

SLIDES	SECAC 2013
Title sheet with cartoon	How I Pad My Survey Course
	<p style="text-align: center;">Background and Current Practice</p> <p>For twenty years, before the onslaught of i-objects, I taught sketching to architecture students. Then as now, I thought that drawing in front of students, and encouraging them to draw with me, was a very effective pedagogical tool.</p> <p>Now I use my iPad. I lead students of my Architectural History Survey Course in analyzing buildings by diagramming. I often work thematically. For example, I might address “The Use of the Circle and the Dome” in architecture including Buddhist structures in India, Islamic mosques, and centrally-planned Christian churches. I sit at the front of the class and draw on my iPad, the image is projected on a large screen facing the class, and the students draw with me in their paper notebooks.</p> <p>I find that this process allows me to be both more entertaining and more effective in my teaching. I have no scruples about correcting my drawings and this helps the students realize that effort counts for more than end product. Students say that they love this way of working, and so I argue that it is a win-win situation.</p>
	<p>My class, which is required for architecture majors, is usually about 100 students; mostly sophomores. About 70% of them are in architecture, 10% in interior design, 10% in construction science, and the remaining 10% in architectural engineering. Although you might expect that all of these disciplines—at least architecture and interior design—would engage the students in drawing exercises, it can be surprising how few have drawn by hand. I always hear someone say, “Please don’t grade me on my drawing—I’m not an artist!” From the beginning I reassure them that I could care less if they can draw a straight line or represent something “as they see it,” although I know that simply by going through the diagramming exercises all semester they will become more skilled in this regard.</p>

	<p>The important thing is that they are engaging in thinking and in judging proportions as they work. Usually I've done my homework and figured out the organizing principles of the buildings I represent—insofar as I am able—but sometimes it can be very difficult to do this and it's actually more productive to work on this in the moment with the class.</p>
<p><i>Façade diagram showing axis</i></p> <p><i>Vielle player with others</i></p> <p><i>Sirens from Psalter</i></p> <p><i>Vielle player and siren</i></p>	<p>The central focus of the siren is reinforced by the four figures on her vertical axis. Two or perhaps three of them are female and one is animal. At the very top is the only fully human woman on the façade, and the only human with “noble” associations, seen in her wimple, veil, long gown, and shoes. A musician, she leans towards her vielle with her eyes almost shut. She is one of the larger sculptures, and she would be an expression of all things good, except that she faces the siren on bended knee, deferring to evil. Music played by female figures was used to seduce sailors, as we see in these illustrations of sirens behaving badly, but it was also used to calm turbulent spirits. In Bernard Silvestris' <i>Cosmographia</i>, Silva, “the Platonic equivalent of original sin, who held all the animals, plants and humans of the world in chaos,” is calmed by refinement and the “harmonious bonds of music.”¹ Music was also considered a mark of culture in Languedoc, where troubadour song originated and where women were also recognized as composers, or <i>troubariz</i>.</p>
<p><i>Lion and siren with diagram</i></p> <p><i>Repeat diagram and three figures</i></p> <p><i>Detail of figure</i></p>	<p>Between the vielle-player and the siren is a howling lion, stretching out and upwards away from the siren as though offended by her evil aura, which seems appropriate as lions are almost always associated with noble and good qualities, as models for human behavior.</p> <p>Below the siren is a figure equally important in this vertical narrative. The gender of the figure is questionable, but I argue for female based on her features. “She”—a lion-human hybrid connects with us directly as she smiles down Mona-Lisa-like and engages us with the tilt of her head. She must be suspect because she is a hybrid—her body seems to be that of a lion with her long, tufted tail, while her head and shoulders are most definitely human—but her expression is so wise and benign that it defies the normal associations with her genre and also defies the forces of the agitated siren above her.</p>

