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INTRODUCTION

Long, Strange Histories

The Wound Man is an image at once troubling and enigmatic (fig. 0.1). A male figure looks out from the parchment page bearing a multitude of graphic wounds. His skin is covered in bleeding cuts and lesions, stabbed and sliced by elaborately detailed knives, spears, and swords of varying sizes, many of which remain stuck threateningly in his body. His head and thighs are pierced with arrows, some intact, some snapped down to just their heads or shafts, their fletch feathering his form. A club metes out blunt trauma at his shoulder, while inside his chest—rendered eerily transparent so as to reveal the structure of his intestines, lungs, spleen—the tip of a dagger punctures his heart. As well as weapons of war and affray, the figure bears traces of more quotidian accident. His shins and feet are clustered with thorn scratches and trod-upon blades. He is peppered with itchy insect bites. And to compound his appalling, cumulative misfortune, the Wound Man is also deeply unwell. His armpits and groin sport rounded, dark red buboes. A label tells us he is beset by “*pruritus per totum corpus*” (itching all over the body), which alongside the depicted rashes and swellings suggests the contraction of multiple diseases. The violence and illness rendered unto his body is total and all-consuming. Yet, despite such a horrendous barrage, the figure’s expression is unnervingly resolute. He stands with eyes wide open, very much still alive, and in this simple act the image’s purpose crystallizes. For despite its gratuitous display, the Wound Man was not a figure originally designed to inspire fear or to menace. Instead, it represented something altogether more hopeful: an imaginative and arresting reminder of the powerful knowledge that could be channeled and dispensed through the practice of premodern medicine.

Consider, though, the different levels of description and categorization we are required to slip and slide between in order to capture the Wound Man’s many simultaneous aspects in words. The image’s abundance necessitates leading with an ekphrastic register, descriptions that parse the essential details of the figure’s body and its penetrating objects, hinting also at the materiality of the page. And at the same time, the image inevitably invites other forms of language: medical discussions of anatomy and diagnostics, the

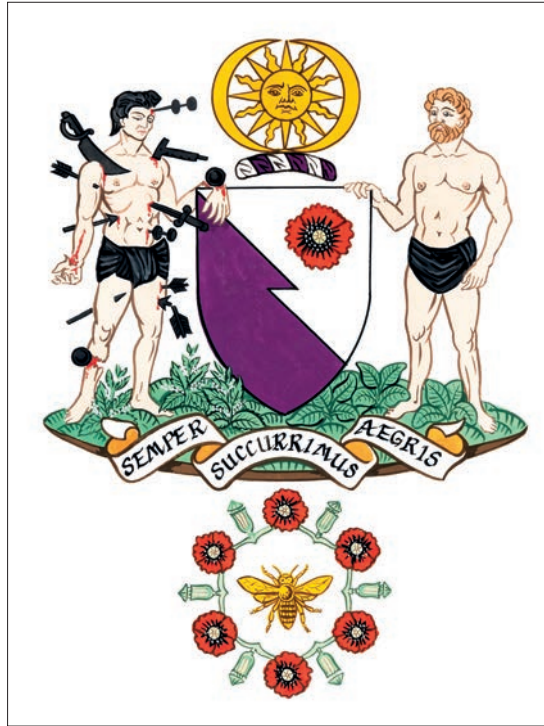


Fig. 0.2. Coat of arms of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, adopted November 2, 1995. Ink on paper. London, College of Arms, MS Grants 162.

employment of technical descriptors to diagnose the figure's diagrammatic innards and brimming diseases, and even far more nebulous yet fundamental questions over what the figure is doing to the viewer emotionally, spiritually, hovering somewhere between surprise and salvation. Amid this scuffle for critical angles, the Wound Man aggressively resists clear interpretation.

A major consequence of this complexity is that today the image lives out an empty, exclusively spectacular life. Recently, his broken body has provided a grotesque lure to a diverse and somewhat bizarre variety of modern constituents. In 1995, the figure was included as part of the new official coat of arms of the United Kingdom's Royal College of Emergency Medicine, reworked with rippling abs and Ken-doll hair to conveniently present in a single body the many trauma injuries that the college's members were equipped to tackle (fig. 0.2).¹ For the administrators of Mont Orgeuil Castle, a thirteenth-century fortress overlooking the port of Gorey on the island of Jersey, the Wound Man was a more playful thing, a fitting inspiration for a sculpture by the artist Owen Cunningham, who produced a giant three-dimensional likeness of the figure for the gleeful, gross-out delight of visitors. This same gruesome sensibility, revived and mercilessly amplified, ushered the image onto TV screens, gracing the desk of Mads Mikkelsen's eponymous cannibalistic doctor Hannibal Lecter in the 2013 NBC series *Hannibal*, a show in turn based on Thomas Harris's 1981 novel *Red Dragon*. Harris drew on the Wound Man as a model for several of his book's particularly spectacular murders, but he was not the first writer to cite the figure as their muse. Back in 1957, no less a literary luminary than Ian Fleming had written to his publisher to suggest that instead of its current title, *Dr. No*, perhaps the sixth book in his

James Bond series of spy thrillers should be renamed *The Wound Man*, after a historical picture he had recently come across in a pamphlet and for which he claimed to have great affection.² The publisher declined. In the last decade or so, the image has inspired music from a heavy metal band, a book of Scots poetry, a piece of one-man storytelling theater entitled *The Adventures of Wound Man and Shirley*, an anarchist tea-towel protesting corporate profiteering, and a diagram in a respected veterinary journal outlining commonly sustained wounds among dueling cats.³

Academic studies have for the most part mirrored this surface-level pop prominence, albeit less often. The Wound Man is not new to the scholarly understanding of medicine's past, first brought to the attention of the academy some time ago, in 1907, by the German historian of medicine and medical images Karl Sudhoff.⁴ A highly problematic yet pioneering academic in the emerging field during the first decades of the twentieth century, Sudhoff conducted exhaustive historical research in the grand libraries of interwar Europe that greatly expanded the understanding of much premodern European medical practice.⁵ In the case of the Wound Man, he gathered together, for the first time in a single space, what was then only a handful of known examples and offered detailed codicological commentary on their origins and the texts they appeared alongside. Yet since Sudhoff, specific studies of the Wound Man have largely been restricted to niche medical-historical subfields, and more importantly, they have only been brief: a journal article from 1965 and a book chapter from 1993 again focus primarily on the texts circulating in the orbit of the figure, while a medical dissertation from 1982 adds several further Wound Men to Sudhoff's short list of examples.⁶ A number of recent academic publishers, keen to display a dramatic dust jacket, have presented the figure as a full-on frontispiece to books on various aspects of the Middle Ages and early modernity. But the contents of these publications rarely dedicate more than a footnote to the Wound Man himself, and in many the injured figure who violently bestrides their covers goes entirely unmentioned.⁷

The central contention of this book is that the Wound Man is far more than spectacle. In fact, the image demands a new kind of thinking to keep pace with its exciting, multifaceted vastness, a scope that straddles manifold arenas of both the premodern world and modern scholarship. The spine of this approach lies in the first-ever detailed excavation of the figure's material history, an account that in the chapters to come traverses a broad sweep of more than three hundred years. Known from at least fifteen late medieval manuscripts and over thirty early modern printed books reproduced in hundreds of editions, the Wound Man appeared as a constant in medical and nonmedical works from fourteenth-century Central Europe to eighteenth-century East Asia. These items are this book's historical core, requiring the examination of materials held in roughly eighty libraries and archives, principally in Europe but also at an increasing remove from the lands of the Wound Man's origin, as far afield as collections in North America and Japan. Some of these images have been known to scholarship since Sudhoff's day, but the majority have not previously been examined, among them works from outside of institutional collections that have surfaced on the rare books

market as recently as 2023. In all, ninety-three Wound Men are gathered here to plot the coordinates of a complex collective life.

This book is no catalog, however. From the very moment of its inception, the Wound Man was an image intimately tied to actual practice. As such, to chart a history of the figure is also to chart a history of the medical ideas, literary interests, technological shifts, and artistic currents that it emerged alongside: their documentation, debate, distribution, evolution, and in some cases collapse. This book deals as much with cutting, bleeding, and suturing as it does with drawing, painting, and printing, showcasing how the Wound Man helps us bring together historical areas of cultural production that interpreters today far too often claim as entirely discrete. In this sense, to track the Wound Man's history is also to explore a developing cast of characters who interacted with the image from different vantage points across its busy chronological and geographical sweep. Engaged by healers and patients alike, but also by printmakers and poets, scribes and students, nuns and monks, this was a figure of the utmost importance for premodern users from both literate and nonliterate worlds, stretching from learned academic elites to workshop artisans who generated their knowledge not through writing texts but through hands-on craft. The chapters to come thus aim both to illuminate the Wound Man's image and to revive his deep context, restoring the captivating presence that the figure once held for a wide range of medieval and early modern people.

