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Martine Clouzot, *Musique, folie et nature au Moyen Âge: Les figurations du fou musicien dans les manuscrits enluminés (XIIIe-XVe siècles)*. Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 2014. xii + 489 pp. Figures, drawings, notes, bibliography, and index. \$122.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN 978-3-0343-1306-3.

Review by Daniel E. O'Sullivan, University of Mississippi.

Martine Clouzot offers to medievalists--both historians and literature specialists--with an interest in musicology and manuscripts (or to musicians with an interest in the Middle Ages and manuscripts) a rich study of illustrations of the *fou musicien* (mad musician) in illustrated manuscripts from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. The volume is divided into an introductory section, five body sections, and a very short conclusion. In the appendix, readers can find lists of the manuscripts consulted, a chronological sequence of images studied, plus a list of archives and edited texts that figure into her study. A thorough bibliography and *index auctorum* finishes out the book.

In her introduction, Clouzot lays out definitions of key ideas--technical vocabulary is a main concern of Clouzot--within the current critical context. She is to be commended for her careful documentation in this and all subsequent sections of her book. She cites several historians, cultural critics, and philosophers, both classical (Aristotle and Plato, above all) and modern (Michel Foucault, Werner Mezger, Jean-Marie Fritz, Muriel Laharie, Danielle Jacquart, and John Southworth), to build a sound epistemological foundation for her analyses of particular images and codices. She aims first to identify and classify images of folly or madness, music, and nature in medieval documents before then turning to the relationship between these ideas and images over time. Leveraging a strong interdisciplinary angle, she proposes an "anthropology of images," which she describes as "une approche plurielle, formelle et anthropologique, sociale et culturelle" (p. 19). She then describes how she constructed her book as five interrelated but semi-autonomous units:

"Ces niveaux d'analyse ne sont pas juxtaposés ou séparés, mais ils interagissent en se transformant les uns et les autres. Impossibles à traiter de front, sauf par les liens-hypertextes d'un Web imaginaire, ils ont été divisés en cinq parties aux thématiques dédiées à la rhétorique, la philosophie naturelle, la physique acoustique, l'histoire sociale et politique, la cosmologie et la théologie morale. Transversales, les cinq parties ont été conçues en autant de livres presque indépendants. Pouvant être lues séparément, chacune d'elles rappellent les principes, les auteurs et les *corpus* fondant les concepts du sujet et les questions qui en découlent." (p. 19)

As her work cuts such a wide swath in the field, it points to several paths where further study is warranted. One might have wished, in fact, that the author had decided to publish five separate, deeper volumes instead of this one broader study. With that said, had she decided to pursue that alternative route, readers would have had that much longer to wait for her excellent insights into the gems that she has unearthed from archives all over Europe. Nevertheless, a succinct summary of her argument is difficult to make--she touches upon myriad primary sources and makes numerous pointed observations concerning each one--and so this reviewer has had to content himself with highlighting parts of each section.

Clouzot describes the first part, “Les *corpus* du fou et la rhétorique des images,” as a continuation of her 2011 book, *Le jongleur: Mémoire de l'image*.^[1] The section is meant to set the stage, delineate a corpus, introduce readers to the concepts that figure in her title: *musica*, *natura*, and madness. Wishing to tease out the visual rhetoric used in depicting the mad musician in manuscripts, she argues that classical treatises on rhetoric—those attributed to Cicero and Quintilian as well as the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*—supplied medieval authors with visual vocabulary needed to articulate images of the mad musician through the notions of *inversio* and *proportio*. The margins of the manuscript page, for example, provide a space for the *mundus inversus* that these images often occupy. *Musica* and its mathematical properties—ratios, proportions, both arithmetic and geometric—form a veritable analytical grid for her typology and interpretation of the mad musician in medieval illuminated texts.