	<p>Her position along the central axis and her proximity to the viewer in the street gives her an authority that the others do not have.. Her expression seems to sum up the struggle displayed on the façade. She may be saying, “Here are the questions: you decide. What is really evil? Perhaps humans change character at times, so that during war they become animals and animals are the more noble creatures. ² Perhaps music is the only way to calm the chaos of the world.”</p>
<p><i>Diagram with diamond of female characters</i></p> <p><i>Harpies</i></p>	<p>If we accept this figure as a female hybrid, we find that females are represented geometrically on the façade by two large triangles placed back to back. The outer figures of these triangles are two harpies looking up towards the center axis. Although their heads are missing, their forms, which echo that of the harpy above them, suggest they would have been female. I don’t think that it is coincidence that there are important female figures here. In addition to the central role of goddesses in secular literature, women were arguably more central to public life in Languedoc than elsewhere in Europe at this time. The use of Roman Law had enabled them to inherit and alienate property for centuries, and this power has been linked to the spread of heresy. Their independence and role in cultivating the arts is well-illustrated in the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine (the grandmother of the founder of Cordes), and their role in politics in the life of Ermengard of Narbonne.</p>
<p><i>Diagram with arrows</i></p> <p><i>East and west dogs</i></p>	<p>All the façade figures except one focus either on the central axis or form a border facing down from the top. The figures that share the string course with the female hybrid closest to the street echo the gestural arrangement of the siren and her accompanists. With their expressions they engage the earth-dwellers in the street below in a questioning of world order as she seems to do. To the east, a plump hybrid faces center but looks back at approaching passers-by with raised eyebrows. To the west, a hungry dog with a bone in its mouth echoes the hybrid’s posture, also looking back over his shoulder towards the street. Is this a Dominican hungry for prey who has had no success at Cordes? If the commentary on the Maison du Grand Veneur was a model we could say yes.</p>
<p><i>Lion and fragment with harpy</i></p>	<p>Above them, on the string course which contains the vieille-player, there are three figures. The east figure is a seated lion squashing a dog-like creature under its massive paws, and the west figure has a human foot and the suggestion of an inflated</p>

<i>Harpy with facade</i>	<p>dragon-belly. Were it to follow the composition of other figures on the western edge, it would be turned back to face the center. The central figure is a harpy whose posture directs our gaze to the swordsman above.</p>
<p><i>Diagram showing dynamic between swordsman and harpy</i></p> <p><i>Top figures</i></p> <p><i>Swordsman</i></p>	<p>The top line of figures is an ensemble of four false gargoyles placed under the eaveline. The two end figures define the edges of the building, and the two center figures define the center line of the window groups.³ Their shared attributes encourage comparison, although their gazes and gestures direct us to the sculptures below. All four figures sit on their haunches, but the three animals are clearly differentiated from the hybrid swordsman by their calm demeanors and their reconizable species; they are carved with enough detail to differentiate the cloven hooves of the bull from the paws of the lion and the hooves of the horse. They are noble simply by being fully themselves, but also in their medieval symbolism.⁴ We have noted the noble qualities of lions.⁵ Both the horse and bull were domestic animals valued for their service, and the horse was associated with wealth and military prowess.⁶</p> <p>In contrast to this stately trio, the hybrid swordsman surges forward and twists himself to the left to pull his sword from behind its small round shield with his right hand.⁷ He is wearing a hood and cape, but his legs are the haunches of a large quadraped, and his feet are webbed and clawed. He has a broad face with a flattened nose, his brow is furrowed, and his thick-lipped mouth is open as though crying in attack. Everything about him suggests savagry: his hybrid form, his aggressive posture, and his rough features, which recall those used by Marco Polo to describe the “savage” and “devilish” men of Zanzibar.⁸ Yet this figure also wears a hood and cape that might be seen on many medieval men, including the Dominican preachers who entered Cordes from the direction he faces. Perhaps his scream is a rebuttal to, or a reflection of, the savagery of the Crusade and the inquisitors.</p>
<i>Three figures</i>	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>To conclude, I argue for intent both on the part of the owner of this building façade and on the part of the sculptor. Having worked with the archival material of Cordes, I doubt that I shall ever be able to identify the owner or connect these sculptures to any manuscripts that were kept here in the fourteenth century. But I argue for the meaning of these sculptures through circumstantial evidence, through</p>

the cultural history of Languedoc, and through the history of the town of Cordes.

