TACTILE PLEASURES:

SECULAR GOTHIC IVORY

A Dissertation in

Art History

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2014
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This study approaches secular Gothic ivory mirror cases from the fourteenth century. Even more specifically, it considers scenes of so-called “romance” or “courtly” couples, which were often given as love pledges and used as engagement presents. There has been a recent flourishing of art historical interest in materiality and visual culture, focusing on the production, distribution, consumption, and significance of objects in everyday life, and my examination adds to that body of work. My purpose is not to provide a survey, history, or chronology of these objects, but rather to highlight one important, yet little-studied aspect. My dissertation situates the sensation of touch in the context of a wider understanding of the relationship between the object and the human body, with specific secular Gothic ivories as case studies. I investigate,

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3 The body is where perception occurs, see Mary J. Carruthers, ed., The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 56–8;
through the imagery and physical evidence, the ways in which these objects inform and are informed by tactile exploration. The size, material, and subjects of these ivories both encouraged and rewarded close study and touching. Secular Gothic ivory appealed to the sense of touch and Gothic people touched and were inclined to think about touch when looking at and holding these objects. The repetition in ivory decoration of men and women looking, touching, and offering themselves as objects to be looked at and touched suggests to me that these individuals were seeing surrogate selves represented in ivory. Ideally, the reader comes away with an appreciation for the role of the sense of touch in experiencing art.  


4 Much in the same way that Marina Belozerskaya, *Luxury Arts of the Renaissance* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005), focused on what are considered the “decorative” arts, and through her study provided a deeper, richer understanding of the culture of the Renaissance; the recent interest in materiality and visual culture in art history, particularly in the study of the Renaissance (examples include: Creighton E. Gilbert, “What Did the Renaissance Patron Buy?,” *Renaissance Quarterly 51*, no. 2 [Summer 1998]: 392–450; and Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400-1600* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005]) has opened up new areas for exploration, particularly in relation to the significance of objects in everyday life.

5 An underlying goal, which will be evident from perusing the footnotes, is to provide a wide variety of sources to the reader.
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Preface

A Note on the Photography

I am no photographer, so where professional photographs were available and superior to what I could accomplish, I have used them. Unless otherwise noted, the images are my own. I apologize in advance for the imperfections and deficiencies of my efforts, to which terrible photographing conditions often added. In many cases, even the professional photographs do not do these objects justice, as they are three-dimensional, and in person they shine and are made more beautiful by the ambient light, which of course makes them ever more difficult to capture on film.

A Note on the Labels

During the long gestation of this work, the Courtauld Institute was pursuing a large undertaking: an aggregation of images and details on Gothic ivory in collections worldwide. It is now available online, and whenever possible, I have made use of this resource for the dates and measurements of the ivory objects I discuss.⁶ There are also full bibliographies and provenance information available at the website, so I have not included that information in this work, and I encourage any interested reader to look there for this information.

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Acknowledgments

This study could never have come about without the help of many individuals, both in person and through writing. I have chosen here to list a select few. My gratitude to all the universities, scholars, libraries, librarians, museums, and curators who have welcomed me and my questions over the years, especially: Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, Richard H. Randall Jr., Charles Little, Peter Barnet, James Robinson, Paul Williamson, Norbert Jopec, Margaret Jennings, and of course the late Raymond Koechlin, the grandfather of Gothic ivory studies. My immeasurable thanks to my doctoral advisor, Dr. Elizabeth B. Smith, and committee, Drs. Brian Curran, Charlotte Houghton, and Kathryn Salzer; as well as to my previous mentors and advisors: Drs. Daniel Mack, Frima F. Hofrichter, Tula Gianini, AnnaMaria Poma-Swank, and the man who got me started in this whole art history business, my advisor from Boston College: Dr. Kenneth Craig.

I appreciate the assistance given from the Art History department at the Pennsylvania State University (especially for the 2010 Art History Department Dissertation Fellowship; the Fall 2008 Art History Department Travel Grant, which allowed my travel to and research in London; the Spring 2008 Francis Hyslop Memorial Fellowship, through which I traveled to and researched in Paris; and the 2005-6 University Graduate Fellowship). I am honored by the support of my family, friends, and acquaintances near and far, and I am particularly grateful for Dr. Robert and Mrs. Susan Staab.

This work has drawn from the wisdom of many, yet the mistakes remain those of your (flawed) author.
“Everything is given to us by means of touch, a mediation that is continually forgotten.”

Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 59; quoted in Elizabeth D. Harvey, ed., *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), introduction. Image source: Compilation of details created from objects studied in this dissertation. Clockwise from top left: Figure 9, Figure 19, Figure 19, Figure 4, Figure 6, Figure 16; center: Figure 14.
Chapter 1: Introduction: Tactile Pleasures

In studying secular Gothic ivory in various collections, I came to notice that not only do many of these objects contain images of people touching, but they also display evidence of having been touched. In some cases, the facial features of the characters have been nearly completely abraded. Even though there is clear evidence of touch both in (imagery) and on (rubbing) these objects, they have only to date been approached visually. From the earliest museum catalogs, to more recent articles, secular Gothic ivories have been studied in visually descriptive categories of imagery, (such as the castle stormed, scenes from Arthurian legends, or popular romance), in addition to being categorized by format, such as caskets or mirror cases.

Noticing these signs of handling brought me to contemplating the tactile enjoyment of sculpture. The impact of sculpture on the sensory lives of its users has, even recently, received relatively little attention from art historians and yet the nature of the sensory experiences offered by sculpture are just as much a part of their history as the economic, political, and social context. The discovery that no one has approached these objects from a tactile position led me to think

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about how touch was conceived of during the fourteenth century, and how the owners and users of these ivories would have interacted with them in regards to their sense of touch.

The starting point of my research is an historical interest in the sensory dimension of sculpture. Both the imagery of touching and the evidence of rubbing on these objects suggest an intimate relationship with the pieces. Popular analogies of ivory to beautiful skin help support the idea that these objects could have been thought of as surrogates for the beloved, and touching the ivory could have stood in for touching the lover.\(^{11}\) Eroticized looking, or scopophilia, has been the topic of some recent books and essays, and I wish to broaden this field of inquiry to include frottage, or eroticized touching. Scopophilia for Freud is voyeurism.\(^{12}\) Freud’s text and its larger critical reception form the core of several recent attempts to understand the nature of male vision and female beholding in late medieval literature. In particular, it is the theoretical springboard for A.C. Spearing and to a certain degree for Sarah Stanbury.\(^{13}\)

I study the imagery of touching on secular Gothic ivories and research the relationship of these objects to physical touching – both of the image and of the lover. By focusing on the sense

\(^{11}\) See the more detailed discussion later in this dissertation.


of touch, I hope to reorient modern beholders of these objects, and provide a wider context in which to understand how the senses affected the medieval user’s experience. Brigitte Buettner’s paper on the reflective nature of ivory mirror cases, both as mirrors and through the imagery, encouraged me to approach these objects not from the angle of meaning, per se, but, rather, of significance. I base my study on the fact that the senses are more than a potential field of study; they are the media through which we experience and make sense of our studies.

Art history has done a disservice to many objects, especially small-scale sculptures, by maintaining such a strong focus on vision. This dissertation challenges the presupposition that objects with secular subject are “marginal” or “frivolous” by situating the sensation of touch in the context of a wider understanding of the relationship between the human body and the object, with the secular Gothic ivory as case study. Indeed, the case of secular Gothic ivories suggests that art history’s prevailing ocularcentric assumptions need to be examined much more critically and that the reception of art, especially sculpture, should by no means be restricted to optical experiences alone.

My goal in this study is not to search for the elusive universal meaning of these objects, but to provide proposals and suggestions regarding this imagery and the significance it might

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14 Buettner, “Circular Arguments.”
16 The body is where perception occurs, see Carruthers, The Book of Memory, 56–8; see also Frese and O’Brien O’Keeffe, The Book and the Body; and Camille, “Before the Gaze,” 211.
have had for its audience. The repetition in ivory decoration of men and women looking, touching, and offering themselves as objects to be looked at and touched suggests to me that these individuals were seeing surrogate selves represented in these objects. These ivories both encouraged and rewarded close study and touching.

In order to structure and guide the reader toward the thesis, I have focused on the following questions: How were these objects acquired, received, and/or given? What was the relationship between these objects and their users? What physical relationships appear on these objects, and how do they relate to medieval thoughts on touch? While conceptually useful, the division of this work into sections is somewhat arbitrary as the topics interrelate, and certain basic themes recur throughout.

What is not addressed in this work are the dating, point(s) of origin, or carving techniques of these pieces, as it is my belief that these details do not affect the thesis of this work. In attempting to date these objects, style and iconography are often problematic. To quote a few scholars: “the dating of fourteenth century ivories is made difficult by a lag in style and persistence of iconography,” and “one cannot usually be sure of the date and place of origin of

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any particular piece, […] though […] certain types of object are not seen before certain dates.”

Following Koechlin, most scholars rely on the clothing to provide approximate dates for the objects, as comparison with monumental sculpture can often be a problem of the chicken and the egg. It has also proved difficult to determine where objects were made, as there is trouble in documenting Parisian or French ateliers and outside ones. We can still only assign to an atelier using stylistic analysis. Commonly, secular Gothic objects have been approached iconographically, but the trouble for iconographers is the redundancy of the images, and the fact that the “courtly” scenes do not fit a specific text (there is no definable single source).

In the interest of limiting the size of this work, the imagery of couples on secular Gothic ivory from the fourteenth century is my principle focus. Paired lovers appear most commonly on mirror cases, and so my discussion gives this format priority. I have chosen to investigate objects identified with the enigmatic topic of “courtly love,” focusing on examples not directly associated with a particular text. It is easy to fall into the trap of theorizing without citing artwork, and I hope to avoid this by providing specific examples as case studies. These case studies are unique examples and do not purport to stand for the whole. I am not trying to explain all of medieval culture, I am simply pointing out a curiosity in regards to this particular object at this particular time, which can be much more useful in helping present-day beholders understand

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21 Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux*, 266; for a discussion of the dating of Gothic ivory objects, as well as inventories and the persistence of the style from 1300 through the fourteenth century, see ibid., 337.
22 In fact, the ideal of Parisian style is false, according to Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux*, 266; Peter Barnet, ed., *Images in Ivory: Precious Objects of the Gothic Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), identified ateliers, and clarified Koechlin (really, removed his prejudice).
what daily life might have been like for the people living with and using this object. Another snare, in which many historians – of art and other subjects – have become entangled, is to make broad generalizations based on the examination of a single object. The group of objects studied here is not an exhaustive list, I have chosen appropriate examples of ivory objects in collections accessible to the general public, which I have seen (and for the most part, handled) in person. I use Caviness’s “triangulation” method of focusing on specific objects from two different angles: contextual and modern. My agenda is not grounded in a single approach; indeed the approaches adopted in some sections may contrast noticeably to those adopted in others. I have made a conscious decision to avoid the extensive use of “theory,” although theoretical assumptions (about scholarship, gender, class, race, etc.) are implicit.

What I wish to highlight is variety. In this work, I seek not to provide answers but rather to encourage questions and suggest a new way of interacting with these specific objects. So as to guide the discussion, I have grouped the objects thematically. My goal is not to force items into strict sets but to foster thought and to see the differences as important and special in their own right. Definitions and categories are not always useful, and perhaps say more about the society or culture providing the definition or category (e.g. what has been deemed an appropriate category) than about the object itself. Definitions can be so general as to be unhelpful (e.g. “courtly”) beyond a certain basic point.

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24 I acknowledge that there will be works that I could not possibly have known about due to the limitations of the sources available to me, or which I have overlooked.
26 This concept bears witness to my training as a librarian. When cataloging books multiple subject headings, metadata tags, and cross-references can be applied to a single item.
Many people of the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century were fascinated with the Gothic, and in particular, with ivory objects. Raymond Koechlin’s 1924 three-volume *Les ivoires gothiques français* laid the foundation for how the study of Gothic ivory would develop. Koechlin (1860-1931) was primarily a collector of Chinese, Japanese, Islamic, medieval, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, which he displayed in his Parisian apartment on the Boulevard Saint-Germain. He was a curator for the Louvre, to which much of his collection was bequeathed upon his death. He published widely on the arts he collected, but is best known for his work on French Gothic sculpture, especially ivories.

Museum catalogs of course existed before Koechlin’s study, such as the 1876 catalog of plaster casts of ivory objects in the South Kensington Museum (which would later become the Victoria & Albert Museum), and the detailed 1896 account of the ivory collection in the Louvre.

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28 Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothiques français*, 1924, the full text of Koechlin’s volumes I and II is available online via Gallica, the virtual library of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

by Émile Molinier (1857-1906).  

Prior to Koechlin’s 1924 oeuvre, however, no publications provided such a systematic or thorough approach, or, more importantly, included works from various collections.

Koechlin did not write about objects he considered uninteresting, or those he deemed of mediocre quality. Evidently, he found many ivory objects with secular themes fell into one or both of these categories. Consequently, he tended to disregard secular ivories or to dismiss them as curious later forgeries. I do not rely solely on Koechlin or his classifications: many of his observations on type and iconography still hold true, but as Danielle Gaborit-Chopin has pointed out, the groups he created are not reliable. Furthermore, the dates Koechlin provided for items were often incorrect because he assumed, mistakenly, that the “minor” arts, (small-scale sculpture, ivories, and the like), copied “major” works like architecture. Despite its flaws, his work remains the reference for the field, and provides a starting point for many scholars’ research, as it did for mine.

By the early twentieth century, major museums had inventories of their works in ivory, though few were published outside their home institutions prior to the twentieth century. As was noted earlier, the Louvre and South Kensington Museum were at the forefront of the trend. A contemporary of Koechlin’s, O.M. Dalton (1866-1945), published an inventory of ivory objects

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31 Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires médiévaux, 268.

32 It has even been claimed that he deliberately dismissed certain foreign objects, see ibid., 267.
in the British Museum in 1909, and followed it with a more extensive catalog in 1924. The first ivory catalogs for the Victoria & Albert Museum were written by the first female curator of a major British museum, Margaret Longhurst (1882-1958) in 1927. More recently, the Keeper Emeritus of the British Museum, Neil Stratford (1938- ) has written on ivories in that collection, yet not extensively on the secular. Other, smaller museums lagged in the publication of inventories of their ivory objects. The catalog of medieval sculptures, including ivory, at Luzern, was published in 1964. In 1977, a substantial tome on medieval ivory at the Louvre was published. The Director of the Musée de Cluny, Élisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, has catalogued the ivory collections of that institution, but is perhaps better known for her work on medieval enamels. Paul Williamson (1954- ) of the Victoria & Albert Museum has also cataloged many

small and private collections of ivories. After Koechlin set the example, later authors included ivory from multiple collections in their surveys, including Joseph Natanson who collated some pieces from worldwide public collections for his brief 1951 *Gothic Ivories of the 13th and 14th Centuries*, and Olivier Beigbeder, who in 1965 produced a comprehensive picture book on ivory, which included some secular Gothic pieces.

Koechlin’s work stood, and frankly still stands, as the resource for Gothic ivory studies, though some of his assumptions have been challenged, most notably by curator emerita from the Louvre, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin (1940- ). Beginning in the 1970s, Gaborit-Chopin confronted some of the accepted “facts” derived from Koechlin’s work, and was especially concerned with ivory fakes and forgeries. In the 1980s, she provided a chronological modification to

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Koechlin’s work, and proved Robinson’s assertion that the same ateliers were capable of producing objects on religious and profane subjects, such as rosette diptychs and Passion diptychs. Though Paris dominated the art and culture of the Gothic era, Gaborit-Chopin was instrumental in identifying other regional and foreign ateliers. She identified locations in the Rhineland, England, and Italy that, to a lesser extent, were major areas of ivory production during this period. Gaborit-Chopin’s study of inventories revealed the original existence and importance of polychromy on Gothic ivories, evidence of which had been all but demolished by harsh “cleaning” in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.


The 1970s and 1980s saw a few exhibitions in which secular medieval art was given attention equal to that of religious, but these are the exceptions to the rule.\textsuperscript{46} Lightbown’s now classic work on secular metalwork included art and craft of small-scale, and the author did not base his analysis of small works on architecture or monumental sculpture.\textsuperscript{47} However, as a whole, even into the 1980s, the standard arguments were reproduced and not discussed.\textsuperscript{48} Most of the scholarly work on secular objects of the Middle Ages has been on insignia, badges, and pilgrim souvenirs, owning a great debt to the work of Brian Spencer.\textsuperscript{49} The three recent Dutch volumes on badges and insignia are treated more archeologically than art historically.\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Showing Status} discussed badges, artistic status, and patronage, and the \textit{Gedenkschrift} for Brian Spencer included essays on amulets in addition to pilgrim souvenirs and secular badges.\textsuperscript{51}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{48} For example, Dieter Kimpel and Robert Suckale, \textit{L’architecture gothique en France: 1130-1270} (Paris: Flammarion, 1990), 258, fig. 262. This work was first published in German in 1985.
\end{thebibliography}
Materials, Methods, and Masterpieces of Medieval Art broadened the contents of “secular art” by including manuscript illumination, paintings on panel (as well as murals and frescoes), mosaic, carvings (ivory, metal, wood, and stone), enamel, stained glass, clothing, and armor.\(^\text{52}\)

Before the late 1970s, ivory was mostly studied in isolation. In 1979, Charles Little demonstrated that similarities could be identified between ivories and works in various other media and larger scale.\(^\text{53}\) Taking Little’s theory on the connection between ivory and other works of art further, Paul Williamson proposed in 1982 that ivory statuettes served as easily transported, three-dimensional records of the monumental sculpture of Paris.\(^\text{54}\) In her 1986 publication, Margaret Gibson studied the iconography of chivalric scenes on ivory boxes, determining that the castle imagery was based not on manuscript illuminations, but on literary descriptions.\(^\text{55}\) In the 1990s, Williamson studied Italian Gothic ivories in comparison to French productions; he pored over English church treasury inventories, and wrote a survey of European Gothic sculpture which included ivory objects.\(^\text{56}\)

In Gothic art historical scholarship, secular art tends to get less attention than its religious counterpart. This may be due to the early academic ideas about the Gothic. Marcel Aubert\(^\text{57}\) and


\(^{57}\) See Histoire et théorie du symbolisme religieux avant et depuis le christianisme, contenant: l’explication de tous les moyens symboliques employés dans l’art plastique, monumental ou décoratif chez les anciens et les modernes, avec les principes de leur application à toutes les parties de l’art chrétien, d’après la Bible, les artistes païens, les pères de l’église, les légendes et
Émile Mâle saw Gothic art as pure and chaste as opposed to Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, Jules Michelet, and Champfleury who “saw Gothic art as essentially democratic and lay-inspired.” The two ideas presented are that Gothic art contains warnings against sins or Gothic art contains anti-clerical satires. For example, the typical scholarly approach to the appearance of genitals in church decoration is to state that “impudent display of outsized, mutilated, or otherwise distorted breasts and genitals provides graphic evidence of the danger of sexual indulgence.”

Since most of the surviving Gothic ivory is religious in nature, it follows that most of the scholarship is devoted to these themes, but among the sea of publications on ivory Virgins and Christs there is an occasional article on secular objects. The earliest article I have been able to find was in Alfred Franck, *Ala Pratique du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance* (Paris: A. Franck, 1870), especially vol. III, chap. 11, “Des Obscoena,” 404-38.

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62 Michael Camille, “Dr. Witkowski’s Anus: French Doctors, German Homosexuals and the Obscene in Medieval Church Art,” in Medieval Obscenities (Woodbridge: York Medieval, 2006), 18; in this essay, Camille studied Witkowski’s (1844-1923) desire to uncover the hypocrisy of the church by revealing “overblown phalluses, trumpeting anuses and squirting breasts” ibid., 20.

locate that discussed secular Gothic ivory is dated 1851. In it, Kirkmann studied the apparel of knights, and included a drawing of a broken mirror case. The same mirror case was reproduced in a 1902 Society of Antiquaries of London publication. Before writing the ivory catalog for the British Museum, Dalton compared two Gothic era caskets and connected their imagery to romance literature in the Burlington Magazine in 1904. In 1919, R.S. Loomis studied siege imagery, including that on mirror cases. Marvin Chauncey Ross reproduced a quick study of a Walters mirror case with gift imagery (Figure 1) in 1939. In 1941, Thomas Cheney, of the Cleveland Museum of Art described an acquisition of a mirror case with a scene of chess players. He identified it with the romance of Huon de Bordeaux, and compared it both to monumental Gothic church decoration and a similar piece in the Louvre collection.

In 1943, Francis Robinson at the Detroit Institute of the Arts employed an examination of period costume to date a writing tablet with a scene of gift-giving. He noted that the craftsmen who created secular works “did not confine their efforts to one field alone, but that the same shop, if not the same men, manufactured religious images and secular objects,” and acknowledged that the subject matter of caskets, mirror cases, combs, and writing tablets was

65 Society of Antiquaries of London, “Carved Ivory Mirror Case of the 14th Century.”
66 One a composite ivory casket, with scenes from life of Aristotle, a joust, the Tristan story, the unicorn, a man and a hermit, and Lancelot, at the British Museum, and a later Embriachi casket (made of bone) with scenes from the story of Jason at the Victoria & Albert Museum, O.M. Dalton, “Two Mediaeval Caskets with Subjects from Romance,” The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs 5, no. 15 (June 1904): 299–309.
67 Loomis, “The Allegorical Siege in the Art of the Middle Ages”; see also his Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art.
69 No.42.136.137, Robinson, “Notes on a French Gothic Writing Tablet.”
70 Ibid., 86.
“almost always secular or profane, rarely religious or sacred: scenes of courtly love, allegorical subjects, scenes from the romances, amusements and sports.” These types of objects, according to Robinson, take inspiration from scenes of courtly love, and are often aligned with the poetry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.  

David Ross studied an ivory marriage casket in the Lord Gort collection and addressed the romance themes on it in 1948, comparing portions of the casket to other caskets as well as to scenes of couples on mirror cases. In 1951, Olivier Beigbeder published an article that connected castle of love imagery in various ivory objects. A short description of a newly acquired mirror case with a hunting scene was published by Harry Bober at the Fogg in 1952. Richard Randall, Jr. (1926-1997) first published on secular Gothic ivory in 1958, and used motifs he found there to identify the marginal decorations of game playing in the hours of Jeanne d’Évreux. The 1960s saw not one single work dedicated to a secular Gothic ivory object.

In 1972, an interesting master’s paper by Frederick Baekeland at New York University used Gothic ivory caskets to approach issues of courtly love. He pointed out possible relationships between the sides of the caskets and suggested that multiple stories on the same

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71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., 87.
76 Richard H. Randall Jr., “Frog in the Middle,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, 16, no. 10 (June 1958): 269–75, he discussed Koechlin’s nos.1171 (which was reused to create a casket, Ravenna, Museo Nazionale di Ravenna, no.1032), 1173 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, OA 2762), 1176 & 1177 (both now in unknown locations).
casket could be interpreted in multiple ways, adding layers to the potential meaning(s) of secular objects. In 1979, Laila Gross connected the imagery on a Gothic ivory casket with the literary work, *La Chastelaine de Vergi*.

That same year, William Wixom studied the imagery of the castle of love on an ivory casket. The 1980s and early 1990s saw an uptick in scholarship that addressed secular medieval ivory objects, such as games and game pieces, connections to literary stories, and format-focused studies.

In 1985, Randall wrote the catalog of the ivories in the Walters Gallery, and in 1993 produced a catalog of the Gothic ivories in American collections: *The Golden Age of Ivory.* Much of Randall’s writing on Gothic ivory focused on attribution; he classified ivory works by workshop and locale, using stylistic analysis, with particular focus on landscape and costume details. In his work on caskets, Randall attempted to make one-to-one comparisons, finding a

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82 Such as Gibson, “Through the Looking Glass.”
84 Randall Jr., *The Golden Age of Ivory*.
In his later career, he studied the relationships between secular imagery on ivory, romance literature, and manuscript illumination in the fourteenth century. Beginning in the 1990s, some authors addressed secular medieval ivory using more contextual and social-historical methodologies. In 1995, C. Jean Campbell studied the imagery of a casket of the prodigal son, and proposed that the carvers, themselves part of the courtly culture, drew parallels between their craft and prostitution. In his 1998 book on medieval love imagery, Michael Camille provided examples of the iconography of love, lovers, and sex in many media, including four ivory mirror cases. Recent years have seen further scholarly works on Gothic ivories, though treatment of the secular continues to be given less attention.

The 1997 exhibition and accompanying catalog *Images in Ivory*, organized by Peter Barnet, was the first to present an introduction to and analysis of the history of scholarship on Gothic ivory carving. It also included several innovative essays that offered alternatives to the methods and findings of Koechlin. This exhibition and its catalog did follow Koechlin’s bias, to the extent that the majority of objects included were French, though Little himself contributed an article on the workshop of Cologne. Also covered by the essays were such topics as the prevalence of polychromy, the guilds of ivory carvers, stylistic similarities between sculpture

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87 Randall Jr., “Medieval Ivories in the Romance Tradition”; Randall Jr., “Games on a Medieval Ivory.”
88 Campbell, “Courting, Harlotry and the Art of Gothic Ivory Carving.”
89 Camille, *The Medieval Art of Love.*
90 Barnet, *Images in Ivory*; the exhibition traveled from Detroit to Baltimore.
in a variety of media and various scales,94 games and romance scenes,95 and a discussion of how users might have read the new formats.96

Among the exhibitions that preceded to *Images in Ivory* that contained (but were not limited to) secular Gothic ivory include: a 1928 exhibition of French Gothic objects in Detroit,97 a 1954 British Museum exhibition of ivory,98 a 1976 exhibition of French Gothic ivory in Milan,99 a 1977 show at Brown University documenting changes in the styles at court,100 *Ivory Microcosm* in 1981 at the Schnütgen Museum,101 and a show on Gothic ivory and Limoges enamels in 1981 in Naples.102

The same year as *Images in Ivory*, an essay by Chad Coerver appeared in a book on women and art in the renaissance, which included references to secular ivory objects as gifts to mistresses, and noted the effects of Arthurian prose, courtly love, and chivalric culture on the

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93 Sears, “Ivory and Ivory Workers in Medieval Paris.”
95 Randall Jr., “Popular Romances Carved in Ivory.”
100 Brown University. Dept. of Art and Rhode Island School of Design., *Transformations of the Court Style: Gothic Art in Europe, 1270 to 1330: An Exhibition by the Department of Art, Brown University at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island, February 2 Through February 27, 1977.* ([Providence, R.I.]: The Department, 1977).
patriarchal, militaristic society of Northern Italy.\textsuperscript{103} Coerver’s essay also connected the exchange of the body of the mistress with the economic tension at the time. At the Thirty-Second International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, also in 1997, Brigitte Buettner gave a talk on Gothic ivory mirror cases and their relationship to love and ritual exchange.\textsuperscript{104} Romance subjects, such as Tristan and Yseult\textsuperscript{105} and Perceval,\textsuperscript{106} which appear on Gothic ivory mirror cases and caskets, were also treated at conferences in 1997 and 1998. The late 1990s saw a renewed interest in the study of ivory, and Gothic ivory in particular, thanks chiefly to the exhibit and accompanying catalog.

There were also many scholarly responses to \textit{Images in Ivory}, some in the form of new or updated catalogs and/or inventories.\textsuperscript{107} In 2008, the Gothic Ivories Project at The Courtauld

\textsuperscript{103} Chad Coerver, “Donna/Dono: Chivalry and Adulterous Exchange in the Quattrocento,” in \textit{Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 196–221.
\textsuperscript{104} Buettner, “Circular Arguments”, I am indebted to Dr. Buettner for providing me with a copy of her unpublished paper.
\textsuperscript{107} For example, the catalog of the Museo statale di Mileto added ivory objects in 2002, Rosanna Caputo et al., \textit{Il Museo statale di Mileto} (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2002); the Werner collection catalog was published in 2002, Williamson, “Medieval Ivory Carvings in the Wernher Collection”; the Museum of Scotland produced a catalog of ivory objects (which also included metalwork) in 2003, Virginia Glenn, \textit{Romanesque & Gothic Decorative Metalwork and Ivory Carvings in the Museum of Scotland} (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 2003); Gaborit-Chopin revamped her 1977 catalog of ivory at the Louvre in 2003, \textit{Ivoires médiévaux}, she added more information on polychromy and many more images; an inventory of the plaster casts at the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum was published in 2006, Matthias Weniger, Birgitta Heid, and Lorenz Seelig, “Gipsabgüsse,” in \textit{Das Bayerische Nationalmuseum 1855-2005: 150 Jahre Sammeln, Forschen, Ausstellen} (München: Hirmer Verlag, 2006), 237–50; this work follows in the tradition of fictive catalogs, such as Westwood, \textit{Fictile Ivories in the South Kensington Museum}; the guidebook of the Museo civico, Fucecchio included Gothic ivory in the
Institute of Art, London, an aggregation of images and details on ivory in collections worldwide, was first made available online. Though it began rather humbly, it is now a very robust database.

