

Take an Apple: Grasping the World in Manuscripts of *L'Image du monde*

Abstract

Gossuin de Metz's thirteenth-century French encyclopaedia, *L'Image du monde*, is punctuated by references to *figures*, diagrams which accompany the text and supplement its descriptions of the cosmos and humanity's place in it. These diagrams are also figures of thought, employing scalar thinking in order to encourage readers to imagine the unthinkable large universe with reference to much smaller everyday items. As he describes the Earth's spherical shape, Gossuin calls on the simile of an apple: people walk around the earth's surface, he says, just like flies on an apple. Later, as he discusses the extent of the world's surface that is inhabited, Gossuin invites his readers to take an apple – figuratively and physically. They are both to imagine an apple, but also, if possible, to hold one, to chop it up and peel it, so that they can better understand the Earth's surface by interacting with the skin of the apple. The *figures* of the manuscript tradition of the *Image* represent these concepts in a variety of intriguing ways.

To issue an invitation to take an apple is not, however, a neutral suggestion, since it echoes the temptation of the serpent to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. While Genesis does not designate the forbidden fruit as an apple, vernacular French texts most often use the word 'pomme'. The *Image* is transmitted in around 100 manuscripts; several of these are larger compilations that also include vernacular narratives about the Fall. These are *L'Estoire d'Adam* (*The History / Story of Adam*) in Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 3516; *De Adam et de Eve feme* (*Of Adam and of Woman / Wife Eve*) in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France français 1553; *Del seinte croyz et de Adam nostre premere piere* (*Of the Holy Cross and Adam our First Father* – also known as *Seth or the Holy Rood*) in Cambridge, University Library Gg.1.1; and *Le Roman de Saint Fanuel* (*The Romance of St Fanuel*), in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France français 1768 and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nouvelles acquisitions françaises 10036. This article explores these narratives in their context alongside the *Image*, and argues that the apple is not only a figure of thought enabling imagination across scales of space, but also scales of time.

The apple is in fact a reminder of the need for scalar thinking in the first place: the impulse to understand the world via approximation, comparison, and typology, mediating the hugely cosmic through the small and mundane, stems from the Fall and its aftermath. According to Augustine's influential commentary on Genesis, the transgression of the Fall resulted in the need for mediation to approximate to, but never fully achieve, the comprehension of the created world.

Gossuin's invitation to the readers of *L'Image du monde* to take an apple is, then, at once an everyday appeal to the mundane as a means to comprehend the cosmic and an allusion to the origin story for this sort of figural thinking across scales.

Keywords

Diagram; Apple; Encyclopaedia; Fall; Image du monde.

Imagine you could walk all the way around the Earth. Such an act of imagination involves visualizing the world as being round in the first place, a thought that might be counterintuitive to our experience of moving across flat surfaces. But medieval Europeans knew – just as we do today – that the world was round (Giacomotto-Charra and Nony), and that it was therefore conceivable (if not actually achievable) that a human being could travel all the way around its surface and end up where they started. The size and capability of an individual human body is not equal to the scale of global circumnavigation, and yet medieval authors, scribes, and artists juxtaposed images and texts in order to picture this extraordinary notion: to do so, they scaled the world down to the size of a circle inked onto a manuscript page to create heuristic diagrams. Early vernacular examples of these diagrams are found in the illustrative programme and references to it in the thirteenth-century French verse encyclopaedia, *L'Image du monde*, by Gossuin (or Gautier) de Metz.

Gossuin emphasises that his work cannot be understood without looking at what he calls the “figures” – diagrammatic representations integrated into the text as it is transmitted in most manuscripts. While there is some consistency in the ways in which the artist-scribes have chosen to interpret the explanation in diagrammatic form, there are also revealing variations that show medieval writers, artists, and readers grappling with the problems of scalar thinking and representation. Pioneering in its time, *L'Image du monde* is less accessible to modern scholars than it deserves to be, partly because of this illustrative programme. If it is difficult to produce an edition of a text that exists in three redactions across 100 manuscripts, it is even more challenging to present faithfully a work which so closely integrates text and image, yet manifests such variety in the style and quality of the images involved. I hope to give an indication of that variety in this essay, but also to show the consistency in the programme of diagrams included by artist-scribes transmitting and compiling the *Image* throughout the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. While Chantal

Connochie-Bourgne provided an edition of the first redaction of the *Image* (the earliest version, which also survives in the largest number of manuscripts) in her doctoral thesis, no published edition is readily available. For the purposes of this essay, therefore, I have chosen to cite the *Image du monde* Transcription Project, led by Laura Morreaux, which took place in 2020 and 2021.¹

In some manuscripts of the *Image*, the diagrams that visualize circumnavigation by walking are rather schematic, using small symbols arranged around the circumference of a circle to convey the possible circumnavigation of the world. In manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal [Arsenal], 3516, for instance, two diagrams of two concentric circles are set side by side: in the left diagram, figures marked in red ink as F are shown at four equidistant points around the circumference of the inner circle, with the accompanying text in black ink “hom qui va” (“man who goes”) to indicate that these symbols stand for human figures. In the diagram on the right, figures are represented parting at the top and meeting at the bottom of the circle (fig. 1).

By contrast, in the fourteenth-century trilingual compendium

1. Since I refer frequently in this essay to the version of the *Image* transmitted in Paris, Arsenal, 3516, I quote from the Transcription Project's transcription of this manuscript. I have silently amended some of the transcriptions; translations throughout this article are my own.



Fig. 1. Paris, Arsenal, 3516 f. 164v. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Cambridge, University Library, Gg.1.1, human figures have been drawn at four equidistant points around the circle representing the world (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Cambridge, University Library, Gg.1.1 f. 359r. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

Evidently, the Earth and its figurative circumnavigators are not portrayed to scale here: this image, and others in manuscripts which depict human figures positioned around a much smaller globe (such as Rennes, Bibliothèque municipale, 593; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France [BnF], nouvelles acquisitions françaises 10036; or Chantilly, Musée Condé, 476) can appear absurdly humorous, and this absurdity is precisely a result of a mismatch of scale. However, what is important in these diagrams is the sense of motion and relative positioning rather than the respective sizes of the human bodies and the Earth around which they walk: an implicit sense of scale creates the assumption that the manuscripts' readers will understand the figures as heuristic diagrams rather than an attempt at realistic proportion.

Gossuin's text calls on another image based in scalar thinking in order to reinforce the Earth's sphericity:

Ensi com une mosce droit
Entor une pome reonde
Ensi porroit a la reonde
Uns hom tant com la terre dure
Tot entor aler par nature (Arsenal 3516, f. 164v c)

(Just as a fly around a round apple, so a man would be able by nature to go all over the world, as long as the Earth endures)

In Gossuin's figural proposition, the Earth becomes an apple. In this essay, I scrutinise the apple as a privileged object in scalar thought, an epistemological and representational system that mediates between states of being (size, materiality, temporality, status) through resemblance and substitution to render creation more comprehensible, revealing, in Kellie Robertson's words, "a world that both measures the human and is, in turn, measured against it" (610).

It is, arguably, because of an apple that scalar thought needs to exist in the first place, according to medieval Christian learning, in particular that influenced by Augustine. The key text here is chapter 3 of Genesis.

Vidit igitur mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad vescendum, et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile: et tulit de fructu illius, et comedit: deditque viro suo, qui comedit. Et aperti sunt oculi amborum; cumque cognovissent se esse nudos, consuerunt folia ficus, et fecerunt sibi perizomata.

(And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold: and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened: and when they perceived themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig leaves, and made themselves aprons).²

2. Genesis 3,6–7. *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*, followed by English translation from the Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition.

3. On the nomenclature of the forbidden fruit, see also Pastoureau 155–218; Júnior 29–70.

Although the Book of Genesis does not specify what species of fruit grows on the Tree of Knowledge, Azzan Yadin-Israel has convincingly argued that the earliest consensus that this fruit was an apple can be detected in medieval French literary and visual culture, as the Latin *pomum* (the term used by Augustine in his commentary on Genesis) and French *pome* shift meanings from general tree-fruit to the specific apple (Yadin-Israel 63–78).³

As Eric Jager points out in his book on medieval interpretations of

Genesis, the Fall is understood as “an exile from the unmediated divine word into a region of semiotic difference, deferral, and displacement” (52). Postlapsarian human intellect has, then, to rely on more or less ingenious methods of mediation to approximate to, but never fully achieve, the comprehension of the created world. These processes are imbricated in an Augustinian understanding of the created world as a revelation of divine purpose, and “the role of the encyclopedia,” Mary Franklin-Brown reminds us, “is to interpret that revelation” (47).