Finally, as well as working to make the image of the Wound Man more familiar—explaining the details of its appearance, its purpose, its makers, its users—this book sets in motion another set of arguments that look to do the opposite: to allow the Wound Man to remain strange. At almost precisely the same time as Karl Sudhoff was publishing the first academic outlines of the Wound Man's medicine, he struck up an epistolary relationship with another German scholar more familiar to historiographers of the visual, the cultural historian Aby Warburg.⁸ Both were deeply interested in the long histories of similar medieval and early modern images, writing in letters of their "*Paralleler Hinreisen*" (parallel paths). But where Sudhoff's approach was unashamedly historical, focusing on what he saw as rigorous matters of provenance, technicality, and cause, Warburg's engagement with the same material could be characterized as far more fluid and philosophical, even bordering on the mystical.⁹ Take the so-called Panel B of Warburg's unfinished yet famed *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, a grand project running from 1927 until his death in which he gathered black-and-white reproductions pinned to large-scale boards in order to trace recurring visual patterns running from antiquity to early modernity (fig. 0.3). In Panel B, Warburg was exploring notions of what we might call proto-science, specifically the metaphysical imbrication of the human body and the cosmos through a suite of astrological images. On the surface, the panel emphasizes direct similarity. Showing multiple idealized male figures set into correspondence with discs of zodiacal signs and circuits, it draws our attention to the simple yet undeniable fact that makers across periods maintained a keen interest in visualizing humankind's relation to the stars. Yet in presenting an art historical argument in pictorial form, Warburg was less interested in matters of concrete lineage—that the artist of



Fig. 0.3. “Panel B” of Aby Warburg’s *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* in its so-called Final Version, 1929, Hamburg. Photograph. London, Warburg Institute Photographic Collection.

one image had directly seen and was trying to emulate another pictured on the board—than he was in their collective presence, a cultural through line of epistemically potent objects that together were complicit in the production and transmission of ideas. The Wound Man himself never featured directly in Warburg’s *Bilderatlas*, yet in conveying the shared intellectual stakes and sweeping aesthetics of its many versions, this book advocates that we take the image seriously on precisely these abstracted yet bewitching terms. Doing so requires not only looking contextually across periods for the Wound Man’s role in reflecting medical knowledge and personnel but also looking at the image more obliquely, alert to its subsurface associations with contemporary patterns of religious discourse, literary practices of legal compunction and fantastical violence, paradigm shifts in media landscapes, and cross-cultural currents of artistic flare that could be deployed to multiple audiences around the world.

In short, this book mobilizes the Wound Man for inspiration in expanding the fundamentals of what can be done with medical images made before the modern era. This broad category of picture has for the most part languished. Once among the past's most active and engaging images, they now find themselves stalled in a niche between disciplines, overlooked both by historians of art unable to sufficiently parse their curative contents and historians of medicine unable to sufficiently contextualize their visual structures. The creative friction between these and other fields, however, can also act with reanimating force. To start this process, the five chapters that follow develop from one another chronologically, charting the course of the Wound Man's history from its later medieval backgrounds and origins through to its multiple early modern lives. But they also develop conceptually, each showcasing how the Wound Man can in turn act as a prompt to various scholarly fields: diagrammatics, medicine, literature, technology, and art history. In this sense, they take the interdisciplinary and transcultural ideas of today's historical writing and explore them not as methodologies but as maneuvers that image-makers and medics were themselves making long before modern historians.

Chapter 1, "Diagram: Ambitious Figures," begins the book by setting the scene for the Wound Man, introducing the various contexts for diagramming the body that emerged in European book culture during the later Middle Ages and exploring contemporary attitudes toward epistemic function, artistic figuration, and the medical audiences of images. First, it surveys a host of materials from across medical and nonmedical contexts that help us grapple with the fuzzy modern term "illustration," a word that, on the one hand, leans toward aesthetic ideas of art, ornament, and embellishment, and on the other, toward more intellectual models of explanation, images that differentiated and made tangible the intricacy of complex ideas. Thereafter focusing on material from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century physicians' notebooks and surgical manuscripts, the chapter demonstrates how makers of medical books were constantly playing with diagrammatic tensions in their work, especially in images of their patients, which they used to simultaneously generate and distribute medical understanding. It concludes by offering an extended analysis of one medical predecessor of the Wound Man in detail, so-called bloodletting figures, which from the fourteenth century onward offered diagrammatic accompaniment to widely circulated texts on the practice of phlebotomy. Bringing to light many previously unknown examples from late medieval Germany, Bohemia, France, Italy, England, Wales, Ireland, and Spain, the chapter maps out the key visual coordinates and medical circumstances for understanding the Wound Man itself.

Chapter 2, "Medicine: Wound Mechanics," turns from matters of backdrop to the specifics of the Wound Man's own origins, explicating the figure's emergence in late medieval European medical culture by examining the eight earliest surviving examples of the figure, found in a group of surgical books from fifteenth-century Bohemia and southern Germany. Known to the few historians of medicine who have considered them as manuscripts of the *Dreibilderserie* (Three-Picture Series), these were flexible works whose changeable medicine addressed a tripartite agenda—disease, gynecology,

and wound surgery—and whose shared characteristic was the marshaling of their contents not through fixed titles or concretized cures but through medical diagrams. The chapter offers the first holistic close reading of these images, known respectively as the Disease Man, the Disease Woman, and of course the Wound Man, although, intriguingly, all three were in part intended for the treatment of both male and female bodies. It then goes on to specifically unpack the Wound Man's complex taxonomic armature in these works, showing how the figure's envelopment in individuated catchphrases and number keys linked his respective injuries to an accompanying list of surgical procedures and pharmaceutical recipes, each carefully designed to heal his many woes. Presenting the figure as an all-too-vivid table of surgical contents, we come to understand the Wound Man's fundamental grounding, at once a unique, encyclopedic catalog of the late medieval profession's craft and a visual reflection of the increasingly prominent social positioning of surgeons within contemporary medical culture.

Having traced the medical origins of the Wound Man in a world of hands-on surgical practice, the book turns in chapter 3, "Affect: Wounds in the World," to consider the powerful emotional qualities that the figure's bruised and battered body could also communicate to readers. Building on both medieval and modern theories of pain as a communal yet fundamentally uncommunicable phenomenon, the chapter considers how the Wound Man's distressing emotional power exemplified the strong links between medical and nonmedical fields in fifteenth-century Europe, in particular in the German-speaking lands from which the figure emanated. Creating a detailed affective framework for the Wound Man, the chapter gradually weaves a rich contemporary "woundscape" from many strands: the visual legal testimony used to indict murder suspects; the bloody treatment of literary heroes in poetic epics; the aggressive masculinity of illustrated fight manuals; and contemporary religious discourses around wounded holy bodies, from strong saintly precedent—Saint Sebastian riddled with arrows, the stoning of Saint Stephen, the gruesome torture of Saint Barbara—to expiatory forms of Christological pain that heralded the promise of healing through a familiar devout model of spiritual sickness and cure. By effectively developing a personhood for the Wound Man, the chapter concludes, conflation with these points of cultural resonance activated a backstory for the figure, something that contemporary medical discourses in turn saw as key to his effective healing.

Chapter 4, "Into Print: International Intermediality," heralds a chronological shift in the book, moving away from the Wound Man's origins to consider the figure's changing fortune across an expansive late medieval and early modern life. Most traditional accounts of illustrated printed medical books in Europe tend to start with the highly detailed and decorated output of the sixteenth century, but this chapter instead begins by demonstrating that many illustrative traditions of early modern medicine were in fact flourishing in print well before 1500, bringing to light a range of previously undiscussed figures used in bodily diagnosis, astronomical prognosis, surgical procedure, and natural philosophical discussions of anatomy. The image of the Wound Man was a crucial element among these illustrated medical incunabules, first appearing as part of the wildly successful *Fasciculus*

medicinae (Little Bundle of Medicine) published in 1491 by the Venetian printers Giovanni and Gregorio de Gregori. Through a close analysis of the images and texts of the *Fasciculus*, the chapter addresses the innovative printing techniques and editorial syntheses needed to realize the Wound Man in this new technological medium. It also examines the role of print in ensuring the figure's immense popularity throughout the sixteenth century, tracking the Wound Man's reworking across subsequent editions, translations, and reimaginings of the book made in Zaragoza, Burgos, Pamplona, Milan, Antwerp, Seville, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Augsburg, Mainz, and Basel. It was through these multiple printed appearances that a number of contemporary European artists were also inspired to capture their own versions of the painful figure, producing extravagant hand-illustrated copies of the *Fasciculus* Wound Man and his printed ills. As a result, the chapter argues, the figure testifies to both the movement of manuscript medical imagery into international print circuits and an altogether more unusual and interesting phenomenon only recently beginning to be identified by print scholars: intermedial images that could bounce back and forth between the different technologies of early modern books.

Having considered the widespread implications of the Wound Man's initial appearance as a printed medical phenomenon, the book's fifth and final chapter, "Image: Wound Man Aesthetics," argues for the figure's emergence among an increasingly transnational set of early modern aesthetic networks. With its unusual combination of eye-catching violence and curative potency, the Wound Man was featured regularly in a new wave of groundbreaking surgical treatises as a visually striking medical title page, starting with printed surgical works by German authors writing around 1500, such as Hieronymus Brunschwig and Hans von Gersdorff. Here the chapter explores how the figure was put to increasingly abstract, artistic use by authors and printers, conjured to both market a book's surgical contents and, in an intriguing poetic turn, literally speak in favor of particular surgeons and their work. From this springboard, the chapter considers the detail of three early modern moments in which the Wound Man's image, rather than his specific medicine, took on particular local import: in sixteenth-century France, seventeenth-century England, and eighteenth-century Japan. By tracing the lines of these many early modern Wound Men as they evolved into almost stand-alone artworks, this chapter emphasizes the figure's strange yet recurrent slippage between cultures, contexts, and technologies. The Wound Man's medico-artistic potential more often than not dwelled in its ability to speak for the surgical craft as a whole: a totemic emblem of the profession through which we can map both the developing expertise and cultural positioning of its many surgical participants.

