Seeing and Sinners:
Spatial Stratification and the Medieval Hagioscopes of Gotland

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ABSTRACT

The hagioscope—a small tunnel or opening usually set at eye-level in a church wall—is a complex and multifaceted device that appears in Europe during the late medieval period. Despite an increased interest in the history of the senses, the hagioscope has been overlooked until now. Drawing from Hans Georg Gadamer’s ideas about hermeneutics, Jacques Le Goff’s work on Purgatory, and the medieval intellectual Peter of Limoges’ thoughts on vision, this study aims to shed light on why the hagioscope appeared when it did and how it may have been used.

This case study of the hagioscope concerns the known hagioscopes with connected cells on the island of Gotland. It is introduced with two themes that combined, create a conceptual understanding of the hagioscope: the first is the device as a physical boundary or spatial division in a church room resulting from changes in theology and liturgy and the second is the device in the context of a medieval discourse on visuality, derived from the widespread thirteenth century treatise, *De oculi morali*. With this understanding in mind, the last chapter presents and discusses previous theories on the Gotland hagioscopes. In contrast with previous research, this thesis proves that the cells of Gotland are clearly of two different kinds: earlier cells are small, lack windows and have trefoil-shaped hagioscopes and a deep niche that significantly distances the observer from the nave. Later cells are bigger, equipped with a single window, have a niche spatially closer to the nave, and have differently shaped hagioscopes.

Keywords: Hagioscope, Peter of Limoges, Visuality, Perspectiva, Anchorite, Recluse, Gotland, Purgatory, Leprosy, Penance, Sword Brethren, Teutonic Order, Pilgrims
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"I am about to say a few words on the eye—
since the fortifying of the soul is contained in them"

Peter of Limoges

Preface

Sometimes it is the small things that actually make a change. The intention here is not to make a grand gesture similar to the world famous words of Neil Armstrong when he took his first steps on the moon, but rather in the Foucauldian sense. Personally, I do believe that Foucault himself would say that in the small details in the margins is where changes can be discovered; but in all honesty, that would not make a very inspiring first sentence. The hagioscope, in essence, a hole in a church wall, is, according to my experience, a marginal apparatus. At first look (pun intended), it is just a hole. Really, being forthright about it, that is its physical [non]existence. But the more I started to think of this device, the stranger it became. Why was it there, who was supposed to use it and why? I had to utter these questions, but neither previous research nor other scholars could provide an answer to them. Or rather, everyone had an answer…or a speculation. The interpretations were as numerous as the interpreters. After spending time intellectually in this cluster of explanations, a few main themes started to arise, but they seemed too simple. I know well that a simple explanation is quite often the best answer to a question. But sometimes, simple can be deceiving, luring one into straightforward and comfortable truths where no more questions are needed. As my knowledge of the hagioscopes increased, so did the exceptions to the answers given, and new questions emerged.

This thesis, a written record of this short but passionate journey, is my attempt to explore something that is seemingly simple, to understand something that for a long time has been misunderstood, and to shed light on a matter that, in the end, is much bigger than just a hole in a wall.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In recent years, there has been wide interest in sensory and visual experiences within medieval history. This has become a central issue in studies connecting material culture—such as art and architecture—to sensual perception. David Lindberg’s influential and refined narrative about pre-Keplerian optics (1976) paved the way for new studies in this multidisciplinary field, with several contributing or alternative narratives still being produced (Smith’s From Sight to Light: the Passage from Ancient to Modern Optics [2014] is one of the more recent). The concept of incorporating contemporaneous ideas about optics has resulted in several studies aiming to create a better understanding of the medieval mentality, and consequently, medieval society. Among the many medieval manuscripts on optics as a subject, some have been considered more influential than others, mainly, for being copied to a higher degree than others. Within the field of medieval optics, very little attention has been paid to hagioscopes as of yet, and a sufficient explanation as to the reason for their appearance in the end of the thirteenth century has yet to be made.

The following study centres on the hagioscope, an architectural element or device unbeknownst to many. It is for me, in retrospect, not hard to understand the reasons for its obscurity. A hagioscope (or a squint, or a leper window as it is also called) is a peeping hole usually located in an outer church wall. Visually connecting the inside with the outside, it is sometimes placed next to the sanctuary, giving a view of the high altar. Other times, it is placed in the western end of the church, also giving a view of the altar. The location can differ drastically; in some cases, the hole is connected to a small cell that has its own entrance from the outside but is not connected to the chancel or the inner space of the church. The shape of the hole varies. It may be formed by removing a brick from the wall, with the empty spaces covered in plaster. In other instances, it is carefully planned during the construction and beautifully carved in sandstone in the shape of a circle (or circles) or even a cross. The hole itself can be put in at an angle, diagonally piercing the wall. It could be in the shape of a cone or a pyramid, shallow at one end and wider at the other.

