

GENEALOGY AND THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION IN THE HIGH AND LATE MIDDLE AGES

Images and image cycles with genealogical content were everywhere in the high and later Middle Ages. They represent families related by blood as well as successive office holders and appear as family trees and lineages of single figures in manuscripts, on walls and in stained glass, and in sculpture and metalwork. Yet art historians have hardly remarked on the frequency of these images. Considering the physical contexts and functions of these works alongside the goals of their patrons, this volume examines groups of figural genealogies ranging across northern Europe and dating from the mid-twelfth to the mid-fourteenth century. Joan Holladay considers how they were used to legitimize rulers and support their political and territorial goals, to reinforce archbishops' rights to crown kings, to cement relationships between families of founders and their monastic foundations, and to commemorate the dead. The flexibility and legibility of this genre were key to its widespread use.

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Joan A. Holladay

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JOAN A. HOLLADAY

The University of Texas at Austin



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CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page vii
<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	xvii
INTRODUCTION	I
Precedents in the Ancient World	6
Genealogy and Family Identity about 1100	8
Diagrammatic Imagery	23
Schemata and Memory	27
Chapter Outline and Method	30
1 RIVALING/REVIVING ROME: ENVIRONMENTAL GENEALOGIES IN PALACE HALLS	53
Frederick Barbarossa	54
Philip IV of France	65
Charles IV of Bohemia	82
2 STRUCTURING THE PAST: HISTORY AND GENEALOGY IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND	99
The Life of Saint Hedwig	100
Bodley Rolls 3	106
Smaller Rolls Starting in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century	127
The Function of Bodley Rolls 3	137
3 CROWNING THE KING: CORONATION RIGHTS AT COLOGNE AND REIMS	141
The Choir Screen at Cologne Cathedral	141
The Right to Crown: Competition between Cologne and Mainz	148
The Content and Message of the Choir Screen Paintings at Cologne Cathedral	161

Reims: The Cathedral and Saint-Remi	178
Kings at Strasbourg Cathedral	193
4 ADVERTISING ALLEGIANCES: TOMBS AND TOMB CYCLES	197
The Nellenburg Family Tombs at Schaffhausen	199
The Tombs of the Abbesses of Quedlinburg	210
The Tombs of the Counts of Wettin, Margraves of Meissen, and Landgraves of Thuringia	221
Other, Accretive Tomb Cycles	234
5 FLATTERING FOUNDERS: GENEALOGICAL IMAGERY IN CLOISTER CHRONICLES	248
The Guelf Family Tree in the <i>Historia Welforum</i>	249
The Foundation Book of Cloister Zwettl	258
CONCLUSION	286
Notes	297
Select Bibliography	359
Index	379
<i>Color plates can be found between pages 202 and 203.</i>	

ILLUSTRATIONS

Color plates can be found between pages 202 and 203.

COLOR PLATES

- I Gian Paolo Panini, Interior of St. Paul's outside the Walls in Rome, view to east, ca. 1750 (Moscow, State A. Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts)
- II Pope Linus (67–76), St. Paul's outside the Walls, Rome, ca. 440–61
- III Charlemagne shrine, ca. 1182 (?)– ca. 1215 (Aachen, Dom)
- IV Male members of the House of Habsburg, stained glass windows from the cathedral of St. Stephen, Vienna, before 1395 (Vienna, Wien Museum Karlsplatz)
- V Duke Rudolf III (IV), stained glass window from the cathedral of St. Stephen, Vienna, before 1395 (Vienna, Wien Museum Karlsplatz)
- VI Matous Ptáček–Ornys of Lindperk, Emperor Charles the Bald, ca. 1569–75 (Prague, Národní Galerie, Archives, AA 2015 [Codex Heidelbergensis], p. 34)
- VII Heptarchy diagram, Egbert and his son, grandchildren, and great-grandson, Genealogy of the kings of England, detail, last quarter of the thirteenth century (London, British Library, Royal MS 14.B.V)
- VIII Edmund Ironside; his son and grandchildren, including Saint Margaret; Knut and his sons; and Edward the Confessor, Genealogy of the kings of England, detail, ca. 1300 (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Typ 11)
- IX Kings and Adoration of the Magi, Cologne cathedral, choir clerestory windows (N III, N II, axial window, S II, and S III), ca. 1290–1304
- X Charles Martel, Charlemagne, Pepin, and Louis the Pious, Strasbourg cathedral, north aisle windows (n IV), soon after 1250
- XI First four generations of the Kuenring family, Liber fundatorum of Cloister Zwettl, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 8r)

FIGURES

- 1 Consanguinity Tree, *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, end of the ninth century (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 4410, fol. 3v) page 12
- 2 Consanguinity Tree, Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ninth century (Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de Montpellier. BU médecine, MS H.53, fol. 136r) 13

