

WALL, NATALIE LENTZ, M.S. Re-Mystifying the Exhibition of Medieval Sacred Objects (2012)

Directed by Dr. Patrick Lee Lucas, 84 pp.

Through this study, I identify and ascertain contexts found within the medieval church, specifically focusing on the architectural experience of the Abbey of St.-Denis, and the design characteristics and features of three medieval objects, in order to see how museums can translate the messages of sacred medieval objects. In this work, I use theories of material culture and visual culture studies, museum practices, design observation and analysis to reveal a broader, conceptual way of applying curatorial and exhibition design practices. In addition, I rely heavily on a textual analysis of Abbot Suger's diary about St.-Denis to both provide a context for the artifacts under scrutiny and then to inspire contemporary curatorial and design practices.

As objects shift from their place of origin to a museum setting, and then from one institution to another through museum loans and purchases, I posit that exhibit designers and curators must take great care in placement and display of these relics. Reverent and sacred presentation of inspirational and transcendent artifacts requires great sensitivity and scrutiny to translate both authentic context and material meaning for visitors. Of particular import, I show the connections between the medieval and contemporary worlds and the value inherent in the original contexts of objects as a catalyst for exhibition design. In doing so, I shed light to "re-mystify" the rich promise of artifacts to tell important stories in the museum, helping visitors to understand other worlds – and maybe more of their own – through meaningful exchange.

RE-MYSTIFYING THE EXHIBITION OF
MEDIEVAL SACRED OBJECTS

by

Natalie Lentz Wall

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

Greensboro
2012

Approved by

Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty
of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair	<u>Patrick Lee Lucas</u>
Committee Members	<u>Heather L. Sale Holian</u>
	<u>Benjamin P. Filene</u>

Date of Acceptance by Committee

Date of Final Oral Exam

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful for the immeasurable amount of encouragement, patience and support that I received from professors, colleagues and family in bringing this thesis to fruition. First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Patrick Lee Lucas, for his constant reassurance, enthusiasm and guidance throughout my research process. His vision and focus bolstered my perseverance, helping me to continue on. I also extend sincere gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Heather Holian and Dr. Benjamin Filene for their dedication, knowledge and advice in further developing this research. Additionally, I am grateful to Ashley Boycher for her insight and perspective on museum exhibit design. Beyond the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, many family and friends stood by me with confidence, before my first day of class until the last moment of writing, cheering me on and providing endless assurance. Finally, I am forever grateful for the constant love, support, and encouragement from my parents, Jeffery and Patricia Lentz, who saw me through reaching this life-long goal.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES.....	v
CHAPTER	
I. SEEING THE LIGHT THROUGH OBJECTS.....	1
II. ILLUMINATING THE PAST.....	7
Capetian Rule and French Politics.....	9
Theology Illuminates Design.....	11
Gothic Architecture.....	17
Liturgical Practice and Craftsmanship.....	21
Illumination in Present Day Museums.....	26
Illumination of Objects.....	28
III. PLACING SACRED OBJECTS IN THE LIGHT.....	32
Investigating Past and Present.....	32
Spatial Analysis.....	35
Object Analysis.....	36
IV. SYMBOLIZING LIGHT, SPACE AND SURFACE.....	38
Abbot Suger's St.-Denis.....	42
Treasures at The Walters Art Museum.....	51
Object Analyses.....	60
Re-Mystifying.....	68
V. ENLIGHTENMENT.....	71
REFERENCES.....	75

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1. The Washington Haggadah Medieval Jewish Art in Context, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (June 2011)	3
Figure 1.2. The Chapel of Notre Dame la Brune in the Abbey of St. Philibert, Tournus, France (Twelfth century)	3
Figure 2.1. Ribbed vaults, St.-Denis ambulatory, Paris, France (1140-1144)	13
Figure 2.2. Saint Mary Chapel, St.-Denis, Paris, France (1140-1144)	14
Figure 2.3. The Tombs of the Kings, St.-Denis, Paris, France (1140-1144)	15
Figure 2.4. Wing of a Reliquary Diptych with Crucifixion and Saints, Tommaso da Modena (ca. 1355-1370), Collection of The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland	20
Figure 4.1. Plan of the Carolingian nave (ca. 775) and Suger's narthex and choir additions (1140-1144), St.-Denis, Paris, France	43
Figure 4.2. Plate IV, etching by M. Felibien. From Histoire de L'Abbaye Royale de Saint-Denis en France (1706).....	45
Figure 4.3. Plate III, etching by M. Felibien. From Histoire de L'Abbaye Royale de Saint-Denis en France (1706).....	45
Figure 4.4. Golden Chalice of St.-Denis, National Gallery, Washington D.C., online exhibition.....	46
Figure 4.5. Golden Chalice of St.-Denis, National Gallery, Washington D.C.....	46
Figure 4.6 The Mass of Saint Giles, the Master of Saint Giles (ca.1500), Collection of The National Gallery, London, England.	48

Figure 4.7. St.-Denis Altar, Paris, France (1140-1144)	50
Figure 4.8. Sketch of St. Baudime in the Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe exhibition, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland (March 2011).....	55
Figure 4.9. Sketch showing narrow spaces in the Treasures of Heaven Exhibition	55
Figure 4.10. Sketch showing stained glass as context in the Treasures of Heaven exhibition	55
Figure 4.11. Ethiopian Collection, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland (March 2011)	58
Figure 4.12. Reliquary Chasse with the Adoration of the Magi, French (ca. 1220 – 1230), (22.5 x 20.5 x 8.5 cm), The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland	61
Figure 4.13. Panel from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom of St. Vincent of Saragossa, (ca. 1245), (337.2 x 110.5 cm).	65
Figure 4.14. Panel from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom of St. Vincent of Saragossa, (ca. 1245), (67.4 x 44.5 cm).	65
Figure 4.15. Reliquary Bust of St. Baudime, (1146 – 78), (73 x 43 x 46 cm), Church of Marie de Saint-Nectaire, St-Nectaire-le-Haut, France.....	66

CHAPTER I

SEEING THE LIGHT THROUGH OBJECTS

Far distant from time and place, some exhibit designers and curators thrust sacred Christian objects of the Middle Ages (400 - 1400 CE) into secular contemporary realms. Often disregarding use and detaching significance from the medieval world, museum professionals reinterpret these objects, replacing religious rituals with new traditions (*Fig. 1.1, Fig. 1.2*). Certainly both a philosophical and physical conundrum, displaying these religious artifacts serves as one means of sharing their stories, a fundamental museum practice. Major limitations in exhibiting artifacts of this nature, bound by the distance of time and space, place the conversation about interpretation and context at the forefront of museum discourse. Even though revisiting the Middle Ages remains an impossible feat, I maintain the possibility to create an exhibition environment for museum visitors to experience, learn and understand these objects and their contexts. One matter to keep in mind: the variety of visitors with different capacities to understand and comprehend information and references make up the museum audience. Scholars have distinctive motivations in visiting exhibits that differ from families, school groups and the everyday museum sojourner. Success in creating exhibits that re-mystify objects communicates with all visitors in some way, a challenge in its own right.

A huge undertaking that only skims the surface, in this thesis I provide an overview on how to create an experience that stimulates and excites the visitor.

Producing such an experience – not a simple task – actually affords great ingenuity in order to re-mystify religious medieval objects in a twenty-first century setting.

The intent behind exhibiting these objects lies firmly about the experience as opposed to replicating the past. An ongoing struggle in maintaining authenticity in today's world, and as a part of this domain, museum curators and exhibit designers should embrace the use of today's technology to create context and experience. So, how do we define context? How explicitly should designers and curators attempt to recreate it in the museum setting? What does it mean to use today's technology for exhibiting sacred medieval artifacts?

Herein, I argue not for the wholesale preservation of artifacts within the churches and other religious spaces from which objects have been drawn. Instead, I advocate calculated and measured curatorial and design practices to best interpret these objects in the absence of their original environments in order to bring them into a fitting and meaning-filled light. To determine such practices and interpretations, I explore the display of religious medieval objects in contemporary museum exhibits.



Figure 1.1. The Washington Haggadah Medieval Jewish Art in Context, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, (June 2011). This detached setting for these religious medieval artifacts indicates the current typical practice for museum curators and designers. Source: Author



Figure 1.2. The Chapel of Notre Dame la Brune in the Abbey of St. Philibert, Tournus, France (Twelfth century). The painted and gilded reliquary of Madonna, on the altar, stands in context in the church for which it was designed, an ideal scenario not possible to reconstruct inside a museum. Source: http://www.sacred-destinations.com/france/tournus-abbey-photos/slides/IMG_6880

Finding context for displaced material culture in the museum represents a significant challenge to curators and exhibit designers, no matter the subject. Concerning the contemporary museum, Higgins finds “an absence of mediation between the space and the objects to be exhibited” where “art became an autonomous object within the museum, detached from its setting”.¹ Establishing context for religious objects derived from sacred medieval European spaces poses particular questions in interpretation, notwithstanding the preservation of their religious value disengaged from their rituals, a subject far beyond the scope of this thesis.

In the Middle Ages, people traveled for hundreds, sometimes thousands of miles to venerate their sacred objects, seeking cures, blessings, and atonement. Relying on more than mere aesthetics of stone, metal, glass, and light, the medieval Christian encounter with religious artifacts and sites fueled their needs and desires for blessings.² Today these sacred objects still draw crowds from distant places, though the needs and desires have shifted from a purely religious relationship to a conjoined one of aesthetic, historical, and cultural contexts – a different physical, intellectual, and emotional journey than that experienced by medieval pilgrims. Even though the current visitor’s motives may differ, the absence of context between the religious objects and their attendant functions and rituals remains a challenge in terms of full understanding and educational value. By bringing these objects and spaces to the light, I demonstrate at least one

¹ Higgins, Peter. “From Cathedral of Culture to Anchor Attractor.” In *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions*, p. 215. New York: Routledge, 2005.

² Leyerle, Blake. “Pilgrim Eulogiae and Domestic Rituals.” *Archiv Fur Religionsgeschichte* 10 (2008): 223–237.

pathway that unites the history and provenance of a particular set of artifacts with museum interpretation and design practices.

Through my research, I expect to find the successes and limitations of displaying religious medieval objects in context, as have many curators and designers who have worked before me. I am interested in how museum professionals curate sacred medieval objects displaced from their original time and place. While my investigations revolve around established exhibition practices, the driving force behind my research explores new contemplations on displaying objects through particular visual, historical and theological views. I argue for the strategic use of twenty-first century technologies to interpret the twelfth-century past, advocating for experiential reestablishment over mere recreation of spatial environments.

Specifically focusing on established practices, I address how curators and designers interpret and perceive an object's story and then communicate this message or messages through display to shape meaningful and educational visitor experiences. As part of this research, I investigate the characteristics of existing exhibitions featuring sacred medieval objects by more fully understanding the elements that surrounded the objects in their original religious settings. Through this holistic examination, I identify the requisites that capture an object's meaning, not a method for duplication of that context. I also analyze how curators and exhibit designers choose exhibition space elements to connect objects to rituals, functions, and cultural beliefs. For example, the use of gothic arches, altars and decorative columns in existing medieval collections, function as contextual elements, which I discuss in Chapter IV. Most particularly, I uncover meanings of objects to inform exhibition design.

Through this study, I contribute to design literature by revealing elements and components of exhibition spaces essential for sacred medieval religious objects to communicate context, linking the objects to culture and beliefs of medieval religious society. I hope museum professionals recognize the significant connections I trace in this thesis, inspiring enlightening and explicit perspectives on medieval life through their exhibitions of sacred objects.

CHAPTER II

ILLUMINATING THE PAST

Viewing medieval churches as museums by exploring their interiors clarifies how museums can exhibit sacred medieval objects in context. How people of the Middle Ages understood their sacred objects in the context of the church, or sacred space, closely resembles contemporary thought in museum visitor interactions with visual and physical artifacts. Both societies aim to visually project certain complex ideas to a varied audience through spatial design.

In examining the relationship between the cult of the relics and the architecture of medieval churches, Éric Palazzo concludes that church relics foster significant understanding of the symbolic meaning of the built environment of churches. He posits that liturgy and reliquary objects found within the church hold valuable clues to understanding the development of medieval church spaces, religious practices, and belief systems.³ I maintain that exhibit curators and designers could adopt the same relationships within the present-day museum setting, with a corresponding transmission of ideas and information.

Not much evidence exists concerning the display of sacred objects during the Middle Ages. However, Abbot Suger's twelfth-century writings documenting the interior improvements of the Abbey of St.-Denis, and the display of religious objects within,

³ Eric Palazzo. "Relics, Liturgical Space, and the Theology of the Church." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 99–109. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

provide an excellent source. His historical accounts reveal material evidence through architectural descriptions, detailed documentation of religious objects, material and socio-cultural practices, as well as literary confirmations of liturgical customs and theological beliefs. Abbot Suger's written accounts provide a well-documented source for the newly developed Gothic addition to the original eighth-century Carolingian Abbey.