In a 2006 article, Ulrike Koenen questioned relying on the stylistic analysis of Gothic ivory alone. She argued that material and scientific analysis must accompany stylistic analysis and that scholars must make use of the knowledge about the tools and techniques used to make the objects as well as the functions of the objects in order to create a better understanding of the medium.

In a brief article in 2011, Anthony Cutler discussed the creation of medieval and modern ivory objects, and advised scholars to consider the techniques the ivory carvers employed to...
create such works. In 2010, Sarah M. Guérin published a study of how ivory came to northern Europe in the Gothic period, and concluded that it traveled through the Straits of Gibraltar. In her recent articles, Guérin has extended her study to religious ivory objects, and suggested attributions for some ivory Virgins and described the use of ivory tabernacles.

After Images in Ivory, there was an increase in publications on ivory itself but especially pertinent to this study is the increase in publications related to ivories with “romance” topics. In 2003, Susan Smith reflected on the possible reception of imagery of courtship on secular Gothic ivories owned by wealthy women. She pointed out the various visual metaphors of courtship, such as the hunt and contest, as well as their literary parallels. She also observed that the lowered gazes of most of the woman pictured in ivory followed the contemporary guidelines of chastity, and pointed out some of the more assertive and active looks as well. In 2008, in an important study of the imagery of the attack on the castle and the history of tournaments, Elizabeth L’Estrange provided a more compelling and positive interpretation of the female gaze in medieval art, especially as it pertains to secular Gothic ivory.

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114 Elizabeth L’Estrange, “Gazing at Gawain: Reconsidering Tournaments, Courtly Love, and the Lady Who Looks,” Medieval Feminist Forum 44, no. 2 (December 1, 2008): 74–96, her examples included caskets, combs, and mirrors. She also pointed out that Mulvey herself said her theory does not really apply in pre-modern contexts.
In a paper published in 2011, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, Curator emerita from the Louvre, acknowledged that: “In the history of Gothic art, ivory carving forms an important chapter, even if its place is sometimes insignificant” and went on to note that the secular objects “are some of the most attractive works of the whole Gothic period.”\footnote{Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, “Gothic Ivories: Realities and Prospects,” in \textit{Gothic Art & Thought in the Later Medieval Period: Essays in Honor of Willibald Sauerländer}, ed. Colum Hourihane (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 157.} In this essay, she pointed out both the thoroughness and the limitations of Koechlin’s work. She noted that in recent years, the secular works (as well as forgeries and imitations) have “received considerable attention.”\footnote{Ibid., 160.} The bulk of Gaborit-Chopin’s discussion, however, focused on works of religious subject, identifying workshops, and issues with dating. She reiterated that some secular ivory objects could also have been made by the highly talented creators of religious ivory objects.\footnote{Ibid., 171–3.} Gaborit-Chopin asserted that “it is time to reconsider secular Gothic ivories” and reminded her readers that the secular objects “are certainly not inferior to their religious counterparts.”\footnote{Ibid., 174.} She concluded by calling for a reconsideration of the chronology of secular ivories, and a plea “that they no longer be considered as minor or merely precious items […] as they are […] one of the most attractive and potentially revealing faces of Gothic art.”\footnote{Ibid., 175.}

Literary and iconographic sources of themes on Gothic ivory mirror cases were discussed by Lylan Lam in 2011. She traced the origin of mirrors, particularly of ivory, as appropriate gifts for courtly ladies to the anonymous late thirteenth-century translations of Ovid’s \textit{Ars Amatoria},
and traced ideas relating love and ivory back to antiquity.\textsuperscript{120} Lam noted that Jean de Meun, Andreas Capellanus, and Eustache Deschampes also recommended mirrors as suitable gifts for lovers, and related it to the romantic imagery they often contain.\textsuperscript{121} She also examined the game of chess as well as the frequent occurrence of birds, dogs, and rabbits on the secular mirror cases, relating these motifs to romantic themes in literary works.\textsuperscript{122}

Paula Mae Shoppe (now Carns), in her dissertation in 2000 and subsequent articles, approached Gothic ivory caskets iconographically, focusing on workshops and individual casket-makers, while pursuing an analysis of their visual narratives.\textsuperscript{123} Shoppe suggested that the carvers invented “pseudo-narratives”, making new associations from stock images, questioned the assumption that they took their inspiration from manuscripts,\textsuperscript{124} and pointed out how the workshops for a variety of media in Paris were located in close proximity to one another, so could easily have seen each other’s work.\textsuperscript{125} This proximity probably also extended to the carvers’ collaboration with painters, who added paint to and gilded the ivory objects.\textsuperscript{126} Carns also noted that secular ivory work typically appears in catalogs as representations of daily life.

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\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 298–9.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 307–10.
\textsuperscript{124} This was stated in Koechlin, \textit{Les ivoires gothiques français}, 1924, v. II, 27, and maintained by many others.
\textsuperscript{125} Shoppe, “Reading Romances,” 34.
\end{flushright}
and to demonstrate the association of secular art with courtly literature. Carns questioned the scholarly assumption that the imagery on these objects faithfully reproduced their source texts, and argued instead that the decorations on the ivory caskets represented contemporary responses to the literature, being, in fact, the sculptural equivalent of the literary tradition of *compilatio* (groupings of related stories). Her study follows in the tradition of David Ross, who in 1948 claimed composite caskets group together images or scenes from one story or a group of related stories. Unfortunately, Carns ultimately falls into same trap as previous authors: when she cannot identify an object with a specific narrative, she calls the imagery “pseudo-narrative.” The images themselves cannot, in her mind, stand alone. They must be related to stories or parts of stories. She perpetrates the broad generalization that all secular Gothic ivory imagery was drawn from popular literature and that all imagery must correspond to some kind of narrative. Dismayingly, in reference to mirror-backs and tablets, she claims they are too small to “permit exhibition of full visual narratives,” and that they display “only isolated motifs.” In an essay published in a book on medieval clothing in 2009, Carns looked closely at the fashion represented on secular Parisian Gothic ivory. She discussed the connection between *ars*

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128 Ross, “Allegory and Romance on a Mediaeval French Marriage Casket.”
129 Carns, “Having the Last Laugh.”
130 Shoppe, “Reading Romances,” 15.
131 Paula Mae Carns, “Cutting a Fine Figure: Costume on Gothic Ivories,” in *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, vol. 5 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), 55–92, she again separates the objects into “narrative” and “non-narrative” groupings.
memoria and the reception of an ivory box in the Toledo Museum of Art in an article in 2011, concluding that this lovers’ gift urged its recipient to remember.\textsuperscript{132}

If we simply look at the session titles from the 2010 International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, we can see that smallness\textsuperscript{133} and the senses (including touch)\textsuperscript{134} are of interest to current scholars of medieval art and history. Though ivory objects have been discussed in this context, the discussion has not been directed, as of yet, to secular Gothic ivory objects.\textsuperscript{135} There is even a “Society of Smallness” (founded in 2012) that produces online exhibits focusing on small objects, one of the earliest was dedicated to pilgrimage souvenirs.\textsuperscript{136} More recently, the Art History and Archaeology Graduate Student Association at the University of Missouri chose smallness as the theme for their annual symposium in 2014.\textsuperscript{137}

Of particular import to the present study was the conference, *Gothic Ivory Sculpture: Old Questions, New Directions* was a conference held at the Victoria & Albert Museum and The Courtauld Institute of Art in London from March 23-24, 2012. At this, the first international conference...
conference devoted exclusively to Gothic ivory carving, both established experts and new scholars presented papers, addressing a wide variety of topics. Most notable were the always complicated matters of authenticity, restoration, and forgery. Naturally, most of the presentations addressed objects with religious themes. One session was devoted to secular objects, and contained two talks. The first was a paper on “romance” ivory, presented by Xavier Dectot, who discussed the recent acquisition of a casket by the Musée de Cluny, which had been unknown to Koechlin (Cl. 23840). Dectot argued that ivory caskets with scenes from Arthurian and ancient romances had been produced for about twenty-five years by various workshops. He surveyed the iconography and structure of this group, paying particular attention to the scene of the Attack of the Castle of Love often found on the lids.

Over the past year or so, the intellectual discourse on Gothic ivory has continued to grow. In November of 2013, the complete catalog of the medieval and later ivories in the Gambier Parry collection at the Courtauld Gallery was published. In addition to essays, catalog entries, and stylistic analysis of the objects by John Lowden, Dr. Alexandra Gerstein introduced the reader to the Victorian collector and Gothic Revival artist Thomas Gambier Parry (d.1888), whose collection included twenty-eight medieval and renaissance ivories, both secular and religious, which remained largely unknown until this publication. A special issue of The Sculpture Journal, specifically dedicated to Gothic ivory, was published in March 2014, and

139 John Lowden, Medieval and Later Ivories in the Courtauld Gallery: The Gambier Parry Collection (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2013), Lowden mentions some evidence of rubbing and kissing on some of the religious objects discussed in this catalog (see, especially cat. 6 [Virgin and Child, 0.1966.GP.3], 7 [Trinity in a quatrefoil, 0.1966.GP.2] and 13 [Nativity and Adoration of the Magi, 0.1966.GP.20]. My thanks go to Anthony Cutler for encouraging me to point this out.
made available online at the end of May. Some of the papers, taken from a 2012 conference, *Gothic Ivory Sculpture: Old Questions, New Directions*, were included. In the introduction, Glyn Davies and Sarah Guérin provided an overview of the current state of research in various areas. Charles Little discussed the re-evaluation of previously dismissed works, championing the use of radiocarbon analysis coupled with stylistic, iconographic, and heraldic research. Gothic ivory carvings from medieval Denmark, especially those featuring Christ, were discussed by Ebbe Nyborg. Adam Levine addressed carving techniques, and suggested the ways “leftover” materials were used to assemble compositions for diptychs, triptychs, and polychytabernacles. Caskets with the story of Tristan the Fool were discussed by Paula Mae Carns. Medieval ivory carvings from Wales, especially of the Crucifixion, were described by Mark Redknap, who also included information gleaned from archaeological research. Emile van Binnebeke presented a study of the history of plaster casts of ivory at the Royal Museums for Art and History in Brussels, and suggested that the Belgian government was involved in the collection plan. Naomi Speakman provided an overview of the history of the British

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Museum’s collection of Gothic ivory carvings.¹⁴⁷ A methodology for analyzing the polychromy of medieval ivory was laid out by Christina Kowalski.¹⁴⁸ The Gothic Ivories Project website, run by the Courtauld Institute, was reviewed by Catherine Yvard.¹⁴⁹ In June 2014, the second volume of the survey of the Ashmolean’s collection of European sculpture, which focuses on stone, clay, ivory, bone, and wood from 1200 to about 1540, was published.¹⁵⁰ This thoroughly illustrated catalog focuses on the history of the collection and those who collected it, and tracing provenance seems to be the goal of the publication. In July of 2014, the conference Gothic Ivories: Content and Context, organized by the British Museum and the Courtauld Gothic Ivories Project took place in London. The conference covered topics such as iconography, sources, original use, provenance, relationships with other media, and the history of collecting. Most talks focused on religious Gothic ivory objects, such as Virgins, Madonnas, Christ on the Cross, and his descent. Also covered were objects by the Embriachi and other workshops, and the relationship of some tomb sculpture and book arts with Gothic ivory. The proceedings are not yet available.

The Gothic Ivories: Content and Context conference heralded the publication of a new catalogue of the Gothic ivories at the Victoria & Albert Museum by Paul Williamson and Glyn

Davies, due out in September.\textsuperscript{151} This two-volume set advertises that it will survey the Victoria & Albert Museum’s collection of ivory carvings from 1200 to 1550, a feat not attempted in nearly a century. The majority of the collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum is religious in subject, so we can expect new analysis many statuettes of the Virgin and/or Christ, croziers, diptychs, triptychs, tabernacles, and caskets. The secular objects should include writing tablets and mirror backs as well as Embriachi workshop objects. Another work worth noting is the forthcoming publication, \textit{Worlds Within: Opening the Medieval Shrine Madonna}, by Elina Gertsman, due out in 2015.\textsuperscript{152} Gertsman studies the polychromed wood or ivory Shrine Madonnas, or \textit{Vierges ouvrantes}: display- or personal-sized sculptures which open to reveal scenes representing complex theological concepts. She approaches the user’s expected interactions with these devotional objects in a way that relies on the roles of the senses, especially sight and touch, in conjunction with the formation of memory in the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries. The way beholders would have manipulated these devotional objects, touching their surfaces as well as their interiors, closely relates to the touches users would have performed on the secular Gothic ivory objects under discussion in this dissertation.


Chapter 2: Gothic Life and Thought

“Gothic” was the pejorative label given by renaissance humanists denoting the fondness for fantasies, drolleries, and grotesques evident in the art and architecture of the late twelfth century onward.\textsuperscript{153} The dominating force remained the Christian church, and much money was spent on church decoration, from architectural elements like sculpted capitals and reliefs to liturgical objects, in a variety of materials such as boxwood, metal work, gold work, precious stones, and ivory.\textsuperscript{154} The era brought with it momentous changes: political, economic, intellectual, and social. The bourgeois and mercantile classes increased in size and prominence, a circumstance which fostered the emergence of ever-larger and more complex urban cities. It was during this time that the major universities of Europe were founded; in fact the universities of Bologna, Paris, and Oxford came out of the mercantile guilds.\textsuperscript{155} Learning moved from the monasteries into these new urban universities.

Theology shaped life in the Middle Ages, and theologians were influenced greatly by the Church councils and popes. The rulings of the church in the Middle Ages had widespread influence, affecting the thinking of theologians as well as the way artists approached the creation

\textsuperscript{153} Robert G. Calkins, \textit{A Medieval Treasury: An Exhibition of Medieval Art from the Third to the Sixteenth Century} (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1968), 7; the end of the Gothic period is unclear, as it often coexists with the beginning of the Renaissance (for example, in Italy, the Renaissance and Gothic styles coexist for the first third of the fifteenth century, in France, Renaissance style takes over about 1450 (with Fouquet), and in Germany, the transition is closer to the beginning of the sixteenth century (with Dürer).

\textsuperscript{154} For a study of church ownership of secular objects, see David Ebitz, “Secular to Sacred: The Transformation of an Oliphant in the Musée de Cluny,” \textit{Gesta} 25, no. 1 Essays in Honor of Whitney Snow Stoddard (1986): 31–38; the expenditure on decorating the church was recognized as excessive by contemporary people. For example, Bernard said the money would be better spent on the poor; for the complete text, see G.G. Coulton, \textit{Life in the Middle Ages} (New York: Macmillan, 1930), Book IV: Monks, Friars and Nuns, 72–6.

of sacred images and objects.  

It was during the Gothic period that the prevailing theory of how vision functioned shifted from that of extramission to intromission. The active agent was no longer the eye but the object. The early extramission theory was based on Neoplatonic authors and St. Augustine, and suggested that rays emanated from the eye as well as the seen object and together created vision. Avicenna embraced the intromission theory, which included emphasis on the body and soul, and argued for a more passive or receptive eye. Earli er medieval thinking and art production relied on the concept of extramission, in which the creation of an accurate likeness held less importance as the object was essentially produced by the gaze. The intromission theory removed the emphasis from vision and placed it in the object or image itself, allowing the eyes of the statue or painting to return the viewer’s gaze.

This conceptual move towards the object being more powerful and having agency relates to the increased emphasis on individual contemplation, especially on the bodily and human experiences of Christ, which manifested as the Man of Sorrows type, and put emphasis on the smallness and un-heroic body of man. The new understanding of sight as object-centered also

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157 For ancient, Arabic, and medieval accounts of extramission v. intromission, see David C. Lindberg, Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 51–2, 136–49; Camille, “Before the Gaze,” 204–5, outlines this change from extramission to intromission.

158 Camille, “Before the Gaze,” 207.

played a part in the lay and monastic devotions. The new idea about sight also allowed for new ideas about desire and love. The ideal of longing takes center stage in the romance literature of the time. Secular artworks, such as ivory objects and tapestries, also focused on love in this era.  

The senses as a whole have rarely been discussed in medieval studies. In fact, in the rare case that a connection between the senses and art is brought up, authors cite Abbot Suger’s *De administratione*, XXVII: “The dull mind rises to truth, through that which is material/And in seeing this light, is resurrected from its former submersion.” The theme of vision has a

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Camille, “Before the Gaze,” 208, Camille makes the connection between the new theory of vision and the new types of literature and art gaining popularity; for vision and love, see Ruth H. Cline, “Heart and Eyes,” *Romance Philology* 25, no. 3 (February 1972): 263–97; for the impact of these theories upon Gothic secular art, see Camille, *The Medieval Art of Love*, 27–49.


A sampling of works highlighting vision in the Middle Ages: Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998); Herbert L. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God’s Invisibility in*
privileged\textsuperscript{164} status in research and discussions about medieval art and receives the lion’s share of the sensory scholarship on the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{165} There have been a few studies focused on the theories of how touch functions,\textsuperscript{166} the nature of touch,\textsuperscript{167} as well as the cognitive approaches to touch,\textsuperscript{168} but this handful of essays is lost amidst the overwhelming sea of literature focused on vision. The major problem with the art historical reliance on reception theory is that it assumes

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\item\textsuperscript{164} For more on the privileging of vision, see Jay, \textit{Downcast Eyes}; some anthropologists and cultural critics who have examined “oculocentrism” include David Howes, ed., \textit{The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); and Constance Classen, \textit{Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures} (New York: Routledge, 1993).
\item\textsuperscript{168} See Ursula Schoenheim, “The Place of Touch in Epicurus and Lucretius” (M.A., Cornell University, 1956); as well as the essays collected in William Schiff, \textit{Tactual Perception: A Sourcebook} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
\end{enumerate}
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the primacy of vision in the experience of artwork. Though the eyes of the creator and beholder would have clearly been involved in the apprehension and enjoyment of secular Gothic ivory, it is also important to note that the vision-centric model negates the possibility of anything other than ocular interpretations. Touch must be considered in tandem with sight.

The history of the relationship between language and touch is long. Not only are there numerous tactile forms of expression in English, but “touch” is one of the longest entries in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In fact, functions of the brain, including vision, were described in tactile ways, for example, the metaphor of pressing or stamping described both how images were perceived and how memories were made. Describing memories as forming like impression in wax has been traced to Aristotle, who said “as wax receives the imprint of the ring without the

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iron or gold, and it takes the imprint which is of gold or bronze, but not *qua* gold or bronze.”

Arabic and other Western philosophers also used the metaphor. Later, Thomas Aquinas employed Aristotle’s metaphor of wax to describe the eye transferring a likeness to the brain: “For the wax takes a likeness of the gold seal in respect of the image, but not in respect of the seal’s intrinsic disposition to be a gold seal.” Wax seals were, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, an important medium of self-representation.

David Howes, and before him, Constance Classen, make it clear that many English terms for thought have tactile origins. These tactile terms for knowing include words like apprehend (from the Latin *apprehendere*, to grasp), conceive (from the Latin *concipere*, to take fully or take in), grasp (as with the hands), and ponder (from the Latin *ponderare* to weigh). According to Classen’s study of the vocabulary for intelligence, in the period before the Enlightenment there was a tactile definition of intellect. In fact, touch-based words such as “acumen,” “acute,” “keen,” “sharp,” “clever,” and “penetrating” consistently outnumbered sight-based words such as “wise,” “bright,” “brilliant,” and “lucid” in the literature. Robin Dunbar states that language has at its root vocal grooming, as primates began speaking in order to remain connected to

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176 David Howes, “Nose-Wise: Olfactory Metaphors in Mind,” in *Olfaction, Taste, and Cognition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 70; for a more thorough discussion of what Howes calls the “study of the sensory etymology of […] English words for cognitive operations,” ibid., 69; see Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, who demonstrates that many words now associated with “lower”/’animalistic’ senses were once associated with the intellect.
177 Howes, “Nose-Wise,” 70.
growing communities, so touches became words in order to maintain relationships.\textsuperscript{178} The evolutionist Ashley Montagu says that touch communicates honestly what cannot be spoken.\textsuperscript{179} Humans have a need and desire for sincerity that can often only be achieved through touch: when at the point of greatest intensity in our relationships, we do not speak but touch.\textsuperscript{180}

Despite its established position as the lowest of the senses in the philosophical hierarchy, touch was one of the most important forms of sensory experience in everyday life in the Middle Ages. In fact, philosophers and scientists have alleged that touch is fundamental to all sensation.\textsuperscript{181} According to the French philosopher and phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, each sense contributes to the production of an individual’s or culture’s sensory world. Sensuous encounters are produced and structured by their social and cultural contexts as well as by the environments in which the encounters take place.\textsuperscript{182} Merleau-Ponty has been influential in phenomenology and to many scholars in anthropology, archeology, and art history, who have renewed the interest in phenomenology, and have based their research on his. Merleau-Ponty claims the body plays a central role in how we perceive the world, as it acts both as object and subject. He addresses perception and the body’s relationship to itself as early as the 1940s, stressing that the object (mind) and subject (body) cannot be separated.\textsuperscript{183}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{180} Perricone, “The Place of Touch in the Arts,” 100; see Dunbar, \textit{Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language}, 148.
\bibitem{181} Perricone, “The Place of Touch in the Arts,” 92, traces this thought as far back as Lucretius.
\bibitem{183} Maurice Merleau-Ponty, \textit{Phénoménologie de la perception} (Paris: Gallimard, 1945); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, \textit{The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes}, ed. Claude Lefort
\end{thebibliography}
Building on the work of Merleau-Ponty, other theorists have approached the concept of touch. Michel Foucault’s studies of cultural and societal institutions have had a major impact on subsequent studies of the body.\(^{184}\) He criticized the “ocularcentric assumptions of western culture,” in the process, considering touch parenthetically.\(^ {185}\) Psychoanalytic theorist, Didier Anzieu, describes a thermal and tactual unconscious.\(^ {186}\) Julia Kristeva, a psychoanalytic and feminist theorist, has presented ideas about the body, most specifically the body of the mother.\(^ {187}\) Another psychoanalytic and feminist theorist, Luce Irigaray suggests touch as an alternative to the patriarchal implications of giving primacy to the visual in art.\(^ {188}\) Martin Jay has also written about the ocularcentric tendencies of generations of historians.\(^ {189}\) Post-structuralist theorists


\(^ {185}\) Johnson, “Touch,” 62.  

\(^ {186}\) Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, explains the skin-ego as an intermediate between metaphor and concept: a child forms a mental representation based on tactile experiences and uses that to picture itself as a container for mental processes. The ego encloses the psyche in the same way that the skin encloses the body.  

\(^ {187}\) Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980). Kristeva uses the term “semiotic” to refer to the emotional pre-Oedipal stage, which is tied to instinct and focuses on the senses.  

\(^ {188}\) Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), Irigaray’s theories on touch focus on the child’s pre-Oedipal stage of development (also referred to in Freud), when experience and knowledge are based on bodily contact, primarily with the mother; Johnson, “Touch,” 62, notes this; for a more thorough study of touch and the work of some of these theorists, see Cathryn Vasseleu, *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas, and Merleau-Ponty* (New York: Routledge, 1998).  

\(^ {189}\) Jay, *Downcast Eyes*. 
Gilles Deleuze and Jean-François Lyotard have struggled with questions of the body and its relationships to the world, the mind, and consciousness. Jean-Luc Nancy writes on the experience of togetherness in the world. Elizabeth Grosz has provided interpretations of many of the afore-mentioned philosophers of the body, and her work continues to focus on questions of corporeality. Furthermore, some anthropologists, behavioral psychologists, and developmental biologists have privileged senses other than vision in their research. These theorists have questioned the hierarchical ordering of the senses and the philosophical and cultural consequences of that order. My study attempts to draw and expand upon this rich background. Even in recent discussions about the perception and the senses, touch is often neglected. Other than Irigaray, very few scholars in any subject or era have approached touch

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191 Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). Lyotard argues that the libido drives the economy, and in turn, the passions and senses are steeped in the political.


196 In Stephen G. Nichols, Andreas Kablitz, and Alison Calhoun, eds., *Rethinking the Medieval Senses: Heritage, Fascinations, Frames* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), the discussions are far from equal for each sense, as the text has a strong focus on vision, with numerous chapters devoting to looking, while touch receives a mere three pages of attention (279-81); similarly, in David Summers, *The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the*
as a way of experiencing art, and yet touch is essential to the production and creation of art, as through it we can learn about ourselves, one another, and our relevance in the world.\textsuperscript{197}

Ashley Montagu claims that the skin is the most important system after the brain.\textsuperscript{198} The skin is the largest sensory organ and touch is developed embryonically first in humans: in fact, an embryo under an inch long will respond to touch.\textsuperscript{199} The hand produces as well as touches and is touched by objects. The plethora of loci for touch allows for variety in philosophical discussion as well as artistic representations of the sense. The conceptual history of touch is partly the root of the present state of its marginality in scholarship. Every organ can touch, only specific ones perform the other senses.

Three-dimensional objects such as those under consideration here, in addition to a visual reception, also have a tactile reception. This simple fact seems to remain greatly neglected in art historical scholarship as a whole, and this is especially true when it comes to Gothic ivories with secular subject. Scholars have written about how devotees had the desire to touch and imagined touching religious objects, and this same approach could be taken with the secular.\textsuperscript{200} Touch was indeed an important way for beholders to negotiate encounters with three-dimensional art objects, and yet few scholars have explored the tactile reception of sculpture by early modern audiences.\textsuperscript{201}

\textit{Rise of Aesthetics} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), not a single chapter is devoted to touch.
\textsuperscript{197} Perricone, “The Place of Touch in the Arts,” 101.
\textsuperscript{198} Montagu, \textit{Touching}, 4; quoted in Perricone, “The Place of Touch in the Arts,” 93.
\textsuperscript{199} Montagu, \textit{Touching}, 4.
\textsuperscript{201} Johnson, “Touch,” 61.
There has been a systematic academic denigration of the sense of touch, although it is a major factor in life, and often recognized as the first way humans learn about the world. Touch is a frequent accompaniment and counterpart to sight in literature. Tactility is traditionally what separates sculpture from painting; an example of this would be the paragone discussions in the renaissance. In fact, modern sculptors continue to promote tactility in their work.

There were long-standing religious practices that involved sculptures intended to be manipulated, and the medieval beholder’s impulse to touch was encouraged and reinforced by the implied tactility of large-scale works. These practices grew out of a pre-medieval tradition of touching sculpture. Cicero described a statue of Hercules whose chin and mouth were worn away from being kissed at feast days, framing touch as both sexual and destructive:

There is a temple of Hercules at Agrigentum, not far from the forum, considered very holy and greatly reverenced among the citizens. In it there is a brazen image of Hercules himself, than which I cannot easily tell where I have seen anything finer; (although I am not very much of a judge of those matters, though I have seen plenty of specimens;) so greatly venerated among them, O judges, that his mouth and his chin are a little worn away, because men in addressing their

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203 For example the works of Louise Bourgeois, Judy Chicago, Pablo Picasso, Jasper Johns, Eva Hesse, Joseph Beuys, and Claes Oldenburg, to name a few. For a discussion of the way touch is approached in the works of some of these artists, see Alex Potts, “Tactility: The Interrogation of Medium in Art of the 1960s,” *Art History* 27, no. 2 (April 2004): 286–91.

