

TRANSFORMATIONS OF AUTHORIAL REPRESENTATION  
IN THE MANESSE CODEX

by

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A THESIS

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The author portraits from the Manesse Codex, a 14<sup>th</sup>-century compilation of German love lyrics, have traditionally been viewed as expendable illustrations to the accompanying texts. In fact, these paintings profoundly affected how contemporary readers would have understood the poems, thus helping shape social attitudes regarding the nature and meaning of authorship. Three specific images in the manuscript reveal various modulations in the patron's or artist's attitude towards authorship. The frontispiece for Der von Kürenberg reconfigures a traditional motif to encourage an autobiographical understanding of his lyrics. Ulrich von Liechtenstein's image draws on sources outside the manuscript to promote a similar interpretation. In a third image, the poet Johannes Hadlaub, who appears to have participated in the making of the manuscript, deliberately exploits the image's ability to shape expectations of his status as an author by having himself depicted as if he had experienced the events described in his poetry.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Author portraits appear frequently in the decoration of medieval illuminated manuscripts, though the word “portrait” applies only with qualification: until the late Middle Ages and Renaissance artists were not interested in representing an author’s actual, historical appearance.<sup>1</sup> Instead, variations of a standard iconographical type sufficed to portray authorship. This visual formula, developed in late Antiquity and ubiquitous for centuries in European and Byzantine manuscripts, depicts the author seated at a desk or pulpit with pen and ink in hand, either writing directly or contemplating the words about to be written.<sup>2</sup> Such images normally, but not always, appear as full-page, framed frontispieces, introducing a body of writings attributed to the author depicted. Author portraits were most commonly used for religious works, as in an early 13<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of the works of Hildegard von Bingen (Fig. 1)<sup>3</sup>, but during

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<sup>1</sup> See Don Denny, “Author portrait,” in Jane Turner, ed., *The Dictionary of Art*, Vol. 2 (NY: Grove, 1996), 835-837, and Dorothee Klein, “Autorenbild,” in Otto Schmidt, ed., *Reallexikon der deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, Bd. 1 (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1937), 1310-1314.

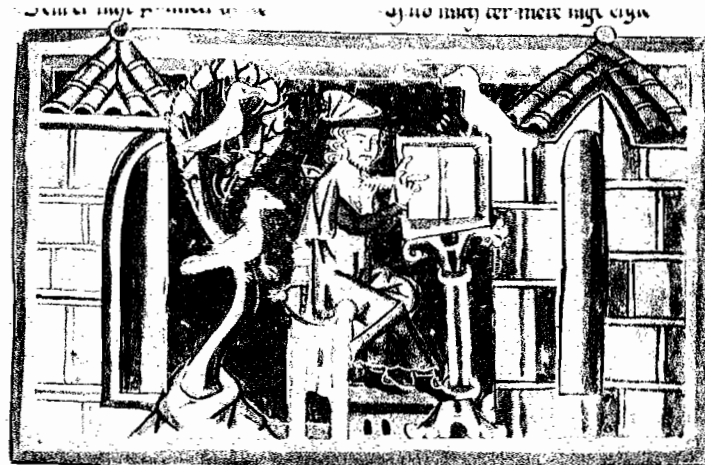
<sup>2</sup> On the origins and development of the Christian author portrait and its transmission into the later Middle Ages, see Albert M. Friend, Jr., “The Portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts,” in *Art Studies*, Vol. 5 (1927): 115-147 and continued in *Art Studies*, Vol. 7 (1929): 3-29, and Hugo Steger, *David rex et propheta* (Nuremberg: Verlag Hans Carl, 1961).

<sup>3</sup> Lucca, Bib. Stat., Ms. 142, fol. 9r. For many other German examples of this iconographical tradition, see Joachim Prochno, *Das Schreiber- und Dedikationsbild in der deutsche Buchmalerei (800-1100)* (Leipzig and Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1929).

the later Middle Ages they began to appear in secular and vernacular works as well. For example, in a manuscript produced around 1270, the German chronicler Rudolf von Ems appears in the pages of his most famous work, the *Weltchronik*, in a pose that closely mimics the traditional author portrait composition (Fig. 2).<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 1.** Hildegard of Bingen at her writing desk. Lucca, Bib. Stat., Ms. 142, fol. 9r.



**Figure 2.** Rudolf von Ems at his writing desk. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 6406, fol. 134r.

In the vernacular songbooks produced in the years around 1300 in upper Germany, the traditional author portrait underwent radical changes, even as it retained its traditional placement in front of the author's text. Perhaps the most notable examples of these transformations stem from the pages of the *Codex Manesse*, a late medieval compilation of German lyric poetry created in Zurich around 1300.<sup>5</sup> In the frontispieces

<sup>4</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cgm 6406, fol. 134r. See Ursula Peters, "Autorbilder in Volkssprachigen Handschriften des Mittelalters: Eine Problemskizze," in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, Vol. 119, No. 3 (2000), 321-368.

<sup>5</sup> For a complete facsimile, see *Codex Manesse: Die Grosse Heidelberger Liederhandschrift. Faksimile-Ausgabe des Codex Pal. Germ. 848 der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg*. 1975-79. It is available digitally at <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/cpg848/>. A full codicological description appears in the accompanying commentary volume: Wilfried Werner, "Die Handschrift und ihre Geschichte," in *Codex Manesse: Die grosse Heidelberger Liederhandschrift, Kommentar zum Faksimile des Codex Palatinus Germanicus 848 der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg*, eds. Walter Koschorrek and Wilfried Werner

of this manuscript, representations of the author have transformed traditional author portrait iconography into something quite new, something indeed scarcely recognizable as an author portrait. How specifically have these images transformed the traditional notion of the author portrait? What can these images tell us about contemporary attitudes towards authorship, and the role of the author in society at the time? In what ways do they respond to contemporary notions of authorship, and how would they have affected a contemporary reader/viewer's understanding of the poems they introduce?

Focusing on three specific frontispieces in the Manesse Codex, this thesis examines these pictorial transformations, and how the author representations in the manuscript worked to transform the contemporary reader's understanding of the concept of authorship. By representing the author as a participant in the actions and scenarios described in his poetry, the successfully merge the poet with the narrator of his poems, encouraging the belief that the Manesse poets spoke and wrote autobiographically.

Richly illuminated, monumental in its scope, beguiling in its iconography, the Manesse Codex has always posed more questions than it answers. The manuscript, outfitted with one of the most extensive and unique pictorial cycles in medieval art, collects the vernacular German lyric verses of 140 authors. Introducing 137 of these authors are carefully executed, full-page miniatures. No solid evidence shedding light on its commissioning, creation, or early history exists, but paleographic and stylistic data

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(Kassel: Ganymed, 1981), 15-39. A complete diplomatic transcription of the manuscript has also been published: Fridrich Pfaff, ed., *Die Grosse Heidelberger Liederhandschrift (Codex Manesse) in getreuem Textabdruck* (repr. Heidelberg, 1984). For recent scholarship on the codex with full bibliographies, see the essays collected in two important exhibition catalogues: Elmar Mittler and Wilfried Werner, eds., *Codex Manesse: Texte – Bilder – Sachen* (Exh. Cat., Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg; Heidelberg: Edition Braus, 1988); and Claudia Brinker and Dione Flühler-Kreis, eds., *'Edele Frouwen – Schoene Man': Die Manessische Liederhandschrift in Zürich* (Zurich: Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, 1991).

combine with internal evidence to place its creation in Zurich in the years just after 1300.<sup>6</sup> At this time, Zurich was a thriving center of manuscript production, and a considerable stylistic, technical, and iconographical unity exists among the works issuing from the region's scriptoria, both religious and laical.<sup>7</sup> The Manesse Codex is unquestionably one of the most important commissions to emerge from this *Kunstlandschaft*.

The manuscript lacks a colophon, but a considerable pool of circumstantial evidence points to a Zurich nobleman Rüdiger Manesse (1252-1304) as the most likely patron, and modern researchers almost unanimously accept this attribution.<sup>8</sup> Besides serving in an administrative capacity for the city, Manesse seems to have been the center of an aristocratic group of art collectors and patrons, including prominent and wealthy

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<sup>6</sup> Initially somewhat controversial, this localization and dating is now accepted by virtually all scholars. The most decisive early article was Friedrich Vogt, "Die Heimat der grossen Heidelberger Liederhandschrift," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, Vol. 33 (1908): 373-381, a meticulous paleographical study that matches particular letterforms and abbreviations to scribal practices in Zurich, and contrasts them to the practices of nearby cities like Constance.

<sup>7</sup> For an archaeologically-based portrait of Zurich of the time, see Jürg E. Schneider, "Zurichs Weg zur Stadt," in *Nobile Turicum multarum copia rerum: Drei Aufsätze zum mittelalterlichen Zurich*. Zurich: Juris Druck & Verlag, 1982, 4-37. Eva Moser provides a brief cultural overview with an emphasis on the local book trade in "Historische Landschaft und Buchkultur," in Eva Moser, ed., *Buchmalerei im Bodenseeraum: 13. bis 16. Jahrhundert*. (Friedrichshafen: Verlag Robert Gessler, 1997), 7-22. For the concept of a specific *Kunstlandschaft* centered around Lake Constance, see Cordula M. Kessler, "Gotische Buchmalerei des Bodenseeraumes aus der Zeit von 1260 bis um 1340/50," in *Buchmalerei im Bodenseeraum*, ed. Moser, 70-96.

<sup>8</sup> The only important exception is the thesis submitted by Ewald Jammers, *Das königliche Liederbuch des deutschen Minnesangs: eine Einführung in die sogenannte Manessische Handschrift* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1965), whose work, however, has been roundly criticized by many scholars: cf., e.g., Hella Frühmorgen-Voss's book review in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, Vol. 88 (1967): 371-380.

individuals both lay and clerical, whose friendly rivalries and efforts at self-aggrandizement often included expenditure on lavish art objects.<sup>9</sup>

Manesse's association with the luxury manuscript now bearing his name rests chiefly on one particular poem found among its contents, first brought to the attention of scholars by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century antiquarian Johann Jakob Bodmer (1698-1783).<sup>10</sup> The local Zurich poet Johannes Hadlaub describes Manesse's interests in collecting and preserving vernacular lyric poetry, and specifically mentions that such a large assemblage of "*liederbuoch*" (song manuscripts) could not be found anywhere else in Europe.<sup>11</sup> Though it is possible that the "*liederbuoch*" mentioned by Hadlaub were actually the very quires later assembled into the Manesse codex, most researchers propose that they were smaller and less comprehensive anthologies, whose contents were then re-copied and collected together to form the Manesse codex as it exists today.<sup>12</sup> This process probably continued beyond Manesse's death in 1304, and even after this original assemblage was complete, further additions were incorporated over the course of three more campaigns, continuing

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<sup>9</sup> The study by Hertha-Elisabeth Renk, *Der Manessekreis, seine Dichter und die Manessische Handschrift* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1974), attempts to collect all biographical information about Manesse and his circle in order to shed light on the emergence of the manuscript.

<sup>10</sup> Johann Jakob Bodmer, *Proben der alten schwäbischen Poesie des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts, aus der Manessischen Sammlung* (Zurich: Ben Heidegger & Co., 1748), iii-xvi.

<sup>11</sup> The most thorough and enlightening discussion of the relevant passages appears in Hugo Kuhn, "Die Voraussetzungen für die Entstehung der Manessischen Liederhandschrift," in *Liebe und Gesellschaft*, ed. Wolfgang Walliczek (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1980), 80-105, esp 100-105. For more on Hadlaub and his relationship to the Manesse codex and its imagery, see Chapter 4.

<sup>12</sup> See Gisela Kornrumpf, "Die Anfänge der Manessischen Liederhandschrift," in *Deutsche Handschriften, 1100-1400*, ed. Volker Honemann and Nigel F. Palmer (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1988), 279-296. For a full discussion of the relationships between the Codex Manesse and other similar extant songbooks, see Kuhn, "Voraussetzungen," 92-95.

as late as the 1340s.<sup>13</sup> The aim, instigated by Manesse and pursued by anonymous parties after him, was apparently to create a kind of definitive sourcebook of German poetry. Ultimately, however, work broke off in the midst of a later campaign, leaving some poets' names without any poetry and some miniatures unfinished.

The poets represented in its pages are arranged by the social standing or rank of each poet, a principle that is more strictly applied in the first half than the latter sections.<sup>14</sup> Some of the poets' corpora occupy over a dozen pages; others only a few, or just one. The texts included are almost exclusively love lyrics, or *Minnesang*. All of the poems in the Manesse codex were originally songs, set to music and intended to be performed. While the melodies of some of the songs survive in other manuscripts, the Manesse Codex itself lacks all notations of melodies.

Besides this plenitude of lyric verse, the manuscript also boasts an extraordinarily complex and inventive pictorial cycle in which a full-page miniature introduces the works of each individual poet.<sup>15</sup> One hundred and ten of these miniatures, on the basis of their

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<sup>13</sup> Modern research regarding the manuscript's "stratification" over the course of several campaigns remains indebted to Adolf von Oechelhäuser's early study, "Zur Entstehung der Manesse-Handschrift," in *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, Vol. 3 (1893): 152-189. Among recent discussions, see especially Ewald M. Vetter, "Die Bilder," in Koschorrek and Werner, eds., *Codex Manesse*, 43-100.

<sup>14</sup> This aspect of the manuscript formed a key focus of early scholarship. See especially Fr. Grimme, "Die Anordnung der grossen Heidelberger Liederhandschrift," in *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher*, Vol. 4 (1894): 53-90; Anton Wallner, "Herren und Spielleute im Heidelberger Liedercodex," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, Vol. 33 (1908): 483-540; indispensable now is Joachim Bumke, *Ministerialität und Ritterdichtung: Umriss der Forschung* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1976), esp. 14-21.

