

TEXTILE GIFTS
IN THE MIDDLE AGES
OBJECTS, ACTORS,
AND REPRESENTATIONS

edited by

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Orphrey of Count Manassès and Countess
Ermengarde, France (?), between 1240 and
1300, embroidery, 69 × 28 cm, particolare.
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Palais [Musée de Cluny – Musée national du
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INTRODUCTION. TOWARDS AN UNPACKING OF THE MEDIEVAL TEXTILE GIFT

Christiane Elster, Stephanie Luther

One of the most precious pieces in the Diocesan Museum of Vicenza is the ‘Parrot Cope’ (*Piviale dei Pappagalli*), a ruler’s mantle converted into a liturgical *pluviale*, which is usually dated to the second quarter of the thirteenth century (figs. 1–2).¹ How it came into the possession of the Dominican church of Santa Corona in Vicenza cannot be determined definitively today. There is much to suggest that it was a gift from a secular ruler. From the sixteenth century on, local sources report that the mantle was a gift from King Louis IX of France (Saint Louis, ruled 1226–1270) to the Vicentine bishop Bartolomeo of Vicenza (1255–1270).² According to this tradition, the mantle was offered as part of King Louis’ donation of a thorn from the Crown of Thorns and a relic of the Cross to the Vicentine bishop, which was documented for the year 1259 (fig. 3).³

In 1260, after Bartolomeo returned to Vicenza, he built a church dedicated to Santa Corona with an attached Dominican convent, to which he bequeathed the thorn relic and supposedly the ruler’s mantle as well – not unlike the Sainte-Chapelle erected in Paris by Louis IX as a monumental reliquary for the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics. This donation marks the beginning of the cult of the holy *spina* in Vicenza. The cult was promoted not by the Church alone: to a significant extent, the tradition was encouraged by Vicenza’s commune (fig. 4). Representatives of the city and the people as well as the clergy attended celebrations of the *festum Coronae* (Feast of the Crown of Thorns).⁴

Even though much supports the conclusion that Louis IX donated the mantle, it is now no longer possible to be certain that this tradition is historically tenable – the ruler’s mantle is not mentioned in the contemporary sources concerning the donation of relics by Louis IX to Bartolomeo of Vicenza, namely the inventory of Bartolomeo of Breganze of 14 May 1260 and the donation to Santa Corona dated 14 March 1261.⁵ We must therefore take into consideration the possibility that this attribution of the ruler’s mantle as a gift from Louis IX is a later construction. Because it is possible that the

1. Parrot Cope (Piviale dei Pappagalli), Sicily or Cyprus (?), mid-13th century, gold embroidery on samite, 131 x 293 cm. Vicenza, Museo Diocesano (Photo Diocesi di Vicenza – Museo “Pietro G. Nonis”)



mantle was made in the royal court workshops of the Hohenstaufen in Palermo, Maria Elisa Avagnina recently argued that it was in fact a gift from Emperor Frederick II to Ezzelino III of Romano (1194–1259), which passed after Ezzelino's death into the possession of the commune of Vicenza and from there to Santa Corona.⁶ This theory cannot be completely discounted, as there were indeed close relationships between Frederick II and Ezzelino, who had ruled Vicenza since 1236 and was allied with Frederick.⁷



The link between the mantle and the relic gifts of Louis IX to Bartolomeo could therefore be a narrative that arose later, largely due to the ignominious defeat of Ezzelino III by the Guelfs, who were loyal to the pope and with whom Vicenza had been associated since 1256.⁸ Concealing or ‘erasing’ Frederick II as the donor in the collective memory of Vicenza and replacing him with the pious king of France even earned the mantle the prestigious status of secondary relic after Louis was canonized in 1297.⁹ It was used, for example,

2. Detail of fig. 1



during the processions held *in festo Coronae* and therefore integrated into the Vicentine public rites surrounding the cult of the *santa spina*.¹⁰

In any case, the story of the mantle, which can be gleaned from sources from the sixteenth century on, is an intriguing example of a social collective appropriating a textile gift and creating a new identity for it. It shows how strongly textile gifts could be charged with the presence of the donor in their perception and use by the recipients, for whom it was irrelevant whether the donor was 'real' or fictitious, i.e., invented afterwards.