Gossuin’s evocation of an apple is an appeal to a recognisable, accessible object, part of the materiality on which medieval scalar thinking depends. But, by the same token, as an object so fraught with stories of transgression and its consequences for human understanding of creation, the apple can never be an entirely neutral choice of figure. In this essay, I demonstrate that this is evident in much of the *Image*’s manuscript tradition: in the dialogue between text and image in the *Image* itself, and in the intertextual dialogues set up by the various compilations in which the *Image* is transmitted from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. I am therefore engaging in two ways with this volume’s theme of scale: firstly, by exploring what is at stake in the use of diagrams in medieval manuscripts in which the hugeness of the cosmos is transcribed onto vellum; and secondly, by tracing comparisons suggested within and across manuscript compilations between encyclopaedic and narrative representations of a small object that also comes to stand for human mortality: the apple.

I begin with an investigation of the diagrams of that instance of scalar thinking, focusing on the iterations of two specific diagrams, both of which compare the world to an apple, in manuscripts of the *Image*. I then zoom out to examine the context of the *Image* in manuscripts that also transmit texts featuring an apple – either the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden or a descendent of the Tree of Knowledge. Some of these texts are much shorter and much less frequently copied in medieval manuscripts than the *Image*, so this part of my argument also zooms down the scale of literary criticism and history. The presence of these short, relatively unknown texts in compilations alongside an encyclopaedic work puts them in a material context which lends them authority and creates intertextual resonances between works of very different genre, circulation, and language (See Collet, Foehr-Janssens, and Azzam). It is within these resonances that scale operates: as connections between texts are forged, they make tangible the connections across time, space, and size on which human comprehension of the created cosmos depends. Sca-

lar thinking is what enables us to think from apple to cosmos, and to walk round the Earth as we read a book.

Circles and spheres

Dating to the mid-thirteenth century, *L'Image du monde* is the one of the first encyclopaedias to be composed in the vernacular in Western Europe. It derives much of its material from works by Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Augustine and its title echoes the twelfth-century Latin encyclopaedia *Imago Mundi* by Honorius Augustodunensis. Gossuin's use of French, and in particular French octosyllabic rhyming couplets in the *Image*'s earliest redaction, situate it in a vernacular literary form that would appeal to readers of French secular and sacred texts: this readership is similarly indicated by the *Image*'s inclusion in several significant compilation manuscripts. Indeed, the *Image* survives in around a hundred manuscripts, in three distinct versions: a first verse version composed by Gossuin around 1245, a second redaction in verse, and a prose redaction also attributed to Gossuin (Brown; Truman). In order to convey the composition of the cosmos, Gossuin integrates several diagrams – which he calls “figures” – into his text.

While Franklin-Brown and Adam Cohen follow Erich Auerbach in reminding us that “figura” can be both visual and verbal, Gossuin de Metz uses the word “figure” to signify a visual diagram (see also Obrist 233). This integration of text and image is emphasised by Gossuin's frequent references to “figures”, emphasising that these schematic diagrams should be understood as essential supplements to the explanations provided in the text. Jeffrey Hamburger draws attention not just to the logical and mnemonic purposes of medieval diagrams, but also to the ways in which they express and to some extent realise their creator's desires for knowledge about the world. This desire leads to the representation of the world from impossible perspectives in order to imagine its orders and structures from a non-human scale. The “figures” in *Image* manuscripts, then, scale up what humans observe every day to that which humans cannot possibly perceive, for there is no physical place from which to view it.

In many manuscripts, the *Image du monde* opens with a table of contents which stipulates the number of chapters that make up the work and the number of “figures” that are integrated into the text. For example, the opening of the *Image* in Arsenal 3516, a compendious manuscript made in St Omer in the second half of the thirteenth

century (Guggenbühl; Stones I.1, 39), reads “El livre de clergie en romans qui est apelé lymage dou monde contient par tot .lv. capitles et .xxviii. figures sans coi li livres ne porroit pas estre legierement entendus” (“The book of learning in the vernacular [French] which is called the *Image du monde*, contains overall 50 chapters and 28 figures, without which the book cannot be easily understood” Arsenal 3516 f. 160r a). In a large number of manuscripts of the *Image* there is an established pattern of diagrams, starting with an image of concentric circles to represent the geocentric cosmos (a schema deriving from early manuscripts of Macrobius’ *Commentarii in somnium Scipionis*, and used widely in other medieval encyclopaedias; Ramírez-Weaver 150), via the images of imaginary circumnavigation I mentioned above, images of continental distribution I will discuss in this section, diagrams depicting the workings of gravity, the phases of the moon and how an eclipse occurs, culminating in a summative diagram, often larger and more elaborate than the others, of concentric circles depicting the elements, planets, firmament, and God on the very outside of the outermost circle.⁴ Throughout the *Image*, readers are invited to think across representational strategies, calling on the cognitive and imaginative functions stimulated by both verbal and visual representation. The shape that enables them to do so, that operates between scales of time, space, and size, is the circle.

Jacques Le Goff remarked that the word “encyclopédie” couples the Greek terms for cycle and education (24): *enkuklios paedeia* signifies general culture, evoking the form of the circle which circumscribes necessary knowledge (Françon 525; see also Kenny 16–17). As it is in Greek, Arabic, Latin, and European vernacular mathematical and cosmological texts from the seventh century onwards (Obrist), the circle is used as a two-dimensional schema to represent the orbs and orbits of the cosmos. Gossuin emphasises the utility and ubiquity of this form in a chapter entitled “Porcoi deus forma le monde reont” (“Why God made the earth round”, Arsenal 3516 f. 165r c), in which he explains that this is an ideal form because of its plentitude and mobility. Firstly, anything made in a round form can hold more content than a shape of the same dimensions with corners: a diagram of a circle overlaid with two squares demonstrates this in the *Image*’s illustrative programme. In addition,

Il na riens de sosciel enclose
Tant soit de diverse faiture
Qui ja se peust par nature
Si tost movoir com la reonde. (Arsenal 3516 f. 165r d)

4. The exception to this last diagram is found in the two otherwise sumptuously decorated manuscripts BnF fr 12323 and London, British Library, Sloane 2435, where the final diagram is not one of many concentric circles, but one circle bearing the presumably accidental caption, ‘PRENDES LE DAERAINNE FIGURE QUI EST EN LA FIN DULIVRE (Take the last figure which is at the end of the book).

(There is nothing below the heavens that is made in any way that can by its nature move as readily as a circle).

Scaled down from the form of the globe to a circle on the manuscript page, the diagrams in the *Image du monde* therefore render the three-dimensional into two dimensions, and the constantly turning into a static image (Truman 116). Yet, as Marcia Kupfer observes, drawing attention to the constructive materiality of this process, although a sphere cannot be reproduced as such on the surface of parchment and is conventionally represented by a circle, “the codex is an artifact that operates in depth,” and the figures recorded in it are not entirely two-dimensional or insubstantial (12). Indeed, these schemata are often referred to in other manuscripts and scholarship on them as *rotae* – wheels – suggesting that, rather than being two-dimensional geometric shapes, they might also be thought of as possessing mobility and materiality (see Wallis 1).

The scalability of the form of the circle – and that of its three-dimensional form, the sphere – is a property both of their plenitude and their mobility: as forms which eliminate angles and can turn readily, they are also transferrable across size, from a small circular diagram on a manuscript page, to the entirety of the created cosmos. This transferability is emphasised in the summative diagram which concludes the illustrative series in many *Image* manuscripts. In manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, français 1553, part of which is dated to 1285 (Stones I.1,131), this diagram comprises concentric circles showing the distribution of the elements and the orbits of the heavenly bodies, with hell at the very centre, the angels in the outermost circle, and God outside the circumference. God is portrayed holding the orb of the world in his left hand, suggesting a scaled equivalence between the concentric circles below him and the globe he created (fig.3).