<sup>15</sup> For color reproductions of each image in the manuscript with accompanying discussions, see Ingo F. Walther, *Codex Manesse: Die Miniaturen der Großen Heidelberger Liederhandschrift* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Insel Verlag, 1988). Scholars have long been interested in developing new ways to categorize and divide the Manesse images, such as by compositional type (e.g., Fritz T. Schulz, *Typisches der grossen Heidelberger Liederhandschrift und verwandter Handschriften nach Wort und Bild* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901)); by iconographical sources (Richard M. Meyer, "Hadlaub und Manesse," in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, Vol. 44 (1900): 197-222 and more adroitly, Hella Frühmorgen-Voss, "Bildtypen in der Manessischen Liederhandschrift," in *Werk – Typ –*

tight stylistic and compositional relationship, are attributed to one anonymous painter, the so-called *Grundstockmaler* or Foundation Painter.<sup>16</sup> As the collection was expanded over several decades, three other painters contributed additional miniatures.<sup>17</sup> All of the *Grundstock* images are enclosed in ornamental frames of red, blue, and gold, whose overall size matches precisely that of the two text columns opposite. On the text pages, bold initials of varying sizes, mark the beginnings of individual poems and stanzas. These initials are undecorated save for wispy, calligraphic flourishes of red and blue lines extending into the margin to the left of each text block. The red and blue hues of the rubricator recur frequently in the *Grundstockmaler*'s bright palette, providing another formal connection between text pages and image.

Setting the codex apart from the majority of earlier song collections, in German as well as Latin, French, and Spanish, is its emphasis on the individual author as the primary organizing element.<sup>18</sup> By drawing attention to each individual author, and visually separating the works of one from another, the author portrait here plays an important role

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*Situation: Studien zur poetologischen Bedingungen in der älteren deutschen Literatur*, ed. Ingeborg Glier, 184-216 (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969); or by their relationship to the texts they introduce (Walter Koschorreck, "Die Bildmotive," in Koschorreck and Werner, eds., *Codex Manesse*, 103-127.

<sup>16</sup> On the *Grundstockmaler*, see Ewald M. Vetter, "Die Bilder," in Koschorreck and Werner, eds., *Codex Manesse*, 47-55. In an earlier article, "Probleme der grossen Heidelberger ('Manessischen') Liederhandschrift," in *Pantheon*, Vol. 36 (1978): 207-218, Vetter had already proposed the existence of three assistants who divided up and completed paintings designed by the *Grundstockmaler* himself, presumably as head of the workshop.

<sup>17</sup> See note 13.

<sup>18</sup> See Ursula Peters, "Ordnungsfunktion – Textillustration – Autokonstruktion: Zu den Bildern der romanischen und deutschen Liederhandschriften," in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, Vol. 130, No. 4 (2001): 393-430.

not only in the practical matter of distinguishing and dividing one author from another, but also with respect to the contemporary reception of the manuscript.

Despite an overall rejection of traditional author portrait iconography, the manuscript makes clear in several ways that the images are in fact to be understood as author portraits. First, their format imitates clearly the format of a classical Gospel author portrait, with a framed, full-page image preceding a body of texts. Then, a caption inscribed over the top of each image records the name of the poet whose works follow the image. The caption clearly has a bearing on the image below, and this relationship is solidified by the inclusion of coats of arms within the image itself, occasionally even born by the author-figure within the image. In many, though not all, cases, these arms are historically verifiable, eliminating all doubt as to the intended identity of the depicted figure.<sup>19</sup>

The history of scholarship regarding the Codex Manesse has involved literary historians as well as art historians. Early scholars saw only a literary value to the Manesse Codex, disparaging the images for their lack of conformity to classical canons of style.<sup>20</sup> Later, more Romantically-minded writers re-appraised the miniatures, prizing them for this same distance from the classical ideal. In no case were the images viewed as necessary or relevant to an understanding of the literary texts they introduced.

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<sup>19</sup> See Karl Zangemeister, *Die Wappen, Helmzierden und Standarten der grossen Heidelberger Liederhandschrift (Manesse-Codex)* (Heidelberg: August Siebert Buch- and Kunstverlag, 1892).

<sup>20</sup> For a thorough and reliable survey of the scholarship and historiography surrounding the manuscript up to the late 1970s, see Karl Clausberg, *Die Manessische Liederhandschrift* (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1978).



Later, while codicologists studied the manuscript minutely for evidence of its production and early history, art historians began to take a more active interest in the miniatures themselves and set about the preliminary work of classifying them and identifying their pictorial and textual sources. Some researchers scoured each miniature's associated body of texts for passages that could "explain" the image in question, while others sifted through historical archives in the belief that each miniature must have a basis in the biography of its poet. While much of this early research was conducted on a sound basis and retains validity, it also suffered from a lack of interest in the social and cultural context around the images, an unfounded insistence on a single, definitive meaning behind each image, and the belief that the manuscript formed a unified whole.

Modern researchers, armed with a greater interest in reception theory and acknowledging the shifting polyvalence of meaning, recognize that efforts to subsume the complexities of the entire pictorial cycle under a single, definitive principle are doomed to failure. Recent studies, though adding little to the concrete knowledge of the codex, have achieved both striking and illuminating results by applying broader, more interdisciplinary trends of scholarship to the manuscript. With respect to the Manesse images, emphasis now lay in two related directions: their relevance to the broader cultural shift from an oral to a written reception of vernacular literature;<sup>21</sup> and the closely related question of their connection to a changing understanding of the idea of "authorship."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See especially the work of Michael Curschmann, "'Pictura laicorum litteratura?'" Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Bild und volkssprachlicher Schriftlichkeit im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter bis zum Codex Manesse," in *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit im Mittelalter: Erscheinungsformen und Entwicklungsstufen*, eds. Hagen Keller, Klaus Grubmüller, and Nikolaus Staubach, 211-229 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1992), and "Wort – Schrift – Bild: Zum Verhältnis zum volkssprachigem Schrifttum und bildender Kunst vom 12. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert," in *Mittelalter und frühe Neuzeit: Übergänge, Umbrüche, und Neuansätze*, ed. Walter Haug, 378-470 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1999); and Nobert H. Ott,

Though no modern researcher would any longer assent to Alfred Stange's 1939 statement that the images merely treat "ganz allgemeine Themen...die zur Charakteristik des Dichters gar nichts beitragen,"<sup>23</sup> scholars have nevertheless failed to explore precisely how the Manesse frontispieces would have affected the understanding of the lyrics in a fourteenth-century context. Since the primary object of study in recent years has become broad, cultural patterns of literacy and authorship, little effort has been expended on specific, concrete images. Many modern writers simply use the Manesse images to illustrate much broader points, ignoring the mechanics of the individual image. Individual and specific images rarely receive any sort of comprehensive analysis. What is needed for the foundation of a reception study of the Manesse images are more studies of specific images in the Manesse corpus, looking closely at how a specific image affects the understanding of the specific texts that follow.<sup>24</sup> Only by following the genesis of a

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"Mündlichkeit, Schriftlichkeit, Illustration: Einiges Grundsätzliche zur Handschriftenillustration, insbesondere in der Volkssprache," in *Buchmalerei im Bodenseeraum: 13. Bis 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Eva Moser, 37-51 (Friedrichshafen: Verlag Robert Gessler, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> See most importantly the work of Ursula Peters, in her articles "Autorbilder," "Ordnungsfunktion," and the recent book-length study entitled *Das Ich im Bild: Die Figur des Autors in volkssprachigen Bilderhandschriften des 13. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*. Cologne: Bohlau, 2008; and Horst Wenzel, "Autorbilder: Zur Ausdifferenzierung von Autorfunktionen im Mittelalterlichen Miniaturen," in *Autor und Autorschaft im Mittelalter*, eds. Elizabeth Andersen, Jens Haustein, Anne Simon, and Peter Strohschneider, 1-28 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> "Completely generic themes...that contribute nothing at all to the characterization of the poet." Alfred Stange, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik, Vol. 1: Die Zeit von 1250 bis 1350* (Nendeln: Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1969), 45-46.

<sup>24</sup> Very few studies of individual Manesse images have appeared. Jeffrey Ashcroft, "The Power of Love: Representations of Kingship in the Love Songs of Henry VI and Frederick II, and in the Manesse Codex and the Liber ad honorem Augusti of Peter of Eboli," in Bjorn Weiler and Simon MacLean, eds., *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany, 800-1500*, 211-240 (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2006), discusses the opening image of Heinrich VI as a commentary on that Emperor's poem, but his interpretation, besides incorrectly assigning the image to the "mid-fourteenth century," insists upon too great an identification between the (hypothetical) sentiments behind the 12<sup>th</sup>-century poem and the supposed reflection of these sentiments in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century image. Much more promising and inspiring is the treatment of the famous Walther von der Vogelweide frontispiece by Achim Masser: "Ich saz uf eime

particular image, the meanings it strives to embody, and its reception by its original audience, can researchers lay a foundation for more comprehensive understanding of the book's place in broader cultural movements, such as the shift from oral to written transmission or the increasing interest in the author as a discrete, individual creative force.

This essay aims to contribute to this more recent literature by analyzing three particular representations of authors from the Manesse codex from the point of view of their social reception. The goal is not to make a comprehensive, all-encompassing statement about the manuscript itself, nor about its total pictorial program, but to identify and track a particular thread running through it, a thread that may illuminate contemporary social attitudes towards the author, and the ways in which imagery can shape and impact those attitudes.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter II lays further groundwork for the overall discussion by examining carefully the image prefacing the works of the poet Der von Kurenberg. Kurenberg provides an ideal test case for a study of the Manesse artist's understanding of authorship: because no information was known about the historical poet, who lived and died over a century before the manuscript's creation, we can see more clearly how the Manesse artist went about the task of constructing an image of the poet "from scratch." Analyzing this process, I observe particularly those elements that the

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steine': Das Bild Walthers von der Vogelweide," in *Tradition und Entwicklung: Festschrift Eugen Thurnher zum 60. Geburtstag*, eds. Werner M. Bauer, Achim Masser, and Guntram A. Plangg, 87-110 (Innsbruck: Bader Druck und Verlag, 1982). Though the titular "Bild" refers mainly to a textual/historical image, the author does recognize the ways in which pictorial representation, and the Manesse painting in particular, shaped the reception of Walther's poems by helping create an image of him that quickly branched away from what was historically verifiable. It is in the spirit of this essay that the present study proceeds.

painter deliberately alters in the transformation of a traditional motif to a “modern” author portrait. I also argue that this author portrait, once created and prefixed to the author’s works, would have then subtly altered the way the book’s readers would have regarded the author and understood the poems, specifically by encouraging the view that the poet was writing autobiographically.

In Chapter III, I build on this foundation to analyze a second image, that of Ulrich von Liechtenstein. Here, the artist had to design an image for a writer who had already fashioned elsewhere a self-image in textual form by the dissemination of a fictionalized autobiography. In designing his image, the Manesse artist follows Ulrich’s own self-creation. I argue that this image functions as a kind of visual “truth-claim,” in accordance with contemporary trends in popular literature, in which the author presents himself in the first-person as someone who actually experienced the events about which he writes. The Manesse image thus fulfills the traditional duties of an author portrait, but in a new and “modern” way. I connect this also to another popular literary trend of the day, in which historical poets became the protagonists of fictionalized legends. Several such poets are represented in the Manesse corpus, and I argue that this trend also justified the artist in his creation and propagation of fictionalized “biographical” images.

In Chapter IV, I examine the image of a poet, Johannes Hadlaub, who is believed to have been still living when the Manesse Codex was compiled, and indeed may have partaken in its creation. I argue here that Hadlaub, too, undertook a project of self-creation, but that this was not only through textual means, as Ulrich and others had done, but also through pictorial means. I assert that Hadlaub, recognizing the active role of images in constructing a fictional, poetic role for oneself, self-consciously utilized his

own image and other motifs in his Manesse frontispiece to insert himself into the popular tradition of fictionalized autobiography.

A final chapter offers a general summary of the conclusions and considers their applicability to the wider pool of Manesse images and beyond.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PAINTING OF DER VON KÜRENBERG

Close study of the image preceding the works of Der von Kürenberg (folio 63r, Fig. 3) will provide the groundwork for our investigation. As with the majority of Manesse images, it is not an author portrait in the traditional sense: it does not depict a scribe writing, meditating at his pulpit, or receiving inspiration. But like every Manesse image, its placement at the head of a textual corpus organized under a particular author's name, in conjunction with the caption that appears over the image itself, compels the reader to understand it as such.<sup>25</sup> This unusual discrepancy in the image, this gap between the image's function and its contents, provides a glimpse into its genesis and inner workings, and may subsequently shed light onto contemporary attitudes towards the author himself.

The painting shows a finely dressed man wearing a long, red, ermine-lined cloak covering a lighter, gold-trimmed blue robe, who stands opposite an equally sumptuously-attired, crowned noblewoman to the right. The two figures, understood as facing each other, gesture to one another in a lively fashion: with his right hand, the man hooks the thumb through the cord cinching his mantle while extending the first and second fingers towards the female. His left hand, cocked at the wrist, daintily holds a long, ghostly

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<sup>25</sup> As Hella Frühmorgen-Voss notes, such scenes also carry overtones of traditional "dedication" imagery, itself a particular variation of the author portrait. See Frühmorgen-Voss, "Bildtypen," 186-189.



Figure 3. Der von Kurenberg. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg 848, fol. 63r.

scroll, penciled in by the designer but never completed in color. She, meanwhile, uses her left hand to grasp and lift a portion of her rich, maroon dress, while her right is raised at the elbow to hold another scroll.<sup>26</sup> The man looks up slightly over the lady's head, perhaps at her scroll, while she looks directly over into his eyes. Where a liturgical manuscript might have filled in the background with precious gold leaf, here the blank parchment alone provides an indistinct, space-less backdrop to their encounter.

Compositionally the two figures appear as equals, drawn to the same scale. Above the man, hovering in the undefined space, the artist has added a helmet in profile, and a matching coat of arms is centered between the two. A frame composed of three parallel bands of blue, gold, and red close off the proceedings from the rest of the page. Above the image appears the poet's name in red ink.