Gifts of textiles and clothing in pre-modern Europe are an immensely heterogeneous phenomenon, appearing in vastly different contexts and performing a multitude of functions. Such gifts could be offered during initiation rites and in points of transition, e.g., at investitures and appointments to office, weddings, entry to monastic life, and as testamentary bequests after death. Gifts of clothing to the poor exemplified charity and frequently appear, for example, in medieval *vitae* of saints. In addition, ecclesiastical institutions were offered precious textiles as opulent gifts. Luxury textiles – such as patterned silk fabrics from Byzantium – also circulated in diplomatic gift exchange. Gifts of clothing, meanwhile, were used within the court as remuneration (in kind) and served to structure and hierarchize court society.

This volume stems from a conference held at the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History in Rome in 2016. Its essays situate the diversity and polysemy of textile gifts as acts of symbolic communication within the broader context of medieval gift giving. Anthropological and sociological models – particularly those of Marcel Mauss, Alfred Gell, and Bruno Latour – are integrated into a primarily art historical approach that aims at a new and better understanding of pre-modern European textile gifts in their function as social acts and processes.

Marcel Mauss vested the items used in gift exchange with an independent capacity for action.¹¹ He described the “*hau*” inherent to the gift as part of the giver’s personality. Because the giver offers a part of himself/herself when giving, the recipient experiences the other when accepting the gift. In Alfred Gell and Bruno Latour, this agency is transferred from gift exchange to social acts more generally. In the 1990s, Gell and Latour explored the central role of objects and their agency in human collectives.¹² They described the power that artifacts can hold over human action.¹³ Crucially however, Gell’s agency and Latour’s actor-network theory are relational concepts. In their view, things or artifacts become actors exclusively within the social processes that people have initiated.¹⁴ According to Gell and Latour, social processes can only be fully grasped and described if all actors – human and non-human (known as actants) – are included in the analysis.

Accordingly, this book does not pursue an ‘animism’ that unscientifically ascribes intrinsic activity to objects and images, thus declaring them subjects in equal measure. Instead, textile donations in pre-modern Europe are described as complex social processes in which both human and non-human actors participated and interacted.

But what might a specifically art-historical contribution to the study of gift exchange in pre-modern Europe look like? According to Cecily Hilsdale, we as art historians are prepared by the subject area of our discipline – namely

3. Saint Louis donating a thorn to Bartolomeo of Vicenza, Reliquiario della Sacra Spina, detail of the plaque on the back of the crown of thorns, 13th century. Vicenza, Museo Diocesano (Photo Diocesi di Vicenza – Museo “Pietro G. Nonis”)
4. Reliquiario della Sacra Spina, complete view of front, 13th–15th century, embossed and engraved gilded silver, translucent enamel, cast silver, 105 cm (height). Vicenza, Museo Diocesano (Photo Diocesi di Vicenza – Museo “Pietro G. Nonis”)



visual culture and the image on one hand and the material object on the other – to turn our attention to the actor within the social event of gift giving that has been most neglected so far, namely the gift itself in its specific materiality and visuality:

“Materiality and formal particularities of individual objects generally lie outside their [the anthropologists’ and social scientists’] analysis, and thus the contexts of exchange are privileged over the objects of exchange. On this point art historians are positioned to offer a significant intervention. The tools for visual analysis particular to the discipline – stylistic, technical, iconographical, and other – allow for a thorough investigation of the specific material and formal properties of medieval gifts and prestation. [...]”¹⁵

In other words, when we ask how the dynamics of reciprocity and the obligations that accompany it were each materially and visually charged, the relationship between the human actors and the agency of the gifts themselves comes into focus.



Despite the diversity of the manifestations of the pre-modern clothing and textile gift in Europe, two of its aspects are so characteristic that they will be briefly discussed here.

First, it should be noted that, in general, the gift in the Middle Ages bore an ambiguity between freedom and compulsion.¹⁶ Much more so than today, gifts in the Middle Ages were largely integrated into structures for conduct that entailed fixed obligations: gifts had to be reciprocated.¹⁷ The gift recipient incurred a debt to the giver that needed to be offset with a material or immaterial counter-gift. However, unlike other transactional processes, including exchanges like trade and compulsory tribute, compensating the debt generated by a gift was ostensibly voluntary, for gift giving was also about demonstrating virtues such as generosity and charity (*caritas*).

