

# Folding Time: Honorius Augustodunensis' *Imago Mundi*

## Abstract

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The *Imago Mundi* or “Image of the World” was composed around 1110 by Honorius Augustodunensis, one of the most prolific authors of his age. Presented in the form of a *mappa mundi*, the *Imago* offers its reader a verbal ‘image’ of the cosmos, covering topics ranging from the atom to the heavenly spheres. Despite being one of the most popular works of the central Middle Ages, scholars rarely regard the *Imago* as a text possessing serious literary merit, dismissing it instead as a derivative exercise in compilation. This essay argues that the *Imago* is in fact an ambitious literary undertaking with a coherent spiritual agenda. While Honorius recycles (like many of his peers) earlier medieval and especially Neoplatonic cosmological ideas, his text shapes that material in new ways – into a spiritually transformative journey through and above the cosmos, and into the self. At the same time, throughout the work Honorius deploys a range of strikingly material metaphors to describe the world from the perspective of eternity – most notably, the rope of time. In this further literary sense, the ascent to eternity entails a recognition that we dwell in images.

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In a work usually placed in the middle of his career, Honorius Augustodunensis (d. 1140) invites his reader to take a journey through a series of cities in search of their “homeland” (*patria*). Each of the cities in *De animae exsilio et patria* corresponds to one of the liberal arts, which for Honorius include the familiar *artes* of the *quadrivium* and *trivium*, plus three additional destinations: the city of Physics, Mechanics, and Economics (*PL* 172.807–1108; Miller 108–206). In each city, the pilgrim is assisted by a guide, who offers a brief tour of the local landmarks and customs. Having passed through Grammar, Rhetoric and Dialectic, for example, the traveller arrives at Arithmetic, where they encounter Boethius. Here their patient guide instructs them in the mysteries of even and odd numbers, and the use of the fingers and the abacus for calculation. From this, our *viator* learns that “God orders (*disposuit*) all things according to measure

and number and weight”, a statement that Honorius derives from the Book of Wisdom 11.21 (*De animae exsilio* v; Miller 202). On then, via Music, to the sixth city, Geometry, where the local expert is the ancient Greek poet Aratus, who “draws a map of the world, on which he shows the location of Asia, Africa, and Europe” and “identifies all the mountains, cities and rivers of the world, through which the traveller must pass” (Miller 203). After brief stops at Physics, Mechanics and Economics the weary traveller finally reaches their homeland, Sacred Scripture, where they come face to face with God – that is unless they continue to delight in transitory, time-bound pleasures (*transitoriis oblectati*), in which case their destiny is permanent exile accompanied by visions of the Vices “running about like savage beasts” (*De animae exsilio* xiv; Miller 206). In order to escape this testing fate, Honorius advises his reader to “train yourself in these matters, and teach others what they must do” (Miller 206).

This essay is concerned with one of Honorius’ most popular and enduring works, the *Imago Mundi*, an ambitious synthesis of medieval ideas about the nature of time and the cosmos.<sup>1</sup> On the surface, the *Imago* is a very different type of text to *De animae exsilio*. While *De animae exsilio* is a brief work of spiritual instruction in the allegorical mode, the *Imago* is an example of medieval encyclopaedism, characterised by the blending of knowledge obtained from various sources into a single, accessible text. Despite these clear differences, *De animae exsilio* offers a useful point of contrast and comparison with the *Imago*, shedding light on some of the features of this text that make it a distinctive example of its genre. Like *De animae exsilio*, Honorius threads themes of pilgrimage and spiritual ascent across the *Imago*, creating a sense of movement and personal transformation that is unusual in a work of encyclopaedism. As in *De animae exsilio*, the reader passes through different destinations, in this case space in book i and time in book ii. Boethius, this essay will argue, is again an important guide in the *Imago*, albeit here in the form of a source rather than a personified figure, providing a conduit through which Honorius absorbed Platonic ideas. And as in *De animae exsilio*, Honorius’ broader aim in the *Imago* is didactic and pastoral, encouraging the reader to undertake an act of metanoia, shifting their perspective away from this transitory world to the stability of eternity. In this respect, the *Imago Mundi* is a product of, and sheds light on, the wider spiritual revival of the twelfth century, a period that saw a renewed emphasis on the attainment of personal salvation through self-examination.<sup>2</sup> While the ingredients are familiar, the

1. Quotations are taken from Flint, “Imago” with translations adapted from the useful, but unreliable, English version in Forster 100–305. Flint’s edition reproduces the 1139 text of the *Imago*, with variant readings from earlier recensions offered in her notes. These include readings from the earliest text of 1110, which she labels C. Since the following study is concerned with the 1110 text, quotations follow the C variants.

2. For overviews of the role of interiority and self-examination in twelfth-century spirituality, see the classic studies by Constable and Bynum, and the more recent discussion by Kramer 1–17. The impact of this shift on English literary culture is outlined in Ashe 127–80 and Georgianna. Honorius’ own attitudes to salvation and interiority are influenced by the work of Augustine and Anselm (Hannam 81–3; Southern 376–81). Self-examination as a path to salvation, particularly as pertains to priests, is a controlling theme of the *Speculum Ecclesiae*.

3. Honorius tells us as much in a well-known statement from the prologue of the *Elucidarius*: “Nomen autem meum ideo volui silentio contegi, ne invidia tabescens suis juberet utile opus contemnendo negligi” (“I have desired my own name to be wrapped in silence so that Envy, pinning away for its own, might not by its condemnation command that a useful work be neglected”). [359]

4. It should be noted that Flint's outline of Honorius' life is not universally accepted. Endres, for instance, linked Honorius with Regensburg and downplayed his time in England, viewing this as a brief stopover during a trip to Ireland (1–15, esp. 14–15). Garrigues directly challenged Flint's “hypothèse fragile” regarding Honorius' English visit, suggesting instead that he was connected to Laon (“Qui était Honorius” 32). Crouse (“A Twelfth-Century Augustinian” 169) questions Honorius' association with Anselm and casts doubt on the whole endeavour of biographical speculation: “Hypotheses continue to proliferate, but the evidence is profoundly unsatisfactory; the field abounds in hasty and ill-founded conjectures”.

5. It is possible that the twelfth-century English interest in Eriugena was sparked by the mistaken belief, expressed by William of Malmesbury, that John Scotus Eriugena was the same person as John the Scot, one of King Alfred's scholars. In their enthusiasm for dismissing this case of mistaken identities, modern historians have overlooked the significance of the misidentification insofar as it acted as a stimulus for a regional Eriugenian revival in northern England after the Norman Conquest, to which Honorius contributed. See Kijewska 352–57; Yingst 92–93; Brennan 438–39.

particular challenge of the *Imago Mundi*, and its particular originality, lies in the way Honorius constructs an encyclopaedic vision of the world that is also a personal salvific labour – an endeavour that involves coming to terms with space and time as images of divine eternity.