Today the overarching discipline of the Medical Humanities tries to keep up a parity between the methods of history and the materials of health. Yet as with many aspects of the historical field, the rich Medical Humanities of modernity and the present day—explorations of X-rays, robotics, genomics, artificial intelligence—are all too often allowed to overpower the important contributions of medical visual culture from a more distant era. Together, these chapters make the case that medieval and early modern voices must be

kept loud and strong in evolving discussions of medicine's relation to images and objects, presenting the Wound Man's many aspects as an ideal point of departure for dialogue between past and present. Utilizing the image's exceptional complexity and intensity, this book reveals a process of medico-artistic entanglement that transports the reader beyond the specifics of bodily injury and allows the Wound Man to emerge as an intricate, unique site of contact: between sickness and cure, painting and print, suffering and sanctity, and ultimately between art, society, and healing.

CHAPTER ONE

Diagram: Ambitious Figures

Fieri autem potest, ut recte quis sentiat, et id, quod sentit, polite eloqui non possit. Sed mandare quemquam litteris cogitationes suas, qui eas nec disponere, nec illustrare possit, nec delectatione aliqua allicere lectorem, hominis est intemperanter abutentis et otio, et litteris.

It may happen that a man can think rightly, yet cannot express elegantly what he thinks. But committing thoughts to writing without being able to arrange or explain them, or at all amuse the reader, is for a person who unreasonably abuses both leisure and learning.

CICERO, *Tusculan Disputations*

Before turning to the Wound Man's late medieval specifics, it is important to understand the image's medico-visual context, its ambitious predecessors and their processes. To do so, however, is to straight away be thrown into a conceptual gray area neatly encompassed by the modern term "illustration," a word whose meanings pull in two directions at once. On the one hand, the term conjures aesthetic ideas of representation: a sense of ornament and embellishment, decorative details that beautify and excite the page. On the other, it leans toward more epistemic models of explanation: serious images that help to elucidate complex concepts, visualizing individual elements of ideas and their intricate connections. To put it in more premodern terms, we might borrow a formulation from the *Tusculan Disputations* cited in this chapter's epigraph—a rhetorical dictum well known to European intellectuals of the later Middle Ages—which acknowledges that *illustrare* always sits in delicate pact with *delectatione*.¹ To illustrate is sometimes to enlighten, sometimes to enliven, and sometimes both.

A tension between these two etymological poles can be found in a wide group of images from medieval Europe, ranging from religious, philosophical, and legal contexts to astronomical, mathematical, and cartographic visual culture. But medical pictures from the European Middle Ages represent a particularly complex and creative approach to illustration's extremes. Knotting together highly diverse concepts of the visual with highly diverse concepts of bodily cure, they emerge more often than not as sites of distinctly paradoxical image-craft. Their visual leisure and their visual learning, to again use Cicero's words, are sometimes synthesized but also often

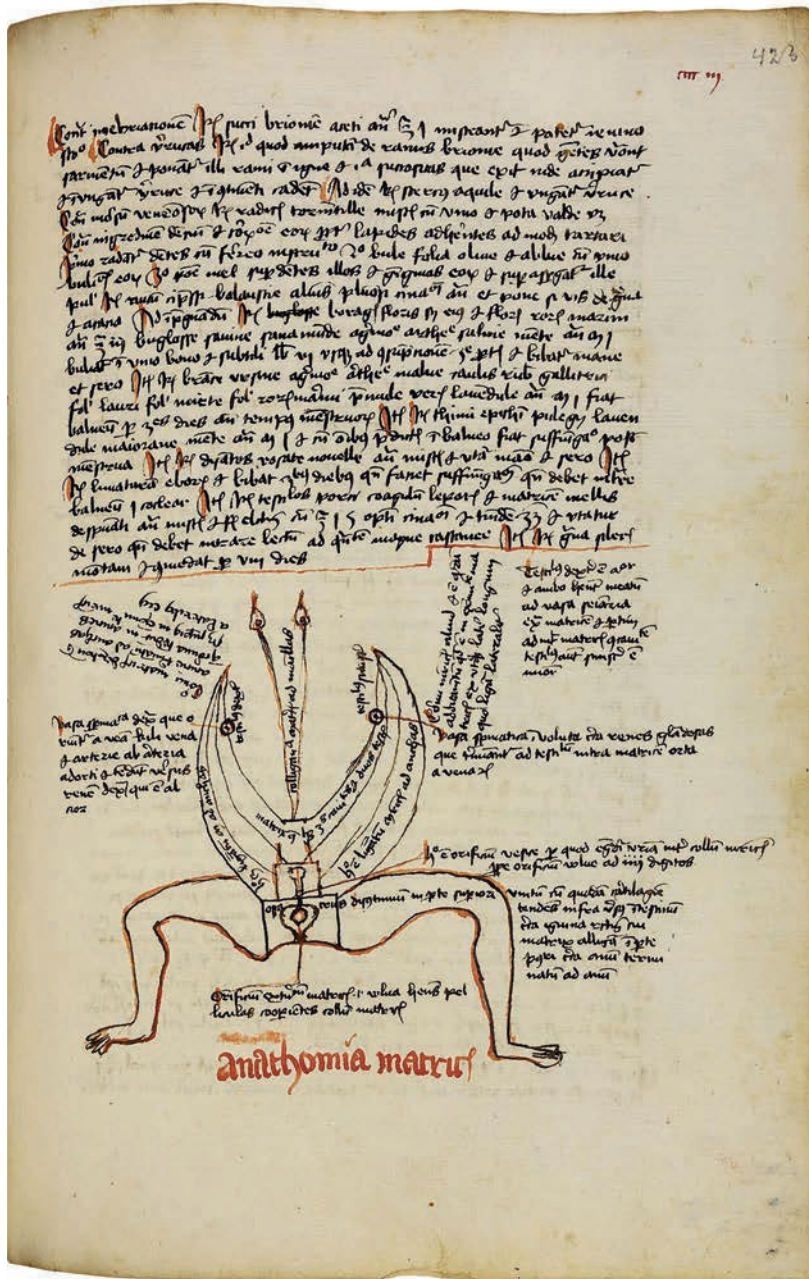


Fig. 1.1. Diagram of the womb sketched by the Heidelberg physician Erhard Knab, c. 1460, Heidelberg. Ink on paper, 31 x 22 cm. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. Lat. 1225, fol. 423r.

staged antagonistically, so much so that they quickly generate difficulties of categorization and interpretation for a modern reader attempting to understand past relationships between image, knowledge, and the human body.

Consider by way of introduction to this problem a particularly unusual image from a chunky medical notebook written at some point around the year 1462 by a physician and high-ranking master at the University of Heidelberg named Erhard Knab (fig. 1.1).² Knab's notebook as a whole is a typical piece of late medieval academic work. Across nearly five hundred folios,

an eclectic assortment of treatises and recipes have been reproduced in a thin black hand with occasional red flourishes, all drawn from Knab's wide-ranging medical reading. He lists digestive medicines and laxatives cribbed from the fourteenth-century French surgeon Gui de Chauliac; he cites treatments for plague drawn from Chauliac's contemporary, the Italian physician Pietro da Tossignano; and he situates excerpts such as these by esteemed medieval experts alongside his own suite of original commentaries on apostemes, ulcers, wound management, uroscopy, and a variety of other topics. The notebook is typical too in its infrequent use of images, with only one large-scale drawing sandwiched by Knab toward the back of the book between a treatise on healing kidney stones and a multifaceted text on various diseases such as fever, asthma, and reproductive health.

Although singular, the image is nonetheless striking. Above a bold red label reading "*anathomia matricis*" (anatomy of the womb), a close-packed set of graphical elements outline key parts of the female reproductive system. At its lower center, two rectangular blocks stacked one atop the other are identified in Knab's highly abbreviated Latin as the mouth of the womb and the womb itself, the former shown as a pair of large concentric ovals and the latter sitting above it, looking like a miniaturized lightbulb in a box. A pair of arching bands spring upward from these blocks to the left and right representing the uterine ligaments, muscular components that Classical writers had long described as loosely anchoring the womb within the body. Here they also forge anatomical connection between the uterus and a pair of small round circles labeled both "*vasa spermatica*" and "*testes*," organs that today we would call the ovaries, but which in medieval generative thinking were conceived as direct correspondents to the male testicles, even to the point of providing a form of female sperm for reproduction.³ Adding even more to the upward sweep of the image, another twin set of anatomical elements shoot vertically from the center, depicted almost as a pair of eyes overlooking the scene. These in fact are the breasts, labeled "*mamillas*," organs that, despite their linking lines, were thought only to hold conceptual rather than physical connection to the uterus, processing the humoral excess of menstrual blood into milk for nursing.⁴ Lastly—and most unnervingly—a pair of realistic legs sprout outward from the bottom of this core cluster, complete with carefully rounded calves and individuated toes. They anchor the accumulated apparatus firmly to the ground, as if it were standing still in a half-squat in front of the reader, yet somehow at the same time they communicate a disturbing capacity for movement. We get the sense that this entire accumulated ensemble could at any moment stand up and scuttle sideways off the page.

It is unclear what exactly to make of this contradictory image. On first impression, its scratchy forms feel rather hastily sketched, the shaky work of a penman more familiar with small-scale letters than long sweeping lines. Yet there has still been considerable care taken in building up the pointed curves of elements like the uterine ligaments, underscoring the legs and breasts in red, and delicately plotting the image's labels in an elegant spiral around the central body, each one reproduced without error, unlike the multiple strikeouts of the messy treatise above the image. It is also contradictory in a more conceptual sense, stuck between illustration's two poles. In its upper

portion, explanation clearly takes the reins, employing a familiar technical vocabulary of simple shapes, linking lines, and textual labels for the principal purpose of clarifying its different anatomical elements to the reader. Below, though, naturalistic legs bring alarming personality to this otherwise mechanical image. If in its top half the image is giving form to anatomical ideas, outlining organs and their theoretical connections, then what is coming into shape in the bottom half? Is this schematic caught in the process of becoming a person, a patient? Standing at the precipice between epistemics and aesthetics, Knab's image feels no need to provide a clear answer.