Following Gadi Algazi, we believe that an open definition of the gift, one which locates gifts within a broader repertoire of transactional forms, is a helpful approach to textile gifts of the Middle Ages. For Algazi, gifts are not fixed, absolute units but relative entities whose manifestation and function depend on the repertoire of transactional models available to the social collective at any given time.¹⁸ We have likewise decided not to draw firm boundaries for the temporal delimitation of the phenomenon of the textile gift in pre-modern Europe. Therefore, in their chronological span, the essays in this book range from Late Antiquity (see Alžběta Filipová) to well into the modern period (see Timothy McCall).

Also noteworthy is the ability of the textile gift to be charged with the giver's presence, as we have seen with the Parrot Cope in Vicenza. That the gift, in general, can serve as a depository for personal efficacy and represent the giver has – beginning with Marcel Mauss – already been described. For textiles and clothing, as compared to other objects, this phenomenon seems to have been particularly pronounced.

The main reason for this may lie in the practices of personalization that were typical for textiles, which Jan Keupp discusses in his essay. Here the donor's physical touch of the objects before the act of giving seems to have played a significant role. This contact could occur through personal use – for example, in the case of clothing that the donor personally wore and used before the gift was offered. In other cases, it was a condition of its production, which can be seen especially in textile gifts offered by women of the high nobility in the Middle Ages (see Stefanie Seeberg). The efficacy of textile contact relics is likewise based on a moment of contact, in this case with the body or bones of the venerated saint (see Alžběta Filipová).¹⁹

Given its direct relation to the body of the donor and the former wearer, clothing given as a gift could be described, following Hans Belting, as a “medium of the body”, alongside the coat of arms, the portrait, and the in-

scription. All these media operated in both ephemeral and permanently monumentalized contexts, with and without a physical person as a support, and could be combined in countless ways.²⁰ At times, offerings of textile gifts are furnished with explicit visual references to their donor and former wearer by bearing his or her likeness, coat of arms, or name inscription. Thus, different media of the body overlap, expand upon, and rival one another, all within the same object.

For example, the orphrey of a chasuble donated to the monastery of Vergy in Burgundy in the late thirteenth century explicitly makes its donation the subject of its pictorial program. The central register portrays the monk “Frater Petrus”. He kneels before the altar of the monastic church of Vergy and offers it a patterned textile object that clearly represents the (no longer extant) chasuble. According to the accompanying inscription, this chasuble was given by Petrus to the monastic church, and to this the orphrey was originally attached (fig. 5). The donation of the liturgical vestment is framed in the top and bottom registers by a depiction of the foundation of the Benedictine monastery of Vergy, in which Count Manassès and Countess Hermengarde give the monastic church to the patrons Mary, Viventius, and Peter. The chasuble thus presents – in an act of self-referentiality, so to speak – its own act of donation within the larger framework of the monastery’s foundation, combining the media of image and text (donor portrait and inscription).²¹

However, the inclusion of such visual signs explicitly referring to the donor or donation was by no means an essential quality for gifted garments and textiles in pre-modern Europe. Indeed, it was more the textile gift’s ability to retain personal efficacy that guaranteed the representation of the former wearer and donor, not necessarily that person’s appearance in image, heraldry, or inscription.

This is exemplified by the clothing that Roman Emperor Gratian (Emperor of the Western Empire from 375–383) gave to Ausonius of Bordeaux (ca. 310–394). In the late fourth century CE, the poet and civil servant Ausonius thanked his former student Gratian for a toga he had received from him. Woven into this imperial gift of clothing was a portrait of Emperor Constantius,²² a predecessor of Gratian:

“You say: ‘I have sent you a palm-broidered robe in which is worked a figure of the sainted Constantius my ancestor.’ [...] It is, it most surely is, a broidered robe, as you say; but embroidered more richly with your words than with its own threads of gold. But, since it is you who have invested me, I perceive that its enrichment means far more. For the light which flows from this single garment bespeaks two imperial personages: Constantius is embroidered in the actual fabric; but in the complimentary nature of the gift I feel the presence of Gratian.”²³

The episode demonstrates that the presence of the donor could be evoked and kept alive by the very materiality of the gifted garment. In Ausonius’s



5. Orphrey of Count Manassès and Countess Ermengarde, France (?), between 1240 and 1300, embroidery, 69 x 28 cm. Paris, Musée Cluny, inv. Cl. 2158 (RMN-Grand Palais [Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen-Âge, Paris], Photo Michel Urtado)

view, the toga he received was charged with Emperor Gratian's aura, even though it displayed not Gratian's image but that of one of his predecessors.