- | | | |
|----|--|----|
| 3 | Consanguinity Tree, Burchard of Worms, <i>Decretum</i> , eleventh century (Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, MS 601, fol. 84r) | 15 |
| 4 | Genealogy of the Carolingians from Pepin of Herstal, Codex Steinfeld, mid-twelfth century after a model dated between 908 and 911 (London, British Library, Additional MS 21109, fol. 133v) | 16 |
| 5 | Genealogy of the Carolingians from Arnulf; lower right: Genealogy of the Ottonians from Henry I, first half of the eleventh century (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 29880(6)) | 17 |
| 6 | Frutolf of Michelsberg, Genealogy of the Carolingians from Arnulf, <i>Chronicon universale</i> , 1099–1100 (Jena, Universitätsbibliothek, Codex Bose quarto 19, fol. 152v) | 20 |
| 7 | Frutolf of Michelsberg, Genealogy of the Ottonians from Liudolf, <i>Chronicon universale</i> , 1099–1100 (Jena, Universitätsbibliothek, Codex Bose quarto 19, fol. 171v) | 21 |
| 8 | Genealogy of Christ from Adam and Eve, Commentary of Beatus of Liébana on the Apocalypse, ca. 940–45 (New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.644, fol. 4v. Purchased by J. P. Morgan (1867–1943) in 1919) | 22 |
| 9 | Tree of Jesse, Commentary on Isaiah, ca. 1125 (Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 129, fol. 4v) | 24 |
| 10 | Tree of Jesse, Saint-Denis, choir window, 1140–44 | 25 |
| 11 | Peter of Poitiers, <i>Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi</i> , ca. 1220. England, Canterbury, thirteenth century. Ink and tempera on a vellum roll of four membranes; detail, top of part 1: 135 × 22.5 cm (53 1/8 × 8 13/16 in.) (Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund, 1973.5a) | 29 |
| 12 | Matthew Paris, Four kings: Henry II, Richard Lionheart, John, Henry III, <i>Abbreviatio chronicorum</i> , 1255–59 (London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D.VI, fol. 9v) | 34 |
| 13 | Matthew Paris, Heptarchy diagram and genealogy of the kings of England from Alfred, <i>Abbreviatio chronicorum</i> , 1255–59 (London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D.VI, fol. 10v) | 35 |
| 14 | Genealogy of the Carolingians from Arnulf, <i>Chronica Sancti Pantaleonis</i> , ca. 1200 (Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 74.3 Aug. 2°, fol. 90v) | 36 |
| 15 | Genealogy of the Ottonians, Salians, and Hohenstaufens from Liudolf, <i>Chronica Sancti Pantaleonis</i> , ca. 1200 (Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 74.3 Aug. 2°, fol. 114v) | 37 |
| 16 | Genealogy of the Carolingians from Arnulf, <i>Chronica Sancti Pantaleonis</i> , after 1237 (Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 467, fol. 17v) | 38 |
| 17 | Genealogy of the Ottonians, Salians, and Hohenstaufens from Liudolf, <i>Chronica Sancti Pantaleonis</i> , after 1237 (Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 467, fol. 43r) | 39 |
| 18 | Konrad III, <i>Chronica Sancti Pantaleonis</i> , after 1237 (Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 467, fol. 63v) | 41 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ix