204 Johnson, “Touch,” 68; anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, in a letter to Meyer Schapiro, dated to the 1950s, discussed the power of imagined touch: “what is seen and touched is always made part of ourselves more intensely and more meaningfully that what is only seen ... [a] picture we only see but cannot, in imagination, touch, does not carry the same attraction and concentration of interest as the one we can, imaginatively, handle and touch as well as see,” Montagu, *Touching*, 236–7.
prayers and congratulations to him, are accustomed not only to worship the statue, but even to kiss it.\footnote{Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, trans. C.D. Yonge (London: George Bell & Sons, 1903), Against Verres, 2.4, 94; see also Paola Barocchi, ed., *Scritti d’arte del cinquecento* (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi, 1971), vols. I, 639.}


Touching makes the experience of art more real. To summarize Bernard Berenson, without a sense of touch, art has no grip on the world, no place from which imagination can grow.\footnote{Bernard Berenson, *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (Oxford: University Press, 1930), 330; what Berenson says here is strikingly similar to George Santayana’s idea of piety; see} A recent article by Christopher Perricone is a reinvestigation of Berenson’s idea of
“tactile values,” adding to it some of the more recent concepts about touch from psychology and biology. Perricone argues that in the arts, touch is the “bass line” to the “melody” of sight and hearing, that touch keeps the artwork accessible.\textsuperscript{209}

Touch is a fundamental part of our everyday experience as humans. This fact is equally as true for the Middle Ages as it is for today, and yet scholars have routinely omitted it from discussions of our interactions with art. The relationship between the human body and pieces of art like secular Gothic ivories has changed over the centuries to where we now hide behind glass things that were meant to be enjoyed digitally and tactilely. Perhaps removing these objects from a world where they were held and caressed daily and placing them in the safety of the “Do Not Touch”\textsuperscript{210} environment of the museum has allowed us (as scholars) to forget that in their original incarnation these objects were intended to be touched and handled. Modern museums are an eighteenth and nineteenth century development,\textsuperscript{211} a place where tactile enjoyment is prohibited and closely monitored, where small sculptures are immobilized and “viewers were constantly

\textsuperscript{209} Perricone, “The Place of Touch in the Arts,” 91.
\textsuperscript{210} Frances W. Herring, “Touch: The Neglected Sense,” \textit{The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism} 7, no. 3 (March 1949): 200, 206–7, also notes this. Of course, curatorially and from a preservation standpoint, I can appreciate the admonition to refrain from touching the objects, but in our quest to preserve cultural heritage, I believe we have done a great disservice to the object and its potential audiences.
\textsuperscript{211} Note that the modern museum is a vastly different concept from the wunderkammern, which were places to touch and enjoy handling curiosities, see Richard Ross, \textit{Museology} (New York: Aperture, 1989); Peter Vergo, ed., \textit{The New Museology} (London: Reaktion Books, 1989); Gaynor Kavanagh, ed., \textit{Making Histories in Museums} (New York: Leicester University Press, 1996); Andrea Witcomb, \textit{Re-Imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum}, Museum Meanings (New York: Routledge, 2003); Andrew Dewdney, \textit{Post Critical Museology: Theory and Practice in the Art Museum} (New York: Routledge, 2013).
reminded to keep their hands to themselves." It is altogether possible that because we as viewers (and not beholders) of these objects in museum cases and displays are discouraged from touching we have collectively forgotten that this was not the case of their original owners. Museums are implicated in the primacy of vision, and the experience they create is false. Few scholars have voiced concern about the draining of meaning from objects when placed in a sterile museum setting. Even the visual experience which formerly would have involved light and change is merely approximated/replaced with a static spotlight. We need simply to look at the objects themselves to notice that in most cases there is evidence of the surfaces of these objects having been repeatedly rubbed and handled. Secular Gothic ivory sculpture was – and still asks to be – touched. Ivory gains in tactile appeal as it is touched. Years of touching create a gleam that cannot be duplicated or manufactured by anything but touch over time. W.R. Valentiner, speaking of the importance of touch in creating and appreciating art, says that just looking at pieces coldly displayed in cases does not allow for an accurate recognition of the


213 “By treating [an object] as art, confining it to a glass-cage museum display, subjecting it to uniform and steady electric lighting, the icon has been deprived of life – its surface, dead,” Pentcheva, “The Performatve Icon,” 631.

214 “A person’s approach, movement, and breath disrupt the lights of the candles and oil lamps, making them flicker and oscillate on the surface of the icon. This glimmer of reflected rays is enhanced by the rising incense in the air, the sense of touch and taste, and the sound of prayer to animate the panel. […] These shifting sensations triggered through sight, touch, sound, smell, and taste stir the faithful. They are then led to project their whirling psychological state and sensual experience […] back onto the object,” ibid.

215 This idea of the way ivory ages and increases in appeal through touch is also noted in Warren E. Cox, *Chinese Ivory Sculpture* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1946); and Herring, “Touch,” 204.
artistic value of objects that were made to fit in the hand.\textsuperscript{216} To understand the beauty, and truly feel the presence, we must touch.

Scholars have begun to note that the tangibility of medieval life has not been addressed outside of religion, and that early modern sculpture might benefit from a new approach with respect to touch.\textsuperscript{217} Even if it is argued that art developed primarily for the enjoyment through the sense of sight, it does not negate the possibility of enjoyment through touch. Emotive artwork helps us imagine physical feelings while looking at it.\textsuperscript{218}

Few renaissance art historians have addressed the tactile reception of sculpture in their work, the most notable exceptions are Suzanne B. Butters\textsuperscript{219} and Michael Baxandall;\textsuperscript{220} additionally some discussions of the relationships between the sense of touch and artistic production and reception in the renaissance have been published.\textsuperscript{221} The propensity to focus on material objects has been studied for the renaissance,\textsuperscript{222} but medieval scholarship lags behind.


\textsuperscript{217} Elizabeth D. Harvey makes this observation in the limited “Introduction”; this is also noted in the recent volume, Francesca Bacci and David Melcher, eds., \textit{Art and the Senses} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); exceptions include Michael Baxandall, \textit{The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Suzanne B. Butters, \textit{The Triumph of Vulcan: Sculptors’ Tools, Porphyry, and the Prince in Ducal Florence} (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1996); while Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle, \textit{Senses of Touch: Human Dignity and Deformity from Michelangelo to Calvin} (Boston: Brill, 1998); and Summers, \textit{The Judgment of Sense} deal with the sense of touch in relation to production and reception of art.

\textsuperscript{218} Montagu, \textit{Touching}, 308; Perricone, “The Place of Touch in the Arts,” 93, points out that both Montagu and Berenson argue this point, using examples by Van Gogh and John Constable; see also Berenson, \textit{The Italian Painters of the Renaissance}.

\textsuperscript{219} Butters, \textit{The Triumph of Vulcan}.

\textsuperscript{220} Baxandall, \textit{The Limewood Sculptors}.

\textsuperscript{221} Such as Boyle, \textit{Senses of Touch}; and Summers, \textit{The Judgment of Sense}.

\textsuperscript{222} For examples, see Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass, eds., \textit{Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Gilbert, “What Did the Renaissance Patron Buy?”; Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt, eds., \textit{Renaissance Culture and the Everyday} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Lena Cowen
Few scholars of art history approach touch as a way of experiencing Gothic sculpture.223

Scholars of modern and contemporary art have explored the importance of touch to the artwork.224 It is remarkable that most historians of sculpture, including those working on the Gothic period, have only theoretically or abstractly mentioned tactility, leaving its practical, material, and historical implications untouched. Therefore, useful insights are drawn from recent investigations into the senses in other fields; in particular those dealing with social history,225


literature, and sexuality and gender, which have examined the ways in which the senses have structured the culture of everyday life. These studies reveal that practices involving touch, such as medicine, midwifery, artistic production, prostitution, and commerce, were structured by the hierarchical and gendered ordering of the senses in ways that had an impact on the nature of experiences in society as well as on their representations in art and literature.

The Senses

To facilitate our goal of setting secular Gothic ivories into the context of being touched, we must discover how people in the fourteenth century thought about the senses, and especially touch. There were many, simultaneously overlapping theories of, and discussions about, the nature of touch, published in a variety of sources, including medical texts, works of philosophy and theology, and vernacular literature. The way that touch is approached in each of these genres reveals nuances and ideas about the ways people in the fourteenth century believed touch functioned and how they encountered touch on a daily basis.


The philosophical writings of Aristotle and other Greek thinkers were available in Latin translations by the end of the twelfth century.\(^{228}\) The new universities in Bologna, Padua, Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge took up the teaching of logic and science based on these ancient Greek texts. Both Plato and his student Aristotle considered touch to be less cerebral and more carnal than the other senses, an attitude that continued throughout the Middle Ages.\(^{229}\)

The eye as an active agent in love affairs finds its source in Arabic and Greek literature,\(^{230}\) which by the Christian era was a commonly held belief. In the late twelfth-century *De arte honeste amandi*, often called *The Art of Courtly Love*,\(^{231}\) which was commissioned by Eleanor of Aquitaine’s daughter, Marie of Champagne, and written by churchman Andreas Capellanus, thirty-one rules of *fin amor* (refined love) are defined in Latin prose.\(^{232}\) Though it has been called “a quasi-scientific attempt to reduce to laws the practices of the troubadours and other courtly lovers of the time,”\(^{233}\) the sentiments expressed give insight into the thoughts and behaviors of contemporary people. Capellanus describes how love comes about: it all starts with

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\(^{228}\) Especially De sensu and De anima, see Aristotle, *De anima; Parva naturalia; De spiritu*; see also Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955).

\(^{229}\) Johnson, “Touch,” 62.

\(^{230}\) See Cline, “Heart and Eyes,” 289, 296–7; the idea of the eye connecting and/or sending darts into the heart of another was not known in Homer, but appeared in Hesiod, see Hesiod, *Hesiod*, ed. Glenn W. Most, 2 vols., The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); as well as in the third century with Helidorus of Larissa, who was the Greek author of a short treatise on optics, which is essentially a commentary on Euclid, see Wilfred Robert Theisen, “The Mediaeval Tradition of Euclid’s Optics” (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, 1972).


\(^{232}\) This kind of love was a style based on artifice, and not an emotion, and it was not intended or marriage. In fact, E. Talbot Donaldson, “The Myth of Courtly Love,” in *Speaking of Chaucer* (New York: Norton, 1970), claims the report is not factual and may even be a farce. Donaldson declares Andreas is making a clerical joke.

\(^{233}\) William George Dodd, *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower* (Boston: Antheneum Press, 1913), 11, Dodd treats the phenomenon of courtly love as historical.
sight, after which the lover must pursue the beloved, followed by a series of tests and tokens. Capellanus defines love as “an inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex.”

Love was physical for Capellanus; it included sexual intimacy and was mutual. Similarly, the thirteenth-century poet Guido Cavalcanti describes how his lady’s spirit entered him through his eyes. Albericus of London likened the carnal love that “invades us fiercely at adolescence” to a lion. In classical thought, touch was difficult to accommodate within categorical systems: the five senses were defined by their association with specific organs, mediums, and objects. Touch, however, was problematic for philosophers, as it consistently eluded the categories, disrupting the basic systems of classification.

Philosophers of every era ordered the senses into hierarchies. In these hierarchies, touch is most commonly the lowest, with sight or hearing taking the top rank. For Aristotle, sight precedes hearing. Touch was also addressed in late medieval church literature. Medieval

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234 André, le chapelain, Andreas Capellanus on Love, 2; cited in Camille, “Before the Gaze,” 208: “It was the internal cogitatio working on the received image of the lady that made love possible; indeed for this author blind people were incapable of falling in love.”
236 Her spirit was not able to penetrate into the second ventricle of the brain so as to be “depicted in the imagination,” Rime canz. VII v. 20-2, cited in the important study of the relations between faculty psychology and medieval culture by art historian Robert Klein, “Spirito Peregrino,” in Robert Klein, Form and Meaning: Essays on the Renaissance and Modern Art (New York: Viking Press, 1979).
237 See Durant Waite Robertson, A Preface to Chaucer: A Study in Medieval Perspectives (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1969), 155; and ibid., 91, n.65, for the text.
238 “In terms of organs, for example, from classical to Renaissance treatises on anatomy, the entire body, the nerves, skin, fingertips, tongue, palms, the region about the heart, were alternatively imagined as the locus of touch,” Mazzio, “The Senses Divided,” 88.
thinkers often prioritized hearing as the sense through which faith is taught: according to St. Paul, faith comes from hearing. This concept is made clear in the lines of a hymn ascribed to Thomas Aquinas: In sight, taste, and touch thou art deceived / In trusty hearing alone believe. Society also ranked activities and professions, and thereby the persons performing these acts, in a similar way. As Howes has made clear, hierarchies of dominance often align with the hierarchy of the senses: the dominant group is associated with the higher senses of sight and hearing, while subordinate groups are allied with the lower senses of smell, taste, and touch.

Most commentators on Aristotle’s *De anima*, including Albertus Magnus, Alexander of Hales, and Thomas Aquinas, acknowledge the analogy of knowing as touching. Intelligence was thought of as sharpness, and the choice to use tactile terms for thought over visual ones expresses a greater intimacy with the object or subject under discussion. Tactile expressions have been noted in studies of proverbs, sentences, and expressions. Common were also tactile

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242 On this notion of sensory order and professions, see David Howes, “The Senses in Medicine,” *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 19, no. 1 (March 1, 1995): 125–33.
245 Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, 58.
terms for medical diagnosis,\footnote{247} such as to be “touched,” which indicated a psychophysiology of temperament, in which one was physically affected by humoral and environmental forces.\footnote{248}

There were manuals written for how one should act, which always focused on the proper use of one’s senses, and very often were written by men.\footnote{249} The tradition of men writing manuals on good behavior for women goes back to St. Louis, who wrote letters to his married daughters encouraging their modesty and avoidance of any behavior that might be thought sinful or flirtatious.\footnote{250} In the life of St. Louis, after discussing the benefits of self-flagellation, Guillaume de Saint-Pathus tells us that the saint later “sent his daughter Isabelle ivory boxes containing chains to discipline herself with,” demonstrating the associations of both gifts and women with objects of ivory.\footnote{251} In Eustache Deschamps’ \textit{Miroir du Mariage}, the matron asks for certain things from a prospective husband, including an ivory mirror: “\textit{Et miroir, pour moy ordinner,}”

\footnote{247} For some texts used by the Salerno medical school and the Trotula, see Monica Helen Green, \textit{The Trotula: An English Translation of the Medieval Compendium of Women’s Medicine} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).
\footnote{248} Mazzio, “The Senses Divided,” 98.
\footnote{249} Nearly all of the “love treatises” are addressed to men by male authors from the male point of view, with the exception of L’art d’amours by Jacques d’Amiens, a thirteenth-century advice book based on Ovid’s Art of Love, which tells women how to attract and hold men’s attentions. See Georges Duby, “The Courtly Model,” in \textit{A History of Women in the West}, vol. 2: Silences of the Middle Ages (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 250–1.
\footnote{251} Caviness, “Patron or Matron?,” 345; this was shown in Joan Holladay, “Men’s Intervention in the Structuring of Female Devotion: Artistic and Textual Evidence” (paper presented at the Twenty-Sixth International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, 1991); see Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, “Vie et Miracles de saint Louis (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Français 5716)” (Paris, 1330 1350).
"D'yvoire me devez donner." She is a member of the bourgeoisie, and compares herself to the wives of lawyers and artisans.

Durand de Champagne’s *Miroir des Dames*, *Miroir des Bonnes Femmes*, and *Miroir des Princes* encouraged an active life of high moral principle for men (future rulers) and a prayerful, contemplative existence for women (future wives). Champagne writes there are three kinds of attention needed for vocal prayer: attention to the words (so they are recited correctly), attention to the sense (of what one is saying), and the most important, which is accessible even to the ignorant and unlettered, attention on the subject of one’s prayer (God) and of what one seeks from him in prayer. Champagne acknowledges that it is impossible to attend perfectly in all three ways all the time and it will suffice to focus on the object. The visual aspects of books of hours reinforce this teaching, especially when the donor is shown attentive before the object of his or her devotion.

There were anxieties expressed regarding the power of women’s looking and the need to prevent or control it, and a fear that looking would arouse sexual desire (this was warned

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254 The French version of Miroir des Dames was created for and is dedicated to Jeanne I de Navarre, the wife of Philippe le Bel. Champagne was her Franciscan confessor. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 324 has been digitized and is available online. For more on prayer books for women, see Geneviève Hasenohr, “La prière des femmes,” in *Prier au Moyen Age: pratiques et expériences (Ve-XVe siècles)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), 239–47, especially 239-41.
256 The previous paragraph is a summary of Margaret M. Manion, “Women, Art and Devotion: Three French Fourteenth-Century Royal Prayer Books,” in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 40; see her Fig. 12: Jeanne de Navarre kneels before the Virgin and child. Paris, BN, MS n. a. lat. 3145, f. 151 v. 180 x 135 mm. Note the figures below: one is naked and running, possibly from the clothed one.
257 Smith, “The Gothic Mirror and the Female Gaze,” 75.
against by Tertullian, Ambrose, and Jerome).[^258] There is sin in enjoying being looked at. In the didactic literature written for women by the moralist writers of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, there are many passages about the dangers of woman’s looking.[^259] Looking was construed as an assertion of sexuality, for example, Vincent of Beauvais (1246-7), in *De eruditione filiorum nobilium (On the Education of Noble Children)* claims one must control the use of women’s eyes – especially when they are young.[^260] Geoffroy of the Tour-Landry (1371-2) in *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, a widely popular guide for daughters, outlined society’s expectations of women. A household manager (the Ménagier de Paris) at the court of Charles V wrote an anonymous tract for a young wife. He advocates religious devotion and offers biblical role models for continence, devotion, and obedience.[^261] The Ménagier urges the wife and mother to protect “the honor of her husband’s line,” by avoiding any action, such as kissing or even receiving a letter, which could be interpreted as showing favor to a man other than her husband.[^262] There are also examples in the Goodman of Paris as well as Christine de Pisan and Bernard de Gordon (a thirteenth-century physician), who recommended lowered eyes as sign of chastity. These manuals encourage a demure gaze, and give examples of Lot’s wife, Eve, and


[^259]: For example, see the conduct books, sermons, and didactic verse addressed to women by men or caretakers of women (husbands/fathers), mentioned in Carla Casagrande, “The Protected Women,” in *A History of Women in the West*, ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, vol. 2: Silences of the Middle Ages (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 701; for a review of conduct manuals, their authors, and audience(s), see Bornstein, *The Lady in the Tower*.


Ecclesiastics 26:9. Petrarch also spoke of the power of women’s looks. These writers also emphasized the need to protect women from the consequences – and men from the power – of women’s looks. Looking, like excessive talking, gesturing, and leaving home, was a bad thing and had to be controlled by men.

Recently, scholars have brought attention to the fact that the study of sense perception must include the context of the bodies doing the perceiving. Social, cultural, and societal values are what bring meaning to sensory experiences. In fact, the senses are a shared social phenomenon through which other topics can be studied.

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267 Marshall McLuhan, a proponent of the visual/literate, aural/oral divide, who is best known for the quote: “The medium is the message,” held that non-literate societies were governed by the power of the spoken word. Raymond Williams’ “essay on the reification of “the medium” in aesthetic theory with an example drawn from a Renaissance definition of sight: “To the Sight three things are required, the Object, the Organ and the Medium,”” Mazzio, “The Senses Divided,” 85; Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 158; this is developed further in Constance Classen, “McLuhan in the Rainforest: The Sensory Worlds of Oral Cultures,” in *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (New York: Berg, 2005), 147–63; McLuhan’s insights on the difference between linguistic communication and sensory pathways (as Howes put it: “a perfume is not the same as a sentence,”) Howes, “Empires of the Senses,” 3–4, helped shape the study of perception and the senses as we know it today.
268 Howes, “Empires of the Senses,” 4–12, provides this idea.
The Vices: Sinning through Touch

The Gothic era saw the production of many tracts and treatises written on the vices and virtues, as well as “translations, adaptations, expansions” of earlier moralists, in addition to various directions for private prayer. There were prohibitions and attacks on both clergy and laity being guilty of the Vices, ranging from lewdness to idol worship. Touch was frequently noted as a possible avenue for sin.

In the Irish Liber Hymnorum, the Confessional prayer instructs the supplicant to catalog “the places where he has sinned” (heaven and earth); “those before whom he has sinned” (God, the angels and saints); “which sins he has committed” (the seven deadly sins are almost lost in this extensive list); and, his real tour de force, “the parts of the body with which he has sinned” (eyes, ears, nostrils, tongue, throat, neck, chest, heart, thoughts, hands, feet, bones, flesh, marrow, kidneys, spirit, body). Archdeacon of Leicester Robert Grosseteste produced works on penance and the sins of the senses in the early thirteenth century. In St. Edmund of Abingdon’s (1175–1240) Speculum Ecclesiae (The Mirror of Holy Church) (c.1213-14) touch is mentioned as a way of sinning: “tucher de tast”/“tocher de tast” or to feel with the sense of

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touch.\textsuperscript{272} The Vices were also discussed in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas in the mid-thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{273} In Pierre Abernon of Fetchem’s \textit{Lumere as Lais} (completed 1267), touch is mentioned, “\textit{en sentir par taster},” or to sense by touching, and again is referring to a possible way of sinning.\textsuperscript{274} The \textit{Somme le Roi} was compiled by a Dominican, Frère Lorens, in 1279, and is a moral discussion of the Virtues and Vices, often accompanied by a series of fifteen illustrations.\textsuperscript{275} It was translated as the \textit{Book of Vices and Virtues} in the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{276} In the first book Walter Hilton’s (d.1396) \textit{Scale of Perfection}, the author concentrated on the seven deadly sins,\textsuperscript{277} and Robert Mannyng of Brunne wrote on the penance for various sins in \textit{Handlyng Synne} early in the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{278}


\textsuperscript{275} Ellen Kosmer, “The ‘noyous Humoure of Lecherie,’” \textit{The Art Bulletin} 57, no. 1 (March 1975): 1; four thirteenth-century manuscripts with full set of fifteen illustrations are: Paris, BN MS fr. 938, dated 1294; Paris, Bibl. Maz. MS 870, dated 1295; London, BM Add. MS 28162, ca. 1300; BM Add. MS 54180, dated late 13th century; “the popularity of the Somme in the 14th and 15th centuries resulted in a number of translations of the text, into Catalan, English, Dutch, Italian, Provençal, and Spanish,” ibid., 1, note 1; two versions of the English text have been edited; Laurent, \textit{The Book of Vices and Virtues: A Fourteenth Century English Translation of the Somme Le Roi of Lorens d’Orléans}, ed. W. Nelson Francis (London: Oxford University Press, 1942) is the English version which is closest to the original French; see also Bishop Grossetête’s Castel of Love/Chasteau d’amour, in the tradition of the Speculum or Mirrour, pattern of Somme le Roi.

\textsuperscript{276} \textit{The Book of Vices and Virtues}.


Medieval authors saw the vice of Luxuria (Lust) as a powerful and hard-to-resist sin.\textsuperscript{279} The relationship between the vice of lust and touch becomes quite clear when one considers that Luxuria was typically punished for her sin by physical torture in her erogenous zones. Avaritia (Greed) often received similar punishment. In fact, from the eleventh century forward, personifications of Lust and Greed receiving genital torment are regularly found depicted next to one another.\textsuperscript{280} The Seven Deadly Sins are related to the Last Judgment,\textsuperscript{281} and after the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the sin of Greed was elevated to be a principal deadly sin.\textsuperscript{282} Many manuals stated that it was important to be moderate, with money and with love: do not keep it all to yourself and do not give it all away. For women, her virginity had a financial value, a

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\textsuperscript{279} Kosmer, “The ‘noyous Humoure of Lecherie,’” 1–3.
\textsuperscript{281} See Katzenellenbogen, Allegories of the Virtues and Vices, especially on sculptural programs including the miser.
\textsuperscript{282} McDonald, “Lusti Tresor,” 139; see Lester K. Little, “Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom,” The American Historical Review 76, no. 1 (February 1, 1971): 16–49; the phrase “libidinal economy” can easily be applied here, in fact there are two definitions for the sin of avarice: “the economics of the libido” and/or “the sex life of money,” see Lyotard, Libidinal Economy, in which he explains sexual psychology in terms of monetary models and metaphors. He focused on the prostitute and desire as a commodity; McDonald, “Lusti Tresor,” 144; on the correlation between economy and sex, especially on money lending and the unnatural act of multiplying money, see Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, The Usurer’s Heart: Giotto, Enrico Scrovegni, and the Arena Chapel in Padua (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008); on the general question of the relationship between the senses and sexuality, see A. P. de Mirimonde, “La musique dans les allégories de l’amour (I),” Gazette des Beaux-arts 68 (1966): 265–90; A. P. de Mirimonde, “La musique dans les allégories de l’amour (II),” Gazette des Beaux-arts 69 (1967): 319–46; the “miser’s lust for money is turned into a quasi-sexual relationship with his beloved ‘tresor’,” McDonald, “Lusti Tresor,” 145–6; see John Gower, The English Works, ed. George Campbell Macaulay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), V. 99–103. To be satisfied, the miser behaves as a lover. Largesse was the remedy for avarice, but take care, as the opposite of avarice is prodigality (the sin of giving too much) and is equally condemned.
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monetarily quantifiable price, and ladies were encouraged to give some love, but not all of it. They were also warned not to be stingy lovers. Some examples of Luxuria can be found at Moissac, Sainte Croix in Bordeaux, Melbourne in Derbyshire, Lincoln, and Bury St. Edmunds. The female personifications of Luxuria included Eve as well as Salome. In studies on the imagery for the vices and virtues at this time, a four-partite scheme has been noted. There is an illustration of a tree of vices in a thirteenth-century manuscript which shows the vices as half-length figures budding out of the tails of serpents that suck from the roots of a tree in which Vita mundi is seated. In the illustration, Lust holds a mirror.

283 McDonald, “‘Lusti Tresor,’” 153 this, of course, is referring to the dowry. 284 “Paradoxically, it seems that the most sexually explicit images are found in religious spaces like churches, cathedrals, and devotional manuscripts, and depending on the context, can be read as censorious rather than celebratory of eroticism and love,” Easton, “‘Was It Good For You, Too?’” 14; Camille noted the occurrence of same-sex couples in early thirteenth century moralized Bibles, corbels, and misericords. In manuscripts, the sexy images are often found in the margins, see Michael Camille, Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

285 See Caviness, “Patron or Matron?,” 340, she includes images of Salome dancing before Herod from the Bronze Paschal Column at Hildesheim Cathedral (c.1015), and Lust from the South Porch, St.-Pierre, Moissac (c.1115); for additional notes on this imagery as well as a general overview of the various “blaming” mythologies, see John A. Phillips, Eve: The History of an Idea (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 38–51; see also Elaine H. Pagels, Adam, Eve, and the Serpent (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), especially chapter 6; and Marianne Shapiro, Woman, Earthly and Divine, in the Comedy of Dante (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), 18–79, which gives an analysis of Dante’s views of women.

286 1. (Upper left) Virtue with attributes atop symbolic animal of vanquished vice; 2. (Upper right) (Often allegorical) Representation of opposing vice; 3. (Lower left) Example of virtuous deed; 4. (Lower right) Example of wicked deed. Lust or Lechery was often contrasted with the virtue of chastity, Kosmer, “The ‘noyou s Humoure of Lecherie,’” 4, see fig 4: Chastity, Luxury, Judith and Holofernes, Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS fr. 938, fol. 120, Somme le roi, dated 1294, northern French; fig 5: Luxury, Chastity, Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, Judith and Holofernes, Hannover, Landesbibliothek, Hs. I. 82, fol. 145, Somme le roi, early 14th-c., French. Sometimes captioned. Potiphar’s wife (Gen. 39:1-23) as the vice of luxury, “for not only is lustful desire clearly exemplified but the virtuous rejection of the woman’s sinful advances is portrayed as well.”

287 Ibid., 6, see fig. 8: Tree of Vices, Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS fr. 9220, fol. 10, Le verger de Soulas, ca. 1290, northern French.
of Lille’s thirteenth century the *Anticlaudianus*, Lust is “the ever-present tinderbox of evil deeds, the tyrant of the flesh, the goad to sin, the flame of transgression, the source of guilt, the enemy and plunderer of our reason.”

John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, (c.1386-90), used the story of a lover walking in the woods lamenting to the god and goddess of Love as an opportunity to discuss the seven deadly sins. His Book Five examines the Seven Deadly Sins, and also contains commentary on social ills and advice to princes material. Advice is given both on how to conduct oneself in love and how to be moral: “eschew vice and follow virtue.” In the section devoted to avarice, sex and commerce are united. The work can be seen as an attempt to combine amorous and Christian morals.