We now turn our attention to the lines of inquiry pursued by the essays of this volume. Though they appear largely in chronological order here, the essays can be grouped into the following four themes, which formed the basis of the conference:

Materiality and Agency

Here we seek to understand what constitutes the textile gift as a gift and what sets it apart, in the broadest sense. What is the textile object's contribution, as an actant, within the social event of the gifting of textiles and in other transactional forms? What roles do the particular material and visual power of the textile gift play within the gift process and the attendant relationships of debt and obligation created between donor and recipient?

In his essay, Jan Keupp suggests asking more specifically about both the 'affordance' (what the material has to offer) and the 'agency' (a person's demands upon the material) of the textile gift, especially in comparison to non-textile gifts.

Cecily Hilsdale reconsiders the function of a Byzantine silk bearing a donor figure in the Palazzo Ducale at Urbino, combining this research with a study of twelfth-century veils now in Halberstadt. She shows how the textile gift's materiality, inscription, iconography, and liturgical function could work together to convey the reciprocity and temporality of devotional donation.

The textile gift could also be charged with the presence of entities beyond the giver, perhaps best exemplified by the textile contact relic. Using such relics as a starting point, Alžběta Filipová explores the differing ways the bishops of Rome and Milan approached relic distribution from the late fourth to the early sixth centuries.

Philine Helas, on the other hand, focuses entirely on the statement the garment makes within the act of giving. The focus here is on socio-cultural and symbolic significance rather than its material nature.

Political Gifts and Diplomacy

Textile gifts played a decisive role in medieval political diplomacy, they were used strategically, for example, by Byzantium in its relationships with the West. In her essay, Silvia Leggio examines the textile gift diplomacy of Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259–1282) in relation to the Latin Church. A *pannum*, now lost but detailed in the papal inventory of 1295, featured images of the Byzantine emperor and Pope Gregory X (1271–1276) embedded within a more extensive iconographic program and framed by Latin and Greek inscriptions. This embroidery was probably donated by the *basileus* to

the Roman pontiff on the occasion of the negotiations for the union of the Churches at the time of the Council of Lyons (1274). Leggio demonstrates how the alliance with the Church of Rome, which the emperor was seeking, was visually encoded in this remarkable diplomatic gift from Constantinople.

In addition to gift exchange between courts, the culture of gift-giving within courts is also noteworthy. At both secular and ecclesiastical courts, gifts of clothing were a common remuneration for service or payment to traveling artists. In her essay, Lisa Monnas shows how rulers could use textile gifts as signs of their claim to power. She sheds light on the political significance of textile gifts made by the counts of Flanders and their successors, the dukes of Burgundy, to the figure of Our Lady in the cathedral of Tournai.

Political textile gifts also demonstrate how diverse the effects of a gift's power to bind could be, as gifts did not always result in bonds and loyalties. On the contrary, gifts could also damage or even destroy relationships if, for example, they were rejected or not reciprocated by the recipient.²⁴ In his essay on the power relationships that textile gifts, especially garments, marked and enacted in fifteenth-century Italy, Timothy McCall explores how textiles could be a medium by which lords and their servants navigated – and sometimes churned – the treacherous waters of courtly life.

Transformation and Re-interpretation

At issue here are the processes by which collectives continually shaped and re-shaped the textile gifts they received and the identity-forming function they took on. The valuation, use, and preservation of medieval textile gifts by their recipient institutions can often be traced through the way the gifts were handled, e.g., their restoration or reworking. How were textile gifts interpreted, used, and instrumentalized in identity formation by the recipients? How were these institutions' relationships to the textile donors shaped in the process? For the twelfth century, the chronicle of the Benedictine monastery of Zwiefalten, discussed by Stefanie Seeberg, offers various examples of how textile donations were handled, further used, and transformed.