## 1. Placing the *Imago Mundi*

Despite being one of the most prolific and popular authors of the twelfth century, Honorius' life is notoriously difficult to reconstruct, not least because he actively concealed his identity; his real name, family, education, and the places in which he lived are all shrouded in mystery.<sup>3</sup> The most convincing reconstruction of Honorius' career to date is that proposed by Valerie Flint, whom I follow here.<sup>4</sup> Born in Savoy, where he may have been “a member of the same minor nobility” as saints Anselm and William of Fruttuaria (Flint, *Honorius* 125), Honorius spent the early part of his adulthood in England (1096–1110), most likely in the monastic cathedrals at Canterbury and Worcester (Flint, *Honorius* 6–13; Hannam 2–41). The best evidence for Honorius' stay in England comes from Worcester, where he seems to have made use of the library when composing some of his earliest works (Flint, *Honorius* 8–9; *eadem*, *Career* 75–80; Heslop 792). These include the *Elucidarius* (a theological primer), the *Sigillum Beatae Mariae* (an allegorical reading of the Song of Songs), the *Gemma animae* (a commentary on the mass), and the *Speculum ecclesiae* (a collection of sermons covering the entire church year). Together, these works testify to Honorius' evolving interest in providing priests, and most likely monastic priests, with materials for pastoral instruction (“Chronology” 219–27; Muessig 257–65; Younge 51–52).

Around this time, Honorius seems to have rubbed shoulders with some of the leading monastic intellectuals of the day, including Anselm of Canterbury and William of Malmesbury. In the *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, William describes Honorius as an “informant whose trustworthiness is beyond question” (Winterbottom and Thomson 59). The two men shared an interest in the Carolingian scholar John Scotus Eriugena, an important, if controversial, figure who played a key role in the transmission of Neoplatonic ideas to twelfth century writers (Winterbottom and Thomson 97).<sup>5</sup> Around 1110, Honorius returned to southern Germany, possibly in the retinue of Henry I's daughter Mathilda, future bride of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V, and probably because the death of Anselm

removed his primary reason for staying in England (Fulton 286–88). After that, the manuscript tradition points firmly to Honorius' association with Benedictine communities in the vicinity of Regensburg, and finally at the Austrian abbey of Lambach near Linz, where he spent the last years of his life (Flint, *Honorius* 107–35).

Flint situates the initial composition of the *Imago Mundi* either side of Honorius translocation from England to Germany. The evidence for this includes the distribution of the earliest surviving recensions and manuscripts, and especially the dedication in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 66, where a copy of the *Imago* is prefaced on fol. 1v by the Sawley Map.<sup>6</sup> On the basis of a dedication found on fol. 2v offering the work to a certain “Henricus” (perhaps Henry of Blois or Henry of Huntingdon), and an allusion to the marriage of Mathilda in the final book, Flint dates the first recension of the *Imago* to 1110 and hedges her bets that, while it was completed in Germany, at least “some of the preparatory work was done in England” (“Imago” 10). In later recensions, the dedication is changed to “Christianus”, almost certainly abbot of the so-called Schottenkloster, or Irish house, in Regensburg, and Honorius revised the main body of the text sporadically until just before his death in 1140 (Flint, *Honorius* 14–15; “Imago” 8).<sup>7</sup>

In its final form, the *Imago Mundi* consists of three books. Following a prologue outlining the broad aims, Book i is structured hierarchically around the four elements. The first of these is earth, consisting of climactic zones, inhabited areas, islands and Hell, located deep in earth's core. As Honorius moves through the inhabited world he passes from eastern to western regions, traversing the northern and southern hemisphere, and describes their inhabitants, both human and monstrous. The second element, water, encompasses oceans, fresh and salt waters, and aquatic creatures. The third element, air, consists of the wind, clouds and the atmosphere. Book i closes with a description of fire, the lightest of the elements, the heavenly bodies, the signs of the Zodiac, the heaven of the angels, and finally the heaven inhabited by God. While much of the material in Book i is conventional, the fundamental motion of the text, ascending from earth to heaven, and from the centre of the cosmos outwards to the celestial realms, is unusual (de Toro 120).

Book ii moves from geography to time and is rooted in the discipline of computus. Time is initially a theoretical proposition, divided into three parts, *aevum*, *tempora aeterna*, and *tempus*, the precise definitions of which are discussed below. The bulk of Book ii, how-

6. The Sawley map is a much celebrated but later work, inspired by the *Imago*, but with no direct connection to Honorius. See Flint, “Imago” 7–13; Harvey 32–35.

7. The Schottenkloster is discussed elsewhere in this volume by Bowden, 41.

ever, is practical and mathematical, focusing on the “unfolding” (*plicare*) and refolding of “worldly time” (*tempus*). Honorius examines the divisibility of *tempus*, moving from the smallest measurable units (atoms, seconds) to larger ones (weeks, months and years); surveys the natural processes that energise transformation (seasons, equinoxes, solstices, eclipses); and concludes with a discussion of how to reckon time, including in relation to the liturgy. Again, much of the material is drawn from esteemed sources, although its arrangement reflects Honorius’ Platonic, and more distantly Pythagorean, interest in number as the ordering principle of the universe.

The closing statements of Book ii, considered in more detail below, have the feel of an ending, and on this basis Marie-Odile Garrigues perceptively suggests that Book iii is a later addition: “le troisième livre semble donc le fruit d’une réflexion postérieure” (“Inventaire critique” 29).<sup>8</sup> This is further implied by the sources and form of the third book, which stands apart from the rest of the *Imago*. Book iii is essentially a universal chronicle subdivided into the ages of the world, moving from the patriarchs and kings of the Jews through to Mathilda’s betrothal (in the English manuscript tradition) and up to the reign of Conrad III (in the German). What is left of the sixth age, Honorius remarks sagely, is known only to God: “Reliquium sextae etatis soli Deo patet” (“the remainder of the sixth age lies open to God alone”) [iii.38]. This essay follows Garrigues’ proposal that the third book is an afterthought, and moreover a departure from Honorius original plan, which I will argue presents the journey through space (Book i) and time (Book ii) as a type of spiritual exercise, shifting the reader’s perspective from outer to inner vision, and from worldly time, to eternal timelessness.