I think that these prominently placed sculptures offer us more than a simple expression of protection for their owner, more than a marginal commentary on a text, more than a didactic moral lesson. They offer us a profound puzzling over the nature of humanity, a puzzling which had been debated in the courts of the counts by the troubadours, which was being debated in many contemporary texts, and which was central to the doctrines of the Cathars.⁹ These debates were possible in a region whose rulers had encouraged artistic expression and who had been tolerant of religions considered heretical by Rome, and they continued to be possible in the town of Cordes which, lacking a dominating religious institution and governed by its consuls, had by and large allowed that liberal culture to continue.

Thank you.

Bibliography

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Endnotes

¹ Brian Stock, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Bernard Silvester* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 73-75.

² In *Cosmographia*, Silvestris borrowed the idea that the arts of agriculture were important elements of order that distinguished man from animals from the story of the rape of Persephone as told by the Roman author Claudian. Ibid.

³ There is only one fourteenth-century building with a comparable type of projecting sculpture in the region, and that is the Maison des Loups in Caylus, a few kilometers north of Saint-Antonin. The Maison des Loups is a much smaller building than the Maison du Grand Ecuyer, about half the size of the Grand Ecuyer. It has projecting “false gargoyles” at the edges of the façade and at other locations, symmetrically arranged for the most part. The sculptures are quite eroded and it is difficult to say that they are indeed wolves, but they are all some type of animal. They lack the complexity and finesse of execution of those at the Grand Ecuyer, and may have been an attempt to mimic the design at Cordes. For discussions of this building, see B. Loncan, “Des maisons du XIIIe au XVIe siècle à Caylus et à Saint-Antonin,” in *Caylus & Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1993), 230-31; Michèle Pradalier-Schlumberger, *Toulouse et le Languedoc: la sculpture gothique XIII - XIV siècles* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1998), 189.

⁴ Whether in an animal or a human, any sign of a “dual or conflicting” nature was generally suspect, and gargoyles were generally depicted as hybrids or grotesques, which makes these figures unusual. Nona C. Flores, “Introduction,” in *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Nona C. Flores (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 152; Janetta Rebold Benton, “Gargoyles: Animal Imagery and Artistic Individuality in Medieval Art,” in *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Nona C. Flores (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996).

⁵ Joyce Salisbury, “Human Animals of Medieval Fables,” in *Animals in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Nona C. Flores (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 49; Wilma George and Brunsdon Yapp, *The Naming of the Beasts: Natural History in the Medieval Bestiary* (Duckworth, 1991), 46-49; Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1971), 451, 53, et alia. Lions displaying their ferocity were often depicted with straight manes and furrowed brows, but the posture, curly mane and smooth brow of this one suggests he rests in a peaceful, watchful state. Janetta Rebold Benton, *The Medieval Menagerie* (New York: The Abbeville Press, 1992), 85-86. These lions may also have been references to the heraldic devices used by the Angevins. Klingender, *Animals*: 451.

⁶ In *Cosmographia*, Silvestris borrowed the idea that the arts of agriculture were important elements of order that distinguished man from animals from the story of the rape of Persephone as told by the Roman author Claudian. Stock, *Myth*: 73-75.

⁷ His armaments are commonly found depicted in a variety of manuscripts. Jack Lindsay, *The Troubadours and Their World of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (London: Frederick Muller, 1976), 87, 253; Lilian M. Randall, *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966). “Tower Manuscript” (Royal MS 14E iii) which is a treatise on martial arts.

⁸ His facial features suggest the depiction of a black African. Medieval descriptions of Ethiopians and of the inhabitants of Zanzibar—the latter by Marco Polo (1254-1324)—associated them with savagery, laziness, and stupidity, and in the extreme, they were compared to devils. Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, & Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 85-86.

⁹ Examples include Robert Grosseteste's "Chateau d'Amour"—stress on argument over accord (c. 1253) (Newman 44), the debate of the gender of Christ by the Spanish Jews in 1221 (Newman 48), and the exploration of the gap between a literal biblical interpretation and the work of natural science (52).