Diagrammatic Perspectives

Images in medical manuscripts such as Knab's figure—and, as we shall see, the figure of the Wound Man too—are often classified in catalogs, archives, and scholarly texts as diagrams. Yet as the historian of science Faith Wallis has recently noted, her tongue firmly in cheek, "Many medievalists, it seems, know a diagram when they see one; but few are prepared to agree on what qualifies as a diagram and why."⁵

The idea that scholars of the Middle Ages might be particularly attuned to the diagrammatic in part reflects the place of such images in late medieval European visual culture itself. In this set of traditions, the subtle explanatory power of visualized information was regularly evoked, especially in medieval books. Whether leafing through the folios of an eleventh-century monastic treatise on the weather, a thirteenth-century legal argument on the limits of intermarriage, or a fifteenth-century religious work outlining the simultaneous oneness and infinitude of God, a medieval reader would frequently find their texts interspersed with eloquent trees, wheels, grids, tables, and mappings of myriad types. Not that "diagram" is the term they would have used to describe such images. In most European vernaculars this word—coined from the Greek roots *dia-* (through) and *graphein* (writing, drawing, painting, describing)—was only popularized by scholars in the seventeenth century, while its premodern Latin iteration, *diagramma*, was mostly limited to the specific technical vocabulary of land surveyors to describe their designs. Instead, in medieval European works such images are noted variously as *figura*, *schema*, *forma*, *imago*, *rota*, *nota*, *descriptio*, *caracter*, צורה (tzeura), חבנית (tavnit), صور (ṣuwar), جداول (jadāwil), or أشكال (ashkāl).⁶

It is the sheer vastness of this scope, etymologically but also formally, that has left scholars who try to pin down the medieval diagram with a broad lexicon of conflicting definitions and blurred categorizations. Michael Evans was surely right when he argued in his pioneering 1980 essay "The Geometry of the Mind"—one of the earliest attempts to collate this loose group of images and their implications—that the problem is at least in part one of neglect through disciplinary boundaries.⁷ For much of the twentieth century, art historians deemed the simplistic aesthetics of medieval diagrammatic images too insubstantial for serious study, while their accompanying words and labels never quite seemed sizable enough to reach the independent status of a text, the bar often necessary for literary scholars to sit up and take notice. In the wake of work by Evans and others, however, the diagrammatic mode has

now become of central interest to a number of strands of medieval and early modern studies and the subject of several important recent volumes. For our exploration of the Wound Man, it is important to tease apart the significant multidisciplinary arsenal amassed by recent scholars for elaborating these deceptively simple pictures.⁸

Historians of science and technology have largely led the charge in tackling such diagramming, their commentary coalescing in particular around what they see as these images' unique capacity to argue.⁹ This idea essentially proceeds from observations made by scholars of older scientific traditions, who note that in the Classical writings of Plato, Pappus, Proclus, and others, the term *diagramma* tended to describe an image presented alongside a scientific proof but was also used more synecdochally to infer the intellectual content of that same scientific proof itself, as well as sometimes even describing the entire discipline to which the proof was contributing. To paraphrase the historian of Classical mathematics Reviel Netz, this early science conflated talk *about* diagrams with the talk *of* diagrams, synthesizing the apparatus of argumentation with an argument's conclusions.¹⁰

Much the same has been maintained of medieval diagrammatic images, principally through their participatory logic. We can see this even in the very simplest forms of visual argumentation to survive from the Middle Ages: stemmatic analyses, whose clearly defined structural armatures laid out a series of demonstrative paths for the reader to follow. Whether these images were individuating groups of Aristotelian predicates or different aspects of whole scholastic disciplines organized by their varied parallel branches, by running one's eyes back and forth along their multiple diagrammatic routes it was possible to both absorb their primary information and, at the same time, model progressive stages of connected logic.¹¹ This was the case for these divergent images both when speedily sketched in the margins of a manuscript and when given a more thoughtful, even luxurious life. They could certainly appear grand. Think, for instance, of the spectacular series of images produced in monastic communities across Europe that outlined respective modes of good Christian deeds, not in simple line but by showing each as discrete colorful feathers on a mystical cherub's enormous wings, the flapping whole intertwining pious actions today with apocalyptic judgment tomorrow (fig. 1.2).¹² Yet regardless of their degree of visual eloquence, if, as Aristotle claimed, it is "not possible to think without an image," then by reading any such diagram, artistically executed or not, the reader unavoidably participated in its argumentative logic.¹³ Indeed, historians of science have suggested that such diagrammatic images argued not merely by replicating textual processes of thinking but by going above and beyond them. Scholars like Kathrin Müller and Barbara Obrist have convincingly shown that as certain historical shifts took place in the fundamentals of scholastic logic over the course of the Middle Ages, the diagrammatic function of images presented alongside scholarly texts also evolved.¹⁴ By the later medieval period, such pictures had grown to become far more active and autonomous participants in persuasive reasoning, to the extent that we find figures such as the cherub bundled together with all sorts of related schematics and tables to form discrete, entirely diagrammatic booklets. With no need for



Fig. 1.2. A branching diagram in the form of a six-winged cherub whose feathers individuate different elements of Christian religious virtues, c. 1300, France. Ink and paint on parchment, 28 x 21 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 1037 Rés., fol. 6v.

accompanying explanatory treatises, such images presented what Müller has termed their own unique “visual gloss” on what could be highly complex concepts, arguing novel points of view from an entirely independent epistemic footing.¹⁵

If viewing these medieval images might therefore be tantamount to thinking through arguments, could they also spark other kinds of mental processes? This is the parallel jumping-off point for another group of medievalists, historians of memory, who have addressed the significant role played by diagramming in conditioning premodern practices of learning, narrative, and creative recall. As Mary Carruthers has most extensively argued, both Classical and medieval methods of *memoria* understood that images could form central prompts for mental recollection and reconstitution.¹⁶ Such prompts work not only in the dry sense that we might be familiar with from modern memory techniques, where pictures stand in as mental substitutes for objects or terms in a straightforward one-to-one manner, although we do find entire late medieval Bibles written in this manner.¹⁷ Rather, for thinkers as diverse as Thomas Aquinas, John Garland, and Ramon Llull, among many others, images both real and imagined could also trigger more meditative and rhetorical forms of thinking that actively unfolded across a viewer’s consciousness.

Take the case of the twelfth-century Benedictine author Hugh de Fouilloy, who regularly combined notions of diagrammatic argument and diagrammatic memory in his work, producing eloquent combinations of image and

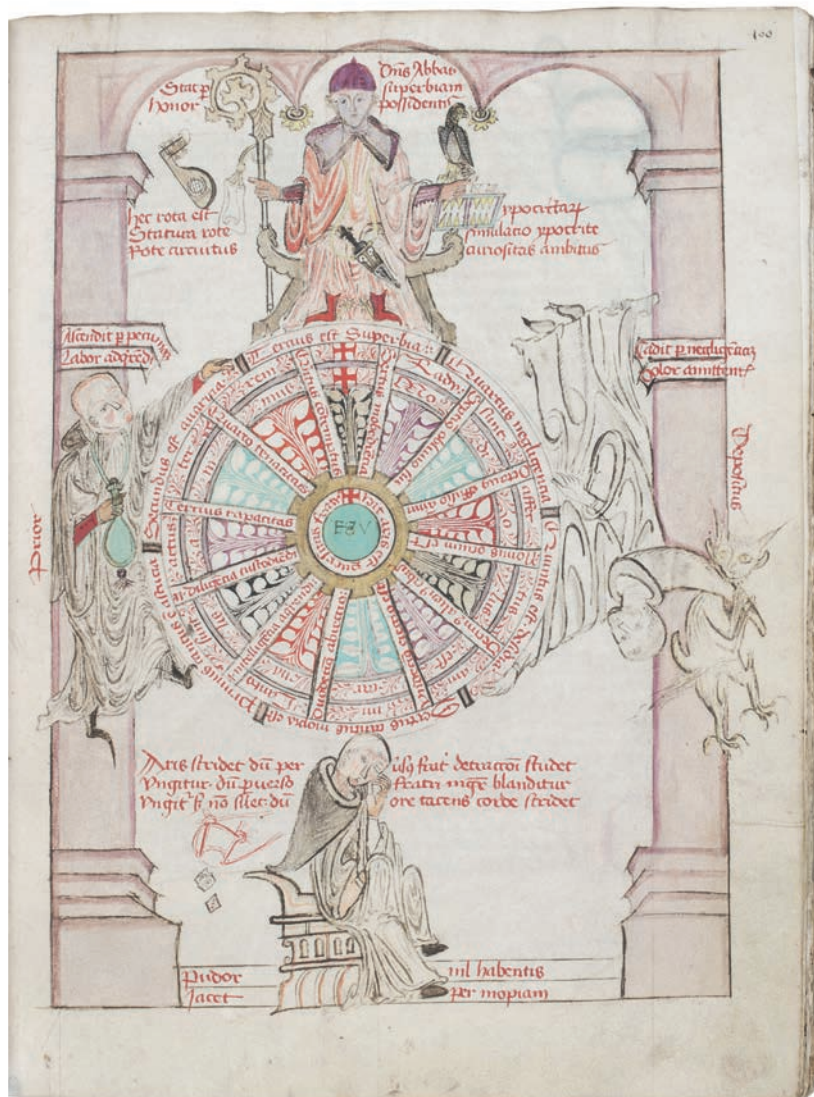


Fig. 1.3. Hugh de Fouilloy's "Axis of Brotherly Perversion," showing the fortunes of a corrupt monk, 1435, probably Austria. Ink and paint on parchment, 29 x 22 cm. Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 737 (23, A 26), fol. 100r.