This summative diagram is accompanied in Arsenal 3516 by an even more comprehensive schema, a tetradic diagram (Stones I.2, 502) which uses circles not to represent concentric spheres, but to circumscribe and connect aspects of the physical and temporal which are to be understood as corresponding with one another. Similar diagrams are found in the Thorney Computus (Oxford, St John’s College, 17, f. 7v) and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 23 (f. 54v), the manuscript which transmits the text known as the Oxford *Chanson de Roland* (Edson and Savage-Smith 12 and 25); they perfectly encapsulate Hamburger’s observation that, “like typology, diagrams are fundamentally relational in character” (8). In Arsenal 3516, the tetradic diagram shows a circle (around the edge of which are inscribed the months of the



Fig. 3. Paris, BnF, fr 1553, f. 197v. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

5. On this image, see Griffin, “Before Time”; Guggenbühl 309.

year), within which sit nine smaller circles; eight of them arranged around one in the centre, bearing the rubric “annus”. Four of these circles are linked by red lines, demarcating black text; in each of these connected circles are inscribed a cardinal direction; an element; the qualities associated with that element; a season; a humour; and a stage of human life (for the purposes of this diagram, which works in fours, there are four of these stages).⁵ From the physical point of view, matter – elements and humours – is understood in terms of geographical disposition and movement – points of the compass. This understanding of the material is fused with a vision of the temporal which sees the cycle of the seasons as analogous to the stages of human life: each of these experiences of time and matter is used as a heuristic device to comprehend the others. The circular form offers the manuscript’s reader a frame through which this comprehension can take place, with the inked circles forging a visual echo with the *rotae* of the diagram below it and with the orbs and orbits it represents (fig. 4).

Gossuin capitalises on both the capacity of a circle to represent a sphere, and on the adaptability of round forms by proposing a cou-



Fig 4. Arsenal 3516, f. 179r. Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

ple of everyday similes. He compares the layering of the cosmos to that of an egg (see Griffin, “The World in an Egg”), and explains the possibility of circumnavigation, as we have seen, by remarking that the world is a sphere around which men or beasts can walk just as flies walk around an apple, “Si comme desos nos vendroit / Il li sambleroit tot adroit / Que nos fuisson tot desos lui” (so that, when he came to the point below us, it would clearly seem to him that we were directly below him, Arsenal 3516, f. 164v d). Not only does Gossuin invite his readers to scale up flies walking around an apple to the size of humans walking around the world, but he also asks us to envisage a sense of proprioception of someone standing on the antipodes of our present terrestrial position: to them, we would be upside down.

The circumnavigation is completed in Gossuin’s hypothetical account of a walk all around the globe by the introduction of a second walker:

Que doi home se dessevraissent
 Li un de lautre et sen alaisent
 Li un ades vers oriant
 Et li autres vers occidant
 Si candui ingalment alaisent
 Il covenroit quil sencontraissent
 Desos le lieu ou il se murent
 Et puis la ou premerain furent
 Si revenroient par devant
 Andoi ensi comme devant
 Car lors aroit cascuns .i. tor
 Fait par desos la terre entor (Arsenal 3516 f. 164v d)

(If two men might happen to go their separate ways from one another: one towards the west and the other towards the east, both going at the same speed, they would end up meeting below the place from where they set out. And they would return to the place where they were first, just as they had both been before, for then each of them would have made a complete circle all around the surface of the Earth).

However, the artist of Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, 2200, made only ten years later than Arsenal 3516 (Stones I.2,507), takes seriously the suggestion that either a man or a beast could embark on this globe-trotting expedition, and depicts not only human figures but canine ones too, walking towards or away from trees growing out

of the side of the Earth. The human figures take with them agricultural implements as they traverse the globe (fig.5).

Gossuin's simile of flies walking on an apple is not commonly represented in the diagrams which accompany this passage: manuscript Brussels, KBR 10574–85 is unusual in this regard, since it represents both the apple and the world, in two figures of two concentric circles that are exactly the same size, but that represent spheres on a completely different scale (fig. 6). In the upper diagram, text in the inner circle indicates that it stands for “la pome” (“the apple”); the corresponding circle in the lower diagram is labelled “la terre” (“the earth”). This manuscript is rather austere in its use of figurative representation, and rather than using symbols or human or nonhuman figures to represent bodies moving around the surface of the respective spheres, the scribe has chosen to write out in text what is happening around the outer circle. In the top diagram, this text reads “les mousches qui vont entour le cercle” (“the flies that go around the circle”); in the lower one, it reads “Deus homes qui vont entour la terre” (“two men who go around the earth”). The use of text here makes these diagrams into something more like calligrams, a reminder that words themselves, and the letters that build them, are *figura* (see Franklin-Brown 41–42). The words in KBR 10574–85 do not simply refer to flies or men



Fig. 5. Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Genève, 2200, f. 64r.

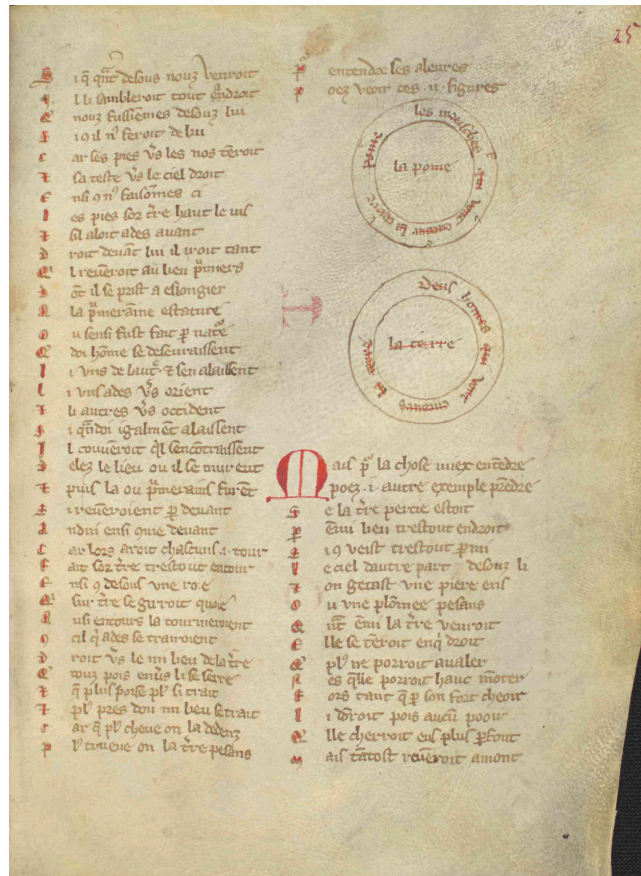


Fig. 6. Brussels, KBR, 10574–85, f. 25r.

going around the world, their spatial positioning on the manuscript folio makes the words into stand-ins for these moving bodies. Human and insect bodies alike are scaled down to the size of letters curving round a circle on a manuscript page. Gossuin elaborates his description of circumnavigation by representing the movement around the surface of the world as a trajectory around the rim of a wheel – “Ensi com entor une roe / Qui sors terre se giroit coie” (Arsenal 3516, f. 164v d) (“just like around a wheel which would lie on the ground”). His comparison relocates the *rota* from the page onto the earth, becoming a circular trajectory for humans to walk in a much more practical way than the proposed circumnavigation of the globe – which is of course impossible, not just because of the scale involved but also because it is predicated on the absence of any obstacles such as mountains or sea. The Earth is neither a perfect circle nor a smooth sphere, and nor is it an apple, but it can be imagined as any of these for the sake of Gossuin’s expositions.

The mechanisms which enable a large, moving, three-dimensional body to be represented and scrutinised in the form of a diagram on a manuscript page are provided by the discipline of geometry, the fifth of the seven arts introduced by Gossuin earlier in the first part

of the *Image*. All seven arts are so interlaced, he explains, that one cannot be understood without knowledge of the others. This is particularly the case for astronomy and geometry, since geometry is the means of translating the size and movement of celestial bodies in ways that can be comprehended in human terms.

Car ele compasse et mesure
 Tote riens ou il a mesure
 Par lui puet on savoir le cors
 Des estoiles qui vont tos jors
 Et la grandor du firmament
 Soleil lune terre ensement
 Par lui set on de verite
 De tote rien la quantite (Arsenal 3516 f. 163r d)

(For it [geometry] encompasses and measures everything that has size. Through it we can know the trajectory of the stars which travel every day and the size of the firmament: sun, moon, earth in the same way. Through it we truly know the quantity of all things).

Geometry is the discipline of thought that enables the small to stand for the large, and for the proportionality and perspective by which it does so to be established (Lugli). On the level of the octosyllabic lines, Gossuin's equivocal rhyme in "mesure" highlights the ability of noun and verb to appear to stand in for one another.

The relationship between geometry and astronomy is emphasised by the *mise en page* and illustrative programme of the second redaction of the *Image* in the sumptuous compilation manuscript Rennes, Bibliothèque municipale, 593 (made in 1303–04 and possibly owned by Clémence de Hongrie, Queen of France; Stones I.1, 86), where each of the seven arts is depicted in a separate illumination. At the top of f. 47r, just above the section on geometry, a haloed human figure gestures towards a large white circle at its feet; in the middle column, a human figure points upwards and outwards at a depiction of the heavens including a white circle overlaid with a crescent, portraying the moon, and the fiery spiral of the sun.