Two issues have prevented modern critics from discerning the fundamentally salvific structure of the *Imago*. The first concerns Honorius’ heavy reliance on classical, patristic and other late antique authorities, a point that he openly acknowledges in the initial prologue: “Nihil autem in eo pono, nisi quod majorum commendat traditio” (“I include nothing in this book except that which is passed on in the report of the ancients”). As Flint’s densely annotated edition of the text shows, Honorius is not feigning here; almost every statement concerning geography and time can be traced back to an authoritative source, including Pliny, Orosius, Macrobius, Isidore, Bede, and Rabanus Maurus. Lurking in the background is a less expected strand of influence, namely Plato’s *Timaeus* and its later reflexes: Plotinus’ *Enneads*, Eriugena’s *Periphyseon*, and Boethius’s *Conso-*

8. Flint made two important studies of Book iii, focusing principally on the German manuscripts (“Anti-Jewish” and “World History”). In contrast to Garrigues, she regarded Book iii to be “an integral part of the treatise from the beginning” and suggested that its inclusion reflects Honorius’ exposure to universal history writing in the west of England at the turn of the twelfth century, such as John of Worcester’s continuations of Marianus Scotus’ *Universal Chronicle* (“World History” 213–14).



lation of *Philosophy* (523). The *Consolation of Philosophy*, I will argue, is especially important for Honorius' conception of time in the *Imago*, not least because this work facilitated the transmission of Platonic ideas into the central Middle Ages.

Due to its heavy reliance on earlier sources, many scholars glibly characterise the *Imago* as an 'unoriginal' work. Even Flint, one of Honorius' chief apologists, states that there is "nothing particularly new" in the *Imago*, "no tremendous surprises": "Neither in the contents of the three books nor in the materials from which he constructed them does Honorius seem to have been breaking fresh ground" ("*Imago*" 13). Similar remarks are often made about his output as a whole.<sup>9</sup> Yet the cliché of Honorius as a slavish and derivative writer obscures the underlying creativity of the *Imago*, which is evinced primarily at the level of form and structure. According to Elizabeth Keen, one of the most sensitive modern readers of the *Imago*, Honorius' encyclopaedia should be regarded as a sophisticated attempt to reshape material through *compilatio* in a manner that engages with the "debates of the day" (287).<sup>10</sup> To use one of Honorius' favourite categories of metaphor (architecture), while the building blocks of the *Imago* are reclaimed, the finished structure is purposeful, original and elegant, with a clear literary and didactic aim. By imposing form and structure on his many sources, Honorius seeks, as James Simpson puts it, to "enforme" his reader: to shape them "according to an ideal pattern", as opposed to simply "informing", in the sense of conveying information (5).

One of the most striking ornamental features of Honorius' edifice is his pervasive use of rhyme, primarily in the form of *homeoteleuton* (the repetition of word endings, usually through reproduction of case or inflection).<sup>11</sup> In the following analysis I will attempt to bring out this underappreciated aspect of Honorius' work – a clear sign that he possessed literary, as well as pedagogical aspirations – by presenting quotations in lineated form, although this is not how the *Imago* is usually printed.

The second issue that has obscured the formal inventiveness and salvific structure of Honorius' encyclopaedia is the disproportionate interest that medieval and modern readers have taken in the first book of the *Imago*, at the expense of both the material on time in Book ii, and the unity of the work as a whole. In England, this trend, which is partly a function of the success of Honorius' colourful description of the mappable world, sets in early with Benoît de Sainte-Maure's heavy use of Book i, and relative neglect of Book ii, in the ge-

9. E.g. "Honorius' treatment of these subjects is rarely original" (Hill 332); "Scholars of Honorius justifiably speak about the lack of originality" (Gurevich, *Popular Culture* 157).

10. Honorius' originality is also acknowledged by Crouse, e.g. "in doctrine and method, as well as in biography, [Honorius] stands thus as a *solitarius*, a theological pioneer, living in personal obscurity perhaps necessitated by the very boldness of his intellectual stance" ("*Intentio Moysi*" 157).

11. Honorius' prose rhyme may be a further indication of his immersion in English literary culture. As Yingst observes, prose rhyme has a 'long pedigree' in Latin literature before the twelfth century, yet the device appears in Honorius' works with a "sheer ubiquity" that is unusual (171). Perhaps Honorius was influenced by the similarly obsessive use of prose rhyme in the Latin sermons of Archbishop Wulfstan of York (d. 1023), which he might easily have encountered at Worcester. Compare the quotation from the prologue in the next section of this essay, for instance, to the following passage from Wulfstan's sermon *On Conversion*: "Ecce iam lapsi sumus. / Stare nullo modo possumus / In peccatis grauati iacemus, / sed qui nos rectos condidit adhuc expectat ut surgamus / sin uero suae pietatis aperit / et nos ad se recipere per penitentiam querit..." (Hall 129) ("You see, we are now fallen and are completely incapable of standing. We lie prostrate, weighed down by sins. But the one who created us upright still longs for us to rise up. In fact he opens up his compassion to us and seeks to receive us through repentance.").

ographical prologue to his *Chronique des ducs de Normandie* (c. 1175) (Damian-Grint 25–43; Fahlin I, xx). The same is true of Perot de Garbelei's more literal translation of the *Imago* in the Old French poem known as the *Divisiones Mundi* (34–36), the later Welsh translation *Delw y Byd* (3–6), and the *Historia Norwegie*, all of which focus on Book i. The medieval tilt towards Book i is echoed by modern scholars, who primarily discuss the *Imago* in relation to the *mappa mundi* tradition. In what follows, I suggest that reuniting Books i and ii restores the original formal logic of the work – the *ductus* by which Honorius conveys his readers from space, to time, and on to an apprehension of the world as an image of eternity.

## 2. Prologue: The World in *speculum*

This intention is signalled from the outset of the *Imago* in a simple passage from the opening prologue, the rich associations of which are easily overlooked:

Ad instructionem itaque multorum  
 quibus deest copia librorum,  
 hic libellus edatur.  
 Nomenque ei Imago Mundi indatur,  
 eo quod dispositio totius orbis in eo quasi in speculo inspiciatur..

(This little book has been produced for the instruction of the many who lack an abundance of books. And it is given the name *Imago Mundi*, because the disposition of the whole world can be inspected in it as in a mirror.)

Honorius' assumption that his readers lack access to books signals the *Imago's* place alongside his other early works of instruction, perhaps especially the *Elucidarius*. Written at the request of his followers in Canterbury, the *Elucidarius* untangles simple theological problems for an audience whose knowledge is limited, exploiting the form of the dialogue as a means of entertaining the reader whilst simultaneously closing-down debate. Both works, if Flint is correct in her framework for Honorius' English period, respond to a pressing need for educational materials in this region in the first decades of the twelfth century.<sup>12</sup>

The prologue's second sentence elegantly compresses a series of ideas that guide and illuminate Honorius' whole project. As Marcia

12. This passage also recalls the prologue of one of Honorius' later cosmological works, the *Clavis Physicae*, where he promises to address both the learned and unlearned: "non solum indoctos sed etiam nitore summe sapiente claros" ("not only the untaught but also those illustrious with wisdom's highest polish") (Lucentini 3).