text.¹⁸ Typical of this is his *Liber de rota verae et falsae religionis* (Book of the Wheel of True and False Religion), a treatise that reworks the much-favored Classical metaphor of Fortune's Wheel into a pair of good and bad models for medieval monastic ethics, its eponymous *rotae*.¹⁹ In an Austrian copy of the work now in Melk Abbey, one of these circular images is preserved particularly well (fig. 1.3).²⁰ This is Hugh's "Axis of Brotherly Perversion," chronicling the rise and fall of one monk's dastardly fortunes around a circular wheel. On the far left of the page we enter the cycle *in medias res* with the wheel's central character on the up: "*ascendit per pecuniam*" (he ascends through money), a marginal note observes. Drawn skyward by the spinning wheel, a quarter turn clockwise we find the same man with purse in hand, comfortably ensconced in a double-headed throne, promoted from mere bad monk to a full-fledged bad abbot. The ill-gotten nature of this office is

stressed by a nearby label discussing his “*superbia*” (pride), while alongside his sacred crozier he wields more frivolous worldly possessions: a hunting hawk and a backgammon board. The cycle of evil pauses for no one, however, and with a further quarter turn, the figure is soon set spinning downward. We read “*Cadit per negligentiam*” (He falls through negligence) and see the man whisked by the wheel so quickly from his throne that a gray devil catches a ride on his hood and saps the washed-up, washed-out monk’s entire body of color.²¹ Finally, at the bottom of the ensemble, he reaches rock bottom, “*iacet per inopiam*” (he is cast down by poverty), with even his gambling dice flung uselessly to the side.

On an immediate level, the image as a whole vividly animates Hugh’s central message to the reader: sin has a cyclical, runaway quality to it, where one bad action inevitably generates another as the wheel turns interminably. Yet at the same time, the circular configuration here serves as a more mnemonic form of ward for the reader. As Carruthers has noted, Hugh himself described his varied investments in images, arguments, and memorization using a wide range of terms, including both *pingere* (to paint) and *decrescere* (to reduce in size).²² Enacting precisely this combination, the *rota* is a visual commemorative compression whose twelve spokes are also each neatly labeled and numbered with a different specific stage in its story of sin: *rapacitas* (rapaciousness), *contemptus* (contempt), *oblivio sui* (forgetfulness of self), and so on. In fusing mnemonics with narrative to elaborate its central claims, this image’s circling terms aid the reader in fully appreciating the gamut of these monastic perils and offer the best possible chance of recognizing such temptations in their own lives.

The *Liber de rota* unquestionably contains serious diagrammatic images with serious consequences. But other historians have suggested that even such seemingly sober systems were, in their own way, drawing upon yet another potential resonance of medieval diagrammatic pictures: their capacity for puckishness and play. Steffen Bogen has unpacked these ludic qualities most recently in relation to the so-called *Libro de axedrez, dados, e tablas* (Book of Chess, Dice, and Table Games), written for the Spanish King Alfonso X in the mid-thirteenth century.²³ The book describes rules, practice problems, and even board- and piece-making methods for a number of different games of skill and chance, all vividly illustrated in more than 150 colorful painted miniatures. The games imaged for Alfonso vary, from chess—“*assessegado iuego e onrrado*” (a noble and honored game)—through to lowlier entertainments such as checkers, backgammon, and dice, as well as several unusual iterations of each, such as *Acedrex de las diez casas* (Chess on a ten-sided board) or *Cercar la liebre* (Corner the Hare, played on a Twelve Men’s Morris board).²⁴ And on a formal level alone the manuscript’s colorful images of games strike particularly persuasive parallels with the medieval diagrammatic tradition, perhaps none more so than the penultimate image in the book, which bears an interesting resemblance to Hugh’s circular *rotae* (fig. 1.4).²⁵

It outlines a remarkable seven-player version of draughts “*que se iuegan por Astronomia*” (that is played by astronomy), with each player taking on the personification of a different planet to simultaneously model their skill in the game and their knowledge of the stars. As with all depictions in the book,



Fig. 1.4. Game of draughts “played by astronomy” from the *Libro de axedrez, dados, e tablas* written for King Alfonso X of Spain, 1283, Seville. Ink and paint on parchment, 40 x 28 cm. Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, MS T-I-6, fol. 96v.

the action is presented to the reader within a semi-realistic environment. Seven well-dressed players sit cross-legged around a grand circular board, the miniature’s striped backdrop evoking the lush, carpeted surrounds of an elite household, just as the fancy chair and attentive servant belonging to the player dressed in heraldic robes at the table’s top evoke Alfonso himself. The board at which the figures play, however, is differently rendered, modeled not in three dimensions but schematically, as if viewed directly from above. This is primarily an attempt at communicative clarity. It is far easier to appreciate the specific details of starting positions and to differentiate board design or other details when games are shown square-on in this manner. But as Bogen subtly notes, in choosing to present the accoutrements of the game this way, such an image might also be trying to harness a more fundamental aspect of the diagrammatic image’s potential. Despite the apparent animation of the figures sitting around these bird’s-eye boards—pointing hands, leaning shoulders, flapping fans—no games in the *Libro* are ever actually in progress. Pieces either hover in opening positions, awaiting play, or, as in the case of astronomical draughts, are yet to even be placed on the table. Unlike their realistic surrounds, these diagrammed boards instead present a frame for the game with a more universal, prospective eye. John Bender and Michael Marrinan, discussing modern visual tropes, have suggested something similar when they argue that diagrams do not simply describe objects or ideas but try to capture multiple moments in the potential unfolding of

a process. As they put it, diagrams are “closer in kind to a Jackson Pollock than to a Rembrandt.”²⁶ Just as with the mnemonic reader who spins their way around Hugh de Fouilloy’s *rotae*, viewers of Alfonso’s book could also be drawn into projecting the pleasure of future games onto these outlined boards. More than a mere static rulebook, these images can be seen as an invitation, a prompt to go out and play.

Several conceptual strands, then, are beginning to emerge from the eclectic body of diagrammatic thinking assembled here, each of which ascribes to what we might anachronistically call diagrams from across later medieval Europe a slightly different set of abilities: they could make arguments, structure mnemonic narratives, and present as playful challenges. Yet to separate out even just these three emphases from one another is clearly something of an artificial construct. While individual medieval readers might have arrived at the page with specific facets of a specific image in mind, it is vital not to disaggregate the multiple capacities of these diagrammatic things but instead to embrace the sheer vastness of their visual ambition as we consider the layered nature of their interconnected lines and labels.

Medieval diagrammatic images were, after all, often deliberately excessive things that attempted to represent far more than the mere sum of their individual parts. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the religious realm, where the potential of such schematics to simultaneously connect readers with multiple grand truths of spiritual thought was utilized to the very fullest.²⁷ Jeffrey Hamburger brings this out most clearly in his recent analysis of a highly original series of Christian images associated with the *De missarum mysteriis* (On the Mysteries of the Mass), written in the mid-1190s by Lothar of Segni, known from 1198 as Pope Innocent III.²⁸ Surviving in several copies made between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, Lothar’s textual discussion of religious practice is reinforced by a graphically punchy spread of forty-two individual pictures that rework conceptual, causal, temporal, and spiritual relationships between religious elements into meshes of dense pattern (fig. 1.5). These images held the impressive ability to both focus Christian thought and, paradoxically, radically untether it from the ordered armatures represented. On the one hand, they function as highly specific maps of ritual practice: one plots the disposition of religious personnel in front of the high altar during the Mass, another the various sacred uses of incense, yet another the different forms of kiss given during such ritual performances, and so on. But on the other hand, Lothar’s images also begin to accrue ritual elements one atop each other in time and space to form grand webs of increasingly universalizing doctrine. Guiding the viewer toward a far more ineffable set of forces at work within the world, it is as if the treatise is laying out “the intricate gears of a mysterious machine,” to use Hamburger’s words, just as contemplation of the smallest network of atoms might prompt thoughts of how entire galaxies are constituted.²⁹ In performing this remarkable bifocal flip from microscopic to macrocosmic, Lothar’s images demonstrate a faculty true to all types of medieval diagrammatic images: that they might mystify just as much as they clarify.

Such diagrams were not always entirely successful in this grand aim. As Hamburger notes, Lothar’s seemingly unflappable sense of Christian order



Fig. 1.5. Diagram depicting interconnected Christian mysteries from Lothar of Segni's *De missarum mysteriis*, c. 1250–75, probably Italy. Ink on parchment, 23 x 15 cm. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 28609, fol. 6v.

could on occasion be undercut through miscopied details or clumsy reconfigurations that left their contents confused or simply incorrect. Yet regardless of their success, this observation draws our attention to a final aspect of medieval diagrammatic thinking that is often overlooked by modern commentators, one essential to understanding not just their internal mechanisms but their social presence in the medieval world. This is the idea that, perhaps more than anything, thinkers, writers, and artists of the European Middle Ages saw diagrams as objects of communication. In his recent book *Thing Knowledge*, the philosopher of science Davis Baird writes that, historically speaking, scientific instruments—of which diagrams are a branch—tend to develop principally in contexts where ordinary language somehow fails as a vehicle for communicating knowledge.³⁰ When technical vocabularies fall short in explaining ideas, objects and images are deployed to take up the epistemological reins as a kind of scientific interlocutor unto themselves.