Abbot Suger (1081 – 1151) came to the Abbey around the age of eight or nine. Through his education and long stay there, he viewed the Abbey as his adoptive parent. His writings reveal his early-established view of God and theological beliefs, which he closely and affectionately ties to the Abbey. King Louis IV (1108 – 1137) appointed Suger Abbot in 1122, and he served in this capacity until his death in 1151. Through his close friendships and counseling relationships with the kings of France, Suger became a trusted advisor to the French monarchy. His business and political intelligence, combined with a character of integrity, supported his main goals to cultivate the power of the French Kings and expand the Abbey of St.-Denis. Both feats worked together, as the Kings financially sustained the Abbey's expansion, and their attachment and duty to the Abbey strengthened the Crown.

Suger believed that a king stood as Christ's representative on Earth. Through this *credo*, the Kings of France represented extremely important quasi-religious figures. Suger publicly reinforced the King's connection and ecclesiastical responsibility by hosting a public meeting at the Abbey including important nobles - princes, feudal lords and bishops - just before the attempted invasion by Emperor Henry V of Germany (1106

– 1125).⁴ Common in twelfth-century Europe, these kinds of expeditions led under the banner of the king earned blessings by local bishops and abbots in hopes of their safe return.⁵ Suger blessed Louis VI (le Gros) by laying the relics of St.-Denis on the main altar and presenting him with the “Oriflamme” banner. The King then “invited all of France to follow it” as the imminence of war drew near.⁶ With the Oriflamme war banner in hand, France escaped war when Germany failed to show their own presence for the anticipated invasion, and a bloodless battle resulted, won in the name of God, the King and St.-Denis. Believing this event a miracle, former soldiers brought the banner to the Abbey, merging political and secular objects with religious views, and the Oriflamme banner remained a monarchical, and religious, symbol through centuries. Contextualized as Christian relics, secular objects like religious artifacts, already in the Abbey, presented challenges of display and care for the church officials of the Middle Ages. This continuing issue now confronts curators and conservators in the present century.

Capetian Rule and French Politics

A view into twelfth-century French power and society elucidates Suger’s key reasons for expanding the Abbey, including its insufficient size, which proved too small to accommodate the surrounding community. His documentation of architectural renovations and sacred religious objects displayed within, highlights the context

⁴ Robert A. Scott. *The Gothic Enterprise: A Guide to Understanding the Medieval Cathedral*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

⁵ Scott, 49.

⁶ Gerda Panofsky-Soergel and Erwin Panofsky. *Abbot Suger: On the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and Its Art Treasures*. Second. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 5.

surrounding the Abbey's interior. These revelations bring further understanding of how to display sacred objects in present day museums.

Just before Suger began reformation of the outdated and outgrown Carolingian Abbey, the monarchy took form as a more powerful political unit in the growing French state. Before the turn of the first millennium, a diminished royalty in France existed because the kings did not possess any land outside of their own small royal domain, and their own vassals populated the courts. However, Hugh Capet's election in July 987 permanently altered the French dynasty, even though some modern scholars, including Scott⁷ and Peters,⁸ characterize the Capetian rule as unsuccessful. The Capetian family line remained strong because of family endurance (asserting power through their sons and wives), as well as papal alliance. The line yielded a slow creation of the French Kingdom, and the Capetian rule eventually developed into the French Monarchy, with the reign of Philip I (1060 – 1108).

According to legend, the second Capetian ruler, Robert II (996 – 1031), demonstrated the family's theocratic power through his ability to cure certain diseases by his touch, bolstering the rising monarchy and the presence and power of the Church in France. Medieval people believed the structure of their society included "men of prayer, men of war, men of work" as the king's instrument of rule. This idea first appeared in King Alfred's translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, a highly influential work

⁷ Scott, 78.

⁸ Edward Peters. *Europe and the Middle Ages*. Second ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1989, p.160.

in the western world on Medieval Christianity.⁹ Men of prayer worked to curb warfare, but men of war gave lands and income to the Church, took penitential pilgrimages and often became members of monastic communities toward the end of their lives. Rather than on the landscape, they supported the belief of peace through the Gospels and writings of Church fathers.

The clergy sought to prioritize a “sacred character of kingship.”¹⁰ Suger recognized the King’s ecclesiastical support in his writings, including the King’s financial support to the Church, and in turn, King Louis VI sought favor with Suger. As the head of the Abbey, the influential Suger reorganized and expanded the church, and served as a counselor to the kings. Suger’s crucial role in strengthening the Capetian dynasty culminated as a result of his ability to mediate peacefully between the French Kings and their vassals, as exemplified in the political and religious victory over Emperor Henry V.¹²

Theology Illuminates Design

Inspiration for the renovation and additions to St.-Denis came from Abbot Suger’s theological beliefs. He used the structure of the Christian faith to shape and plan the Abbey, using biblical symbolism to place sacred objects within the interior. Employing stained glass to tell the stories of the New Testament and specific accounts from Christ’s

⁹ Peters, 154.

¹⁰ Peters, 155.

¹² Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 4.

life, the light that shone through the windows created an additional effect on the clergy and visitors alike. Suger wrote:

Thus, when – out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God – the loveliness of the many-colored gems has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner.¹³

His use of the Latin word *anagogico*,¹⁴ translated to the English form *anagogical* by Panofsky, asserts Suger's personal experience and intentions for those who visited the Abbey. As a psychological force, anagogical interpretation derives from, pertains to, or reflects the moral or idealistic striving of the unconscious. After reading the Pseudo-Dionysian writings, Suger grounds his renovations in the tradition of Neo-Platonic thought and the "ascent from the material to the immaterial", relating to his described anagogical experience.¹⁵ Mistaken for St. Denis, the Pseudo-Dionysius philosophy of the "metaphysics of light" translates to the intelligible light from God, also shining through Suger's new additions.¹⁶

This heavenly environment, purposefully designed to reinforce the message of the Christian gospel by arranging a spiritual experience, takes advantage of the symbolic

¹³ Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 64 – 65.

¹⁴ The Oxford English Dictionary cites the etymology: < Latin *anagōgē*, < Greek *ἀναγωγή* elevation, religious or ecstatic elevation, mystical sense; < *ἀνάγειν* to lead up, lift up, elevate.

¹⁵ Harrington, 158.

¹⁶ Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 165.

meaning and use of pervading light in the Abbey additions, and pointed to the cornerstone of Christian belief: Christ as the “Light of the World”.¹⁷ Light and stained glass placement drove the architecture and design of the renovated Abbey while aligning with the architecture of the original eighth-century Carolingian structure. (*Figs. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3*).



Figure 2.1. Ribbed vaults, St.-Denis ambulatory, Paris, France (1140-1144). Light sweeps through the stained glass windows in Suger's ambulatory, bringing significant additional illumination to the church and linking to conceptual ideas espoused by Suger about the meaning of light in religious space. Source: <http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~sedwards/photos/paris2002/gallery.html>

¹⁷ John 8:12. Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

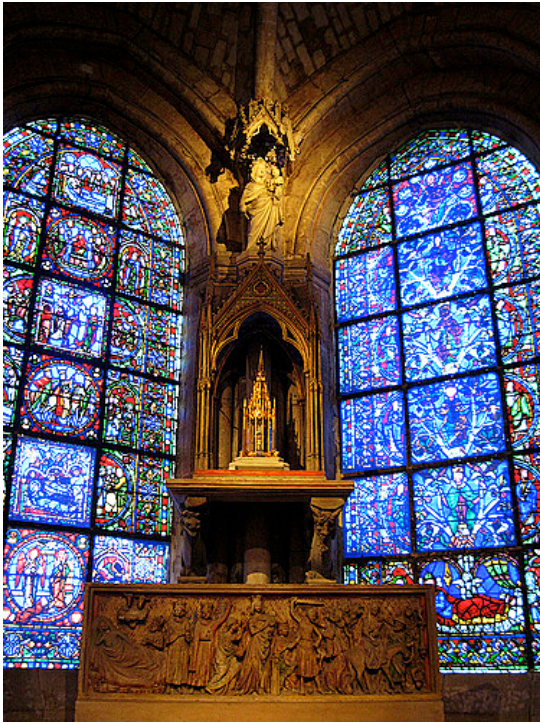


Figure 2.2. Saint Mary Chapel, St.-Denis, Paris, France (1140-1144). In Suger's day, the stained glass likely dominated the experience of the chapel, enlivening and informing pilgrims of the important stories linked to the architectural enclosure. Modern spotlighting emphasizes statues and their decorative surrounds, focusing attention to them in the same space a century later, something not possible in Suger's day. These symbols within space thus achieve a greater focus and a balance in the space of both architectural elements and stained glass features. Source: <http://www.ruthburts.com/2011/08/pictures-to-embrace-saint-denis.html>



Figure 2.3. The Tombs of the Kings, St.-Denis, Paris, France (1140-1144). Colorful light, streaming through a stained glass window, strikes the carved marble sarcophagus, enlivening and enriching the experiences of pilgrims and visitors today. Significantly, Suger placed this tomb to receive the light, linking political overtones to the religious space. Source: <http://www.ruthburts.com/2011/08/pictures-to-embrace-saint-denis.html>

Suger's additions to the Abbey of St.-Denis resulted from his personal theological views, as well as the needs and beliefs of society of which he was a part. Concerning medieval society, van Dam finds that buildings "mirrored and taught the beliefs and behavior appropriate to Christian communities" rather than simply remaining a backdrop to cultural practice. He asserts that "the correspondence of the spatial layout and

appearance of the church” shaped “beliefs about holiness and its effect on people’s behavior in and around the church”.¹⁹

Van Dam supports the parallel experiential aspects of churches and museums as he postulates that the church of St. Martin (Tours, France, rebuilt in 590) “had also become a ‘museum’ to the memory of St. Martin.” Using the evidence of a poem written by Fortunatus left behind on one of the church cell walls, van Dam views the inscribed verse as a “placard describing an exhibition on a museum tour.”²⁰ Similarly, he likens the frescoes of the church, depicting the life and activities of St. Martin, to art in a museum. A tour of this basilica – a sort of mini pilgrimage within its walls – includes walking from the entrance to St. Martin’s tomb and taking in scenes from his life along the way. Visitors and participants in religious rituals then, as now, abstracted signals and signs within, immersed in the totality of the church environment.²¹ By considering how the medieval pilgrim read and understood relics and images, museum professionals today could gain valuable insight into object context and meaning. The juxtaposition of the objects as a collection figures prominently in this process of information transmission, with a particular challenge resulting from the lack of surviving evidence about object placement in churches, and with this thin evidence spurring many questions.

Not all remains obscured, though, as Wilkinson suggests in his study of a valuable itinerary and travel log penned by a sixth-century Piacenza pilgrim who

¹⁹ Raymond van Dam. “Sacred Space: The Cult and Church of St. Martin at Tours.” In *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul*, 233. Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1985.

²⁰ Van Dam, 230.

²¹ Roland Barthes. *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.

travelled to Jerusalem. Through this diary, we sense the experience of the pilgrim through physical descriptions of spaces and objects, as well as the reactions and beliefs of the pilgrim concerning the sacred objects she traveled so far to venerate. This journey, a sojourn to sacred places to view objects and encounter life removed from the every day, provides tangible evidence of the Middle Age world view.²² It, too, suggests a source on which to model contemporary pilgrimages in museums.

Though a different kind of pilgrimage, the museum visitor now often travels great distances to places where museum staffs have amassed objects, collected for study, contemplation, and perhaps even veneration. Psarra explores the spatial and social impact of museum visitation, characterizing an “increasing emphasis on constructing experiences and diverse interpretations” to acknowledge the power of space as an essential aspect of exhibit making. In part, Psarra explains that objects meet certain “spatial, social and aesthetic objectives” through their interpretation.²³ As curators and designers grapple with exhibiting medieval religious objects in today’s museums, reading and understanding objects provides valuable information. This knowledge offers a more conceptual foundation, and not specific techniques for display and design processes.

Gothic Architecture

King Dagobert built the Abbey of St.-Denis in honor of its namesake, the first Bishop of France, and his companions, Sts. Rusticus and Eleutherius. Constructed in the

²² John Wilkinson. “The Piacenza Pilgrim Travels from Piacenza.” In *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, 129 – 143. Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1977.

²³ Sophia Psarra. “Spatial Culture, Way-finding and the Educational Message: The Impact of Layout on the Spatial, Social and Educational Experiences of Visitors to Museums and Galleries.” In *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions*, 88. New York: Routledge, 2005.

eighth century, builders modeled the Carolingian Abbey after a Roman basilica. Since 312, this architectural genre dominated the religious built environment with interiors that functioned as places for bishops to assemble canons and welcome the faithful.²⁴

As France emerged out of the old, deteriorated Carolingian rule, Suger gained momentum to restore the aging, outdated, undersized Abbey. This happened in part because France developed a new social structure, and combined private lords and public authorities that spurred movement into urban areas and stimulated population growth. Between the years 1000 and 1328, the population in the kingdom of France doubled.²⁵ Liturgical festivals became quite a challenge during Suger's abbacy, and in his writings he documented spatial challenges, validating the need to expand the Abbey:

To this was added, so as to incite our devotion, the fact that in the lower church that place of the Holy of Holies, worthy of the Deity, inviting visits of the holy angels, was so much cramped by its narrowness that, on the hour of the Holy Sacrifice, the brethren partaking of the most holy Eucharist could not stay there, and that they were oftentimes unable to withstand the unruly crowd of visiting pilgrims without great danger. You could see how people grievously trod down one another; how – what many would not believe – eager little women struggled to advance toward the altar marching upon the heads of the men as upon a pavement; how at times, pushed back and forth and almost half-dead, they escaped in the nick of time into the cloisters with the aid of merciful men, and stayed there gasping almost with their last breath. Hastening with all the ardor of our soul to put an end to these and other outrages, we brought together an assembly of illustrious men . . . until . . . these edifices . . . will be entirely and honorably completed, including their towers.²⁶

²⁴ Alain Erlande-Brandenburg. *The Cathedral: The Social and Architectural Dynamics of Construction*. Translated by Martin Thom. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Univeristy Press, 1994.