No portrait, of course, of the historical Der von Kurenberg exists. The name itself means simply "the man from Kurenberg" and thus already betrays a degree of uncertainty on the editor's part; it is most likely derived from a brief reference found within the corpus itself.<sup>27</sup> The verses of this poet are known to appear only in this and one related songbook,<sup>28</sup> and no external documentation has been found that corroborates, verifies, or fleshes out the poet's existence. The coat of arms included in the manuscript is also a

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<sup>26</sup> The visible presence of guidelines, as well as the omission of half of each figure's hand, attest to the presence of scrolls in the *Grundstockmaler's* original conception. Why were they not executed? Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 52, says it was "wohl des Wappens wegen;" Gisela Siebert-Holz, in her "Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Dichterdarstellung in den Miniaturen der grossen Heidelberger Liederhandschrift" (PhD Diss., Marburg an der Lahn, Philippe-Universität, 1964), concurs: "Der Grund scheint nur in der wahrscheinlich späteren Anbringung des Wappens zu liegen" (213).

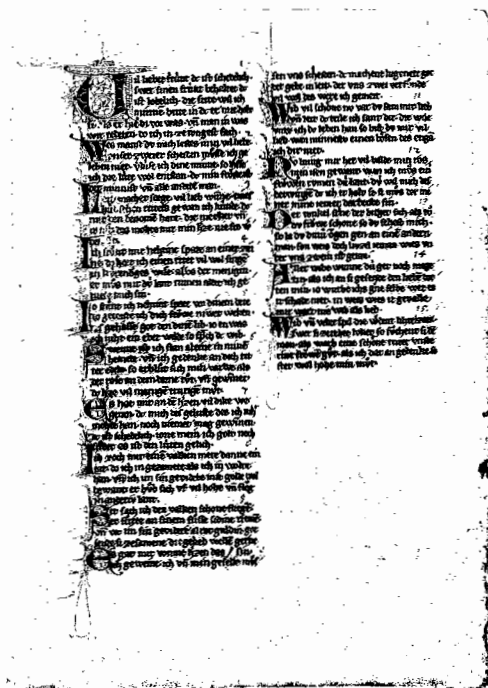
<sup>27</sup> In poem 8.3: "do hort ich einen riter/ vil wol singen/ in Kurenberges wise/ al uz der menigin. ("There I heard a knight/ singing quite well/ in Kurenberger's manner/ from the assembled crowd") See Olive Sayce, *The Medieval German Lyric, 1150-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 84.

<sup>28</sup> Sayce, *Medieval German Lyric*, 84. On the Budapest fragment, see below.



total fabrication: it depicts a hand-held mill, a pun that turns on the similarity between the proper noun Kürenberg and the Middle High German word “kürn” (“mill”). Given the important role of arms as identifying devices in the late Middle Ages, it is safe to assume that the artist had no additional information at his disposal.<sup>29</sup> In the century and a half between the poems’ composition and their inclusion into illuminated southern German songbooks, it seems that the man from Kürenberg had completely disappeared as a historical personage. Thus, in a very real sense, the entire corpus transmitted under his name is actually anonymous, and in fact, as we shall see, his very existence seems to be at least in part a product of his pictorial representation.

All of Kürenberg’s extant poetry comes from this manuscript, on the verso of the miniature itself (folio 63v, Fig. 4), which greets the reader as the leaf is turned. It is not a



**Figure 4.** Text page for *Der von Kurenberg*. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg 848, fol. 63v

<sup>29</sup> Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 52. Note too that the colors of the arms match those used for the poet’s garb, and the fact that, contrary to standard practices of heraldry, two colors are placed side-by-side.

large body of work, comprising only fifteen strophes, each introduced by a medium-sized filigree initial executed in blue. Collectively the corpus does not fill a single page. Each of the strophes consists of two rhymed couplets, sharing the same meter found in much earlier, Old High German poetry, a survival from prior centuries that induces historians to regard them as a native production, untouched by the influx of French lyric influence beginning just at that time.<sup>30</sup>

Thematically, Kürenberg's strophes are divided between those composed from the point of view of a woman, the so-called *Frauenstrophe*, and those spoken by a man, the *Männerstrophien*. While most of the strophes appear to be stand-alone poems, generally grouped together as *Frauenstrophien* followed by *Männerstrophien*, there are some whose shared structure, meter, and subject matter seem to indicate that they were paired together, a female's pronouncement followed by a male's response. When so combined, this type of poem is termed a *Wechsel* or "exchange."<sup>31</sup> Stanzas 4 and 12 provide a good example of the *Wechsel*: though separated at some point in their transmission, their shared theme, vocabulary, and metrical form testify that they were originally intended as a unit. The lady speaks first: "I stood late last night on the tower/ There I heard a knight singing quite well/ in Kürenberg's manner among the crowd/ He must soon leave the land, or I shall win him for myself." To which the man replies: "Bring to me immediately

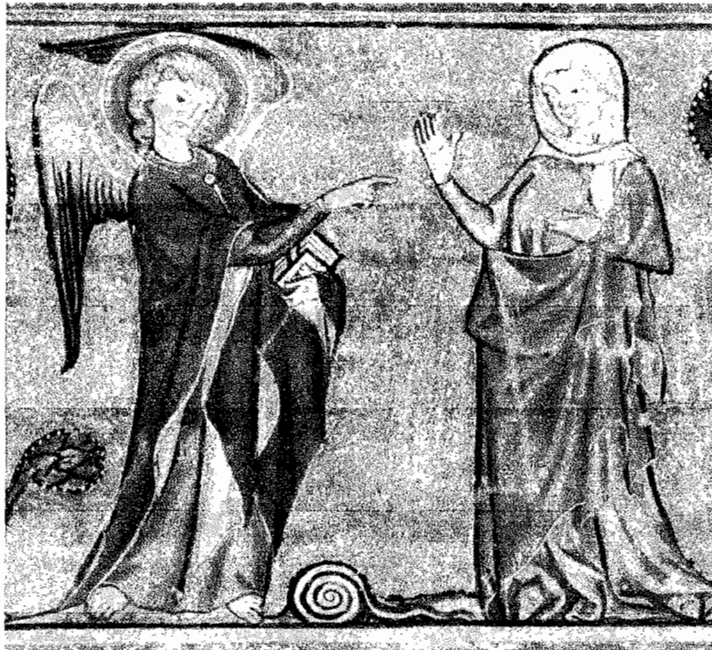
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<sup>30</sup> See Sayce, *Medieval German Lyric*, 84-90.

<sup>31</sup> On the *Wechsel*, see Marion E. Gibbs and Sidney M. Johnson, *Medieval German Literature* (NY: Routledge, 1997), 239-244.

my horse and armor/ for I must leave this land for a lady's sake/ She would gladly compel me to love her/ She will have to forego my love once and for all."<sup>32</sup>

What, then, is the relationship between Der von Kürenberg's corpus of poetry and the frontispiece accorded him in the Manesse codex? To create this pictorial introduction to Kürenberg's verses, the Manesse artist did not turn to traditional author portraits but instead utilized a variation of another traditional motif, one in which a male and a female stand across from one another and engage in dialogue. An eminently adaptable motif, it most likely circulated in pattern books and was most commonly used to represent sacred scenes of Annunciation, such as the Annunciation to Hagar in a world chronicle from the same time and region as the Manesse Codex (Fig. 5).<sup>33</sup>



**Figure 5.** Annunciation to Hagar. St. Gall, Kantonsbibliothek, Ms. Vadiana 302, fol. 16v.

<sup>32</sup> My translation. Modern German translations in Albert K. Wimmer, *Anthology of Medieval German Literature* (Berrien Springs, MI: Vande Vere Publishing, 1987/1991), 283-284 and Friedrich Neumann, ed., *Deutscher Minnesang (1150-1300)* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam Verlag, 1954/1977), 23.

<sup>33</sup> For an overview of medieval pattern books, see Robert W. Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900 – ca. 1450)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 1-88.

However, already by the first quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, this motif had also become attached to secular verse compositions, and for such occasions modern researchers have reserved the term *Minnegespräch*, or “Lover’s Conversation.”<sup>34</sup> The *Carmina Burana* manuscript, a famous compilation of lyrics in Latin and vernacular German, features an example of this motif (folio 72r, Fig. 6). This manuscript, a potpourri of sacred, mock-sacred, and outright profane songs compiled in a southwestern German monastery around 1230 or 1240, contains eight illuminations, interspersed somewhat randomly among the songs.<sup>35</sup> There is no consistency in size, either, and most of the images appear to have squeezed in where space permitted. This applies especially to the image of the conversing man and woman, which has been tilted sideways in order to fit an essentially vertical format into the horizontal space allotted by the scribe.

Iconographically, the *Carmina Burana* image is similar both to earlier Annunciation imagery and the later Manesse pictures, but semantically, it stands apart from both. It appears as an illustration to the poem beginning “*Suscipe, flos, florem*” (“Take, O flower, this flower”), a poem surviving only in this manuscript.<sup>36</sup> The picture appears directly after the poem’s opening line, which reads “Take, O Flower, this flower;

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<sup>34</sup> On the compositional type of the *Minnegespräch*, see Siebert-Holz, “Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen,” 211-220, who acknowledges its derivation from Annunciation iconography and on account of its frequent appearance in the slightly older Weingartner Songbook considers it “zu den ältesten Bildnissen von Minnesängern zu gehören” (216).

<sup>35</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4660 and 4660a. Its eight miniatures, dispersed irregularly throughout the songs, have received only cursory scholarly attention: see Diemer, P. and D. Diemer. “Die Illustrationen der Handschrift.” In *Carmina Burana: Text und Übersetzungen, mit den Miniaturen aus der Handschrift*. Ed. B. K. Vollmann, 1289–98 (Frankfurt-am-Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987).

<sup>36</sup> *Carmina Burana*, folio 72r. In modern editions the poem is designated CB 186. For full Latin transcription with German translation, see Fischer, Carl, et al., eds. *Carmina Burana: Die Gedichte des Codex Buranus: Lateinisch und Deutsch* (Zurich and Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1974), 552-553. A rather

compoſuim, aut loſa. **D**ico de hinc ſon. raris  
 deamit die nunc ov nich. den. aut ladon. facia  
 Et g. nif. nū. ande. w. n. p. r. o. n. abſq. timo. r. et ſp. r. i.  
 ich mache dich em. w. n. d. u. t. a. l. ſ. t. a. m. o. p. **E**t. w. n. i. u.  
 uſ. ſ. a. b. e. n. d. e. t. u. r. a. w. p. e. d. e. r. e. c. t. a. e. t. r. u. n. t. e. n. a. t. i. u. l. a. z. p. e. r.  
 g. e. l. u. r. a. ſ. p. i. d. e. ſ. i. r. e. c. t. a. **E**t. n. a. m. d. e. n. ſ. h. o. e. d. e. u. r. d. e. d. e. n. ſ. a. g. e. n.  
 t. e. n. u. n. a. b. a. r. u. r. d. e. ſ. e. l. l. e. ſ. e. r. n. i. c. h. b. e. n. a. g. e. n. n. d. u. ſ. c. e. p. t. e. r.  
**S**o. ſ. e. ſ. e. f. l. o. r. n. i. q. u. i. a. f. l. o. r. e. ſ. e. ſ. t. a. n. t. e. a. m. o. r. e. n. i.



**I**lle de flore nuncium sum spiritus amor.  
**F**ruat flos tua dulcissima semper odor.  
**N**am melius aurora fuerit tua spes a deo.  
**F**lorem flori uide quoniam dum uideat nunc uide.  
**F**lori. **A**ugetur tua uox cantus pueri. **A**uget.  
**O** carita del flor. uideo flos omni uer. **O**.  
**F**lor in pichina non est flos omni. **F**lor. **A**.  
**Q**uo purgat florum non purgat florum. **O**uget.

**Figure 6.** Two Lovers. Munich,  
 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm  
 4660, 72r.

the flower that designates love.” The verses, continuing below the picture, then beseech the beloved, who is personified throughout as a flower, to inhale, gaze upon, and kiss the flower offered by the narrator as a token of his devotion.

At first glance, the *Carmina Burana* image appears to illustrate this sentiment in a literal and straightforward fashion, depicting a male protagonist proffering his beloved a bouquet of flowers as a token of affection and loyalty. And yet the “flos” offered by the

male can also be understood symbolically, as the word was also a common metaphor for a poem, or a textual composition generally. The literal flower held by the man thus transforms into a symbol of the very text that surrounds the image. Further still, the final two lines of the poem actually add yet another, different inflection to the poem's multiple plays on the word "*flos*." This final couplet reads, "A flower in a painting is not a flower, but merely a shadow/ He who depicts a flower cannot depict a flower's scent."<sup>37</sup>

Considering that out of over a hundred and thirty love songs included in the manuscript, this one poem prompted the inclusion of a painting, the Carmina Burana "Lover's Conversation" would seem to function essentially as a demonstration of this final couplet. The male figure, himself existing only in paint, presents the very sort of false flower that the text warns against. Perhaps, too, its illogical orientation on the page (usually attributed to the scribe having left insufficient space) was another, deliberate means of disorienting the viewer and reader, undermining his or her impulse to read the picture as a representation of reality. Rather than creating and presenting an independently existing pictorial world, the kind of parallel reality usually denoted by the word "illustration," the Carmina Burana image, when read in conjunction with its associated poem, instead deliberately points to its own status as an ephemeral and inadequate fiction.

The Carmina Burana image thus resonates only distantly with the concept of authorship. While the painted flower-giver may be identified with the flower-giving

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<sup>37</sup> "Flos in pictura non est flos, immo figura/ Qui pingit florem non pingit floris odorem." My translation, purposefully literal. Because this couplet (unlike the preceding lines) appears elsewhere as an independent adage or motto, most printed editions treat it as a second, independent stanza, but in fact the lines preserve the same leonine hexameter and the manuscript itself provides no graphic or visual justification for separating them in this case.