Kupfer observes, Honorius' use of the word *disposito* recalls a passage from the Book of Wisdom that he cites at the end of his description of the city of Arithmetic in *De animae exsilio*: “sed omnia mensura et numero et pondere disposuisti... quoniam... sic est ante te totus orbis terrarum et tamquam gutta roris antelucani quae descendit in terram” (“thou has ordered [*disposuisti*] all things in measure, and number, and weight... For the whole world before you is... as a drop of the morning dew, that falls down upon the earth” (Wisdom 11.21–3; Kupfer 77). The biblical image creates a dramatic shift in perspective, making us first imagine the vastness of a world ordered and measured by God, before abruptly reducing this to the size of a dewdrop in His perspective. Honorius' allusion to this passage is significant, since it provided medieval writers with a point of intersection between the cosmology of Plato's *Timaeus*, where the universe is geometrically shaped by an artificer God, and the less mathematical world of the Hebraic Bible.<sup>13</sup> In this way, Honorius implies that his little book (*libellus*) has the title *Imago Mundi* because it will show us the cosmos as we are encouraged to see it in Wisdom: *disposed* by God. The world, Honorius continues, can be “inspected in it as in a mirror” – just as, incidentally, a dewdrop reflects the world in miniature in its convex surface.

Cosmological associations aside, Honorius' decision to refer to his work as a mirror makes additional use of a common image for suggesting the power of a text to elicit self-examination and transformation. Gregory the Great called Scripture a mirror before the mind's eye in which we learn how far we have come, and how far we lie from our goal.<sup>14</sup> Thus, on closer inspection, the *Imago's* opening statements, which are easily overlooked, contain a subtle criss-cross of images, amounting to the suggestion that the book sets out to bound the world as an image of eternity. The kind of image, or reflection, the book offers is ultimately intended as a spiritual exercise; by picturing time and space, Honorius allows his reader to rise above the *mundus* and detach themselves from transience through an internal motion.

Moving back to an earlier section of the general prologue, we find the following statement:

... poscis a me, amicissime, ut...  
 totius orbis depingi formulam in qua sic oculum corporis  
 valeas reficere  
 sicut visum cordis soles in machina universitatis depascere.

(... you request from me, dear friend, that I paint the shape

13. Cf. Augustine, *City of God* xii.19: “for Plato... with his great authority represents God as fashioning the world on numerical principles. And in our own Scripture we read the words addressed to God: “Thou has ordered all things by measure and number and weight”. The Platonic feel to the Book of Wisdom reflects the intellectual climate of Alexandria in the first century BCE, where the author would have encountered a heady blend of Middle Platonism and Jewish philosophy.

14. “Scriptura sacra mentis oculis quasi quoddam speculum opponitur, ut interna nostra facies in ipsa videatur. Ibi etenim foeda ibi pulchra nostra cognoscimus. Ibi sentimus quantum proficimus, ibi a propectu quam longe distamus” (“Sacred scripture is offered like a kind of mirror to the eyes of our mind, that we may see our interior face in it. For there we recognize our ugliness and our beauty. There we measure our progress; there we see how far we are from our goal”) (*Moralia in Iob*, 2.1:1–4; Kerns I.117).



of the entire world which might then strengthen the corporal eye just as you are accustomed to let range the inner eye upon the machine of the world.)

Once again, Honorius refers to his God-like power to contain the world's image in his text. At the same time, he also introduces the fundamental pattern of the work: first the reader will contemplate the cosmos through the eyes of the body (*oculum corporis*), before moving to a consideration of the deeper principles of the "world machine" (*machina universitatis*) via the vision of the heart (*visum cordis*). The analogy between bodily sight (*aspectus*) and the sight of the mind (*affectus*), and the notion that the former led naturally to the latter, was familiar to western Christians from the influential formulation in Augustine's *Soliloquies* (e.g. i.6), yet this concept also contains an unavoidable echo of the Neoplatonic worldview, with its division of the universe into the external world of the senses, and the more truthful inner nature of things.

In the context of the *Imago*, the shift from *aspectus* to *affectus* becomes a fundamental structuring principle (assuming the third book is a later addition). Book i asks the reader to grasp the shape of the physical world with their corporeal eye, and in so doing prepares them to contemplate the world as *machina*, temporally unfolding from eternity in Book ii. In important respects, this motion – from the material to the immaterial, and from external appearance to internal significance – also parallels contemporary exegetical practices. As Karl Kinsella has shown, just such an approach informs Honorius' commentary on the mass, the *Gemma animae*, where the reader moves from the literal impression of a familiar object (a chalice, column, window etc.), to the allegorical, and on to the tropological. In so doing, the material world functions as a prompt, or point of departure, for a reflection on deeper spiritual themes ("Typological Exegesis").

### 3. Mapping the world with the eyes of the body

Throughout book i, we see Honorius abiding by the structural logic of the initial prologue, aligning his mappable cosmos with the work of our bodily eye through the pervasive use of visual imagery. Here there is only space to point out a few of the different literary techniques he employs, namely: dramatic shifts in perspective, analogies from the world of twelfth-century material culture, and transitional statements that figure the reading experience as an embodied journey.

A good example of Honorius' concern with optics and viewpoints in Book i occurs in Chapter 5: "On the Shape of the Earth". This highly condensed section defines the earth as a sphere, gives an exact measurement of its circumference (12,052 miles), and describes the oceans that encircle its border. In order to convey an impression of the size and immensity of the globe, and to explain how the roughness of the earth's surface accords with its spherical nature, Honorius asks the reader to look at the world as if they were suspended in the air:

Si enim quis in aere positus eam desuper inspiceret, tota enormitas montium et concavitas vallium minus in ea appareret quam digitus alicuius si pilam praegrandem in manu teneret. (Imago i.5)

(For if anyone were situated high in the air, looking down upon it, the hugeness of its mountains and deepness of its valleys would appear to be smaller than the finger of someone who held a very large ball in his hand.)