*(Private) Devotion, Prayer, and Love*

Combining erotic and religious love and devotion was not uncommon in the middle ages. The sexuality of Christ and the mystics has been discussed at length, most notably by Leo Steinberg. Karma Lochrie also addressed possible sexual and homosexual responses to the exposed body of Christ, which opened up avenues of inquiry for other authors. Although

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292 Ibid.
293 Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, argued for sexualized readings of Christ, especially p. 58-61, figures 63-4, in which he equated the circumcision with Christ’s side wound; his stance was countered by Caroline Walker Bynum, “The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages.”
scholars have approached the use of metaphorical eroticized language in texts, there is a real scholarly reluctance to engage with the sexual imagery of the Middle Ages. Sexual, erotic, risqué, and bawdy medieval art has habitually been deemed problematic and/or inappropriate and

Constructing Medieval Sexuality (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 180–200; Lochrie is especially concerned with medieval female mystical experience, and notes the feminization of Christ by the emphasis of his upper-body wounds (the pierced side appears as a vulva).


The reluctance of medieval scholars in particular to address sexual imagery and objects is specifically noted in Michael Camille, “Manuscript Illumination and the Art of Copulation,” in Constructing Medieval Sexuality (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 62; Camille, “Obscenity Under Erasure: Censorship in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts,” in Obscenity: Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages (Boston: Brill, 1998), footnote 79; and Easton, “Was It Good For You, Too?,” 2, 3, 24 who used specific examples of Medieval erotic sculpture to point out the scarcity of scholarship on three-dimensional sexual art of the Middle Ages, she claimed scholars of history, literature, and even medicine have been more successful than those of art.
thus marginalized and not given serious scholarly attention. Art historical discussion of the obscene has begun in recent years, yet most scholars still base their inquiry on texts. When obscenities from the Middle Ages are pointed out, the scholarly categorization and word choice often removes their disruptive potential and denies their subversive effect.

Devotional images and objects were incorporated into the religious life of late medieval Christians. In fact, “very few pronouncements by popes and councils on images for private use predate the Middle Ages.” The Franciscan and Dominican orders exerted a powerful influence in the thirteenth century, and they encouraged the use of devotional aids in prayer and meditation. An intense emotional tone was set by Bernard of Clairvaux as well as Francis of

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298 These works are (either intentionally or not) removed from academic discourse due to “academic prudery, as well as pervasive, if unspoken, social regulations about what kinds of subject matter can be legitimately and publicly discussed,” McDonald, *Medieval Obscenities*, 9.

299 Recent notable attempts to study medieval obscenity as well as its modern reception are: Jan M. Ziolkowski, ed., *Obscenity: Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages* (Boston: Brill, 1998); Timothy Hyman and Roger Malbert, eds., *Carnivalesque* (London: Hayward Gallery Pub., 2000), (this exhibition traveled to Brighton, Nottingham, and Edinburgh); Richard Marks and Paul Williamson, eds., *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547* (London: V&A, 2003), includes examples of vulva and phallus brooches or badges, these badges were reproduced and sold in the gift shop for the V&A show; McDonald, *Medieval Obscenities*.


301 Honée, “Image and Imagination,” 158.


The mid-thirteenth century saw an increase in mystical piety, some types of which relied more on intellect and some were more concerned with feelings and experiences. In these more experience-based devotions, the meditations almost always included images, the goal of which was to reach the visions and ecstatic experiences described by those who properly venerated the images. In fact, there were prayers for a vision, which demonstrate how desirable this ecstasy was. For example, Suso addressed the Virgin Mary: “Alas, pure tender lady, I now beg you to offer me your tender child, as it appeared when dead, placing it on the lap of my soul so that, according to my ability, I may be vouchsafed in a spiritual manner and in meditation that which befell you in a physical manner.” Beyond simply observing, nuns and other religious cared for mock infant Jesuses as though they were alive: they made and changed his clothes, bathed him, and kissed him as mothers would a real child. Similarly, monks called the Virgin Mary “mother” as they acted as sons. From the thirteenth century onwards, lay and

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305 St. Francis had no written works, but lead by the example of his life. For the written works of the Franciscans, see those of Johannes Bonaventure (1221-1274).


309 See Klapisch-Zuber, “Holy Dolls,” 327; the Virgin Mary gets greater prominence in later versions of the (apocryphal) gospels to respond to the devotional focus of her as interlocutor between man and God, this has been referred to as the “mariological slant” of the retelling of the Gospels, see Van Os, The Art of Devotion, 14.
religious spiritual leaders called upon members of the community to participate in Biblical dramas by acting with, or as, the sacred participants.\textsuperscript{310}

Mendicant preaching in the vernacular reached new heights in the fourteenth century, and it was through this movement that lay people were taught to pray and meditate.\textsuperscript{311} Importance was placed on identification and participation. The doctrine of \textit{compassio}, a feature of contemplative reflection, appeared more frequently in the texts, and was aimed at a more general audience, which was appealing to the laity.\textsuperscript{312} The practice of devotion encouraged participants, especially young girls, to focus on the images that moved them most powerfully, in the hopes of reaching a state of “\textit{dolcecia e divotione} (enchanting sweetness and devotion).”\textsuperscript{313} The senses played a large part in the liturgy, as large-scale images were presented in order to encourage emotional responses, what Pentcheva calls a “tactile visuality” intended to be sensually experienced.\textsuperscript{314} As the focus on private devotion increased, there was an upsurge in requests for direct intercession by the Virgin Mary and the saints on the part of the individual devotee.\textsuperscript{315}

\textsuperscript{310} Klapisch-Zuber, “Holy Dolls,” 323.
\textsuperscript{311} “In a learning process that lasted for centuries, ordinary believers were trained in spiritual values that had evolved in the claustral world of the monastics,” Honée, “Image and Imagination,” 162.
\textsuperscript{313} Klapisch-Zuber, “Holy Dolls,” 320.
\textsuperscript{314} Pentcheva, “The Performative Icon,” 632; see also Van Os, \textit{The Art of Devotion}, 52.
\textsuperscript{315} Scholars have noted that at this time, there was a Christian obsession with “its tortured dead (Christ and the martyrs),” Caviness, \textit{Visualizing Women}, 35–7; for works on the torture of saints, see Thomas J. Heffernan, \textit{Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages}
Female spirituality was affected by the increased practice of private prayer. Women for whom books of hours were made were trained to pray in many ways and were expected to spend much of their time practicing their devotions. Religious imagery was a tool with an ultimate goal of piety; their primary function was didactic, for religious instruction. Certain values were taught to young girls, such as not to want sex, aside from out of her sense of duty to her husband. Often, images in the private books of hours had the intention of repelling female sexuality, which would make for a chaste wife. For example, in the Hours of Jeanne, there were many visual warnings to keep her mind on her prayers and avoid adultery. The Church set rules and limits about when and how a couple should have sexual encounters and procreate:

There were

limits on coitus between married couples: there was to be no intercourse during the forty days of Lent, the forty days after Pentecost, and the forty days before Christmas; on sixteen other feast days; on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays; and while the woman was menstruating or nursing. This amounts to


318 Caviness, “Patron or Matron?,” 355; Caviness is speaking of the Hours of Jeanne, and especially concerned with the age Jeanne was when she received these Hours – she was young and impressionable: “in later life she would have been less susceptible,” ibid., 343.
about three days of taboo for every day of license in a year without a birth. Apparently such proscriptions were increasingly enforced by the mendicants in the face of the illicit love sung by the troubadours and the supposed orgiastic behavior of heretics. […] The entire month of May […] was forbidden for weddings, because of the danger of sexual license, even though Pentecost might fall at the end or in June (Fauvel wed in May on Pentecost, a double infringement).319

There was also punishment for inappropriate sexual relations:

In 1314 […] Philippe’s [le Bel] three sons’ wives, Marguerite de Bourgogne and her cousins, the sisters Jeanne d’Artois and Blanche de Bourgogne, were accused of adulterous affairs […] Their sins were doubly offensive because they had made love on high feast days (“temporibus sacrosanctis”). Their lovers were instantly castrated and executed. Marguerite and Blanche had their heads shaved and were imprisoned in Chateau Gaillard. Jeanne was sent to Dourdan and released in 1314 after her trial.320


Prayer books for the laity, called books of hours because they were used at prescribed times of the day, gained popularity in the late 1200s.\textsuperscript{321} The wealthy paid for decorative illustrations and embellishments in the popular style, such as architectural and natural elements as frames and contemporary fashions.\textsuperscript{322} For example, King Charles IV famously commissioned Jean Pucelle to create a book of hours as a gift for his queen, Jeanne d’Evreux.\textsuperscript{323} By the fourteenth century the use of images to guide prayers and meditations had spread from monastics to lay people.\textsuperscript{324} Personal prayer and meditation were included in the daily religious rituals of lay people in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,\textsuperscript{325} by which time many prayers had been translated into the vernacular from Latin.\textsuperscript{326} The focus of prayer included the adoration of God and Christ, as well as that of the Virgin and the saints; the intensity of these adorations could lead to a loss of control and an ecstatic trance.\textsuperscript{327} This sensory phenomenon was limited to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The fourteenth century saw devotional painting aimed at

\textsuperscript{321} Marilyn Stokstad, \textit{Art History}, Rev. 2nd ed (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005), 541.
\textsuperscript{322} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{323} Ibid., 542; see also Caviness, “Patron or Matron?”, the hours are at the Cloisters in New York, MS 54.1.2.
\textsuperscript{324} Honée, “Image and Imagination,” 172; in fact, it has been argued that altarpieces “functioned above all during off-hours,” Kees van der Ploeg, “The Spatial Setting of Worship: Some Observations on the Relation Between Altarpieces and Churches,” in \textit{Images of Cult and Devotion: Function and Reception of Christian Images of Medieval and Post-Medieval Europe} (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2004), 157, meaning they were used most often not during the liturgy, but during private devotion within the church.
\textsuperscript{325} Van Os, \textit{The Art of Devotion}, 61.
\textsuperscript{327} See Van Os, \textit{The Art of Devotion}, 56.
children, and later Dominican pedagogue Giovanni Dominici would write of setting saints’ images before children to emulate.\textsuperscript{328}

From about 1300, personal books of hours became increasingly popular in royal and aristocratic circles, especially with the urban patriciate. The laity, beginning with kings, princes, and rulers, also had private chapels constructed; the increase in lay patronage and ownership of books, especially secular and in the vernacular, created an increased market for romances.\textsuperscript{329} The romances appear to draw the heavily from the Arabic traditions.\textsuperscript{330} By the end of the fourteenth century, illustrated religious books for personal use became increasingly available to the prosperous middle class. Prayers for individual and private use,\textsuperscript{331} extracted from their liturgical context,\textsuperscript{332} appear in the earliest private devotional books in England, France, and the Netherlands, which eventually become quite decorous.\textsuperscript{333}

\textsuperscript{328} This was especially true in Tuscany, see Meiss, \textit{Painting in Florence and Siena After the Black Death}, esp. 125–6; this became the norm in the early fifteenth century; see Arthur Basil Côté, \textit{On the Education of Children} (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1927), 34.
\textsuperscript{329} Honée, “Image and Imagination,” 162.
\textsuperscript{330} See Cline, “Heart and Eyes”; there are approximately thirty surviving chansonniers (songbooks) dating from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, which contain about 2,500 lyrics; these facts can be found at Laura Weigert, “Romance, Manuscript,” \textit{Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online}, accessed November 8, 2007, http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T072819.
\textsuperscript{331} Muir, “The Early Insular Prayer Book Tradition and the Development of the Book of Hours,” 10, discusses this “smaller, less often discussed group.”
\textsuperscript{332} These books used a liturgical model, and were compilations, drawn from a variety of sources, ibid., 13, for example, the prayer book of Bonne of Luxembourg includes extracts from vernacular moral treatises; many popular devotional texts were by St. Augustine and other church fathers, and many others were falsely attributed to them in order to increase their authority, ibid., 14; Manion discusses three manuscripts which demonstrate prayers developed from the liturgy for private use, and are examples where the relationship between text and image in encouraging personal prayer can be observed, Manion, “Women, Art and Devotion”; the manuscripts discussed are: the Psalter-hours of Blanche of Burgundy (also known as the Savoy Hours): New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, MS 390, vellum, 201 x 147mm, 26 folios (24 original, 2 are Charles V additions); the Hours of Jeanne of
There were also manuals of instruction for private devotion, which make it clear that there was a preoccupation with the correct way to experience holiness. This heightened culture of prayer diluted or even removed the distance between saint and sinner. Pertinent to this study is the late medieval literature of devotion that used erotic love metaphors to describe union with the body of Christ. The early fourteenth-century treatises *Meditationes Vitae Christi* (Meditations on the Life of Christ) and *Meditatione Passionis Christi* (Meditations on the Passion of Christ) are poetic and ecstatic in style, and encourage readers to focus on the physical aspects of Christ’s life, especially his torture. The late fourteenth-century mystical treatise, *The Cloud of

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Unknowing, is a guide to contemplative prayer. There are many passages of erotic devotion in the writings of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century women mystics, such as Mechthild of Magdeburg (1207-82), Hadewijch, and later Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373), Catharine of Siena (1347?-1380), Dorothy of Montau (1347-1394), and Juliana of Norwich (died c.1416/20). Mystic devotion flourished in the fourteenth century. These writers described their love for Christ in explicit sexual terms, as did James of Milan, who used copulare to describe union with the wound. There was a growing lay desire for visualization, an urge to witness, which intensified into a desire for access to and contact with the sacred, including the individual characters from the Gospels. In the late fourteenth century, “modern devotion” (devotio moderna), a religious reform movement that focused on humility and obedience, arose. Advancing the practice of the mystics, the private devotions of the devotio moderna community heightened the personal interaction with Biblical scenes. The concept of projecting oneself into the stories of the life of Christ was developed by Ludolph of Saxony in his Vita Christi in 1374. Women were identified with the body and the senses, and through these texts, women


339 Lochrie, “Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies,” 186–90; see also Caviness, Visualizing Women, 35.

340 This desire had its roots in mysticism, see Ploeg, “The Spatial Setting of Worship,” 153; Manion, “Women, Art and Devotion,” 32, Manion uses Savoy as an example.

were being taught to imagine touching images and taking the place of characters in images and stories.\textsuperscript{342}

The mystics represent a move towards embracing the feelings and including touch as an important way of experiencing religion. Shortly after the move to more touch came the move away from touch. For example, responses to Avicenna and Costa ben Luca of Aristotelian unifications of Body and Spirit were suppressed by the fifteenth century. The crisis of the Great Schism was blamed on sensory unions with Christ (especially by women, which led to the accusation of witches), and the Church began the drive to impose boundaries on the body: it opposed emphasizing physical union with Christ, and bodily possession was interpreted as demonic, not religious.\textsuperscript{343}


\textsuperscript{343} Nichols, Kablitz, and Calhoun, \textit{Rethinking the Medieval Senses}, 282; see also Caciola and Elliott, \textit{Proving Woman}. 

Chapter 3: Ivory Terminology

There are many metaphors of and references to ivory. Ivory has long been considered desirous, and a thing of beauty. Being made of or inlaid with ivory would impart an increased status to objects, and by extension, to their owners.\footnote{Colum Hourihane, ed., *The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art and Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), vol. 2: 12.} Ivory has been used to describe the white and/or pearly brows, necks, and teeth of beautiful people.

**Biblical**

Ivory was regularly used for objects in churches in the Middle Ages. It is seen extensively in pyxes, decoration for ecclesiastical furniture, statuettes, crosiers, liturgical combs, tabernacles, and diptychs.\footnote{Examples include: Cylindrical pyxis, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.190.168; throne of St. Maximian, Ravenna, Archiepiscopal Museum; Deposition group, Paris, Musée du Louvre, OA 3935; Crozier Head, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art,11.182.3a–c; Liturgical comb, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, A.27-1977; Gabled polyptych, London, The British Museum, 1923,1205.4; and the Soissons Diptych, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, 211-1865.} Ivory is mentioned in thirteen Bible passages, and is often associated with commerce, markets, luxury, wealth, excess, and referred to as a commodity for export and/or import. Biblical passages often used ivory as an allegory of fineness and extravagance. It was the material of King Solomon’s throne: “The king also made a great ivory throne, and overlaid it with the finest gold.”\footnote{*The Holy Bible*, 1 Kings 10:18, also mentioned in 2 Chronicles 9:17: “The king also made a great ivory throne, and overlaid it with pure gold.”} It was expensive cargo from exotic lands:

For the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.\footnote{Ibid.; 1 Kings 10:22, also mentioned in 2 Chronicles 9:21: “For the king’s ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Huram; once every three years the ships of Tarshish used to come bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.”}
The Rhodians traded with you; many coastlands were your own special markets; they brought you in payment ivory tusks and ebony.\textsuperscript{348}

cargo of gold, silver, jewels and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory, all articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble.\textsuperscript{349}

Ivory was a lavish building material:

Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house that he built, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel?\textsuperscript{350}

your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad.\textsuperscript{351}

made your deck of pines from the coasts of Cyprus, inlaid with ivory.\textsuperscript{352}

It was used to make reference to lives full of excess:

I will tear down the winter house as well as the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall come to an end, says the Lord.\textsuperscript{353}

Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall;\textsuperscript{354}

Ivory was also associated with lover’s bodies: “His arms are rounded gold, set with jewels. His body is ivory work, encrusted with sapphires.”\textsuperscript{355}

In the \textit{Song of Songs}, the bride’s neck is compared to a tower of ivory: “Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon, overlooking

\textsuperscript{348} Ibid.; Ezekiel 27:15.
\textsuperscript{349} Ibid.; Revelation 18:12.
\textsuperscript{350} Ibid.; 1 Kings 22:39.
\textsuperscript{351} Ibid.; Psalm 45:8.
\textsuperscript{352} Ibid.; Ezekiel 27:6.
\textsuperscript{353} Ibid.; Amos 3:15.
\textsuperscript{354} Ibid.; Amos 6:4.
\textsuperscript{355} Ibid.; Song of Solomon 5:14.
Damascus.” This reference to the neck of the lover as an ivory tower (turris eburnea) was understood as a metaphor for the noble beauty and purity of both the Virgin Mary and the Church as early as the twelfth century Marian revival, and was also an attribute of Saint Barbara. This reference to an ivory tower might also help explain the occurrence of towers and castles in conjunction with the imagery on the ivories under consideration here.

**Classical**

Classical authors, who carried great influence into the Middle Ages, also alluded to ivory in their work. The ivory scepter is an attribute of Zeus/Jupiter, Aeëtes, and during the Roman Republic, an ivory scepter (sceptrum eburneum) marked consular rank. An ivory quiver is an attribute of the fierce huntress Atalanta, and Eros, son of Aphrodite, was also given an ivory quiver. The ivory hand is an attribute of Fortune personified.

In Homer’s *Odyssey*, the entrance for deceptive dreams is an ivory gate. In book XIX, an elegant chair is inlaid with ivory for Penelope: “Then Penelope came down from her room looking like Venus or Diana, and they set her a seat inlaid with scrolls of silver and ivory near

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358 Steven Olderr, Symbolism: A Comprehensive Dictionary (McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), 206; the current pejorative of the “ivory tower” as the location of esoteric intellectual elitists unconcerned with the realities of everyday life is a 19th century convention.
360 See many references in Johann Joachim Eschenburg, Manual of Classical Literature (Philadelphia: Key and Biddle, 1836).
362 Ibid.
363 Ibid., 103.
364 Ibid., 94.
the fire in her accustomed place.” She tells of the gates of horn and ivory, through which dreams emerge. The ivory gate is the entryway for deceptive dreams, and so ivory may also be taken as symbol of foolishness or naivety:

And Penelope answered, “Stranger, dreams are very curious and unaccountable things, and they do not by any means invariably come true. There are two gates through which these unsubstantial fancies proceed; the one is of horn, and the other ivory. Those that come through the gate of ivory are fatuous, but those from the gate of horn mean something to those that see them.”

Venus, attended by Graces and Cupids, rode in an ivory chariot, in Ovid’s *Heroïdes*, as did Messala, who was “crowned with laurel” […] and “borne in an ivory chariot drawn by white horses.” In Roman times, the chair of state was made of ivory (or highly decorated with it). There was also a tradition of massive chryselephantine (gold and ivory) sculptures in ancient Greece, such as the *Athena Parthenos*, which was begun c.447 BCE by Phidias. Ivory made up the face and arms of the goddess. The *Ars Amatoria* provided a treatment of the beloved woman, with a description full of metaphor: “her forehead is not surpassed in brilliance by ivory.” Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* provided an ivory shoulder as an attribute of Pelops, who

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365 Homer, “The Internet Classics Archive,” trans. Samuel Butler, *The Odyssey by Homer*, 1994 2009, bk. XIX, http://classics.mit.edu/Homer/odyssey.html, this work is dated to the end of the 8th c. BCE; Medieval manuscripts of his works were known as early as the 10th century.

366 Ibid.


was killed by his father Tantalus and made into a stew for the gods. Demeter was distracted by her grief over her daughter’s abduction and accidentally ate his left shoulder, so when the Fate Clotho brought him back to life, he was given a replacement appendage of ivory. This shoulder could then cure diseases.\textsuperscript{373}

Also in the \textit{Metamorphoses}, Ovid told the story of the sculptor Pygmalion, who carved a woman out of ivory and fell in love with it. Venus then transformed the ivory statue into a real woman.\textsuperscript{374} Jean de Meun, in his continuation of the \textit{Roman de la Rose} (c.1268-1285), reworked the Pygmalion story.\textsuperscript{375} In Book 4 (Sloth) of the \textit{Confessio Amantis} (c.1386-90), John Gower referred to the story of Pygmalion, and again ivory was the material of the statue: “for of yvor whyt / He hath hire wroght of such delit.”\textsuperscript{376} The Latin marginalia in the \textit{Confessio Amantis} read:

Here he speaks against cowards in the cause of love, and he says that the Lover ought not to keep muted his words because of fear, but by continuing his prayers

\textsuperscript{373} Eschenburg, \textit{Manual of Classical Literature}, 385.  
\textsuperscript{374} Ovid, \textit{Ovid: Metamorphoses}, Book X, lines 243-97.  
\textsuperscript{376} John Gower, \textit{Confessio Amantis}, ed. Russell A. Peck, trans. Andrew Galloway, vol. 2 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2013), l. 383–4, the editors note that the Tale of Pygmalion and the Statue could be based on Ovid’s Metamorphoses or Jean de Meun’s Roman de la Rose, as “the tale was well known, though Genius embellishes it nicely.”
would more securely pursue the fulfillment of his love. And the Confessor presents an instructive example how Pigmaleon, because of the fact that he continued his prayers, perceived that a certain ivory statue - by the lust of whose beauty he was ensnared - was transformed by his side into flesh and blood.\textsuperscript{377}

Chaucer also reworked the Pygmalion story in his late fourteenth-century \textit{Canterbury Tales}.\textsuperscript{378}

The importance of the material – ivory – of the statue is underscored by the later authors’ retention of ivory as the material in their retelling of the story.

\textbf{Courtly/Love Literature/Romances}

Ivory found its way into the Arthurian romances,\textsuperscript{379} \textit{Minnesänge, chansons de geste}, epics, legends, fabliaux,\textsuperscript{380} and romances of the medieval period, and those stories found their

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\textsuperscript{377} Editor’s note on Pygmalion and his Statue, from Book 4 of ibid., vol. 2, l. 371–450: Hic in amoris causa loquitur contra pusillanimes, et dicit quod Amans pre timore verbis obmutescere non debet, set continuando preces sui amoris expedicionem tucius prosequatur. Et ponit Confessor exemplum, qualiter Pigmaleon, pro eo quod preces continuauit, quandam ymaginem ebrvneam, cuius pulcritudinis concupiscencia illaqueatus extitit, in carnem et sanguinem ad latus suum transformatam sencit.


way onto ivory mirror cases and writing tablets relate to the popular literature of the time, including romances and instruction manuals. These ivories display imagery of courtship.


Mirror cases and writing tablets have the most similar imagery/subject matter and style, which is why they are the focus on my project. The subject of these objects (caskets, mirror cases, combs, and writing tablets) is “almost always secular or profane, rarely religious or sacred: scenes of courtly love, allegorical subjects, scenes from the romances, amusements and sports. In style and subject the mirror cases and the writing tablets are most closely aligned,” Robinson, “Notes on a French Gothic Writing Tablet,” 86.

The terminology for these types of literature is not exact (fabliaux, lai, roman, etc.), see Busby, “Narrative Genres,” 139–153; “a part of the stigma attached to romances, and to the reading of romances even in the Middle Ages, a stigma which perhaps continues even to this day, may very well have had its origin in these two facts: romances tended to prefer speaking of profane love that was as often as not illicit, and courtly love was an occupation of the idle rich,” Norma Lorre Goodrich, “Introduction,” in *The Ways of Love: Eleven Romances of Medieval France* (Toronto: Beacon Press, 1964), (unpaginated).

employing metaphors of pursuit and conquest. All these repeated scenes appear to draw from the vague realm of ‘courtly love.’ The subjects of secular literature took on greater importance in the artwork of the time partly due to the increase in secular patronage.

In Chrétien de Troyes’ *Cligés* (1176), Soredamors is described as having teeth as white as ivory and a neck four times as white: “Nature bestowed special pains, so that whoever should see them when the mouth opens would never dream that they were not of ivory or silver. [...] And the neck beneath her tresses is four times whiter than ivory.” When the true hero of the

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384 Easton is more specific, as she says “the luxury trade in ivory mirrorbacks, combs, and caskets in the fourteenth century produced large numbers of objects with images of heterosexual couples,” Easton, “‘Was It Good For You, Too?,’” 19.

385 Koechlin has suggested a religious reading of these secular scenes, drawing parallels between the cult of the Virgin Mary and chivalric love. See his examples: Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothiques français*, 1924, no. 1002 (V&A 9.72); and Sulzbach, Paris, ibid., no. 1088.


387 Calkins, *A Medieval Treasury*, 9, Calkins groups these as being on the theme of courtly love, and believes both specific scenes from the literature as well as general concepts appear on ivory; his examples include: Arthurian romances (his no. 79), the Roman de la Rose (his nos. 81-83), the Minnesänge (his no. 81), combs (his no. 84), and marriage caskets for jewels (his nos. 78-80); for discussions of literary themes in medieval art, see Loomis, “The Allegorical Siege in the Art of the Middle Ages”; Loomis, *Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art*.

Anticlaudianus, (1181-4), Phronesis (Prudence), is described, the author claimed “her teeth rival ivory.”

An allegory of the art of courtly love, in the form of a dream vision, the Roman de la Rose (c.1230 and c.1270-80) was left unfinished by the original author, Guillaume de Lorris, and later expanded and completed in a different style by Jean le Meun. It was the most popular literary work in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as well as quite controversial.

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389 Her quest is for real knowledge, Alanus de Insulis, Anticlaudianus, 1973, 28.
390 Ibid., 57.
391 There are about 300 extent manuscripts, see “Roman de La Rose, Digital Library,” Roman de La Rose: Project History, December 18, 2012, http://romandelarose.org/#project; the Roman de la Rose had a pan-European distribution, Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, eds., The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4; beyond the plot of the Roman de la Rose, a number of themes have been discussed, from textual lies and doubles to views of women. The “rose” as the beloved in the Roman de la Rose can be phallic or vaginal. At times, Amant’s desire is unclear, it can be seen as heterosexual as well as homosexual; nominative as well as transgressive. He is similar to Narcissus, who was pursued by both sexes and fell in love with a man (himself), Noah D. Guynn, “Le Roman de La Rose,” in The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 52; Bel Acueil possesses or personifies “unmanly” receptivity. He is approached by Venus armed with “a burning torch whose flame has warmed many a lady”: “un brandon flambant … dont la flame / a eschaufee mainte dame,” Jean Renart, Le Roman de La Rose, Ou, De Guillaume de Dole, ed. Félix Lecoy (Paris: H. Champion, 1962), 1.3406–8; translation from Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, The Romance of the Rose, 1994, 52; he yields, granting “the gift of a kiss”: “un bessier endons,” Jean Renart, Le Roman de La Rose, Ou, De Guillaume de Dole, 1.3457; translation from Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, The Romance of the Rose, 1994, 53; it is unclear until a bit later that Amant actually kissed the rose, and not Bel Acueil, a man. Later in the poem, Amant’s desire is aimed at Bel Acueil, through an amorous male bond, Guynn, “Le Roman de La Rose,” 52; Even medieval writers were aware of lack of truth reached by the original text, ibid., 54; in fact, the Roman de la Rose was considered unseemly, obscene, and misogynistic in its own time. The moral status was debated with Christine de Pisan and Jean Gerson arguing against Pierre and Gontier Col and Jean de Montreuil, ibid., 60; see Christine de Pisan et al., Le débat sur le Roman de la Rose, trans. Eric Hicks, Bibliothèque du XVe siècle 43 (Paris: H. Champion, 1977); Christine McWebb, ed., Debating the Roman de La Rose: A Critical Anthology, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Routledge, 2007); Christine objected to the passages that slandered women, while others claimed that the characters spoke for themselves and the author shouldn’t be held responsible. Unsound reasoning has been observed on both sides, but the mere existence of this heated argument
Guillaume’s work was influenced by Andreas Capellanus’ *The Art of Courtly Love*, and described the attempts of a courtier, Amant, to woo his beloved, Rose. The rules include guarding one’s reputation, maintaining a fashionable outward appearance, and cultivating pleasant hobbies – all in order to attract a better match. The desired, Rose, is both a lady and an object/possession, standing for female sexuality. The God of Love is armed with arrows: insomnia, loss of appetite, erotic dreams, anxiety, burning, and emaciation, to remind readers that private, personal pain is an integral part of love. These pains are all based on touch. Love came in through the eyes, but there is also much language relating to touch, such as plucking, grabbing, and seizing. The idea is to prolong this painful anticipatory part of love, for once consummated, the experience is concluded (the rose plucked, the love attained, the game over).