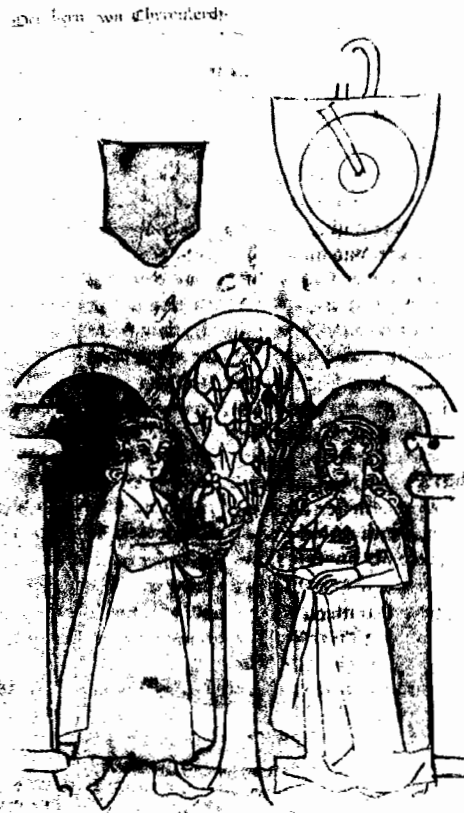
narrator of the poem, who speaks as a first-person narrator addressing his beloved directly, there are in fact no compelling grounds for identifying either figure in the image with the historical author behind the poem. For no caption providing an author's name accompanies the poem or the image; indeed, the poems of the *Carmina Burana* manuscript are not arranged by authorial corpus at all, but by theme or subject matter. Most importantly, the image announces itself (by its association with the poem and by its own composition) to be a fiction, not a representation of any external reality. In no way does the image function as an author portrait.

When the "Lover's Conversation" motif next appears in German lyric manuscripts, however, it has taken a decisive step towards representing an author. In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, another variation of the Lover's Conversation adorned a small songbook from the Upper Rhine region. Today housed in Budapest, it survives only in fragments recovered from the flyleaves of another manuscript, but among these fragments is a painting of our poet, here called "Der Herr von Churenberch."<sup>38</sup> This image (Fig. 7), while using the same modular "type" of the man and woman in conversation, re-directs its meaning to address the theme of authorship. In this unfinished ink drawing, the same fabricated arms appear as in the *Manesse* codex some fifteen years later, but the figures standing below are considerably different. Here, the poet offers or receives, a wreath from his beloved, who grasps in her left hand the hem of her dress while appearing to hold a ring close to her chest with her right. The figures are of relatively squat proportions and are tucked under the scalloped arches of an indoor setting, yet,

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<sup>38</sup> On Budapest fragment, see Andrus Vizkelety and Karl-August Wirth, "Funde zum Minnesang: Blätter aus seiner Bebilderten Liederhandschrift," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, Vol. 107, No. 3 (1985): 366-375. Color reproductions of all extant leaves appear in Mittler and Werner, eds., *Codex Manesse*, 550-556.

confusingly, this illuminator places a leafy, stylized tree between them, with leaves similar to those in the earlier Carmina Burana painting. The artist has depicted both figures, male poet and female interlocutor, to the same scale and has allotted equal space to both.



**Figure 7.** Der Herr von Churenberch. Budapest, Szechenyi-Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Germ. 92, fragment.

Despite the compositional adherence of the Budapest fragment to the traditional type seen in the Carmina Burana, a major semantic shift has taken place in this image, one that will prove important for understanding the Manesse Kürenberg image as well.



For the first time, the “Lover’s Conversation” motif has been converted unambiguously into an author portrait. This was done by several means. First, its position with respect to the text has been altered. Unlike the *Carmina Burana*, the Budapest fragments are arranged by author, and the image emphasizes this division by providing a clear, visual break between one author’s works and the next. Second, the image is no longer awkwardly integrated with its corresponding texts, as in the *Carmina Burana*, but is isolated and centered on its own page, exactly as traditional evangelist portraits or the new, emerging secular German author portraits based on them (e.g., Fig. 2). Third, the poet’s name and coat of arms have been appended to the image, testifying to the artist’s intention to link the image with an individual personage. A tightly-knit network of connections, textual and visual, now exists between image and textual corpus.

The frontispiece for *Der von Kürenberg* in the *Manesse Codex* adopts all of these textual and pictorial devices, which secure and crystallize the image as an author portrait. But the *Manesse* painter has made several alterations to the traditional Lover’s Conversation as well. His style and execution, of course, differ markedly from the painter of the Budapest image, and he has simplified the whole composition by deleting all extraneous elements and closing it off with the solid rectangular frame.

But the most salient change is the addition of scrolls held in each figure’s hands. These scrolls, though not in the end fully executed,<sup>39</sup> clearly formed a part of the painter’s initial conception, and have replaced the objects held by figures in the earlier Lover’s Conversation images: the bouquet of flowers in the *Carmina Burana* image, and

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<sup>39</sup> See note 26.

the wreath from the Budapest fragment, for example. The scrolls were not invented exclusively for Kürenberg's image: similar scrolls appear elsewhere in the Manesse codex, and frequently appeared also in other contemporary songbooks. What was the reason for the introduction of these scrolls into the image of Der von Kürenberg?

Many writers have connected the presence of these scrolls to the concept of the *Wechsel* that forms such an important part of Kürenberg's oeuvre.<sup>40</sup> According to this notion, the scroll held by each figure is intended to represent each of their respective speech acts: the woman's statement to the man, and his reply to her. The scrolls are a visual translation of a fundamentally oral, poetic device. Other writers, noticing the peculiar, insistent blankness of the scrolls in this and other Manesse images, interpret the scrolls as symbols of the entirety of the poet's oeuvre, which could not be achieved with the citation of any particular verse on the scroll. The most recent German scholarship has seen in these ghostly, often unlined scrolls a marker, in a general sense, of the oral origins of Kürenberg's lyrics, a kind of compensatory device striving to counteract the fixity bestowed onto the verses by written transmission.<sup>41</sup>

Certainly the scrolls reference the idea of speech. But their superficial similarity to Annunciation scrolls – which are unambiguously intended symbolically to represent speech and are not representations of actual scrolls physically held by the figures – is misleading, for the Manesse scrolls are in fact physical objects too, a fact overlooked by

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<sup>40</sup> E.g., Siebert-Holz, "Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen," 211-220.

<sup>41</sup> Exemplified most recently by Michael Curschmann, "*Pictura laicorum litteratura?*," 219-226. Horst Wenzel, in "Wahrnehmung und Deixis: Zur Poetik der Sichtbarkeit in der höfischen Literatur," in *Visualisierungsstrategien im mittelalterlichen Bildern und Texten* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2006), 31, also views the scrolls as invitations to a compensatory, imagined performance, going so far as to connect the rising and falling arc of the depicted scrolls with the rising and falling cadences of the Minnesang.

researchers too hastily striving to unlock some symbolic content. We have seen, in previous examples of the Lover's Conversation motif, precedents for the figures holding physical objects, and indeed, in the Manesse Kürenberg image, similar to the lady in the Carmina Burana image, one party looks not directly across at the other figure but upwards, looking at the scroll. Other Manesse, such as that depicting Burkhard von Hohenfels, also show the scrolls as physical objects, such as Burkhard von Hohenfels, and most conclusive of all, perhaps, have been the recent discoveries that 13<sup>th</sup>-century poets did indeed use scrolls as part of their public recitals of their works.<sup>42</sup> While they may carry the symbolic weight of speech or orality, the scrolls held by both parties in Kürenberg's image are primarily to be understood as physical objects.

What, then, does this signify? How does it alter our understanding of the image, and its relationship to the poet, to regard the scrolls as physical objects? Comparing the image to other contemporary manuscripts that make use of scrolls, we find an answer. In Annunciation imagery, for example, the scroll certainly symbolizes speech, but not speech in any general, abstract sense: rather, a very specific, particular speech, a set of words spoken exactly once at one set time. The stress here is on the particularity of the moment. Far less abstract and idealized than usually thought, the scrolls in Kürenberg's image actually serve to ground the events depicted in a particular moment with great specificity. They help mark a specific historical moment; they become the deliberate record of actions and speeches undertaken. The man von Kürenberg spoke these words, at a particular time and in a particular way, and the lady he addressed responded in this

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<sup>42</sup> See Franz H. Bäuml and Richard H. Rouse, "Roll and Codex: A New Manuscript Fragment of Reinmar von Zweter." *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*. Bd. 105, Hft 2 (1983), 192-231.

way. Much as they do in Annunciation imagery, the scrolls represent a truth claim on the part of the artist, a projection of the texts back onto a historical individual who is also conjured by the painting.

There is a second, loosely related but perhaps even more important aspect of the image that brings into focus how it both reflected and shaped the contemporary viewer's understanding of Der von Kürenberg as an author: namely, the question of the female figure. When we return to our original question and ask of this figure, "What exactly is being represented?," we stumble across an interesting conundrum. In Annunciation imagery, of course, the female half of the man-woman dialogue was unambiguously understood as an objectively existing individual, one whose presence was even more central to the biblical narrative than the corresponding male. Looking at an image of Mary's dialogue with the angel, the medieval viewer was presented with a historical moment in time, and each instance of the image, particularly in a religious context, was testimony and confirmation of the historical truth of the event depicted. Both figures are presented as reality. In the context of the *Carmina Burana*, also, the figures share the same plane of existence: the entire scene may be presented as a fiction, but within that fiction, both share the same status. One figure is not more "real" than the other.

However, when the Lover's Conversation motif is appropriated and re-deployed to serve as an author portrait, the equity between the two figures no longer holds. Because half of Kürenberg's verses were composed from the point of view of a woman, the reader would have naturally and readily connected the female narrator of the *Frauenstrophe* with the depicted female figure, enabling the entire picture to mimic visually the poetic form of the *Wechsel*, as described above. But while the male figure

becomes firmly anchored to the concept of an actual, independently-existing author, the female figure completely loses her identity, for there is in fact no female author behind Kürenberg's *Frauenstrophén*. The female "I" of the poems, just as much as the male "I," is a creation of the author; both represent authorial personas subordinated to the historical poet who, so to speak, stands outside of both. As one scholar summarizes, "Minnesang ist wesentlich Rollenlyrik. Dies wird v.a. deutlich in den *genres objectifs* wie dem Tagelied, aber auch in den Frauenliedern und –strophén (etwa im Wechsel)."<sup>43</sup>

These considerations explain the choice of the Lover's Conversation for Kürenberg's author portrait, but they also prompt a profounder question: how would this image then have affected the understanding of the poems for a contemporary reader, who no longer experiences the lyrics in their original performative context, but in the orderly, subdued pages of a book? With this particular use of the Lover's Conversation image as a frontispiece, the Manesse artist is actually shaping and altering readers' expectations: Viewing habits that had been conditioned to understand the Lover's Conversation image as a depiction of two independently existing parties, would now encourage the reader to understand Kürenberg's female interlocutor, who stands opposite him in the image, as an equally objectively existing individual. The image, a fiction created by emphasizing particular strands of Kürenberg's text, now feeds back into those texts, gives them new life, and re-frames them as autobiography. Confronted by an unillustrated text, or by a solitary performer reciting the poems, the viewer or listener would have more readily understood Kürenberg's *Frauenstrophén* as the adoption of a fictive role by the poet; this

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<sup>43</sup> "Minnesang is essentially a poetry of roles. This is discernible above all in the *genres objectifs* such as the *Tagelied*, but also in the *Frauenlieder* and –strophes (as in the *Wechsel*)." Günther Schweikle, *Minnesang* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1989), 189.

is no longer the case in the Manesse Codex, where the image assures the reader that an exchange between Kürenberg and his lady did indeed take place.

In light of the foregoing discussion of Der von Kürenberg's image, we can reach the following conclusions: the painting of Kürenberg is not a depiction of the historical poet (about whom the artist knew nothing), but of his persona, and in fact personas, who are then presented as historical, independently existing individuals. This claim to truth is bolstered by various pictorial devices, which encourage the contemporary reader to understand the image as if it were biographical. From textual references, an image was fabricated that was then presented as, and accepted as, the historical individual and the historical circumstances behind the verses.

The picture thus would have played a very constructive role in a contemporary's understanding of the texts: it does not merely reflect or illustrate the verses, but re-frames them, suggests a kind of historical context for them, a fictional envelope that provides an frictionless substitute for the absence of any actual historical frame of reference. The image encouraged the belief that Kürenberg's verses were in fact autobiographical, that there was such a writer who spoke these lines to a specific lady who responded in such terms. It fashions an author who spoke autobiographically, who recorded experiences and exchanges he actually had, and then, in its capacity as author portrait, it authenticates and verifies that fiction. It accepts and posits as truth an autobiographical reading of the poems, one which is almost certainly fictional, and in turn presents itself as the confirmation of that autobiographical reading.

We shall now see how this notion of a fictionalized autobiography recurs elsewhere in the manuscript, and specifically, how the Manesse painter reacts in the case

of an author who had already actively and deliberately generated for himself a fictionalized autobiography.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PAINTING OF ULRICH VON LIECHTENSTEIN

In the case of *Der von Kürenberg*, the artist created an author portrait that replaced the originally anonymous, indistinct author by creating an entirely new authorial persona. This conditions how a 14<sup>th</sup>-century reader would have understood and received the subsequent texts, for the image implies that they were biographical utterances from a historical, tangible author. Because the frontispiece guides and directs attention in such a specific manner, the experience of these poems in the pages of this manuscript would have been considerably different from their reception in any other context, though the texts remain exactly the same.

This process unfolded as it did partially because of the fact that there was no pre-existing data regarding Kürenberg for the artist to work with. What happens, then, in the case of an author who has already consciously and deliberately created and propagated a particular image of himself? A careful look at the image of Ulrich von Liechtenstein (fol. 237r, Fig. 8) will deepen our understanding of how the Manesse artist dealt with the notion of authorship, and how the images themselves help construct those notions.





Figure 8. Ulrich von Liechtenstein. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg 848, fol. 237r.

As a historical figure, Ulrich von Liechtenstein is much better documented than the elusive poet from Kürenberg.<sup>44</sup> Ulrich was born around 1200 in the duchy of Styria, in modern Austria, to a family from the lesser nobility. He was involved in politics from a young age, working to preserve Styrian independence from the larger kingdom of Austria. Eventually, as the effort failed and Styrian elites were absorbed into the Austrian cultural sphere, many young nobles, including Ulrich, traveled to Vienna and participated in the courtly life there. Friedrich II of Austria (1211-1246, Duke of Austria 1230-1246) was a particularly eager patron of Ulrich, though little else is known of Ulrich's poetic career. His work, however, betrays familiarity with the literary stars of the previous generation, particularly Reinmar, Gottfried, and Walther von der Vogelweide.<sup>45</sup> After Friedrich's death in 1246, Styria sank into the larger political quagmire of the Great Interregnum, until finally in 1276, Styria fell decisively into the hands of a newly revived Austria. Ulrich von Liechtenstein died about this same time.

