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## THE CHANCELLOR'S THREE REASONS FOR PAINTINGS IN CHURCHES

### I.

The two letters written by Pope Gregory the Great to Serenus, bishop of Marseille, are generally regarded as the texts which are most frequently and in the most varied discursive contexts referred to in the medieval West in connection with the use of images.<sup>1</sup> Since Gerhart Ladner's study was published in 1931, scholars of art history and the history of theology have viewed these letters as classical witnesses to—and as foundations for the later development of—a uniquely Western conception of the image, defined in contrast to the Byzantine theology of images.<sup>2</sup> The letters' medieval citations as well as the modern interpretations stress the didactic function of images, the most compact formulation of which is in the second letter:

*Aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturae historiam quid sit adorandum ad-discere. Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cernentibus, quia in ipsa ignorantes uident quod sequi debeant, in ipsa legunt qui litteras nesciunt ...<sup>3</sup>*

For it is one thing to adore a picture, another through a picture's story to learn what must be adored. For what writing offers to those who read it, a picture offers to the ignorant who look at it, since in it the ignorant see what they ought to follow, in it they read who do not know letters ...<sup>4</sup>

Such a statement can be considered to have been generally binding in the High Middle Ages, in case its decisive impact can be discerned in the most varied literary genres, and if at least the rudiments of the doctrine on images in Scholastic theology can be traced back to it. After all, can a theological tradition be deemed fundamental in this era, unless it was acknowledged in the main Scholastic summas? Presumably this is what guided Ladner when he included St Thomas Aquinas among the adherents of the Gregorian dictum. In order to do so, Ladner referred to the three reasons which the Doctor Angelicus—in accordance with St Bonaventure's earlier text—puts to justify the use of images in churches. The first among them indeed concurs with the argument of the Church Father.<sup>5</sup>

Fuit autem triplex ratio institutionis imaginum in Ecclesia. Primo ad instructionem rudium, qui eis quasi quibusdam libris edocentur. Secundo ut incarnationis mysterium et sanctorum exempla magis in memoria essent, dum quotidie oculis representantur. Tertio ad excitandum deuotionis affectum qui ex uisis efficacius incitatur quam ex auditis.<sup>6</sup>

There was a triple reason for instituting images in the church. First, for the instruction of simple people, who are taught by them as if by some books. Second, so that the mystery of the incarnation and the examples of the saints remain more in our memory, as they are represented to the eyes daily. Third, to excite devotional feeling, which is stimulated more effectively by things seen than those heard.<sup>7</sup>

In 2001, Creighton Gilbert devoted an entire study to the subject of the *triplex ratio*, in which he demonstrates that these three reasons are contained in the chapter on image worship from St John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa*, known in the West since the mid-12th century. Much quoted in Scholastic theology, the text, however, does not present the arguments in the same systematic fashion and the Latin authors mentioned by Gilbert do not refer to it in this very context.<sup>8</sup> The possible role of the Damascene presented no obstacles to Gilbert's placing the cited Scholastic texts within the continuity of Western image theory from St Gregory to the Council of Trent, and including contemporaneous works from other literary genres, in particular William Durand's liturgical treatise.<sup>9</sup> In subsequent publications, the view that the letters attributed to Gregory the Great were the sole source of the *triplex ratio* gained dominance.<sup>10</sup>

There are some problems, however, with this last assertion. It is well-known that the role of images as writing for the illiterate was not Gregory's invention. He, too, relied on a large tradition in Greek theological literature, later passed on by the Damascene. He actually alluded to this when he wrote: "the ancients reasonably permitted that stories of holy persons be depicted in venerable places."<sup>11</sup> More importantly, the other two arguments are missing from the letters to Serenus.<sup>12</sup> If we postulate that medieval authors also connected these arguments with Gregory, then we need to turn to the 8th-century interpolated version of the letter to the recluse Secundinus.<sup>13</sup> Here we find all in one sentence the sought-after three motifs, and appearing as stages in the process of contemplating the picture.

Et dum nos ipsa pictura quasi scriptura ad memoriam filium Dei reducimus, animum nostrum aut de resurrectione laetificat aut de passione emulcat.<sup>14</sup>

And thus, like scripture, the image returns the Son of God to our memory and equally delights the soul concerning the resurrection and softens it concerning the passion.<sup>15</sup>

It seems to have been overlooked in previous scholarship that the early medieval interpolation in the Secundinus letter was in all likelihood inspired by St John

Damascene, most probably by the chapter on images in his encyclopaedic work.<sup>16</sup> In the current context, more critical is the question of how well-known, if at all, this interpolation—much quoted in the Early Middle Ages—was in the 12th and 13th centuries. I don't know of any direct proof that either the authors of the *Summa Halensis*, or maybe Bonaventure or Aquinas were aware of this text. In the 11th and first half of the 12th centuries, however, in quotations of the second letter to Serenus (while always the same passage is quoted), the addressee is consistently referred to as “Secundinus seruus Dei reclusus”, which suggests no direct knowledge of either letter.<sup>17</sup> The addressee's name was first corrected by Gratian, who evidently read the second epistle to the Gallic bishop, but nothing suggests that he got acquainted with or at least knew about the text interpolated into the Secundinus letter.<sup>18</sup>

## II.

In the following, I will comment on the text which provides—according to our present knowledge—the first detailed account on the adoration of images in high Scholastic theology. This text, Philip the Chancellor's *Summa de bono* from ca. 1225–28 seems also to be the source for later commentaries on the Sentences in enumerating the *triplex ratio*.<sup>19</sup> The passage in question responds to the basic anxiety that “the cult of such images is a revival of idolatry”.<sup>20</sup>