Testaments bear witness not only to the transfer of textile objects in the course of a bequest (a directive upon death) but also to the attendant processes of transformation by the recipients, as demonstrated by Eleonora Rava in her study of 568 Pisan testaments from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In the directives, processes of transformation and re-purposing are sometimes anticipated, for example, when secular textiles and garments are bequeathed to ecclesiastical institutions on condition that they be used as paraments to equip the altar and the liturgical personnel celebrating the Mass.

When we consider how textile gifts were adapted, their potency as independent and idiosyncratic actants becomes very clear. Textile gifts could have effects unforeseen by the donor. As demonstrated by the Parrot Cope of Vi-

cenza, the donor is not always memorialized in the long term but only when it suits the identity formation and self-representation of the recipient collective. Legends and local history-writing tend to invent donors both prestigious and historically relevant to the collective. Such narratives often backdate the gift and sacralize it by attributing it to saintly or historically significant figures.

Gender

Were textile gifts in the Middle Ages also gendered? Can differences between men and women be observed in practices of gifting textiles and clothing in pre-modern Europe?

Although textile gifts given by both men and women of the ruling elite had fundamentally similar functions, special features can be observed in textile gifts offered by women. For example, the representative presence of female donors in gifted textiles seems to have played an even more important role, especially in spaces reserved for men. Furthermore, producing textiles themselves provided women with opportunities to shape the material according to their own interests and thereby convey meaning. In *vitae* of female saints, textile donations are idealized and presented as exemplary, especially by saintly queens. However, textual sources used to document the history and inventory of an institution show how textile donations were implemented and perceived by women. This is the case with the chronicle of the Zwiefalten monastery, explored by Stefanie Seeberg.

By following these lines of inquiry and focusing on textiles, this volume aims to give shape and texture to our understanding of the pre-modern European experience of gift-giving. Concentrating on the particular could, we hope, offer insight into the broader social phenomenon.

At this juncture, the editors would like to take a moment to express their gratitude. We thank the presenters from the 2016 conference and the contributors to these proceedings for the thought-provoking and fruitful discussion of the textile gift in pre-modern Europe. We would also like to thank the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, especially Tanja Michalsky, for the opportunity to host the conference and to publish it in the form of these proceedings. The staff of the Board of Directors assisted in organizing the conference – many thanks go to Anna Paulinyi, Ornella Rodengo, and Raffaele Rossi. Interns from Tanja Michalsky's Department lent a hand in copyediting the essays; in particular, special thanks for this work are due to Luise Leyer. Finally, we would like to thank the staff of Publications, namely Marieke von Bernstorff and Mirjam Neusius, for their extensive guidance and support during the publication process.

Notes

¹ See *Il Piviale dei pappagalli. Dal trono all'altare* (exhibition catalogue Vicenza), ed. Maria Elisa Avagnina, Vicenza 2014; Christiane Elster, *Die textilen Geschenke Papst Bonifaz' VIII. (1294–1303) an die Kathedrale von Anagni. Päpstliche Paramente des späten Mittelalters als Medien der Repräsentation, Gaben und Erinnerungsträger*, Petersberg 2018, pp. 405–409, cat. 15. According to Maria Elisa Avagnina, its transformation into a liturgical pluviale did not take place before the late fourteenth century. Material and stylistic analyses of the subsequently applied hood lead to this conclusion. See Maria Elisa Avagnina, “Regis amictus o manto imperiale? Il Piviale dei pappagalli della chiesa di Santa Corona, tra storia, tradizione e nuove ipotesi”, in *Il Piviale dei pappagalli* 2014 (note 1), pp. 31–44, here at p. 34.

² On the sources for the donation, see Avagnina 2014 (note 1), pp. 34–36. The earliest (visual) source for this tradition, though it no longer survives, is a miniature in a 1504 gradual for Santa Corona, which depicts the gift of the mantle by Saint Louis to Bartolomeo of Breganze at the beginning of the divine office to be sung on the feast of Santa Corona. On Bartolomeo of Vicenza (also called Bartolomeo of Breganze), who was beatified in 1793, see [Anon.], “Bartolomeo da Vicenza”, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 6 (1964), pp. 785–787. Bartolomeo became the bishop of Vicenza in 1255, but he could only take office after the death of Ezzelino III of Romano in 1259.