After a stolen kiss, Amant is left lamenting his fate. Sexual and semantic uncertainties are highlighted in the actual text of *Roman de la Rose*, yet the love quest is never fulfilled in the original text. Suffering the private, personal pains of love heightens desire and makes the goal more worthy.

In medieval literature, continuation of texts was often encouraged, and it has been generally accepted that this work was left unfinished intentionally to encourage the imagination. Famously, Jean le Meun took up this challenge, and reinterpreted the

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393 Guynn, “Le Roman de La Rose,” 53.
ambiguities in the original text according to the cultural and ideological expectations of a new audience. Jean added more characters and “finished” the wooing: love was actually achieved: the castle stormed and the rose plucked (a thinly veiled and bawdy sexual metaphor). The Roman de la Rose’s most misogynistic passage is also its most metaphorical: Venus engulfs the castle in flames and razes it to the ground. Amant thrusts his staff into an aperture in the fortification, scatters seed from his sack onto the rosebush, and plucks the rose. This act is violent, aggressive, and non-mutual. The rose is passive, receptive, mute, and inert. Masculine bravado depends on silencing contradictory discourses and objectifying women.

Jean’s scholastic background made him want clear, unambiguous descriptions and discourse. In Jean’s version, the plot does not advance, it concludes. The climactic scene in the Roman de la Rose, in which Amant finally seduces/rapes the object of his desire, the Rose, is an attack upon a fortified edifice, with the Rose’s body described as an “ivory tower” and her legs as “fair pillars.”

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397 Guynn, “Le Roman de La Rose,” 54.
398 “Ploughing and harvesting, labour and finance are among the more popular medieval metaphors for sexual activity (especially common in the fabliaux),” McDonald, “‘Lusti Tresor,’” 156.
399 Roses have “vaginal connotations,” Easton, “‘Was It Good For You, Too?,’” 21, see also her fig. 20: storming of the castle of love, Paris, c.1320, Walters 71.169; see also the discussion of the castle as metaphor for female body prepared for penetration in Helen Solterer, “At the Bottom of Mirage, a Woman’s Body: Le Roman de La Rose of Jean Renart,” in Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature, ed. Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 213–33.
400 Guynn, “Le Roman de La Rose,” 54.
401 Easton, “‘Was It Good For You, Too?,’” 21; for the text of the Roman de la Rose, see Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, Le Roman de la Rose, 1914: v.20999: “Cil dui pilers d’ivire estoient,” and at v.21080, referring to Pygmalion: “Si fist une ymage d’ivuire”; and Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, The Romance of the Rose, 1995; see also Brownlee and
The Book of John Mandeville, (c.1357-71) indicated that the gates of the palace of Prester John were made of sardonyx and ivory: “gates of that palays beth of precious stones that men calle sardyn, and the bordure of barres beth of yvour.”402 Ivory is also referred to in many more contemporary works; for the sake of space this essay does not name them all.403

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403 For example, Guilluame de Machaut (c.1300-1377), Christine de Pisan (1364-c.1430), and Jean Gerson (chancellor of the University of Paris, 1363+). See the references in Robinson, “Notes on a French Gothic Writing Tablet,” 87; for the writings of Jean Gerson on courtesy and courtly love, see Jean Gerson, Œuvres Complètes, ed. Palémon Glorieux (Paris: Desclée, 1961); see also Koechlin, Les ivoires gothiques français, 1924, Vol. I, 373ff on courtly love; see Barbara Wertheim Tuchman, A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century (New York: Knopf, 1978) for a good outline of literature in the 14th century.
Chapter 4: Secular Gothic Ivory

**Background: Secular Gothic Art**

In the Gothic period, new types of objects, both religious and secular, began to be in demand. The elaborate, delicate tracery work that defines the Gothic was evident from the largest to the smallest items (for example, from Chartres Cathedral to the tiniest boxwood and ivory carvings). Gothic architecture and sculpture for public consumption continued to focus on large-scale monuments, such as the life-sized statues at Bamberg and Naumburg Cathedrals, but the manufacture of items of small scale, intended for personal devotional use, or to be donated to the church, increased. From the twelfth century onward, there was an increase in the production of small sculpture, such as panels and ivory sculptures, which was possibly inspired by the art of book covers. Playful and secular decorative elements mingled with religious themes often quoting from the “visual language of courtly and chivalric idealism.” Like the literature of the time, Gothic images and objects could and did have a “plurality of significations.” Works were full of multilayered readings, double entendres, and sexual puns. In fact, much of the enjoyment of the pieces came from realizing the multiple, often conflicting, interpretations.

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404 Stokstad, *Art History*, 537.
405 See, for example, the wooden Andachtsbilder, Hourihane, *The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art and Architecture*, vol. 2: 181.
406 Ibid., vol. 2: 85.
408 Camille uses this phrase in Camille, “Dr. Witkowski’s Anus: French Doctors, German Homosexuals and the Obscene in Medieval Church Art,” 18; our modern categories are insufficient and not helpful. The questions Camille suggests we ask are: What was the purpose of this image? What can it mean to us today? “Did people of the thirteenth century laugh when they saw such things?"
409 Some examples of studies of multiple meanings: Russell A. Peck, “Public Dreams and Private Myths: Perspective in Middle English Literature,” *PMLA* 90, no. 3 (May 1, 1975): 461–68,
Secular Gothic Ivory

The trade in ivory flourished from the first half of the thirteenth century\textsuperscript{410} into the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{411} Through the creation of small tablets and diptychs, “ivory carvers, like the illuminators of manuscripts, brought into the private domain images that a century earlier had been restricted to public locations. Although the image remained the same, its function was now radically different.”\textsuperscript{412} Ivory works were not merely monumental sculptures rendered at a smaller

which points out interpretations from scatological to sacred, of the poem “Erthe took of erthe,” 465-67; John Brückmann and Jane Couchman, Du “Cantique des cantiques” aux “Carmina Burana”: amour sacré et amour érotique, 1977; Caviness points out many double entendres and word play, for example, in the Carmina Burana, many of the most erotic phrases come from the Song of Songs, Caviness, “Patron or Matron?,” 352; the “ballok pursez,” noted in a 1446 inventory, are identified with the scrotum. The ability of this object to carry two meaning simultaneously is discussed in McDonald, “Lusti Tresor”; for more on word play, see Laura Kendrick, The Game of Love: Troubadour Word Play (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 10, 53–73.

\textsuperscript{410} Explanations of why large quantities of ivory were newly available, especially in Gothic France, have been poor. The routes remain unclear, though Gaborit-Chopin suggests ivory blocks were routed from Africa, using the “Swahili corridor,” entering Europe from Cairo through Venice, Genoa, or Marseilles; for her discussion of possible routes of ivory in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Ivoires médiévaux, 11–21; for a more recent exploration, see Guérin, “Avorio d’ogni ragione.”

\textsuperscript{411} Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires médiévaux, 20; in this history of the Louvre’s ivory collection, she focuses mainly on the religious in subject and function. She notes that ivory was often reused from earlier periods, which explains their preservation in part, as does their exoticness. She itemizes the variety of objects that were made of ivory, and that great sums were paid for ivory from the eleventh century; she studies the habits of collecting, and notes that inventories reveal what people collected as well as what was used when ivory became scarce (which included bone, baleen, and wood). In the fifteenth century, elephant ivory becomes more rare and we see more bone items listed in inventories, ibid., 12; on works in bone by the bottega degli Embriachi, see Elena Merlini, “Il trittico eburneo della Certosa di Pavia: iconografia e committenza,” Arte Cristiana Milano 73, no. 711 (1985): 369–84; Elena Merlini, “La ‘Bottega degli Embriachi’ e i cofanetti eburnei fra Trecento e Quattrocento: una proposta di classificazione,” Arte Cristiana 76, no. 727 (1988): 267–82; Elena Merlini, “I trittici portatili della ‘Bottega degli Embriachi,’” Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen 33 (1991): 48–62; Leonardo Foi, Bottega degli Embriachi: cofanetti e cassetine tra Gotico e Rinascimento, ed. Luciana Martini (Bagnolo Mella: Grafìoca Sette, 2001); Michele Tomasi, La bottega degli Embriachi (Firenze: Museo nazionale del Bargello, 2001).

\textsuperscript{412} Van Os, The Art of Devotion, 10.
scale; the carvers and painters of these objects had their own style and catered to patrons with a taste for precious objects. From the end of the thirteenth century into the fourteenth century, new types of secular ivory objects gained popularity. These objects were decorated with some new themes: courtly scenes, the assault or storming of the castle, jousts or tournaments, encounters of paired lovers, gift giving, playing chess or other games, and imagery based on popular romances. Gaborit-Chopin referred to this period as the “birth of profane ivory,” when the production and purchase of mirror cases, writings tablets, boxes, combs, gravoirs, and knife handles exploded. These secular ivory works were informed by the adoption of a Parisian-style fashion from the second half of the fourteenth century. The style changed from long flowing robes to tight-fitting gowns with split sleeves, fitted cloaks, or short tunics with a belt at

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414 Writing tablets of wood, metal, or ivory were in use “from the days of the ancient Egyptians to the times of the Stuart kings, at least” and customarily used “to keep accounts, make brief records, or write notes.” The inner sections are sunken, and could be filled with wax into which notes could be inscribed, Robinson, “Notes on a French Gothic Writing Tablet,” 84–5; see Koechlin, *Lesivoiresgothiquesfrançais*, 1924, Vol. I, 43ff, Vol. II, nos. 1161–1720, Vol. III, pls, CXCVff on ivory writing tablets.

415 Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoiresmédiévaux*, 12; Margaret of Austria was known to be a patron of the arts. A 1523, inventory notes that Margaret kept silver bookmarks in an ivory box: “Item, ung petit coffret d’ivoire auquel il y a plusieurs legieres enseignes d’argent, a mettre dedans Heures,” Dagmar Eichberger, “Devotional Objects in Book Format: Diptychs in the Collection of Margaret of Austria and Her Family,” in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 306; see Henri Michelant, *Inventaire des vaisselles, joyaux, tapisseries, peintures, manuscrits, etc., de Marguerite d’Autriche, régente et gouvernante desPays-Bas, dressé en son palais de Malines, le 9 juillet 1523* (Bruxelles, 1871), 94; see also Manion and Muir, *The Art of the Book*, fig. Fig. 94: Anonymous Master. Margaret of Austria praying (right panel). Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, 305 × 146 mm. It is interesting to note that the setting is a private interior, not a church; most women of her rank at the time, including Isabella of Portugal, Isabella la Catolica, and Margaret of York, were notable patrons, see Eichberger, “Devotional Objects in Book Format,” 295–7.
the hips. The women have their hair braided in popular styles and wear contemporary headpieces. The religious ivory objects tend to maintain the traditional style.

As Gaborit-Chopin has noted, toward the end of the fourteenth century ivory was also less abundant, and the small amount that existed was thinned and augmented with other precious materials, including the gems and metals that were favored by high nobles. The end of the popularity of ivory mirror cases with secular subjects coincides with the beginning of increase of written sources. By the late fourteenth century, “ivory was no longer a fancy enough material to be given as gifts” by high nobles, but the material remained popular with lower nobles and burghers.

Medieval mirrors were small, often circular, and cherished by their privileged owners. The intended use of mirrors was for personal grooming, and they were often sold in sets with leather cases containing combs, hair parters, scissors, and razors. The mirrors were typically protected by being boxed, cased, or fitted into covers or frames, sometimes of ivory. Women wore and carried ivory mirrors, and they were considered costume elements. The circular format is unusual in art history, and similar to writing tablets, the mirrors were conceived like diptychs, and came in pairs. Mirror cases rarely survive in their original pairs, but the few that have support the theory that they were originally screwed together. These swiveling ivory frames were decorated with religious or secular allegories or scenes. Ivory mirror cases were

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416 For more on the clothing on these pieces, see Carns, “Cutting a Fine Figure.”
417 Ivoires médiévaux, 12.
419 Ibid., 10, “when ivory appears, it is mixed with precious metals, pearls, gems, and so on.”
420 Koechlin, Les ivoires gothiques français, 1924, vols. I: 9, 121, 360–1, 369; and Randall Jr., Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery, 179.
421 For a description of how, see Gaborit-Chopin, Ivoires médiévaux, 270.
423 A rare intact mirror pair is at the Louvre (Figure 2).
identified as a cohesive group by Koechlin as they have similar material, structure, style, and content, and subsequent scholars have followed suit.\(^{424}\) Though the subjects, figural groupings, and poses repeat, two identical mirror cases do not exist.\(^{425}\) This repetition and reuse suggests the use of model books, while also allowing for invention on the part of the carver.\(^{426}\)

In addition to the appearance of the ivory material, the size and feel of these objects is an important element to their enjoyment. The mirror cases under discussion here range in diameter from about 5.8 to 12.5 cm, and their small size calls for close scrutiny. Caviness noted the importance of size in her study of manuscript illuminations, remarking that when an object or image is tiny and just fits in the palm of the hand, it must be held close and enjoyed privately.\(^{427}\) Smallness lends itself to intimacy. Henk Van Os discussed how size and intimacy are related, and showed that a fifteenth century Holy Trinity sculpture’s small size revealed that it was intended to accompany private prayer.\(^{428}\) In the same way, the smaller scale of these ivory objects fosters meditation. These palm-of-the-hand-sized ivory mirror cases cannot be appreciated from a distance, the meticulous detail must be admired close-up. One has an intensely personal experience with objects of small scale,\(^{429}\) and part of enjoyment of ivory

\(^{424}\) Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothiques français*, 1924, vol. I: 21–4, see 370–1 for a discussion of the high cost of these objects (as opposed to simple pewter mirrors); for example, Smith, “The Gothic Mirror and the Female Gaze” relies heavily on Koechlin’s assessments.


\(^{427}\) Caviness, “Patron or Matron?,” 354.


\(^{429}\) Susan Stewart notes, “[t]he reduction in scale which the miniature presents skews the time and space relations of the everyday life world and as an object consumed, the miniature finds its ‘use value’ transformed into the infinite time of reverie,” *On Longing: Narratives of the*
mirror cases included the feel of the weight and smoothness of the object. Their scale lends itself to touching and holding with the hands, appealing to our natural desire for tactile manipulation. Touching small objects provides sizeable pleasure.\textsuperscript{430}

\textit{Patrons of Secular Gothic Ivory}

The primary patrons of art before the twelfth century had come from the upper aristocracy and holders of high church offices. This patron group increased to include additional social classes during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the types of commissions also increased. Local rulers and lower members of the nobility began acting as patrons, followed by civic fraternities and guilds, and private individuals, including wealthy townspeople, members of the patrician and merchant classes, and even tradesmen.\textsuperscript{431}


\textsuperscript{430} Johnson, “Touch,” 68, she refers to small art as “works specially designed to be held, turned, and other-wise manipulated by a beholder”; see also Herring, “Touch”, who discusses the “tactile appeal” of art forms (those created to appeal to the sense of touch), such as Chinese jade and ivory, and outlines the difficulty in describing the appeal of touch; Perricone, “The Place of Touch in the Arts,” 94, explains that Dunbar “argues for the social character and consequences of touch, the most profound consequence of touch being its contribution to the evolution of language”; see Dunbar, \textit{Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language}; see also Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, “Cognitive Adaptations for Social Exchange,” in \textit{The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 163–228; a recent symposium focused on the marginalization of small, decorative works of art: It’s a Small World After All: Art History and Archaeology Graduate Student Association Symposium, University of Missouri-Columbia, March 7-8, 2014.

\textsuperscript{431} Hourihane, \textit{The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art and Architecture}, vol. 2: 686 his example is a 1144 document in which Hermann, a burgher of Cologne, is noted as a founder of St. Mauritius, see also private donors of windows in churches.
Ivory remained a popular medium throughout the fourteenth century, with nobles making up the greater part of the patron group for objects of this kind. Many patrons of medieval books also owned ivory, and the similarity of themes on Gothic ivory and in the romance literature suggests that the patrons could easily have related the two in their minds. The main characters, as well as the audience for secular/vernacular literature, were not exclusively aristocratic, but included lesser courtiers and merchants, which is the same audience at which secular ivory was aimed.

On these objects, the accessories and symbols of (courtly) love abound. There are architectural elements, which suggest castles, flowers, to suggest gardens. The Biblical passage, “A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a fountain sealed,” might also explain the appearance of garden imagery on these ivory objects. These may be visual references to the Hortus conclusus, which literally translates to enclosed garden, which was an emblematic attribute of the Virgin Mary in medieval and renaissance art and literature around 1400. At this time, there were many metaphors for Mary as a container for God, such as those listed by

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432 Koechlin practically took for granted that the owners of these objects had been wealthy, Koechlin, Les ivoires gothiques français, 1924; Camille, The Medieval Art of Love, discussed ivories briefly in this work, and I will develop the groundwork he laid.


434 The Holy Bible; Song of Solomon 4:12.

Caesarius of Heisterbach (ca. 1180-ca. 1240) in his Dialogue of Miracles: “hill, castle, temple, chamber, city, palm, cedar, vine, rose, […] the rod that budded, the burning bush, the fleece of Gideon, Solomon’s throne of ivory and gold, the sealed fountain, the enclosed garden, and very many others which I must omit for the sake of brevity.”

Couples are represented as fashionably dressed in contemporary fourteenth century outfits, some of which are quite detailed.

Paul Williamson noted that royal courts actively collected ivory during this time, some of which eventually ended up in the cathedral and church treasuries. Though Elizabeth Sears has discussed the makeup of workshops, she also indicates the class of person who bought the objects. These small ivory objects were commonplace in fourteenth-century households.

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437 For more on the fashions in Gothic ivories, see Carns, “Cutting a Fine Figure.”

438 Williamson, “Ivory Carvings in English Treasuries from Before the Reformation,” 197, according to Williamson, the most common categories of ivory objects from this period are boxes, combs, staves, crosses, and tabernacles; The earliest English cathedral inventories to be published containing ivories were from Salisbury (1214 and 1222) and St. Paul’s in London (1245 and 1295). In the later Salisbury inventory (1222), there was no reference to ivory objects: “This might be taken to confirm what most students of Gothic ivory carvings have long believed on the basis of style: that there was a break in the production of ivories in the first decades of the thirteenth century,” ibid., 188, an earlier, but less full inventory is found at Winchester Cathedral, which noted the gifts of Bishop Henry of Blois (1129-71).

439 Sears, “Ivory and Ivory Workers in Medieval Paris.”
Ivory caskets were common in aristocratic households, and possessed by both women and men. They were used to house other precious items, such as jewels.\textsuperscript{441} C. Jean Campbell described the users of these objects as educated and wealthy.\textsuperscript{442} Buettner also pointed to the fact that gold, silver, and precious jewels would have been the materials used for royal objects de toilette, leaving ivory for those at a lower social class.\textsuperscript{443} Precious materials, including metals, gems, and ivory, were a required fashion accessory.\textsuperscript{444}

Objects in ivory, for example devotional polyptychs, figures of the Virgin, mirror cases, and caskets with scenes from Romances, were often used as engagement presents.\textsuperscript{445} These small portable ivory sculptures and carvings, both religious and secular, were aimed at, intended for, and owned by a largely lay female audience.\textsuperscript{446} It appears the ivory mirror cases, in particular, were the purview of women, in fact, Margaret, Duchess of Flanders (d.1405) had at least eight in

\textsuperscript{440} Williamson, “Ivory Carvings in English Treasuries from Before the Reformation,” 200; the Valois, who were not known as avid ivory collectors, also had extravagant ivory made. Philippe le Hardi, in 1377, acquired twenty-six pounds of ivory from Jehan Girost and sent it to Jean de Marville. In the 1380 inventory of King Charles V, various types of ivory objects are mentioned: mirrors, knives, horns, caskets, etc., as well as religious themed tableaux and sculpted diptychs, Gaborit-Chopin, \textit{Ivoires médiévaux}, 12, calls Charles V the “véritable amateur d’ivoires pour cette période,” though she says his love of ivories came after his coronation, because the 1363 inventory (when he was dauphin) cites only three pieces; devotional diptychs were made frequently of ivory and “mostly owned by important noble families,” Eichberger, “Devotional Objects in Book Format,” 294; for examples, see Van Os, \textit{The Art of Devotion}, plates 1 and 6.
\textsuperscript{441} See, for example, Louis Douët d’Arcq, \textit{Nouveau recueil de comptes de l’argenterie des rois de France} (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1874), no. 57, p.46.
\textsuperscript{442} Campbell, “Courting, Harlotry and the Art of Gothic Ivory Carving.”
\textsuperscript{443} Buettner, “Circular Arguments”; Buettner notes the art historical focus on consumption and production rather than “the distribution of artistic goods”, and for this article, she studies “the ‘life of things’ by focusing on gift giving,” ibid., 598.
\textsuperscript{446} Gaborit-Chopin, \textit{Ivoires médiévaux}, 270.
one of her chateaux. Though no single secular Gothic ivory piece can be matched to a specific medieval owner, it has become clear that the market for these objects was cornered by the upper middle class, people such as burghers and lesser nobles, and that there was a close association between these objects, courtship, and women.

Secular objects and items for personal devotion are often found listed in wills. Inventories also serve to demonstrate the popularity of ivory objects in the Gothic era. From the inventories, we know that wealthy royal men, such as Philippe le Bel (1268-1314), Charles V (1338-1380), and his brother Jean, Duc de Berry (1340-1416) had ivory objects in their collections, though few specific items are now identifiable. In the thirteenth century, ivory is mentioned more frequently in lay collections, including those of Queen Marie of Luxembourg, Clemence of Hungary, Jeanne of Burgundy, and Jeanne d’Évreux. Orders and receipts for payment provide more detail regarding craft and technique. Neil Stratford notes that in Queen Eleanor’s household account from 1251-3, three and a half pounds of ivory was purchased “for

447 “Though produced throughout the Middle Ages, it was indeed in the late 13th century, in Paris and during the reign of Philip the Fair in particular, that mirrors became a best-selling item, produced, sold, acquired, and, perhaps, given by the hundreds,” Buettner, “Circular Arguments,” 2; see Koechlin, Les ivoires gothiques français, 1924, vol. I, 370; see also Ingeborg Krueger, Glasspiegel im Mittelalter: Fakten, Funde und Fragen (Bonn: Rhein. Landesmuseum, 1990) for a history of mirrors in the middle ages; Herbert Grabes, The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and the English Renaissance (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982) for a discussion of the mirror as metaphor; and Buettner, “Circular Arguments.”

448 Evidence in wills and inventories suggest that courtly/romance subjects were also popular motifs on metal work, though little remains, Lightbown, Secular Goldsmith’s Work.


the carving of images,” and in the 1299-1300 accounts of King Edward I, a number of ivory objects are noted.\textsuperscript{452}

Mahaut, Countess of Artois (1302-29), owned secular ivories as well as chivalric manuscripts, and her inventories document her special affinity for Parisian ivory.\textsuperscript{453} She purchased her objects personally as well. For example, the inventory of 1315 mentions that Jehan le Selleur of Paris, who was a middleman/merchant who paired people with their desired objects, sold Mahaut two ivory combs with cases and a hair parter “in her presence.”\textsuperscript{454} She also corresponded with Jehan le Selleur about the decoration of an ivory mirror case.\textsuperscript{455} Mahaut later purchased a toiletry set: a mirror-back and two combs in a pressed leather case along with ivory and wooden candlesticks “by which the Duke would read romances.”\textsuperscript{456} Her inventory of 1322 contains the first appearance of the term “ivoirier,” meaning one who works or sculpts in ivory.\textsuperscript{457}

Ivory objects were also traditionally left to daughters. This is the case in the will of Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex (1319-22), who chose to leave his ivory objects to his daughters, specifically “two petites ymages de nostre dame de yvor, an ymage de

\textsuperscript{452} Specifically, “a box, a chess set, a bowl and two combs,” Stratford, “Gothic Ivory Carving in England,” 107.


\textsuperscript{454} This could mean she went to his shop or he came to her palace Richard, \textit{Une petite-nièce de Saint Louis}, 322.

\textsuperscript{455} Ibid., 321; Sears, “Ivory and Ivory Workers in Medieval Paris,” 31–2, notes that Jehan le Selleur appeared in Paris tax rolls as both ivoirier and mercier; Jehan le Selleur is also noted by Gaborit-Chopin, \textit{Ivoires médiévaux}, 269.

\textsuperscript{456} Richard, \textit{Une petite-nièce de Saint Louis}, 323.

\textsuperscript{457} See Richard, \textit{Une petite-nièce de Saint Louis}.
nostaire dame de yvor en une Tabernacle cluse, and a petite ymage de yvor de Seinte Katerine."\textsuperscript{458}

In the 1322 inventory of Roger of Mortimer, there is a reference to a “small statue of the Holy Virgin made from ivory,” which is noted as having belonged to his wife.\textsuperscript{459} According to Andreas Capellanus, ivory mirrors were acceptable lover’s gifts which women enjoyed receiving.\textsuperscript{460} What is also interesting to note is Capellanus discussed the gifts of ivory in a book about the proper way to court a lady; these objects were part of the process of wooing.

Sales of ivory objects often took place in the workshops where they were created.\textsuperscript{461} There were also shopkeepers (merciers) who sold assorted domestic and imported luxury items such as writing tablets, mirrors, combs, lamps, and gaming pieces.\textsuperscript{462} For those living outside of the cities of production, there were traveling salesmen or peddlers.\textsuperscript{463} How these objects were procured by women remains unclear, they may have been commissioned by the women themselves, or acquired through intermediaries, or given to the women as gifts. Ivory objects were purchased “either from ivory makers or from middlemen” and the ones with secular imagery were often given as love pledges.\textsuperscript{464}

\textsuperscript{460} André, le chapelain, \textit{Andreas Capellanus on Love}, 268–9.
\textsuperscript{462} Sears, “Ivory and Ivory Workers in Medieval Paris,” 31.
\textsuperscript{464} Buettner, “Circular Arguments,” 8–9; see also Sears, “Ivory and Ivory Workers in Medieval Paris.”
Gothic Artists, Guilds, Ateliers, and Merchants

These changes in the patronage group also affected the artists themselves, who began to display increasingly distinct personal identities.\(^{465}\) Previous to this time, members of the church, court, or nobility commissioned and specified the majority of the details of the pieces, and more often than not, the finished work would be inscribed with the name of the individual or group for whom it was made.\(^{466}\) Artists, both lay and religious, were generally anonymous.\(^{467}\)

With the growth of cities, there was an increase in the wealth of the middle class; in fact, this period saw the creation of a bourgeois class. Local craftsmen, artisans, merchants, etc., organized themselves into trade guilds, ateliers, and confraternities in order to protect their shared interests. They also began instituting apprenticeship systems. The twelfth-century treatise on how to perform certain arts by Theophilus represents this growing focus on proper training and recipes.\(^{468}\)

Some artists began to show themselves at work, or even name themselves. There was an increase in the number of lay artists, and scholars have found images of lay and monastic artisans working side by side.\(^{469}\) An early example of a named artist, in the twelfth century, is the

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\(^{466}\) Gilbert, “What Did the Renaissance Patron Buy?”, discusses the flexibility of patron/artist power over content.