Twenty full pages of double-columned verse survive in the Manesse codex under Ulrich's name. Yet his most famous work, the *Frauendienst* or "Service of Ladies," is not included in the manuscript, but survives from a single (unillustrated) exemplum of the late 1200s preserved in Munich.<sup>46</sup> Ulrich's *Frauendienst* is an elaborate, jaunty epic of self-mythologizing. In it, Ulrich adopts an autobiographical, first-person voice to describe

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<sup>44</sup> Biographical overview from J.W. Thomas, ed., *Ulrich von Liechtenstein's Service of Ladies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 3-11.

<sup>45</sup> Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 158.

<sup>46</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 44. The most recent edition of *Frauendienst* is Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *Frauendienst*, ed. Franz Viktor Spechler (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1987). A slightly abridged English translation appears as J.W. Thomas, ed., *Service of Ladies*. For the *Frauendienst* in its literary context, see Gibbs and Johnson, eds., *Medieval German Literature*, 311-314.

his adventures jousting for the honor of his beloved, an unnamed lady who, in the classical tradition of *Minnesang*, spurns his attentions even after multiple displays of bravery and self-sacrifice in her honor. This work, while already groundbreaking as the first putative autobiography in vernacular German, is rendered more fascinating by its patchwork composition: for Ulrich's 58 lyric poems are interspersed and integrated throughout the main *Frauendienst* narrative.<sup>47</sup>

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, researchers accepted Ulrich's *Frauendienst* as an autobiographical account of the author's life and activities.<sup>48</sup> While a few specific dates and many individual persons who appear throughout the narrative can indeed be corroborated, the majority of the book's events elude all attempts at outside confirmation. Therefore, the majority of modern scholars regard the work as an elaborate fiction, and even, considering its often fantastical and farcical episodes, an outright satire of the romances and love poetry of previous generations.<sup>49</sup> It is generally believed further that Ulrich composed the main *Frauendienst* narrative only after all the lyric poems were already circulating, and that he wrote it to serve as a kind of unifying, frame-story around the poems. One recent scholar, pursuing this line of research, asserts that this frame tale

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<sup>47</sup> "It is clear [from the structure] that Ulrich's original purpose was merely to include songs when appropriate and that it was only after he had finished his original story and was having difficulty continuing the work that he began to pad it heavily with songs." Thomas, *Ulrich*, 41.

<sup>48</sup> "Frauendienst ist...nicht nur für die Kenntniss der eigenthümlichen Persönlichkeit des Dichters, seiner Schicksale und Abenteurer, sondern auch als Spiegelbild der Sitten und Anschauungsweise jener Zeiten von unvergleichlichen Werthe." Adolf von Oechelhäuser, *Die Miniaturen der Universitätsbibliothek zu Heidelberg, Bd. II* (Heidelberg: Verlag von Gustav Koester, 1895), 244.

<sup>49</sup> "Das [= the autobiographical interpretation of Ulrich's poetry] ist nicht mehr üblich, denn die offiziellen Dokumente über den steirischen Ministerialen haben keine Berührungsmomente mit der vida, dem um 1255 entstandenen 'Frauendienst.'" Volker Mertens, "Liebesdichtung und Dichterliebe: Ulrich von Liechtenstein und Johannes Hadloub." In *Autor und Autorenschaft im Mittelalter*, eds. Elizabeth Andersen and Jens Haustein, 200 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1998).

was a means of substituting a textual, biographically-based continuity for the continuity originally provided by the performer's physical presence, gestures, and delivery.<sup>50</sup> In all of these debates, however, the Manesse image has been either ignored or dismissed as a simple "illustration" of the *Frauendienst* narrative.<sup>51</sup> However, as a key piece of evidence for the late medieval reception and understanding of Ulrich as an author, the painting certainly merits a closer look.

We begin again with a deceptively simple question: What is represented in the image? On a purely descriptive level, the miniature shows a mounted, fully armed knight, astride a large, dark gray charger galloping to the left. Over his full suit of chain mail, the rider wears a dull green cloak emblazoned with a pattern of small white dots and an escutcheon. He holds in his right hand a blunted jousting-lance at a perfect 45 degree angle. A shield thrown over his left arm bears the same coat of arms as his clothing, while a matching green caparison, also bearing the same arms, covers the horse. A crest affixed to the top the knight's helmet takes the form of a doll-like Lady Love, wielding a torch and arrow, crowned, and dressed in a flowing pink gown. Below, in lieu of solid ground, the horse gallops over a wavy set of green lines representing the sea, within which swim two fish and two dueling monsters.

Like the Lover's Conversation used for Kürenberg, the motif of the charging knight has a pre-history in late medieval, upper German manuscript illumination. Besides appearing repeatedly elsewhere in the Manesse corpus, it also features in earlier, less

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<sup>50</sup> Mertens, "Liebesdichtung," 202.

<sup>51</sup> Mertens, "Liebesdichtung," and Thomas, *Ulrich*, for instance, make no mention of the Manesse image, while art historians are content simply to reference the *Frauendienst* narrative: cf., e.g., Schultz, *Typisches*, 25; Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 158; Frühmorgen-Voss, "Bildtypen," 204-205.

formal illustrated songbooks from the region, and ubiquitously as an illustration for secular, courtly romances (as seen in the contemporary or slightly earlier Weingartner Songbook, Fig. 9).<sup>52</sup> Most likely, the modular motif circulated via artist's pattern books, such as the famous sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt in Paris (Fig. 10), from which it could be used and re-used as needed, with specific details added or altered to bestow individuality or shift its meaning.



**Figure 9.** Hartman von Aue. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HB XIII 1, p. 33.



**Figure 10.** Mounted Knight. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Fr. 19093, p. 16.

Scholars believed that this “knight” motif was initially transferred to vernacular love poetry as a means of distinguishing the amateur poets of the upper (knightly) classes, who did not need to compose poetry to make a living, from the lesser ranks of professional minstrels and itinerant singers: “in diesen Bildtypen ist Standesdarstellung

<sup>52</sup> On the use of this motif in the Manesse codex with its variations, see Schultz, *Typisches*, 18-26. On the Weingartner manuscript, see Gebhard Spahr, *Weingartner Liederhandschrift: Ihre Geschichte und ihre Miniaturen* (Weissenhorn: Anton H. Konrad Verlag, 1968).

als Anliegen der Auftraggeber bei weitem am stärksten hervorgehoben mittels einer durch und durch heraldischen Gestaltung.”<sup>53</sup> From this point of view, the social status of the poet determined not just the poet’s placement within the Manesse manuscript, but also the specific types of iconography used to depict him. However, such an oversimplified interpretation ignores the picture’s role in creatively shaping the viewer’s notion of authorship, and fails to explain much at the level of any specific individual poet. In Ulrich’s case, for example, several changes to the general rider-type create a unique instance of it, and these details must be taken into account to understand the frontispiece’s relationship to Ulrich’s corpus.

Commentators have long noted, though rarely with any substantive elaboration, that Ulrich von Liechtenstein’s frontispiece contains elements referring pointedly to his pseudo-autobiographical *Frauendienst*.<sup>54</sup> Two major elements of the painting have been cited in support of this contention. In the *Frauendienst* narrative, Ulrich relates an adventure in which he claims to have disguised himself in female garments to undertake a series of jousts.<sup>55</sup> The Manesse artist supposedly alludes to this journey by means of the decorative crest of the rider’s helmet: By donning this crest the rider symbolically adopts a female garb and simultaneously demonstrates his devotion to Lady Love, a major theme of *Frauendienst*. Secondly, the text of *Frauendienst* describes Ulrich as beginning his

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<sup>53</sup> “In these sorts of images, the representation of social rank desired by the patron is by far the most emphasized, by means of a completely heraldic form.” Frühmorgen-Voss, “Bildtypen,” 191.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Schultz, *Typisches*, 25.

<sup>55</sup> *Frauendienst*, 463-473 (Spechtler, *Ulrich*, 103-105).

journey “from the sea.”<sup>56</sup> While the *Frauendienst* narrative makes clear that this locution refers simply to the city of Venice,<sup>57</sup> the Manesse artist has depicted Ulrich’s horse literally launching itself forward from the surface of the sea. Subsidiary allusions to the *Frauendienst* narrative are sometimes pointed out as well in the painting: the rider’s lance is portrayed as blunted, for use in jousting as opposed to actual combat, and his green attire can allude in a very general way to the concepts of springtime and love.<sup>58</sup>

But does this process of matching the visual elements of the painting to passages within the *Frauendienst* text fully explain the image and its role in the manuscript? In fact, several complications arise in this comparison between the Manesse image and the text of *Frauendienst*. Though some reference is certainly made to the subject matter of Ulrich’s narrative, the pictorial allusions do not, in fact, correlate with the text very well.

First, the knight’s coat of arms does not at all match those carried by the *Frauendienst* narrator, whose arms consist of two black stripes over a white background.<sup>59</sup> In fact, the arms of the painting, red with a quartered gold field with two blue chevrons, closely match the color and design used in the border of the *Grundstock* images, raising the suspicion that they were, like many other arms in the manuscript, an ad hoc invention by the artist. Also, the presence of underwater monstrosities, accompanied by fish and engaged in combat with arrows and sword, is inexplicable by reference to the *Frauendienst* text alone. Such creatures, explained by scholars as

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<sup>56</sup> “Vom dem mer”: *Frauendienst* 461.1 (Spechtler, *Ulrich*, 103).

<sup>57</sup> As made clear by, e.g., *Frauendienst* 472-473 (Spechtler, *Ulrich*, 105).

<sup>58</sup> E.g., Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 158.

<sup>59</sup> Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 158.

embodiments of evil or the dangers of sea travel,<sup>60</sup> appear elsewhere in the Manesse Codex, particularly in the painting of the seafaring Friedrich von Hausen (fol. 116v). There, in light of the fact that the historical Friedrich died abroad during the Third Crusade, the monstrous sea denizens make sense symbolically, but their appearance in Ulrich's image still demand explanation. Another major inconsistency between Ulrich's self-presentation in *Frauendienst* and the *Grundstockmaler's* representation of him hinges on Ulrich's statement that he disguised himself in female garb. The difference between textual and visual representations is drastic and should not be overlooked: while in the *Frauendienst* text Ulrich describes himself as donning female garb, in the frontispiece it is only a crest, not in fact any sort of full female clothing that the knight wears. The distinction has provoked little discussion among scholars.

With researchers generally content to note the similarities between the Manesse image and Ulrich's *Frauendienst*, is there any way to account instead for these considerable differences? While there can be no doubt that the Manesse artist or patron was familiar in a general way with Ulrich's pseudo-autobiography, the discrepancies mentioned above raise the possibility that the artist did not perhaps rely slavishly on an established textual version of the *Frauendienst*, but rather a non-textual, orally circulating version of Ulrich's tale. Transmitted through such an indirect channel, a clear description of Ulrich's arms could have been omitted, requiring the artist to invent a new one. Hearing only that Ulrich began his journey "from the sea," the artist fell back on familiar iconographical devices to show the dangers of sea travel. And knowing that Ulrich had

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<sup>60</sup> E.g., Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 158.



commemorated his devotion to Lady Love by adopting female garb, the artist could easily have understood this to be the symbolic adoption of a heraldic, feminine crest.

Researchers have used exactly this kind of oral transmission to account for comparable discrepancies in material illustrated from Gottfried von Strassburg's Middle High German epic *Tristan*,<sup>61</sup> and it may explain Ulrich's discrepancies also. If it is the case that an oral version of Ulrich's *Frauendienst* lies behind the *Grundstockmaler's* conception of his frontispiece, as the image seems to indicate, what implications might this have for the artist's understanding of Ulrich as an author?

By avoiding the lyric dancing- and love-songs that actually appear under his name in the Manesse codex, and drawing instead on an external source, one which perhaps circulated orally, the Manesse artist establishes a link here that goes beyond the texts at hand, and deliberately connects with an author-personality known from other sources. A clear chain of associations emerges: the author of the poems is identified with the protagonist of *Frauendienst*, who is in turn identified with the rider depicted in the image. The viewer is thus invited to interpret the image of Ulrich in accordance with this system of mutually reinforcing identifications: the painting attributes existence to a historically, independently-attested author, and it leans on texts outside the Manesse corpus to do so.

Behind these tendencies lay a particular set of assumptions and reading habits popular in late medieval Germany. When Ulrich von Liechtenstein fashioned his pseudo-autobiographical legend, he was riding the crest of an increasingly popular sub-genre of

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<sup>61</sup> See Michael Curschmann, "Images of Tristan," in *Gottfried von Strassburg and the Medieval Tristan Legend*, eds. Adrian Stevens and Roy Wisbey, 1-18 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990); and for historiated Tristan textiles, Doris Fouquet, *Wort und Bild in der Mittelalterlichen Tristantradition* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1971).

literary production, the popularity of which grew throughout the second half of the 1200s and peaked in the years around 1300. During this period of “epigones,” many authors felt themselves in the shadow of the great talents of the generation around 1200. While some, like Rudolf von Ems, labored to find original niches for their work and others contented themselves with writing sequels or continuations of previous masterpieces, one of the most popular responses was the fashioning of tales in which the great poets themselves were the principal actors.<sup>62</sup> Some of these stories were original compositions, while in other cases, traditional stories were re-told with a noted author as the protagonist. For a writer to mention or incorporate other writers into his own work was not radical: already in the classical period, Gottfried’s famous “literary excursus” in *Tristan* had mentioned and methodically critiqued the most popular authors of his day.<sup>63</sup> They appear as characters, some deceased, like Heinrich von Veldeke, and others still living, like Walther von der Vogelweide and Bliigger von Steinach, and as one scholar noted, it is only “a short step from introduction in the third person to introduction in the first person.”<sup>64</sup>

There followed from mid-century on a burst of literary activity in which well-known poets become the heroes of narrative adventures. Around 1250, the prolific poet and writer Konrad von Würzburg employed the earlier author Wirnt von Grafenberg as

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<sup>62</sup> A good enumeration of the many 13<sup>th</sup>- and early 14<sup>th</sup>-century examples is found in J.W. Thomas, ed. and trans., *Tannhäuser: Poet and Legend* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), 61.