Unde tres causas assignat Damascenus quare fiunt imagines, quarum una est, ut iam dixi, propter habendam quorundam memoriam, secunda est propter imitationem, et hee due cause sunt communes omnibus, tertia propter rudium simplicitatem. Unde ita dicit Damascenus quia “Deus ‘propter uiscera misericordie sue’ secundum ueritatem factus est homo propter nostram salutem, non ut Abrahe uisus est in specie hominis, non ut prophetis, sed secundum substantiam factus est homo, passus est, crucifixus est, surrexit, assumptus est et omnia secundum ueritatem facta sunt et uisa sunt ab hominibus, scripta autem sunt ad memoriam et doctrinam nostram. Quia non omnes noscunt litteras neque lectioni uacant, patres excogitauerunt uelud quosdam triumphos in imaginibus hec scribere ad memoriam uelocem, propter hoc quod multotiens, non secundum mentem habentes Domini passionem imaginis Christi crucifixionem uidentes et salutaris passionis in rememorationem uenientes, adoramus non materiam sed imaginem. Similiter et Dei genitricis imaginis non materiam, sed figuram adoramus. Honor enim qui est ad ipsam ad eum qui ex ipsa incarnatus est reducitur. Similiter et sanctorum certamina erigentia nos ad fortitudinem et imitationem et zelum uirtutis eorum et gloriam Dei.”<sup>21</sup>

Hence the Damascene assigns three causes why people make images, first—as I said before—for having a memory, second for imitation, and these two causes are common for all, third for the simplicity of the rude. Hence the Damascene alike tells that “God ‘through the tender mercy of Him’ became in truth human for our salvation, not

as He was seen by Abraham in the semblance of a man, nor as He was seen by the prophets, but according to substance He became human, suffered, was crucified, resurrected, was assumed, and all these things veritably took place and were seen by men, they were likewise written down for the memory and teaching of us. Seeing that not everyone has a knowledge of letters nor time for reading, the Fathers contrived to write these in images like as some triumphs for the swiftness of memory. Therefore often, when we have not the Lord's passion in mind, but we see the crucifixion of Christ's image and His saving passion is brought back to remembrance, then we adore not the material but the image. In a like manner, in the case of the image of the mother of God we adore not the material but the figure. For the honour which we give to her is referred to Him Who was made of her incarnate. Similarly, also the struggles and the encouraging of holy men lead us to endurance and to the imitation and emulation of their valour and to the glory of God."

The passage above consists in large part of a quotation from St John Damascene, namely the same quotation whose affinity to the later formulations of the *triplex ratio* was highlighted by Gilbert. The *Summa de bono* shows that this relation is more than a simple affinity. The authoritative source of the three reasons for the use of images in churches was *De fide orthodoxa*, and not St Gregory or what was attributed to him, and not even some of the triadic arguments in favour of images appearing in earlier Latin literature.<sup>22</sup> That Philip refers to the Damascene suggests it was not clear to him that similar arguments were to be found in the letters of Gregory. Considering the argumentative structure of the Scholastic *questio*, it is implausible that a 13th-century university theologian, while being aware of the opportunity, would not have relied on an earlier Father of higher ecclesiastical rank, and consequently of higher authority<sup>23</sup>—and this is worth pondering in regard to later formulations of the *triplex ratio*, too.

At the same time, there are some conspicuous differences between John's text and Philip's introduction to it. This regular arrangement, which enables at all to distinguish the three reasons in favour of images, is entirely foreign to John. It is even more foreign to the original text than to Philip's quotation, which contains omissions. John does not list and organize arguments, but rather describes a process. The prerequisite of this is the incarnation as the foundation of our ability to visualize God, and it proceeds from perception through memory to an ascent to worship, and this worship passes on—pursuant to the dictum of St Basil the Great—to what is imaged. Behind Philip's reinterpretation we can see simply the attraction of the high medieval Latin writer to regular, if possible, tripartite structures. The matter is actually more complicated and if we want to understand it, we need to consider the entire chapter of the *Summa de bono* devoted to images.

If we compare this chapter to the corresponding passages in later encyclopaedic works of Scholastic theology, then most striking is the apparent disorder of its presentation. While in the latter writings the individual questions of image worship are covered in separate textual units, which carefully follow the order of the

arguments, the counterarguments, conclusions and *ad obiecta*, Philip devotes only one chapter to an unbroken series of—seemingly—loosely related questions and to a bunch of responses. One may be right in regarding this as a sign of the relative immaturity of the literary form of the *questio*. But at the same time it facilitated Philip to develop closer philosophical and theological ties between the various subtopics. When, for example, he asks if the word *adoratio* is said univocally or equivocally of the adoration to God and to the cross,<sup>24</sup> and answers with “neither”, saying that the word is said *per prius et posterius*, i.e. according to analogy,<sup>25</sup> thereby he offers a linguistic–philosophical preparation to the metaphysical interpretation of iconicity—and not just the iconicity of man as created in the image of God. This gives after all a metaphysical meaning to Basil’s statement “the honour paid to the image passes on to the prototype”,<sup>26</sup> which in the West was known only isolated from its context, as transmitted by the Damascene. Among others, the striving for theoretical penetration is what makes the chapter on images in the *Summa de bono* so attractive. Nevertheless, this effort manifests itself at times only in implications, and forces the author into some contradictions. The later elaborations on the question can be read as stages in the gradual resolution of these contradictions, which however entailed cutting back on Philip’s theoretical ambitions, and ripened a couple of generations later more consistent, but rather practical answers to the question of image worship.<sup>27</sup>

This general characterization applies also to the formulation Philip provided of the *triplex ratio*. The brief introduction to the Damascene’s quote is built around three terms: *memoria*, *imitatio* and *simplicitas rudium*. The easily identifiable equivalents of these same terms appear in another part of the chapter, too, in which Philip answers the question “whether God—inasmuch as He is adored in the image—is to be adored in the vestige”.<sup>28</sup>