\(^{467}\) Art historical attribution for this period generally depends on stylistic analysis.


\(^{469}\) See Egbert, *The Mediaeval Artist at Work*, plate IX.
sculptor Gislebertus, and in the fourteenth century, Claus Sluter. Various types of artists were often required to be members of a guild. As a result, and thanks to the record-keeping in these guilds, more artists are known to us by name in this period than any previous.

Étienne Boileau’s _Livre des métiers_ (c.1260-70) stated that by the mid-thirteenth century there were at least one hundred guilds in Paris. By the fourteenth century, there were three hundred and fifty guilds in Paris. Boileau also stated that ivory makers were separated by the type of object they made. The sacred and profane were not entirely distinct categories in medieval thought or in the production of ivory, and the same ateliers made both religious and romance objects.

The sense of personal artistic achievement shows the new relationship of the artisan to society starting late in the twelfth century and blossoming in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

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470 See Sherry C.M. Lindquist, “‘The Will of a Princely Patron’ and Artists at the Burgundian Court,” in _Artists at Court: Image-Making and Identity: 1300-1550_ (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 46–56, the author argues against the idea that pits anonymous Medieval craftsmen against self-conscious Renaissance artists, citing Claus Sluter at the court of Philip the Bold.
471 Étienne Boileau, _Le livre des métiers, XIIIe siècle: Publié par René de Lespinasse et François Bonnardot_ (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1980).
473 Gaborit-Chopin, _Ivoires médiévaux_, 269.
474 Ibid., 270: “Le classement des objets d’art du Moyen Âge marque généralement une nette séparation entre les œuvres religieuses et les œuvres profanes. Or, la réalité médiévale réfute ce principe, et la distinction établie de nos jours entre le profane et le sacré semble incompatible avec la mentalité des hommes du Moyen Âge : leur monde était d’abord et fondamentalement chrétien, dans toutes ses expressions, aussi bien religieuses que profanes, et le profane ne peut être exclu du religieux”; Even in 1943, scholars noted that the craftsmen who created secular works “did not confine their efforts to one field alone, but that the same shop, if not the same men, manufactured religious images and secular objects,” Robinson, “Notes on a French Gothic Writing Tablet,” 86.
centuries. The abundant repetition of types of works and scenes testifies to the existence of ateliers and mass-production. Model books also demonstrate an increased focus on the production of stylistically similar works, and sketchbooks have been found revealing the existence of named individual artists, for example, in the thirteenth century, Villard de Honnecourt.\footnote{See Villard de Honnecourt, \textit{Album de Villard de Honnecourt, architecte du XIIIe siècle: reproduction des 66 pages et dessins du manuscrit français 19093 de la Bibliothèque nationale}, ed. Henri Auguste Omont (Paris: Berthaud Frères, 1906), which is available online at http://archive.org/details/albumdevillardde00vill; and Villard de Honnecourt, \textit{The Sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt}, ed. Theodore Bowie (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959); Bibliothèque nationale de France, “Les cathédrales et Villard de Honnecourt: architecture medievale et gothique,” accessed April 4, 2014, http://classes.bnf.fr/villard/, which also reproduces a number of the sheets.} Ivory workers and manuscript illuminators were not working from the same models or model books,\footnote{Gaborit-Chopin, \textit{Ivoires médiévaux}, 271.} and ivory carvers worked in other media as well.\footnote{Sears, “Ivory and Ivory Workers in Medieval Paris”, Sears examined 13th century guild regulations and other Medieval documents (such as tax rolls, inventories, and royal accounts), and laid out working practices and norms during the 13th and 14th centuries.}

\textit{Gothic Gift Culture}

The practice of giving, endowing, and exchanging gifts in the Middle Ages was complex, and operated within a broad international context.\footnote{See the seminal work on gift exchange, Marcel Mauss, “Essai sur le Don: Forme et Raison de L’échange dans les Sociétés Archaiques,” \textit{L’Année sociologique}, Nouvelle série, 1 (1923): 30–186; Walter Benjamin’s talk, “Unpacking My Library: A Talk About Book Collecting,” in \textit{Illuminations}, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), which provided the idea of object biography; (see his influence in Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, “The Cultural Biography of Objects,” \textit{World Archaeology} 31, no. 2 [1999]: 169–78); see also some more recent works: Coerver, “Donna/Dono”; Esther Cohen and Mayke B. De Jong, eds., \textit{Medieval Transformations: Texts, Power, and Gifts in Context}, vol. 11, Cultures, Beliefs and Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 2001), which gives an overview of historians using theory on gifts;} There was much ritual exchange in the European Middle Ages, and gift giving was a sign of largesse.\footnote{For a specific focus on the language of medieval gift giving, and examples of peasants, the elderly, women, and the elite, see Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre, eds., \textit{The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).} The tradition of tributes
included gifts of raw materials, food, spices, as well as artistic objects and luxury items.\textsuperscript{480} Just as one gave gifts (of prayers and alms) to God and expected in return a blessing and protection, medieval gift-giving was centered on reciprocity.\textsuperscript{481} Receiving a gift was an obligation and it was important that both giver and recipient give due consideration to the most advantageous item and its timing.\textsuperscript{482} There was a desire for gifts to be memorable and precious, and also personal.\textsuperscript{483} The upper nobility tended towards gifts of “joyaux (jewelry, jewels) and vaisselle (plate),” of rare and expensive materials, which were intended to be displayed and decorate the bodies and homes of the recipients.\textsuperscript{484} For example, on New Year’s Day (a religious festival as well as a secular feast, and also known as the Feast of Fools), the expectation was that royalty were to be generous and give gifts to all levels of staff. The feast atmosphere influenced gifts at all levels, from the very simple to elaborate jeweled cups and personalized jewelry.\textsuperscript{485}

\textsuperscript{480} See Belozerskaya, \textit{Luxury Arts of the Renaissance} for examples of sumptuous gifts from the Renaissance.
\textsuperscript{481} Buettner, “Past Presents,” 598.
\textsuperscript{482} The appropriate timing of gifts is discussed in ibid., 600.
\textsuperscript{483} Buettner focuses on presentation miniatures to demonstrate the aura and solemnity of gift-giving. “The artist has perfectly captured the quasiliturgical nature of court culture – a culture in which seeing and being seen were of paramount importance,” ibid., 609.
\textsuperscript{484} Ibid., 604.
\textsuperscript{485} For a longer description of New Year’s gifts, see Jenny Stratford, “The Goldenes Rössl and the French Royal Collections,” in \textit{Treasure in the Medieval West} (Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 2000), 109–33; see also Buettner, “Past Presents”; in Camille, “Dr. Witkowski’s Anus: French Doctors, German Homosexuals and the Obscene in Medieval Church Art,” 30, Camille argues that during the Feast of Fools a topsy-turvy inversion was the aim.
The employment of intermediaries for gift-giving was common, and often expected. Christine de Pisan describes chamberlains as messengers, even between husbands and wives, as “it was not the custom among higher nobility for ladies to be as commonly in the presence of their husbands as other women.” Inventories confirm that gifts between spouses and even between parents and children in the same household were presented through intermediaries.

Gifts also played an important role in chivalric culture and romantic rituals. In his Welsche Gast (c.1215), a manual of good behavior for nobles, Thomasin von Zerclaere “contrasted open chivalric gifts with hidden monetary transactions,” saying that gifts at court are required to be visible, as this public action allows for the ritual as well as the gift to be evaluated for appropriateness. In chivalric culture, the offering of a knight’s sword gave the lady a superior role, and the suitor used the gift to accomplish heroic deeds to prove him worthy of her love. The Lancelot story illustrates how encouragement could change the course of a battle, as a maiden suggests that Guinevere send Lancelot a public sign of her affection, which gave him greater military strength. For example, in the Romance of the Châtelain of Coucy, as in many romances of the time, the Lady of Vermandois gave her suitor a token to wear in tournament.

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487 Buettner, “Past Presents,” 614; examples can be found in Bernard Prost and Henri Prost, Inventaires mobiliers et extraits des comptes des ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois (1363-1477) (Paris: E. Leroux, 1902), vol 2, no 1195; and Jan Hirschbiegel, Etrennes: Untersuchungen zum höfischen Geschenkverkehr im spätmittelalterlichen Frankreich der Zeit König Karls VI. (1380-1422), vol. 60, Pariser historische Studien (München: Oldenbourg, 2003), nos. 116–7, which stated Philip the Bold delegated to his butler the chore of bringing his wife some diamonds and a “habitual” gift of 1,000 francs.
488 Buettner, “Past Presents,” 619; this is the thirteenth of Zerclaere’s rules about largesse (milte) and proper gift giving: Thomasin von Zerclaere, Der Welsche Gast, ed. F.W. von Kries, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 425 (Göppingen: Kümerle, 1984), l. 15,239–62.
490 Ibid., 208; see Filippo Luigi Polidori and Luciano Banchi, eds., La Tavola ritonda, o L’istoria di Tristano (Bologna: G. Romagnoli, 1864), vols. I, 28.
She also gave him a ring and strands of her hair.\textsuperscript{491} The talismanic power of the gift bound man to woman and woman to man. Furthermore, association with a heroic male raised the woman’s social status.\textsuperscript{492} The Lady of the Lake explained how Guinevere must be concerned with the honor of Lancelot because her honor “functions as an appendage to his.”\textsuperscript{493} There is also strength gleaned from the joy associated with lover’s gifts.

\textit{Ivory Objects as Gifts}

Not only have secular ivory objects been given as gifts; gift exchange has also been portrayed on these objects. The presence of gift-giving imagery on secular Gothic ivory objects confirms that these items were considered suitable to give and receive. At the Walters Art Museum, there is a secular Gothic mirror case, (Figure 1), which depicts two figures and the gift of a flower. The background is crosshatched, and the inner ring of the frame has a rope-like appearance.\textsuperscript{494} Both figures are standing, and the suitor is pictured to the proper right of the lady. Both the lady and the youth wear contemporary fashions. The youth wears a houppelande with long dagged-edged sleeves and an intricately designed belt, as well as a big cloth chaperon. The lady wears a long gown with pendant sleeves hemmed with fur, the hem of which covers her feet and pools on the ground. A belt with a rose embellishment cinches her tiny waist. On her head an elaborate headdress (\textit{à bourrelet}). The suitor holds a rose between them in his left hand and his right hand rests on his belt. His gaze is at the lady’s chest. She is depicted taller than her suitor,

\textsuperscript{492} Coerver, “Donna/Dono,” 208.
\textsuperscript{493} Ibid., 210.
\textsuperscript{494} This piece formerly had corner leaf projections. This was ascertained by Randall from an 18th c. Venetian drawing, see \textit{Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery}, 234, note 5, the mirror case is reproduced as his cat. 348.
which enhances the fact that she gazes down at him. Her right hand is raised, possibly to accept the rose, and her left hand hovers near her side. Trees or shrubs to left and right of the couple suggest a garden. On the Walters case, there is a banner rising from the rose and extending above and behind the suitor, which reads “PRENES,” meaning take.

A similar motif in a very similar style is seen on a mirror case at Cluny, (Figure 2). Again, we have two standing figures, the suitor on the left and the lady on the right, with a crosshatched background and trees and flowers around them, suggesting a garden setting. The couple is fashionably dressed, wearing almost exactly the same outfits we saw on the couple on the case from the Walters (Figure 1): a houppelande for the youth, a long fur-hemmed gown for the lady, and large headwear for both of them. On this mirror case the suitor’s cap has vine details to match those in his garment. The suitor is holding up a wreath of flowers or chaplet in his left hand, and pointing (at it? suggesting speech?) with his right hand. In the crook of her left arm, the lady holds a dog, while her right hand reaches towards a rose that grows from a plant between the couple. Emanating from the wreath held by the youth and extending around and behind him is a banner, which reads “EN GRE.”

In 1939, Marvin Chauncey Ross of the Walters Gallery connected the Louvre piece to the mirror case in the Walters (Figure 1), noting that together the inscriptions, “prenes” and “en gre,” form a motto from a poem by Christine de Pisan, prenez en gre le don de votre amant (take kindly the gift of your lover). Ross used the costumes to date and locate the pieces to the early

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495 On this example, the foliated corner termini remain intact.
496 Ross corrected Koechlin, who claimed that our Cluny case (Figure 2) was a nineteenth-century forgery, Marvin Chauncey Ross, “A Gothic Ivory Mirror-Case,” The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery 2 (1939): 109–11, under discussion are Paris, Musée du Louvre (currently on loan to the Musée national du Moyen Âge-Musée de Cluny), no. OA 115, and Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, no.71.107.
fifteenth century in Flanders, and pointed out their appearance in earlier inventories. Later on, Richard Randall confirmed through stylistic similarities that these two mirror cases are a matched pendant pair. Randall explained that two lovers facing each other in this way was a convention of Italian wedding portraits in the fifteenth century. Other imagery included a suitor offering his lady a ring, or a couple joining hands with a priest as the witness. Illustrations of betrothals and weddings can be found in the decorations of canon-law manuscripts. With the offering of a rose and a circular wreath, this mirror case pair may have been created to commemorate a marriage, quite possibly as a gift between the betrothed.

497 Randall Jr., Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery.
499 Sandler, “A Bawdy Betrothal in the Ormesby Psalter,” 154, a useful example is Gratian’s Decretum of the 13th and 14th centuries; for reproductions of many illustrations of betrothals and marriages, see Anthony Melnikas, The Corpus of the Miniatures in the Manuscripts of Decretum Gratiani (Rome: Institutum Gratianum, 1975), III, causae XXVII–XXXVI.
Chapter 5: Touching [and] Secular Gothic Ivory

Writing of a mirror case, acquired in 1952 by Harvard’s Fogg Art Museum, Harry Bober noted “the beautiful patina and texture of the ivory must be seen and touched to be fully appreciated.” He also related the hunting party scene to the literature and tradition of courtly love. In a similar vein Frederick Baekeland, in his 1972 thesis from NYU, *Two Kinds of Symbolism in a Gothic Ivory Casket*, noted the three-dimensionality of the secular ivory object and posited the importance of the relationships between the sides; he suggested the two stories on them represent two different ways of looking at love. Using these two authors’ observations on touch and three-dimensionality as a jumping off point, we shall look at how secular Gothic ivory objects could be enjoyed tactilely, keeping in mind that lover’s gifts were often a reason to celebrate the senses, as love and the senses are closely related. The theme of the Five Senses was considered an appropriate topic for a wedding or lover’s gift, and in this case, the imagery focused on one sense, Touch, an important element of the lovers’ interaction.

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500 Bober, “French Gothic Ivory Mirror Case.”
501 Baekeland, “Two Kinds of Symbolism in a Gothic Ivory Casket.”
502 Nordenfalk mentions inscriptions on lovers’ gifts, such as the Fuller Brooch, as well as poetry of the thirteenth century which enumerates how each sense is used to adore the beloved, Carl Nordenfalk, “Les cinq sens dans l’art du Moyen-Age,” *Revue de l’Art* XXXLV (1976): 21; the inscription on the Fuller Brooch reads: Aeduwen owns me. May the Lord curse the man who takes me from her, David M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork, 700-1100* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1964), 86; for examples of lovers enumerating their adored by the five senses, see G.L. Brook, ed., *The Harley Lyrics, the Middle English Lyrics of Ms. Harley 2253* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1948), esp. No. 88; for a discussion of gifts and the senses in Byzantium, see Pentcheva, “The Performative Icon”; “the multisensory experience triggered by the performance of the Psalms resembles the sensual experience of other genres of writing. For instance, in Byzantium, letters were often sent with gifts, so that the sound of reading the letter was linked to the smell and taste of the gifts. The resulting experience was simultaneously aural, visual, tactile, and olfactory,” ibid., 648.
503 The Fuller Brooch and the Lady and the Unicorn tapestries were both wedding gifts, see Nordenfalk, “Les cinq sens dans l’art du Moyen-Age,” 27.
Seeing events portrayed encouraged imagining the events occurring, and linking sensory experiences to these imaginings.\(^{504}\) In the absence of God, the sender of a letter, giver of a gift, or lover, the imagination uses the senses to bring the invisible or intangible closer.

**Ovid’s Gradus Amoris, Touch, and Ivory**

The *gradus amoris* (sometimes referred to as *quinque lineae amoris*) describes the progression of falling in love in increasingly intimate steps from sight to consummation. Its original source can be traced in Latin to Ovid’s *Ars amatoria* which provided five steps: sight, conversation, touch, kiss, and the deed (*visus, colloquium/alloquium, tactus, osculum, factum/coitus*)\(^{505}\) The motif became quite popular from the twelfth century onwards, both in secular and religious literature.\(^{506}\) As Lionel J. Friedman put it in the 1960s, “The concept of the *gradus amoris* […] determine[s] the sequence of actions in a narrative line in which an erotic experience is transformed by metaphor and personification.”\(^{507}\) Authorial uses of the *gradus amoris* vary in both number and type. Like many other motifs of medieval literature, the steps

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\(^{505}\) Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, vers. 4.13.

\(^{506}\) Connie Hopkins, “All Roads Lead to Lechery: Progressions into Sexual Sin in Some Late Medieval Manuals of Religious Instruction” (M.A., Utrecht University, 2009).

can be rewritten to expand or contract.\footnote{508} In fact, the first step (sight) is often omitted. Andreas Capellanus explained four sequential steps: the giving of hope, the granting of a kiss, the enjoyment of an embrace, and the yielding of the whole person (\textit{spei datio, osculi exhibitio, amplexus fruition, totius personæ concessio}).\footnote{509} Many authors of medieval romances used the \textit{gradus amoris} to structure their plots, for example, the \textit{Lais} of Marie de France could be viewed through the lens of the \textit{gradus amoris}, as her writings include lovers laughing, playing, and talking, as well as lying down next to one another in bed, though the act of sex itself is left to the imagination, just as in our ivories. Both authors of the \textit{Roman de la Rose} used the \textit{gradus amoris} to organize the sequence of love. The thirteenth century Matthew of Vendôme thought Ovid’s list was incomplete and provided six phases: looking, lust, approach, conversation, flattery, and consummation (\textit{intuitus, concupiscentia, accessit, alloquium, blandimentum, and adulterium}).\footnote{510}

An example of an author using the \textit{gradus amoris} and focusing on the senses can be found in Richard de Fournival’s \textit{Bestiare d’amour}.

\footnote{508}{The reworking of motifs in Medieval literature is the topic of Douglas Kelly, \textit{The Conspiracy of Allusion: Description, Rewriting and Authorship from Macrobius to Medieval Romance} (Leiden: Brill, 1999); for the \textit{gradus amoris} as it relates to issues of consent in marriage, see especially Chapter 5: The Issue and Topics of Consent in Eneas, Erec, and the Bel Inconnu, ibid., 171–213; and Stacey Layne Hahn, “Patterned Diversity: Hierarchy and Love in the Prose Lancelot” (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, 1988).}

\footnote{509}{Don Alfred Monson, \textit{Andreas Capellanus, Scholasticism, & the Courtly Tradition} (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 194.}

\footnote{510}{Matthew of Vendôme, \textit{Ars versificatoria}, ed. Louis Bourgain (Paris: Société générale de la librairie catholique, 1879), XLIX.}

\footnote{511}{Multiple copies exist with the most published being BM MS Harl. 273 and Paris, BN, fr. 412, see Richard de Fournival, \textit{Master Richard’s Bestiary of Love and Response}, trans. Jeannette Beer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); on MS fr. 412, see Cesare Segre, ed., \textit{Li bestiaires d’amours di maistre Richart de Fornival e li response du bestiaire} (Milano: R. Ricciardi, 1957), xxxvii f.; Richard de Fournival, \textit{Le bestiaire d’amour: Suivi de la réponse de la dame} (Paris: C. Hippeau, 1860) which includes a transcription of the manuscript with 48 line-drawings; see also Nordenfalk, “Les cinq sens dans l’art du Moyen-Age”, especially p.22-3 and fig.9; Roberto Crespo, \textit{Una versione pisana inedita del Bestiaire d’amours} (Leiden:}
combination of the Bestiary and Art of Love (*Ars amatoria*) genres. It explained the symbolism “in terms of secular love, not in terms of clerical Christianity” and used allegory in a new way. In it, the nature of knowing, memory, knowledge, and the senses were studied. The *Bestiaire d’amour* outlined what Richard thought was important to know about the senses, though, it was “not Richard’s immediate purpose in the *Bestiaire* to discuss the senses or sense organs.” His actual purpose was to describe a man’s and a woman’s love as it progressed. In his description, Love was awakened by the five senses, the first of which is sight. Richard was taken in by three senses at once: hearing, sight, and smell. If he had been taken in by taste

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514 For Roman sources of the rhetorical tradition, see Frances Amelia Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), Chapter 1; Yates cites the most important Latin sources for the classical art of memory as: Quintilian, Institutio oratoria; Cicero, De oratore; anon, Ad C. Herennium libri IV; and the Ars memorativa (the art of memory); see also Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 71–75; and Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind*, chap. 8; the visual is still used to aid in memory. See, for example the “memory palace” discussed in a recent TED talk on competitive memorizing, Joshua Foer, *Feats of Memory Anyone Can Do*, TED 2012 (Long Beach, CA, 2012), http://www.ted.com/talks/joshua_foer_feats_of_memory_anyone_can_do.html.


(through kissing) and by touch (through embracing), he claimed he would have lost his senses and risked death.\(^{518}\) Richard described sight as the noblest sense, but recognized the importance of the others, noting that each “has its particular object: Voice serves hearing, colors sight, odors smell, and flavors taste.”\(^{519}\) For our purposes, it is important to note his feelings on touch: “many things serve touch, for with it one feels hot, cold, moist, dry, rough, smooth, and many other things.”\(^{520}\)

Though there are secular Gothic ivory objects that tell a specific tale or story,\(^{521}\) some of the “romance” ivories that are not easily aligned with a particular plotline may be representing the various stages along the ladder of love, following the *gradus amoris*: the lovers see one another, they lust after one another, they meet, exchange a conversation and/or gift, touch one another, kiss, and finally make love.\(^{522}\)

On ivory, the sex act is not portrayed directly, but alluded to through representations of anticipation, longing, and imagining. Delay and restriction heighten the experience. It makes sense that this imagery would appear on secular Gothic ivory objects as they were often given as


\(^{520}\) Sears, “Sensory Perception and Its Metaphors,” 23; see Segre, *Li bestiaires d’amours*, 35; Richard de Fournival, *Master Richard’s Bestiary of Love and Response*, 12; we will discuss further in a later chapter how Aristotle, and hence Richard, noted difficulty with the definition of the sense of touch.

\(^{521}\) For example, the *Fountain of Youth* mirror case in Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, 71.170 and *Gawain on the perilous bed* mirror case from Bologna, Museo Civico Medievale, 697.

\(^{522}\) Buettner, “Circular Arguments,” 6–7; Gaborit-Chopin briefly acknowledged this connection recently as well. Her example is a pair of mirror cases, Paris, Musee du Louvre, MRR 197: “lovers in a garden, which are a kind of gradus amoris – a veritable booklet of courtly scenes with all the symbols and accessories of Love (crown, chapel of flowers, gloves, bird, small dog),” “Gothic Ivories: Realities and Prospects,” 174.
gifts between lovers. The varying degrees of chastity and vulgarity pictured on these object could be interpreted as artistic renditions of the different phases of the gradus amoris occurring in libidinously charged spaces where characters are watching, being watched, touching, and being touched.

**Visus: Sight Leading to Lust and Hope**

The first step of the gradus amoris is sight (visus/intuitus), which more often than not creates lust (concupiscentia) and hope that the feeling is reciprocated (spei datio). Sight has the power to stimulate arousal, sexually as well as spiritually, and the eye is an erogenous zone. The imagery on some ivory mirror cases, for example, cases at the Walters Art Museum (Figure 3) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 4), depicts how lovers are first taken in by sight, often by the aid of arrows/cupid.

In the Walters piece (Figure 3), the God of Love, in a tree above two figures, takes aim at the two below with arrows. To the left of the tree is the suitor, who is seated with crossed legs, a symbol of power, typical of the time of Philippe le Bel and has a bird on his wrist, probably a falcon. The frequent occurrence of the falcon and hound make reference to the hunt and pursuit of animals as well as of women. The imagery of falcons on the ivories under

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523 Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, 120; the practice of focusing on the senses produced the culture of devotional practice, and created books of hours, treatises (e.g. Grosseteste’s Castle of Love), hymns, devotional images (e.g. Arma Christi), which “all stress the mediation of ‘performative vision’: intense contemplation of holy scenes in which the individual ‘actively’ participates by a vivid exercise of the imagination,” Nichols, Kablitz, and Calhoun, *Rethinking the Medieval Senses*, ix.

524 Surrounding the scene are seven lobes, with seven faces or masks appearing in the spandrels. The corner termini are crouching monsters.


discussion insinuates that the lady’s heart can be conquered like a prey. This imagery also draws a parallel between the falcon and the faithful lover: each is free to go, making their return that much sweeter. The suitor here may be feeding or hooding the falcon.

On the other side of the tree is a kneeling lady, who holds a chaplet and appears to be pierced by an arrow in the chest. Both figures have deep V folds in their groin area, calling attention to those locations. The eye of the female figure seems to have been drilled and darkened, perhaps to highlight that she and the youth are falling in love at first sight. Furthermore, the gazes of the two figures, though on opposite sides of the tree trunk, appear to meet one another. The emphasis on the lovers seeing one another as well as the inclusion of the God of Love and his arrows can easily be read as an image of the early stage of falling in love: sight, followed by lust.

The entire surface of the case is worn, and especially eroded are the faces of all three figures, the arrows, the bird, and the tree trunk. When viewed at an angle, it becomes clear that there is an all-over wear pattern, as the highest points of ivory have been worn down, and there are also specific spots that are worn from being rubbed repeatedly and intentionally. This wear is the result of the owner repeatedly touching, handling, and rubbing the ivory, possibly while thinking about the lover. The spot where the arrow pierces the lady’s breast has been rubbed to the point that the arrow and her hand seem to melt into her chest. The same effect is seen on the face of the suitor, which no longer has a nose or right eye, as well as the smoothed body of the falcon he holds. This wear is the result of the owner repeatedly touching, handling, and rubbing the ivory, and I suggest that this was done while thinking about the lover. The suitor may be placing the hood on the falcon, which can be an analogue or surrogate for sexual intercourse, in

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527 At least according to Buettner, “Circular Arguments,” 6.
which the male body part (the beak) is fit into a female body part (the hood), and heightens the sensuality of his action.

When holding ivory, it is difficult to resist the desire to move one’s fingers over the surface and feel the bumps and ridges of the carvings. It has a feel reminiscent of skin, and when held in the hands and rubbed, the material retains the hands’ heat, adding to the flesh-like sensation. Frottage, from the French _frotter_ (to rub), is sexual rubbing, “the act of obtaining sexual stimulation by rubbing against a person or object.”

Mirror cases, especially ones with scenes of lovers, could have played a part in the sex lives of their owners, their surfaces standing in for the lovers’ bodies, being caressed and fondled as surrogates. The wear patterns on this ivory in particular support the hypothesis that the owner could have engaged in frottage, rubbing the ivory for sexual gratification.

On a mirror back at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 4), there are two pairs of lovers on either side of a tree in which the God of Love appears. From his perch, the God aims at the lovers below. There are spandrels to the left and right of the God, inside which appear trefoil designs. Though much of the surface of the ivory is worn in the area around the God, he seems to have a bird near him, and he is holding an arrow aimed at the couple on the right. The bird, probably a falcon, is again an allusion to the hunt or the taming of the beloved. The suitor to the right of the tree is kneeling, similar to other figures who await crowning, though the scene contains no chaplet. He raises his right hand toward the lady’s body, perhaps caressing it, and her left hand cups his hand. The lady is standing and raises her right hand. This meeting pair is about

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528 Merriam-Webster, “Frottage,” _Merriam-Webster.com_, accessed September 4, 2014, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/frottage, Surrealists such as Max Ernst also used this term to describe the transfer of textures onto paper or canvas through rubbing.

529 The other half of this mirror case is probably also in Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 15).

530 The four corner termini are crouching monsters with tails.
to be struck by the arrow, while in the couple to the left of the tree trunk the suitor seems to be swooning from the effects of the arrow piercing his heart. His groin is emphasized by deep cuts in a V shape. The lady stands nearer the frame and appears to be embracing or catching him. This piece also has evidence of possible frottage. There is loss of detail from rubbing in the areas where the lovers’ bodies touch, and the way the noses fade into the faces of the lovers suggests frequent touches. The figures all wear contemporary dress and stylish hairstyles. These two pairs can be representing multiple steps in the beginning of a courtship of one couple: they meet, are struck by love’s arrow, and embrace.