The second part, “*Natura et musica: ornementalité et musicalité de la folie*,” continues an investigation into such classical concepts as *ornatus*, *proportio*, *phusis*, *natura*, *cosmos*, *sonus*, *vox*, and *physica* as they were understood by the medieval thinkers who inherited them from the classical world. The principal source of these ideas was Aristotle’s *philosophia naturalis* as it was taught in medieval universities: the study of nature proceeds from the observation of physical movements such as light, animals, sensations, and sound. Sound becomes then an important theme and link between nature and music in her analysis of the mad musician and the *insipiens* (she translates this figure as the “insensé-fou”). As the *insipiens* becomes associated with different instruments by the fourteenth century, especially the pipes (*cornemuse*) and bells (*grelots*), she has occasion to touch not only on the representation of singing but also instrumentation.

In “Les musicalités de l’humanité: hybridité et animalité du fou,” her third part, Clouzot discusses an idea very much in vogue today: hybridity. Historians and literary critics alike are probing into how society forms and reforms identities across categories of race, gender, and species. Clouzot singles out the work of French historian Robert Delort (*Les animaux ont une histoire*) as having made animals the subject of social, cultural, material, and economic history.^[2] Many of the mad musicians exhibit features of both animals and humans, with monkeys, birds, and dogs playing particularly important roles. Medieval authors link these hybrids to the first man, Adam, who, because of his sin, takes a step away from God and closer to the animal world. In this chapter, Clouzot does an admirable job at tying these questions of musical notions of movement and rhythm to these dynamic bodies in motion.

The fourth part, “Les images de la folie: musicalités et intentions morales,” investigates further the moral arguments in which the mad musician figures. Concentrating here on prayer books and chronicles, Clouzot fleshes out the patristic and monastic arguments underpinning a Christian morality that relies on the dialectic between vices and virtues. Over and over again, comparisons are made in these sources between pride and humility, the City on Earth and the City of God. Clouzot relates this back to the idea of *inversio* and appeals to the Aristotelian notion of *dynamis* (potency or potentiality) rethought by medieval thinkers as power as opposed to weakness. The Cistercians and Franciscans in particular embraced the idea of transforming humiliation into humility. Folly comes into her argument as these sources point to the ultimate humiliation in the Christian worldview: the crucifixion of God in the person of Jesus. Saint Paul even mentions the Folly of the Cross in 1 Corinthians.

Clouzot’s final part, “*Corpus musical et harmonie universelle: de l’homme inconnaissant à la sagesse de Dieu*,” considers the relationship between the microcosm and macrocosm in discussing the notions of folly and melancholy of the prince that figure so prominently in ethical and philosophical treatises like princely mirrors and chronicles. Images and text both push to the forefront the question of folly in European courts and it becomes linked to cosmological scale through images of the Greek poet Orpheus and King David. Representations of Orpheus, master of nature, and David, master of his people, are both infused with concepts of *natura* and *harmonia*.

The one real failure of the book, however, and I suspect it comes down to limitations the press placed on the author, is the paucity of illustrations. At the very end of the book, readers will find only seven color reproductions (of dubious quality) and seven ink drawings. As the entire study involves illuminated manuscripts spanning three centuries, this hardly suffices to illustrate Clouzot's very rich study. A smaller quibble comes in regard to the bibliography, which is subdivided into so many subcategories-- art and images, music, literature, cultural history, sciences, philosophy and theology, etc.--it can be difficult to find a particular source. That said, while the works cited are heavy on studies written in French, important contributions by scholars writing in English and German are not entirely overlooked.

Musique, folie et nature au Moyen Âge will find an appreciative audience among graduate students and scholars of medieval visual culture, music, and material culture. Its copious notes and rather subtle, at times complex, arguments, not to mention the summa of texts analyzed, will intimidate the casual reader, but anyone who puts in the effort will be greatly rewarded.

NOTES

[1] Martine Clouzot, *Le jongleur: Mémoire de l'image. Figures, figurations et musicalité dans les manuscrits enluminés, 1200-1330* (Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 2011).

[2] Robert Delort, *Les animaux ont une histoire* (Paris: Seuil, 1984).

Daniel E. O'Sullivan
University of Mississippi
dosulliv@olemiss.edu

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