The inspiration for this *kataskopos* occurs in Calcidius' commentary on Plato's *Timeaus*, which Flint identifies as Honorius' main source for this passage ("Imago" 51).<sup>15</sup> Here Calcidius imagines looking at a set of jagged mountains from a distance and perceiving them to be as smooth as an orb turned on a lathe:

Quod si quis ad cacumina montium prolixitatemque et saxosam asperitatem aspiciens similem dicet esse ad tornum levigatae pilae deformitatem asperiorum montium, non recte sentit; non enim nos terram globum esse dicimus sed globosam, nec pilam sed similem pilae (Calcidius 222–23).<sup>16</sup>

(If, however, in gazing upon the craggy, rocky height of mountain peaks someone claims that the deformity of the jagged mountains resembles a ball that has been made smooth on the lathe, his perception is wrong; for we do not claim that the Earth is a sphere, but that it is spherical, not that it is a ball, but that it resembles one.)

Despite the similarities between these two passages, many of the elements that lend Honorius' *kataskopos* its force are his own, including the abrupt ascent into the air and the dizzying shift in scale from the immense mountains to the fingers holding the ball.

The familiar image of a hand grasping a ball relates to a second

15. For an overview of twelfth-century interest in the *Timeaus* see Hicks 17–20, 41–42. On Honorius' acquaintance with Calcidius, see Crouse, "Hic sensilis mundus" 284–85; d'Alverny 74–75.

16. Honorius may also be drawing on Isidore, *Etymologies* 285.

type of visual technique that Honorius uses to emphasise the link between bodily sight and the cosmological subject matter of Book i. Karl Kinsella has called this aspect of Honorius' pedagogy his "didactic materialism": the deployment of specific and often highly visual comparisons with objects from the everyday world of twelfth-century material culture as a means of explaining abstract concepts (*Edifice* I.130–31). Hence Honorius (i.73) compares the revolution of the earth around its poles to a wheel (*rota*) turning around an axle (*axis*). In a more striking example, pursued along similarly mechanical lines, the rapid tracking of the stars across the heavens is compared to a fly (*musca*) being carried around in the sails (*rota*) of a windmill (*molendinum*): "sicut musca si in rota molendini circumferretur" ("like a fly carried around on the wheel of a mill"). In this instance, Honorius is elaborating upon his sources, which include Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* and Bede's *On the Nature of Things*. From these authorities, Honorius derives the idea that stars follow their fixed courses with great speed, but not the analogy with the mill (Macrobius xxi.8; Bede xii). The precise scenario that Honorius has in mind is intriguing, since it is not clear whether the *molendinum* is a watermill or a windmill. If the device in question is wind powered – and it is hard to conceive of a fly being carried back and forth through water – then this constitutes one of the earliest references to the post mill (a twelfth-century invention) in medieval literature (Kealey 1–29).

The emphasis on sight in these examples corresponds to the broader imaginative frame that Honorius constructs for Book i, in which he repeatedly portrays the reader as an embodied traveller, much like the *viator* who tours the cities of learning in *De animae exsilio*. This conceit, which is pervasive throughout the first book, is most clearly displayed in the transitional passages that link the different thematic units of Honorius' cosmogram:

Insulas circuiamus,  
tunc inferna etiam petamus (i.35)

(Having encircled the islands,  
now we reach to towards the underworld).

Ignea inferni loca perspeximus,  
ad refrigerium aquarum confugiamus (i.37)

(Having observed the fiery places of Hell,  
towards the cooling waters we flee).

Aerem transvolavimus,  
iam etheris ignem contendamus (i.71)

(Having flown through the air,  
now we may hasten to the fire of the ether.)

These connecting couplets are rich with verbs of motion and change. Taking his reader by the hand, Honorius circles, flies, flees, and plunges through the different zones of the physical world. In the case of the movement from Hell to the oceans, the transition is a palpable relief from extreme heat. In the case of the movement from air to ether, a sudden ascent. Pulled, bodily, from one location to the next, each transition presents the reader with a new perspective on the workings of the earth, which they are invited to take in visually (*inspicere*) with the eyes of the body.

#### 4. Measuring the world with the eyes of the heart

Book ii opens with yet another prologue, in which the central plan of the text is restated. Honorius' mode of address is particularly direct here, reminding his readers of the spiritual work that is still to come in the following chapters:

Priori libello globum totius mundi oculis corporis representavimus,  
sequenti iam tempus in quo volvitur oculis cordis anteponamus.

(In the first book we have represented the globe of the world  
to the eyes of the body; now, in the following [book] we set  
Time before the eyes of the heart, in which [the world]  
unfolds [*volvere*].)

In moving from space to time, and from physical sight to the eyes of the heart, Honorius pivots away from a world that, however exotic, can be known through observation, to the more abstract dimension of time. As in the city of Arithmetic in *De animae exsilio*, Honorius draws us into a universe arranged by number, measure, and weight. The use of the verb *volvere* to describe time's extension presents some initial difficulties of interpretation, implying either a circular motion – the 'revolution' of time – or a species of unfolding; subsequent pas-

sages in Book ii suggest that Honorius has the second meaning in mind (Lewis and Short, *volvere* sv. i.a and i.b3).

After the prologue, Honorius begins book ii proper with an extended and important definition of time, outlining a schema upon which the rest of the *Imago* subsequently relies. Time, for Honorius is tripartite, divided into *aevum* (“eternity”), *tempora aeterna* (“eternal times”), and *tempus mundi* (“time of the world”):

1. Aevum est ante mundum, cum mundo, post mundum. Hoc ad solum Deum pertinet, qui non fuit, nec erit, sed semper est.

2. Tempora aeterna sub aevo sunt, et haec ad archetipum mundum et angelos pertinent, qui ante mundum esse caeperunt, et cum mundo sunt, et post mundo erunt.

3. Tempus autem mundi est umbra aevi. Hoc cum mundo incipit et cum mundo desinet. Veluti si funis ab oriente in occidentem extenderetur, qui quotidie plicando collectus, tandem totus absumeretur. Per hunc extenduntur saecula, sub hoc currunt universa in hoc mundo posita. Hoc uniusquisque vita mensuratur. Hoc series dierum, et annorum terminatur. Tempus autem a temperamento dicitur, et nichil aliud quam vicissitudo rerum intelligitur.

(1. *Aevum* [eternity] is before the world, with the world and after the world. This relates to God alone who was not, neither will be, but who always is.

2. *Tempora aeterna* [eternal times] are beneath *aevum*, and these relate to the archetypal world and the angels, which existed before the world, and are with the world, and will be after the world.

3. *Tempus mundi* [the time of the world] is a shadow of eternity. It began with the world and will end with the world. Just as if a rope was extended from east to west, which every day is folded up a little, so that finally all of it is used up. Through this the ages are stretched out, and under this all things run having been placed in this world. With this, each life is measured, and with this the sequence of days and years is ended. Time is so called from *moderation* and nothing else is understood by it than the changefulness of things.)