Altogether, these variations have, by and large, given rise to several descriptions as to who used the hagioscope and why. In some extreme cases, this feature has been disregarded and described as an “unexplainable hole”. The hagioscope has never before been compared in a greater extent to medieval theories of vision. The medieval origin of the hagioscope does coincide with radical changes in society, such as the perception of seeing, the theological development of Purgatory, and the cult around the Eucharist. This study aims to describe the hagioscope as a device by putting it into a historical context in the thirteenth and fourteenth century to shed light on how these events and ideas changed everyday society. By moving in the conceptual circles around the device and studying the conception of vision at the time, the development of church architecture, the life and

\[\text{References}\]

2 Madeline Harrison Caviness et al., The Four Modes of Seeing: Approaches to Medieval Imagery in Honor of Madeline Harrison Caviness (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009).

people on the island of Gotland, including lepers, sinners, knights and pilgrims—an understanding of the hagioscopes can emerge.

1.2. Disposition

This thesis consists of three major parts. The first part is an inquiry to create an understanding of the hagioscope as barrier within the church room. Second, the thesis establishes a medieval discourse of visuality to understand the hagioscope as a visual device. Finally, the paper specifically discusses the hagioscopes on the island of Gotland. The structure of the introductory chapter reflects this division, starting with a summary on previous research on the hagioscopes on Gotland. Thereafter, the research aims and methodology are explained; three kinds of approaches generate three main questions of this work. The wide source material for the three different parts are discussed and introduced at the beginning of the analysis. For a general and brief description of what a hagioscope is, see chapter 2.1.1.

In the last part of the analysis the cases of Gotland are discussed from several perspectives, drawn from previous research, and divided into subchapters. Nonetheless, to understand the underlying reasons for the case study on Gotland, the first two chapters are necessary. The three chapters are all of equal importance in approaching the hagioscope.

1.3. Previous Research

There has been little to no research on the hagioscope. It is not uncommon for the term to appear in guidebooks or architectural descriptions of churches, but the device is, in most cases, is referred to as a “so-called hagioscope” due to a lack of deeper understanding and knowledge.

The art historian Armin Tuulse has written the most overarching article on the subject (1966) in which he discusses the hagioscopes on Gotland, as well as some other examples from the Swedish mainland. Despite presenting his highly relevant thoughts on the matter in a very elegant and precise way, he explicitly leaves the question open-ended. Tuulse did not write his article purely based upon his own ideas, however. The article takes an opposition stance against another art historian, Johnny Roosval, who presented his ideas on Gotland hagioscopes in the series, Sveriges Kyrkor. Roosval believed that the hagioscopes of Gotland, with their connecting cells, were so-called reclosoriums: small chambers or cells in which a person would live disconnected from the world in order to come closer to God, like a recluse or an anchorite.

Tuulse points out that Roosval’s argumentation is very unclear. Tuulse refers to Roosval’s conclusion in Sveriges Kyrkor, but also mentions Roosval’s 1938 article, En Inclusorie-Cell i Westminster Abbey in which Roosvall mentions that a reclosorium has been found in Westminster Abbey. Roosvall connects this phenomenon to his previous argument in a local newspaper in which he suggested that the hagioscopes of Gotland are reclosoriums.

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This debate is ongoing. As late as 2000, the art historian Gerhard Eimer briefly discussed hagioscopes and examples from Gotland in an article in Die Sakrale Backsteinarchitektur des südlichen Ostseeraums – der theologische Aspekt (2000) and reached the conclusion that they appeared due to a changed perception of vision. Eimer suggested, on faulty grounds, that they most probably were used as reclosoriums. Nevertheless, like Tuulse, Eimer made a connection between the Gotland cells and those in certain castles of the Teutonic Order. Tuulse, Roosval and Eimer have in common that they, a priori, assumed that the cells on Gotland are identical with each other.

Certain specific kinds of hagioscopes have been researched, such as those connected to reclosoriums in England, as have hagioscopes in the Byzantine Empire, but there have been no general studies of the process.\(^6\) Indeed, despite trying to explain the function of these devices, no study gives a valid explanation of what the overall function of the hagioscope is; and more so, why it appears precisely during this period as an architectural element.

1.4. Research Aims and Methodology

This three-part thesis is a multi-pronged endeavour to create a wide and accurate contextual background to present a valid understanding of the hagioscope. Two historical contexts will be provided: one regarding the architectural development of dividing zones and visual trends within the church room, and the other, a contemporary discourse on visuality. With these contexts and understandings, the hagioscopes on the island of Gotland are discussed from the standpoints and claims made in previous research. This is done to clearly insert the claims and findings in this thesis in the ongoing academic debate, but also to stay close to the sources.

The first two parts of this thesis “The Paradoxical Barrier” and “The Visual Device” transparently provide a contextual background necessary to describe the hagioscope and construct the horizon of understanding that is being used to do so. Indeed, it is relevant to present these two inquiries transparently to avoid misinterpretation of the hagioscope itself. Since this is significant to the inquiry, it is in the interest of the reader to include in this thesis, especially with regard to the inter-subjective examination.