<sup>63</sup> The literary excursus appears in *Tristan*, lines 4619-4818. English translation by A.T. Hatto in Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan* (London, Penguin, 1967), 105-107.

<sup>64</sup> Allen W. Porterfield, “Poets as Heroes of Epic and Dramatic Works in German Literature,” *Modern Philology*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (June 1914): 70.

the hero of his *Der Welt Lohn* (The World's Reward); the poets Heinrich von Morungen, Reinmar von Brennenberg, Tannhäuser, and Neidhart von Reuenthal, and many others also became heroes of narrative compositions. The movement climaxed, perhaps, around 1325, when Hugo von Trimberg, in his *Der Renner*, featured a whole series of prominent poets as heroes of various adventures.<sup>65</sup>

By Ulrich's time in the mid-1200s, the narrating "I" of the earlier *Minnesang*, such as that used by Kürenberg, had gradually taken on more autobiographical overtones.<sup>66</sup> The moralist known as Der Stricker, for instance, composed a scathing poem called "Die Minnesänger" in which he accepts the often adulterous leanings of classical *Minnesang* at face value, and correspondingly attacks the values and morals of the poets in question. As one scholar writes, "Die literarische Kunstübung der Minnesänger gerät bei Stricker zur kritikwürdigen Lebenspraxis."<sup>67</sup> It was in this atmosphere that Ulrich composed his faux-autobiography, encouraging and expecting his audience to accept the first-person, narrative persona of the text as autobiographical reality. To bolster this effect, he correspondingly reminds his readers at regular intervals of the truth-value of the adventures he narrates: however outlandish and improbable the events of his

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. Gibbs and Johnson, *Medieval German Literature*, 427-428.

<sup>66</sup> Gibbs and Johnson, *Medieval German Literature*, 310-311.

<sup>67</sup> "For the Stricker, the literary practice of the Minnesingers is conflated with actual life practices, deserving of criticism." Rüdiger Schnell, "Vom Sänger zum Autor: Konsequenzen der Schriftlichkeit des deutschen Minnesangs," in *Text und Kultur: Mittelalterliche Literatur, 1150-1450*, ed. Ursula Peters (Stuttgart/Weimer: Verlag J.B. Metzle, 2001), 123.

*Frauendienst* become, he peppers the text liberally with protestations of truthfulness: “daz ist war;” “des muoz ich von der warheit jehen;” “Ich han iu von im niht gelogen.”<sup>68</sup>

In the Manesse frontispiece, just as with Kürenberg, the usual position of the author portrait is usurped by what could be termed a “persona-portrait,” though one presented as the truth by means of the tight connections between image, caption, and texts. The author is presented not as an author (composing or writing) but as one who lived and experienced the events narrated. It thus serves as a visual parallel to the “truth claims” that appear in the *Frauendienst* text. For the painter, the whole picture of the author – his biography, however fictionalized the conception of him may be – held sway over any specific poems. The images were not, as many scholars maintain, simply drawn from the poems themselves, but nor, as other researchers have held, were they necessarily reflections of the poet’s actual lives. Instead, in the case of Ulrich, they drew from circulating legends to create an authorial persona that is then offered to the reader as biography. Where modern scholars see irony and artifice in the *Frauendienst* text, the perception of a 14<sup>th</sup>-century reader of the Codex Manesse would have been prepared by the image to accept Ulrich’s lyric poetry as true and authentic expressions of his personality.

We have seen in Ulrich’s image and others that the Manesse paintings for these poets are affected by a popular interest in the lives of notable literary figures. Even when these legends themselves are not part of the poet’s corpus, as with Ulrich and Wolfram, they are incorporated into the artist’s vision of the author, and propagated as truth by the

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<sup>68</sup> “It is true” (*Frauendienst* 12.1); “It’s nothing but the truth, I swear” (*Frauendienst* 40.8); “I haven’t lied to you in what I’ve said” (*Frauendienst* 670.8).

frontispieces. By giving a fixed, visual form to these legends, the images generate belief in the authenticity of the following lyrics. They conjure a believable author who is presented as the historical source of the songs, whose life and experiences stand behind them. They therefore are not passive illustrations to the songs, but active generators of belief and meaning that concretely affect how a reader would have experienced the subsequent texts. Specifically, Ulrich's image, by latching onto the legend of Ulrich's *Frauendienst*, assures the reader that a single historical personage stands behind the corpus, and testifies to the truth of their contents. The reader beholds the lovelorn knight Ulrich setting off on his epic journey, with the painting offering a context in which to understand the lyric songs that follow. For the 14<sup>th</sup>-century reader of the Manesse codex, the image communicated a persona that was both necessary and sufficient to a proper appreciation of the following poems.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PAINTING OF JOHANNES HADLAUB

We have seen the Manesse artist's reaction to two kinds of author, and the ways in which the prefatory image for each poet both reflects and also helps shape the contemporary viewers understanding of the concept of authorship in each case. For both authors, images, drawn from texts that are not necessarily autobiographical, are presented exactly as such: in Kürenberg's case, because there were no outside data to work with; in Ulrich's case, because he himself contributed to this interpretation of his songs. And in both cases, the images, once erected in the context of a frontispiece, consequently encourage and validate an autobiographical reading of the texts for a 14<sup>th</sup>-century reader. However, a further question remains. How did this understanding of authorship change in the case of a poet that was still living and composing during the time the Manesse codex was created? What happens when the kind of image-based, biographical myth-making that we have observed confronts a living and local author? To answer these questions we turn to our third Manesse frontispiece, depicting the poet Johannes Hadlaub (fl. c.1290-1300?; Fol. 371r, Fig. 11).

Meister Johans Hadlob.

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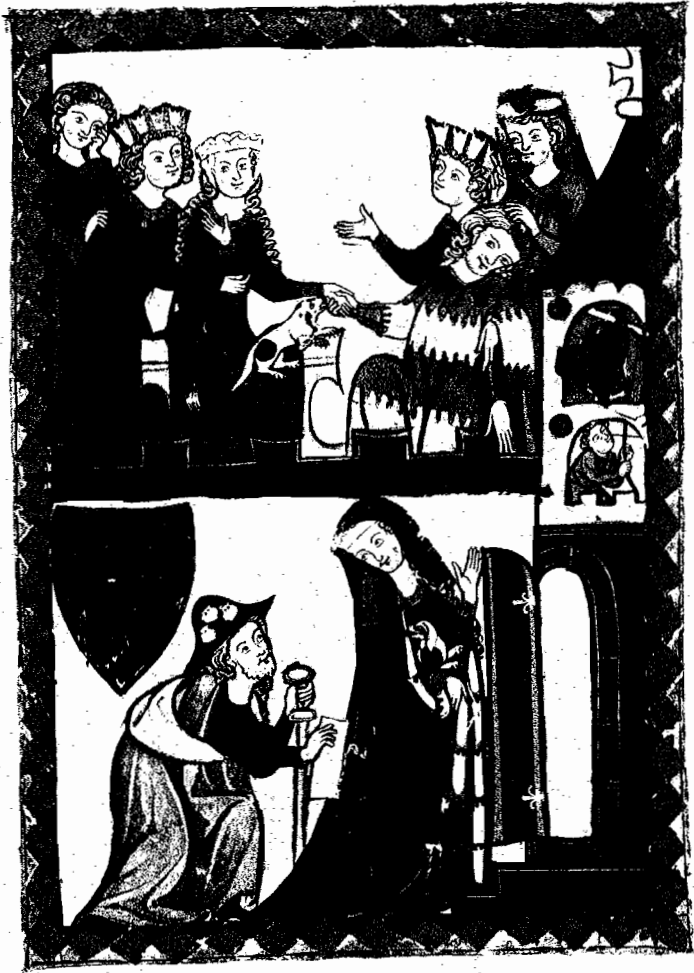


Figure 11. Johannes Hadlaub. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg 848, fol. 371r.

Johannes Hadlaub (fl. c.1290-1300?), unlike Ulrich and, presumably, Der von Kürenberg, was not a member of the nobility.<sup>69</sup> Judging by the appellation “Meister” before his name in the manuscript, he was possibly a professional scribe, but concrete documentation regarding his life is scarce: there is only the record of his purchase of a house in Zurich in 1302 and a notice of his death, though without an exact date, in the necrologium of a Zurich church. Other, more circumstantial evidence suggests, however, that Hadluab may have been fairly affluent, and at least occasionally moved in high circles. Historians have tentatively put his years of poetic activity mainly in the 1290s, extending probably into the first years of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. More descriptive, if also more speculative, data about Hadlaub’s life has traditionally been culled from his poetry.<sup>70</sup> Though the degree to which Hadlaub’s works illuminate his biography is certainly questionable, many poems, in which the poet introduces or addresses several prominent citizens and nobles of the region and praises their patronage of art and literature, certainly attest to a basic involvement with the literary life of Zurich around 1300.

Hadlaub’s poetry survives only in the Manesse codex, which contains fifty-four poems with diverse structures, meters, and themes.<sup>71</sup> The consensus among literary historians declares Hadlaub’s overall corpus unremarkable: well-wrought formally, with

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<sup>69</sup> Biographical references drawn from the exhaustive discussion of all known documents in Max Schiendorfer, ed. *Johannes Hadlaub: Die Gedichte des Zürcher Minnesängers*. (Zurich: Artemis, 1986), 198-207.

<sup>70</sup> A tradition that began with Gottfried Keller’s *Zürcher Novellen* of 1878, featuring Hadlaub as the protagonist of a historical fiction. On Keller and his understanding of Hadlaub and the Manesse codex see Werner G. Zimmermann, “Die Manessische Liederhandschrift im Spiegel von Wahrheit und Dichtung,” in *Manesse Almanach auf das 40. Verlagsjahr*, eds. Werner G. Zimmermann and Federico Hindermann (Zurich: Manesse Verlag, 1984), 389-434.

<sup>71</sup> For a modern edition of Hadlaub’s poems with German translations, see Schiendorfer, *Hadlaub*, 9-163.



some thematic originality, but basically contrived, dry, and uninspired.<sup>72</sup> The majority of his work follows traditional lines of the best German *Minnesang* of earlier decades: descriptions of nature that introduce evocations of summer or winter, and the feelings excited by each; songs praising the beauties and virtues of women in a generalized fashion; and most of all, songs of complaint directed at beautiful, noble ladies who have spurned the poet's attentions. Often, the structure of the poem circles down from a generic praise of all women and their beauty, to the praise of a never-named, but nevertheless specific lady, who is exhorted to relieve his love pangs by allowing him to grasp her hand, accept a letter, or grant a moment alone. In contrast to classical *Minnesang*, they often pursue a first person narrative arc, with the poet describing a series of events transpiring between himself and his beloved to a third party (ostensibly, the listening or reading audience). This stands in contrast to classical *Minnesang*, which is much less based on a narrative and often features direct exchanges of dialogue, as in the songs of Der von Kürenberg.

As with Ulrich's work, the question has frequently been raised of the extent to which Hadlaub's poems may be considered autobiographical. Older scholarship had no difficulty accepting all fifty-four songs as autobiographical. Nineteenth-century historians interpreted the poems unambiguously as first-person confessionals, records of authentic love affairs and a catalogue of the poet's emotions. Certainly, as with Ulrich and other poets, there are recognizable and indisputable references to the social world around the poet. But in general, as with the *Minnesang* as a whole, modern scholarship has rejected

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<sup>72</sup> E.g., Gibbs and Johnson, *Medieval German Literature*, 295: "On the whole he is a less gifted poet, and his work is strongly derivative"; Schiendorfer, Hadlaub, 207-208: "Es scheint fast so, als habe die eben angesprochene Inspirationsquelle, die unvergleichliche Liedersammlung, in Hadlaub die Ambition geweckt, es den verehrten Vorbildern in möglichst jeder Hinsicht gleichzutun."

the notion that Hadlaub's poems accurately reflect any sort of reliable autobiographical experience.<sup>73</sup>

The poems with their accompanying full-page miniature form part of the *Grundstock*, the manuscript's first artistic campaign. Several unique features cluster around Hadlaub's image. Codicological studies have revealed that Hadlaub's poetic corpus was initially conceived to be the concluding section of the manuscript in its early form.<sup>74</sup> Also, the scribal hand in which Hadlaub's works appear is a unique one in the manuscript.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, while for every other poet the Manesse scribes left empty space for the inclusion of further poems, this is not the case with Hadlaub. Researchers have taken this to imply that the compilers of the manuscript felt that Hadlaub's corpus was both complete and definitive.<sup>76</sup>

Hadlaub's frontispiece has still other peculiarities. As mentioned, it is the work of the so-called *Grundstockmaler*, and as such, shares many traits with the main body of this artist's work, including the style, color palette, and frame design. However, the image is divided into two equal registers, each of which narrates a self-contained story. It is the only painting in the manuscript to be so divided.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> The issue is discussed by Schiendorfer, *Hadlaub*, 201-202, who notes that many scholars unwittingly followed the lead of the novelist Keller in their biographical appraisals of Hadlaub's poetry.

<sup>74</sup> Schiendorfer, *Hadlaub*, 195.

<sup>75</sup> Description of this unique hand in Werner, "Die Handschrift," 17-18.

<sup>76</sup> Schiendorfer, *Hadlaub*, 196.

<sup>77</sup> One other Manesse image, that for Klingsor von Ungarland depicting the Wartburgskrieg (fol. 219v), is divided into two registers, but the image represents only a single scene. See Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 149.

The two registers in the picture illustrate the first two songs included in Hadlaub's corpus. In the first song, Hadlaub describes an escapade in which he disguises himself as a wayfaring pilgrim in order to approach his inattentive beloved closely enough to slip a love message into her dress. This he does as she leaves church.<sup>78</sup> This exact episode is depicted in the painting's lower tier. The upper tier depicts an event narrated in the second poem of the collection. Here, the narrator relates that he has never been able to converse with the object of his affection, whom he has served faithfully "sīt daz wir beidiu wāren kint."<sup>79</sup> In response to this complaint, several friends engineer a meeting between the two. Upon meeting the lady, however, the narrator promptly faints, and upon being revived, clenches his beloved's hand so tightly that she bites it to free herself. This sequence of events is depicted in the upper register, with the lady's bite replaced by a bite from her protective lapdog. These narrative elements, while not *ipso facto* indicating a later date of execution than that of the non-narrative frontispieces,<sup>80</sup> are certainly unusual; they do not, like the images of Kürenberg and Ulrich, base themselves on simple, repeated, flexible compositional types. Hadlaub's image represents a fundamental rethinking of inherited motifs, especially designed to serve just for Hadlaub's corpus. This is also borne out by the fact that the image illustrates exactly the first two songs of the corpus.