17. For discussion of *aevum* and *aeternitas*, both of which are synonyms of the Greek *αἰών*, see Porro 132.

While these statements overlap significantly with other medieval temporal schemes, they are in many respects Honorius' own distillation of centuries of thought (Gurevich, *Categories* 118–19). Compared to his description of worldly time (*tempus mundi*), the statements concerning *aevum* and *tempora aeterna* have an air of hasty disengagement. In defining God's eternity, Honorius chooses the word *aevum* over *aeternitas*, and emphasises its status as a type of timeless present, a concept that Richard Sorabji traces back to Plotinus' *Enneads* (113).<sup>17</sup> Eternity, Plotinus tells us, has no extension: it cannot be separated, unfolded, or stretched out:

Τὸ γὰρ ἀληθῶς εἶναι ἐστὶ τὸ οὐδέποτε μὴ εἶναι οὐδ' ἄλλως εἶναι· τοῦτο δὲ ὡσαύτως εἶναι· τοῦτο δὲ ἀδιαφόρως εἶναι. Οὐκ ἔχει οὖν ὀτιοῦν [τὸ] ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο, οὐδ' ἄρα διαστήσεις, οὐδ' ἐξελίξεις, οὐδὲ προάξεις, οὐδὲ παρατενεῖς, οὐδ' ἄρα οὐδὲ πρότερον αὐτοῦ οὐδέ τι ὕστερον λαβεῖν ἔχεις. Εἰ οὖν μήτε πρότερον μήτε ὕστερον περὶ αὐτό, τὸ δ' «ἔστιν» ἀληθέστατον τῶν περὶ αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτό, καὶ οὕτω δέ, ὅτι ἐστὶν ὡς οὐσία ἢ τῷ ζῆν, πάλιν αὐ ἦκει ἡμῖν τοῦτο, ὃ δὴ λέγομεν, ὁ αἰών. (III.vii.6, ll. 10–2).

(For true being is never not being, or being otherwise; and this is being always the same; and this is being without any difference. So if [eternity] does not have any 'this and that'; nor, therefore, will you be able to separate it out or unroll [ἐξελίσσω] it or prolong it or stretch it; nor, then, can you apprehend anything of it as before or after. If, then, there is no before or after about it, but its 'is' is the truest thing about it, and itself, and this in the sense that it is by its essence or its life, then again there has come to us what we are talking about, eternity.)

As Sorabji shows, Plotinus' view of eternity as a timeless present, characterised by a lack of extension or capacity for unfolding (ἐξελίσσω), had a profound influence on later medieval writers, not least Boethius, who "transmitted the traditional concept to the Latin middle ages" (121). Thus in the *Consolation of Philosophy* we encounter the statement:

Quod igitur interminabilis vitae plenitudinem totam pariter comprehendit ac possidet, cui neque futuri quidquam absit nec praeteriti fluxerit, id aeternum esse iure perhibetur, idque necesse est et sui compos praesens sibi semper adsistere et

infinitatem mobilis temporis habere praesentem. (v pr.6, 25–31)

(Whatever therefore comprehends and possesses at once the whole fullness of boundless life, and is such that neither is anything future lacking from it, nor has anything past flowed away, that is rightly held to be eternal, and that must necessarily both always be present to itself, possessing itself in the present, and hold as present the infinity of moving time.)

In Boethius' claim that eternity is "always present to itself" (*prasens sibi semper*) we catch an unmistakable echo of Honorius' reference to God's realm as a place that "always is" (*semper est*).

*Tempora aeterna*, the realm of the angels, is Honorius' contribution to the wider medieval inventory of intermediate temporalities. As Pasquale Porro observes, while the concept of eternity was relatively stable, the same cannot be said of "the framework of created durations": the different manifestations of time, which "became progressively enriched by new terms and concepts", particularly during the twelfth century (131). Among these new terms and concepts are a subgroup that bridge, or blur, human and divine time, including *sempereternitas*, "endless duration of that which begins *with* time", and *perpetuitas*, "endless duration of that which begins *in* time" (Porro 131). Since Honorius' *tempora aeterna* clearly begins 'in time', scholars have been tempted to translate this as "perpetuity" (e.g. Kinsella, *Edifice* I.221). However, Honorius' decision not to use the word *perpetuitas* (and I think we should regard this as a conscious decision) is significant, insofar as it signals his desire to contribute to precisely that "progressive enrichment" of terms and concepts that Porro refers to – fusing, extending and imaginatively recombining sources to produce his own characteristically pithy and faintly Platonic formulation of angelic time.

In general, Honorius cursory treatment of these contested temporal categories conveys the impression that these were not his priority. Instead, what does seem to catch his attention is worldly time (*tempus mundi*), and specifically its relationship to eternity; enabling his readers to grasp and visualize the relationship between these two temporalities, it would seem, was his ultimate goal. Tellingly, it is *tempus mundi* that inspires some of the richest, and most puzzling, imagery in the *Imago*. For Honorius, human time is a "shadow" (*umbra*) of eternity: it is finite, beginning and ending with the world, and, like a rope stretching from east to west, it is in the process of being gathered up, little by little. Along time's rope run the ages of the world

and under it are measured out the lives of individuals and the sequence of days and years. *Tempus*, Honorius concludes, is derived etymologically from *temperamentum* (“moderation”) and is reducible to nothing other than the changefulness of things (*vicissitudo rerum*).

Honorius’ first statement – the typically memorable formulation “*Tempus autem mundi est umbra aevi*” (“the time of the world is the shadow of eternity”) – draws us back to Plato’s model of forms and sensible realities. As Plato put it, “the archetype is forever existent in all eternity, and this sensible world, [is] its image (*imago*)” (*Timaeus* 38c). Aside from being generally Platonic, the specific use of the word shadow (*umbra*) to characterise time’s relationship to eternity is harder to pin down, since this is not among the terms that Calcidius uses to refer to forms and their worldly reflexes, either in his translation or commentary. One possibility is that Honorius was thinking of the shadow cast by a ‘gnomon’, the point of a sundial or stick used to tell the time. The gnomon, which literally casts a shadow of the heavens onto the ground in order to indicate the time, is described by Calcidius in his commentary on the *Timaeus* (64) and referred to elsewhere by Honorius in the *Imago* (e.g. ii.24).

More striking still is Honorius’ extended metaphor of time as a rope, folded up little by little until it finally runs out. The reference to time “folding” (*plicare*) echoes, and helps us to interpret, the earlier allusion to time unrolling (*volvare*) in the prologue to Book ii of the *Imago*. *Plicare* is cognate with the verbs *explicare* (to unfold, or explain) and *implicare* (to complicate, make difficult, intertwine), and Honorius’ use of this medieval key word suggests he is engaging in an innovative way with a wider discourse of pleating and folding that extends back to Plotinus, and ultimately Pythagoras.