The seven arts, then, are part of the hermeneutic ingenuity humans depend on in order to mediate the created world such that it can be comprehended as a source and demonstration of divine wisdom. Geometry provides the tools which enable Gossuin to refer constantly to "figures" throughout his text, and to rely on his readers' ability to un-

derstand that these “figures” will reflect further on the information about the composition of the world and its place in the cosmos, by glancing from cosmic sphere to apple to ink circle. But, as Mary Caruthers observes, the process through which geometry mediates between the universe and the page can involve complex, creative negotiations between different conceptions of space and place. As I will explore in the next section, the thought experiments Gossuin asks his readers to imagine can pose a significant challenge to the artist-scribes of the manuscript tradition of the *Image du monde*.

The geometric problem of the world and the apple peel

In the second part of the first redaction of the *Image*, Gossuin returns to the simile of the apple in order to elaborate on the composition of the earth to propose to his readership a new thought experiment. This one is more involved and has more stages than the invitation to compare flies walking round an apple to humans and beasts moving over the earth’s surface.

Dont par une pome poes
 Prendre exemple se vos voles
 Que parmi partie seroit
 En .iiii. quartiers tot endroit
 De lonc et de le par moities
 Et .i. quartier en preissies
 Si estendissies la peleure
 Por mieus entendre la faiture
 Tot entiere parmi .i. plain
 Ou en milieu de vostre main
 Tant est de la terre habitee
 Dont lune moitie est clamee
 Orians et li altre occidant
 Et la ligne quen .ii. lieus fent
 Est droite ligne de midi
 Dont ces .iii. figures sont ci (Arsenal, 3516, f. 165v b)

(You can, if you wish, take an example of this from an apple which has been split into four neat quarters, halved lengthways and then widthways. You should take one quarter of it and, to understand the composition better, stretch out the peel

completely on a flat surface or in the middle of your hand. Such is the inhabited land, of which one half is called the East and the other the West. The line that splits them into two is the straight line of Midi: these three figures of this are here).

This process of cutting into quarters and peeling the apple, and then flattening the peel, presents quite a challenge to the artists of several *Image* manuscripts. Thomas Le Gouge identifies three different diagrammatic interpretations of this process (see also Centili): the differences boil down to a lack of consensus about how best to represent the shape of the apple quarter's peel, which Le Gouge says can be shown as a circle, a semi-circle or a mandorla (an ellipsis with pointed ends).⁶ Once again, geometry is called on to measure out the world on a scale that can be accommodated to a manuscript page, and to convert the three-dimensional sphere of the world (or the apple) to a two-dimensional space. In fact, there are more than three variations on this theme, as artist-scribes think their way through the process that takes them from a whole apple, through its quartering

6. See also Truman, who compares the mandorla shape of the quarter-apple peel in BnF fr 574 (which transmits the prose redaction of the *Image*) to the representation of Christ's wounds elsewhere in that manuscript (115).

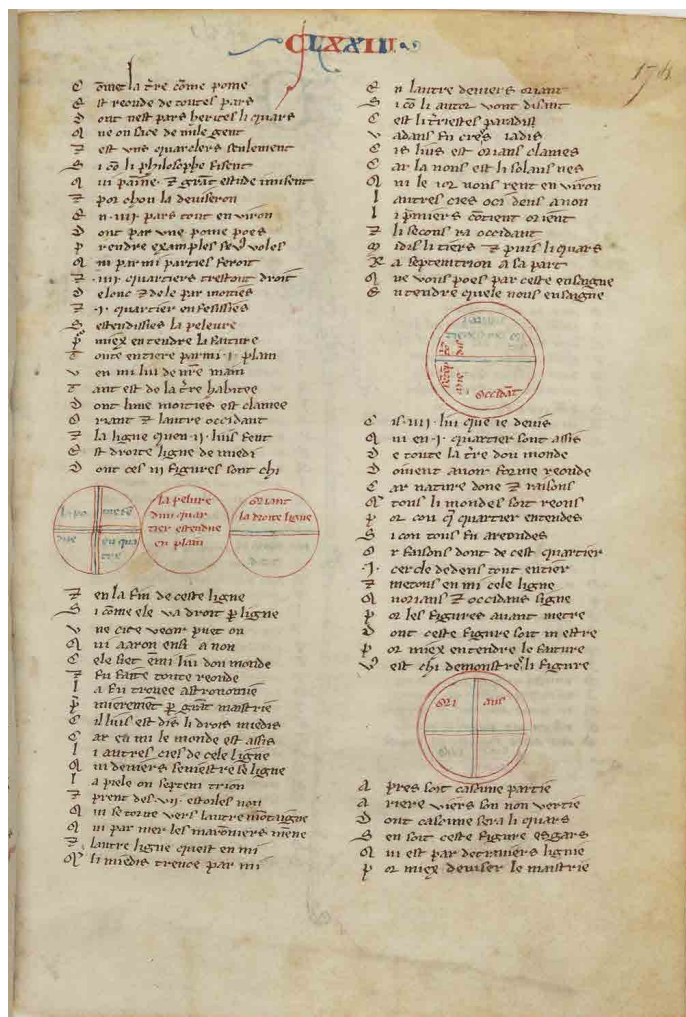


Fig. 7. BnF fr 1553, f. 174r.

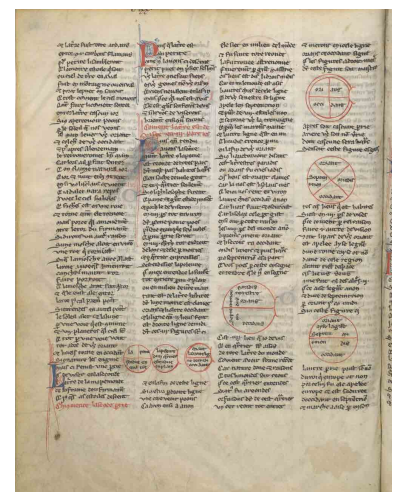
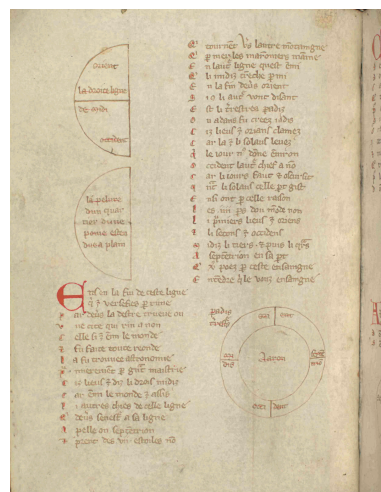
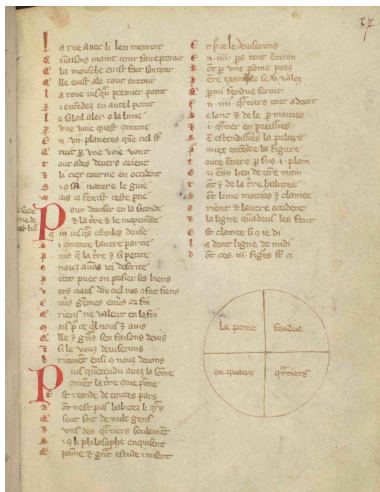
and peeling, to a notional division of the surface of the earth, and from three-dimensional spheres to the representation of their segmented surfaces on the surface of the page. In the series of three diagrams portraying this process in *Image* manuscripts, the first tends to show a quartered circle bearing the text “la pomme fendue en quatre” (“the apple split into four”), followed by two more shapes, more or less identical in shape and size, the first labelled “la pelure dun quartier estendue en plain” (“the peel of the quarter stretched flat”); the second, often bisected by a horizontal line, is labelled “orient” (“east”) at the top; “occident” (“west”) at the bottom; and “la droite ligne de midi” (“the straight line of the south”) along the bisecting line.

In BnF fr 1553, all three shapes are circles (fig. 7). In KBR 10574–85, whose artist-scribe carefully portrays the circle of the apple circumnavigated by flies, the order of the images of apple peel and inhabited earth is switched, although both are portrayed as precise semi-circles (fig. 8). In Arsenal 3516, the peel of the quarter-apple and the inhabited earth are both represented as circles with a small section missing (perhaps where a stalk has been removed or a bite taken from the apple?) (Fig. 9).