²⁵ Erlande-Brandenburg, 157.

²⁶ Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 135.

Erlande-Brandenburg supports the notion that Suger brought about the 1140 expansion because of its old, archaic state and insufficient size for congregating, noting that the Abbey of St.-Denis bore the earliest evidence of Gothic style alterations to a Romanesque structure.²⁷ Suger's additions also alleviated the spatial constraints experienced by both the clergy and pilgrims of St.-Denis. The creation of an ambulatory with radiating chapels, allowed room for liturgical and pilgrim processions concurrent with the veneration of relics set within separate chapels. For the cult of relics, this architectural development represented the most important feature of the Abbey of St.-Denis, and Gothic churches, going forward. The objects within the interior of these Gothic structures became further contextualized as they began to reflect the elements of the architecture around them. As time progressed, Gothic architecture greatly impacted church reliquary design, as seen in the *Wing of a Reliquary Diptych with Crucifixion and Saints*, where the overall form of the panel draws inspiration from church architecture (see *Fig. 2.4*).

²⁷ Erlande-Brandenburg, 233.



Figure 2.4. *Wing of a Reliquary Diptych with Crucifixion and Saints*, Tommaso da Modena (ca. 1355-1370), Collection of The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland. A fine example of a reliquary design significantly impacted by church architecture. The organization of the piece, as well as the compartments on its face, and the iconography, all blend into a seamless experience for the viewer. By making this sacred artifact more church-like, Tommaso da Modena reminds of the importance and hierarchy of symbolism within church architecture. Source: <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/1458/wing-of-a-reliquary-diptych-with-the-crucifixion-and-saints/>

By the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, builders considered church construction a penitential act. Though the name and origin of the builder or architect for the Suger renovations remains unknown, the importance of this work resonated in religious, political and architectural circles for many years, as the building's changes under Suger remained intact. The addition at the east end, (1140 – 1144) known as the chevet, includes the apse, ambulatory, choir and radiating chapels. An organic space that flows, the designer allowed for unobstructed light to permeate the eased passage

for visitors and pilgrims, creating a radiant and processional halo around the altar. The center region of the chevet served as a stage and a display area. Recognizing this interior arrangement, aids in understanding the display of reliquary and liturgical collections as seen through the medieval eye.

Liturgical Practice and Craftsmanship

Within this manifested theological framework, the design of the new Abbey made way for more successful divine processions during liturgical practices. Eucharistic services, veneration of relics, funeral processions, feast days and other forms of public worship dictated church design. As church plans conformed to theological views and religious practices, Palazzo suggests that the church structure becomes a type of reliquary, containing a broader understanding of liturgical practice.²⁸

The many stone tombs of the kings situated throughout the church's ambulatory serve as a testament to the monarchy's substantial links to the Abbey as the "royal necropolis of France," as many members of the royal blood received their education there. Burial of French royals began around the sixth century, and by the 10th century interred more royalty than any other location in France.²⁹ Ritualistic events revolved around birthdays of the kings, coronations, funerals and weddings. Other religious functions held within the Abbey, included the "divine liturgy," or administration of the

²⁸ Palazzo, 99–109

²⁹ Scott, 78.

Eucharist. Suger argues for the use of elaborate, decorative objects for Eucharistic services:

To me, I confess, one thing has always seemed preeminently fitting: that every costlier or costliest thing should serve, first and foremost, for the administration of the Holy Eucharist. *If golden pouring vessels, golden vials, golden little mortars used to serve, by the word of God or the command of the Prophet, to collect the blood of goats or calves or the red heifer: how much more must golden vessels, precious stones, and whatever is most valued among all created things, be laid out, with continual reverence and full devotion, for the reception of the blood of Christ!*³⁰

Suger's belief in using the finest decorative objects for religious rites also included his renovation of the original altar, repaired with gold using "praiseworthy" goldsmith's work. Even with the presence of precious materials like gold and gems, Suger stressed workmanship over materials, as he does in his description of the cast and gilded doors on the west façade, on which he had inscribed, "Marvel not at the gold and the expense but at the craftsmanship of the work".³¹

All classes and positions within the Christian faith revered sacred objects. During Suger's renovation, he discovered additional relics placed in special compartments of the original altar – revealing a decree by Emperor Charles the Third (823 – 877). Buried beneath the altar, the Emperor ordered the placement of the relics to protect his body and soul.³² Reliquaries and their contents carefully situated within the church served political and religious figures, as well as pilgrims and church members.

³⁰ Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 65.

³¹ Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 47.

³² Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 67-68.

Suger attended to detail as he directed the expansion and renovation of the Abbey, and supported his belief of nobility in the craftsmanship, conspicuously placed for all to see. Two main factors motivated Suger to enlarge the Abbey – combining worldly and political customs with spiritual and heavenly ambitions. First, he strengthened the power and prestige of the kings of France, while he acted as legal and political advisor including serving as Regent while the King went to the crusades.³³ Second, the disrepair of the eighth-century Abbey called for renovation, which became a priority because it served as the burial place of the French monarchy. Suger's rebuilding of the Abbey paralleled and reinforced his trips to Rome as he strengthened the relationship with the papacy.³⁴

His theological views of Christ as the "True Light" guided the decisions he made during the renovation. Suger placed fourteen stained glass windows within the new chevet, which produced more light and opened the interior space. Suger commented, "And bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new light"³⁵ He equated divine light with the light coming through stained glass and reflecting in the gems on the artifacts throughout the space. Ultimately, Suger saw the Abbey as a metaphor for all Christians,

in Whom all the building – whether spiritual or material-groweth unto one holy temple in the Lord. In Whom we, too, are taught to be builded together for an

³³ Whitney S. Stoddard. *Monastery and Cathedral in France: Medieval Architecture, Sculpture, Stained Glass, Manuscripts, The Art of Church Treasures*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1966.

³⁴ Stoddard, 97.

³⁵ Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 51.

habitation of God through the Holy Spirit by ourselves in a spiritual way, the more loftily and fitly we strive to build in a material way.³⁶

Suger referenced his Neo-Platonic following through inscriptions on the panel commemorating the consecration of the church, and the doors, for all to see.³⁷

Along with these spiritual materializations, the Church recognized, too, the economic promise of building programs throughout the empire, as well as the social and cultural networks they made possible. Church and political officials increased their religious identity and created a community that supported the rise of the marketplace. With more safe and secure markets by the eleventh century, these consumer places created economic growth and diversity, turning the warrior and peasant society into a community filled with merchants, administrators and townspeople.³⁸ With a new mercantile law encompassing temporary fairs to established markets, new routes of communication and exchange rose. Trade routes spread throughout Western Europe, and fairs held by churches like St.-Denis flourished as pilgrimages to the saintly shrines paired well with the sale of wine produced on monastery lands, also creating support for the clerical community. Churches banded together to care for the sick, bury dead, and participate in feasts and celebrations. As the mercantile industry grew, the church community strengthened and more impressive religious feasts, baptisms, marriages, funerals represented only a few of the Christian activities taking place. These

³⁶ Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 101.

³⁷ Harrington, 160.

³⁸ Peters, 152.

ceremonies created a social framework for almost every individual's life and death, inextricably linked with church life and rituals.

Even today, the religious community functions in similar ways. How do museums compare with creating a sense of community and drawing in visitors to their exhibitions? Does the showing of the objects in museums today parallel with pilgrims to the church? Can they be connected here? What about community events at the museum? The North Carolina Museum of Art recently held a celebration event for Purim, a festival in conjunction with their Judaic Collection. This occasion functioned as an opportunity for members of the community to celebrate their Jewish beliefs while serving as a fundraiser for the museum. With this one limited example, it seems as though contemporary museum practices echo greatly our forebears attempts to know themselves through travel and encounter with others.

I believe that through this rich tapestry of history, museum curators and exhibit designers can create contextual displays for sacred medieval objects, as they draw from this deep pool of symbolism and theological meaning outlined in this thesis. Taking an analytical approach while getting into the mind of the original "curator" of the objects, as I have tried through Abbot Suger's writings, provides engaging and intimate details that validate and explain the significance of the placement of these sacred objects. This practice should not be mistaken as a guide to reach an insurmountable emulation of the medieval past, but rather to inform the curator and designer of the what, where, how, and why of the artifacts to enlighten new ways of display. Museum exhibit designers should also carefully consider the twenty-first century minds of their visitors while connecting how sacred objects and spaces impacted medieval society.

Fortunately, Abbot Suger's detailed documentation and personal notes on a twelfth-century Abbey renovation, available for museum professionals to research and contemplate, provides incredible first-hand information, which, when combined with material evidence that still exists today, reveals the viewpoint of the visitor in historical context, another rich source of information.

Illumination in Present Day Museums

Thinking through how museum curators and designers created contexts over the past century, especially for medieval religious objects, brings standard museum practices into question. According to de Montebello, museums have the flexibility and capability to recreate more than one context for objects, and the museum has the power now more than ever to return the object to its original context.³⁹ Despite de Montebello's point of view, I argue that while the museum can reference an object's original context, it cannot be fully restored. As curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1977 to 2008, de Montebello most definitely shaped visitor experience through artifact selection, inclusion, and interpretation in exhibits, deploying the latest technological advances available to the exhibit designer and utilizing new research uncovered by scholars.

In exploring how the meaning of objects has changed over time, Conn characterizes that museums display fewer objects today than they did during the first quarter of the twentieth century, largely because curators have moved away from the idea that all objects convey the meaning and connection they did in the past. For

³⁹ Philippe de Montebello. "And What Do You Propose Should Be Done with Those Objects?" In *Whose Culture?*, 55–70. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009.

example, in art museums, curators now use a “modernist” approach to exhibitions by hanging art on a single horizontal line. A century ago, the visitor likely encountered a more immersive environment, with walls adorned with art from floor to ceiling. Though many speculate about the changes within curatorial and design practices in museums, this streamlining links to the other pressures of modern museums: the limited time of visitors to encounter art, the necessity for text, signage and charts to help tell the story, and the dedication of valuable gallery space for commercial purposes such as gift shops.⁴⁰ For this myriad of reasons, artifacts receive less space and, as a result, each individual object must tell a greater story, a key premise of this research.

Fortunately, religious artifacts carry strong connections to the world they represent. The Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA) exhibited medieval art from the Walters Art Museum, interpreting the context of their use in Christian liturgical practices and personal devotion, highlighting the object’s connectedness to religious practices and traditions. Seeing the exhibition of medieval religious art as a challenge, MOBIA’s museum professionals recognize that, “art museums often present works of medieval art from an aesthetic point of view, neglecting to address the question of their original function in religious rituals”.⁴¹ Addressing the object’s use with as much historic context as possible, the museum utilized texts and medieval images that depicted works of art to enhance their installation. MOBIA also dedicated their efforts on “helping visitors understand the liturgical and devotional practices, both shared and divergent, of

⁴⁰ Stephen Conn. “Do Museums Still Need Objects?” In *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* 20–57. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

⁴¹ Museum of Biblical Art. “Realms of Faith: Medieval Art from the Walters Art Museum.” *Past Exhibition*, July 5, 2008. <http://mobia.org/exhibitions/realms-of-faith#slideshow1>.

Byzantine and Western medieval Christians”.⁴² The March 5 to July 13, 2008 exhibition, *Realms of Faith*, encapsulated the essence of the Middle Ages, the sacred nature of the world that’s permeated by religion and by its mysteries,⁴³ according to Ena Heller, Director of MOBIA.

Bouquet, Porto & McDonald explain the connection between museums and religious functions with a “kind of magic” in exhibition. They significantly assert that “the architectural and aesthetic exhibitionary strategies used to attract the visitor” permits “visitors to read their own meanings into that which is displayed”.⁴⁵ This transmission of information brings the world of the Middle Ages through material encounters with objects to the twenty-first century exhibit visitor, a field of study in its own right.

Illumination of Objects

Latent ideas and attitudes exist within objects of medieval European culture and represent powerful lessons to be translated by curators and designers. Doing so begins to clarify societal beliefs around the sacred objects, shedding light on how the works might best be exhibited. Turning to history, this translation of objects occurred within many medieval churches. Specifically within the Abbey of St.-Denis, Abbot Suger’s display of relics and religious art was greatly influenced by Dionysian traditions,

⁴² Museum of Biblical Art. “Realms of Faith: Medieval Art from the Walters Art Museum.” *Past Exhibition*, July 5, 2008. <http://mobia.org/exhibitions/realms-of-faith#slideshow1>.

⁴³ Ena Heller. “Keynote Address Introduction” presented at the Seeing the Medieval: Realms of Faith/Visions of Today, Pope Auditorium, Fordham University Lincoln Center Campus, May 30, 2008.