The first part suggests the development of dividing spaces within church rooms in connection to changes in liturgy and the systematization of sin. In the second part, a context for the hagioscope as a visual device is discussed; that is, how the hagioscope existed as a material aid to guide the sight of the beholder. For this reason, a discourse of sin and visuality is drawn from a thirteenth century text, the Tractatus Moralis de Oculo, by Peter of Limoges. Finally, with the historical context in mind, the third and last part consists of an investigation of the hagioscopes of Gotland. These hagioscopes are subjected to a thematic discussion based upon the claims of earlier research, but also including a more rigorous description about when they appeared, how they were built, and how their physical appearance can be described.

The three themes correspond with three equally important research questions:

1. Why does the hagioscope appear when it does, and can it be understood and explained as a materialized visual aid and optical device connected to a changed perception of vision?
2. How does the hagioscope work as an element of church architecture and what theological ideas motivate it?
3. Do the cells connected to the hagioscopes on Gotland—when put into a larger context—give any insights to why they were made and who they were made for?

1.4.1. The Hagioscope as a Paradoxical Barrier

Several studies from different academic disciplines have been made on the connection of theology and architecture within the church room. The art historian, Anna Nilsén, has mainly focused on the boundary between the chancel and the nave (1991, revised 2003). She acknowledges the transformation of the church room and connects it to the development and changes in theology and worship. A similar connection was made by the art historian Jacqueline E. Jung in her inquiry into the gothic screen (2013).

The hagioscope appears as a hole in the wall and this is imperative. Such a hole might strike one as being inclusive, in the sense that a person standing outside the church, who previously was unable to see into the church, is given a possibility to do so. Although this may be true, such a hole could also be perceived as exclusive if it is constructed with the intent of placing the observer outside, rather than inside, the church.

The deeper issue that lies in this definition can be illustrated with a more detailed and playful example: If a private art collector decided to put in windows in her villa to make her artwork visible to the public passing outside, we would call it ‘inclusive, because the action explicitly demonstrates that the collector is including the passing public in the experience of seeing inside, using the window. In this case, a window serves as an inclusive device.

Nevertheless, windows are not always inclusive. Airport security checkpoints and prisons have glass walls and windows meant to separate people. In this case, a window serves as an invisible barrier, or an exclusive device. Whether a window is inclusive or exclusive depends upon the context and historical understanding of the window. A medieval example on the complex a perception of a window is found in the monk Grimlaicus’ Rule for Solitaries from the tenth century:

A curtain is to be hung in front of this window, both inside and outside, so that he cannot easily be seen from the outside or himself see outside. Otherwise death might be drawn in through the gateway of the eyes, as it is written: Take care that death not enter into your soul through your windows!

Grimlaicus is referring to the passage from Jer. 9:21: “For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets.” Nonetheless, it also implies that the eyes are the gateway or the windows to the soul.

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To avoid falling in to such a trap regarding the hagioscope, where the context and historical understanding is unknown to us, this chapter will study the hagioscope as a paradoxical barrier, being both inclusive and exclusive at the same time.

The hagioscope is, at its purest, a hole in a wall connecting one side with the other. There are, however, two sides to a wall and people standing on one side are spatially isolated from those on the other. The development of the church room as one side of this division will be discussed in this chapter.

Most of the study of the medieval church room has been conducted by art historians, such as Jung and Nilsén, who centre their research on observations of material and architectural aspects. In contrast, the underlying hypothesis of this project requires a more historical approach, using written sources to create a wider context for the phenomenon of the hagioscope.

The theologian Allan Doig, in *Liturgy and Architecture from the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (2008), approached the connection between liturgy and architecture from a theological point of view. While Jung and Nielsen made good case studies on the appearance of single objects, Doig created a chronologically longer, but less detailed, narrative about the development of the church.

These studies provide the thematic background for this chapter, while the work of Toby Huitson (*Stairway to Heaven: the Functions of Medieval Upper Spaces*, 2014) inspired the methodological approach. Huitson researched the purpose of upper spaces in general, such as staircases, chambers, and towers in churches, taking different explanations into account in thematic discussions. He transparently used several examples and provides a detailed description of his methods in working with the material, offering explicit insights into the complex connection between function and form in church architecture.

### 1.4.2. The Hagioscope as a Visual Device

It is safe to say the hagioscopes were created with a purpose in mind; they must have a function. In his essay, *Prostheses of Pious Perception: on the Instrumentalization and Mediation of the Medieval Sensorium*, Hans H. Lohfert Jørgensen touched upon the subject of how to connect material objects (such as artefacts, art and other devices to devotional practices) to sensorial perception. He connects sensorial aspects to external materials, suggesting the concept of multisensorial mediation—the meeting of the interior mind and the exterior body, for example, how the touch and the smell of rosary beads are intertwined with the concept of prayer. Jørgensen uses the word ‘instrument’ to describe these material objects. “*Instruments substitute for immediate, direct and unaided access to things, thus taking the place of genuine immediacy and replacing it with the mediation of tools, props and utensils*.” His definition of ‘instrument’ is similar to that of ‘device’ as it is used in this text. The Oxford Dictionaries describes an instrument as “a tool or implement, especially one for precision work.”