- | | | |
|----|--|----|
| 19 | Philip IV, Yves of Saint-Denis, <i>Gesta regum Francorum</i> , ca. 1314–19 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 13836, fol. 120r) | 43 |
| 20 | Genealogy of the kings of France from Clothar to Pepin, Yves of Saint-Denis, <i>Gesta regum Francorum</i> , ca. 1314–19 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 13836, fol. 12r) | 44 |
| 21 | Genealogy of the kings of France from Clothar to Pepin, Yves of Saint-Denis, <i>Vita et passio beati Dionysii</i> and <i>Gesta regum Francorum</i> , ca. 1314–19 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 5286, fol. 168r) | 45 |
| 22 | Clovis with his four sons, grandson, and great-grandson, Yves of Saint-Denis, <i>Vita et passio beati Dionysii</i> and <i>Gesta regum Francorum</i> , ca. 1314–19 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 5286, fol. 132r) | 46 |
| 23 | Genealogy of the kings of France from Charlemagne to Hugh Capet, Yves of Saint-Denis, <i>Gesta regum Francorum</i> , ca. 1314–19 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 13836, fol. 78r) | 48 |
| 24 | Ingelheim, <i>Aula Regia</i> , reconstruction of the painted cycle, ca. 820. After Lammers, “Ein karolingisches Bildprogramm in der Aula Regia von Ingelheim” (1972), fig. 7 | 56 |
| 25 | Giacomo Grimaldi, Old Testament scenes and roundels with busts of the popes, right wall of the nave of Old St. Peter’s, Rome, 1620 (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Cod. barb. lat. 2733, fol. 108v) | 59 |
| 26 | Reliquary for the arm of Charlemagne, front: Frederick Barbarossa, the archangel Michael, the Virgin and Child, the archangel Gabriel, Frederick’s wife Beatrice (top); back: Duke Frederick of Swabia, Saint Peter, Christ, Saint Paul, Konrad III (bottom), ca. 1165 (Paris, Louvre, MR 347) | 62 |
| 27 | Jean Pélerin (known as Viator), Paris, Grand’ Salle. After Viator, <i>De artificiali perspectiva</i> , 1st edition, Toul, 1505 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des Étampes, Ia 9 rés., fol. 29) | 67 |
| 28 | Jacques I ^{er} Androuet du Cerceau, Paris, Grand’ Salle, ca. 1580 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des Étampes, Collection Lallemant de Betz, VX fol., fol. 269) | 68 |
| 29 | Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, Paris, Grand’ Salle, plan. After Viollet-le-Duc, <i>Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle</i> , Paris, 1858–75, 8:82, “Salle,” fig. 5 | 69 |
| 30 | Charles V, King of France, entertaining his uncle Charles IV, King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor, in the Grand’ Salle, <i>Grandes chroniques de France</i> , 1378–80 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 2813, fol. 473v) | 71 |
| 31 | Paris, Royal Palace, plan, ca. 1360. After Jean Guérout, “Le palais de la cité à Paris des origines à 1417: Essai topographique et archéologique,” <i>Mémoires de la Fédération des Sociétés historiques et archéologiques de Paris et de l’Île-de-France</i> 2 (1950) | 73 |
| 32 | Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, upper chapel, 1241–48 | 75 |
| 33 | Saint-Denis, schematic reconstruction of the royal tombs in the crossing ca. 1270 (left) and 1314 (right) | 81 |

34	Karlštejn castle, view from southwest, begun 1348	90
35	Karlštejn castle, plan, begun 1348. After Dobroslava Menclová, <i>Ceské hrady</i> (Prague, 1976), fig. 50	91
36	Matous Ptáček–Ornys of Lindperk, King Charles IV of Bohemia, Holy Roman Emperor, ca. 1569–75 (Prague, Národní Galerie, Archives, AA 2015 [Codex Heidelbergensis], p. 53)	92
37	Matous Ptáček–Ornys of Lindperk, Queen Blanche of France, the first wife of Charles IV of Bohemia, ca. 1569–75 (Prague, Národní Galerie, Archives, AA 2015 [Codex Heidelbergensis], p. 56)	92
38	Karlštejn castle, hypothetical reconstruction of the genealogy of Charles IV, 1356–57	93
39	Genealogical Tree with ancestors and descendants of Saint Hedwig, Life of Saint Hedwig, 1353 (Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, MS Ludwig XI 7, fol. 9v–10r)	102
40	Saint Hedwig with her parents and siblings and the marriage of Saint Hedwig to Henry of Silesia, 1353 (Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, MS Ludwig XI 7, fol. 10v)	105
41	Reconstruction of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley Rolls 3, with London, British Library, Cotton Charter XIV.4 as final section, 1296–1300	106
42	Legend of the Golden Fleece, the Trojan War, and the Founding of Britain, Bodley Rolls 3, section 1, rows 1–5, 1296–1300 (Oxford, Bodleian Library)	107
43	Early kings of Britain beginning with Brutus, Bodley Rolls 3, top of section 2, rows 6–8, 1296–1300 (Oxford, Bodleian Library)	108
44	The kings of the Heptarchy, Bodley Rolls 3, lower part of section 3, rows 23–26, 1296–1300 (Oxford, Bodleian Library)	109
45	Twenty-eight kings of England from Aethelwulf to Edward I, Bodley Rolls 3, section 4, rows 27–30, 1296–1300 (Oxford, Bodleian Library)	110
46	Genealogy of the kings of England and Scotland, 1296–1300 (London, British Library, Cotton Charter XIV.4)	112
47	Aeneas arrives in Latium; Brutus kills his father; Pandrasius gives his daughter to Brutus; Brutus, asleep at the temple of Diana, hears her prophecy that he will found a second Troy, Bodley Rolls 3, section 1, row 5, 1296–1300 (Oxford, Bodleian Library)	118
48	The troops of Hercules; the battle between the Greeks and the Trojans; Telamon and the king's daughter Hesione; Alexander and Helen; the Greeks at sea; and the Sack of Troy, Bodley Rolls 3, section 1, rows 3–4, 1296–1300 (Oxford, Bodleian Library)	119
49	The Great Seal of Edward I, impression from 1306 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, CCCCo1/G/1/16)	127
50	First great seal of Henry III, obverse, impression from 1243 (London, British Library, Cotton Charter XI.53)	127
51	King Alfred and his descendants, Genealogy of the kings of England, detail, 1270–71 (Princeton, Princeton University Library, Department	