Ad illud quod queritur utrum Deus adorandus sit in uestigio sicut in imagine respondendum est quod cum de homine dicitur quod factus est ad imaginem Dei non intelligitur secundum corpus, sed secundum animam que est spiritualis substantia et expressissima imago Dei quantum possibile est fieri in creaturis secundum memoriam, notitiam et amorem. Uestigium autem pertinet ad res corporales, et ideo in uestigio non adoratur Deus ...<sup>29</sup>

To the question whether God is to be adored in His vestige, just as in His image, shall be answered that when the man is said to be created in the image of God, this is not apprehended according to the body, but according to the soul, which is a spiritual substance; and the most distinct image of God is to be recognized according to memory, knowledge and love, as far as possible. But the vestige pertains to the corporal things and therefore God is not to be adored in the vestige ...

The question and the answer both derive from St Augustine’s anthropological doctrine of the Trinity; this latter defines the *uestigium* as the counter–concept of

the *imago Trinitatis*. Here we need to recall only a few basic tenets of the doctrine.<sup>30</sup> In *De Trinitate*, Augustine treats the apprehension of the relationship between the persons of the Trinity as the means to reach illumination about God. This can proceed from the triads discernible in the created world: with their help, the vestige of the Trinity can be detected in all creatures, and contemplation of these vestiges pave the way for the contemplation of the image of the Trinity.<sup>31</sup> The latter is based on the trinities of *mens-notitia-amor* and *memoria-intelligentia-uoluntas*. Augustine correlated man's being created in the image of God only to the human spirit; man in the corporal sense—the “external” man—bears only a trace of the Trinity. Thus, when Philip bases his definition of the image of God on the difference between spiritual and corporal things, he is not contradicting Augustine, but slightly simplifies the hierarchy of the trinities established by him. For, according to Augustine, in the case of those ternions that the human soul can contemplate in itself, the system of relationships among the individual parts is what more faithfully and directly corresponds to the structure of the Trinity and thus images it.

The set of three terms which refers to this understanding of the image of God in Philip's text (*memoria-notitia-amor*) cannot be found in this form in Augustine's writing, and this is no accident. *Notitia* and *amor*, which form a triad with *mens* in the ninth book of *De Trinitate*, are mentioned explicitly as *notitia sui* and *amor sui*—as acts of self-reflection of the human soul. In contrast, *memoria*, *intelligentia*, and *uoluntas*—which Augustine begins to refer to in the tenth book, in the next step in his reasoning—relate to the image of God in man in a more fundamental way, as the capacities of the soul.<sup>32</sup> In the passages of *Summa de bono* where attention is expressly paid to this, Philip also closely follows Augustinian terminology.<sup>33</sup> There must be a special, certainly contextual, reason for his not doing so in this chapter—presumably that in this way the ternion was congruent with the three supposedly Damascenian reasons for images in churches.

The appearance of *memoria* twice requires no comment. It is also easy to see how the *notitia* and not the *intelligentia* of the text and the image is what makes one inaccessible and the other accessible for *rudes*. *Imitatio* and *amor* demand a slightly more complex interpretation. At first reading, it is not clear to which statements by John the term *imitatio* in Philip's text refers. The word itself appears, but at a marginal point, in connection with the imitation of the saints' “valour”. It is more likely that Philip summarized with this word the entire sequence which in the quotation closes with the exemplar of the saints: the adoration of Christ, whether it proceeds from his own depiction, from images of Mary, or from representations of the deeds of saints, belongs to the sphere of *imitatio*. If, however, the observer's ambition is none other than to pursue God along various routes, then in an obvious way this can be anchored in the Augustinian system much more readily with the term *amor* than with *uoluntas*.

When Philip distinguished the three reasons for the ecclesiastical use of images in the quotation from St John, he interpreted it in the scope of Augustine's

theology of the Trinity. In doing so, he correlates the two traditions, upon which is built the ninth *distinctio* dealing with the adoration of Christ's humanity in the third book of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. This *distinctio* became the starting point for the Scholastic discussion of the image question—in terms of content already for Philip, but for later authors from the literary point of view as well.<sup>34</sup> In connection with pictures, Philip was the first who had to confront the divergence of the two traditions, the difficulty of reconciling them—and this primarily constitutes the theological achievement of the *triplex ratio*. For the Damascene the ascent toward the adoration of God is the point, and the *imago*, which is used as an aid to this, is understood primarily as image made by human hands. In contrast, for Augustine what is at stake is the ascent towards a conception of God, and the *imago* in an ontological sense, as a created image, may be the tool. As we have seen above, the chasm between the two concepts of image is not unbridgeable in Philip's view, and we have also seen that as a result of this reconciliation the Basilean dictum received a theoretical expounding which could be regarded by Scholastic thinkers as rational. From the combination of Greek and Augustinian traditions in the *triplex ratio*, the author does not unfold an explicit theory. Nevertheless, this mixing gains meaning only as the starting point of an implicit theorem that is explained by the intention of the Basilean dictum to rationalize. In this way, the question of the *adoratio* of the image—the principal topic of this chapter in *Summa de bono*—poses not just the textual context for the *triplex ratio*, but the theoretical framework, too. This framework, however, is foreign to the letters of St Gregory to Serenus, the most striking motif of which is the rejection of the *adoratio* of images—and, according to general interpretation, this is the very aspect in which the letters would have determined the specifically Western attitude of moderation between image worship and iconoclasm for a long time.