Hadlaub's seventeen pages of poetry also received decidedly unique attention with respect to their content and decoration. He is the only poet in the entire manuscript

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<sup>78</sup> See Schiendorfer, *Hadlaub*, 10-21, with modern German translations.

<sup>79</sup> "Since we were both children": Schiendorfer, *Hadlaub*, 14.

<sup>80</sup> As held by Jammers, *Königliche Liederbuch*, 62-63.

whose first poem opens with an unusually large and elaborately decorated initial (Fig. 12). Part of the explanation for this special attention is Hadlaub's close connection with the manuscript's putative patron, Rüdiger Manesse. In fact, the evidence of Manesse's

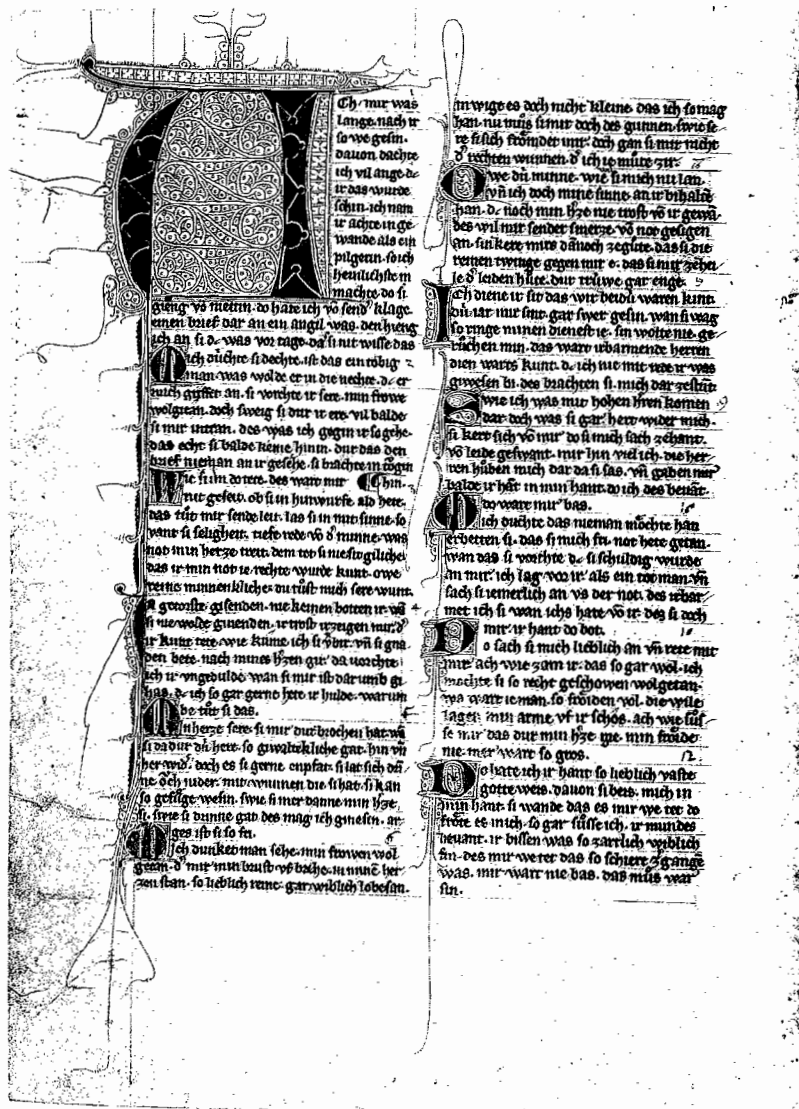


Figure 12. Johannes Hadlaub initial text page. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, fol. 371v.

patronage, cited in the introduction to this thesis, comes from one poem from Hadlaub's corpus stands out as providing evidence for his patronage. In another poem, Hadlaub again mentions Manesse as an important local figure, and describes a whole circle of historically attested figures, among whom were known patrons of art and poetry, such as the Heinrich von Klingenberg, bishop of Constance.<sup>81</sup> As yet another unusual indication of the close connection between Manesse and Hadlaub, the initial M of the former's name is highlighted within the text in red ink, an odd detail that does not recur anywhere else in the manuscript.

Hadlaub scholarship has shown very little interest in this image besides noting that it illustrates the first two songs, and recognizing its formal uniqueness among other frontispieces in the codex. In his recent scholarly study of Hadlaub and his corpus, for example, Max Schiendorfer, who elsewhere provides penetrating analyses of the texts as well as thorough treatment of the social context, treats the image with only a brief aside.<sup>82</sup> Researchers have not undertaken an interpretive analysis of his image as an equally fictional construct. Indeed, what is left of the image, if the autobiographical content of the poems is rejected? How does the image depict authorship, and how would it have shaped a 14<sup>th</sup>-century reader's understanding of Hadlaub as an author?

It is clear that Hadlaub's frontispiece and textual corpus commanded unparalleled, special attention from both artist and scribe. The accumulation of all these peculiarities

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<sup>81</sup> See Renk, *Manessekreis*. However, several scholars have warned against an overhasty identification of the historical data with the literary picture given by Hadlaub, who "will keinen real existierenden 'Manessekreis' darstellen, sondern eine ideale Einheit der politischen Führungsschicht Zürichs in der Kunst" (Mertens, "Liebesdichtung," 204).

<sup>82</sup> Schiendorfer, *Hadlaub*, 196-98.

has led many researchers to conclude that Hadlaub himself had some hand in the creation of the manuscript: “Für unseren Dichter Hadlaub ergibt sich mithin die bemerkenswerte Situation, dass er sowohl in räumlicher wie in zeitlicher Hinsicht zur entstehenden Liedersammlung in allernächster Distanz steht.”<sup>83</sup> It is thus quite probable that Hadlaub, as a favored court poet in Manesse’s circle, was assigned the task of assembling the various authors’ corpora from his own collections of “*liedbuoch*,” and perhaps entrusted with other details of the commission, such as hiring an artist and scribe. Such a situation would especially account for his own special place within the manuscript (some scholars even raise the possibility that Hadlaub himself may have been that unique scribal hand who copied his own poetry into the manuscript).<sup>84</sup>

No researcher however, has linked this theory to the production of the image as well. If it is the case that Johannes Hadlaub had a degree of control over the arrangement, presentation, and decoration of his texts, as most scholars agree, then it would be most surprising if this same control did not extend to the other, equally important component of every authorial entry in the Manesse codex: the frontispiece. Because the frontispieces are such an important part of the manuscript, it seems unlikely that Hadlaub would have concerned himself for the preservation and organization of his lyric work, while leaving the matter of the frontispiece, the first thing a reader would see, to someone else’s discretion. Indeed, Hadlaub probably also had a creative hand in the design of all of the

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<sup>83</sup> “For our poet Hadlaub, then, there is the remarkable situation that he stands in the nearest possible proximity to the creation of the manuscript, both in geographical and temporal respects.” Scheindorfer, *Hadlaub*, 194.

<sup>84</sup> “Der Gedanke, hier habe Hadlaub seine eigene Strophen eingetragen und Raum für eine besonders grosse Eröffnungsinitiale gelassen, erscheint gar nicht so abwegig.” Wilfried Werner, “Die Handschrift,” in Brinker and Flühler-Kreis, eds., ‘*Edele frouwen – schoene man*,’ 54.

miniatures. He would have taken a particular interest in his own, which would account for its unusual nature with respect to all the other images in the manuscript: it may in fact be the only painting where the poet depicted had a hand in his own representation.

This proposition has wide ranging implications. First of all, it implies that we cannot treat the image, as nearly every commentator does, as a mere illustration to the poems, an add-on to be casually disregarded by the philologist. We should, in contrast, view it as a primary document of Hadlaub's self-presentation, as a projection of his own understanding of authorship: what an author is, and what an author does. In the image, Hadlaub does not appear as a writer, reciter, or any other traditional function of authorship. Instead, he appears as a performer or character, physically embodying a narrative scene from one of his own poems. In this respect, the image is consistent with what occurs with other Manesse images as well: for example, Der von Kürenberg and Ulrich von Liechtenstein, as we saw, were both also represented as if the authors were experiencing the events described in their respective texts (Kürenberg's *Wechsel* with a high-class lady; Ulrich's jousting expedition in honor of love). However, in those cases, as we saw, this was partially explained by a paucity of outside, verifiable information. In the absence of outside biographical data, the image itself tended to take over that function, and helped to erect and embody an authorial presence.

With Hadlaub, however, the case is somewhat different. As he was a known public figure closely involved with the book's patron and perhaps the very making of the book, the historical circumstances of his life would have been familiar to the patron and earliest readers of the Manesse codex. Consequently, what does not appear in the image proves to be just as interesting as what does appear: namely, any trace at all of his life

outside of his poems, that is, his actual, lived life. The decision to exclude any fact or circumstance of his life that was not also in the texts was a very deliberate one. Johannes Hadlaub and the painter of his image in the Codex Manesse both existed and circulated in roughly the same historical context as each other, and yet the painting does not reflect this: its conception and its relationship to the texts are still comparable to those of Kürenberg, who had been dead for a century and a half. Why should this be so?

Hadlaub, in fact, deliberately chose to be so portrayed. Of greater value to him than his own historical circumstance or physical appearance was the rhetorical persona he had created in his poems, the first-person narrator who moves about town, falling in love with miscellaneous paragons of beauty and engaging in various love schemes to attract their attention. He wanted the reader to identify the protagonist of the image-narratives not with himself as a practicing poet, minstrel, or scribe, but rather with the protagonist of his texts, a practicing lover and adventurer. Hadlaub's image is best understood as a conscious, deliberate attempt at creating a kind of second life for the poet, an impulse towards the same sort of self-fashioning that induced Ulrich von Liechtenstein to compose his lengthy quasi-autobiography, in accordance with the popular interest in the lives of authors documented in the previous chapter. Only where Ulrich was satisfied with a purely textual medium, Hadlaub, involved as he was in the compilation and decoration of the Manesse codex, was aware of the role images can play in the creation and propagation of a self-image.

Recent scholarship has interpreted the Manesse images, and Hadlaub's frontispiece in particular, as compensatory devices, intended to counteract the loss of their original, oral or performative context (in which the poet's physical presence was the



central point of reference for understanding the song), by including an image of this physical body, as a kind of reminder of or substitution for that lost context.<sup>85</sup> Proponents of this idea claim that when this context gradually began to disappear in the mid- and late-1200s, to be replaced by a predominantly written, text-based reception, images added to the songs attempted to recapture a lost “aura” of immediate, performative authorship: “das Autorportrait...ist ein schwacher Abglanz jener Möglichkeiten, die in einer Aufführungssituation durch die reale Präsenz des Sängers gegeben sind.”<sup>86</sup> These efforts included the use of scrolls to symbolize the original oral delivery, as in the painting of Der von Kurenberg, and in the case of image like Hadlaub’s, depicted narrative actions to communicate a sense of the original author’s performance during an oral recitation: in either case, the image would become a surrogate replacement for something from the past that is now lost.

This “compensation” theory, however, particularly with respect to an author portrait like Hadlaub’s, is vulnerable to several criticisms. First of all, as several scholars have noted, there is no single, uniform mode of reception valid for all lyric poetry of the oral or semi-oral period. Middle High German songs could have been read aloud privately to oneself, before a small group, or before a large public gathering; they could have been recited by the original author or by a different performer; they could also have

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<sup>85</sup> A theory expounded recently by Michael Stolz, “Die Aura der Autorschaft: Dichterprofile in der Manessischen Liederhandschrift.” In *Buchkultur im Mittelalter: Schrift – Bild – Kommunikation*, ed. Adrian Mettauer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 68-99; and Volker Mertens, “Liebesdichtung und Dichterliebe: Ulrich von Liechtenstein und Johannes Hadloub,” in *Autor und Autorenschaft im Mittelalter*, eds. Elizabeth Andersen and Jens Haustein (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1998), 201-210, who does however admit that the theory “gilt nicht ausnahmslos” (208).

<sup>86</sup> “The author portrait is a pale reflection of those possibilities that were, in a performative context, offered by the physical presence of the singer.” Stolz, “Aura der Autorschaft,” 79.

been read and circulated in a purely written form, outside of any performative context.<sup>87</sup> It is surely fallacious to contrast a monolithic, earlier period of oral reception that subsequently needed to be reconstructed in a later period of textual reception. Moreover, the risk of a circular argument soon appears, in which the images themselves are used as testimony for a particular type of reception, which is then used to “explain” the images. Furthermore, as described above, all available evidence indicates Johannes Hadlaub was not only still alive at the time of the assembly of the manuscript, but likely had a hand in it, as described above. Many other local poets, based in and around Zurich, were also still alive at the time in which their lyrics were transcribed into the codex, and illustrated with frontispieces. And yet, they too, are not shown in the act of recitation or performance. Instead, like Hadlaub, they are depicted as characters in various love games, enacting the situations enshrined by the poetic conventions of *Minnesang*.<sup>88</sup> Such images, then, could not possibly be compensating for a vanished mode of reception: they are quite clearly rejecting this mode of reception in favor of establishing and representing a different one.

The point may be clarified by reference to another set of images from approximately the same time and place, images that, like the Codex Manesse, feature an author who used both text and picture in his self-representation. The Dominican preacher Heinrich Suso, throughout the 1320s and 30s (just when the second and third artistic campaigns of the Manesse codex were underway) wrote a series of tracts and treatises in

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<sup>87</sup> D.H. Green, D. H. *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature, 800-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For extensive literature in German on each of these particular modes of reception, see Schnell, “Vom Sanger zum Autor,” 97, n. 6.