The scribe-artist of BnF fr 1807 seems to have attempted to convey the interrelated nature of the three diagrams by superimposing them, making the image and text difficult to decipher. The apple peel and inhabited earth are represented by rounded ellipses which can barely contain the text labelling them, and the “droite ligne du midi” bisecting the inhabited world is certainly not in a straight line, nor is it on one. While the execution of the text and image in this manuscript is not generally of the highest quality, this is a particularly striking instance of the artist-scribe squashing the images into the small-

Fig. 8. KBR 10574–85 f. 27r–27v.

Fig. 9. Arsenal 3516, f. 165v.



est space imaginable: the inhabited portion of the world is rendered as small as possible, even smaller than an apple, in the tiny space available on the page.

The iteration of the *Image du monde* in Cambridge Gg.1.1 does not label its diagrams, but instead uses colour and design to depict the apple (represented as concentric orange, yellow, and green circles); the quarter-apple's peel (a quarter circle in the same colours); and the inhabited world (a green quarter circle, bisected with an orange line and showing orient and occident as red semi circles above and below it). (Fig 10).

In manuscript Sainte-Geneviève 2200, colour is also used to distinguish between the identical mandorlas of the apple peel and inhabited world, with the peel coloured bright red to match the quartered circle of the apple above it, in contrast to the brown mandorla of the inhabited world to its right. (Fig 11).

This series of three diagrams is a precursor to a new sequence of images which follow one another in fairly quick succession in the section of the *Image du monde* that explains the disposition of the continents within the inhabited portion of the Earth. Gossuin explains the location of earthly paradise in the East, the four points of the compass, and the disposition of the continents. This sequence of images concludes in manuscripts with what is sometimes called a TO map, showing Asia at the top (east), Europe on the bottom left (north west) and Africa on the bottom right (south west). Perhaps because he is working towards a diagrammatic goal, Gossuin gives precise directions for the representation of the inhabited Earth: although he is still dealing with a quarter of the planet, it should be represented as a circle, since this is the form of the world.

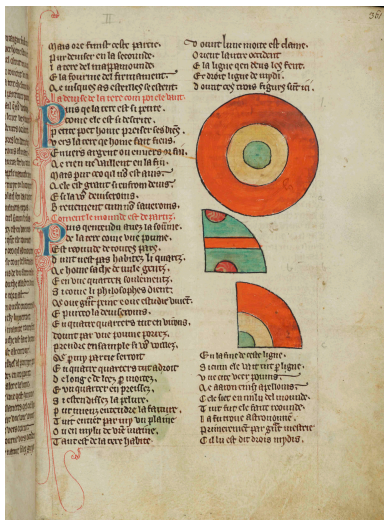


Fig. 10. Cambridge Gg.1.1 f. 361r. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

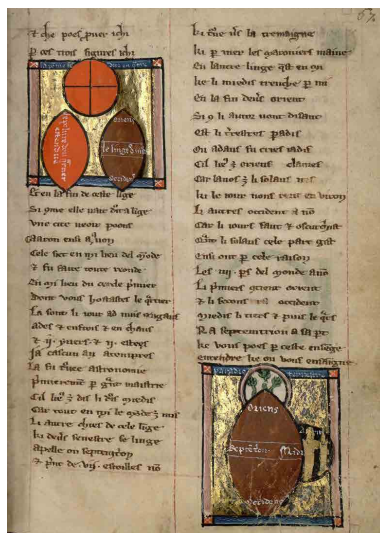


Fig. 11. Sainte-Geneviève 2200, f. 67r.

Cist .iiii. lieu que io devis
 Qui en quartier sont assis
 De tote la terre du monde
 Covient avoir forme reonde
 Car nature done et raisons
 Que tos li mondes soit reons
 Por ce cest quartier entendes
 Si com tos fu areondes
 Or faisons dont de cest quartier
 Un cer reont tot entier
 Et metons en i cele ligne
 Oriens et occidans signe (Arsenal 3516, f. 165v c–d)

(These four places that I am describing, set in a quarter of all the world's land, should have a round form, for it is natural and reasonable that the whole world is round. Therefore, you should understand that this quarter is entirely round. Now let us make this quarter entirely round and let us put on there this line signifying orient and occident).

Given the variety of representations of the comparison of a quarter of an apple peel to the inhabited world in this part of the manuscript tradition of the *Image*, it is perhaps unsurprising that the artist-scribes of the manuscripts interpret Gossuin's quite specific instructions here in a variety of ways. In Cambridge Gg.1.1 and KBR 10874–85, the subdivided circle representing the inhabited world divided into continents is placed inside the shape each manuscript had previously used to represent the quarter of the apple peel (a quarter-circle and semicircle respectively) (fig. 12 and fig. 13).

The instructions pose a geometrical and intellectual problem to the readers and artists of the *Image*, highlighting the processes at work in the relations between text and image in this text, and in each manuscript instantiation of it. Summarising the challenge posed by Ptolemaic geography's proposition that the inhabited world comprises just a quarter of the Earth's surface, Edson and Savage-Smith remark that, "Anyone wishing to map the inhabited world is confronted by a problem: the surface of even one-quarter of a sphere cannot be represented on a flat map without distortion" (62). The means of resolving this problem in manuscripts of the *Image* – and elsewhere – might reinforce the point that the TO schema is properly called a diagram rather than a map (Edson 4; Mauntel 59). The circle of the O cannot represent a sphere in the way that the circles of earlier diagrams have (those representing concentric orbits of heavenly bodies, for example), but is a round frame for a heuristic representation of the distribution of the continents. And yet the artist of KBR 11184 has attempted to portray the sphericity of the apple and the Earth by using curved rather than straight lines to divide the apple peel and the TO map (fig. 14 and fig. 15).

While the text of the *Image* can move from the description of a quartered apple peel to a perfect circle in a matter of a few lines, the visual figures on which the text insists and relies are obliged to show their workings in a graphic way. As Ayelet Even-Ezra points out in her book on medieval diagrams of thought, the technical, physical processes of drawing and plotting a diagram are cognitive as well as



Fig. 12. Cambridge Gg.1.1, f. 361v
Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

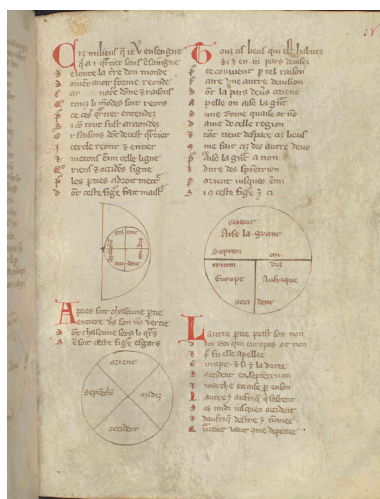


Fig. 13. KBR 10874–85, f. 28r.



Fig. 14. KBR 11184, f. 17r (detail).



Fig. 15. KBR 11184, f. 18r (detail).

representative: writing implements are intellectual tools, allowing artist-scribes to construct and iterate processes of comprehension or creation – they create, in the words of Even-Ezra’s title, lines of thought. Something of the three-dimensional materiality of the apple lingers in the portrayal of the quarter- or semicircle on the page of the manuscript, allowing the reader to follow the artist-scribe’s trajectory of understanding, from something as small and impermanent as an apple peel up the scale to the distribution of continents on the globe. In creating a schematic map of the Earth’s continents, the scalar thought involved in mapping is made manifest by these diagrams.

Zooming out: narratives of the Fall in *Image* manuscripts

In this section, I take Gossuin at his word, and take some apples from texts compiled alongside the *Image* in several manuscripts. I reflect on what is at stake in Gossuin’s selection of this fruit – at once so common and so overdetermined with symbolic and narrative freight – as a simile for the Earth’s sphere. While Gossuin enjoins his readers to take an apple in a conceptual fashion (“par une pome poes / Prendre exemple” (“you can take an example from an apple”), he also suggests that we hold it physically, cutting it into quarters, and then perhaps stretching out the peel on our hand (“Tot entiere parmi .i. plain / Ou en milieu de vostre main” (“completely on a flat surface or in the middle of your hand”). Looking at the manuscript images of apple peel flattened out, we see skin on skin – the peel of the apple on the palm of the hand or the vellum of the page. The haptic encounter between apple and hand can never, in the context of Western Christian learned literature about the composition of the created world, be free from connotations of the temptation and Fall of Adam and Eve, the originary moment in which taking an apple led to the human condition of sinful mortality from which medieval authors and readers attempt to grasp the world.