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

xi

- of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton MS 57) 129
- 52 Matthew Paris, Kings Alfred to Hardeknut, Genealogy of the kings of England, *Chronica majora*, 1250s (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker Library, MS 16, fol. iii recto) 132
- 53 Matthew Paris, William the Conqueror to King Henry III, Genealogy of the kings of England, *Chronica majora*, 1250s (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker Library, MS 16, fol. iii verso) 133
- 54 William the Conqueror and Kings William Rufus, Henry I, Steven, and Henry II, Genealogy of the kings of England, detail, ca. 1300 (London, British Library, Cotton Charter XV.7) 135
- 55 Kings John to Edward II with *maniculae* in the left margin pointing out the homages paid by the kings of Scotland to the kings of England, Genealogy of the kings of England, detail, 1314–16 (London, British Library, Additional MS 29504) 138
- 56 Kings John, Henry III, and Edward I and a short genealogy of the kings of Scotland from Alexander II to Edward Balliol in the left margin, Genealogy of the kings of England, detail, late fifteenth century (London, British Library, Additional MS 24026) 139
- 57 Cologne cathedral, choir, view from west, 1247–1322, choir screen ca. 1300, painted decoration ca. 1330 142
- 58 Cologne cathedral, choir screen program, ca. 1330 143
- 59 Life of the Virgin, Cologne cathedral, choir screen interior, south side, east section, ca. 1330 144
- 60 Legend of the Magi, Cologne cathedral, choir screen interior, south side, center section, ca. 1330 144
- 61 Lives and martyrdoms of Saints Felix, Nabor, and Gregory of Spoleto, Cologne cathedral, choir screen interior, south side, west section, ca. 1330 145
- 62 Life of Saint Peter and martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul, Cologne cathedral, choir screen interior, north side, east section, ca. 1330 145
- 63 Lives of Pope Sylvester and Emperor Constantine, Cologne cathedral, choir screen interior, north side, center section, ca. 1330 146
- 64 Lives of Pope Sylvester and Emperor Constantine and his mother Helena, Cologne cathedral, choir screen interior, north side, west section, ca. 1330 146
- 65 Tomb of Archbishop Siegfried III of Eppstein (d. 1249), mid-thirteenth century, Mainz cathedral 151
- 66 Head of the tomb effigy of Archbishop Gerhard II of Eppstein (d. 1305), early fourteenth century, Mainz, Bischöfliches Dom- und Diözesanmuseum 152
- 67 Franz Joseph Bodmann, drawing of the tomb effigy of Archbishop Gerhard II of Eppstein (d. 1305) at the time of its discovery, 1804 (Mainz, Stadtarchiv, Lindenschmit Nachlaß zu III Aw 1a (III Md 3) b) 152
- 68 Tomb of Archbishop Peter of Aspelt (d. 1320), ca. 1330, Mainz cathedral 154

- 69 Two archbishop-electors seat the future king Henry VII on the altar; the archbishop of Cologne crowns King Henry at Aachen, Codex Balduini, 1330s (Koblenz, Landeshauptarchiv, MS 1 C 1, fol. 4) 156
- 70 The newly crowned King Henry VII and Queen Margaret kneel before the shrine of the Three Kings at Cologne; the archbishop of Mainz marries Henry's son John to the Bohemian princess Elizabeth in Speyer in 1310, Codex Balduini, 1330s (Koblenz, Landeshauptarchiv, MS 1 C 1, fol. 5) 158
- 71 Shrine of the Three Kings, front, ca. 1181–1220, Cologne cathedral 159
- 72 Pope Sylvester shows the images of Peter and Paul to Constantine, Rome, Quattro Coronati, Chapel of Saint Sylvester, 1246 169
- 73 Pope Sylvester baptizes Constantine, Rome, Quattro Coronati, Chapel of Saint Sylvester, 1246 170
- 74 The Constantinian Donation, Rome, Quattro Coronati, Chapel of Saint Sylvester, 1246 170
- 75 Pope Sylvester baptizes Constantine, seventeenth-century drawing after the twelfth-century mosaic on the Lateran Basilica portico, Rome (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Cod. barb. lat. 4423, fol. 15) 171
- 76 The Constantinian Donation, seventeenth-century drawing after the twelfth-century mosaic on the Lateran Basilica portico, Rome (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Cod. barb. lat. 4423, fol. 14) 172
- 77 Peter and Paul appear to the sleeping Emperor Constantine and Pope Sylvester shows the images of Peter and Paul to Constantine, San Piero a Grado, early fourteenth century 173
- 78 Kings, standing over the arms of the von der Salzgasse family, Cologne cathedral, choir clerestory windows (S VI), ca. 1290–1304 177
- 79 Kings of France (above) and Archbishops (below), Reims cathedral, nave clerestory windows (bay 129; now lost; pre-1914 photo by François Rothier), ca. 1255–70 179
- 80 French King, Reims, Saint-Remi, nave clerestory (window 242/SXXIII), ca. 1134–51 181
- 81 King Chilperic, Reims, Saint-Remi, nave clerestory (window 244/SXXIV), ca. 1134–51 181
- 82 Reims, Saint-Remi, plan of the east end in the early twelfth century. After Madeline Harrison Caviness, *Sumptuous Arts at the Royal Abbeys in Reims and Braine* (Princeton, 1990), fig. 3. Copyright Madeline H. Caviness 184
- 83 Seated tomb figures of Louis IV and Lothar, Reims, Saint-Remi. After Bernard de Montfaucon, *Monumens de la monarchie française* (Paris, 1729), 1: pl. 30–1 186
- 84 *Fastigium*, Reims, Saint-Remi. After Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand, *Voyage littéraire de deux religieux bénédictins de la Congrégation de Saint Maur* (Paris, 1717), 2:81 188
- 85 Enthroned king, perhaps Charlemagne or Henry VI as Charlemagne, from the west facade (?) of Strasbourg cathedral, fourth quarter of the twelfth century (Strasbourg, Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame) 195