### III.

Before drawing final conclusions, we should make a cross check with Durand, whom the literature frequently turns to—as we have seen—as the other end of the spectrum of literary forms, in order to demonstrate the general medieval validity of the Gregorian legacy.<sup>35</sup> Regarding the foundations for the ecclesiastical use of images, Durand relies primarily on the letters to Serenus. His doing so fits well with the traditions of the genre of liturgical exegesis.<sup>36</sup> The prominent role of St Gregory the Great in this literary tradition is quite natural, since in the High Middle Ages his person was intertwined—although largely ungrounded—above all with a long series of liturgical regulations.<sup>37</sup> As with other authors, there is no proof that Durand had immediate knowledge of the letters to Serenus. What he quotes or uses from them would have been available to him in Gratian's transmission. Despite this, his work reveals an intense examination of Gregory's statements not seen in earlier liturgical treatises.

The *Rationale diuinarum officiorum* was the first significant representative of its genre since the succeeding generations of Scholastic theologians worked out a

specifically theoretical system of arguments to justify images and their worship. The influence of Scholastic theology left its mark on the content of Durand's text just as it did on the structure and mode of argument. This influence explains above all how the question of *adoratio* became central to the discussion on the legitimacy of the image, and also how this question in part—in a cross-referenced chapter of the *Rationale*<sup>38</sup>—was articulated in the dichotomy of *latria* and *dulia*. The answer, on the other hand, does not refer to these concepts. According to Durand any type of *adoratio* shown to images is idolatry; the correct use can be described with the words *ueneratio* and *honor*.<sup>39</sup> Understandably, for him, who approached the images from a pragmatic perspective, the distinctions within the concept of *adoratio* might have appeared uselessly academic and he likewise refrained from distinguishing between the adoration of the depiction of God and the adoration of God in His depiction, or—in the spirit of St Basil's dictum—from considering the worship of an image as a path to the worship of God. Instead, not only did he consistently adhere to the arguments of didacticism and memory quoted from the letters to Serenus, but when he expanded on this by mentioning the depictability of the “evils to avoid”,<sup>40</sup> he implicitly distanced himself from the view that images, with their rememorative function, can be a stimulus for some kind of ascension. In Durand's text, the influence of Scholastic theology thus appears primarily as a challenge that prompted him to express the motifs, which were traditionally highlighted in liturgical exegesis to justify the images, with new, complex terminology and rich arguments. As a means to this end, he reads and uses the Serenus letters in a more nuanced way and as an authority against the Scholastic discourse on images—also enabled by the fact that the latter discourse has not incorporated the Gregorian tradition.

The confrontation of Philip the Chancellor and Durand reveals that in high medieval scholarship, the specific logic inherent in the traditions of the various literary genres led to the preservation not only of different methods of argument, but also of partly different sets of relevant authorities, and—not unrelatedly—in some cases fundamentally opposing positions, too. What art historians often call the Scholastic theology of the image was born from the intention to reconcile the Augustinian theology of the *imago* with the newly discovered Greek authors so exciting to early Scholastics: St John Damascene, and the Eastern Fathers quoted by him. This intention immediately lost its significance outside the framework of speculative theology, and likewise its results also became problematic. The theological summas and the commentaries on the Sentences are of just as little use as sources of a specific Western medieval conception of the image as the 11th–13th-century quotations from St Gregory's letters—for such a unified conception did not exist.

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *S. Gregorii Magni Registrum epistularum*, ed. D. Norberg, Turnhout 1982, 768, 873–76. Here, the methodology which guided my process of reasoning was greatly inspired by the studies of Andreas Speer; see esp. idem, “Thomas von Aquin und die Kunst: Eine hermeneutische Anfrage zur mittelalterlichen Ästhetik,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 72, 1990, 323–45.
- <sup>2</sup> G. B. Ladner, “Der Bilderstreit und die Kunst-Lehren der byzantinischen und abendländischen Theologie,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 3, 50, 1931, 1–23; here cited after the reprint, idem, *Images and Ideas in the Middle Ages: Selected Studies in History and Art*, vol. 1., Rome 1983, 13–33, esp. 25. An account of the present state of scholarship and a comprehensive bibliography is offered by H. L. Kessler, “Gregory the Great and image theory in Northern Europe during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,” in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. C. Rudolph, Oxford 2006, 151–72.
- <sup>3</sup> *Registrum epistularum* (n. 1 above), 874, lines 22–26.
- <sup>4</sup> English transl. by C. M. Chazelle, “Pictures, books, and the illiterate: Pope Gregory’s letters to Serenus of Marseilles,” *Word & Image* 6, 1990, 138–53, at 139.
- <sup>5</sup> Ladner (n. 2 above), 29. Other examples of linking this *triplex ratio* with Gregory: E. de Bruyne, *Études d’esthétique médiévale*, vol. 1., Bruges 1946, 290. (citing the commentary on the Sentences by St Bonaventure); J.-C. Schmitt, “L’Occident, Nicée II et les images du VIIIe au XIIIe siècle,” in *Nicée II, 787–1987*, ed. F. Boespflug–N. Lossky, Paris 1987, 271–301, here cited after the reprint: idem, “De Nicée II à Thomas d’Aquin: L’émancipation de l’image religieuse en Occident,” in *Le corps des images: Essais sur la culture visuelle au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2002, 63–95, 370–74, at 373 f., n. 64; L. G. Duggan, “Was art really the ‘book of the illiterate’?,” *Word & Image* 5, 1989, 227–51, at 232 (defining Bonaventure as the inventor of the *triplex ratio*); G. Wolf, *Salus populi Romani: Die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter*, Weinheim, 1990, 153 f.
- <sup>6</sup> *Commentary on the Sentences*, 3,9,1,2,2, ad 3; quoted after S. *Thomae Aquinatis opera omnia*, ed. R. Busa, vol. 1., Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt 1980, 294; See also *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae S. R. E. episcopi cardinalis opera omnia ...* ed. P. P. Collegii a S. Bonaventura, vol. 3., Quaracchi 1882, 203.
- <sup>7</sup> English transl. C. Gilbert, *The Saints’ Three Reasons for Paintings in Churches*, Ithaca, N.Y. 2001, 7 (here adapted with slight alterations).
- <sup>8</sup> Gilbert (n. 7 above). For the Greek original of Damascene’s work, see *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, ed. B. Kotter–R. Volk, vol. 2., Berlin–New York 1973, 206–08. For the Latin translation by Burgundio of Pisa, see Saint John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, ed. E. M. Buytaert, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 1955, 330–35. On the reception of this work in the West, see J. de Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique du XIIIe siècle*, 2nd ed., Bruges 1948, 335–46, 368–70, 374–415. Unlike Gilbert, I cannot see these three reasons in the *Summa Halensis*, cited by him on p. 16.
- <sup>9</sup> Ladner (n. 2 above), De Bruyne (n. 5 above), and Duggan (n. 5 above), too, ascribe the same role to Durand’s *Rationale diuinarum officiorum*. See also J. Kollwitz, “Bild und Bildertheologie im Mittelalter,” in *Das Gottesbild im Abendland*, ed. W. Schöne et al., Witten–Berlin 1957, 109–38, at 121–28; W. R. Jones, “Art and Christian piety: Iconoclasm in Medieval Europe,” in *The Images and the Word: Confrontations in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. J. Gutmann, Missoula 1977, 75–105, at 83–85. Michael Camille also discusses the writings of Thomas and Durand as testimonies to the Western conception of the image from the opposite ends of the literary spectrum, even though he does so on a quite different basis, in the context of the diverse kinds of image worship; see idem, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art*, Cambridge 1989, 203–07.
- <sup>10</sup> Kessler (n. 2 above), 152; J. F. Hamburger, “The place of theology in medieval art history: Problems, positions, possibilities,” in *The Mind’s Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle*

