

Gruesome Gore in the Guise of Courtly Elegance: Style as Incongruous in the *Girona Martyrology* (Ms. M.D. 273)

The *Girona Martyrology* (Ms. M.D. 273) is an exemplar of late-medieval book production, created at the Prague court around 1410 by an unidentified patron for, or as a gift for, an unknown Cistercian monastery. Its one hundred and twenty-six folios contain a calendrical listing of saintly feast days that are surrounded by corresponding narrative images. The Martyrology's illuminations combine the most fashionable French, Italian, Northern, and Bohemian painting styles, presenting delicate, sinuous, and elegantly clad saints in what art historians have coined the "beautiful style". It is likely that the sumptuousness of the manuscript echoed the very surroundings of those whom were privileged enough to read it.

Perhaps overwhelmed by the Martyrology's overwhelming material and tactile beauty, it might take the modern viewer a moment register the extremely violent nature of the book's visual program. Detailed decapitations, roastings, breast removals, and flayings of saints dominate the pages of this 252-page book. So gruesome is this subject matter that it seems to betray the very style that depicts it.

This paper will explore the dissonance between stylistic mode and subject matter in an effort to extract meaning. Focusing on the ideological potential of such a visually charged work of art, I will explore the book's historical context and liturgical use. How useful is style in a discussion of "meaning"? Is it capable of making an object visual incongruous? If so, what sort of implications does this have for the history of art throughout the ages?