⁴⁵ Mary Bouquet, Nuno Porto, and Sharon Macdonald. “Enchantment and Its Dilemmas: The Museum as a Ritual Site.” In *Science, Magic and Religion: The Ritual Processes of Museum Magic*, 209–227. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.

supporting his belief that divine light radiated through the stained glass windows. His renovations of the Abbey during which he added more space to the interior through enlarging the upper choir, added more light, a physical manifestation of Christian Neo-Platonism and the “metaphysics of light.”⁴⁶ In his diary, Suger writes, “And bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new light.”⁴⁷ References to this philosophical system are present in poems inscribed on the exterior of St.-Denis, one on the panel commemorating the consecration of the church, the other inscribed on the doors. Through this proclamation, Suger explains his renovation in part, while other pertinent reasons for the expansion included monastery growth, increase in pilgrimages, reliquary display and the “divine” Capetian monarchy. Just as Suger deployed design elements to bring his beliefs into concrete form and space, craftsmen and artists through all time imbue material objects with their values, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Outside of the church setting, this practice of “reading” material objects indicates a long deployed tradition in the museum world, echoing the practice of theorizing through objects in the academy. Material culture, the study of artifacts, reveals the societal beliefs of a particular community in a particular time through the investigative methodology developed by J. D. Prown. Espousing a material culture theory born out of art historical research, Prown explores ways to determine important cultural meanings of objects through a three-part method for study: (1) description through substantial and formal analysis and content; (2) deduction through sensory and intellectual engagement

⁴⁶ L. Michael Harrington. *Sacred Place in Early Medieval Neoplatonism*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

⁴⁷ Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 51.

and emotional response; and (3) speculation using theories and hypothesis and research. Prown suggests that by utilizing these analytical methods, scholars can begin to recover some of the hidden societal beliefs and meanings of the objects.⁴⁸ In the context of museums, this important cultural reading yields understandings, which, in turn, can shape exhibit design and interpretative practice to link the sacred object to its context. Prown recognizes the limitations in his methodology, but reminds the investigator that cultural distance from the culture of the object “precludes affective experience of those beliefs that are at variance with our own belief systems,” but significantly leading “to the recovery of some of those beliefs”.⁴⁹ His formal analytical modes, amplified by the work of a number of scholars, provide avenues to read multiple meanings within single objects. Notably, Hebdige addresses the power and symbolism of everyday objects in culture and various subcultures with alternative readings of cultural objects and spaces. Hebdige argues that objects become a way of contesting meaning, and explores how these meanings shift depending on context or juxtaposition in society.⁵⁰ A major theme found in his work, how objects imbue hegemony, or power, within a subculture, builds on work by Hall, who defines the term hegemony as:

⁴⁸ J. D. Prown, (1982). *Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method*. Winterthur Portfolio, 17(1), 1-19.

⁴⁹ Prown, 26.

⁵⁰ Dick Hebdige. “Introduction: Subculture and Style.” In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, 1–19. London, New York: Routledge, 2002.

a situation in which a provisional alliance of certain social groups can exert 'total social authority' over other subordinate groups, not simply by coercion or by the direct imposition of ruling ideas, but by winning and shaping consent so that the power of the dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural⁵¹

Hegemony maintains significant relevancy in the exhibition and curation of medieval material culture, given the omni-presence of the Church as the dominant cultural institution of the Middle Ages and given the efforts of the Church to shape experience for pilgrims and participants in religious ritual. In this way, Hebdige helps cultural readers to see how context, societal setting, social hierarchy, and other aspects of the medieval world can be read from multiple perspectives.

The challenge, from the perspective of designer and curator, then remains how to represent this richness of alternative material culture readings within the museum setting, an approach that calls for varied analytical and design strategies, undergirded by historical research, story telling techniques, and a focused understanding of idea transmission and visitor perception.

⁵¹ Edward T Hall. *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Doubleday, 1966.

CHAPTER III

PLACING SACRED OBJECTS IN THE LIGHT

Placing sacred objects belonging to a world far removed from present time and space into museums presents many challenges for curators and exhibit designers. Intently searching to discover the original placement and function of these objects brings a clearer understanding of culture and context for interpretation in the museum. Through a distinct set of methods, I aim to reveal how church leaders displayed sacred objects in medieval spaces and how current museum curators and designers exhibit medieval religious works.

Explicitly, I look at three sacred medieval objects, two museum exhibitions, and one European medieval space through this material culture study. In doing so, I provide a comprehensive perspective on the traditions, culture and original context surrounding the displayed objects. Through this analysis, I further speculate about the objects and the spaces for their display, and examine specific methods of presentation in the museum.

Investigating Past and Present

While investigating both object and space, I provide cultural interpretations for understanding societal and religious beliefs surrounding key works of art by taking a close historical look at the original presentation of sacred objects, positioned

within their culture and context. I closely examined the *Reliquary Chasse with the Adoration of the Magi* (ca. 1220), *Panels from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom of St. Vincent of Saragossa* (ca. 1245), and the *Reliquary Bust of St. Baudime* (ca. 1146-78). The 2010 - 2011 traveling exhibition, *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, brought these objects together under the same interpretive practices (as referenced in the exhibition's catalogue under numbers 70, 71, 94 and 105, respectively). The provenance for each identified the three works as having ties to medieval France, consistent with my chosen case study, the Abbey Church of St.-Denis. Thus, I made connections between the object and its original culture, while drawing similarities among objects in St.-Denis. Through these material culture readings, I identified design implications from medieval time and space to current museum settings.

To provide a broader understanding of spatial context, I studied one European medieval space housing sacred objects: The Abbey Church of St.-Denis in Paris, France. For this research, I relied on written records of architectural and decorative features deployed in the Church as described in the diary of Abbot Suger (1081-1151), who served as the head and reformer of the Abbey. Suger's inherent role as a "curator" and designer during the Abbey's building campaign from 1140 to 1144, brought focus to my investigation and provided treasured insight into the historical, theological and aesthetic contexts within a sacred medieval space. Armed with this direct insight, I investigated the material culture and visually analyzed the architectural and spatial aspects of the structure through examination of plans, photographs, and artist

renderings, paired with the descriptive accounts of Abbot Suger and successive scholars.

In looking at how curators and designers attempted to contextualize sacred medieval objects, I investigated the medieval collections in the Walters Art Museum. Through this case study, I connected object and space in current museum practice. The Walters Art Museum's traveling exhibition, *Treasures of Heaven*, specifically served as a strong precedent and case study. Investigating this exhibition through an independent study while participating in a team taught art history and religion course at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), I supported my thesis research and refined my skills to visually analyze both object and museum space. The course and study offered advantageous research opportunities and provided relevant literature sources connected to the museum's *Treasures of Heaven* exhibition and permanent medieval collection.

I used material culture and visual analysis, and qualitative approaches to analyze the sacred objects, museum spaces, historic church site, and the relationships between and among those spaces and the objects within. Observing these spaces through visual analysis revealed how church leaders displayed sacred objects in the past, how curators and designers currently exhibited them, and how they related to one another and their surroundings. Employing qualitative historical research revealed medieval European architectural features and display methods within St.-Denis' interiors, which I then applied to the Walters exhibit.

In all my proposed study of museum collections, I used photography, sketches and written descriptions to analyze lighting, signs, texts, wall finishes, colors, and positioning of sacred objects to better understand the challenges and opportunities

museum professionals face when exhibiting material culture. Through this discourse, I identified design elements of the physical exhibit, the relationship of the collections' cultural meanings to that space, and the various meanings intended by designers through exhibition approaches.

Selecting museum precedents for this study involved the consideration of museums with reputable medieval collections supported by well-informed curators and exhibit designers. As major art museums, each case study houses significant artifacts supported by well designed exhibits, available for observation and visual analysis, reinforcing my research. However, while these exhibitions possess aesthetic design qualities, there remains a need for creating further context for the displayed sacred objects. While reflective of well-considered and longstanding traditions of museum practice, the exhibits in each museum space mostly negated the possibility of a contextual approach for medieval objects. In each case study, I acknowledged the opportunity to suggest another comprehensive method of creating context for sacred medieval objects within the museum.

Spatial Analysis

Approaching the spaces through the lens of material culture revealed evidence of the medieval past, imparting cultural and religious beliefs, interior function and materiality within the period. I looked at this physical evidence through Prownian methodology -- description, deduction and speculation -- to elucidate context and meaning within each

space.⁵² Documentation of my observations through written description, sketches, and photographs explained spatial attributes and design elements, serving as a reference to inform alternative design strategies. I specifically identified the use of materials, presence of symbols and text (e.g. representing religious meanings and liturgical practices); spatial hierarchy, juxtaposition, circulation, and dimensions; sources and conditions of light and sound, and placement of objects and furniture.

Object Analysis

I continued the same visual and material culture analysis methods to reveal context and meaning for sacred medieval objects. Focusing on three objects within a similar time and region allows for greater contextual comparison through a more consistent physical and theological framework.

As with the spatial analysis, I identified these objects by interpreting cultural and religious beliefs, function, and materiality within the medieval time period. I recognized use of materials, presence of symbols and text (e.g. representing religious meanings and liturgical practices); dimensions; and placement of objects, linking the object's original historical presentation and relationship to space, scaled within their culture and context.

Through my writing, at the end of these investigations, I advocated for a renewed commitment toward museum practices to embrace both original and new contexts for objects. Recognizing that sometimes these spaces sit worlds apart across time and space, I showed the connections between those worlds and the value inherent in the original contexts of objects as springboards for exhibition design. As a means of

⁵² Jules David Prown. *Art as Evidence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

curating the medieval world from which objects come, I demonstrated through this research and design exploration how objects forge pathways of illumination to the past. In doing so, I shed light to “re-mystify” the rich promise of artifacts to tell important stories in the museum, helping visitors to understand other worlds – and maybe more of their own – through meaningful exchange.

CHAPTER IV

SYMBOLIZING LIGHT, SPACE AND SURFACE

As I focus on Christian artifacts from the Middle Ages, and more specifically objects and locations from France, this study provides a contextual basis for museum exhibitions worldwide, presented among many faiths, demographics and cultures. Understanding these objects represents a key objective for any visitor to a museum. For the exhibit designer, utilizing display techniques stands as the key stratagem to inform visitors of a faithful past. Through our collective experiences, we come to know new ideas, and through this work, I hope to give museum exhibit designers and curators guidance in creating such experiences for their visitors.

In my literature review, I establish the significance of Abbot Suger's writings concerning details of the interiors and objects in the Abbey of St.-Denis. This foundational evidence illustrates an authentic sacred medieval setting, not wholly translatable to a museum exhibit gallery. The context of the Abbey revolves around one essential theme of light, evident in Suger's documentation as a pairing of physical light with spiritual illumination:

The church shines with its middle part brightened. For bright is that which is brightly coupled with the bright, And bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new light.⁵³

⁵³ Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 51.

Suger equated divine light with the glow through the new stained glass windows, further reflecting upon the polished and gemmed surfaces of the sacred reliquaries and treasures in the expanded choir, and the gleaming surfaces of the church furnishings.

Through his expansion of the Abbey choir and the insertion of the rose window and other stained glass in the choir and westwork additions, Suger made possible a means of illuminating the interior, but also provided metaphorical windows for the medieval world.

Christianity's established solidarity as a belief system through longevity and vast translation among diverse populations makes the phrase Christ as the "light of the world"⁵⁴ a commonly understood analogy, whether or not one believes. With this in mind, and as Suger's writings support, light provides a most important contextual factor to dissect and analyze the original church and how to translate and showcase sacred medieval objects in the museum.

What does light mean to us as human beings? An essential element both natural and human-made, we use and experience light daily: it makes all things visible and illuminates our everyday world. All colors depend on light. With both luminous and radiant energy, light from particular sources inspires and clarifies. In its absence, humans experience sorrow and fear. In nature, light aids in plant growth through photosynthesis, bringing forth life.

In literary terms, to 'shed light' on something, means to provide understanding and perspective. Christianity establishes that the Word of God illuminates truth,

⁵⁴ John 8:12. Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

ultimately personified through Christ, the “light of the world,” who brings the totality of humanity into balance against the darkness. In medieval art, halos of light symbolized divinity and sainthood. Narratives of the Bible, illuminated through stained glass, populate the walls of thousands of churches. Candles, used in sacred liturgies provide physical light, and symbolize the spiritual light in the world that dispels darkness. Ye unveils luminosity in the past to reveal that, “. . . lighting devices reflect in some way the ideas, beliefs and values of the people who produced them and used them; the way in which these ‘things’ contain ‘messages’ of their times, not in written form, of course, but in a more concrete and paradoxically more hidden way.”⁵⁵ Likewise, Suger’s stained glass panels served as a source of light, physical and meta-physical, that now provides us with glimpse into the beliefs and values of 12th-century France.

In the Gothic addition to the Abbey of St.-Denis, Suger utilized a pivotal device to create an innovative measure marrying architecture and religion. He envisioned colorful glass panels to span a large area, grandly opening the architecture to allow more light into the space. The bright windows, an integral part of the scheme, illustrated God’s word through pictures and images and served as Biblical exhibitions to illiterate pilgrims and members of the church. The windows took form as constant, bright, decorative reminders of the faith, which, at certain times of the day, must have appeared fiercely divine and, at others, softly glowing with the soft radiance of longevity.