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

xiii

86	Tomb of Rudolf of Swabia (d. 1080), Merseburg cathedral, ca. 1080–90	198
87	Tombs of Eberhard of Nellenburg (d. ca. 1078), his wife Ita (d. after 1103/4), and their son Burkhard (d. 1101/2), from the church of Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen, early twelfth century (Schaffhausen, Museum zu Allerheiligen)	200
88	Schaffhausen, Allerheiligen, church with external crypt and cloister, plan, ca. 1050–64. After Walter Ulrich Guyan, “Das Salvator-Kloster zu Schaffhausen: Ergebnisse der Allerheiligen-Grabung von 1963 bis 1965,” <i>Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte</i> 36 (1979): 174, Abb. 30	202
89	<i>Stifterdenkmal</i> , found in the church of Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen, ca. 1080–1100 (Schaffhausen, Museum zu Allerheiligen)	204
90	Schaffhausen, Allerheiligen, church, plan, 1087–1103/4. After Josef Hecht, <i>Der romanische Kirchenbau des Bodenseegebietes von seinen Anfängen bis zum Ausklingen</i> , vol. 1: <i>Analyse der Bauten</i> (Basel, 1928), pl. 199b	207
91	Tomb of Abbess Adelheid I (d. 1044), Quedlinburg, St. Servatius, ca. 1095–1125	212
92	Tomb of Abbess Beatrix (d. 1062), Quedlinburg, St. Servatius, ca. 1095–1125	212
93	Tomb of Abbess Adelheid II (d. 1095), Quedlinburg, St. Servatius, ca. 1095–1125	213
94	Quedlinburg, St. Servatius, plan showing arrangement of graves excavated in 1938. After Hermann Wäscher, <i>Der Burgberg in Quedlinburg: Geschichte seiner Bauten bis zum ausgehenden 12. Jahrhundert nach den Ergebnissen der Grabungen von 1928 bis 1942</i> (Berlin, 1959), fig. 253	214
95	Tomb of Abbess Agnes II of Meissen (d. 1203), Quedlinburg, St. Servatius, soon after 1203	218
96	Tomb of Abbess Gertrude of Amfurt (d. 1270), Quedlinburg, St. Servatius, soon after 1270	219
97	Tomb of an unnamed abbess (Bertrada of Krosigk [d. 1230], Kunigunde of Kranichfeld and Kirchberg [d. 1231], or Osterlinde of Falkenstein [d. 1232]), Quedlinburg, St. Servatius, ca. 1240	219
98	Tomb of Otto, Margrave of Meissen (d. 1190), Altzella, ca. 1270	224
99	Tomb of Hedwig (d. ca. 1197), wife of Otto of Meissen, Altzella, ca. 1270	224
100	Tomb of Albert, Margrave of Meissen (d. 1195), Altzella, ca. 1270	225
101	Tomb of Dietrich, Margrave of Meissen (d. 1221), Altzella, ca. 1270	225
102	Tomb of Otto, Margrave of Meissen (d. 1190). After Christian Schlegel, <i>De Cella Veteri</i> (Dresden, 1703), unnumbered sheet inserted after p. 22	226
103	Tomb of Hedwig (d. ca. 1197), wife of Otto of Meissen. After Christian Schlegel, <i>De Cella Veteri</i> (Dresden, 1703), unnumbered sheet inserted after p. 28	226
104	Tomb of Albert, Margrave of Meissen (d. 1195). After Christian Schlegel, <i>De Cella Veteri</i> (Dresden, 1703), unnumbered sheet inserted after p. 32	227
105	Tomb of Dietrich, Margrave of Meissen (d. 1221). After Christian Schlegel, <i>De Cella Veteri</i> (Dresden, 1703), unnumbered sheet inserted after p. 42	227