- Ages*, ed. J. F. Hamburger–A.–M. Bouché, Princeton 2006, 11–31, at 14 f; B. Fricke, *Ecce fides: Die Statue von Conques, Götzendienst und Bildkultur im Westen*, Munich 2007, 113–16.
- <sup>11</sup> “in locis uenerabilibus sanctorum depingi historias non sine ratione uetustas admisit”; *Registrum epistularum* (n. 1 above), 874, lines 31 f. For the Greek predecessors of Gregory, see Chazelle (n. 4 above), 144 f; G. Cavallo, “Testo e immagine: Una frontiera ambigua,” in *Testo e immagine nell’alto medioevo*, Spoleto 1994, 31–64. For the wider context, see G. Lange, *Bild und Wort: Die katechetischen Funktionen des Bildes in der griechischen Theologie des sechsten bis neunten Jahrhunderts*, 2. ed., Paderborn 1999, esp. 13–38.
- <sup>12</sup> The third argument however resembles a phrase in the second letter: “Sed hoc sollicitè fraternitas tua admeat ut ex uisione rei gestae ardorem compunctionis percipiant et in adoratione solius omnipotentis sanctae trinitatis humiliter prosternantur,” *Registrum epistularum* (n. 1 above), 875, lines 59–62. Relatively few authors ascribe a deeper significance to this passage: H. L. Kessler, “Pictorial narrative and church mission in Sixth-Century Gaul,” in *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. H. L. Kessler–M. Shreve Simpson, Washington 1985, 75–91, at 75, 89, n. 9; Wolf (n. 5 above), 149 f. The interpretation of the passage is largely dependent on the much discussed general problem—which cannot be expounded here in detail—how far we have to look for a consistent theological statement in Gregory’s letters. For the quoted sentence is put as a closing of the section on the images, far from the sentences containing the argumentative core of the letter, thus it can be correlated with the declaration on the didactic function of images only if we give an affirmative answer to the aforementioned question. Yet this is one of the moments where the primarily pragmatic character of Gregory’s letter becomes evident. The pope names here the Trinity the only possible object of *adoratio*, whereas in the earlier parts of the letter he proceeded from a wider concept of *adoratio*: its prohibition applied not to the creature, as opposed to the Creator, but to the depiction, as opposed to the depicted, which is not necessarily God. This is enunciated most clearly in a sentence already quoted: “Aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturae historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere.” This phrase is, admittedly, sometimes interpreted as claiming the exclusiveness of God’s adoration, see Chazelle (n. 4 above), 141. But Chazelle—entering into a circular reasoning—invokes the help of the sentence quoted further up for the reading of this one, whereas the images broken by Serenus and advocated by Gregory are called “sanctorum imagines” and “sanctorum historiae”; and even Chazelle pointed out the breadth of the concept of *sanctus*, as understood by Gregory. In light of this latter argument, the pope is rather unlikely to have supposed that pictures teach only God to be “quid sit adorandum”. Regarding the basic character of the Serenus letters, I find the conclusions of Wolf the most convincing: “Die Briefe Gregors sind ... aus einer bestimmten Kommunikationssituation hervorgegangen und müssen, wenn man die Stellung Gregors zur Bilderfrage interpretieren möchte, aus dieser heraus verstanden werden.”
- <sup>13</sup> For the authentic letter of Gregory to Secundinus, see *Registrum epistularum* (n. 1 above), 698–704; for the interpolated version, *ibid*, 1104–11. On this interpolation, see C. Chazelle, “Memory, instruction, worship: Gregory’s influence on early medieval doctrines of the artistic image,” in *Gregory the Great: A Symposium*, ed. J. C. Cavadini, Notre Dame 1995, 181–215, at 183–85; H. L. Kessler, “Real absence: Early Medieval art and the metamorphosis of vision,” in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, Spoleto 1998, 1157–211, at 1176–79; H. G. Thümmel, “Die Stellung des Westens zum byzantinischen Bilderstreit des 8./9. Jahrhunderts,” in *Crises de l’image religieuse: De Nicée II à Vatican II*, ed. O. Christin–D. Gamboni, Paris 2000, 55–74, at 60–62, n. 26.
- <sup>14</sup> *Registrum epistularum* (n. 1 above), 1111, lines 182–85.
- <sup>15</sup> English translation: Kessler (n. 13 above), 1177.
- <sup>16</sup> The confrontation of the following two passages may convince of the conceptual accordance between both texts: *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* (n. 8 above), 207 f., lines 35–46,