The last place we might expect to find Baird's twenty-first-century idea affirmed is in thirteenth-century poetry, yet communication through diagrammatic imagery appears to be precisely what the Friuli-born writer Thomasin von Zerclère had in mind when crafting his grand didactic poem *Der Welsche Gast*.³¹ Translated variously as *The Italian Guest* or *The Romance Stranger*, Thomasin's work is a poetic stroll through ethical conduct for courtly gentlemen and gentlewomen, schooling the reader in aristocratic virtues, vices, and

niceties, complete with secular and spiritual exemplars taken from Thomasin's world. In *Der Welsche Gast*'s seventh book, for instance, Thomasin turns specifically to the edification of the soul, which, he argues, is a two-part process. First, a courtier's soul might be nourished through the cultivation of inherently heavenly attributes, such as common sense or reasoning. But the soul is equally fueled by a dedication to earthly learning—"wir wellen sîn alle wîs" (we all want to be wise), as the poet puts it—and key to this, according to Thomasin, is knowledge of the finest historical thinkers from across the Seven Liberal Arts.³² The ensuing poetic roll call lists the ancient names that dominated academic discourse of the day, alongside which several manuscripts of *Der Welsche Gast* also preserve a set of images to develop Thomasin's point.³³ We might assume that these pictures, like the text, show portraits of the great figures in question, and this is indeed how they are labeled: Priscian is paired with Grammar, Euclid with Geometry, Pythagoras with Arithmetic, Aristotle with Dialectics, Milesius with Music, Ptolemy with Astronomy, and Cicero—whose words began this chapter—with Rhetoric. Yet the illustrations in fact present a number of ordinary individuals, female and male, rich and poor, all exchanging giant diagrams (fig. 1.6).³⁴ Two men pass an outsize Aristotelian Square of Opposition between each other, its counterbalanced lines labeled in Latin with dialectical terms. A pair of crowned figures discourse together on astronomy by hoisting large interlocking circles into the air, an image drawn from Ptolemy's works on planetary orbit. And two figures enacting musical exchange come across as the most dynamic of all: they hold



Fig. 1.6. Communicative diagrams of the Seven Liberal Arts from Thomasin von Zerclère's *Der Welsche Gast*, c. 1450–75, Swabia. Ink and paint on paper, 31 x 21 cm. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 571, fol. 70v.

opposite ends of a realistically rendered thick wooden staff, from which burst the different intervals of Classical music theory—*diatessaron*, *diapente*, *diapason*—as if these technical elements were actually springing forth from this quotidian object, a tangible diagrammatic presence conjured into being during the process of intellectual communion.

As well as the vividness of seeing such images brought to life, their presence within this explicitly moralizing work steers us toward an important point, in some ways the most crucial lesson of these medieval diagrams for explorations of the Wound Man in the chapters to come. Thomasin's concern with these diagrammatic arts is not merely an intellectual exercise: it is explicitly ethical. In *Der Welsche Gast*, knowledge's true value is as a moral force, one that can help in telling "*daz slehte vome krumben, die wârheit vom valsche*" (the straight from the crooked, truth from falsehood). And in the process of making diagrammatic images real, Thomasin's illustrators come to echo the one medieval profession that actually did use the term *diagramma*: land surveying, a discipline that regularly utilized images to create physical boundaries in the landscape. Steffen Bogen and Felix Thürlemann have drawn attention to this by examining in detail the sixth-century scholar Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus's description of an early medieval land surveyor at work.³⁵ Clomping his way through woods and groves with instruments and images in hand, Cassiodorus suggests that anyone coming across a surveyor in reality might well mistake him for a madman desperately lost in a forest. Yet this individual's diagrams, he reminds us, are the most potent of all, because they form a graphical template for imposing the law equitably and uniformly onto the complexities of sociopolitical space. Kathrin Müller has termed this capacity of medieval images "*visuelle Weltaneignung*," a direct appropriation of the world through the visual.³⁶ If, as we have seen, diagrams from the European Middle Ages were proponents of argument, narrative, play, mystery, and communication, what better tools could there be for those wishing to make their own claims to power and to knowledge?

Figura and the Problem of Medicine

Most diagrammatic images found across later medieval Europe exhibit a strong analogical streak. This is to say that, as well as utilizing what we might term a shared schematic vocabulary—lines leading to circles, labels surrounding squares, arrows gesturing across grids, and so on—artists and writers of the period were keen to move beyond this simple informational texture and employ more creative tropes when crafting their visual explanations. A stemma presenting spiritual tenets could have remained a branching bundle of texts and lines rather than transform into an elaborate cherub with labeled feathers. Hugh's *rotæ* could have stayed as plain numerated circles rather than germinate into human-scaled spinning wheels peopled with crooks and hellish caricatures. But they did not. Instead, these images were extended into complex analogical structures: full-fledged visual ecosystems built from multiple metaphorical connections.

This accumulative style of visual thinking was very much in keeping with broader developments unfolding across contemporary models of thought.

It resonated with the growing intellectual penchant of medieval European scholars for *concordia*—the rhetorical potential of thinking by grand association—and it resonated too with such theoreticians' increasing engrossment with ideas of equilibrium, the strong sense present from the thirteenth century onward that totalizing balance was the ultimate goal of legal, religious, economic, and medical systems alike.³⁷ Visually speaking, a cluster of analogical refrains also emerged as particularly popular with authors and image-makers thinking in this mold. The organic, root-and-branch forms of trees, for instance, matched neatly with the carefully stratified nature of much scholastic thought.³⁸ The image of the house was likewise a common analogy, doubly handy for making available both a host of interconnected architectural metaphors—foundations, walls, roofs, gardens—and more affective concepts of home, safety, and custodianship.³⁹ Even so, the most common and most versatile of the visual forms these thinkers utilized was that of the human body, the figure, a piece of analogical apparatus par excellence.

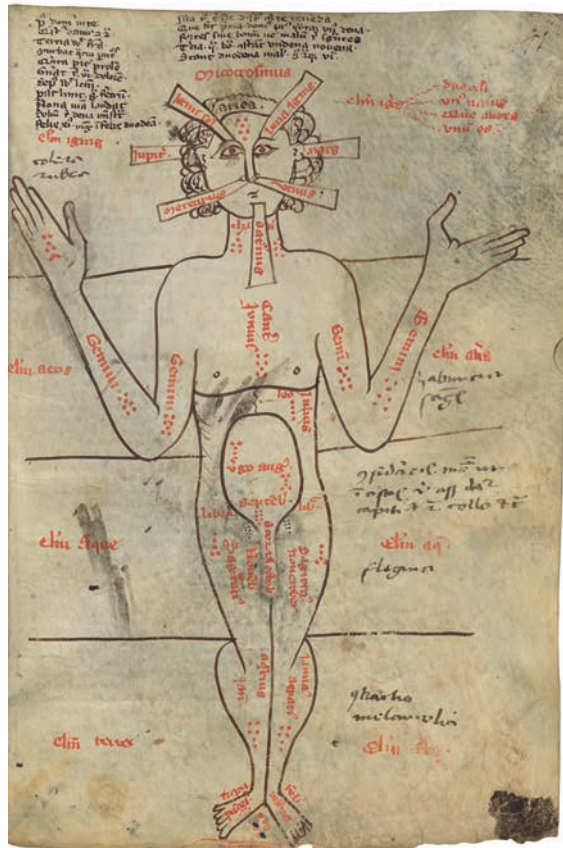
In part this was an inheritance from the Classical world, where a substantial repertoire of literary and visual personifications had been built up over the centuries.⁴⁰ As Erich Auerbach has observed, the Latin word *figura* condensed a complex series of inferences into a single term.⁴¹ Beginning with the generalized rhetorical allusions of early authors such as Quintilian, the word grew to take on an increasingly prophetic, prefigurative quality in the writing of Christian thinkers such as Tertullian and Augustine, while throughout retaining its chameleon-like capacity to signify a multitude of everyday ideas: a number, a quantity, an image, a physique, and of course an actual body. Figurative allusions of this kind resonated particularly with European medieval readers, who regularly encountered the Elements or Cardinal Directions, the Liberal Arts or the Four Seasons, all taking on human form in the pages of their books.⁴²

Personification, though, was only the first and arguably the most superficial of corporeal tools in the medieval analogist's arsenal. More useful was the body's structure itself, whose somatic correspondences lent strong conceptual coherence to all sorts of parallel ideas when diagrammed on the page. At its simplest, these correspondences cohered in a modular sense, with individual body parts acting in the stead of more typical schematic elements (fig. 1.7). In a well-known twelfth-century diagrammatic image accompanying Honorius Augustodunensis's *Clavis physicae* (The Key of Natural Philosophy), a text summarizing and synthesizing Neoplatonic philosophy, twelve individually labeled arms run up, down, and across the page, their grasping hands and ruffled sleeves used to clarify the interconnected qualities of the scheme's different conceptual parts.⁴³ In an even more tactile example from several centuries later, an English *rota* for calculating the date of Easter and other important calendar events comes complete with a figural volvelle at its center.⁴⁴ Labeled "*Digito noto pascha*" (Finger denotes Easter), its right hand and foot function as a movable pointer to identify paired variables at different sites around the wheel. But more than its deconstructed parts, the body could also be made to stand for what Michael Camille astutely termed "any bounded system" of the European Middle Ages, regardless of complexity or magnitude.⁴⁵



Fig. 1.7. Two pieces of corporeal diagrammatic technology. *Left*: Concepts connected by interlocking arms from Honorius Augustodunensis's *Clavis physicae*, 14th century, probably Meuse region. Ink on parchment. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Latin 6734, fol. 1v. *Right*: A figural volvelle, 15th century, probably Germany. Ink and paint on parchment with string attachments, 21 x 15 cm. London, British Library, Harley MS 941, fol. 29v.