I focus here on four vernacular texts which recount an encounter with the forbidden fruit or its descendants, and are transmitted alongside the *Image du monde*. They are *L’Estoire d’Adam* (“The History / Story of Adam”) in Arsenal 3516; *De Adam et de Eve feme* (“Of Adam and of Woman / Wife Eve”) in BnF fr 1553; *Del seinte croyz et de Adam nostre premere pierre* (“Of the Holy Cross and Adam our First Father” – also known as Seth or the Holy Rood) in Cambridge Gg.1.1; and *Le*

Roman de Saint Fanuel (“The Romance of St Fanuel”), in BnF fr 1768 (early fourteenth century) and BnF naf 10036 (late thirteenth century). A certain logic can be traced in each manuscript, in line with Keith Busby’s observation of similarities between blocks or sequences of texts gathered together, even if there is apparently no single overarching aesthetic or theme uniting the whole compilation. In other words, contingent but compelling connections between individual textual units emerge within each compilation, with the more obscure texts I examine here taking on new significance in their resonance with the *Image* via the repeated form of the apple.

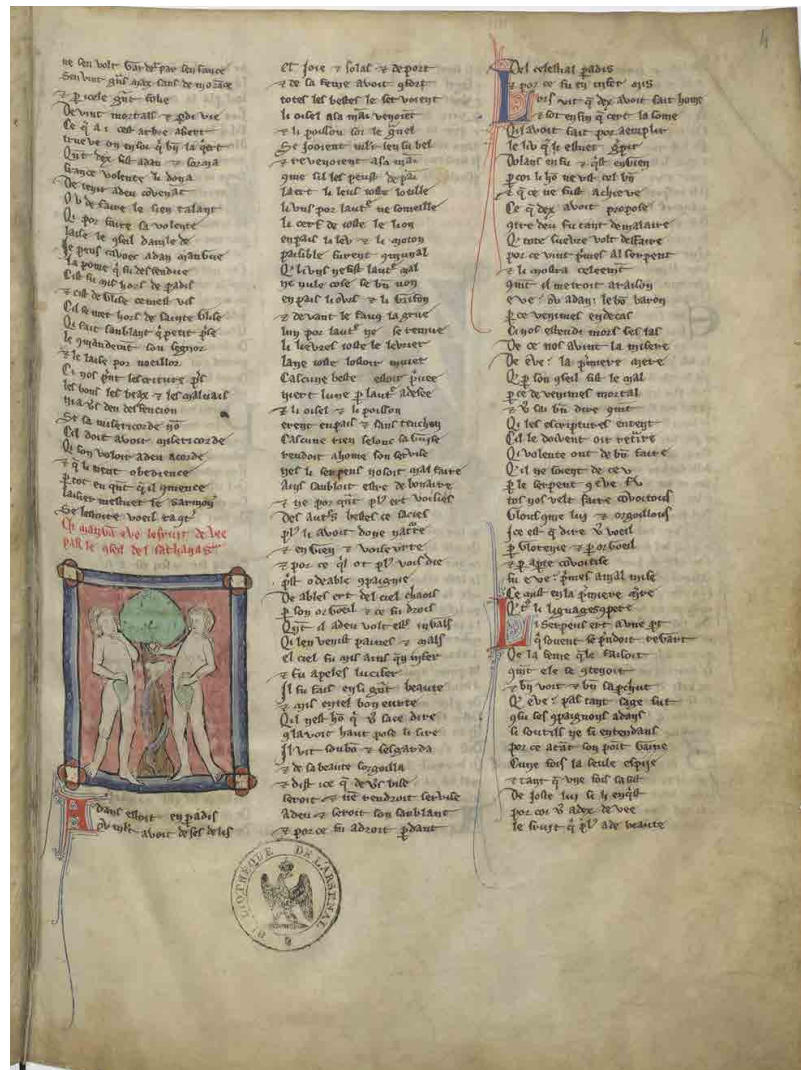
The first surviving image in Arsenal 3516 accompanies a text entitled in the manuscript’s table of contents *L’Estoire d’Adam*: it depicts the moments in which Adam and Eve succumb to temptation. The rubric for this first image reads “Ci manga eve le fruit de vee par le conseil del sathanas” (“here Eve ate the forbidden fruit on the advice of Satan”).⁷ The apparent precision of the spatial index “ci” (“here”) and the temporal index of the preterit tense “manga” (“ate”) are troubled in the scene depicted, since various moments are overlaid in this single image – as is often the case of images of the Fall. Eve is shown holding the apple in her right hand, her arm extended towards Adam; the apple is represented as a red circle with an irregular white shape in its centre, as if a bite has already been taken out of it. The serpentine body of Satan is wrapped around the tree at the centre of the image, between Adam and Eve: its face, pointing towards Eve, has been erased by rubbing.⁸ However, it is not just the moment of temptation that is portrayed here, since both human figures hold a large leaf in front of their genitals – they are covering their nakedness, which they realise is shameful only once the apple has been eaten (fig. 16). This image, in other words, depicts a complex temporality, in which separate instants of temptation, sin, and shame are all embodied in the human and nonhuman characters, with the apple at their centre.

The simple gestures of proffering and taking an apple, then, are revealed as the origin of the uniquely human quality of nakedness, an innately shameful state which demands the covering of skin. While Arsenal 3516 opens with an amplified translation of Genesis, Cambridge Gg.1.1 and BnF fr 1553 transmit texts that offer apocryphal elaborations of the story of the forbidden fruit. Neither of these texts is accompanied by images in these manuscripts. *Del seinte croyz* in the Cambridge manuscript is an Anglo-Norman prose version of the tale of Seth’s quest for the holy oil, which connects the Tree of

7. The *Estoire d’Adam* transmitted by Arsenal 3516 is an amplified translation of the book of Genesis, with similarities to the text edited by Julia Szirmai as the *Bible anonyme* (see also Guggenbühl 141–46).

8. As is often the case with depictions of the devil in manuscript illustrations: “Where you see a smudge in a medieval manuscript illustration, usually what was once there was a demon or a devil” (Camille 144n).

Fig. 16. Arsenal 3516, f. 4r.



9. Edited by Taguchi. On this tradition, see Quinn; Prangsmas-Hajenius.

Knowledge to the wood used to make the Holy Cross.⁹ It recounts the preparations Adam makes for his death: now aged 930, he sends his son Seth back to paradise. Seth retraces his parents' steps: their path is easy to follow because all the vegetation over which they walked is withered and dead. Once in paradise, Seth finds the spring from which flow the world's four principal rivers, next to a great tree.

sur la funtaine vit ester un arbre graunt mult ben braunche
mes un esteit decorce et defoile ke ele estoit nue par meisme la
encheisun ke le pas sun pere e sa mere furunt fletriz ceo est pur
le pecche ke sur la defense dieu mengent del fruit de cel arbre
(Cambridge Gg.1.1, f. 400v a, corresponds to Taguchi 34)

(Above the spring he saw a great tree with many beautiful
branches; but one was so bare of bark and leafless that it was
naked, for the same reason that the footsteps of his mother

and father were withered, which was the sin of having eaten, in the face of God's prohibition, the fruit of this tree).

The shameful nakedness resulting from the Fall is transferred from the human bodies of Adam and Eve to the stripped branch of the tree from which they picked the apple. If the absence of the apple haunts the Tree of Knowledge in this text, then that missing, forbidden fruit also gestures towards the future in a mode which emphasises its status as a source for figural thinking, as the angel guarding Paradise gives Seth “treis greins, u pepins de poume e bien put estre qe ce furent de meisme le arbre dount Adam manja” (“three seeds or apple pips, and they may well have been from that same tree from which Adam ate” Cambridge Gg.1.1, f. 400v b, corresponds to Taguchi 36). Seth places the pips under his father's tongue, as the angel directs him, and Adam dies. When Seth buries him, three trees grow from the pips – a cedar, a cypress and a pine (none of them is an apple tree). These trees signify the Trinity; they grow and are transplanted throughout the time of the Old Testament, through the lives of Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Solomon. Their trunks entwine, they are finally cut down, and made into the cross on which Christ is crucified. *Del seinte croyz* concludes:

En ceste manere come ieo vous ai cunte, dieu voleit qe nostre redempcioun veneit de meime le lu e de meime le arbre dount nostre pardicioun surdi primerement e de meime le fruit. (Cambridge Gg.1.1, f. 402v b, corresponds to Taguchi, “The Legend” 56)

(In this way, as I have related to you, God wished that our redemption should come from the same place and the same tree from which our damnation first arose and the same fruit).

The trio of trees stand for the eternal Trinity, yet they are also represented as growing and enduring throughout generations, and their story connects the beginning of human mortality to its salvation. These trees, for Christian readers, are *figurae* in the tropological sense that Auerbach outlines – “something real and historical which announces something else that is also real and historical” (29).¹⁰ Via an apple, its seeds, and the trees that grow from it, humanity is shown coming full circle, from sin to redemption, in a narrative loop which can be scaled down from a tale that spans the whole of Biblical history to one that can be mapped onto the course of an individual sinner's life.