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8 Finishing essay in: Laugerud, Ryan, and Skinnebach, *The Materiality of Devotion in Late Medieval Northern Europe*.


Hagioscope can be described as a tool, but I argue that it is not one for precision. The various forms and placements of the hagioscopes point to an object with many uses. Depending on the shape and location of the hagioscope, it is almost impossible to determine a single use of it. Some might have been multipurpose and some might have been made for a single purpose. Therefore, instead of using the word ‘instrument’ with its connotations as a ‘tool of precision’, the more architectural term ‘device’ is applied. A ‘device’ can be considered an instrument, but its meaning is more inclusive to other uses as well.

This chapter will focus on the hagioscope as a visual device, that is, as an instrument for seeing. To discuss the optical uses of the hagioscope, an inquiry in the medieval discourse of visuality is made by using Richard Newhauser’s normalized translation (2012) of Peter of Limoges’ Tractatus Moralis de Oculo. This analysis will connect the hagioscope as a material object to sensual and visual perception.

Peter of Limoges’ book had a strong focus on using optics as way to understand God; some passages mention how the soul is connected to seeing, describing that the internal body and the spirit therein meet the external and material world. Thus, the focal point of the textual analysis is the meeting of the internal and the external to see how vision through the hagioscope is intertwined with the concepts of religiosity, spirituality, and sin.

To grasp the concept of medieval optics, two main works will be used. David C. Lindberg (1976) and Mark A. Smith (2014) have both described the scientific development of optics from antiquity onwards. Lindberg’s book has long been considered the standard work for the development of optics; however, it does not include the more recent academic discoveries. Smith’s more recent study has been written to complement and update Lindberg’s suggested narrative. In his book, From Sight to Light: the Passage from Ancient to Modern Optics, he has “revamped” the work of Lindberg, considering recent discoveries in both source material and methodologies. These two books provide a conceptual searchlight in the textual analysis of the manuscripts.

1.4.3 Describing the Gotland Examples
The hagioscopes of Gotland are somewhat unique. Hagioscopes exist all over northern Europe, but on Gotland, they are usually connected to a small chamber or cell that is only accessible from the outside of the church with a separate entrance. These specific hagioscopes will be analysed as a case study, to not only create an understanding for the hagioscope, but also connect it to physical objects.

The analysis will be conducted with the help of floor plans of church rooms, earlier archaeological inquiries of their development (summarized in Sveriges kyrkor: konsthistoriskt inventarium), and field studies where the size and the placement of hagioscopes have been examined. An observant reader might notice that Sveriges Kyrkor is one of the works in which Johnny Roosval presented his ideas about the hagioscopes; therefore, this need some clarification. Roosval used these books as a medium to present some of his theories regarding the hagioscopes of Gotland, but the works also

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12 Further information on this can be found in the chapter 2.1.3. The Treatise.
14 See chapter 1.3. Previous Research.
describe relevant data on the churches that is necessary for a new examination—such as the size of the hagioscope, the size of the cells, the construction phases of the churches and so on. This data will be used in this inquiry, while arguing against Roosval’s theories based upon the same data.

The sightlines from the hagioscopes have also been reviewed where possible. To actually see if it is possible to see the high altar, or another holy figure, a temporary barrier was raised at the height of 168 cm, which was the mean height of a man during the medieval period. This barrier provided information about what could be observed from the hagioscope when the congregation was gathered in the church. All of the collected data will thereafter be put into different contexts, or themes, drawn from suggestions or hypothesizes from previous research.

1.5. Theoretical Approaches

All things considered, this study has the overarching aim to contribute to the understanding of medieval discourse on religion and visuality, in the spirit of Hans Georg Gadamer’s theoretical ideas. It has often been claimed that an understanding of the medieval period is impossible due to the vast historical distance and the radical changes in human mentality. Nevertheless, by applying Gadamer’s hermeneutics on fundamental concepts in history (such as emotions and senses) a deeper understanding can be acquired that was previously considered impossible. Thus, the inquiry of the hagioscope is meant to create an understanding of the medieval concept of visuality and serve as a case study on forming an historical understanding while still remaining close to the source material.

This project has been shaped by the main concepts from Gadamer’s magnum opus, Wahrheit und Methode (first published in 1960).

Even in the early forms of source criticism, it was accepted that the meanings of some words have changed throughout history; even a word with a deceptively obvious meaning in historical documents still should be revised. Emotional expressions or sensorial descriptions have been unconsciously taken as essentialities in the field of history. Expressions connected to emotions and senses are fundamental in understanding, but their medieval meanings have become alien to us, and needs to be rediscovered.

To avoid misinterpretation of medieval source material, and to create a deeper and more accurate understanding, this study aims to serve as a tentative example on how to explore, and hopefully rediscover, the medieval concept of the hagioscope. With that knowledge, this study should shed light on social divisions and changes in mentality that have been unknown or forgotten until today.