**Accessit, alloquium, blandimentum: Approaching, Speaking with, and Flattering the Lover**

The step of approaching, meeting, and talking with the beloved can be seen on many mirror cases. An indication of speech is identifiable in works of this period by figures who are pointing a finger, a traditional sign of conversation, and parallel hand gestures often indicate the passing of information between characters.\(^531\)

Carved into a mirror case at the Victoria & Albert Museum (Figure 5) is a pair of seated figures inside a tent playing chess.\(^532\) The game of chess could be seen as an opportunity for lovers to chat.\(^533\) Courtly love, like chess, has strict rules.\(^534\) On the mirror case, the tent is indicated by the drapery around the outer rim of the frame. The suitor, on the left, has his left

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\(^{531}\) This device is noted in Gross, “‘La Chastelaine de Vergi’ Carved in Ivory”; and Carns, “Having the Last Laugh.”

\(^{532}\) The corner termini are crouching monsters with tails. There is a hole at the top, which was most likely added at a later date and intended to be used for hanging.

\(^{533}\) For a thorough discussion of the game of chess at this time, see Olivia Remie Constable, “Chess and Courtly Culture in Medieval Castile: The Libro de Ajedrez of Alfonso X, El Sabio,” *Speculum*, April 2007; Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux*, 352, relates chess imagery to Huon de Bordeaux and the story of Tristan and Yseult. She also says it could simply be an image of an aristocratic game.

\(^{534}\) Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux*, 352.
hand wrapped around the central tent pole, while he grasps a game piece in his right hand. His firm grasp of the phallic tent pole calls attention to the object and leads the viewer to contemplate the grasping of other similarly shaped objects. The lady’s arms are spread apart: the fingers of her right hand gently touch the suitor’s hand on the pole and in her left hand she holds game pieces. Her hand brushing against his hand on the pole implies her participation in the underlying erotic of the scene. Her open pose reveals deep drapery folds in her lap and calls attention to that area. Both the suitor and lady gaze down at the game, their attention focuses ours on the game of love. From years of being carried and handled the peaks of the draperies have been softened and the suitor’s right eye has also lost some details.

A similar pair of figures can be seen at the British Museum (Figure 6). Two seated figures appear close to the picture plane, a lady on the left and a suitor on the right. The suitor has a falcon on his left arm and the lady is carrying something in her right hand, probably the falcon’s hood. Again, the hood and falcon are a thinly veiled metaphor for penetration. The suitor even points to the lady’s lap. Their faces have been carved nearly in the round. There are remnants of gold leaf in the hair of both characters, and some red polychromy is also visible. The outside edges are worn from being held and carried. Both figures have deep V folds in their garments, calling additional attention to their laps, and both figures gaze downward, focusing their attention on each other’s laps and drawing the attention of the viewer once again to the groin.

This mirror case is suggestive and stimulating in its simplicity: we are looking at two lovers looking at each other in a sensual manner. Our imaginations are encouraged to produce stories about what might occur next. Because the scene lacks a table, central pole, or tent, it has been interpreted as an artistic mistake on recreating a chess-playing scene. As it is known that
ivory carvers used model books, I would suggest that this was an artist taking the “conversation” from a known format (chess) and extracting it from that setting simply to provide the patron with a mirror case image of a conversation between lovers. If this were a mistake, the details would not have been finished to such a degree: why carve the strands of hair on a piece that was not going to be sold? This piece displays artistic freedom in choosing how to portray a feeling or event, using the standard visual language available to him. Remove the chess board and this is a seated couple talking, something that happens in many love songs and stories, and could easily be sold among other images of lovers, appealing to a variety of patrons and standing in for a variety of characters.

Another example of a pair of lovers meeting and speaking is found at the British Museum (Figure 7). On this ivory mirror case two figures stand in the center of the frame. Behind them are castle and garden elements (a tree directly behind them, turrets and brick walls to their left and right). The suitor and lady face each other, he on the left and she on the right. Her left hand and his right hold a circular object, often identified as a chaplet or wreath of flowers.

This ring may be a symbolic gift, a demonstration of the acceptance of the love between them. The ring, garland, wreath, or flower chaplet often appears on secular Gothic ivories, with lovers or their servants holding or crowning one another with it. The imagery traces to other representations of loving couples, and when the crown is accepted by the lover, it can be a formal acceptance of the lover, as well as an admission of the lady’s complementary desire for

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535 There are four lobes, the spandrels of which contain geometric designs. The four corner termini, though broken, seem to have been basic leaf shapes. The damage to the corners is most likely from the twisting motion of opening and closing the case. There is a hole at the top of the scene that was most likely drilled later for hanging.
her suitor. In the act of crowning, both the man and woman give themselves, as the chaplet becomes an extension of the self. Coerver connects the imagery of clasped hands to the *immixtio manuum*, a ritual of vassalage in which a vassal places his hands between a lord’s hands before swearing an oath of fealty. In secular Gothic ivory examples, the man acts as a vassal to the woman: his joined hands are cupped in hers, altering the *immixtio manuum* ritual, which signifies the vassal’s submission and the lord’s reciprocal gift of aid and protection, into a love pledge. The chaplet can also stand for the female pudendum, as it did for Ovid: “o little ring that shall encircle my fair mistress’s finger ... may thou fit her, as well as she fits me.”

On the British Museum piece (Figure 7) the area of the ring and the hands beneath it is the location that has been touched most frequently, as it is the most smooth and worn. This is not a wear pattern that would have occurred from opening or closing the piece, or from simply carrying it. The wear at this location is deliberate and concentrated. The suitor’s hand at the base of the ring has lost all details from being rubbed so frequently. It is easy to imagine a beholder sliding her finger around and into the ring over and over, shining and wearing away the ivory as

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536 Coerver, “Donna/Dono,” 207–9, see the page of the Morgan Model Book, c.1370-80 by a Lombard artist, with two drawings of crowning with a garland and knights clashing: Morgan Model Book II, 14r, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, reproduced as Coerver’s fig. 8.7; a particularly interesting parallel exists in the grisaille drawings in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, which have been proved to be bas-de-page scenes of a manuscript containing poems by Guillaume de Machaut, Donald Byrne, “A 14th Century French Drawing in Berlin and the Livre Du Voir-Dit of Guillaume de Machaut,” *Zeitschrift Für Kunstgeschichte* 47 (1984): 70–81, figs. 1 and 2; Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer*, 93, calls attention to the existence of the topic in medieval literature as well.


538 The example cited by Coerver is Walters 71.167, reproduced as “Donna/Dono,” fig. 8.9, this image is printed in reverse; see my Figure 19 for a correct reproduction.


she ponders her suitor and stimulates her mind to sensual thoughts. The lady’s left hand hovers near her belly, possibly an indication of her fertility or potential pregnancy. Her hair is in a contemporary braided hairstyle, and both characters are wearing the flowing garments typical of the period. The lovers gaze into each other’s eyes, highlighting the aspect of sight in their connection. On her chest are two darkened gouges, just about where the nipples would be, clearly calling attention to that area and drawing the gaze to her close-fitted bodice and the mind to contemplate her (pregnant?) body beneath her clothes.

At the Victoria & Albert Museum, a mirror case (Figure 8) shows a chaplet or wreath being used as a crown. 541 Three figures are carved into this ivory piece: a kneeling suitor in the center, a standing lady on the right, and a standing attendant on the left, who holds the reins of two horses (their heads peek in from the left) and a whip. Sexual urgency, and even masturbation, may be indicated by the whip as well as the anxious horses. 542 The entire surface of the object shines from years of being held and rubbed. There are delicate traces of polychromy and gilding in the hair, and the faces of all three characters are nearly carved in the round. The foot of the suitor touches the foot of the servant. The kneeling suitor also holds up and offers an object in a cloth of honor to the lady, much as priests would offer the holy Eucharist. This object, which the suitor is offering to his beloved, has been interpreted as a heart, but the shape is truly phallic in appearance. Her response of crowning him with the chaplet/wreath is read as her

541 The corner termini are crouching beasts carved in the round, and there are three holes drilled into the piece (on the left side of the crown, under the woman’s left hand, and at the edge of the attendant’s gown), none of which are contemporary to the imagery.

542 Caviness, “Patron or Matron?,” 346; the motif of beating horses is also seen simplified in the Hours of Jeanne de Navarre (daughter of Louis le Hutin), illuminated by a follower of Pucelle, Jean le Noir, reproduced in François Avril, Manuscript Painting at the Court of France: The Fourteenth Century, 1310-1380 (New York: G. Braziller, 1978), 68–71, pl.16; see also the ivory mirror back in Koechlin, Les ivoires gothiques français, 1924, no. 367, CLXXVI.
acceptance of his gift and possibly an indication of their betrothal. The fingers of her left hand slide sensually in between the folds of the drapery covering her suitor’s gift. This mirror case shows both the giving of the heart and the crowning of the lover, which is a clear indication that these lovers are moving along the *gradus amoris*: conversing, exchanging gifts, and touching.

A mirror case at the Victoria & Albert Museum (Figure 9) shows two pairs of lovers with a tree between them, possibly two scenes of the same couple, as a continuous narrative. In the scene on the left, a kneeling suitor gathers and offers flowers to a standing lady holding a chaplet/wreath. He peers up at her and she peers down at him. On the right a seated lady lifts a chaplet above the head of a seated suitor who appears to reach towards her breast, his right hand and her left touching. Both figures’ laps have deep V folds, highlighting their pubic areas. Taken together, the two scenes on this mirror case are two steps in a story: the lovers first make the chaplet together, with the suitor handing flowers for the garland to the lady, and then the lady crowns the suitor as their love is confirmed and they become more familiar. The hands of the couple on the right are touching, and their feet are very close to one another as well, showing a move forward in their intimacy.

**Tactus: Making Contact with the Lover**

An important step in the *gradus amoris* is touching the lover. In fact, this part was so meaningful to the users and creators of secular Gothic ivory objects that it has frequently been split into multiple types of nuanced touches: for example, as we saw above, lovers were often

543 The four corner termini are crouching monsters with tails.
shown conversing and/or giving a gift while touching, they may also be portrayed holding hands, or chucking one another under the chin\textsuperscript{544} (often on horseback\textsuperscript{545}), and/or embracing.

One example of hand holding is depicted on a mirror case at the British Museum (Figure 10).\textsuperscript{546} Two central figures, a suitor on the left and a lady on the right, stand with clasped hands. The lady carries a dog. There is a smaller attendant behind the suitor, holding a circular chaplet or wreath. Traditionally, the hunt was not a private but a group event, and participants would bring along their attendants. This scene may include the attendant in order to imply the setting of the hunt, and provide a metaphor for the pursuit of a lover. Further indicating this event is taking place in the woods is the inclusion of some leaves to the right of the couple, denoting a bush or tree. The dog and the chaplet symbolize fidelity, and together with the clasped hands this mirror case may portray a betrothal. The faces of the three figures are carved especially detailed and deep, highlighting their foci and expressions. The suitor’s gaze is directed at the face of the lady, while she peers down, quite possibly at the chaplet held by the attendant. The combination of the dog, chaplet, and hand clasping depicts a “system of amorous vassalage” on a lover’s gift.\textsuperscript{547} The circular chaplet, in its similarity to the curved external opening of the female genitalia, can also be a metaphor for the consummation of the courtship.\textsuperscript{548} In fact, the attendant lifts her skirt suggestively, which would lead beholders to think about the attendant and/or the lady’s bodies beneath their skirts, and implies the consummation of the betrothal.

\textsuperscript{544} For some background on the chin chuck, see Steinberg, \textit{The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion}, 110–5.
\textsuperscript{545} Gaborit-Chopin, \textit{Ivoires médiévaux}, 425, notes the mid- to late 14th century popularity of the subject of lovers on horseback, also called La Chevaucée.
\textsuperscript{546} There are no corners on this round piece, and there is a hole, drilled at a later date for hanging, between the heads of the lovers at the top.
\textsuperscript{547} Coerver, “Donna/Dono,” 211.
\textsuperscript{548} Easton, “‘Was It Good For You, Too?,’” 19, also makes this connection.
Chin chucking appears on an early fourteenth-century ivory object at the British Museum (Figure 11) in which a pair of lovers is depicted. There are trees depicted to the left and right of the couple. The suitor, on the left, chucks the lady under her chin with his left hand, and her left arm reaches behind him, indicating an embrace as well. He gazes at her face, and her eyes look down, towards his chest. There are deep V-folds in the lady’s garment in her groin area, and his pose also draws attention to the gathering drapery between his legs. His energetic forward stride also characterizes the suitor as the initiator of the touches between the couple. The peaks of the draperies are shiny from years of handling, as is the arm of the suitor. The lady has a dog in her right arm, which is worn as though it has been petted. The suitor carries his gloves in his right hand, an act that highlights the fact that he is touching the face of his beloved with his bare hand. The skin on skin contact of the chin chuck combined with the body language of both figures makes it both an intimate and gentle caress shared between sweethearts.

Imagery of lovers chin chucking could be depicting a step halfway between touching and kissing. In the British Museum mirror case (Figure 11) the kiss is anticipated. In other examples, (Figure 14 and Figure 20), the chins of the lovers are tilted and their faces are nearly touching. The anticipation of the kiss is, of course, titillating. The chin chuck most often appears in the hunting or hawking imagery on Gothic ivory, (Figure 13 and Figure 14). The inclusion of horses in some of the ivories with a chin chuck may allude to this type of touch as well, or at the very least indicate that the characters are moving along in a narrative which at some point either before or after this scene, involves being on horseback.

549 The corner termini are crouching monsters, though one corner is damaged and missing. The damage to the corner was most likely from the twisting motion of opening and closing the piece. There is a large hole at the center top, most likely drilled later for hanging, as well as four small holes, which are an earlier repair.
Another depiction of chin chucking is found at the Walters Art Museum (Figure 12). This very tiny⁵⁵⁰ piece depicts two figures, a suitor and a lady, inside a six-lobed frame.⁵⁵¹ The figure on the left, a youth, chucks the figure on the right, a lady, under her chin with his left hand (his right arm is obscured/damaged⁵⁵²). Her body curves as she lifts her skirt with her left hand (her right arm is also obscured/damaged). His eyes gaze at her face, and she looks down, towards his chest. We are again observing a tender moment of embrace and touch, this time with the addition of a lifted skirt, taking the sexual tension one step further.

Often on secular Gothic ivory, imagery of the chin chuck is found in images of the hunt or hawking, such as the mirror case at the Victoria & Albert Museum (Figure 13).⁵⁵³ A lady and a suitor are on horseback, with the lady’s body closest to the viewer. Behind and to the left of the lovers are two attendants on foot, one of which carries a spear.⁵⁵⁴ The attendants’ faces turn towards each other, and their hands appear raised, a symbol of speech. The looks on their faces coupled with the closeness of their heads and the crouched body of the leftmost figure encourages the beholder to imagine these two attendants are conspiring. The horses wear ornate decorative harnesses with pierced holes. These holes indicate the work of a specific shop, the

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⁵⁵⁰ Randall claims the small scale suggests that the object was intended for a child, *Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery*, 222, this ivory mirror case is reproduced as his cat. 321.

⁵⁵¹ The four corner termini are crouching monsters.

⁵⁵² There is much evidence of wear and damage on this piece. The majority of the damage appears to have come from the object being buried. The large hole in the center of the piece does not appear original, and may have been added so the piece could be used as button, which would have created the wear marks that removed the details from the youth’s and lady’s arms. There are also holes drilled in each of the monsters.

⁵⁵³ There is damage to the edge of the piece, and in the upper part is a later hole.

⁵⁵⁴ According to Randall Jr., “A Group of Gothic Ivory Boxes”, this composition is based on calendar scenes for the month of May in manuscript calendars.
atelier aux bandeaux gemmés,\textsuperscript{555} and it has been assumed that gems were inserted in the holes. The attention paid to the details in this piece is especially seen in the dense layering of the textiles beneath the lady. Both central figures wear elaborate dress as well: on the lady are a flowing mantle and a hat with a pointed brim, and the youth wears a mantle and a crown pierced with small holes. His right leg appears over his horse’s shoulder, revealing his boot and spur. He peers at her face and chucks her under the chin with his left hand, while the tips of the fingers of his right hand are visible over her right shoulder, depicting an embrace. She does not meet his gaze, but looks straight ahead. This lady is an active or empowered looker, as she meets the gaze of the beholder. At the same time, she is also compelled to see herself as a body with the potential for a sexual position.\textsuperscript{556}

The lady’s right hand is holding the reins of her horse, and her left hand rests on the handle of the youth’s sword, which is remarkably phallic in both appearance and positioning. This double-entendre of the suitor’s penis/dagger is not unique in marginal illustrations or ivory.\textsuperscript{557} This area of the ivory is notably shinier than others, indicating that it has been handled more frequently. The mane of the lady’s horse has been substantially more worn directly beneath the hilt of the youth’s sword, another sign of possible frottage in this area. Trees are carved to the left and right of the couple. Beneath the scene, there are two animals, which have been

\textsuperscript{555} This is noted in both Natanson, \textit{Gothic Ivories of the 13th and 14th Centuries}; and Gaborit-Chopin, \textit{Ivoires du Moyen Age}.  
\textsuperscript{556} Smith, “The Gothic Mirror and the Female Gaze,” 82.  
\textsuperscript{557} Sandler describes the emphasis on the man’s dagger in the Ormesby psalter as “shockingly like a part of his anatomy uncovered and revealed. In fabliaux, the words for weapons and the male sexual organ, and for aggression and sexual assault, are often interchangeable,” “A Bawdy Betrothal in the Ormesby Psalter,” 157; for English translations of some examples, see Thomas Darlington Cooke, “Pornography, the Comic Spirit, and the Fabliaux,” in \textit{The Humor of the Fabliaux: A Collection of Critical Essays} (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974), 137–62; see also the marginal illustration in the Luttrell Psalter of Man defeated by Woman, in which his dagger appears to double as his penis, London, British Library, Add. Ms. 42130, fol. 60.
interpreted as a dog chasing and capturing a rabbit. It seems to me that these are two rabbits, an interpretation which highlights both the sense of touch (the softness of rabbit fur) and well as eroticism (the notoriously lascivious hares) in the scene. These rabbits are shiny and smooth from the friction and oils of centuries of hands petting them. The animal imagery can be taken as quite sexual, even pornographic: as in the marginal decorations of manuscripts, the animals here serve to amplify and intensify the meaning of the scene above.558

Osculi exhibitio, amplexus fruition: Sharing a Kiss, Enjoying an Embrace

One more vital step in the gradus amoris is another kind of touch: a kiss. The mouth (and the skin through kisses) is an erogenous zone, and an effective weapon in the lady’s armory, which she uses for kissing as well as flirtatious laughing and talking.559 Kissing imagery has been studied by Madeleine Caviness, who noted the association of the kiss with the vice of lewdness,560 citing representations of kisses in manuscripts below the Fall of Adam and Eve, such as the kiss of Judas, kissing grotesques and devils, and even copulating couples.561 Couples

560 For the Amiens sculpture and attitudes to kissing in relation to procreation, see Madeline H. Caviness, “‘The Simple Perception of Matter’ and the Representation of Narrative, Ca. 1180-1280,” Gesta 30, no. 1 (1991): 60; 64, n. 78; fig. 22.
561 The figures used as examples in Caviness, “Patron or Matron?” are: the Betrayal; tilting at a barrel, with titulus of the hours of the Virgin; facing page: the Annunciation; Queen Jeanne; blindman’s buff, with beginning of matins, hours of the Virgin, Hours of Jeanne d’Evreux, fols. 15v-16r (enlarged); Young man embracing a female grotesque, Hours of Jeanne d’Evreux, fol. 52r (detail); according to Caviness, figures playing the cymbals, (her example: Beginning of Seven Penitential Psalms, Hours of Jeanne d’Evreux, fol. 183r), also connote kissing (or coitus): Rabanus Maurus likened them to human lips, though without sexual innuendo, see Théodore Gérold, Les Pères de l’Église et la musique (Paris: F. Alcan, 1931), 178–9; though in Hassell, Middle French Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases, 141 (J27), a later vernacular proverb says: “Sa femme avec le chevalier jouoit des cimbales”; Caviness, “Patron or Matron?”
standing and kissing often signified sexual union in the thirteenth century, even when both were fully clothed, as it represented the coming together of two mucous membranes.\textsuperscript{562}

Taking the chin chuck further, to an embrace and a kiss, is a couple on horseback at the Victoria & Albert Museum (Figure 14).\textsuperscript{563} In front of the couple, to the right of the scene, an attendant turns back and faces them while he points in the air, indicating speech. The attendant has a very elegantly carved foot in the scene, while the forward foot has moved out of the frame. Trees are carved behind and above the couple. The horse the suitor rides is particularly chubby, with the haunches very round and the hip anatomically incorrect. No published description addresses the odd shape of this horse’s back end. In this pair, the suitor is closest to the beholder, and reaches out his right arm to pull in the chin of the lady as their lips touch and they kiss. There is some loss of detail in their faces, most likely from regular touching, as their faces almost appear fused at the noses. His left hand is visible behind her back, and her left hand supports a falcon, while her right hand is visible behind the suitor’s back, indicating her return of the embrace. The inclusion of the falcon highlights the allegory of the hunt and pursuit, and in this case, the woman is the falconer/pursuer. The falcon has clearly been intentionally rubbed, as it is whiter and shinier than the areas around it, even areas like the corner monster, which would have more readily been touched in the course of normal use. The youth has a knife on his belt,

\textsuperscript{342} or devils urging homosexual couples to embrace, see Bible Moralisée, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2554, fol. 48r (detail); see also Camille, \textit{The Gothic Idol}, 59–60, 90, figs. 30, 48.
\textsuperscript{562} See Camille, “Manuscript Illumination and the Art of Copulation,” 74 and 77, fig 4.9; and Michael Camille, “Gothic Signs and the Surplus: The Kiss on the Cathedral,” in \textit{Contexts: Style and Values in Medieval Art and Literature} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 151–71; Albert the Great described four alternative/dangerous sexual positions: lateral, seated, standing, and backward, missionary and for procreation were the only “acceptable” positions, see Camille, “Manuscript Illumination and the Art of Copulation,” 73.
\textsuperscript{563} The corner termini are crouching monsters.
and another object, perhaps a sword or the pommel of his saddle, in indicated between his body and the lady’s. The knife shows signs of frequent touching or rubbing. Both handles point toward the lady, in familiarly phallic shapes. This scene is both intimate and observed (by the attendant).

In another mirror case from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, we are presented with two lovers on horseback (Figure 15) followed by a smiling female attendant. The lady is closest to the viewer, and she swats with her right hand at the flank of her horse with a whip. The section of the ivory where the whip hits the horse has signs of having been habitually touched. Her left hand is loosely holding the reins of her horse, and also shows the loss of detail that comes from routine rubbing. She stares directly into the eyes of the youth beside her, whose gaze meets her. Her suitor has a bird, probably a falcon, in his left hand, and the bodies of this pair are close, yet it is unclear if his right arm is around her. The hand under the falcon has also been damaged through numerous touches; some beholders were deliberately stroking this bird. There are signs of specific locations (the whip, the hands, the falcon) having been intentionally and repeatedly rubbed. These are not the highest points of the object, and would have had to have been singled out for caresses, not simply worn away through regular carrying. The castle walls and foliage behind the figures indicate that they are outside. The smooth surfaces of this piece are evidence of rubbing and handling over the years. This scene of a pair’s encounter and possible embrace relates to the replacement in Capellanus of physical contact (contactus) with embracing (amplexus). This explains why so many lovers in these ivories are shown embracing: they are specifically in Capellanus’ embracing stage. These lovers touch and embrace, representing a step on the gradus amoris between kissing and completing the deed.

564 This mirror case is probably the other half of the mirror case discussed earlier, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 4). The four corner termini are crouching monsters.
Factum, adulterium, totius personæ concessio: Giving Completely to the Lover

The final stage of the gradus amoris is the sex act itself: intercourse/consummation (factum/coïtus). The imagery on secular Gothic ivory only goes as far as the kissing stage, which allows the sex act to be continuously deferred, adding fantasy and imagination to the experience. The fact that sex is never explicitly depicted allows for fantasy. While penetration is not depicted on these ivories, there are touches that may indicate the nearness of sex. One of these has already been briefly discussed: the pairing of the chin chuck with the lifting of the lady’s skirt. The two acts taken together could imply consummation and be an allusion to the final stage of the gradus amoris. For a woman to attract a suitor’s gaze is also to attract his touch – up to and including the sexualized touching of her genital area and/or breasts.

The touching of the breast relates to the story Aucassin and Nicolette, in which Aucassin tells Nicolette that a woman’s love is in her nipple (among other places): “A woman’s love is in her clitoris, in the nipple of her breast, and in the tip of her big toe.” Scholars of the torture of female saints have pointed out that medieval people, like people today, were fascinated by, and had a sexual response to female breasts. There was also a theological emphasis on lactation.

565 For skirt lifts, see Figure 12, Figure 16, Figure 17, and Figure 20 on the bottom left.
567 Caviness, Visualizing Women, 98, Caviness suggests that the concept of penis envy in fact is a reversal of the “original” breast envy - the fear of the loss of the mother’s breasts/milk; see Bynum, “The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages”; “the Christian discourse of sublimation was able to displace more basic responses,” Caviness, Visualizing Women, n. 43; see also Margaret R. Miles, “The Virgin’s One Bare Breast: Female Nudity and Religious Meaning in Tuscan Early Renaissance Culture,” in The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 193–208; the focus on a major sex attribute as a site of torture is a way to emphasize sexuality or at least sado-erotism.
The knight or suitor touching the lady’s breast (Figure 4 on the right, Figure 9 on the right, Figure 16, Figure 17, Figure 19 on the right, and Figure 20 on the top left) may be an indication of the immanence of the deed. This touch may occur at the castle, or on horseback, where the lovers may also kiss. I have found only two printed references to this imagery: one in Calkins’ 1968 catalogue, and the other in Coerver’s 1997 article.

This intimate scene of touch occurs on a piece at the Walters Art Museum (Figure 16). Filling nearly the entire frame is a pair of lovers. The lovers are surrounded by foliage, indicating their presence in a garden or outdoors. On the left, a youth kneels, staring up at a standing lady to the right, who peers down at him. It is unclear whether or not she holds something in her right hand, perhaps a wreath/chaplet with which she will crown her suitor. With her left hand, she holds up her skirt, inviting lascivious thoughts on the part of the youth, and by extension, the beholder. Adding to this line of thought, the right hand of the youth is in a gesture of pleading or prayer, level with her breast, calling attention to that location on her body as well. The shiniest areas of this ivory are the ones most commonly touched by the lovers: the suitor’s face and the

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568 Caviness, *Visualizing Women*, 123; the goal of this emphasis was perhaps intended to suppress the eroticism of the Song of Songs and medieval love poetry.
569 This is a scene not infrequently imaged, and yet very rarely written about in the art historical literature. The earliest reference I have found is Calkins, *A Medieval Treasury*, 156, no. 79: the lid of a coffret in the MFA, Boston (64.1467), which is decorated with many scenes of amorous couples: meeting of lovers; lady chucking her lover under the chin; youth kneeling before a lady who places a helm over his head; offering of the heart; couple embracing; youth lifting the dress of a lady; see also Olds, Williams, and Levin, *Images of Love and Death*, no. 64, pl. IV; and Randall Jr., *The Golden Age of Ivory*, no. 190.
571 “The male’s fondling of her breast in the adjoining scene alludes to the sexual repayment that he can expect to receive for his efforts,” Coerver, “Donna/Dono,” 211.
572 Three, formerly four, crouching monsters decorate the corner termini.
lady’s breast. This scene of touch encouraged a physical response in the beholder of pleasurable, sensual touching, frottage, and repeated erotic touching.

In an even more overtly sexual mirror case also at the Walters Art Museum (Figure 17), a couple embraces within a frame of nine lobes. The shallowly carved piece shows signs of overall wear, caused through regular handling, opening, and closing. On the left, the suitor strides forward, his legs spread wide, and reaches towards the lady on the left with both his arms. The suitor is portrayed with spurs on his boots and a thick sword hangs from his belt and points outwards toward the frame. His left arm goes behind and around her body and his right arm is at her belly. Note the carver’s technique of using lower relief to show the left arm is behind the body of the lady. His gaze is directly at her face, and though her face is angled downwards, her gaze meets his. Her right arm returns his embrace and her left arm supports a squirrel as it lifts her skirt. The gazes, touches, and poses of the figures on this piece highlight sexuality, fertility, and fecundity.