At one end of this spectrum, we find the body elucidating extremely focused, small-scale concerns. For instance, in a prefatory image found at the beginning of one of the oldest medieval books to survive in Middle Dutch, Jacob van Maerlant's thirteenth-century *Der naturen bloeme* (The Flower of Nature), an author portrait of Jacob holding his book has been hybridized with a diagrammatic explanation of his various intellectual sources (fig. 1.8).⁴⁶ Clearly modeled on so-called Trees of Consanguinity—legal and religious diagrams designed to plot the limits of familial intermarriage—the portrait shows Jacob's interconnected learning cascading forward from his stomach like a dangling parasitic growth, each issued circle occupied by a different author cited in the work, from Philemon to Democritus to the cardinal point at the top of the tree held by Aristotle.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, at the other end of the spectrum we find the body giving bounds to something as unendingly enormous as the fundamental workings of the universe itself. In a scientific book roughly contemporaneous with Jacob's work, produced most likely in southern Germany, a single human form takes up the role of connecting an entire world-system (fig. 1.9).⁴⁸ The multiple elements of this “microcosmus,” as it is labeled, come thick and fast, listed one by one atop the figure's body: its limbs are likened to months of the year and signs of the zodiac, it stands amid a four-part backdrop of the four cardinal elements, and labels fire out from its face declaring the names of the seven planets.⁴⁹ Not only does the



body here unite a disparate universe, but like all of these corporeal analogies, it lends a sense of inviolability and authority to its embodied ideas. Rewiring the knowledge contained in such figures would require a violent reconstituting of parts, the coherence of the scheme as a corporeal whole stewarded by protective figuration.

It was within the medical sphere, however, that this useful medieval habit of turning base information into bodies came up against a unique set of contradictions. Medical authors and image-makers of the later Middle Ages, just like their intellectual and artistic counterparts in other fields discussed earlier, were well aware of the intricacies of the diagrammatic mode and had been utilizing them frequently for centuries.⁵⁰ Among the earliest medical texts to be transported around the medieval Mediterranean in the busy exchange between Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew healing cultures were the so-called *Alexandrian Summaries*, a mixed commentary built around a core of sixteen books on Classical Galenic medicine whose contents were often shared in the form of branched trees of information to aid recollection.⁵¹ As the period progressed, many other key medical concepts and practical procedures also soon found useful schematic form, with a single medical book often housing many such images at once. Theoretical understandings of the body's internal workings—grids contrasting the four elements, bodies marked with points for strategic humoral cautery with heated irons, the

Fig. 1.8. Figural diagram of learned sources from Jacob van Maerlant's *Der naturen bloeme*, c. 1325, Belgium. Ink and paint on parchment, 24 x 15 cm. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, MS 19546, fol. 2r.

Fig. 1.9. Microcosmic figure showing the correspondence of planets, elements, the zodiac, and the body, c. 1290, probably southern Germany. Ink on parchment, 21 x 15 cm. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2469, fol. 41r.

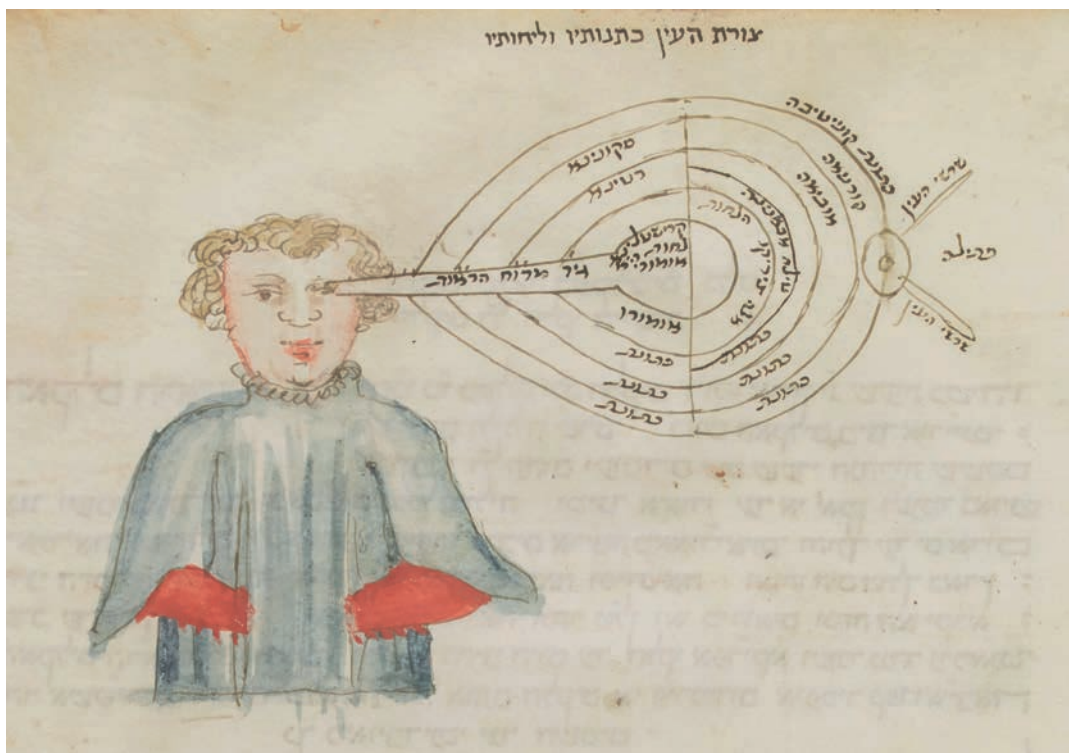
so-called Zodiac Man plotting the influence of the stars on human health—could all be clarified through tables and maps that neatly visualized their distinctions and correspondences.⁵²

Other more active diagrammatic images were mobilized directly in the process of diagnosis, the most common being Urine Wheels in which the color of a patient's urine—a key indicator of their internal humoral balance—could be assessed against circular *rotae* describing and sometimes even imaging different colors of the micturitic spectrum.⁵³ Prognosis too could be divined through grids and circles, for instance onomantic images such as the *Spera de vita et morte* (Sphere of Life and Death), variously known as the Sphere of Pythagoras, the Sphere of Hippocrates, or the sphere of pretty much any other great scholarly name of the period.⁵⁴ Using a circular schematic packed with numbers, this image instructed the reader to reformulate the name of a patient into a series of numerical values, add to it various pieces of calendrical information regarding the date they fell ill, and then divide by thirty to achieve a final number that was itself cross-referenced against a key at the circle's center for a final dramatic prediction: life or death.

Nonetheless, when medieval medics wished to follow their fellow authors and image-makers in branching out from lines and circles into thinking by creative visual analogy, they encountered an obvious problem particular to their field. Unlike in discussions of cosmology or theology, mathematics or memory, legalese or literature, in medicine the subject of the field's theory and practice was one and the same as the period's dominant frame for elucidating theoretical and practical correspondence: both were bodies. One of the earliest and most influential theorists of the modern diagram, the nineteenth-century semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce, argued that a diagram's fluid function relied upon a clear differentiation between its frame and its content: "many diagrams resemble their objects not at all in looks; it is only in respect to the relations of their parts that their likeness consists."⁵⁵ Yet this relational separation is patently not always possible in medicine, where the distinction between analogical framework and informational content is instead collapsed into one.

Take an image presented on the penultimate page of an early fifteenth-century Hebrew manuscript, made in southern France or perhaps northern Italy (fig. 1.10).⁵⁶ We are shown a man with short, curly hair who wears a high-collared blue coat, the red of his undersleeves vanishing into a pair of pocket slits at the robe's front. But erupting from his face is a much-magnified image of an eye, plotted out entirely schematically so as to make clear the different parts of the ocular anatomy, mostly descriptions of different kinds of humor (אומר) and tunics (כתונה).⁵⁷ Could this exploded eye ever actually belong to the specific figure from which it emanates, to the singular, individual patient we see carefully depicted in flesh and blood? Or is it instead a universalized abstraction, an image whose relation to the actual object of a human eye is entirely theoretical, mapping instead how all fifteenth-century eyes were understood to function, and in turn transforming the robed figure into a conglomerate of all fifteenth-century men and women?