Biblical precedent for the idea of the world unfolding in time is found in the Book of Isaiah (40.22), where God “stretches out the heavens like a canopy and spreads them out like a tent to live in” (*extendit velut nihilum caelos et expandit eos sicut tabernaculum ad inhabitandum*). Another important parallel occurs in the *Enneads*. As Plotinus reaches the culmination of his discussion of eternity and time in book iii – one of the best-known passages in the text – he engages in a conversation with a personification of Time, asking this figure to explain how it came into being. The answer he receives from Time is that it regards itself as an expression of the soul which, having existed peacefully in eternity, is stimulated by its “restless active nature” to engage in a process of “unfolding” (ἐξέλισσω):

Λέγοι δ' ἂν περι αὐτοῦ ὡδέ πως· ὡς πρότερον, πρὶν τὸ πρότερον δὴ τοῦτο γεννηῖσαι καὶ τοῦ ὑστεροῦ δεηθῆναι, σὺν αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἀνεπαύετο χρόνος οὐκ ὢν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκείνῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ἡσυχίαν ἤγε. Φύσεως δὲ πολυπράγμονος καὶ ἄρχειν αὐτῆς βουλομένης καὶ εἶναι αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ πλεόν τοῦ παρόντος ζητεῖν ἐλομένης ἐκινήθη μὲν αὐτή, ἐκινήθη δὲ καὶ αὐτός, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔπειτα αἰεὶ καὶ τὸ ὑστερον καὶ οὐ ταυτόν, ἀλλ' ἕτερον εἶθ' ἕτερον κινούμενοι, μῆκος τι τῆς πορείας ποιησάμενοι αἰῶνος εἰκόνα τὸν χρόνον εἰργάσμεθα. Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ψυχῆς ἦν τις δύναμις οὐχ ἡσυχος, τὸ δ' ἐκεῖ ὀρώμενον αἰεὶ μεταφέρειν εἰς ἄλλο βουλομένης, τὸ μὲν ἀθρόον αὐτῇ πᾶν παρεῖναι οὐκ ἤθελεν· ὡσπερ δ' ἐκ σπέρματος ἡσύχου ἐξελίττων αὐτὸν ὁ λόγος διέξοδον εἰς πολὺ, ὡς οἶεται, ποιεῖ, ἀφανίζων τὸ πολὺ τῷ μερισμῷ, καὶ ἀνθ' ἑνὸς ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ἐν δαπανῶν εἰς μῆκος ἀσθενέστερον πρόεισιν... (III.vii.7 ll. 14–27).

(It [*i.e.* time] might say something like this about itself; that before, when it had not yet, in fact, produced this 'before' or felt the need of the 'after', it was at rest with eternity in real being; it was not yet time, but itself, too, kept quiet in that. But since there was a restlessly active nature which wanted to control itself and be on its own, and chose to seek for more than its present state, this moved, and time moved with it; and so, always moving on to the 'next' and the 'after', and what is not the same, but one thing after another, we made a long stretch of our journey and constructed time as an image of eternity. For because soul had an unquiet power, which wanted to keep on transferring what it saw there to something else, it did not want the whole to be present to it all together; and, as from a quiet seed the formative principle, unfolding itself [*ἐξελίττων αὐτὸν*], advances, as it thinks, to largeness, but does away with the largeness by division and, instead of keeping its unity in itself, squanders it outside itself and so goes forward to a weaker extension.)

If we could ask Time to relate its origin, Plotinus suggests, it would tell us that it rested initially in Being with eternity, until its nature (which is essentially restless) compelled it to seek more than the present. In this way time, time, like the soul (in which we all mysteriously participate), sought to extend itself by unfolding and extending, and thereby produced an image of eternity.

Plotinus' portrayal of time restlessly unfolding finds an echo in the

*Consolation of Philosophy*, and it is probably from Boethius that Honorius derives his own understanding of the foldable nature of time:

Providentia namque cuncta pariter quamvis diversa quamvis infinita *complectitur*, fatum vero singula digerit in motum locis, formis ac temporibus distributa, ut haec temporalis ordinis explicatio, in divinae mentis adunata prospectum providentia sit, eadem vero adunatio digesta atque *explicata* temporibus fatum vocetur... (iv pr. 6)

(For providence embraces all things together, though they are different, though they are infinite; but fate arranges as to their motion separate things, distributed in place, form and time; so that this unfolding of temporal order being united in the foresight of the divine mind is providence, and the same unity when distributed and unfolded in time is called fate.)<sup>18</sup>

18. This passage is also examined by Morton, 126–27.

As David Albertson observes, Boethius draws a distinction in this passage between the capaciousness of providence and the limited time of fate: “Providence... ‘Embraces’ (*complicare*) the infinitely diverse form of things in the simplicity of the divine Mind, while fate in a contrary but isomorphic movement is the ‘unfolding’ (*explicare*) of time” (125). The Boethian formulation of fate as a temporal entity nested within providence perhaps comes closest to Honorius’ own conception of *tempus mundi* as unfolded time, simultaneously enfolded within *aevum*.

These sources help to establish the intellectual backdrop against which Honorius arrived at his definition of *tempus mundi*, providing the key notion of a temporality that, in contrast to eternity, is finite and has the capacity to be folded. With the image of the rope, however, we once again witness both Honorius’ instinctive attraction to accessible metaphor and freedom with his sources, particularly in his decision to present time as an entity that folds up as history progresses, as opposed to unfolding. This conceptual shift, which inverts his sources, appears to be Honorius’ own contribution to the history of ‘folded time.’

As Kinsella notes, Honorius’ description of time’s rope strongly resembles other examples of his “didactic materialism”, and in this respect we might suspect that the image is also his own invention (*Edifice*, I.228). Kinsella compares the rope’s east / west orientation, to a passage from Hugh of St Victor’s *De archa Noe mystica*, in which Hugh imagines drawing an oval around Noah’s ark in order to create



19. The passage is discussed by Burgon at 97.

a “mappa mundi” (14.28; *PL* 176.700).<sup>19</sup> The bow of the ark that points to the east represents Paradise, while the stern, directed towards the west, is the resurrection and the Last Judgement. But Honorius’ image is more dynamic, and represents a fascinating and well-executed fusion of Neoplatonic ideas with imagery drawn from the everyday world of construction. Ironically, while time is ostensibly to be apprehended by the eyes of the heart, Honorius at moments like this must take recourse to the world of images, just as he did more systematically in Book i. The vivid (if mind bending) use of the rope metaphor can be seen as a kind of literary example or redoubling of the philosophical lesson of the text: that we dwell in the realm of the *imago*.