Not only do light and forms suggest perceptions of Christianity in architecture and design, Suger’s curation of sacred objects within his renovation focused on the

⁵⁵ Ye, Weili. “The Light of the Home: Dialectics of Gender in an Argand Lamp.” In *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, 243–251. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000.

veneration and procession experiences of visitors in his Church. Drawn to the supernatural, Suger characterizes the new architecture and design of his Abbey additions a transformation of experience and place, what Suger terms an anagogical approach, bringing the viewer out of this world and closer to a heavenly realm.

Suger's influence on Gothic architecture spread far beyond the confines of St.-Denis; it precipitated an entire genre of architecture, one fundamentally associated with the Christian faith. His interpretive philosophy is further explained through Snyder's characterization of meaning in Gothic cathedrals, where architecture combines scholastic *reason and understanding* with the *immediate experience* of divinity.⁵⁶ Museum designers and curators of sacred medieval art should take into account the transformational experience Suger describes in his writings and the physical setting of the cathedral, as understood by church visitors. The basis for this thesis rests on the discovery and implementation of this whole context. Transcending time and space while pairing experience with design intention is vital for successfully translating sacred medieval objects into museums. Investigating Suger's St.-Denis uncovers physical evidence and spirituality manifested, and considering both are needed to create a meaningful museum experience, thus providing a way for museum visitors to glimpse into the medieval world.

⁵⁶ Snyder, James. *Medieval Art: Painting-sculpture-architecture, 4-14th Century*. New: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989, p. 349.

Abbot Suger's St.-Denis

Suger transformed the interior of the Abbey into his own testimonial dedication to divinity, worshipping God through the art and splendor of his groundbreaking additions and alterations. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1115 – 1153), however, opposed these ideas, accusing Suger of flaunting the church's interiors, turning them into a "synagogue of satan".⁵⁷ Saint Bernard's distinctly different, ascetic practices in Cistercian monastic life contrasted starkly with Abbot Suger's Benedictine view of living a disciplined life while opposing asceticism. This view carried over into Suger's beliefs to not withhold any decoration or sacred object from the service of God. Despite Bernard's antagonism, Suger continued to plan for his reformation.

Elements added to this catalytic church pre-figured the foundations of sacred architecture in the period 1000 to 1200: a rose window, a two tower façade, sculptured doors, and a vertical division of the church façade. The Abbey's west façade reveals Suger's westwork additions, with an eighth-century Carolingian plan at the church's core, and Suger's twelfth century additions, located on either end of the Carolingian space, which doubled the size of the structure.⁵⁸ The east end, or chevet, includes the apse, ambulatory, and radiating chapels as responses to the overcrowded, tight spaces endured by many pilgrims, as mentioned in Suger's writings. Columned spaces supported an open area without the use of walls and individual radiating chapels provided dispersed spaces for the veneration of relics, spreading the crowds throughout the various spaces, instead of gathering them all into one small area (*Fig. 4.1*).

⁵⁷ Snyder, 351.

⁵⁸ Leland M. Roth. *Understanding Architecture*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1993.

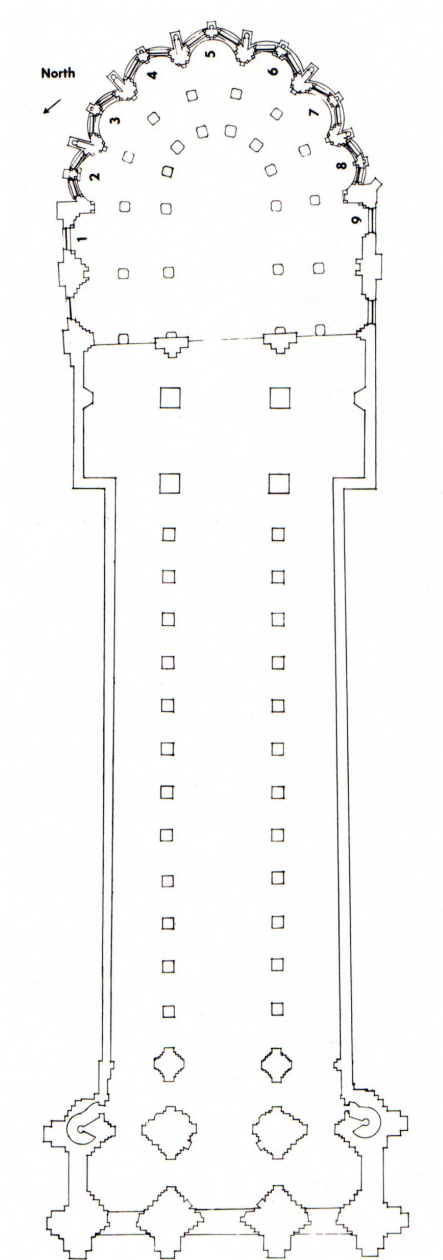


Figure 4.1. Plan of the Carolingian nave (ca. 775) and Suger's narthex and choir additions (1140-1144), St.-Denis, Paris, France. As pilgrims would have experienced it through the eleventh century, the plain, simply detailed, and dark basilica contrasts with the light filled vision and spaces introduced by Suger in the twelfth century. Bringing these two visions of church into one building resulted in much different impressions for visitors and literally opened the church physically to more visitors in the space. Source: Drawing by S. McK. Crosby, from Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, *Abbot Suger: On the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and Its Art Treasures*

Supporting the ambulatory vaults, twelve columns symbolically represented the twelve apostles, and twelve columns in the ambulatory signified the number of Minor Prophets. In his descriptive writings, Suger cleverly uses the term *aedificium*,⁵⁹ fully deploying and implying both meanings of the word, an expansion of a new architectural system, and a spiritual expansion. Changes in population growth paired with liturgical practice created the need for St.-Denis' expansion, and Suger's theological beliefs and affinity for display and worship gave form to his anagogical approach.

The Abbot's transformation of the Abbey took form in at least three scales; object, space, and building. Suger documented the objects and ornamentation that he curated as he expanded and renovated the Abbey. As seen in the eighteenth-century illustrations above (*Fig. 4.2, 4.3*), most of the pieces materialized a ceremonial or liturgical use, including reliquaries and coronation vestments. Examples include the golden altar frontal (mounted on the wall on the right side of the illustration) and the cross of St. Eloy (on the left), paired with smaller crosses and "the Crest", all placed upon the golden altar (*Fig. 4.2*). The Felibien illustration shows these objects stored in the church treasury centuries later, yet this visual imagery aids in an understanding of object identification and illustrates the Abbey's collection Suger describes in his writings.

⁵⁹ 1a building, especially a large, imposing one. a complex system of beliefs: *the concepts on which the edifice of capitalism was built*. Oxford dictionary. **Origin:**late Middle English: via Old French from Latin *aedificium*, from *aedis* 'dwelling' + *facere* 'make'

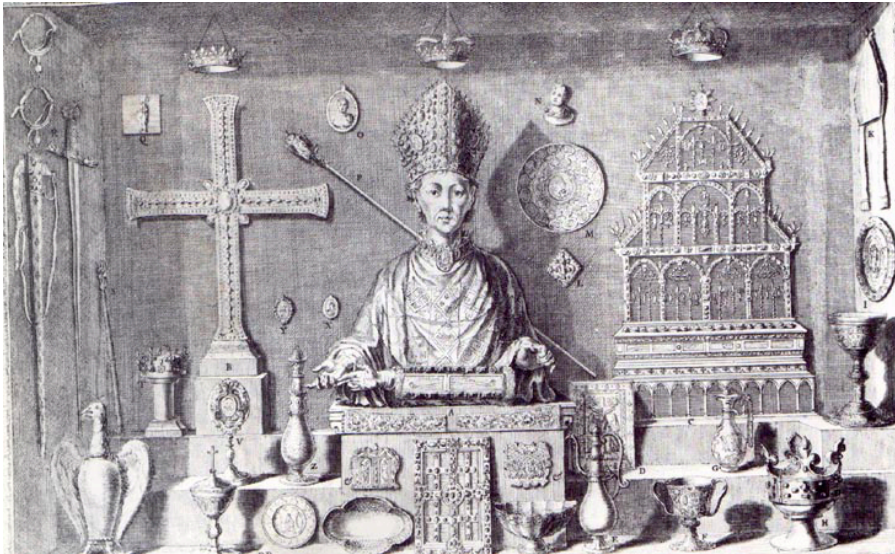


Figure 4.2. Plate IV, etching by M. Felibien. From *Histoire de L'Abbaye Royale de Saint-Denis en France* (1706).

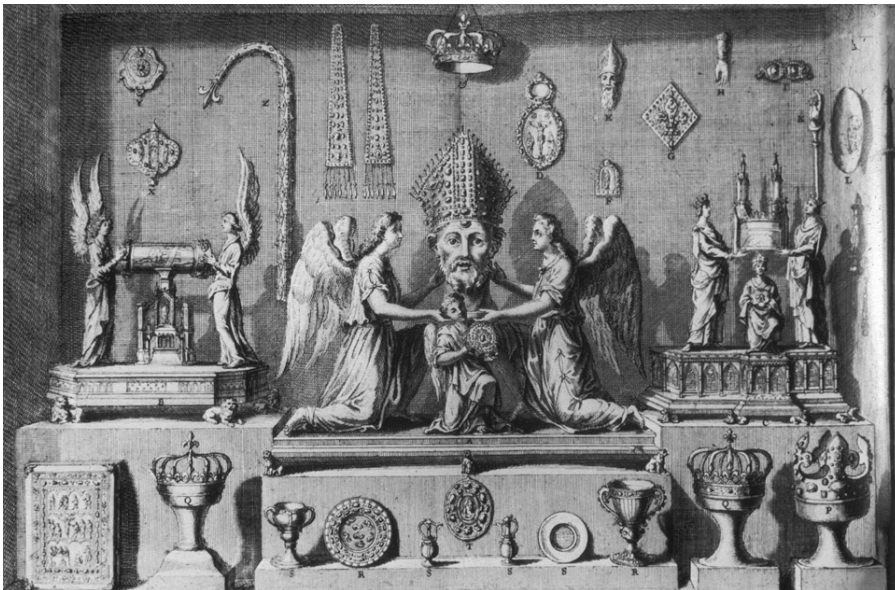


Figure 4.3. Plate III, etching by M. Felibien. From *Histoire de L'Abbaye Royale de Saint-Denis en France* (1706).

These images indicate the order and presence of artifacts in treasury rooms, a common practice for protecting objects from theft or destruction. Counter to Suger's method of display in the church, these artifacts from St.-Denis have been removed from church space and sit within a museum-like room, stripped of their context. Sources: http://employees.oneonta.edu/farberas/arth/arth212/liturgical_objects/st_denis_treasury.html, <http://www.oberlin.edu/images/Art336/Art336j.html>



Figure 4.4. Golden Chalice of St.-Denis, National Gallery, Washington D.C., online exhibition



Figure 4.5. Golden Chalice of St.-Denis, National Gallery, Washington D.C.

Two Views of the Golden Chalice of St.-Denis, adapted from an Alexandrian cup (ca. 1500-500 BCE) with base, handles, and rim added (1137 – 1140). Left view: online exhibition, right view: Medieval collection, National Gallery, Washington, DC. Echoing Suger's belief of a close view of both craftsmanship and materials, the crisp online image allows the viewer to experience the depth of the color values and the sumptuousness of the material and the design. By contrast, the location of the chalice in the museum removes this artifact from any sense of connection to the church space where it was used. Interestingly, both the online image and the Plexiglas-encapsulated object permit close encounter but not the kind of experience Suger intended for the object. He bolted the chalice to the altar to prevent its theft but believed that pilgrims should be able to see it within the church. Both views demonstrate some of the challenges that exhibition curators and designers face when presenting artifacts to visitors. Sources: <http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/medieval/medieval-1437.html>, <http://cecc4c.livejournal.com/3152.html>

Suger's descriptive writing, when paired with artist renditions, informs curators and designers as they search for contextual themes and create exhibition displays. The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. cite both Feilbien engravings, as well as Panofsky's translation of Suger's writings to inform their online exhibit description of the *Chalice of the Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis* (Figs. 4.4 and 4.5). According to the staff of

the National Gallery, the Chalice represents one of the most splendid treasures from the Middle Ages, indicating a probable use in the June 11, 1144 consecration ceremony to dedicate Suger's new chevet addition.⁶⁰ During my visit to the National Gallery in the spring of 2011, I did not notice significant design contexts surrounding this object. Located within the Medieval Collection – accompanied by a few other wall-mounted period pieces – the Chalice sat centrally on a pedestal in a small room, shrouded with a protective plexiglass bonnet and highlighted by the track lighting above. A visitor easily experienced the piece in close proximity, atop its singular support, but not in context with an altar or encased with other objects to tell the story of St.-Denis, or Abbot Suger, or even medieval liturgical practices.

The *Mass of Saint Giles*, ca. 1500 (*Fig. 4.6*), sheds additional contextual information about the altar area at St.-Denis. The unknown artist of this canvas depicted the miracle of St. Giles, who sought repentance for the king at the high altar of St.-Denis. In the image, the artist paints architectural features and altar objects to describe the event and the placement of objects in assembled groups during use. As in this painting, the main altar of St.-Denis represented great importance to monastic life at the Abbey and was the place of consecration. Suger encased the altar with panels on either side, making the altar appear golden in its entirety.