*The Castle of Love as Gradus Amoris*

Many steps in the *gradus amoris* may be represented on a single ivory through the imagery of a castle being stormed. This is one of the most popular scenes found on ivory mirror cases around the fourteenth century. Knights in armor attack, assault, and/or lay siege to a castle

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573 There remain traces of red polychromy, and two of the remaining crouching monsters decorate the corner termini. Inside the spandrels of the lobes are bearded faces or masks, and foliage also decorates some of the spaces created by the lobes. The right side of the mirror case is damaged, most likely through burial, and a later hole has been drilled into the piece at the top. This piece was reportedly disinterred by the explosion of a German shell in Northern France between 1914 and 1918, Randall Jr., *Masterpieces of Ivory from the Walters Art Gallery*, cat. 330.

574 A “nut-eating squirrel” appears in the Ormesby Psalter, Sandler, “A Bawdy Betrothal in the Ormesby Psalter,” 156, Sandler notes that another famous lady’s pet squirrel can be found in the Luttrell Psalter, London, British Library, Add. Ms. 42130, fol. 181v, where it sits on the lady’s shoulder.
(typically described as the *Castle of Love*), a popular allegory for the attainment of love.\(^{575}\) The source for the imagery of the castle of love remains elusive, perhaps because there is no one source.\(^{576}\)

An ivory example with the castle of love imagery is found in Paris, at the Museé de Cluny, on loan from the Musée du Louvre (Figure 18). This is a very rare mirror case, as not many of these two-part cases have survived together.\(^{577}\) The two parts would screw together to protect the inner mirror, and threading is clearly visible on the inside of both pieces. The outside edges of both sides have foliated termini, so that when the two pieces are screwed together, eight points surround the piece. The inside contains a nineteenth-century metal mirror, similar to what would have originally been in that place. The decorated surfaces of both outer parts of the mirror case contain castle scenes with knights on horseback enacting a joust\(^{578}\) or tournament with people in the ramparts above. In the fourteenth century, the tournament was a place for courtship and displays of prowess.

\(^{575}\) “The scene is thus one of the most popular allegorical representation on the theme of courtly love,” Calkins, *A Medieval Treasury*, 158; here, Calkins is referring to a mirror back in the Seattle Art Museum (Fr. 10.1), Siege of Castle of Love, French, c.1320-50, Ivory, 4.5 x 4.25 in, for reproduction, see ibid., fig. 81; the scene is of uncertain literary origins, see the studies in Loomis, “The Allegorical Siege in the Art of the Middle Ages”; Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothiques français*, 1924; and Beigbeder, *Ivory*.


\(^{577}\) Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux*, 566, says “le travail est sommaire et assez brutal.”

\(^{578}\) This joust imagery also relates to chess pieces, see for example, Louvre OA 3297, dated c.1120-40, from England. For reproduction, see ibid., 237, catalog 77.
On one side (Figure 18, A), two mounted knights in armor approach each other in the foreground. Both knights wear great helms and carry shields and lances. The shield of the knight on the right is decorated with three flowers. Both horses are caparisoned, with the flapping edges of their draperies helping to depict their movement toward one another. Behind and to the left of the knight on the left is another figure whose hand is raised, indicating speech. There are also two figures behind the knight on the right, standing on what could be rocks or a ledge, holding trumpets with banners. These three attendant figures may be signaling the start of the joust via the bugle and/or herald’s cry. Behind all these figures is an architectural feature clearly meant to indicate a castle with brick walls, a portcullis, and ramparts above. The portcullis is open (conveniently located between the two knights in the center of the composition). Above the portcullis, in the castle ramparts, are four half-figures. On the far left of the ramparts, one figure looks out of the frame to left, and appears to be receiving a falcon from the figure to his left. This figure is directly above the portcullis, and looks at and is chucking under the chin the lady to his right. The lady meets his gaze. The pinnacle of the buttress interacts with her upper body in such a way as to make it unclear if she holds something in her hands. It may very well be a falcon, as it was a common way to hint at the sex act. Next to her, on the far right of the ramparts, another figure looks at the central couple, and also appears to have her hands raised.\textsuperscript{579}

The opposite part of the case (Figure 18, B), also pictures two mounted knights, who wear great helms and mail, carry shields (this time without decoration), and these two wield swords. There is some confusion in the area of the left knight’s shield, the artist may have been indicating a portcullis in that same area. The knight on the left raises his sword straight up while the knight on the right’s sword is at a 90° angle to the picture plane. Their mounts are again

\textsuperscript{579} There is a small hole between the central couple, which was most likely drilled at a later date.
compared, with the drapery styled to indicate motion towards each other. Behind and to the left of the knight on the left is another figure (possibly also on horseback), who seems to be wearing mail and a hood or helmet. His hand is raised in the same style as the figure in the same position on side A. Behind the knight on the right is a lone figure in the ramparts of a smaller castle-like structure. He peers out of the right side of the frame. A brick pattern separates the fighting figures from three pairs of half-figures in the ramparts of another structure (in fact, confusingly, the sword of the knight on the right seems to create the base of the ramparts on that side of the structure). On the far left of the ramparts, two figures face one another, and one may be chucking the other under the chin. Providing some intimacy and privacy to this couple is the sword of the leftmost knight as well as some foliage. Larger and in the center of the ramparts, another pair of figures face each other and the one on the right seems to be putting a crown on the figure on the left, who raises a hand, which may be joining with the hand of the figure on the right. There is some confusion in this couple as a crack in the ivory goes through the figure on the right, all the way down the case, between the horses to the spot between their two front hooves.\footnote{This crack is most likely the result of drilling the small hole above the figure through which the crack travels. Another cause for the crack may have been from screwing together the two pieces too tightly or with too much force or pressure.} On the right of the ramparts another couple faces each other and the leftmost figure chucks the chin of the rightmost one. In this single mirror case, we can clearly see lovers meeting, speaking, touching, kissing, and even some allusions to the final act.

Another example of various stages of the \textit{gradus amoris} represented on one ivory mirror case frame is in the collection of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (Figure 19). It also has foliated termini, and the imagery is framed inside eight lobes, which would have related to the eight foliated corners when the case was screwed together. Similar to how the ramparts appear
above the knight’s sword in the Cluny example (Figure 18) and create a spatial division, here a crenellated band stands to suggest the ramparts of a castle as well as create two registers, separating the two couples in the foreground from the God of Love and two figures above. On the bottom, two couples are pictured interacting with one another. On the left, a seated suitor is crowned by a standing lady, his right hand is raised, and her left one cups it. Both figures in the couple on the right are standing, and the suitor’s hood is up over his head. The lady’s left hand is raised, and his right hand reaches towards her, possibly also caressing her breast. His left arm and her right arm embrace one another. In the top tier, in the center, the crowned and winged God of Love is pictured in three-quarter view, as he points an arrow at the couple below on the right. His left hand is raised in the same fashion as the lady in the right couple. There are two half-figures with him in the top tier to his left and right, who both face the center. Each of these figures also raises a hand in the same fashion.

**Quadripartite Ivory: Four Lover’s Encounters as the Gradus Amoris**

Another way that multiple stages of the *gradus amoris* can be presented on ivory is through the separation of the piece into quadrants, each filled with a couple performing a different step. These quadripartite ivories represent multiple stages of the *gradus amoris*; the figures demonstrate the steps to the viewer in a circular motion around the piece. Making the typical five-steps into four, the works often start with a combination of sight and conversation, move to touch (embracing, hugging, chin chucking), then on to the kiss, and finally to imply the act of intercourse in a variety of ways. The separation between the pairs of lovers is often vegetal or tree-like. This vegetal component only serves to amplify the sexual intensity, analogous to how Marie de France conveyed the intensity of sexual desire in her *Lais* through symbolic
elements of the natural world (trees, plants, birds).\textsuperscript{581} The middle steps highlight the importance of the creation of and rumination on memories – the details draw the lover back to the beloved.

An example of a quadripartite ivory that can be interpreted as depicting various stages of the \textit{gradus amoris} is at the Walters Art Museum (Figure 20), especially if one reads the progression from the top left pair around in a clockwise motion.\textsuperscript{582} Four scenes of paired lovers are separated by a tree-like vegetal cross. The progression starts on the top left, where two figures gaze into one another’s eyes. The suitor kneels in front of the lady, perhaps in the style of crowning though no chaplet is discernable here. His right hand is raised, and her left cups it. This could be the acceptance of a betrothal, and a combination of the seeing and meeting phases of the \textit{gradus amoris}. On the top right, both figures are seated, and the suitor holds a falcon on his right arm while he chucks the damaged face of the lady under the chin. The falcon again reminds the viewer of the metaphor of falconry and faithful lovers. There are deep \textit{v}-folds in both of their laps, heightening the sexual tension and encouraging the beholder to concentrate on that location. Both figures are standing in the bottom right scene, where the lady holds a dog and the suitor a pair of gloves. The suitor reaches for her chin and their faces point at one another indicating an imminent kiss, the next step of the \textit{gradus amoris}. The pair on the bottom left is also standing, and the lady raises her hand and lifts her skirt, tantalizingly indicating the final step of the \textit{gradus amoris}, intercourse. The suitor gazes at her body and his left arm appears to be going in for an embrace, while his left arm is doing something unclear behind his body. The faces and bodies of many of the figures, as well as the vegetal separation on this piece have been worn through

\textsuperscript{581} This is the argument in Tovi Bibring, “Scènes érotiques, écriture courtoise: La symbolique naturelle dans les Lais de Marie de France,” \textit{Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire}, no. 31 (May 1, 2010): 185–96.

\textsuperscript{582} The terminal crouching monsters are later additions, though may represent what was originally in those locations.
repeated touching and rubbing. The details of the faces and bodies of all the figures on this piece are quite worn due to frequent, repeated, and focused rubbing in these areas. Lovers took pleasure from touching images of lovers touching.
Chapter 6: Conclusion: Frottage and Gothic Ivory

Touch is important for the experience of sculpture – in fact, sculpture can be thought of as the art of touch.\textsuperscript{583} The art of touch, or the supreme activity of touch, can also be intercourse.\textsuperscript{584} Three-dimensional objects have tactile reception. Even more specifically, secular Gothic ivories, due to their size, material, and subject, encouraged touching. Just as viewers imagined feeling the wounds of Christ while observing images of him, the users of these objects would have concentrated on the imagery and their memories of touch. Lovers may also have mimicked and repeated the acts depicted on the ivory while beholding these objects together.

The imagery on secular Gothic ivories has been carefully arranged to elicit arousal, and encourage thinking about and acting on desires to touch. In addition to evidence of people rubbing the object itself (see especially Figure 3, Figure 15, Figure 16, Figure 19, and Figure 20, where facial features and details have been worn by frequent rubbing and touching), there is imagery of touching on the object, exponentially heightening the episode of touch. That one handles and touches the object heightens the personal experience. The positioning of the characters – their body position and body language – also encourages interaction. The looking on and touching of these ivory objects seems to violate the rules of modesty: these gazes and grasps are not chaste or modest.

Jacques Lacan equated the unconscious with language and claimed language as the site of desire, as opposed to the body.\textsuperscript{585} In rereading romance texts, it is possible to relive pleasurable

\textsuperscript{583} Hall, \textit{The World as Sculpture}, 84.
\textsuperscript{584} Summers, \textit{The Judgment of Sense}, 215.
events, and this is also possible for visual and tactual objects. Repeated viewing and touching of an object activates the mind of the beholder and encourages the use of the imagination.  

Similar to how Geraldine Heng describes text as sex and Foucault argues that talking about sex is an approximation of the act of sex, the act of viewing an image of touch can be a surrogate for touching itself.  

The word digital originated in reference to the fingers. Somewhere along the way, digital became less about the fleshy and more about the numerical and technological. As we become increasingly reliant on electronics, and detached from actual, physical, tangible things, we have a more intense desire for tangible, physical experiences, the base of which has always been touch. We are beginning to realize the possibilities of more advanced touch technologies: we

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2001), 308: “Les relations entre les êtres humains s’établissent vraiment en deçà du champ de la conscience. C’est le désir qui accomplit la structuration primitive du monde humain, le désir comme inconscient”; the structure of desire is set up by words in analogies, thus, the sex act can be deferred (along with pleasure) into “metaphor and linguistic play,” which allows it to be relived over and over again, see Simon Gaunt, “Obscene Hermeneutics in Troubadour Lyric,” in Medieval Obscenities (Woodbridge: York Medieval, 2006), 96, 104.  

See Kessler, Spiritual Seeing, 114, in which he speaks of the painted ekphrasis in the Ashburnham Pentateuch; see also James A. W. Heffernan, Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); for a discussion on how frames were used to establish a delineation between reality and imaginary, see Kessler, Spiritual Seeing, 118.  


Sensory deprivation makes you a nerd. In 1996, Malcolm McCullough wrote: “touch technology is underdeveloped, and few interaction devices provide force or tactile feedback. Without touch, currently the most common complaint about computers is not about overload but deprivation. It is about the inability to touch one’s work. Being out of touch is considered an occupational hazard: regular sensory deprivation turns you into a nerd,” Malcolm McCullough, Abstracting Craft: The Practiced Digital Hand (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996); in 1974, Heslin outlined the five haptic categories (or functions of touch): 1. Functional/professional
no longer just push a button, we communicate haptically with our devices. Our fingers hover, hold, slide, and maneuver deftly over the surface of the screen, which reacts with nuanced responses. Soft or hard, heavy or light, still or moving, gentle or forceful, we create patterns with our fingers, painting our thoughts onto touchscreens at the airports, supermarkets, libraries, and even personal smartphones. This technology has been steadily gaining in popularity, which is a sign of our longing to return to the tangible and concrete after too long living in a digital world devoid of physical digits.

(“Touch is permitted by the context – for example, during a medical exam, someone you hardly know may touch parts of your body that even your best friend has never seen”); 2. Social/polite (“Touch is formal – for example, a handshake”); 3. Friendship/warmth (“Touch is an expression of regard.”); 4. Love/intimacy (“Touch is special, permitted only with those with whom you are close.”); 5. Sexual/arousal, Richard Heslin, “Steps toward a Taxonomy of Touching” (presented at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, May 1974); the example statements come from Steve Duck and David T. McMahan, *The Basics of Communication: A Relational Perspective* (SAGE, 2011), table 3.2.

590 Haptic is defined as “adj. relating to or based on the sense of touch,” “Haptic. Dictionary.com,” *Collins English Dictionary* (HarperCollins), accessed March 11, 2014, http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/haptic, haptic communication is communication through touch; haptic technology differs from tactile technology, which focuses on pressure or force.

The removal of touch from aesthetic enjoyment limits the authenticity of the experience. Small handheld art objects like secular Gothic ivories provided haptic feedback to their medieval beholders: as they swiped their fingers over the carved ridges of the bodies and facial details of the lovers, they were rewarded with a variety of edges, curves, and textures. Studies have proven that people can rapidly and accurately identify three-dimensional objects by touch through the use of exploratory procedures, such as moving the fingers over the outer surface of the object or holding the entire object in the hand.592 There is a high density of receptors on the fingers and a large amount of brain space is allotted to the hand.593 The viewer and handler should be as sensitive as the sculptor in order to gain greater enjoyment.594 Rubbing is evidence that people enjoy art through touch. Sculpture wants to be touched. The sixteenth century humanist Giordano Bruno “likened memory to a series of carved, tactile statues that could be mentally re-encountered.”595 When we touch, our experience becomes richer and more varied, and we create connections that would never have happened without this tactile intimacy.

Touching could be a response to viewing an image of touching. There is evidence in much medieval literature that it was understood that the image could arouse lustful looking, the


594 An example of the sensitivity of the audience, as well as the desire to explore through touch, is the common display at children’s museums, where participants try to identify an unseen object through touch alone. “We take it for granted that the sculptor should have sensitive fingers: it is a little strange to be told that the fingers of the beholder should be no less sensitive,” “Chinese Jade: The Sense of Touch,” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 77, no. 453 (December 1, 1940): 195.

desire to see more, and incite the imagination to wonder what could happen next. This is especially true in religious discussions of the sins, where it is made clear that the desire to be lecherous starts with seeing an object of desire, then touching it. The Dominican Laurent provided a lengthy discussion of the progression of lechery.\footnote{\textit{The Book of Vices and Virtues}.} There is great power in the anticipated or imagined touch, and the imagined touch gives life to these pieces. The beholder of secular Gothic ivory did have an “imagined felt encounter,”\footnote{Potts, “Tactility,” 291.} as s/he touched the work, and was expected to imagine touching his/her lover. Texture simultaneously creates and heightens tactility, and feelings can be conjured by objects. Expectations are set up between what is seen and unseen. These objects, in representing touch, encouraged their beholders to mimic the actions depicted, and think about next steps that could be taken. In the same way that beholders of religious manuals and devotional aids were encouraged to imagine themselves with Jesus, lovers would imagine their absent lover.

As Geraldine Johnson and Sara Matthews Grieco have argued, “Art objects and related practices not only depict women’s life experiences but may actually help to shape them.”\footnote{Geraldine A. Johnson and Sara F. Matthews Grieco, “Introduction: Women and the Visual Arts: Breaking Boundaries,” in \textit{Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9.} Just as love poetry need not exactly follow the rules of idealized love, and could go beyond everyday boundaries, images in ivory can be seen as wish fulfillment; the activities pictured could be the desire of the giver. These ivory objects could be surrogates for actions desired with the recipient. Lancelot painted Guinevere during his captivity in the castle of Morgan le Fay: “When he saw the image of his lady, he bowed and saluted it, and approached it and kissed it on the mouth, and
gained more delight than he had of any other woman save his lady.”599 This “erotic idolatry”600 could very easily be achieved through the medium of secular Gothic ivory. In Marie de France’s Eliduc, the lovers’ gifts or tokens are described as surrogates for the body: “she added that while she only sent him a sash and a ring, it was really her person she was offering him.”601 In the tale of Aucassin and Nicolette, the damsel gives her love locks of her hair. He responded thus:

“Gallant Aucassin took them and did them homage. He kissed her curls and caressed them. Then he slipped them close to his heart.”602 Like a pilgrimage souvenir or talismanic image of a patron saint, these ivories could function as reminders and focal points on which to meditate. Ivory mirror cases pose the question of love as reflection.603 The mirror encourages self-recognition and projection. In these mirror cases, one sees the self and sees the example. Looking at a mirror case with imagery of lovers touching while sitting beside one’s lover, inspires the beholders to “mirror” the actions of the lovers and touch one another. These pieces can be thought of as aide-memoires; like souvenirs of love, they could have been used to recall and ruminate on the giver. The flesh-like feel and appearance of ivory could certainly heighten these sensations.604 This era

600 Coerver, “Donna/Dono,” 197.
604 There is a some information on the tactile nature of the cult of relics in the medieval period, such as Van Os, *The Art of Devotion*; Bynum and Gerson, “Body-Part Reliquaries and Body Parts in the Middle Ages”; and Bynum, “Bleeding Hosts and Their Contact Relics in Late Medieval Northern Germany.”
saw saints taking the spotlight, with pilgrims traveling to visit relics, and creating or purchasing a kind of medieval tourism souvenir in order to relive the experience.  

Sculpture is the art of touch, and the material of ivory is a pleasure to touch. Indeed, ivory as a material is especially appealing to touch. The textured surfaces of sculpture engage the sense of touch, as evidenced by the sensual appeal of certain icons. Touching is a response, especially to the eroticized imagery of secular Gothic ivories. The (philosophical) problem is that touch prevents us from being detached: “in most historical and theoretical discussions about the reception of art, the general (though usually unstated) assumption is that one should be concerned with ocular scrutiny, with how contemporary viewers, including artists themselves, used their eyes as the primary means for apprehending works of art.” Vilifying touch is a scholarly habit, a habit that goes hand in hand with disparaging medieval studies, the decorative


606 “The ample textures are sensually and sensorially available to the gaze, touch, and taste. Tactility combats the optical experienced, Alois Riegl referred to the tactile qualities as the true aspect of an object as opposed to the illusion generated through the optical frame,” Pentcheva, “The Performative Icon,” 639; “Whereas the optical qualities disappear in the dark, the tactile qualities remain. Extent and delimitation are thus the more objective qualities, color and light the more subjective ones, for the latter depend to a great degree on those change circumstances in which the perceiving subject finds itself,” Alois Riegel, “Late Roman or Oriental?,” in German Essays on Art History (New York: Continuum, 1988), 181.

607 The claim of tactile response is made in both Camille, “‘For Our Devotion and Pleasure’: The Sexual Objects of Jean, Duc de Berry”; and Easton, “‘Was It Good For You, Too?’”

arts, sex, etc. There is an academic desire for “detachment” from the body, the erotic, and desire. When scholars strive to appear objective, they tend to use vision-centric words, basing their choices on the concept that vision conveys a sense of detachment. A major problem with reception theory in standard art historical practice is that it assumes the primacy of vision in the experience of artwork. My study does not call for a replacement of visuality with tactility, but to add tactile enjoyment and reception to the mix.

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609 The “marginalization of medieval studies” has often been pointed out. Even in 1926, it was noted that “history as compared with the physical sciences, is neglected by the modern public. […] Something will have been done to dissipate that cloud of suspicion which hangs over too many important chapters in the social and religious history of the Middle Ages,” Owst, Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c.1350-1450, vii–viii; see also James F. Willard, ed., Progress of Medieval Studies in the United States of America, vol. 6 (Boulder: University of Colorado, 1928); in the 1940s, C.H. McIlwain, “Mediaeval Institutions in the Modern World,” Speculum 16, no. 3 (July 1, 1941): 275–83; in 1953, E.N. Johnson struggled with a similar problem: “If we [medievalists] cannot justify our interests by some sort of contribution to the solution of major contemporary problems […] then we shall be deserted for some system or some one who promises to do what we do not do. […] And we shall not get it done by merely attending as usual to our own comfortable, irrelevant, esoteric, and academic busy work while the world goes to its ruin and we together with it,” E.N. Johnson, “American Mediaevalists and Today,” Speculum 28, no. 4 (October 1, 1953): 844–54; see in the 1970s, Paul Oskar Kristeller, “Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Reflections of a Scholar,” Speculum 52, no. 1 (January 1, 1977): 1–4; and in the 1990s, Lee Patterson, “On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History, and Medieval Studies,” Speculum 65, no. 1 (January 1990): 87–108: “past scholarship has sequestered, denied or white-washed medieval obscenity to the detriment of our understanding of the Middle Ages,” McDonald, Medieval Obscenities, 13.

610 Also referred to as reader-response criticism, the art historians in the 1980s began to incorporate this theory into their work, such as Belting, Das Bild und Sein Publikum im Mittelalter; Fried, Absorption and Theatricality; and Kemp, Der Anteil des Betrachters. Art historians based their approaches upon the theories first put out by literary historians; Iser, The Act of Reading; and Jauss, Toward an Aesthetic of Reception.

611 “The tangibly appeals to and mobilizes all five senses, while the visible addresses itself just to the eye. It is our modern culture’s obsession with making things visible, fueled by optical visuality, that makes us project a similar framework onto medieval art. […] tactile visuality sensually experienced. […] the eye […] seeks a tangible form that can be ‘touched with the eyes, hands, and lips,’” Pentcheva, “The Performatice Icon,” 636; this quote, “to touch with the eyes and lips,” is from the liturgical treatise of the Mandylion, mid-tenth century. See Ernst von Dobschütz, Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1899), 112.
History as a discipline has set arbitrary categories and delineated periods, but there is more continuity in the course of human experience over time than many historians allow. Pointing out similarities in arguments between the medieval and the modern can “broaden our awareness and understanding of both.”\(^{612}\) I hope my focus on what has been ignored by others out of their fear of not being taken seriously contributes to a movement that embraces the entirety of the senses and our tactile experiences with art. Though touch can easily be associated with the erotic and sensual, it also has positive associations with knowledge and creativity. There is often a specific time for the appreciation of a specific kind of work, and the time for touch has come.\(^{613}\)


\(^{613}\) “The greatest artworks need a particular soil in a particular time. Art history teaches us the greatest artworks are bottom up phenomena. It is as if one can never understand man in himself without understanding a particular woman or man in a particular time and place, a woman or man you could imagine to hear, to see, and to touch; a woman or man you could trust or fear; a woman or man you could touch—someone who seems genuine, such as Oedipus, Antigone, Lear, Don Quixote, Emma Bovary, Hedda Gabler, or Huckleberry Finn,” Perricone, “The Place of Touch in the Arts,” 99.
Appendix: Figures

Figure 1: Pair of Lovers, mirror case, ivory, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (71.107) 
Early 15th century, 8.2cm diameter; .9cm deep
Figure 2: Pair of Lovers, mirror case, ivory, Musée du Louvre; on loan to Musée national du Moyen Âge-Musée de Cluny, Paris (OA 115)
Early 15th century, 8.7cm x 8.2cm; .8cm deep

614 Image from “Gothic Ivories Project, Courtauld.”
Figure 3: *Pair of Lovers*, mirror case, ivory, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (71.265)
Mid-14th century, 9.5 cm diameter
Figure 4: Pairs of Lovers, mirror case, ivory, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (17.190.246) 14th century, 8.2cm diameter; .8cm deep

615 Image of inside from ibid.
Figure 5: Lovers Playing Chess, mirror case, ivory, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (803-1891)
c.1300-25, 10.7cm x 10.5cm; 1.7cm deep, 100g
Figure 6: *Pair of Lovers*, mirror case, ivory, The British Museum, London (1856.0623.109)
14th century, 9cm diameter; 1cm deep, 57.8g
Figure 7: *Pair of Lovers*, mirror case, ivory, The British Museum, London (1885,0804.6)
Late 14th century, 8cm diameter; .8cm deep, 35.7g
Figure 8: Pair of Lovers, mirror case, ivory, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (217-1867)
c.1300-25, 10.6cm x 10.4cm; 1.3cm deep, 100g
Figure 9: Pairs of Lovers, mirror case, ivory, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (A.562-1910) c.1330-40, 9.5cm diameter
Figure 10: *Pair of Lovers*, mirror case, ivory, The British Museum, London (1856.0623.108)
Late 14th century (or 19th century), 6.8cm diameter; .6cm deep, 20.8g
Figure 11: *Pair of Lovers*, mirror case, ivory, The British Museum, London (1856,0623.105)
Early 14th century, 7cm diameter; .6cm deep, 28.3g
Figure 12: *Pair of Lovers*, mirror case, ivory, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (71.95)  
First quarter of 14th century, 5.8cm x 5.7cm
Figure 13: Lovers on Horseback, mirror case, ivory, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (222-1867) c.1330-50, 12.5cm diameter
Figure 14: *Lovers on Horseback*, mirror case, ivory, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (219-1867)
c.1330-40, 10cm diameter
Figure 15: *Lovers on Horseback*, mirror case, ivory, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (17.190.247) c.1350, 8.2cm diameter; 1cm deep

616 Image of inside from ibid.
Figure 16: *Pair of Lovers*, mirror case, ivory, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (71.284)  
First quarter of 14\textsuperscript{th} century, 9cm x 8.5cm\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{17} Image of inside from ibid.
Figure 17: *Pair of Lovers*, mirror case, ivory, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (71.97
Mid-14th century, 9.5cm diameter; .5cm deep
Figure 18: *Castle of Love/Joust*, complete mirror case, ivory, Musée du Louvre; on loan to Musée national du Moyen Âge-Musée de Cluny, Paris (OA 116)
c.1340-50,

A (on left): 10.4cm x 10cm, 6cm deep
B (on right): 10.3cm x 10.2cm, 1cm deep; mirror: 7.2cm diameter

618 Inside and closed images from ibid.
Figure 19: *Pairs of Lovers*, mirror case, ivory, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (71.167)  
Second half 14th century, 9.5cm diameter
Figure 20: Four Pairs of Lovers, mirror case, ivory, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (71.168)
Second quarter 14th century, 7cm x 6.5cm
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“Now the mariner rejoices at the sight of land; 
now the runner is at the winning post; 
the anchor is fast in the harbour.”\textsuperscript{619}

\textsuperscript{619} Alanus de Insulis, \textit{Anticlaudianus}, 1973, 216, (Book IX: line 419).
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