As stated above with the example of the window, the human relationship to and attitudes toward the window is a cultural construct. To fully understand it, one must learn the cultural background of the window. This may however not be sufficient; a person possessing that knowledge may still not be able to differentiate the difference between a sheet of glass in a prison and one in a private art gallery. To be able to do that, an alien observer must understand the context. What is the difference between

15 Ebba During, Kristina Ambrosiani, and Åsa Jägerhorn, Osteologi: Benens Vittnesbörd, vol. 5, Arkeographica (Gamleby: Arkeoförlag, 1992), 68.
16 An early and influential work of this kind is Norbert Elias’ Über den Prozess der Zivilisation.
17 See chapter 1.4.1. The Hagioscope as a Paradoxical Barrier.
the art gallery and the prison? To approach the hagioscope scientifically, we need to acknowledge our deficiency in studying events and objects in a historically-distant period. To describe the hagioscope, a device situated in history, it is necessary to have a historical understanding. In this case, the historical understanding is the idea of optics. How would the interior have been perceived by a person using the hagioscope? In addition, the context of the church room must be considered. It is thus imperative to create and describe the optics and the context before beginning an inquiry into the hagioscopes of Gotland.

Gadamer illustrated the challenges of studying the past by describing how we as observers of the past exist in the consequences or aftermath of our history. Objectivity is not possible if an active standpoint is not taken. Absolute and full objectivity is, of course, never possible; but striving to attain it will lead to an increased understanding of the issue being examined. This can be called historical consciousness. To create this consciousness, or awareness, Gadamer advocates the use of a conceptual horizon—a horizon that embraces everything that can be seen from a certain standpoint.

This concept is drawn from Husserl and Nietzsche to describe how the “narrowness of horizon” limits our way of thought. One who lacks such a horizon, or stands unknowing of it, will always over-evaluate the objects closest to oneself. In contrast, Gadamer suggests that a relevant, conceptual, historical horizon has to be constructed to fuse it with the horizon of oneself. The historical horizon becomes a part of the historical consciousness for the purpose of avoiding the hermeneutical issues of misunderstanding and misinterpreting.

However, the main focus of this study is not a written source. Gadamer wrote, “For what is true of the written sources, that every sentence in them can be understood only on the basis of its context, is also true of their content. Its meaning is not fixed…” To create a better understanding for the hagioscope, a material object whose meaning has been lost in history, a historical consciousness is applied.

The hermeneutical stance, as suggested by Gadamer, validates the need for a study of this kind. It leads to the medieval discourse of sin and visuality, which in turn, is applied to the hagioscope. The hagioscope is an intrinsic device. It has been used over time in buildings that have been renovated and rebuilt, situated in a landscape that has changed because of war and other factors. Its use is shaped by the ideas of the time. The revelations provided in this study are holistic truths for devices with multiple uses. Even after extensive study, to claim a full, objective understanding of the device would be naïve, if not foolish. Or as Gadamer describes it:

Historia is a source of truth totally different from theoretical reason. This is what Cicero meant when he called it Vitae memoriae. It exists in its own right because human passions cannot be governed by the universal prescriptions of reason /…/ that is why Bacon

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19 Gadamer, ‘Hermeneutical Understanding’, 158.
21 Gadamer, Truth and Method, 184.
describes historia /…/ as virtually another way of philosophizing (alia ratio philosophandi).22

The first conceptual horizon to be constructed and described is the development of church architecture and how it is connected to changes in theology and mentality. The hagioscope is situated in the church wall, and creates a channel between the inner and the outer space. Understanding how walls, other dividing devices and visual trends have developed in churches will bring better insight.

Secondly, and primarily, a discourse of visuality will be drawn from a very influential and widespread text on theories of vision, Peter of Limoges' *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*. This text incorporates the new ideas of vision and optics that came into Europe in the late twelfth century and early thirteenth century in a handbook for priests on how to include these new discoveries in their sermons. If the mostly illiterate laypeople of medieval society encountered ideas of visions, the most plausible channel for this knowledge was through the church. The idea of a layperson’s (a medieval villager or citizen without direct access to academic information) conception of vision is referred to as the ‘normative perception of vision’ in this paper, in contrast to an ‘academic perception of vision’.

These two horizons are a major part of this investigation. Systemizing the development of certain architectural elements in the church and the idea of vision will be used as analytical tools to understand the appearance and use of the hagioscopes without falling for anachronistic interpretations. This understanding will, in this case, be used to approach the more unusual hagioscopes on Gotland with connecting cells but also create an understanding for hagioscopes at large.

The medieval user of the hagioscope is presented herein as an observer, a term borrowed from the art historian Jonathan Crary (1990). He draws from Foucault, among others, when describing a "modern and heterogeneous regime of vision".23 Although the chronological focal point of Crary's investigation differs greatly from this one, he does present some ideas that are meaningful here.

If I have mentioned the idea of a history of vision, it is only as a hypothetical possibility. Whether perception or vision actually change is irrelevant, for they have no autonomous history. What changes are the plural forces and rules composing the field in which perception occurs. And what determines vision at any given historical moment is not some deep structure, economic base, or world view, but rather the functioning of a collective assemblage of disparate parts on a single social surface.24

The Foucauldian influence, with a main emphasis of the genealogical method, is clearly noticeable in this statement. To put things more clearly: the most relevant results of this study are not that the perception of vision may or may not change; it is rather about the different aspects of medieval society that together shaped the social surface.