⁶⁰ The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. "The Collection: The National Gallery of Art." *Chalice of the Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis*, 2012. <http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/medieval/medieval-1437.html>.



Figure 4.6 *The Mass of Saint Giles*, the Master of Saint Giles (ca.1500), Collection of The National Gallery, London, England. Part of a larger altarpiece, this painting depicts the miracle of salvation set at the high altar of St.-Denis, Paris. The image contains illustrations of many objects confirmed part of the collection in the treasury at St.-Denis, serving as a source of evidence to inspire further context in museum spaces. Source: <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/master-of-saint-giles-the-mass-of-saint-giles>

Suger's anagogical approach to display and decoration relied on natural sunlight and candle flame, but museums today should consider the effects of modern electric lighting. Keeping objects in context, however, does not necessarily mean copying or recreating the past. During the Middle Ages, illuminated stained glass served as a

modern-day innovation, one which Suger used to create the heavenly experience for his church visitors. Curators and museum designers use the equivalent to astonish their own visitors, evoking spiritual inspiration instead of merely recreating the past. An example of current-day lighting – probably utilized for a special event – on the altar in the chevet of St.-Denis provides a dramatic focus for the space, emphasizing the verticality of Gothic architecture (*Fig. 4.7*). As is true of twelfth-century stained glass and the dramatic lighting of the twenty-first century, Ye finds that, “Many of the lighting devices reveal the degree of technological sophistication of their times, and some also manifest a high level of aesthetic elaboration”.⁶¹ Both medieval and current lighting techniques, when used in the proper context, represent highly aesthetic, relevant and supportive aspects of church space, and corresponding exhibition space, which contains individual objects.

As a medieval curator, Suger used labels to describe the objects in the Abbey’s collection, highlighting the diversity of materials, helping his literate visitors understand object characteristics and use. From a research perspective, Suger’s efforts to record the objects that shine with “radiance of delightful allegories” provide significant value to the designer and curator, so object metaphors might be better understood.⁶²

⁶¹ Weili Ye. “The Light of the Home: Dialectics of Gender in an Argand Lamp.” In *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, 243–251. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000.

⁶² Panofsky-Soergel, Panofsky, 63.



Figure 4.7. St.-Denis Altar, Paris, France (1140-1144). A modern view of the altar area in Suger's addition at St.-Denis reveals how 21st-century lighting technology illuminates the space. Probably installed for a special event, the lighting creates an awe-inspiring experience for current-day visitors, much like Suger's permanent stained glass inspired 12th century pilgrims. Source: <http://faustotriana.com/2011/03/24/suger-y-enrique-iv-basilica-de-saint-denis/>

Regarding the issue of curating for a variety of visitors, Falk and Dierking's research explains constructivism in museum learning. Curators and exhibit designers cannot be completely responsible for the knowledge with which the visitor leaves an exhibition, but also have to consider the spectrum of knowledge a variety of visitors bring to the space.⁶³ Well before the development of this learning theory, Suger's dilemma of curating for the literate and illiterate poses the same issue.

⁶³ John H. Falk, and Lynn D. Dierking. *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.

Moreover, encountering medieval objects in the museum setting brings a myriad of questions for the designer. Who stand as the various audiences for these exhibits? What can we learn from Suger to reinforce good design strategies for sacred medieval objects? Do Medieval objects have more pre-learned responsibility because of their religiosity? Why create good design for these particular objects? Why design a space to transcend time? I turn to an investigation at the Walters Art Museum to shed light on these exhibition design questions, building on current museum practices and establishing paradigms for creating context in the museum.

Treasures at The Walters Art Museum

Serving as a strong precedent and case study, the *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics & Devotion in Medieval Europe* exhibition at the Walters Art Museum (Feb. 13 – May 15, 2011) provided much more information on context beyond the collection of captivating, mysterious, and sacred objects. After all, visitors came to the exhibition to bask in the mystery and awe of being in the presence of an object that once stood on the altar of a great cathedral, perhaps carried hundreds of miles by a pilgrim in search of healing. Some visitors simply viewed and enjoyed objects purely as works of art. Regardless of their reasons for visiting, a well thought-out, planned and executed exhibit design fosters a more optimal visitor experience. In my estimation, the designers for *Treasures of Heaven* largely provided successful elements for this exhibition. Along with a few ineffective aspects of the design, I offer this detailed examination to further inform designers, curators and museum professionals about what has already been

accomplished with this critically acclaimed exhibition as these professionals choose from a range of possibilities to create well executed exhibitions.

According to McLean, three universal principles suggest that museum exhibitions: (1) exist to show things, (2) serve as a medium for communication, (3) and provide experiences for visitors rather than stand as products.⁶⁴ Keeping this paradigm in mind, my goal for analyzing *Treasures of Heaven* focuses on visitor experience, using my own visit to the Walters on March 26, 2011 as the basis for my evaluation of the exhibit design, content, and display of artifacts. By analyzing this exhibition through the lens of my own experience, I bring my education and understanding to the critique. As a designer and art historian, I offer a unique perspective, considering both aesthetic and educational viewpoints. In my review, I also utilize an important conversation with the Walter's Exhibit Designer, Ashley Boycher, to better understand design decisions and limitations that took place during the exhibition planning and installation. In the end, I focus specifically on how the exhibition design creates context for the displayed objects.

Upon arriving at The Walter's Art Museum, the buzz and excitement surrounding this new and rare exhibition by all who visited set the stage for keen anticipation, adding to the overall experience of the show. When turning the corner to enter the exhibition space, I encountered a long wall that divided the museum lobby and the exhibition. The exhibit super graphic, containing the full title of the installation: "*Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics & Devotion in Medieval Europe*," brands the space and helped lead my eye to the show's entrance. Before passing the exhibition threshold, the *Reliquary Bust*

⁶⁴ Kathleen McLean. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*. 5th ed. Washington D.C.: Association of Science-Technology Centers, 2009, p. 16.

of *St. Baudime* (catalogue no. 105) came into full view (*Fig. 4.8*), dramatically accentuated with a dark blue wall to emphasize the brilliance of the bust's copper gilt finish. Atop a pedestal, designers placed this bust at the eye level of visitors, taking advantage of the saint's hands, raised in greeting and blessing, as if to welcome the visitors into the exhibition. The space around *St. Baudime*, large enough to comfortably hold ten to fifteen visitors, allowed individuals and small groups to pause and contemplate this reliquary, while ample circulation space enabled visitors to pass around any crowds at the reliquary bust. The placement of this work of art as the initial object one sees, paired with dramatic lighting, created an excellent first-impression, preparing the visitor for what was yet to come.

After contemplating *St. Baudime*, the exhibition space opened to the right, a natural circulation movement for most people. Many objects came to view, and while no specific piece called attention to itself in terms of hierarchy, the pathway on which these objects sat remained narrow and tight. When large crowds toured the exhibition, this compressed space compromised each visitor's experience in terms of the amount of viewable objects available and the low comfort level in the congested area. However, the advantage of this layout presented an experience more representative of the kinds of experiences pilgrims and devotees may have had with these objects. A tighter, smaller space added to the intimacy of the sacred objects, and any crowded area throughout the exhibition indicated the location of important objects, revered and rare, again referring back to how pilgrims might have viewed the objects in their own world. To help illustrate this point, Scott considers an account made by Abbot Suger:

Often, on a feast day completely filled, the church disgorged through all its doors the excess of the crowds as they moved in opposite directions, and the outward pressure of the foremost ones not only prevented those attempting to enter from entering but also expelled those who had already entered. At times one could see, a marvel to behold, that the crowded multitude offered so much resistance to those who strove to flock in to worship and kiss the holy relics, the Nail and Crown of the Lord, that no one among the countless thousands of people because of their very density could move a foot.... The distress of the women, however, was so great and so intolerable that you could see with horror how they, squeezed in by the mass of strong men as in a winepress, exhibited bloodless faces as in imagining death; how they cried out horribly as though in labor; how several of them, miserably trodden underfoot [but then] lifted by the pious assistance of men above the heads of the crowd, marched forward as though upon a pavement.⁶⁵

While no museum would want to (or legally could) emulate this occurrence, the Walters took advantage of an experiential learning opportunity to safely and effectively allude to historical accounts. Thinking back on the Walters' exhibit, the tightly and closely contained show featured some compact and some open areas but, as a whole, the exhibition remained an intimate, yet narrow space (*Fig. 4.9*). After a conversation with Boycher, I learned that the limited space stood as the only appropriate space available for the special exhibition. As is the case with any museum, the available space dictates the location for the exhibit, much of its traffic flow, and the overall experience of the visitor. More often than not, museum staff members must compromise and make the best of the situation.

⁶⁵ Robert A. Scott. *The Gothic Enterprise: A Guide to Understanding the Medieval Cathedral*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003, p. 85.

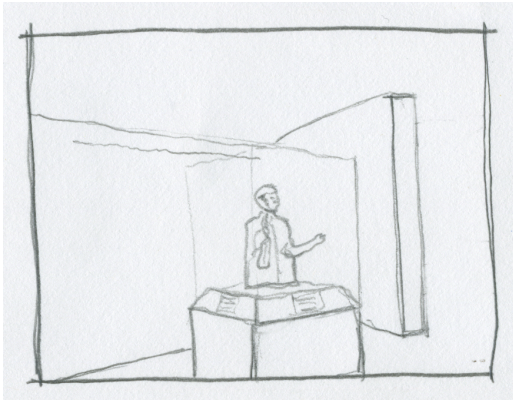


Figure 4.8. Sketch of St. Baudime in the Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe exhibition, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland (March 2011)

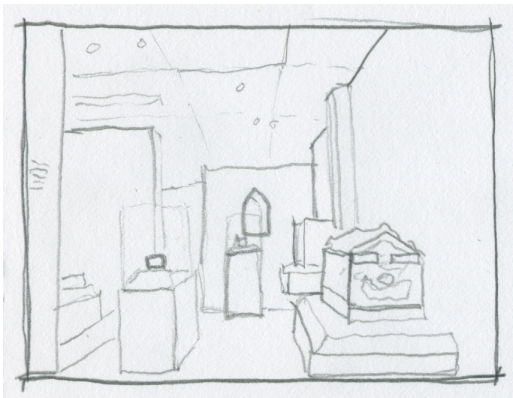


Figure 4.9. Sketch showing narrow spaces in the Treasures of Heaven exhibition

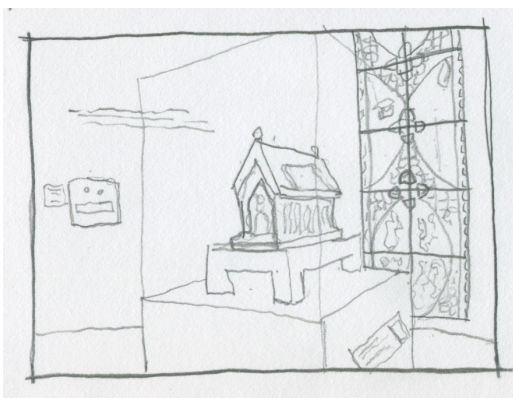


Figure 4.10. Sketch showing stained glass as context in the Treasures of Heaven exhibition

These illustrations were created to demonstrate and analyze object placement, spatial design, and context in the traveling exhibit. Museum restrictions against photography often limit gathering visual information to textual description and sketches. Source: Author

Exhibit curators and designers deployed effective and ineffective ways for display of artifacts. Nearly all the display pedestals with Plexiglas bonnets sat at a similar height that, on one hand, made sense in order to have the objects at a comfortable elevation for the maximum amount of visitors to observe. On the other, the monotony of display cases at a uniform height created a sea of Plexiglas cubes. By offering more varying options of display – wall mounting, adding alcoves as mini-altars, and creating pathways around clustered objects displayed openly in the center of spaces – all would have produced an interesting view, while simultaneously alluding to the past. This approach might have resulted in a more holistic approach to design for the space, instead of dealing with the exhibition object by object. Moreover, Boycher expressed frustration in the design of the display cases, commenting on their “clunky” nature, and noting the challenges they brought in presentation of artifacts.

Scale represents a key element and consideration when dealing with the 130+ objects in this exhibition. Varying the scale of objects within the same vicinity creates interest and keeps the eye moving. Grouping similar objects together of the same scale results in harmony and rhythm, providing a way to give smaller objects a greater sense of presence. The show exhibited appropriate scale among the objects, through groupings and pairings. However, as mentioned previously, mixing the form of display would have added interest while correlating historical connections to the objects.

The positioning of the *Panels from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom of St. Vincent of Saragossa* (catalogue no. 70, 71) provides a great example of display incorporating historical reference (*Fig. 4.10*). These stained glass windows, set in the wall and back-lit to emulate their original location in the Lady Chapel of the Abbey of

Saint-Germain-des-Prés (Paris), brought the full lancet-shaped window to the space and provided ambient lighting. The deep blue walls around the exhibition, a color inspired by the blue tone in the stained glass windows, nicely sat as a backdrop. The entire assemblage of artifact and backdrop brought a sense of place to this section of the exhibit.

Much like another exhibit space at the Walters, the exhibition of Medieval European and Ethiopian art located in another part of the museum, offers yet another good example of display referencing the past (*Fig. 4.11*). The use of an “altar” and grouping of objects created context, furthering the visitor’s understanding of the objects’ function and place in history. The *Treasures of Heaven* exhibition might have incorporated similar contextual elements to help interpret the objects, offering an environment for better understanding the works.