and *Registrum epistularum* (n. 1 above), 1110 f., lines 177–85. The agreement in content—and importantly in terminology, too—nevertheless does not provide clear guidance concerning the specific relationship of the texts. When weighing this, it is worth considering the convincing dating to before 726 suggested by Thümmel for the Damascene starting to work on *De fide orthodoxa*. This date, which scarcely appears in art historical literature, relies on the comparisons of the chapter on images and John’s major work in image theology, the three *Logoi*: H. G. Thümmel, “Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der sogenannten Pege gnoseos des Ioannes von Damaskos,” *Byzantinoslavica* 42, 1981, 20–30. (Recent literature in the history of theology fails to note this suggestion, too, but—as it seems to me—without offering a reassuring answer within the traditional framework of dating to the problem used by Thümmel as a starting point. See D. J. Olewiński, *Um die Ehre des Bildes: Theologische Motive der Bilderverteidigung bei Johannes von Damaskus*, St. Ottilien 2004, 326–42.) Thus St John Damascene must have written his text some decades before the interpolation in the letter to Secundinus, and if the latter—in accordance with the traditional interpretation—indeed was created amidst the unease provoked in Rome by Byzantine iconoclasm, then this would not only explain the interest in John’s work, but would relieve some of our concerns about the possible language barriers that might have impeded reception.

- <sup>17</sup> The first text that makes this mistake seems to be the *Decretorum libri uiginti* (3,36) by Burchard of Worms from the early 11th century; see *Patrologiae cursus completus... Series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1844–1855 (further referred to as *PL*), vol. 140., col. 679A–B. He quotes the section from p. 874, lines 22–36 in the Norberg edition and introduces this with the rubric “Ex epist. Gregorii Secundino seruo Dei recluso directa.” The genre of Burchard’s work—whose aim was to organize details of authoritative texts which could be used as legal sources, make them more accessible, and replace the original—corresponds to the later history of the quotation. The addressee’s misstated name and the identical excerpt recurs not only in later works on canon law (such as Ivo of Chartres: see *PL*, vol. 161., col. 206D–207A), but also in other genres associated with highly variable levels of erudition. To mention two extremes: this textual tradition is followed by Peter Abelard in *questio* 45 of *Sic et non* (Petrus Abelardus, *Sic et non: A Critical Edition*, ed. B. B. Boyer–R. McKeon, Chicago–London 1976–1977, 209, lines 176–84), and also the bilingual passage on p. 68 of the St Albans Psalter. See the online facsimile and translation of the codex, URL: <<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/~lib399/english/translation/trans068.shtml>>. From what we know today it is impossible to say what sources Burchard relied on directly. However, the *Collectio decretalium*, the so-called Pseudo-Isidorian False Decretals from the mid-9th-century—quoting at length from the interpolated Secundinus letter (*PL* vol. 130, col. 1108D–1113A)—probably played a role in his misunderstanding concerning the addressee.
- <sup>18</sup> *Decretum*, 3,3,27; see *Decretum magistri Gratiani*, ed. E. Friedberg, Leipzig 1879, col. 1360. Gratian here names the addressee as “Serenus, Episcopus Massiliensis”, and quotes a slightly different portion of text.
- <sup>19</sup> I know of one previous mention of *Summa de bono* in this context in: J. Wirth, “Structure et fonctions de l’image chez Saint Thomas d’Aquin,” in *L’image: Fonctions et usages des images dans l’Occident médiéval*, ed. J. Baschet–J.-C. Schmitt, Paris 1996, 39–57, at 52. However, the author appears puzzled in his analysis; in fact he gravely distorts the content of Philip’s main statements in his summary of them.
- <sup>20</sup> “imagines huiusmodi colere sit idolatriam reuocare”; *Philippi Cancellarii Parisiensis Summa de bono*, ed. N. Wicki, Bern 1985, 972, line 5.
- <sup>21</sup> *Summa de bono* (n. 20 above), 973 f., lines 45–61. For the quotation from Damascene, cf. *De fide orthodoxa*, (n. 8 above), 332 f., lines 32–54.
- <sup>22</sup> The *Gemma animae* of Honorius Augustodunensis—in which Gilbert (n. 7 above), 12., thinks he has found the first phrasing of the three reasons—provides an example of liturgical exegesis nearly a century and a half earlier than Durand’s *Rationale*. Of the three causes given for the use of

images, two correspond to what appears in Philip's text, but the third is completely different, fitting with a tradition based on Ps. 25.8: "Ob tres autem causas fit pictura: primo, quia est laicorum litteratura; secundo, ut domus tali decore ornetur; tertio, ut priorum uita in memoriam reuocetur"; *Gemma animae*, c. 132 *PL*, vol. 172., col. 586C. The passage in fact has a complex early medieval prehistory, the detailed study of which—to my best knowledge—has yet to be done. As an example, see the *Libellus synodalis* compiled for the 825 Synod of Paris: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Concilia*, ed. A. Werminghoff, vol. 2:2., Hanover–Leipzig 1908, 526, lines 6–12. The affects roused by the image—which might seem to be the most significant innovation of Philip's compared to Honorius—also appears among the arguments during the Carolingian period; see Walafrid Strabo, *Liber de exordiis*, c. 8; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Capitularia regum Francorum*, ed. A. Boretius–V. Krause, vol. 2., 484, lines 5–8. Thus, it cannot be excluded that this tradition influenced the Chancellor in some way. But even if this is the case, it is not related to the question of the relationship to St Gregory the Great, the authoritative support for the *triplex ratio*, or its systematic place in Scholastic theology.