Whereas Arsenal 3516's *Estoire d'Adam* depicted Eve taking the

10. On this figural tradition, see Klapisch-Zuber 221–22.

11. Cambridge Gg.1.1, fols. 390v–392r.
 Edited by Meyer 316–320; see also
 Summerfield 333.

apple, in the Cambridge *Del seinte croyz*, the emphasis is on Adam eating the fruit from the tree – perhaps an echo of the robust defence of Eve in *La Bonté des femmes*, the text which immediately follows the *Image du monde* in this manuscript.¹¹ As the *Bonté* points out, Adam was the one who ate the apple, and could have used his knowledge to resist Eve’s enticement – he was full of “science” (“learning”) and yet he still succumbed to the devil’s persuasion (Cambridge Gg.1.1, f. 392r, corresponds to Meyer l. 246). The *Bonté* also calls on the apple tree as a simile, observing that man is nurtured by woman just as an apple or pear is nurtured by a tree: “Fruit ne poet sanz l’arbre crestre / Sanz femme ne put nul neestre” (“A fruit cannot grow without the tree; no-one can be born without a woman.” 162–63). The author of this text, like the compiler of the Cambridge manuscript, demonstrates their own “science” through the use of figural thought connecting the story of the Fall to the resulting need to think in images in order to gain an insight into the scalar patterns of creation and humanity’s place in it.

12. On this manuscript see Lepage,
 “Un recueil”.

The apocryphal text *De Adam et de Eve feme* is a very small element of the large volume that is BnF fr 1553, which also transmits *Le Roman de Troie* and *Les Sept Sages de Rome* alongside *L’Image du monde* and over forty other works.¹² *De Adam* takes up just three out of the 524 folios. Yet this text precisely reveals the ways in which the small reflects on the large, partaking in the scalar logic of cosmic harmony on which the expository text and diagrammatic programme of the *Image du monde* depend. This is a French version of the apocryphal description of the formation of Adam attributed to the fourth-century writer, St Methodius, Bishop of Tyre (Lepage, “Les Versions françaises”; Saviotti). It relates that Adam was formed by God from eight distinct parts: lime from the earth to make flesh; sea to make blood; sun to make Adam’s eyes; clouds to make thoughts; wind to make breath; stones to make bones; the holy spirit, “cele ki est mise en chascun homme” (“that which is placed in each man”); and the “clarte dou monde” (“the light of the world”), signifying Christ (BnF fr 1553, f. 286v, corresponds to Lepage, “Les Versions françaises” 153). This enumeration of the correspondences between the nonhuman physical and metaphysical world and the human body calls on the scalar logic familiar from *L’Image du monde*, and proposes an origin for it: if the first man’s body is composed of aspects of the environment and the divinity that created it, then each can stand for the other in attempts to understand the harmony of creation.

An instance of scalar thinking that traces correspondences be-

13. On prelapsarian language, see Jaeger 52–55; Augustine 8.16.35.

tween even more extreme ends of the scale is evident in the explanation of Adam's name in *De Adam*. God sends his four angels to the furthest of the four points of the compass; each sees a star and brings the initial letter of the star back to God. The stars are Anathelin, Dussis, Archos, and Musibrum: Uriel is charged with assembling them produce a name, and he makes the acronym ADAM. Adam's name, then, is written in the stars, and seems to be implicated in a perfect *Ursprache*, or originary and unmediated language.¹³ Adam is therefore portrayed in this text as the first, and perhaps most literal microcosm: a human body, being composed of the matter and spirit of the cosmos (see Robertson). In a more literary sense, Adam is represented as a microcosm in language, perhaps more precisely script, since his name is written from the stars. Adam's creation is a matter of scalar thought across the material, the celestial, and the linguistic.

This perfect balance of matter and meaning is all the more awe-inspiring for its loss in the Fall, yet the punishments inflicted by God in *De Adam* are also dictated by scalar correspondences. Adam and Eve are given the same number of punishments as the sins they committed; Eve's curse in Genesis 3.16 is articulated as reflecting her handling of the forbidden apple: “por chou que tu as pechiet en fruit, tu seras pugnue en ten fruit” (“since you sinned with a fruit, you shall be punished in your fruit.” BnF fr 1553, f. 287v, corresponds to Lepage “Les Versions françaises” 156), and is condemned to give birth in pain. Whereas the *Bonté des femes* in the Cambridge manuscript makes a positive connection between female fertility and apple trees, *De Adam* presents the forbidden apple as an origin for the travails of childbirth.

The connections between childbirth, pain, and a body marked as female are troubled in *Le Roman de Saint Fanuel* (Chabaneau), the last example of texts featuring the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which is co-located with the *Image du monde* in BnF naf 10036 and BnF fr 1768.¹⁴ This extraordinary text, which “radically collapses chronology” (Boulton 37), is much longer than either *Del seinte croyz* or *De Adam*; like *Del seinte croyz*, it involves an earthly descendant of the Edenic fruit tree. In *Fanuel*, this tree is planted in the garden of Abraham, where it is guarded by an angel. The voice of God announces to Abraham that Christ will be crucified on wood from the tree, and that a knight, the grandfather of the Virgin who will bear Christ, will be born from the tree's blossom. Abraham's twelve-year-old daughter smells the apple blossom and becomes pregnant from its perfume: St Fanuel is the offspring of this remarkable union. Dedicating himself to the service of the poor, Fanuel provides them with

14. Three other manuscripts of the *Image du monde* (BnF fr 1807, Rennes 593, and Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 3430) transmit a section of this text which starts at Chabaneau's line 851 with the Annunciation and does not relate the conception and birth of Fanuel, Anne, and the Virgin Mary.

miraculous apples, presumably – although the text does not specify – from his grandfather’s orchard:

Pomes ot de bone nature,
 Ce nos raconte l’écriture ;
 Ainc Dex ne fist si dolerox,
 Si malade ne si lieprox,
 S’il en eust le col passé,
 Que maintenant n’eust santé (Chabaneau ll. 417–22)

(He had apples of a great nature, so scripture tells us. God created nobody so suffering, so ill, nor so leprous, that they did not immediately regain their health once some had passed down their throat).

Fanuel’s seneschal “Trois des pomes et .I. coutel / Mist en la main saint Fanuel” (“put into St Fanuel’s hand three apples and a knife.” Chabaneau ll. 431–32). In a gesture that recalls Gossuin de Metz’s instructions to the readers of *L’Image du monde*, Fanuel takes the apple in his hand and cuts it up: the author notes the realistic detail that some of the apple’s juice remains on the knife. What happens next is much less realist, however:

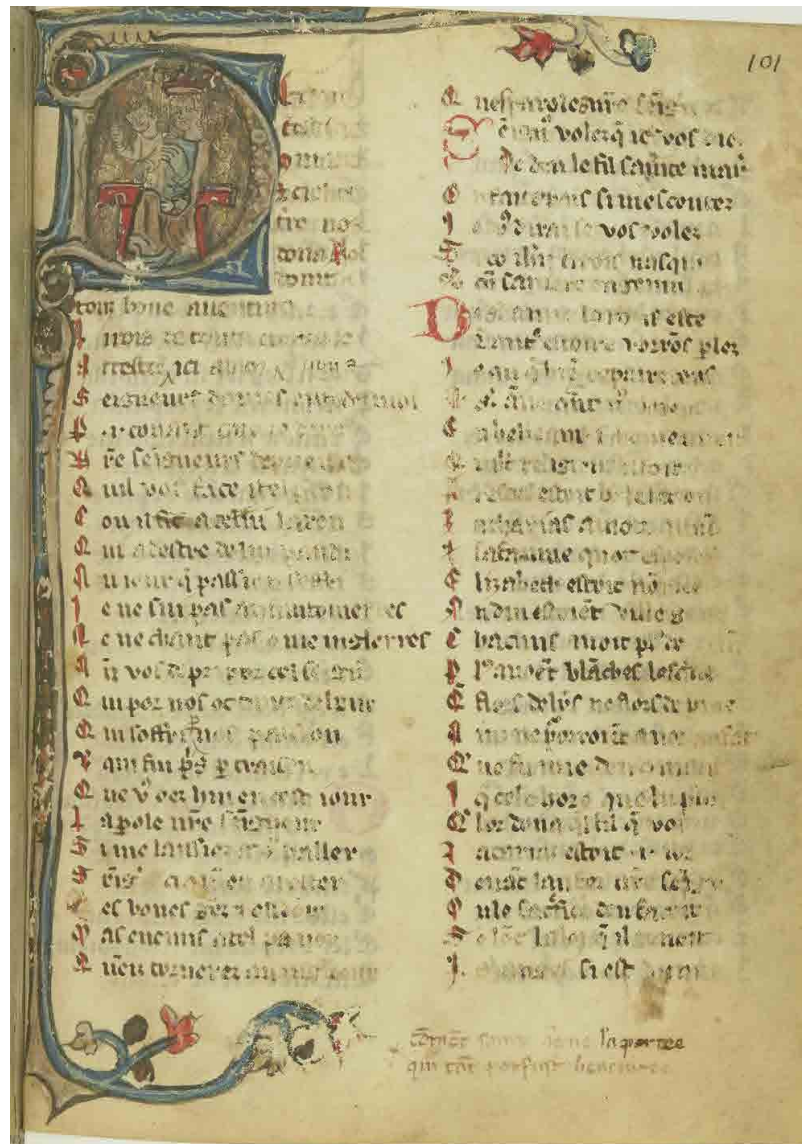
Quant il vit son coutel moillié
 De la pome qu’il ot taillié,
 A sa cuisse le ressuia :
 La cuisse si en engroissa
 D’une molt gentil demoisele,
 Qui molt fu sainte et bone et bele (Chabaneau ll. 439–44)