We have arrived back where this chapter began: at the two antagonistic concepts lashed together in the word "illustration," image as information



and image as representation. So let us return as well to the unusual half-woman-half-diagram sketched by Erhard Knab in his Heidelberg notebook (see fig. 1.1). Given the impressive conceptual depth found across the varied late medieval diagrammatic contexts surveyed earlier, especially their epistemic back-and-forth between bodies at once ubiquitous and individuated, we are now better placed to understand this particular body's resistance to being either wholly a patient or wholly a schematic. After all, Knab was himself far from naive when it came to diagrammatic medical images and their different knowledge functions. We know this because an unusually high number of books associated with Knab survive today, owing in part to the wholesale transfer of Heidelberg's Palatine Library to Rome in 1634 following the Thirty Years' War.⁵⁸ Such a concentration of sources is perhaps unique in the medical world of the Middle Ages. As Peter Murray Jones reminds us, unlike their counterparts in the modern textbook, medieval medical images are almost never associated with named illustrators, designers, publishers, or even authors.⁵⁹ Instead, particular illustrative tropes bounced around freely from text to text. Being able to look broadly across Knab's Heidelberg books is thus a rare opportunity, and in them we find illustrations put to a highly varied number of uses. One manuscript from the later 1450s, for instance, presents the different divisions and subdivisions of the art of medicine plotted out by Knab as a typical tree diagram, much like those that had been used to illustrate the *Alexandrian Summaries* for centuries.⁶⁰ In another book from around 1460, Knab has copied out a canonical medical commentary on Galen by the early medieval author Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq—known to

Fig. 1.10. Diagram of the eye from a Hebrew medical manuscript, 15th century, probably northern Italy. Ink and paint on parchment, 35 x 25 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Hébreu 1181, fol. 265r.

medieval European physicians as Johannitus—alongside what appears to be his own glossed commentary on the text and, in the lower left-hand corner of one page, a diagram of the twelve winds, each personified with a large grotesque face not dissimilar to those in Hugh de Fouillois's *rotae*.⁶¹ And among the lines of yet another manuscript, this one completed in 1466, Knab has included a series of compact sketches of instruments to be used in different surgical operations, an illustrative idea whose pedigree stretched back at least three hundred years to the Arabic writings of the prolific Hispanic surgeon Abū'l Qāsim al-Zahrāwī.⁶²

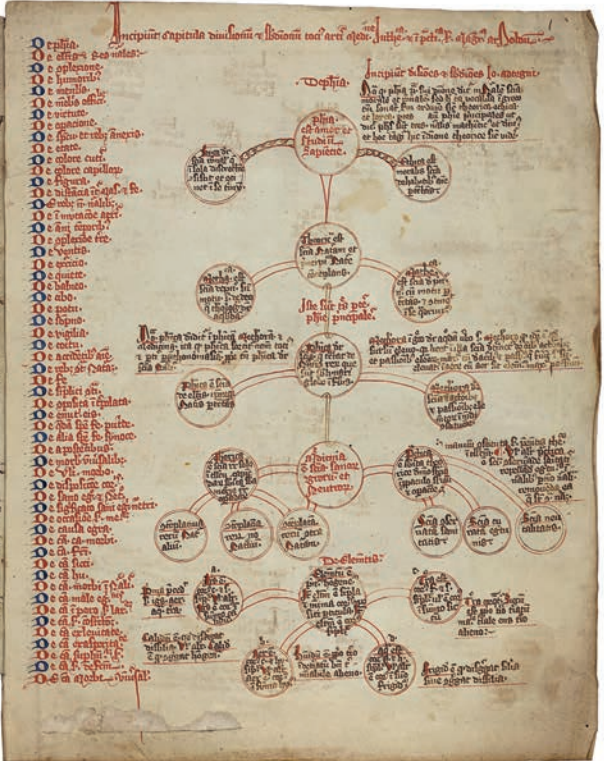
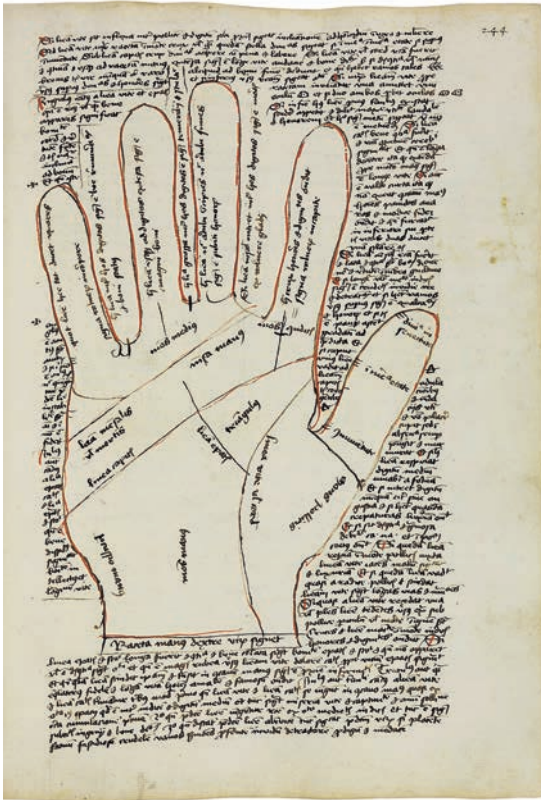
What is more, the evidence of Knab's collected manuscripts suggests that he was not only well versed in medieval traditions of medical imaging but also well aware of the social value of an illustrated book more generally in the intellectual climate of his age. Most of his manuscripts are rather chaotically collected notebooks completed in his own scrawly writing, but several of them include images that were no doubt commissioned from professional artists. In a manuscript from around 1470, Knab's hand leaves space at the opening of a text that he has copied—Abū 'Alī al-Husayn ibn Sīnā's *Canon of Medicine*, a medieval medical classic—for a highly competent painter to insert a giant illuminated letter S, complete with swooping acanthus patterning and a subtly gilded black ground.⁶³ Later in this book, the same illuminator also provides a stretched floral bouquet across the bas-de-page beneath the opening of Ibn Sīnā's chapter on urine and egestion, as well as a rendering of a heraldic display beneath the opening of the *Canon's* fourth book, including a knightly helm between the arms of the city of Heidelberg and the Palatinate.⁶⁴ Knab knew that an expensive illuminator's work could raise the professional cachet of a book significantly, connecting his writings with a broader network of artistic and intellectual patronage.

Most of all, though, Knab seems quite simply to have taken real joy in making images himself. Another of his autograph commentaries, this time addressing a uroscopy treatise by the thirteenth-century French royal physician Gilles de Corbeil, opens with an oversized figural initial of a man holding a book whose rough style, executed in the same red and black ink as the text, is surely the physician's own.⁶⁵ Even more playfully, in another manuscript from the 1450s, Knab has copied out a text on chiromancy—the popular medieval practice of divination by lines on the palms—illustrated on either side of the folio by a pair of five-fingered diagrams whose outline Knab has clearly produced by tracing carefully around his own hands (fig. 1.11).⁶⁶ This array of visual evidence in which Knab shifts between pictorial registers and almost revels in representative techniques suggests that he understood exactly the different modes he was straddling when creating his intriguing half-woman-half-diagram.

This was, we now recognize, a diagrammatic doubling of bodies as both medical subject and informational vehicle common to many medical makers of the day. Another book also conveyed from Heidelberg to Rome, produced by an unnamed author, clarifies the situation in a perfect snapshot. The manuscript is only short, a fourteenth-century treatise just nine folios long, yet it summarizes several popular scholastic medical works by condensing them into easily consumable tree diagrams (fig. 1.12).⁶⁷ The original opening

Fig. 1.11. Chiromantic hand diagrams sketched by the Heidelberg physician Erhard Knab using his own hands, c. 1450–55, Heidelberg. Ink on paper, 29 x 21 cm (each folio). Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. Lat. 1264, fol. 244r–244v.

Fig. 1.12. Bloodletting figure inserted opposite a tree diagram showing the "Entire Art of Medicine," 14th century (diagram) and early 15th century (figure), Germany. Ink on parchment, 41 x 32 cm (right folio). Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. Lat. 1181, inside cover and fol. 1r.



page of the book is typical of the work as a whole. At the top, we read the phrase “*Capitula divisionum et subdivisionum totius artis medicinae*” (Chapters of the divisions and subdivisions of the entire art of medicine). Below it, units of the eponymous medical art are laid out in connected circles indicating their relations, with bubbles representing theory and practice springing forth from medicine, which in turn takes its place amid a progressively all-encompassing tree showing different categories of knowledge. This tree, however, did not remain the booklet’s opening page for long. To judge by the extant binding, another folio—a single parchment sheet showing the figure of a male patient, his body labeled from head to toe with locations for therapeutic bloodletting—was tipped in during the early 1400s to serve as a new entry point for the reader.⁶⁸ If this sketch was intended as a punchy new title page to the work, the insert fails, for it is the blank recto of this sheet that greets us as we hold the unopened booklet in our hands. Instead, the figure has been flipped so as to form a deliberate pair with the diagram of the Entire Art of Medicine, which now sits exactly across the gutter on the facing page at an almost identical height and width. With their shared branching limbs and floating paratexts, a map of the idealized patient and a map of the medical profession itself are being precisely aligned, a comparison that once more stages the correspondence between medical illustration’s opposing ends: on the right, medical epistemics is enlivened through diagrammatic display, while on the left, a diagrammed body is enlightened by medicine’s knowledge.

Blood and Words: The Wound Man’s Double

The appearance of a figure outlining bloodletting in this diagrammatic manuscript is particularly pertinent given that medieval phlebotomical imagery provides a final important piece of staging for understanding the Wound Man’s prehistory. A deep dive into the *figurae* of medieval European bloodletting, a body of images never before systematically explored, offers space for unpacking various key qualities of medieval medical images at large, revealing aspects of their fabrication, function, readership, and circulation. This was the Wound Man’s world too, not just aesthetically speaking but also in the often overlooked social roles played by such images within and beyond the medical encounter. Moreover, this phlebotomical corpus has even keener links to the Wound Man, not only as a visual precursor but also as a conceptual double. Whereas images of the Wound Man, as we will soon discover, aided the enclosure of the body—its sealing through suturing, bandaging, and protection from the consequences of invading objects—bloodletting images facilitated the reverse: the therapeutic opening up of the body to bleed it. Bound by this inverted interest, these phlebotomical figures showcase better than any other diagrammatic antecedent of the Wound Man how medics and image-makers across Europe were mobilizing broader late medieval diagrammatic stances for their own means, innovating novel modes of medico-visual explanation that evolved across the period.

A manuscript from the Biblioteka Uniwersytecka in Wrocław, the excitingly named MS I F 334, is a good place to start, if for no other reason than its unusually long historiography. The earliest description of the book appears

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