It is with this in mind that Crary’s definition of the observer is applied and used in this study. He warily chose the word ‘observer’ instead of ‘spectator’, partly because the word ‘spectator’ has connotations to “a passive onlooker at a spectacle, as at an art gallery or theatre”25 and also because

“...an observer is more importantly one who sees within a prescribed set of possibilities, one who is embedded in a system of conventions and limitations.”

This thesis aims to transparently create two horizons of understanding based upon the relevant developments in church architecture and the discourse of sin and visuality as presented in Peter of Limoges’ treatise and apply these horizons in an analysis of the hagioscopes on Gotland.

2. Analysis

2.1. Source Material

This study draws its empirical data from a wide variety of sources; it is therefore necessary to further explain and describe them. The main material that is used to contextualize and create the ideal type, the ideal hagioscope, consists of the general development of architectural dividing elements within the church and Peter of Limoges’ treatise. Next, with that context and discourse in mind, the existing hagioscopes in the churches of the Swedish island of Gotland will be analysed from several stances presented in previous research.

Some data has also been collected in field research conducted in April 2018, by visiting all of the relevant Gotland churches, as well as inspection of later-constructed hagioscopes in Munktorp Church and Strängnäs Cathedral. Necessary details were also provided upon request from the Olavinlinna Castle in Finland.

2.1.1. The Hagioscopes

The simplest way to describe a hagioscope is a small hole in the wall of a church. Early hagioscopes in Sweden, dating back to the beginning of the thirteenth century, are found in the outer walls, such as those in the ruins of churches in Flasta, Granhult or Skurup. These were connected to the southern wall of the apse with a view of the altar. Nonetheless, they exist in many shapes and sizes, occasionally elaborately built, sometimes just a removed stone. The opening is sometimes splayed; wide on one end, and narrow on the other, and sometimes built at an angle. They have been found in northern Europe, France, and to a great extent in England.

‘Hagioscope’ has an etymology from the Greek ‘hagios’ ἅγιος (holy) and ‘scopio’ σκοπεύω (to see or to examine): basically, ‘an instrument for viewing the holy’. The word is not very old; the first recorded use is from 1839 and was at that time suggested to replace the older term ‘squint’. Oxford English Dictionary describe the hagioscope as a “small opening, cut through a chancel arch or wall, to enable worshippers in an aisle or side chapel to obtain a view of the elevation of the host; a squint; also, sometimes applied to a particular kind of window in the chancel of a church.”

Hagioscopes in Sweden located in the outer wall of a church were mostly constructed from the early thirteenth century an onwards. Usually they were placed in the eastern part of the church next to the

26 Crary, Techniques of the Observer, 6.
apse, such as in the Church of Börstil (early fourteenth century)\(^ {28}\), in Munktorp (thirteenth century)\(^ {29}\), and the Södra Råda (early fourteenth century)\(^ {30}\) that has been destroyed by fire.

Other kind of windows occasionally occur within the church space for other practical reasons, for example, to let out the sound of the bells from the church tower, or to let in light. Openings like these are usually connected to parts of the church that would have been closed to the congregation or a visitor. Several holes have been found in vestries, or other closed spaces, in England, and their purpose have been more practical, such as to enable a priest, or another high-ranking cleric to follow, or control, the celebration of the mass.\(^ {31}\)

The hagioscopes on Gotland are all located in the south-western part of the church and are connected to a cell with an entrance from outside of the church.

### 2.1.2. The Architectural Development

Most of the material presented in this chapter is drawn from previous studies on the subject that is critically analysed and summarized. Several works and authors were studied; these create a basis for understanding the development of ecclesiastical architecture.\(^ {32}\)

The cultural historian Justin E. A. Kroesen and the theologian Regnerus Steensma in their book, *The Interior of the Medieval Village Church* (2012), approached medieval society by analysing several aspects, such as furnishings and architectural elements in the interior of parish churches. They were explicitly inspired by, and refer to, the churches on Gotland and their well-preserved interiors.

Art historian Anna Nilsén studied the development of church rooms with special focus on dividing barriers. In her book, *Focal Point of the Sacred Space: The Boundary between Chancel and Nave in Swedish Rural Churches: From Romanesque to Neo-Gothic* (2003),\(^ {33}\) described the ecclesiastical architecture in Swedish rural churches.

Jacqueline E. Jung, an art historian focused her book, *The Gothic Screen: Space, Sculpture, and Community in the Cathedrals of France and Germany ca. 1200-1400*, entirely on the gothic screen. Despite looking at cathedrals, her work provides some important background on the reasons for the appearance and function of the different screens.

The art historical angle is of great importance to this chapter, but to put this research in another context, the subject of this work can be compared to different liturgical and theological studies. The

\(^{28}\) Erik Bohm et al., *Kyrkor i Frösåkers Härad: Södra Delen: Konsthistoriskt Inventarium* (Stockholm: Generalstabens litografiska anstalt, 1956), 577–80, 618.