Given Honorius’ abiding interest in architectural allegory, it seems possible that the spark of inspiration for the rope of time may have come from the builder’s line (*funiculus*), a length of cord used to lay out and measure edifices. Just such a line features in a vision experienced by Abbot Gunzo of Beaume preserved in a collection of late twelfth-century Cluniac miracles (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Lat. 17716, f. 42v–44r). Paralysed after a stroke and confined to the infirmary at Beaume, Gunzo has a vision of the apostles Peter, Paul and the martyr Stephen, who ask him to convey a message to Abbot Hugh of Cluny, commanding him to build a larger church without fear for the expense. Having said this, Peter proceeds to take out a set of builders’ lines (*funiculus*) and use these to “measure off the length and breadth [of the church]” (*longitudinis atque latitudinis metiri quantitatem*) [Braunfels 240–41]. As Carruthers notes, this scene is shot through with allusions to Ezekiel 40.2–3, in which the prophet receives a similarly technical vision regarding the construction of a temple (221–28). In both Ezekiel and Gunzo’s case, following the builder’s line becomes a “penitential and salvific act”: “one mode of the *ductus* of salvation itself” (Carruthers 227). As a deep enthusiast of both the Old Testament and architectural allegory, the appearance of the builder’s line in Ezekiel’s vision, and its penitential associations, are factors that may well have attracted Honorius to this image.

Helpfully, the moment of Gunzo’s enlightenment is depicted in an accompanying illustration in MS Lat. 17716 (fig. 1).



Fig 1. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Lat. 17716, f. 43r

As Gunzo lies in his bed, Stephen holds the line of rope, while Peter and Paul, in the role of master builders, direct it across the building. From the static image, it is impossible to tell whether they are unfolding the rope in an act of measuring, or folding it away again having mapped the building. Other elements of the language that Honorius uses in his account of time's rope seem to confirm that he had the builder's line in mind. Like the foundations stones of a building, Honorius imagines the events of this world being located (*positus*) beneath the taught line, which also serves as a way of "measuring" (*mensurare*) out the life spans of each individual.

What follows in the rest of Book ii is an attempt to describe time's folds by breaking them down into different units. Beginning with the atom, "the smallest space of time" (*minimum temporis spacium*), Honorius moves steadily through ever larger units of time and related topics: minutes, hours, days and their names, the night and its separate parts, months and their etymologies, seasons and their "unevenness", lunar years, leap years, the generations of man, the ages of the world, the calculation of moveable feasts, and so on. With this we move squarely into the realm of *computus* – the medieval science of calculating times and dates using a blend of mathematics and as-

tronomy – and, with the exception of a fascinating passage on man as microcosm taken from Eriugena's *Periphyseon*, back to more predictable sources. Yet instead of a dry categorisation of time to be passively surveyed by the reader, this computus material, we are informed, is presented within a framework of learning and ascent. The divisions of time are to be conceptualised and internalised in an active way by the reader as part of their cosmological journey through and above the image of time. Indeed, the final lines of Book ii end with another theoretical comment on the nature of worldly time (*tempus*):

Per descriptum volubile tempus,  
 sic volvitur volubilis mundus.  
 Sed nos temporis volubilitatem iam postponamus,  
 et ad stabilitatem aevi mente tendamus. (ii.120)

(Through the winding [*volubile*] record of time,  
 Thus the twisting world is rolled.  
 But now we may set aside the turning of time  
 And stretch with the mind towards the stability of *aevum*.)

This playful, musical statement, which Garrigues regards as the original ending of the *Imago*, neatly completes Honorius' journey. Having assayed the mappable world with the eyes of the mind and contemplated the measurable units of time with the eyes of the heart, the reader now sets aside *tempus*, which twists and turns unpredictably, and reaches instead towards the timeless stability of *aevum*. There is no known source for this statement, which has the feel of a memorable jingle, similar in style perhaps to the poems of the *Carmina burana*, and expressing sentiments that are broadly Boethian (Flint, "Imago" 123). The final couplet, if that is what we wish to call it, pushes the reader to make the leap from *tempus mundi* to *aevum*, a motion achieved by extending the mind, like the tent stretched (*tendere*) across the sky in Isaiah. With the reference to *stabilitas*, Honorius may again be reaching for the *Consolation of Philosophy* (3 m.9), this time to the famous formulation of God as the Unmoved Mover: "stabilisque manens de cuncta moveri" ("and resting still, grant motion to all else"). In making this gesture, Honorius' reader is ultimately asked to complete a kind of spiritual exercise, grasping the world as a moving machine and *imago*, in contrast to the stability of eternity.

## Conclusion

20. The online database compiled by the project [Defining Europe in Medieval European Geographical Discourse](#) lists 350 surviving copies of the *Imago*.

The *Imago Mundi* was one of the most impactful works of the high Middle Ages, exceeding even Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* in terms of its surviving manuscripts.<sup>20</sup> Despite its popularity, the text has been valued, both by medieval and modern readers, more as a cosmological primer than an integrated theorization of space and time with a serious pastoral and literary agenda. Honorius, I have argued, conceived of the *Imago* as a coherent work, designed to stimulate an experience of spiritual ascent, in which the reader moves from a visual appreciation of space to an intellectual understanding of time, and on to a vision of eternity. Superficially, Honorius conveys the impression of a conservative writer, drawing most of his information from well-known sources. Yet the *Imago* has a highly creative overarching formal structure and is innovative in its use of literary devices, ranging from rhyme and perspectival shifts (such as the *kataskopos*) to everyday metaphors, like the windmill and the rope. While the ultimate origin of the notion that time is foldable can be traced back to Plotinus' *Enneads*, Honorius' immediate source was probably Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*.

As Albertson shows, the concept of the fold has a remarkably important place in European culture. Originating ultimately in Pythagorean claims about geometrical flow (the line unfolds from a point), the notion of the fold was elaborated in the later Middle Ages by Nicholas of Cusa, and thereafter feeds into the humanist tradition of Leibniz, Heidegger and onto their postmodern disciples such as Gilles Deleuze and Michel Serres. Honorius' metaphor of time as a rope in the process of being coiled up seems to be unique in the history of this idea. Not only does this inversion epitomise Honorius' creative treatment of his sources and instinctive feel for affective metaphor (both of which have been undervalued), it also represents the conceptual centre and spiritual goal of this carefully structured work by summarising for the mind's eye how our world unfolds and re-folds, image-like, from God's eternity.

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