³ These relics came from the collection of Passion relics that the French king had acquired in Constantinople in 1239 and brought to Paris. The legend of the donation of the thorn relic and the mantle emphasizes that Louis IX wore the mantle when he met Bartolomeo and that it was a royal mantle. See Francesco Barbarano de Mironi, *Historia Ecclesiastica della città, territorio e diocesi di Vicenza. Libro Secondo*, Vicenza 1652, p. 105.

⁴ See Avagnina 2014 (note 1), p. 33.

⁵ See D. Domenico Bortolan, *S. Corona. Chiesa e convento dei Domenicani in Vicenza. Memorie storiche*, Vicenza 1889, pp. 143–147; Maria Elisa Avagnina, [Piviale dei pappagalli], in *Restituzioni '94. Opere restaurate* (exhibition catalogue Vicenza), Cittadella 1994, p. 29; Avagnina 2014 (note 1), p. 34. However, there is another case of Louis IX donating a thorn relic in combination with a ruler's mantle, namely to the Dominican convent in Liège in 1267. In this case, too, only the thorn is mentioned in the contemporary source that deals directly with the donation – a letter from Louis dated 8 September 1267. The mantle appears for the first time in a seventeenth-century chronicle, making this instance a legendary tradition as well. All of Louis' gifts to the convent were lost in the turmoil of the Revolution. See Elster 2018 (note 1), pp. 406–407.

⁶ Whether Avagnina's hypothesis regarding the origin of the mantle in Palermo is correct can ultimately be clarified only by further research into the production site of the ruler's mantle. Thus far, the question as to whether the mantle and embroideries technically and stylistically similar to it in Anagni (liturgical vestments donated by Pope Boniface VIII) and Assisi were made in Sicily (Palermo) has been insufficiently resolved. An alternative production site is Cyprus, see Elster 2018 (note 1), pp. 110–122.

⁷ In 1236, Frederick II allied himself with Ezzelino in the struggle against the communes in northern Italy and gave him significant support in the consolidation of his rule over Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Trento, Brescia, and Feltre. Ezzelino III married Selvaggia, an illegitimate daughter of Frederick II, in Verona in 1238. Moreover, in 1239, after his journey to the Empire in 1236–1237, the Hohenstaufen emperor stayed for a long time in Padua and Verona, maintaining friendly contact with Ezzelino. On the relationships between Frederick II and Ezzelino, see Avagnina 2014 (note 1), pp. 41–44; Giorgio Cracco, “Ezzelino, l'altro Federico. Un grande personaggio dell'Europa nel XIII secolo”, in *Ezzelini. Signori nel cuore dell'Impero di Federico II* (exhibition catalogue Milan), ed. Carlo Bertelli and Giovanni Marcadella, Milan 2001, pp. 135–139.

⁸ Ezzelino III of Romano was excommunicated by Pope Innocent IV in 1254, and the Pope also called for a crusade against him. Ezzelino lost Trento in the battle against the Guelfs in 1255 and Padua in 1256. In 1258, he was able to conquer Brescia in a counter-offensive before he fell into the hands of his opponents near Milan and was taken prisoner in 1259.

⁹ As is well known, Frederick II was excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX and Pope Innocent IV and went down in the collective memory of the Church as the ‘Antichrist’.

¹⁰ On the use of the pluviale in processions for the feast of the Crown of Thorns, see Avagnina 2014

(note 1), p. 44. On the status of the mantle as a (secondary) relic and the regulations and provisions for its use, see Avagnina 2014 (note 1), pp. 35–36. In 1557, a golden sphere containing various relics, including a fragment of the “Manto di s. Lodovico Re di Francia” was placed on top of the tower in the Piazza dei Signori.

¹¹ See Marcel Mauss, *The Gift. Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cun- nison, Glencoe 1954, reprinted 2011, originally published as “Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l’échange dans les sociétés archaïques”, *L’Année sociologique*, nouvelle série, 1 (1923/4), pp. 30–186.

¹² See Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory*, Oxford 1998; Bruno Latour, *Re- assembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford 2005.

¹³ See Hans Peter Hahn, “Dinge sind Fragmente und Assemblagen. Kritische Anmerkungen zur Metapher der Objektbiographie”, in *Biography of Objects. Aspekte eines kulturhistorischen Konzepts*, ed. Dietrich Boschung, Patric-Alexander Kreuz and Tobias Kienlin, Paderborn 2015, pp. 11–33, esp. p. 16; Hans Peter Hahn, *Materielle Kultur. Eine Einführung*, Berlin 2005, pp. 29–35, 40–45.