\(^{32}\) The nomenclature used in this chapter have been made with the reader in mind, while still striving to be within academic discourse. However no deeper explanation for the terms are provided. For further information please see Cocke, Thomas, Rust, David & Wilson, George (red.), *Recording a church: an illustrated glossary*, 3. ed., Council for British Archaeology, York, 1996.

main work used here is by the famous liturgist Josef Andreas Jungmann: *Kyrrkans Liturgi: Kortfattad förklaring Mot Dess Historiska Bakgrund* (1981), which is a thoroughly updated edition by Maxim Mauritsson. For longer perspectives on the development of the church the book *Medieval Christianity: A New History* (2015) by the historian Kevin Madigan, has been consulted.

The final part of this chapter draws heavily from the much-acclaimed book *The Birth of Purgatory*, originally published in 1984. The author claims that the perception of Purgatory as a physical place did not exist prior to 1170.34 This conclusion has, however, been criticized by some. The historian Richard Trexler stated that several others had reached different conclusions on the emergence of Purgatory as a physical place “simply by using other definitional a prioris”35.

This criticism is not relevant for this study, since the argument presented herein is more about the systematization of sin than the geographical and spatial placement of Purgatory. Whether it existed prior to 1170 does not affect the conclusion that the fourth Lateran council confirmed a new dogma regarding classification, and stratification, of sin and penance.

### 2.1.3. The Treatise

*Tractatus Moralis de Oculo* was written by Peter of Limoges (†1306) in the second half of the thirteenth century. Peter, a canon active in the university of Paris, was a well-respected astronomer and held a *Magister Artium* in theology and astronomy. He might also have been a Dean of the medical school in Paris and declined being elected bishop twice. Peter had an interest in homiletics and copied several sermons during their delivery; he preached himself in Paris between 1273 and 1280. *Tractatus Moralis de Oculo* was made as *moralia*, providing preachers with moral examples to use in their sermons from the burgeoning field of optics. Over 70 manuscripts from his private library still exist, and give a great insight to the works he cited in his text. The treatise consists of 15 chapters in which many *exempla* are given. Peter, in general, starts with an example from optical science, explain it with a biblical passage or intellectual authority and thereafter, makes a comparison that is relatable, such as how a priest should act in certain situations, or how a good Christian should behave. Thereafter, a longer discussion usually follows.

The text became extremely popular and over 219 manuscripts containing the treatise still remain in Europe, indicating its massive spread and influence.36 The treatise has survived in some manuscripts from Sweden, such as Uppsala MB C282, fol. 179rb - 206va (15th c.), C385 fol. 397v - 447r (15th c.), C641, fol. 2ra - 57ra (1374) and a fragment in C634, fol. 19v-20v. (1446-1460). These are all from the library in Vadstena Abbey and indicate that the text was known in Sweden.

Newhauser, in *The Moral Treatise of the Eye*, based his translation upon the earliest printed text of the work: *Johannis Pithsani archiepiscopi Canthuriensis ordinis fratrum minorum liber de oculo morali foeliciter incipit* (Augsburg: A. Sorg, 1475[?]) and compared it to two manuscripts of which one came from Peter of

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Limoges’ own library. Newhauser’s translation is meticulously and transparently made, despite not being a critical edition. The importance of this manuscript, has also been affirmed by other scholars, such as Dallas G. Denery, who analysed the implications of medieval allegories in the treatise.

2.1.4 The Churches

The island of Gotland experienced a surge in wealth during Middle Ages due to its geographical location in the Baltic Sea. Trade generated money, which in turn, was invested in building and the construction of close to a hundred stone churches. Its position shifted at the end of the thirteenth century, due to a civil war between the islanders and the citizens of Visby in 1288, and competition with other Hanseatic cities, such as Lübeck, Riga and Reval. The definite mark of the decline occurred in 1361, when the Danish king Valdemar Atterdag occupied the island as a result of a war that severely decimated the population, already affected by the outbreak of the plague. Looking at building and architecture of Gotland, the decline happened even earlier, around 1230, and in Visby, around 1300, coinciding with the rise of the crusades to the Baltics. The era of building stone churches on the island was brief, starting in the twelfth century and declining during the fourteenth century.

It is quite easy to date the many churches on the island, using their architectural elements and a few written sources in combination with findings from a few archaeological excavations. Most of the information regarding this has been collected from the series Sveriges Kyrkor, an art historic inventory published between 1912 and 2011 with details about construction phases, paintings, known written sources and other details of interest for further research. Measurements without a reference in the text were made by the author in April 2018 in a field study and have been rounded to the closest decimetre.

For floor plans, and photographs of the cells and hagioscopes, see Appendix I and II.

The measurements and location of cells in castles of the Teutonic order have been provided by the floor plans presented in Conrad Steinbrecht’s Preussen zur Zeit der Landmeister: 1230-1309 (1888).

