"Qui scit ubi scientis sit, ille est proximus habenti." -- Brunetiere*

**Introductory Information**

The term iconography, in short, relates to the subject, meaning or symbolism of an artwork. Apart from classifying themes, motifs, attributes, allegories, and symbols, iconography also traces their historical development focusing for example on the perpetuation of certain visual traditions and the resulting standardization of image formulas. Iconography is usually divided into religious and secular themes. This library guide offers the student a starting point in the field of iconography.

It should also be noted that since every culture has its own conception of symbolism, an attempt has been made in this library guide to include resources that will assist students with the iconography of Western European artworks. For information on Asian iconography, please see Library Guide No. 1 entitled *Art History: Asian Iconography*. It will soon be mounted on the ULS Digital Library. For a concise introduction to the definition of iconography, see the following.

*Grove Dictionary of Art.* Available for you to search yourself at any electronic device in ULS libraries. Begin at the ULS home page and click on FIND ARTICLES. Go to the right of the screen and click on “Particular Database” and then click on the first letter of the database title. Choose the title of the database. See the articles entitled “Allegory,” “Iconography and Iconology,” and “Symbol.,” each of which is accompanied by a bibliography of resources.

**Methodology**


**General Resources**

Materials on this subject may also be located by executing a subject search in Pittcat, the ULS online catalog, using the following Library of Congress subject headings.

- Allegories
- Art and Mythology
- Art Themes Motives
- Mythology
- Symbolism
- Symbolism in Art


Christian Iconography

A Database

*Index to Christian Art.* Available for you to search yourself at any electronic device in ULS libraries. Begin at the ULS home page and click on FIND ARTICLES. Go to the right of the screen and click on “Particular Database” and then click on the first letter of the database title. Choose the title of the database. The *Index of Christian Art* is the largest archive of information on Early Christian and Medieval iconography in the world. The *Index* documents images or subjects of Christian art from early apostolic times to 1400 CE with no geographic limitations. 17 different media are represented including manuscripts, metalwork, sculpture, painting, glass, et al. *ICA* provides more than 150 searchable categories of information, including the usual – artist’s name (if known), title of the work, medium, provenance and extensive bibliographic citations.

NOTES: Provides citations and abstracts only about each image or subject. Only a fraction of the printed *ICA* is available online at the current time.

The database began in 1991 and is updated weekly. Because of copyright law, many images are not available for public viewing. The bibliographic information for each subject is, however, invaluable for art and architectural historians. For assistance in using ICA, please consult Library Guide No. 35 entitled *Index to Christian Art.* It will soon be mounted as a Research Guide on the Art and Architectural History Subject Guide on the ULS Digital Library.

Resources

Materials on this subject may also be located by executing a subject search in Pittcat, the ULS online catalog, using the following Library of Congress subject headings.

- Christian Art and Symbolism
- Jesus Christ Art

A standard dictionary of Christian iconography and liturgy.

*Catholic Encyclopedia*. (1907) Frick - Reading Room - Section 3.
Contains very informative articles on the saints; iconography of such religious subjects as the Jesus Christ, the Last Supper, Pentecost; Trinity and other Christian terms.

Vol. 1 - History and symbols of the numbus and God; Vol. 2 - Iconography of the Trinity, angels, et. al.

Does not provide sources of information; therefore, generally not acceptable as a secondary source in graduate level art history papers.


Discusses the Roman Catholic Mass as sacred drama.

Discusses the history of the rite of the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church from the time of the primitive church, thus provides reasons for certain changes that were made in religious architecture and liturgical objects.


Covers St. Gregory the Great to Benedict XI; includes bibliographical footnotes.


More discursive than Kirschoaum; arranged Biblically. Volume 1 includes articles on sources and evolution of Christian iconography; on animal, human, and liturgical symbolism; and iconography of the saints. Volume 2, containing iconography of the Bible, is divided into two parts, one covering the Old Testament; the other, the New Testament. Volume 3, iconography of the saints, consists of 3 books, the last of which has indexes to names of saints in various languages; to patronage of various saints; and to attributes of saints. Entries in volume 3 describe scenes in which saints are depicted in art and contain bibliographical data and extensive lists of works that illustrate the saint or symbol discussed.


Discusses the history and development of liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church and various ecclesiastical related dramatizations. Source for Latin versions of numerous medieval tropes and liturgical plays.