(When he saw that his knife was wet from the apple that he had cut, he wiped it on his thigh. His thigh became pregnant with a very noble damsel, who was very holy, good, and beautiful)

The child of this miraculous pregnancy is St Anne, the Virgin’s mother. In BnF fr 1768, Fanuel opens with a historiated initial, portraying a seated figure holding – or perhaps birthing – a child on his lap, resonating with Blake Gutt’s reading of this text as offering trans possibilities of male pregnancy (fig. 17).

In *Fanuel*, cutting up an apple does not lead to an understanding of the habitable area of the world, but prepares the ground for the Incarnation – and the crucifixion. At the same time, the sensory focus

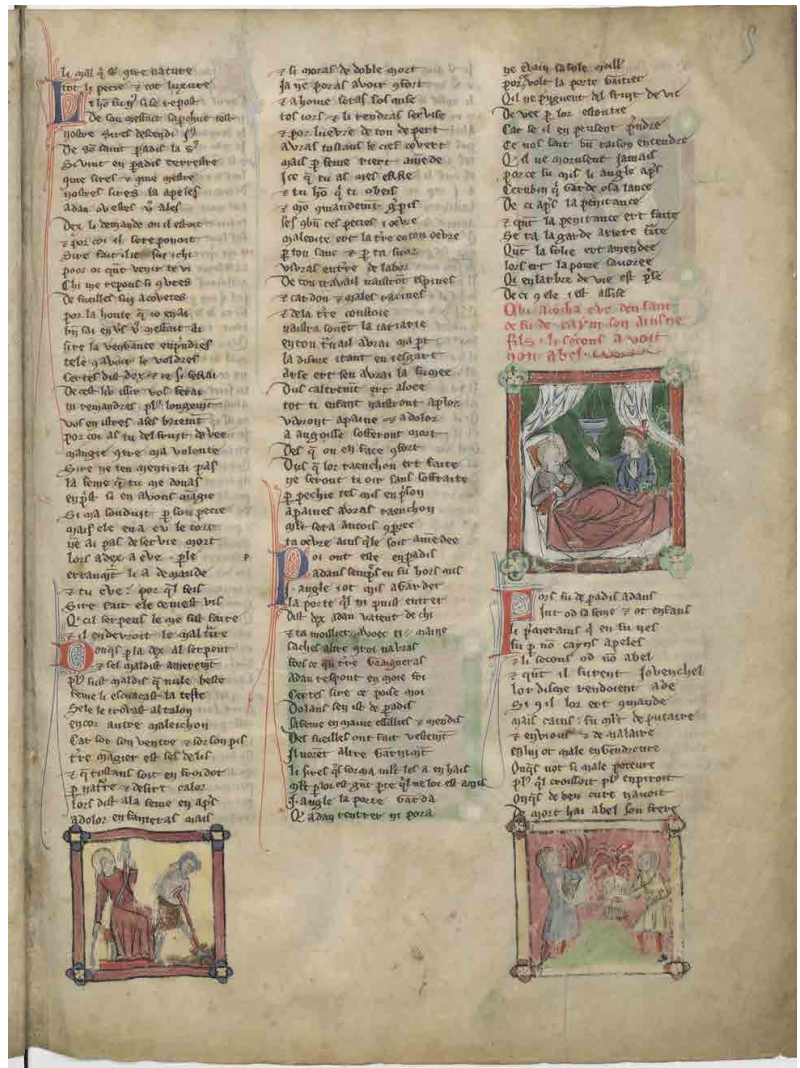
Fig. 17. BnF fr 1768, f. 101r.



15. On this representation of the conception of Christ, see Gros.

on the saint holding the apple and noticing the drop of juice emphasises the embodied character of the encounter with the apple. Fanel's conception via the scent of a flower and Anne's conception from the contact of apple juice on human flesh are followed by the fairly conventional (albeit angelically foretold) conception and birth of the Virgin Mary and, as the culmination of this sequence, the annunciation to the Virgin. In a much more orthodox translation of the Biblical account, Gabriel tells Mary, "Sor tous soit tes fruis beneis" ("may your fruit be blessed above all." Chabaneau l. 897; cf. Luke 1: 41–42); she is promptly impregnated via a ray of divine light.¹⁵ None of these conceptions quite conforms to the cursed model decreed by God as Eve's punishment for her transgression in Eden, but all relate human fertility – in a diverse range of possibilities – to the fruitfulness and genealogy of the Tree of Knowledge of the Garden of Eden.

Fig. 18. Arsenal 3516, f. 5r.



Eve's transgression – her offer to Adam that he should take an apple – is redeemed not just by the Incarnation and Virgin Birth, but by the extraordinary family tree that leads up to it, an elaboration of *Del seinte croyz's* claim that both Fall and redemption are located in the Edenic apple tree.

While Eve's punishment is the painful labour of childbirth, Adam's is the labour of agriculture. These punishments are both depicted in separate illustrations on f. 5r of Arsenal 3516. At the bottom of the left column, Eve and Adam (both clothed) are shown at work – Eve spinning and Adam digging the ground. In the right column, Eve is shown in bed, breastfeeding a baby, while a bearded figure in a red hat stands at her bedside (fig. 18).

The accompanying text relates God's words:

ses combien tes pecies i oevre:
maleoite ert la terre en ton oevre;
par ton sanc et par ta suor

vivras en terre de labor. (Arsenal 3516, f. 5r, corresponds to *Bible anonyme* ll. 555–58)

(You know how your sins work there: the earth will be cursed in your work; by your blood and by your sweat you will live off the earth in labour.

The equivocal rhyme in “oevre” underlines the work of Adam’s sins: their material effect in the punishment that God deems appropriate, and the disrupted relationship between man and earth that will necessitate hard agricultural labour. Adam’s sin, then, ‘works’ through interpretation; the Augustinian interpretation of Adam’s curse reads the physical labour of tilling the earth as the hermeneutic labour of reading the world, as “the Fall also subjects humans to the labor of interpretation in general” (Jaeger 59). The need to understand the world via approximation, comparison, and typology, mediating the hugely cosmic through the small and mundane – in other words, the necessity and creativity of scalar thinking – stems from the Fall and its aftermath.

Gossuin’s invitation to the readers of *L’Image du monde* to take an apple is, then, at once an everyday appeal to the mundane as a means to comprehend the cosmic and an allusion to the origin story for this sort of figural thinking across scales. The compilers of some of the manuscripts in which the *Image* survives seem to have responded to this invitation by selecting texts which feature the Edenic apple, and presenting them alongside Gossuin’s encyclopaedia. In Genesis and its vernacular adaptations in the manuscripts I have examined in this essay, the serpent invites Eve to take the apple to gain the knowledge of all that is good and evil, knowledge that will equal God’s, but this knowledge is a fantasy, lost as soon as it is gained, as soon as Adam takes the apple from Eve’s hand. Gossuin cannot tempt his readers with such omniscience, but in inviting them to consider his text, “figures,” and the relations between them, he can offer them vernacular wisdom, “science”. The scribes, artists, and compilers of the manuscripts that transmit the *Image* contribute to that *science* with the images and narratives that invoke figural thinking across scales of time and space.

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