106	Tomb of Louis the Springer, Count of Thuringia (d. 1123), originally at Reinhardsbrunn, early fourteenth century (Eisenach, St. Georg)	230
107	Tomb of Adelheid (d. 1110), wife of Louis the Springer, originally at Reinhardsbrunn, early fourteenth century (Eisenach, St. Georg)	230
108	Tomb of Louis I, Landgrave of Thuringia (d. 1140), originally at Reinhardsbrunn, early fourteenth century (Eisenach, St. Georg)	230
109	Tomb of Louis II the Iron, Landgrave of Thuringia (d. 1172), originally at Reinhardsbrunn, early fourteenth century (Eisenach, St. Georg)	230
110	Tomb of Jutta of Swabia (d. 1191), wife of Louis II the Iron, originally at Reinhardsbrunn, early fourteenth century (Eisenach, St. Georg)	231
111	Tomb of Louis III the Pious, Landgrave of Thuringia (d. 1190), originally at Reinhardsbrunn, early fourteenth century (Eisenach, St. Georg),	231
112	Tomb of Louis IV, Landgrave of Thuringia (d. 1227), originally at Reinhardsbrunn, early fourteenth century (Eisenach, St. Georg)	231
113	Tomb of Herman II, Landgrave of Thuringia (d. 1241), originally at Reinhardsbrunn, early fourteenth century (Eisenach, St. Georg)	231
114	Drawing for Roger de Gaignières (1642–1715) of the tomb of Robert the Pious (d. 1031) and Constance of Arles (d. 1032), installed at Saint-Denis in 1263–64 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Gough Drawings–Gaignières II, fol. 16)	235
115	Tomb of Konrad of Thuringia, High Master of the Teutonic Order (d. 1240), Marburg, St. Elisabeth, 1240s	238
116	Tomb of Adelheid of Braunschweig (d. 1274), wife of Landgrave Henry I, Marburg, St. Elisabeth, 1270s	238
117	Friedrich Lange, arrangement of the graves of the landgraves of Hesse in the south transept of the church of St. Elisabeth, Marburg, after the excavations of 1854	239
118	First tomb of Henry the Younger (d. 1298), Marburg, St. Elisabeth, soon after 1298	240
119	Tomb of Henry I, Landgrave of Hesse (d. 1308), and Henry the Younger (d. 1298), Marburg, St. Elisabeth, 1320s	241
120	Tomb of Otto I, Landgrave of Hesse (d. 1328), Marburg, St. Elisabeth, 1320s	241
121	South transept with tombs of the Hessian landgraves, Marburg, St. Elisabeth	242
122	Tomb of Otto I, Landgrave of Hesse (d. 1328), foot end with figures representing his sons Otto, Archbishop of Magdeburg, and Henry II, Marburg, St. Elisabeth, 1320s	244
123	Drawing for Roger de Gaignières (1642–1715) of the tomb of Marie of Bourbon (d. 1274) installed at the abbey church of Saint-Yved, Braine, probably soon after her death (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Gough Drawings–Gaignières I, fols. 78r (top) and 79r (bottom))	246
124	Guelf family tree, <i>Historia Welforum</i> , ca. 1185–90 (Fulda, Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, MS D 11, fol. 13v)	250