<sup>23</sup> On the methodological approach in the *Summa de bono*, see N. Wicki, *Die Philosophie Philipps des Kanzlers*, Fribourg 2005, 9–26.

<sup>24</sup> *Summa de bono* (n. 20 above), 972, lines 6–7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 974, lines 62–64; for Philip's use of the analogy, see D. Piché, "Le concept de vérité dans la 'Summa de bono' (Q. I–III) de Philippe le Chancelier," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 92, 2008, 3–31, esp. 5–7; for the question in general and for its evolution, see A. de Libera, "Les sources gréco-arabes de la théologie médiévale de l'analogie de l'être," *Les Etudes philosophiques* 1989, 319–45.

<sup>26</sup> The interpretation above relies primarily on *Summa de bono* (n. 20 above), 974 f., lines 65–95. Philip quotes Basil first in a question quite at the beginning of the chapter (*ibid.*, 972, lines 14 f.) and a bit later (974, line 69) in the answer to it. The question, which originates basically with St John Damascene, asks on the one hand whether the dictum of Basil can be used for people as images of God, i.e. should they be adored, and on the other hand how the adoration of the tabernacle can be justified, for it is not the image of God, but the image of creatures. Philip first—quoting the Damascene—answers 'yes' to the first part of the question (65–70), but he makes a distinction not found in St John's text (see n. 39 below), which had considerable influence on later theology: a human can be adored with *latria* if God is adored in him as in an image, if however the human is adored because of his dignity as the image of God, then only the adoration of *dulia* applies (71–77). This can be used also for such creatures like the tabernacle (82–95). Here, Philip makes another differentiation, which again plays an important role in the works of later writers: between images apprehended as "in being" (*in essendo*), and "in signification and understanding" (*in significando et cognoscendo*). Here, too, the latter term has a simpler form (*in significando*), and later is simplified even further (*ut signum*). The definition has been embellished here for reasons of content. Philip gives the use of images as signs an ontological dimension by dividing the cognition of each thing into three levels, structured hierarchically according to their ontological aspect: "Est enim mundum tripliciter accipere, ut est in materia, scilicet mundum istum sensibilem, uel ut est in cognitione nostra siue angelorum, uel ut est in cognitione Dei, et sic est mundus archetypus." Thus when we use the tabernacle as God's image *ut signum*, then we ascend actually to the archetype of the tabernacle in the cognition of God. The choice of the tabernacle as an example expands the argument in more than one respect, since in this case the divine institution guarantees the existence of the archetype and the legitimacy of the worship as well. Philip's argument is still not restricted to this example, since it is "the world" what is to be accepted in three ways. In the end, irrational creatures can be imbued with similar dignity by their being an image *ut signum*, like the human by their ontological iconicity; and this "semiotic" iconicity makes their adoration with *latria* as well as with *dulia* possible. More relevant in the present context, the veneration of the image

as sign is also related to the analogy of being, which is why we say adoration of God and adoration of the cross *per prius et posterius* and why the statement “the honour paid to the image passes on to the prototype” can be generalized. The consonance of Basil’s prototype and Philip’s archetype is scarcely a coincidence.

- <sup>27</sup> The subquestion of the adoration of man discussed in the previous note offers a suitable example of this. Philip poses the question in a rather provocative way: “queritur, cum expressissima sit imago Dei homo, quod potius adorandus sit quam ceterae imagines”; *Summa de bono* (n. 20 above), 972, lines 12 f. The potential implicit in the objection was repeatedly exploited by iconophobic authors and movements at the end of the Middle Ages, when they appealed to the image of God in man while rejecting the worship of paintings and sculptures; see N. Schnitzler, *Ikonoklasmus – Bildersturm: Theologischer Bilderstreit und ikonoklastisches Handeln während des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 1996, 42, 45. This makes comprehensible in retrospect that Scholastic theologians after Philip cautiously dealt with the question, and gave more definite and at the same time more simple answers. The *Summa Halensis* continues Philip’s differentiation between the two concepts of image, but he strips the image as sign of its connection with the analogy of being, and thereby contrasts the adoration of the two kinds of images with each other instead of drawing a parallel between them: the adoration of an “image by participation” does not reach God directly or completely, and can thus only be *dulia*, as opposed to the case “ubi ergo est imago ut signum, totus honor refertur ad prototypon, id est exemplar”—here the image can be adored with *latria*; *Summa Halensis*, 4,303; see *Doctoris irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales ordinis minorum Summa theologica seu sic ab origine dicta „Summa fratris Alexandri,”* ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi, vol. 4:1., 457 f. The *Summa Halensis* supports its statements about the ontological image with an expounding which is, however, still rather complicated, although in a different way. A human therefore can only be “material of *latria*” (4,298; *ibid*, 455), and that as an object of *dulia*, since the *Summa Halensis* traces the *dulia*—at the cost of a sharp reinterpretation of the traditional concept—back to participation from the divine dignities (4,288; *ibid*, 441–442). In this way, the analogical relationship observed by Philip between the adoration of God and that of his image here becomes transformed to an analogical relationship between the types of adoration. St Bonaventure’s argument rests on similar foundations but is much simpler and thus more effective: “cum talis homo sit creatura nobilis, offert se magis per modum rei quam per modum signi; et ideo honor, qui ei defertur, non omnino refertur ad primum exemplar, sicut honor, qui defertur imagini pictae uel sculptae”; *Commentary on the Sentences*, 3,9,1,2; *S. Bonaventurae opera omnia* (n. 6 above), vol. 3., p. 204.
- <sup>28</sup> “cum Deus adoretur in imagine, utrum adorandus sit in uestigio”; *Summa de bono* (n. 20 above), p. 973, line 29.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 975, lines 96–101.
- <sup>30</sup> The standard edition is *Sancti Aurelii Augustini De Trinitate libri XV*, ed. W. J. Mountain, Turnhout 1968. For a critical review of the literature, see R. Kany, *Augustins Trinitätsdenken: Bilanz, Kritik und Weiterführung der modernen Forschung zu ‘De Trinitate,’* Tübingen 2007, esp. 227–40. A close reading of the relevant passages: J. Brachtendorf, *Die Struktur des menschlichen Geistes nach Augustinus: Selbstreflexion und Erkenntnis Gottes in ‘De Trinitate,’* Hamburg 2000, esp. 118–99.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 194 f.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 163–65.
- <sup>33</sup> *Summa de bono* (n. 20 above), 72–75, 103–05, 239–43.
- <sup>34</sup> *Magistri Petri Lombardi Parisiensis episcopi Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, vol. 2., Grottaferrata 1981, 68–71. The influence of Peter Lombard on Philip can best be apprehended by his selecting the discussion of *latria* and *dulia* as a framework for questions about image worship. See also n. 39 below.