The interpretation of objects in the *Treasures of Heaven* exhibition impacted how curators displayed the objects and the overall design and detailing of the exhibition by designers. Just like the panels and backdrop, juxtaposing objects with their cases and mounts caused visitors to “read” objects in a certain way, or at least impacted the reception of these objects in the minds and hearts of the visitors. Curators elected to display The *Reliquary Box with Stones from the Holy Land* (catalogue no. 13) with the lid standing upright, so the visitor could see the painting on both sides, as well as the stones inside of the box. Without this inventive display technique, visitors may have deduced that the upright lid fit on top of the box, but they may not have determined that the original makers provided a sliding mechanism to keep it closed.



Figure 4.11. Ethiopian Collection, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland (March 2011). The medieval Ethiopian Collection presents a good example of context without re-creating the original church, through reminiscent elements, such as arches and altars. Dramatic lighting and the way the objects are organized contribute to the context of the space, as well. Source: Author

Like the context of the case or mount, the text provided with each object helped explain the function, provenance, materials and relevant history. The exhibition offered enough text to inform but not overwhelm the visitor as each person paused to read. The easily comprehended text font, size, color and writing style provided stories in tandem with the object's basic information, often not repeating the catalog copy verbatim. Curators included several copies of the exhibition catalogue in the exhibition space near comfortable benches, so visitors could relax and read more detailed information on works that particularly piqued their interest.

Appropriate lighting framed objects throughout the exhibit and led visitors along pathways, all the while establishing both ambient and task lighting levels commensurate with exhibit artifacts and visitor needs. Mentioned previously, designers lit *St. Baudime* dramatically, highlighting the finish and details of the art while creating a sense of awe. In the rest of the exhibition space, exhibit designers highlighted only one other object

with dramatic lighting; the *Tree Sarcophagus with Anastasis*. Affixed from below, light amplified the carving and sculpture on the front of this artifact resulting in a striking, beautiful display that provided another visual landmark in the realm of the exhibit. In this way, designers used lighting effectively as an interpretative tool, focusing the visitor on the narrative and craftsmanship of the work. Unfortunately, the rest of the exhibition remained evenly if dully lit.

Other elements added to the exhibition, creating further context for the objects including a large photograph of the Golden Chamber in St. Ursula's Basilica, which illustrated the original location and placement of the *Reliquary Bust of St. Balbina* (catalogue no. 107), and the *Reliquary Bust of an Unknown Female Saint, Probably a Companion of St. Ursula* (catalogue no. 108). A video stand offered the location for a quartet of instructional short films on craftsmanship and methodologies used to produce the objects. Curators placed the small stand, convenient for the exhibition space, beside a main circulation space, which made it a bit awkward and uninviting for visitors to stop and comfortably view the educational film.

Keeping in mind de Montebello's theory on the museum's ability to recreate more than one context for objects, curators did not fully utilize opportunities for creating context. Offering more points of reference to the past through the exhibition design would have made this exhibit a more visually cogent and intellectually comprehensive space, bringing art history to life. Noting the fine line in creating perspective and imitating places of the past, the *Treasures of Heaven* exhibition did neither, but left room for more connections to object history throughout.

With undoubtedly more room for context, *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics & Devotion in Medieval Europe* did meet McLean's universal principals for museum exhibitions. The exhibition clearly showed objects, communicated a holistic view on saints, relics and devotion in Medieval Europe, and created an experiential space for visitors. After spending a semester studying most of the objects featured in the exhibition, I took the opportunity to see them in person. The Walters Art Museum provided an educational and pleasant space to view these fascinating works of art. As a designer, I continually questioned the decisions made by the museum staff for this exhibition, not only for the exhibition as a whole, but for a number of the individual objects on display. This next section of analysis contains some of my thoughts regarding object examination and interpretation within the same exhibition, a close examination of the sacred works, *Reliquary Châsse with the Adoration of the Magi* (ca. 1220), *Panels from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom of St. Vincent of Saragossa* (ca. 1245), and the *Reliquary Bust of St. Baudime* (ca. 1146-78).

Object Analyses

Reliquary Chasse with The Adoration Of The Magi (ca. 1220)

This small object's imagery makes significant connection to light, as the entire purpose for the Magi's devoted travels happened in reaction to the physical light of the star of Bethlehem. Following the celestial light as a guide, the story continues as their final destination brings them to the spiritual "Light of the World."



Figure 4.12. *Reliquary Chasse with the Adoration of the Magi*, French (ca. 1220 - 1230), (22.5 x 20.5 x 8.5 cm), The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland. This small reliquary box uses narrative to connect the viewer with its contents and liturgical practices. Light plays an important role in the story of the Adoration of the Magi. Source: <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/7155/reliquary-shrine-with-the-adoration-of-the-magi/>

Also from France, the Limoges *châsse* (fig. 4.12) of copper gilt, and enamel features the *champlevé* method, with enamel filling in the recesses carved from metal. The maker depicted the three Magi on horseback on the roof of the object in procession to see the Christ child and, on the front panel he showed the Magi in between arches, in adoration of the child in Mary's arms. On either end of the casket, generic saints populate the *mandorla*, not unusual in reliquaries of this kind.⁶⁶ Normally a *châsse* held

⁶⁶ Mandorla: a pointed oval figure used in architecture or aureole, around imagery usually figures of Christ, Virgin Mary, or other saints in medieval art. The nineteenth-century Italian term literally means "almond". Oxford English Dictionary.

remains of saints, but this one contained no physical evidence or record to suggest it had been used.⁶⁷

Within medieval society, the three wise men represented and modeled faithful behavior for Christians, and their gifts would have reminded viewers of the sacred vessels and relics in Mass. The kingly representation of the Magi may also have resonated with members of the nobility and as patrons of the Church, especially. On the reverse of the casket, a lockable access hatch ensured protection, reminding pilgrims of its valuable contents.⁶⁸ Instead of a narrative, an x-shaped decorative pattern covers this part of the casket. A bright blue background contrasts the gilt copper figures with raised heads, bringing further dimensionality and life to the narrative. Geometric floral motifs, and a bright blue enamel background typical of the Limoges style, serve as an overall background pattern to the figures.

The church-like form of the châsse and the inscribed decorative frame surrounding the Magi, on which the maker deployed Roman (not Gothic) architectural elements of columns and arches, lend an architectonic quality to this artifact. The box is raised on four feet and surmounted by three spires on the roof of the châsse. The key-hole shaped cutouts along the ridgeline and the stylized floral medallion enamel insets below each spire all add architectural details to this châsse. Only 22.5 by 20.5 by 8.5 centimeters, the small reliquary box is similar in size to other Limoges châsses produced during this period.

⁶⁷ Kathryn B. Gerry. "94, Reliquary Chasse with the Adoration of the Magi." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 184. Baltimore: The Trustees of The Walters Art Gallery, 2010.

⁶⁸ Gerry, 184.

*Panels from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom
of St. Vincent of Saragossa (ca. 1245)*

The makers of these stained glass panels (*figs. 4.13 and 4.14*), deployed light to illuminate and glorify the story of St. Vincent. Originally from the Lady Chapel at the monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris (1245), these panels depict the story of St. Vincent of Saragossa, Spain, a third century CE deacon imprisoned in Valencia for his faith and finally tortured on a gridiron. Having survived this excruciating punishment, guards threw Vincent into prison, with shards of broken pottery strewn across the cell floor. Despite his torture, he remained faithful to God, even converting his jailer. Later, prison officials allowed his release, and his friends took him and put him to bed, where he died of his wounds and his soul ascended into heaven.⁶⁹

The local lay community and pilgrims funded the creation of the stained glass panels, containing a narrative story that reads from bottom to top: Vincent preaching with Bishop Valerious, Vincent shown in the forefront as speaker because Valerious had a outspoken fearless speaking tone); a modern replacement that still uses the same colors speech impediment; Vincent tortured by fire (he angered the governor because of his of the original glass; and Vincent in prison.^{71 65}

⁶⁹ Mary B. Shepard. "The Relics of St. Vincent of Saragossa at Saint-Germain Des Prés." *Gesta* 37, no. 2 (1998): 258 – 265.

⁶⁵ According to Gerry, the two stained glass window panels depicting St. Vincent were at the Abbey of St.-Denis around 1840, as described by Baron Francois de Guilhermy. Founded in the sixth century in Paris by Germain, the bishop of Paris and King Childebert, the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés was built to protect the relic of the tunic of St. Vincent of Saragossa.⁷¹ In the 1240's a new chapel was built, and included the stained glass windows. Gerry, Kathryn B. "70, 71 Panels from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom of St. Vincent of Saragossa." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 130–131. Baltimore: The Trustees of The Walters Art Gallery, 2010.

According to Legend, a raven guarded Vincent's body from wolves. The bird, quite present in the upper right hand corner and within a halo, materializes the miracle from God for protection. The next panel shows Vincent's body cast into the sea, with a weight around his neck to insure proper burial. The weight, a millstone, reveals societal activities and styles, as do the illustrated clothing and architectural features. The window commemorates St. Vincent's life and documents the significance of both of his relics: his tunic and his jawbone given as royal gifts to the monastery.⁷²

As with other saintly figures, St. Vincent's halo marks his status and his naked form marks his specialness in every scene after his torture. A red geometric grid overlays a background of mostly blue glass, and along with the panel's armature, possibly refers to the rack endured by Vincent, and his torture on a red-hot gridiron. Within the blue background squares, artists applied six-sided star or flower motifs with paint, and placed white crosses on the intersections of the red grid.

Artists placed the scenes of St. Vincent's life within a *mandorla* set in an overall geometric composition. The use of bright colors specifically red and blue – are typical of this period. Large red quatrefoils separate the scenes, and within these designs, four blue squares with fleur-de-lis visually make a large square in the center of the quatrefoil. The whole window, framed in red with blue wave motifs, possibly refers to the sea, where his body was given. Outlined and bordered in white glass, the images stand apart and come forth from the background. The smaller accompanying panel (*Fig. 4.14*), one half of a pair of windows from the Lady Chapel at Saint-Germain-de-Pres, continues the

⁷² "Stained Glass Window with Scenes from the Life of Saint Vincent." *The Walters Art Museum*, 2011. <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/77393/stained-glass-window-with-scenes-from-the-life-of-saint-vincent/>.

story of St. Vincent, illustrating more of his torture, where two men used hooks to tear away at his flesh as they “racked” him.

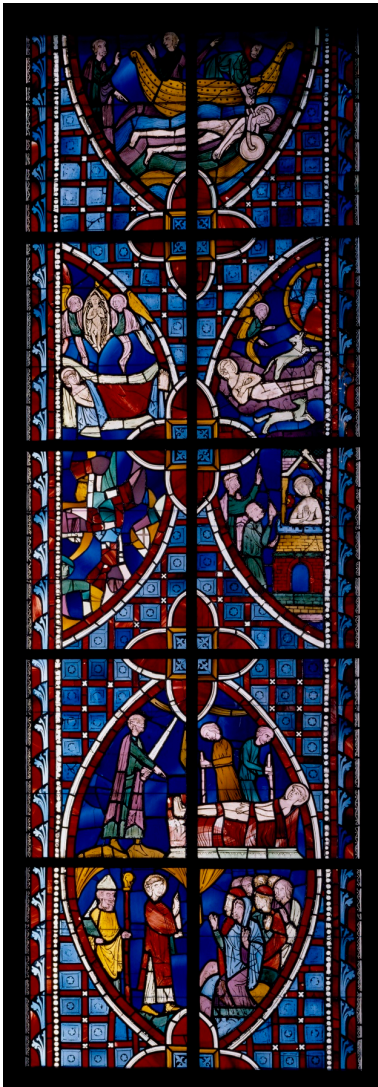


Figure 4.13. *Panel from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom of St. Vincent of Saragossa*, (ca. 1245). (337.2 x 110.5 cm). The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland.



Figure 4.14. *Panel from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom of St. Vincent of Saragossa*, (ca. 1245). (67.4 x 44.5 cm). The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland.

Used for illuminating space while narrating a story, these stained glass panels depicting the scenes of St. Vincent's mission and martyrdom were created for the Lady Chapel at the monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, in Paris. Sources: <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/19397/window-panel-with-saint-vincent-on-the-rack/>, <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/77393/stained-glass-window-with-scenes-from-the-life-of-saint-vincent/>

Reliquary Bust of St. Baudime (ca. 1146 – 78)



Figure 4.15. *Reliquary Bust of St. Baudime*, (1146 – 78), (73 x 43 x 46 cm), Church of Marie de Saint-Nectaire, St-Nectaire-le-Haut, France. This reliquary bust serves as a brightly gilded effigy for St. Baudime. The sacred object was designed to engage viewers, blessing those who stood before him. Source: Bagnoli, et al, *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*

St. Baudime accompanied St. Nectaire and St. Auditeur on an evangelical mission to Gaul. The twelfth century church dedicated to St. Nectaire, provides the burial place for these three saints, the same location as the *Reliquary Bust of St. Baudime* (Fig. 4.15). This artifact, first recorded in an inventory dated 1462, contained a vial of the saint's blood inside, but no other relics, including the expected skull of the saint.