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

xv

- 125 Frederick Barbarossa enthroned between his sons King Henry VI and Duke Frederick, *Historia Welforum*, ca. 1185–90 (Fulda, Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, MS D 11, fol. 14r) 251
- 126 Guelf family tree, detached folio from an unidentified manuscript, now lost, ca. 1196–97 259
- 127 King Konrad III, Leopold, Duke of Bavaria, and Hadmar I, Liber fundatorum, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 8v) 263
- 128 Hadmar and Abbot Herman on horseback defining the territory of Cloister Zwettl with Pope Innocent II, Duke Leopold of Bavaria, and King Konrad III, Liber fundatorum, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 12r) 264
- 129 Duke Frederick II, Liber fundatorum, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 28r) 266
- 130 Gisela of Sonnberg and her descendants, Liber fundatorum, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 17v) 272
- 131 Hadmar II and his wife, as the donors of the monastery church of Zwettl, and their children, Liber fundatorum, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 18r) 273
- 132 Hadmar III and his children, Liber fundatorum, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 26v) 274
- 133 Henry III and his descendants, Liber fundatorum, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 27r) 275
- 134 Gisela of Falkenburg, her husband, and their descendants, Liber fundatorum, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 44r) 276
- 135 King Rudolph of Habsburg and his descendants, Liber fundatorum, 1310–11 (Zwettl, Cloister Archive, MS 2/1, fol. 55r) 281
- 136 Stephen of Meissau and his wife Margaret offering the Cistercian church at Mailan and their descendants, Stiftungsbuch of the cloister of St. Bernhard at Mailan, eighteenth-century copy after a lost original of ca. 1350 (Klosterneuburg, Archiv, Sammlung Freisleben, Karton 1, Nr. 2) 282
- 137 Ulrich of Meissau and his wife, Anna of Schaunberch, and their descendants, Stiftungsbuch of the cloister of St. Bernhard at Mailan, eighteenth-century copy after a lost original of ca. 1350 (Klosterneuburg, Archiv, Sammlung Freisleben, Karton 1, Nr. 2) 283
- 138 Albrecht Altdorfer (attributed), Habsburg family tree from *Historia Friderici et Maximiliani*, ca. 1508–10 (Vienna, Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Hs. Blau 9, fol. 6r) 288
- 139 Hans Burgkmair, Hector, from *Genealogie*, ca. 1510–12 (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, picture archives, Vienna + signatures, Cod. 8018, fol. 1v) 289
- 140 Albrecht Dürer and workshop, Triumphal Arch, 1515, 1799 edition (Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 1991.200.1, Gift of David P. Tunick and Elizabeth S. Tunick, in honor of the appointment of Andrew Robison as Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator) 290

xvi LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 141 | Hans Burgkmair, Caesar Augustus, woodcut designed for Konrad Peutinger's <i>Kaiserbuch</i> , ca. 1506 (Dillingen an der Donau, Studienbibliothek, V 1462, p. 119) | 291 |
| 142 | Cenotaph for Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor (d. 1519), Innsbruck, Hofkirche, 1502–ca. 1555 | 292 |
| 143 | Tomb of Mary of Burgundy (d. 1482), north side with family tree of her father, Charles the Bold, Bruges, Church of Our Lady, 1488–1501 | 293 |

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It seems that I have been working on this book my entire career. I remember photocopying the appendices of Harald Keller's 1939 article on the development of portraiture while researching my dissertation in Germany on a fellowship from the Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst. The first lists fourteen figural sequences of rulers between 1300 and 1380; the second, somewhat longer, enumerates tomb monuments installed between 1250 and 1350 to commemorate long-dead donors. Keller didn't seem interested in the possible connection between the two lists – sequences of tombs for successive family members or officeholders. I could think of numerous additional examples for both lists, among them the tombs of the landgraves of Hesse at Marburg that I was researching for my dissertation. I started tossing slips of paper into a file every time I thought of or ran across another example, and as historians and scholars of medieval literature began to investigate the importance of genealogy in the Middle Ages, I finally decided that the time had come to do something with this material. By then the file was so fat that the scale of the project was intimidating. At a conference banquet to which I accompanied my husband in the summer of 1997, I admitted as much in a lively conversation with the late economist Allan Meltzer, saying that this felt like one of those huge topics that one should address from the wisdom and wider experience of old age at the end of one's career. His advice was both sound and motivating: to write the book as I wanted to write it then and address the topic again later if I felt I had other things to say. The present book, then, is a first attempt to come to grips with the vastness of the material in a way that allows an understanding of both the numbers of images and image cycles with genealogical content and some of the subtleties of genealogical representation in the high and late Middle Ages. It has taken me so long that it is simultaneously the product of my presumably wise old age.

It seems a natural human preoccupation to be concerned with our ancestors, with where we come from, with those whose blood we share. My parents found and still find their family histories interesting and cultivated in me and my siblings an early curiosity about the past as it applied to us personally. They took us to sites associated with earlier generations of their families: the Holladay family cemetery, where my great-grandfather, who died before my father

was born, and my much younger great-grandmother, whom I remember well, are buried side by side with some of their children and grandchildren; the “old home place” nearby, where my father remembers spending summers on the farm as a child, later evacuated by the Army Corps of Engineers for a water management project in the 1930s, but which then didn’t flood after all; the town where my father was born, where sidewalks and concrete steps are all that remain of a good-sized village that was moved in the same flood prevention campaign. As appealing as these history-laden sites were to a child, the stories about people interested me as much as the physical spaces in which they had lived. I was intrigued by the idea that my father had an uncle who was hardly older than he was. Later on, it was a source of some confusion that I had two great-grandmothers with the same last name: my mother’s maternal grandmother, after the untimely death of her first husband, later married a paternal uncle of her grown daughter’s husband. Photos made this all come alive. We still take family pictures in the same setting as that in the photograph that hangs in the hall behind me, on the boulders where the grandparents, parents, and older siblings of my grandfather posed before he was born in 1902. It’s not just that I’m interested in how these people looked; it’s more the idea that there is physical, pictorial documentation that locates earlier steps in the lineage of which I am a part. It certainly seems, at least to this art historian, livelier and more personal testimony to their existence and to my past than mere names on the pages of a census or notices in a newspaper. The cycles that I deal with in the chapters that follow, cycles to which I have no personal connection, certainly served some of the same roles for the viewers whose families they document. In every case, however, they also served more complicated social and political functions, and those are the subject of this book.