- <sup>35</sup> *Guillelmi Duranti Rationale diuinorum officiorum*, ed. A. Davril–T. Thibodeau–B. G. Guyot, vol. 1., Turnhout 1995, 34–36. See the (rather recapitulative) comments by K. Faupel-Dreves, *Vom rechten Gebrauch der Bilder im liturgischen Raum: Mittelalterliche Funktionsbestimmungen bildender Kunst im Rationale diuinorum officiorum des Durandus von Mende (1230/1–1296)*, Leiden–Boston–Cologne 2000; J. Longère, “Guillaume Durand, évêque de Mende,” in *L’image dans le pensée et l’art au Moyen Âge*, ed. M. Lemoine, Turnhout 2006, 41–62.
- <sup>36</sup> See Johannes Beleth, *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, c. 85; *PL*, vol. 202., col. 89B–C.
- <sup>37</sup> See the summary by M. S. Driscoll, “The Conversion of the Nations,” in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. G. Wainwright–K. B. Westerfield Tucker, Oxford 2005, 175–215, at 185–88.
- <sup>38</sup> *Rationale diuinorum officiorum*, 4,39,2; *Guillelmi Duranti Rationale* (n. 35 above), 432, and 36, lines 59 f.: “De hoc etiam dicitur in quarta parte sub quarta particula canonis super uerbo ‘seruitutis’.”
- <sup>39</sup> See among others: “Sed nos illas non adoramus, nec deos appellamus, nec spem salutis in eis ponimus quia hoc esset idolatrare, sed ad memoriam et recordationem rerum olim gestarum eas ueneramus”; *Guillelmi Duranti Rationale* (n. 35 above), 35, lines 14–17. The literature frequently contains the mistake that the conceptual pair of *latria* and *dulia* corresponded to the concepts of *adoratio* and *ueneratio/honor*—e.g. Kollwitz (n. 9 above), 111. In fact, both *latria* and *dulia* are just a type of *adoratio*. The other mistake, in which the dichotomy is traced back to Greek theology of images, St John Damascene or the *horos* of the Second Council of Nicaea, is not at all unrelated—e.g. Schmitt (n. 5 above), 90; Camille (n. 9 above), 380, n. 25. Although the words themselves are clearly of Greek origin, this juxtaposition (and the concept of *δουλεία*) is unknown in the texts mentioned. Here, Scholastic theologians relied on an entirely different source, on St Augustine, and what they expressed with this pair of concepts is alien to the Greek texts they would have had access to; see A. Landgraf, “Der Kult der menschlichen Natur Christi nach der Lehre der Frühscholastik,” *Scholastik* 12, 1937, 361–77, 498–518; J. Pascher, “‘Servitus religiosa’ seit Augustinus,” in *Festschrift Eduard Eichmann zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. M. Grabmann–K. Hofmann, Paderborn 1940, 335–52. While *latria* and *dulia* are mutually exclusive concepts, in the chapter on images in the Damascene’s *De fide orthodoxa* (unlike the *Logoi*, which was unknown in the medieval West), words belonging to the conceptual sphere of veneration, *προσκύνησις* and *τιμῆ* (which Burgundio translated as *adoratio* and *honor*) are used as synonyms, in the decrees of the Council, however, *λατρεία* is a subset of *τιμητικῆ προσκύνησις* (translated by Anastasius Bibliothecarius as *honoratoria adoratio*); see “Concilium Nicaenum II – 787,” ed. E. Lamberz–J. B. Uphus, in *Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque: Editio critica*, ed. G. Alberigo, vol. 1., Turnhout 2006, 295–345, at 315.
- <sup>40</sup> “Moderate uero uti picturis ad representandum mala uitanda et bona imitanda reprehensibile non est. Unde Dominus ad Ezechielem: ‘Ingredere et uide abominationes pessimas quas isti faciunt. Et ingressus uidit omnem similitudinem reptilium et animalium abominationem et uniuersa idola domus Israel depicta in pariete,’” in *Guillelmi Duranti Rationale* (n. 35 above), 36, lines 47–52.