Hahn asserts that the medieval image of a bodily reliquary provided an aesthetic spectacle creating a "sensory experience" through shining surfaces and three-dimensionality, provoking the viewer to imagine the substance of the saint's life. She

connects this kind of interaction with Abbot Suger's commentary on aestheticism and spirituality.⁷⁴

Certainly the brightly gilded, and once bejeweled St. Baudime evoked mysticism and devoutness in those who sought his relics. The beautiful metalwork detailed on the walnut core bust includes a meticulous stippled beard, textured vestment, scrolled hair and stunning black and white eyes that engage the viewer. The artisans fashioned the hands on the reliquary bust in gesture, with the left hand serving another purpose before its attachment was broken off and separated from the reliquary. The engaging eyes and expressive hands "speak" blessings to those that come in holy reverence, representing a visual voice for the heavenly Saint.

The gilded figure and, the once highly gemmed surface evoked a heavenly image of St. Baudime, extenuating his evangelistic calling through his effigy. The vestment depicted on the reliquary bust represents a typical forked-cross style orphrey that extends from the front to back of the figure, and was common from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. Without knowing what classes of precious stones were incorporated into this ornamental band, the gems quite likely suggested linkage to the spiritual qualities of St. Baudime. Opulent and symbolic, this tradition of including precious stones resulted from the medieval belief that gems contained powers from the cosmos, ultimately compared to virtues by Christian writers.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Cynthia Hahn. "The Spectacle of the Charismatic Body: Patrons, Artists, and Body-Part Reliquaries." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 163 – 172. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

⁷⁵ Martina Bagnoli. "The Stuff of Heaven: Materials and Craftsmanship in Medieval Reliquaries." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 137 – 147. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

Noticeable draping in the Saint's vestment presents the same stylized treatment seen in the clothing of both the reliquary ch sse and St. Vincent stained glass panels. Highly stylized, St. Baudime's cap-like hair is comparable to the stone sculptures of St. Nectaire and St. Baudime found in the carved capitals of the nave of the Church of Saint-Nectaire.⁷⁶ St. Baudime's hair depicts a more abstract design, but is similar to the stylized versions found on the figures of the other two objects.

At 73 x 43 x 46 centimeters, the reliquary bust is not easily moveable, unlike the much smaller and portable reliquary ch sse. Located in the Church of Marie de Saint-Nectaire since its manufacture, the reliquary bust remains in context at its original location and in close proximity to the internment site of St. Baudime.

Re-Mystifying

Each artifact shares similar materiality through a combination of using the same medium and characterizing similar materials through representation. The reliquary bust uses both metal and jewels in physical form, while the reliquary ch sse and stained glass panels contain other materials that symbolize the same moral and spiritual qualities of metal and gem, although the objects flaunt their materiality. Within the reliquary ch sse, the champlev  enamel serves as the gems laid between the metal partition, which form the design and pattern on the piece. The stained glass panels utilize a similar creative process, except the metalwork takes form as the lead lining and the enamel, while the gems translate as colored glass. The metalwork in the stained

⁷⁶ Barbara Drake Boehm. "Reliquary Bust of St. Baudime." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 191–193. Baltimore: The Trustees of The Walters Art Gallery, 2010.

glass panel, like the châsse, defines the imagery and patterns. Just as materiality connects these three sacred objects, Snyder reminds us that:

Light is the medium here, and closest comparisons that can be found for its mysterious qualities are the bright illuminations in Gothic manuscripts, in mosaics, or, even more so, in the brilliant world of bejeweled golden objects and iridescent cloisonné enamels.⁷⁷

Understanding key contextual elements through a close examination of the three objects provides useful evidence in interpreting and exhibiting the objects, their religious connections, and their materiality. The theme of light provides a binding design element for understanding among these three artifacts. How each material receives the light differs, but the concept that light informs and animates the artifacts in liturgical practice and in the experiences of all who encounter them, indicates an appropriate departure for exhibit curators and designers. As a result, their recognition and cognition in light signals a design direction that underscores the important qualities of each artifact and, by extension, indicates a linkage among most (if not all) artifacts from this time period. By relying on light, museum professionals can help visitors see in the ways that pilgrims did, bringing to light the emotional reactions to artifacts that pilgrims surely had.

By a holistic consideration of these three artifacts and the lessons of light that they teach, I posit that current design and curatorial practice can and should extend from material culture, making good connections, and connoting a few missed opportunities made by curators and designers for some aspects of the *Treasures of Heaven* exhibit at The Walters Art Museum. Keeping in mind that context represents the driving force and

⁷⁷ Snyder, 371.

the objects themselves the design cues, the ultimate goal for designers remains to create an experience that re-mystifies objects so far removed in time and space from their medieval ecclesiastical contexts. At a broader scale, museums serve as the sturdy metal framework that contain and define the colorful objects within. Thus, exhibits stand as the finished narratives that curators and designers wield, helping visitors to admire and experience.

CHAPTER V

ENLIGHTENMENT

Investigating, researching, and speculating how to exhibit sacred medieval objects in museums originated from my own positive experiences and frustrations in museum spaces. As a visitor, exhibits moved me, and as a designer, I critiqued the elements and treatments of these exhibits. In doing so, I sought to discover how I could contribute to this discipline, creating meaningful experiences for others in the encounter with the past while utilizing, and growing, my design and art history knowledge.

Absorbing the history of twelfth-century France, more completely understanding Abbot Suger's perspective on church architecture, and dealing with both of these topics within current museum practices all represent obvious gains from the research process. The skills, familiarity, and understanding of these inter-related aspects of exhibit design developed through the process of writing this thesis and provided insightful and valuable experiences. Tracing exhibition histories allowed me to link objects to further knowledge about exhibit design and specific periods of history and movements in art.

As with any basic research project centered in the museum, exhibition bibliographies supplied me with additional information for objects on display, but I found this process of research most valuable in getting into the mind of the curator, both contemporary and past. Exposure to other ideas and theories about creating exhibitions allowed me to develop my own opinions about displaying sacred medieval objects, ideas

which spring from a deep understanding of objects in context and an abstraction of exhibit ideas from the essence uncovered in the process.

Through my thesis research, my ideas about exhibit design, particularly for sacred medieval objects, morphed into something more complex. Using these newfound ideas to guide and inform design decisions in exhibit making is a process and consideration I believe are essential in finding context for objects removed from their native environment. Considering the theology behind the piece is essential and asking questions such as, how was the object used and displayed in the church, what were associated rites, and who had access? My ideas before this research concluded revolved around recreating the past environment. Enlightened through my investigation, I now firmly believe that creating a successful exhibit for sacred medieval objects cultivates an experience, connecting the visitor to people, places and cultures of the past.

In my study of the specific qualities of exhibitions and medieval artifacts at The Walters Art Museum, my findings support my original hypothesis that curators and designers can create exhibitions that contextually support objects. Through my observations and analyses, I identified existing museum examples incorporating successful elements and methods of displaying these specific objects, as well as some less successful ones. Determining the limitations and challenges served as a springboard for my research and purpose to supply the museum and design literature with additional sources for overcoming these tasks, and offering specific manners of approach.

Difficulties and frustrations during my research mainly hinged on my travel limitations. Because I attempted to address the vast experiential necessities of working with sacred medieval objects, my reliance on images of St.-Denis in France stood as a key frustration and a potential impediment in this research. Even though the Internet provided a myriad of images of the church, the images I pulled from this source do not bear my own imprint, and thus indicate their fragility as bearers of the light about St.-Denis, because they ultimately represent understandings of the place taken from someone else's perspective.

Fortunately, the long-surviving diary of Abbot Suger provided an invaluable source for discovering his reasons for church design and object display during the twelfth century, certainly a solid foundation for the analytical work I took on herein. While the diary of any one individual did not necessarily reflect true intentions and feelings of the author, I tempered Suger's accounts with previous scholarly research and my own observations to insure some evenhandedness in approach. Through my research and in consideration of my expectations to find mostly technical patterns of display, I rather pleasantly found myself in deep application of theology, inherent symbolism, and perspectives on viewing artifacts through experience. Even more, this entire process imparted me with a sense of drive and confidence in undertaking future research and writing projects.

I recognize that I can still undertake much research on exhibiting sacred medieval objects in museums. Time restrictions and inexperience limited my ability to include a number of rich resources to support my argument or to raise further questions. With each source, my mind drew further speculation of the limitations and missed

opportunities, exposing the many loose threads waiting to be pulled together to foster opportunities that make more connections and reveal more strategies about exhibiting sacred medieval objects. Once you take an object out of its context – the very premise of exhibit making – this action requires exhibit designers and curators to reverse that process as best they can for contemporary audiences. In re-mystifying sacred medieval objects through an intense analysis of the artifacts themselves, I believe one can design an atmosphere in which a visitor can understand at least some context for those objects. Exhibit designers help provide strategies and elements to creatively manifest an experience for visitors that evokes some sense of the past. The alternative: white walled galleries with simple labels that do very little to help bring the past to light or engage the viewer. No matter the approach, in the end, I learned that everyone establishes their own beliefs in the same spiritual story or foundation, and that telling the story of a religious past requires great insight and careful handling, particularly in a museum setting.

REFERENCES

- Bagnoli, Martina. "The Stuff of Heaven: Materials and Craftsmanship in Medieval Reliquaries." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 137 – 147. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.
- Bouquet, Mary, Nuno Porto, and Sharon Macdonald. "Enchantment and Its Dilemmas: The Museum as a Ritual Site." In *Science, Magic and Religion: The Ritual Processes of Museum Magic*, 209–227. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.
- Conn, Stephen. "Do Museums Still Need Objects?" In *Do Museums Still Need Objects?*, 20–57. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- de Montebello, Phillipe. "And What Do You Propose Should Be Done with Those Objects?" In *Whose Culture?*, 55–70. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Erlande-Brandenburg, Alain. *The Cathedral: The Social and Architectural Dynamics of Construction*. Translated by Martin Thom. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Univeristy Press, 1994.
- Falk, John H., and Lynn D. Dierking. *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.
- Gerry, Kathryn B. "94, Reliquary Chasse with the Adoration of the Magi." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 184. Baltimore: The Trustees of The Walters Art Gallery, 2010.
- Gerry, Kathryn B. "70, 71 Panels from a Window Showing the Life and Martyrdom of St. Vincent of Saragossa." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 130–131. Baltimore: The Trustees of The Walters Art Gallery, 2010.
- Hahn, Cynthia. "The Spectacle of the Charismatic Body: Patrons, Artists, and Body-Part Reliquaries." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 163 – 172. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Hall, Edward T. *The Hidden Dimension*. New York: Doubleday, 1966.

Harrington, Michael L. *Sacred Place in Early Medieval Neoplatonism*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Hebdige, Dick. "Introduction: Subculture and Style." In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, 1–19. London, New York: Routledge, 2002.

Higgins, Peter. "From Cathedral of Culture to Anchor Attractor." In *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions*, p. 215. New York: Routledge, 2005.

John 8:12. Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Leyerle, Blake. "Pilgrim Eulogiae and Domestic Rituals." *Archiv Fur Religionsgeschichte* 10 (2008): 223–237.

McLean, Kathleen. *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*. 5th ed. Washington D.C.: Association of Science-Technology Centers, 2009.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. "The Collection: The National Gallery of Art." *Chalice of the Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis*, 2012.
<http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/medieval/medieval-1437.html>.

Palazzo, Eric. "Relics, Liturgical Space, and the Theology of the Church." In *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, 99–109. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Panofsky-Soergel, Gerda, and Erwin Panofsky. *Abbot Suger: On the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and Its Art Treasures*. Second. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 5.

Peters, Edward. *Europe and the Middle Ages*. Second ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1989, p.154.

Prown, J. D. (1982). *Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method*. Winterhur Portfolio, 17(1), 1-19.

Psarra, Sophia. "Spatial Culture, Way-finding and the Educational Message: The Impact of Layout on the Spatial, Social and Educational Experiences of Visitors to Museums and Galleries." In *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions*, 88. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Roth, Leland M. *Understanding Architecture*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1993.

- Scott, Robert A. *The Gothic Enterprise: A Guide to Understanding the Medieval Cathedral*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003, p. 85.
- Mary B. Shepard. "The Relics of St. Vincent of Saragossa at Saint-Germain Des Prés." *Gesta* 37, no. 2 (1998): 258 – 265.
- Snyder, James. *Medieval Art: Painting-sculpture-architecture, 4-14th Century*. New: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989.
- Stoddard, Whitney S. *Monastery and Cathedral in France: Medieval Architecture, Sculpture, Stained Glass, Manuscripts, The Art of Church Treasures*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1966.
- "Stained Glass Window with Scenes from the Life of Saint Vincent." *The Walters Art Museum*, 2011. <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/77393/stained-glass-window-with-scenes-from-the-life-of-saint-vincent/>.
- van Dam, Raymond. "Sacred Space: The Cult and Church of St. Martin at Tours." In *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul*, 233. Los Angeles, CA: University of California, 1985.
- Wilkinson, John. "The Piacenza Pilgrim Travels from Piacenza." In *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, 129 – 143. Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1977.
- Wingfield, Christopher. "Touching the Buddha: Encounters with a Charismatic Object." In *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*, 53–70. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010.
- Ye, Weili. "The Light of the Home: Dialectics of Gender in an Argand Lamp." In *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, 243–251. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000.