When one plugs away at a large project over a long period of time, one incurs many debts; naming names here can hardly begin to repay them or express the depths of my appreciation. First, because it’s closest to my mind in light of my most recent work on this project, I thank Beatrice Rehl at Cambridge University Press for her faith in this book and for moving it along so professionally and expeditiously. Her assistant, Edgar Mendez, has worked, often without my knowledge, to that same end. Also at Cambridge, Katherine Tengco Barbaro, the content manager for this project, coordinated all aspects of the book’s production, working with Yassar Arafat, my project manager at SPi Global, and the press’s design team. Wendy Nardi provided able and efficient help with all the things copy editors do so well.

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on the project away from Austin and undistracted by the needs of the classroom and committee meetings. Jack Risley and Douglas Dempster, my most recent department chair and dean, respectively, arranged for me to hold the Walter and Gina Ducloux Fine Arts Faculty Fellowship in the spring of 2014, which allowed me unbroken time to update chapters written long ago and complete the introduction. Jeffrey Chipps Smith deserves special thanks for including research and travel funds for his colleagues in European art in his annual proposals to the Kimbell Art Foundation; to the foundation I express my heartfelt gratitude for the flexibility their funding has allowed. Glenn Peers negotiated generously for graduate student assistance for several of us working in medieval and early modern fields; Louis Waldman helped with some of the Latin translations; and Penelope Davies was a ready and well-informed conversation partner on issues large and small. I have profited from the help of Meagan Green Labunski, then an undergraduate honors student, and our former graduate students Steph Payne, Shannon Steiner, Emily Pietrowski, Meagan Decker, and April Jehanne Morris. Jenn Bassman and Jacob Schock served as my able research assistants during a year-long stint as the Dorothy K. Hohenberg Chair of Excellence in Art History at the University of Memphis, an honor I owe to the late Carol Purtle.

It is a special pleasure to thank Sherry Smith, a former MA student of mine, for her friendship over the years, her seemingly infinite curiosity, and our lively discussions about art history in general and my project in particular. Her generosity to the Department of Art and Art History helped fund the purchase of photographs as did several summer grants from the College of Fine Arts and a Special Research Grant from UT's University Research Institute. A generous subvention from the Office of the Vice President for Research and unexpected financial assistance my department chair Jack Risley, from the research funds associated with his own chair, helped support the publication of images beyond the number normally allotted by the press. Serena Romano, Marie Bláhová, Nadesda Kubu, Madeline Caviness, and Paola Pogliani helped put me in touch with image sources, and Ann Roberts and Anne Rudloff Stanton arranged specific photographs for me. Sydney Kilgore, Mark Doroba, and Mindy Johnston Niendorff, all formerly of our Visual Resources Center and now on the staff of the Fine Arts Library, offered their always efficient, cheerful, and timely help with scanning. The photographers cited in the image credits and the many staff members at the various libraries, archives, and regional monuments authorities who enabled easy access to the materials in their charge and helped arrange photographs have also earned my unending appreciation. I would be remiss if I failed to mention UT's amazing Interlibrary Services, which has become progressively more efficient and user-friendly over the years, and the staff of the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich, especially the Manuscripts and Rare Books divisions, has long provided a comfortable second research home.

Colleagues and friends at other universities have also offered lively discussion, concrete suggestions, and helpful criticism. Ursula Nilgen and the late Willibald Sauerländer made time to discuss ideas and bibliography with me at a very early stage of this work. Olivier de Laborderie, Michael T. Davis, and Lawrence Nees shared their work before publication; Marigold Norbye and Inga Spillmann generously sent me books by other people. John Block Friedman, William W. Clark, Mary Shepard, Todd Porterfield, and Shirin Fozi willingly shared ideas in areas of their expertise.

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I dedicate this book to my current and former Ph.D. students in the history of medieval art, amazing women every one. Their devotion to their work, their intellectual curiosity, and their friendship have stimulated and sustained me.

Citations throughout are from the Douay-Rheims Bible.

Unless otherwise specified, all translations are my own.

Dates in parentheses are those of tenure in office unless specifically noted as years of birth and death.

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Joan A. Holladay

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