**Hagiography (Works about the Christian Saints)**

Materials on this subject may also be located by executing a subject search in Pittcat, the ULS online catalog, using the following Library of Congress subject headings.

Anne Mother of the Virgin Mary
Francis of Assisi Saint
Joseph Saint
Mary Blessed Virgin Saint


Lengthy, scholarly articles on saints.


A standard, authoritative reference. Arranged by ecclesiastical calendar (or feast day of the saint). Index by saint’s name is in volume 4. Butler’s is the preferred set on the lives of the saints because it provides citations to other publications which earlier artists may have used.


Divided into biographical dictionary of saints and dictionary of emblems that lists saints associated with them.


Frick - Reference - N33/C37/1995

   Vol. 1 - Tuscan Painting; Vol. 2 - Central and South Italian Schools of Painting; Vol. 3 - North East Italy; Vol. 4 - Northwest Italy.

   Concerns the use of patristic writing to clarify metaphors and images in medieval poetry.

Christian Literary Texts

   Volumes 1-8 cover the writings of ecclesiastical authors who wrote prior to 325 A.D. Volume 8 contains some of The Infancy Gospels. Volume 9 provides the bibliographical synopsis of volumes 1-8. Volume 10 is a supplement of more recently discovered documents.

   A 14th century Swedish saint who made a pilgrimage to Bethlehem and while contemplating the grotto where Christ was presumed to have been born, had a vision of his birth.

Fathers of the Church. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1947-. Hillman Library. Individual volumes are cataloged separately, see the title index in Pittcat, the ULS online catalog. More than 100 volumes are planned. Includes the works of the four Latin fathers: Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, and Jerome as well as others.

The Holy Bible. Trans from the Latin Vulgate .... Douai ed. Frick - Reference - BS180/B58 (Copy also in Hillman Library - Reference - Ground floor - BS180/1899a)


First published in Latin in 1275, the first compilation of the lives of the saints and used as a source by medieval and renaissance artists. Arranged according to the church calendar beginning with Advent.


Once attributed to Pseudo St. Bonaventura, now believed to have been written by a 13th century Franciscan monk living in Italy. Text relates the story of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ.


Much medieval art was based on the Infancy gospels and other apocryphal books.

*Patrologia Graeca Database.* Full Text. Available for you to search yourself at any electronic device in ULS libraries. Begin at the ULS home page and click on FIND ARTICLES. Go to the right of the screen and click on “Particular Database” and then click on the first letter of the database title. Choose the title of the database. An electronic version of more than 160 volumes of Greek material (with Latin translations) relevant to the study of the history of the Christian Church from its beginnings through the Council of Florence in 1439. A collection of the writings of church leaders who wrote in Greek, including both the Eastern “Fathers” and those Western Christians who wrote before the Latin takeover of the West in the third century. It includes, for example, the early writings collectively known as the Apostolic Fathers, such as the *Epistles* of Clement and *The Shepherd of Hermas*, the church historian Eusebius, the controversial theologian Origen, and the Cappadocian Fathers Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. PG’s coverage extends to 1439, the date of the Council of Florence.

*Patrologia Latina Database.* Full-Text. Available for you to search yourself at any electronic device in ULS libraries. Begin at the ULS home page and click on FIND ARTICLES. Go to the right of the screen and click on “Particular Database” and then click on the first letter of the database title. Choose the title of the database. A complete electronic version of the first edition of Jacques-Paul Migne’s *Patrologica Latina* (1844-1855 and 1862-1865). *Patrologia Latina* covers philosophical and theological writings from Latin Christianity up to the year 1216. Contains bibliographic information from works concerning patristic and monastic thought as well as philological and theological learning, humanistic and ecclesiastical thinking.


**Secular and Classical Iconography**

Based on the Census of Antique works of Art known to Renaissance Artists. Iconographic arrangement.


A discursive survey of secular themes in medieval and renaissance art.


Lists treatments of biblical subjects (v. 1) and classical mythology (v. 2) in Baroque painting. Vol. 3 is selective, black-and-white plate vol. Information provided under each theme includes a list of references describing the scene plus a list of artists who depicted it. Many works are abbreviated; list of abbreviations is provided in the back of each volume.


**”The person who knows where information is, as good as has it.” – Brunetiere No. 22 – Rev. 8/21/07**