¹⁴ “Es ging ihnen [Gell und Latour] um ein von den Menschen eingesetztes Delegieren beziehungs- weise Externalisieren aktiver Eigenschaften an und in Objekten, also um die komplexen Ver- schränkungen zwischen Menschen und den verschiedensten „Nicht-Menschen“, und nicht um eine selbstständige Wirkmacht der Objekte, wie eine vereinfachende Lektüre suggerieren könnte.” Philippe Cordez, “Die kunsthistorische Objektwissenschaft und ihre Forschungsperspektiven”, *Kunstchronik*, 67 (2014), pp. 364–373, here at p. 368.

¹⁵ Cecily Hilsdale, “Gift”, in *Medieval Art History Today – Critical Terms*, ed. Nina Rowe, *Studies in Iconography*, 33 (2012), Special Issue, pp. 171–182, p. 173.

¹⁶ For a discussion of the ambiguity in the term “gift” and the use of the term “prestation” as an al- ternative, see Hilsdale 2012 (note 15), pp. 171–172.

¹⁷ See Helmuth Berking, *Schenken. Zur Anthropologie des Gebens*, Frankfurt a.M. et al. 1996, pp. 190–191; Jan Hirschbiegel, *Étrennes. Untersuchungen zum höfischen Geschenkverkehr im spätmittel- alterlichen Frankreich der Zeit König Karls VI. (1380–1422)*, Munich 2003 (Pariser historische Stu- dien 60), pp. 17, 296.

¹⁸ “Gifts are [...] not stable entities [...] but relational constructs, which owe their most important characteristics not to their unchanging structure but to their relative position within available reper- toires of models of exchange. When such repertoires change – when new options arise [...] or when familiar ones gain prominence [...] – the relative position of gifting practices, their structure, and image may also change. At different times and places, “gifts” might therefore mean very different things according to their respective position within local repertoires of transaction modes.” Gadi Algazi, “Introduction. Doing Things with Gifts”, in *Negotiating the Gift. Pre-modern figurations of exchange*, ed. Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner and Bernhard Jussen, Göttingen 2003 (Veröffent- lichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 188), pp. 1–27, here at p. 22.

¹⁹ On the sacralization of objects within the cult of saints in late antiquity, see Franz Alto Bauer, *Gabe und Person. Geschenke als Träger personaler Aura in der Spätantike*, Eichstätt 2009 (Eichstätter Universitätsreden 116), pp. 59–65.

²⁰ The conventional media that represent legal persons and are described by Hans Belting as ‘media of the body’ are portraits in relation to individual bodies, heraldry in relation to collective bodies, and (name) inscriptions. They use mimetic pictorial depiction, the heraldic sign, and writing to evoke the presence of the wholly or partially absent entity represented. See Hans Belting, “Wappen und Porträt. Zwei Medien des Körpers”, in Hans Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie. Entwürfe für eine Bild- wissenschaft*, Munich 2006, pp. 115–142.

²¹ Paris, Musée de Cluny, inv. no. Cl. 2158. England or France (Burgundy), late thirteenth century. See A. Grace I. Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery - a brief survey of English embroidery dating from the beginning of the tenth century until the end of the fourteenth. Together with a descriptive cata- logue of the surviving examples. Illustrated with one hundred and sixty plates and numerous drawings in the text*, Oxford 1938, pp. 76–77, cat. 43, pl. XXX; *Opus Anglicanum. English Medieval Embroi- dery* (exhibition catalogue London), ed. Donald King, London 1963, pp. 18–19, cat. 28; Odile Brel- Bordaz, *Broderies d’ornéments liturgiques XIII–XIV siècles*, Paris 1982, pp. 127–129, cat. 1.

The Benedictine monastery of Vergy was founded in the ninth century and placed under the au- thority of the Abbey of Cluny in 1087. A seventeenth century manuscript describes the orphrey as applied to a white chasuble. The latter has not survived.

Inscriptions: Lower register: “Comes Manasse et Ermengardis Comitissa Hui Monasterii Funda-