<sup>88</sup> Rost von Sarnen (fol. 285r; see Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 192) and Heinrich Teschler (fol. 281v, see Walther, *Codex Manesse*, 191), both attested in Zurich in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century, are two examples.

vernacular German for the private use and edification of the nuns in surrounding communities. Around mid-century, Suso compiled his writings together for preservation into a single volume, which he called the *Exemplar*; included among these works was his pseudo-autobiography or *Vita*.<sup>89</sup> Like many of the other texts we have discussed, this *Vita* was long understood as a straightforward and factual account of Suso's life; modern scholars, however, draw attention to its frequent use of literary tropes and other fictional elements.<sup>90</sup> For Suso, more important than strict veracity was the truth of the effect: if fictional devices served the book's purpose and helped shepherd wayward souls onto the right path, then this was sufficient proof of its veracity. More relevant still is Suso's conviction that images could play a valuable role in the communication of religious truths. Though of course aware of the dangers inherent in images, Suso believed that an image, properly received, could serve as a step along the path to wisdom: ultimately to be transcended, but useful as a stimulus or launching point for the mind.<sup>91</sup> One result of this interest in images can be seen in the earliest surviving manuscript of Suso's *Exemplar*, dating to c.1370 but believed to be a close copy of Suso's autograph copy from two decades earlier.<sup>92</sup> In this manuscript, the images illustrate, and provide a kind of guide to, his theological ruminations. The remarkable consistency of this pictorial program among

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<sup>89</sup> For a full English translation see Henry Suso, *The Exemplar with Two German Sermons*, ed. and trans. Frank Tobin (NY: Paulist Press, 1989).

<sup>90</sup> Frank Tobin, "Introduction," in Suso, *Exemplar*, 40-42.

<sup>91</sup> For a full exploration of Suso's attitude to images, see Jeffrey Hamburger, "The Use of Images in the Pastoral Care of Nuns: The Case of Heinrich Suso and the Dominicans," *Art Bulletin* 71 (1989): 20-46.

<sup>92</sup> E. Colledge and J.C Marlier, "'Mystical Pictures' in the Suso 'Exemplar,' Ms. Strasbourg 2929," *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum*, LIV, 1984, 294-300.

nearly every surviving manuscript of the *Exemplar* has led researchers to conclude the image cycle originated with Suso himself.<sup>93</sup>

These images prominently feature Suso himself, but not as an author who writes, dictates, or reads aloud his work. Rather, like Hadlaub, he shows himself as an actor or performer, undergoing or experiencing the events about which he writes. For example, on the upper register of folio 109v (Fig. 13), a figure labeled “Der Diener” (The Servant) swoons before a crucifixion. His Dominican habit and the Greek letters singed upon his



**Figure 13.** Henry Suso as *Der Diener*. Strasbourg, Bibliotheque Nationale et universitaire, Ms. 2929, fol. 109v.

<sup>93</sup> On the image cycle, see Stephanie Altrock, “Vom *diener der ewigen wisheit* zum Autor Heinrich Seuse: Autorschaft und Medienwandel in den illustrierten Handschriften und Drucken von Heinrich Seuses “*Exemplar*.” In *Text und Kultur: Mittelalterliche Literatur 1150-1450*, ed. Ursula Peters (Stuttgart/Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 2001), 165-175 with illustrations.

chest, details taken directly from his autobiographical text, help identify the figure as Suso. In the lower register, the same figure appears again, reaching from his seated position to touch a bleeding Christ while playing an instrument with his other hand. Like Hadlaub's, these images do more than simply illustrate passages from the text on nearby pages. They actively attempt to convince the reader of the veracity of the narrative persona adopted by the author, the first-person autobiographical "I." By firmly planting the author within the world described in the text (however fictionalized that world may be), the image paradoxically helps validate the authenticity of that experience. Stephanie Altrock has stressed how Suso's embodiment of his works into textual form was not a regrettable by-product of his inability to be physically present for all the nuns under his care. Rather, Suso recognized the positive benefits of textuality itself: "[dem Buch] kommt eine verselbständigte Rolle zu, es 'spricht.'" <sup>94</sup> To this statement should be added: And so too does the image. In the manuscript of Heinrich Suso's *Exemplar*, the actual, historical author has been completely absorbed by the authorial persona of the text, and this is achieved primarily by the image.

The similarities between Suso's and Hadlaub's respective images extend beyond the purely formal (both are full-page, enframed and divided into two equal registers). Though directed towards different ends – courtly entertainment and pastoral care – both use the same methods of constructing authorial identity with images. Suso, like Hadlaub, is depicting a persona that is projected as the truth. Each author sought an image that could be unambiguously and decisively identified with himself, and then used that image

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<sup>94</sup> "To the book is assigned a role that is now independent; it 'speaks.'" Altrock, "Vom *diener der ewigen wisheit* zum Autor," 160.

or persona to promulgate a specific view of his own authorship, one that claims the author has actually experienced and performed the words he wrote, the experiences they describe. Images like these are not compensatory in the slightest: on the contrary, they are constitutive. They do not seek to compensate for a missing, longed-for authorial presence (both men, again, were alive and well when the images were designed): they seek to supersede an inadequate presence and disseminate a new, more powerful one, in which the author is wholly identified with a textual persona. They are not “traces” looking back to some ideal mode of reception; they are fully active statements of authorship, making use of the power of images to shape a reader’s understanding of the text. The image presents itself as a validation, doing what the physical presence of the author cannot. Far from being compensatory, the image is in fact closer to the truth that the author wishes to express about himself than a traditional author portrait could be. In this process, the image is central, not tangential or subsidiary.

Earlier poets, such as Der von Kürenberg and Ulrich von Liechtenstein, were provided with author portraits that framed their texts as biographical, and served as visual truth claims to verify and authenticate this claim, in accordance with popular literary traditions that laid ever more emphasis upon the person or life of the author. Then, accepting the authority of these images as legitimate records of the past, more modern poets like Hadlaub responded by outfitting their own works with poems that sought to achieve a similar effect. Hadlaub’s involvement with the production of the Manesse codex allowed him the special opportunity of fashioning a unique frontispiece to propagate exactly the kind of self-image that he wished and that the reading public

expected: not as writer or composer, but as actor and performer, enacting his verses, living them, combining with his songs to transform himself completely into his textual persona.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

This thesis charts merely one of many possible paths through the inexhaustibly rich pictorial program of the Manesse codex. As the first thing seen by the reader upon approaching any particular author in the manuscript, the frontispieces serve as preparation for the encounter, indicating what one should be attentive to in the reading and interpretation of the following verses.

Researchers have underestimated the absolutely central role of the Manesse Codex's images in shaping readers' expectations regarding authorship, and transforming their understanding of the poets presented to them. "Die Autorenbilder setzen lediglich um was in diesen Liedern bereits angelegt war: die Identität von Singer und Autor(rolle),"<sup>95</sup> writes Rüdiger Schnell in a 2001 article. Schnell recognizes a transformation in the presentation of authorship, a shift towards an identification of the author with his textual persona, but attributes this to the rise of a written over an oral reception. His use of the word "lediglich" with respect to the images is telling, however, and links Schnell to over a century of art historical criticism that has overlooked the importance of these images in shaping expectations and creating, in a very deliberate manner, a particular notion of authorship.

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<sup>95</sup> "The author portraits merely re-state what had already been accomplished in the songs: the identification of the singer with the author-role." Schnell, "Vom Sänger zum Autor," 142.



These images are not passive, negligible illustrations to a set of pre-existing texts that remain unaffected by the inclusion of images. On the contrary, they actively participate in a kind of reshaping of the meanings yielded by the texts and of the experience a 14<sup>th</sup>-century reader would have had. And they themselves are not merely the effects of a new interest on the part of a reading public in the author's personal life, but also causes of that interest.

In the case of the Knight from Kürenberg, the genesis of the image lay in the welding together of a traditional iconographical motif and a particular interpretation of the texts transmitted under his name. His personal life and historical biography, apparently unknown to the Manesse compilers, was elided in favor of a materialization of the speaking "I" within his poems. The fact that this "I" just as often was put into a lady's mouth as a man's, did not deter the Manesse artist in the least, for the female persona was embodied too, depicted standing opposite Kürenberg and endowed with the same pictorial or ontological status. Subsequently, because of its traditional, authoritative status as a guarantor of truth, the author portrait itself becomes responsible for a re-interpretation of the poet's corpus, generating an autobiographical reading of the poems that would not originally have been implied. The image merges Kürenberg's life seamlessly into his poetry. While the historical individual vanishes, the poet, as an actor or performer of his own poems, lives on. The image has transformed his songs into his life.

Ulrich von Liechtenstein, a half century before the creation of the Manesse codex, had used textual devices deliberately and self-consciously to create a living myth around himself, responding to popular trends in literature. Two generations later, the

Manesse artist absorbed this persona, gave it concrete visual form, and re-presented it outwards to the readers of the codex. In some sense, this transformation was the natural conclusion to Ulrich's own efforts. The Manesse artist, wishing to present to his audience the historical poet behind the poems, reached beyond the actual corpus of songs copied into the manuscript in an effort to reach the "real" Ulrich, but there found only another persona waiting to be grasped. The Manesse artist embraced it, however, thus in some sense completing through reception and perpetuation what Ulrich himself had begun. Like Kürenberg, but through a different path, Ulrich's life was diverted and digested through his textual persona. He, too, was now viewed less as an author of a set of texts than as a man who had experienced extraordinary adventures, and then, almost incidentally, had recorded them. In the Manesse codex, it is the image that does this work.

For Johannes Hadlaub, as an exact contemporary living and composing in the very milieu that gave rise to the manuscript, there was no question of the artist lacking biographical or personal knowledge of the poet. What is most telling, then, is that the artist – guided, very possibly, by Hadlaub himself – rejected any such references, and instead used the frontispiece as a platform to create, whole cloth, an authorial identity that does not involve writing or reciting at all, but rather, again, acting and experiencing. While modern scholars see no compelling reason to view Hadlaub's songs autobiographically, a contemporary, 14<sup>th</sup>-century audience would have had every reason to do so. The image, yet again, stimulates and determines a specific view of authorship, in which the validation of a textual corpus lay in its having actually been experienced by the poet.

Hadlaub's frontispiece bolsters the illusion that his texts are autobiographical, and it was specially designed to do so. This, in turn, reflects Hadlaub's own understanding of previous generations of *Minnesang*, and already-circulating images of *Minnesänger* like Der von Kürenberg. Hadlaub's own image is a response to his understanding of other frontispieces, and as such is characteristic of the readership of his time.

This has at least one further implication on the manuscript as a whole. Hitherto, scholars have universally persisted in searching for a single interpretive paradigm for all of the Manesse images, the paradigm that would most accurately characterize or illuminate the relationship between the poems and frontispieces. Earlier scholarship sought this by categorizing all the images according to their type, looking for textual sources or iconographical precedents. Modern researchers have, in contrast, jettisoned much of the simple, declarative statements of "meaning" found in older literature, embracing instead the virtues of polyvalence and unstable meanings derived from postmodern critical theory. At the same time, though, they have perhaps unwittingly replaced the older search for comprehensiveness with a new one, centered around function instead of form. But while the images are indeed constructions of authorship, they need not all be so in the same way. Kürenberg's image may be to some degree compensatory; Ulrich's less so; Hadlaub's not at all. Kürenberg's image and Hadlaub's not only differ compositionally, but they generate their meanings through vastly different processes, even if their endpoint – the propagation of an image that treats the texts as autobiography – is similar. Thus, interpreters should take into account not only the manifold possible relationships between a frontispiece and its associated lyrics, but

additionally, the relationships that may exist among various frontispieces themselves. They do not all do the same work in the same way.

The Manesse codex, a luxury production into which dozens of individuals poured their talents and energies, emerged from a literary milieu. Wealthy collectors of literature would have circulated and shared such codices among select and trustworthy acquaintances, in an effort to impress and entertain.<sup>96</sup> Correspondingly, this original audience, as literate, wealthy connoisseurs of art and song, would have understood and interpreted the German *Minnesang* according to familiar literary patterns from their own time, patterns that images themselves helped form. Foremost of these trends was a heightened interest in the life of the author “behind” the texts, as exemplified by legends and tales fabricated regarding their adventures, and their enshrinement in image form as well. These attitudes were carried back and projected onto earlier poets. The images are truth claims that depict and propagate authorial personas as truth of the author, in accordance with contemporary literary expectations during a period that saw a shift from oral vernacular to written vernacular. In a way that neither texts alone, nor the generic concept of textuality, can match, the images give us actors, authors-as-actors, authenticating the poems because they vouch for their historical truth.

In some ways, though we end with Hadlaub, he may be considered as standing at the beginning: not only in terms of his ostensible, personal input into the book’s manufacture, but also in the sense of his own conception of authorship. Hadlaub’s vision of himself as an author was perhaps the guiding vision for the whole manuscript: a vision

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. Hugo Kuhn, “Die Voraussetzungen für die Entstehung der Manesseschen Handschrift,” in *Liebe und Gesellschaft*, ed. Wolfgang Walliczek (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlerische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1980), 80-84.

that elided both “factual” autobiographical detail, and the actual mechanics of writing and reciting, in favor of an identification of an author with his textual persona. This vision has proved extraordinarily long-lasting, to judge by the fact that early modern critics understood the image of the Manesse poets in the same manner that Hadlaub did – as autobiographical testimonies to the poets’ actual lives. Indeed, the arguments of this thesis, as a whole, indicate that Schnell’s comment that “die in den letzten Jahrzehnten abgewehrte biographistische Deutung des Minnesangs könnte sich als ein im Mittelalter selbst anzutreffendes Paradigma erweisen,” which he says only with the texts in mind, may apply equally well to the images.<sup>97</sup> Though rightly rejected from the point of view of the image’s genesis, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century acceptance of the Manesse Codex’s text and image as windows onto historical truth, perhaps rings true after all, at least with respect to the images’ 14<sup>th</sup>-century reception. Paradoxically enough, the pictorial fictionalization of the author allowed and encouraged the texts to be circulated and understood as truth.

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<sup>97</sup> “The biographical interpretation of the songs, rejected in recent decades, may in fact prove to be a paradigm applicable to the Middle Ages itself....one whose influence radiated into the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries.” Schnell, “Vom Sänger zum Autor,” 103.

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