38 An annotated edition by Richard Newhauser is, however, currently in progress.
Atlingbo Church, Hejde Setting:\n
This church has a chancel built around 1215, while the tower and the western part of the church—including the cell—was built between 1240 and 1280.\textsuperscript{42} The cell is about 300 by 150 cm in size and the door leading into it and today has a threshold with a height of 30 cm on the outside. The room lacks other openings. The hagioscope is 35 by 33 cm; in the shape of a trefoil and is cut in one round block of stone with a splayed and angled niche on the inside of the cell.

Bro Church, Bro Setting:\n
In this church, the cell was added during a rebuilding of the church attributed to the building master Neoiconicus, active in the beginning of the fourteenth century. Original floorboards were found in 2002 under the present floor that were dendrochronologically dated to 1302 to 1304, giving the construction of this cell a very exact date.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} A setting is a Gotlandic territory. The medieval island was in its administrative system divided in thirds, and every third had two settings.


The cell is 480 by 220 cm, with a threshold height of about 70 cm on the outside. The door arch appears to have been changed since the top three stones lack a line marking where the plaster should begin when compared to the bottom stones of the doorway.\(^{44}\)

One rectangular window faces west, and another one faces south, but these openings are of later date, since it they are not visible in earlier photos of the church.\(^{45}\) Just to the north of the western window is the remains of a built-up window in a semi-circular shape with a splayed niche on the outside, sloping upwards. The bottom of the opening is about 230 cm above the ground today.

The hagioscope is 38 by 36 cm in the shape of a cross and is facing the high altar. It has a two-levelled niche in the inside of the cell.

**Endre Church, Bro Setting:**

In this case, the cell no longer exists; however, the door opening remains. Based upon the present state of the building, certain conclusions can be made. The apse, with the cell was built 1297.\(^{46}\) The cell should have been approximately 360 cm long and between 2 to 3.5 meters wide, presuming that it was built in the same manner as the cell in Vall and Bro. The built-up door remains on the outside and threshold is about 110 cm above the ground today. The western part of the church is the oldest, with remains from a previous church structure. The cell has had a window to the south viewing Bro.\(^{47}\)

**Martebo Church, Bro Setting:**

The tower, which contains the cell, is supposed to have been built between 1250 and 1280, based upon the brick arches in the tower and their similarity with other churches constructed in those years. The chancel and nave have been dated—due to their gothic appearance and structure—to the early fourteenth century, when they replaced an older, smaller structure.\(^{48}\) The cell is about 170 by 200 cm and the threshold of the door on the outside today is ca. 30 cm.

The hagioscope is 31 by 33 cm and has a trefoil shape. It is possibly made from one block of stone but this is a bit uncertain due to the surface being partly covered in plaster. It has a three-levelled niche on the inside of the cell and with a focal point towards the high altar.

**Vall Church, Hejde Setting:**

The cell is in Vall is part of the tower constructed between 1225 and 1235. The capitals in the church room are built in the same manner as the Church of Mary in Visby, which was consecrated 1225, but do not share the more modern style of vaulting seen in the Church of Mary’s choir built around 1235. The master builder of Vall seems to have worked on the Church of Mary before his work on Vall.\(^{49}\) Nonetheless, the cell was created by adding a wall to the north, which probably coincided with

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\(^{44}\) Efraim Lundmark, *Kyrkor i Bro Ting: Konsthistoriskt Inventarium*, Sveriges Kyrkor (Stockholm, 1929), 247.

\(^{45}\) Lundmark, *Kyrkor i Bro Ting*, 247.


\(^{47}\) Lundmark, *Kyrkor i Endre Ting*, 389.


\(^{49}\) Roosval, *Hejde Setting*, 72.
when the tower was built higher between ca. 1230 and 1300. The cell is 520 by 140 cm, and is particularly large in comparison to the others. Height of the threshold to the door on the outside is about 110 cm today. One partly built up small window exists is on the opposite wall of the hagioscope (i.e. facing south). It is about 200 cm from the ground to the bottom on the outside. Due to a raised floor, it is only about 130 cm from the floor of the cell to the bottom of the window.

The hagioscope has been built up and the architect Carl Georg Brunius (†1869) noted in harsh words how heavily and carelessly renovated the church was. Regardless, the size and the angle of the niche on the inside of the cell indicate that the size of the hagioscope today (47 cm high by 9 cm wide) is similar to the original opening. The current shape of the hagioscope is rectangular, but it is not possible to say whether this has always been the case. The hagioscope faces the western part of the northern wall, and not the high altar, in contrast to the other cells.

Väskinde Church, Bro Setting:

In this church, the chancel was built around an older church in the middle of the thirteenth century, and the nave, with the connected cell was completed around 1275. The cell is about 160 by 150 cm and is currently connected by a small door to a second vestry in the south-western corner of the church (west of the cell). This gives the impression of a cell that is bigger than it was during the middle ages. This rather careless work was done after the publication of Sveriges Kyrkor, where the floor plan shows two separate rooms. According to information from the church warden during the field research, the renovation happened in the early 1950s. The door to the cell is blocked up but still visible. The threshold to the door on the outside is 70 cm from the ground. An aumbry is built into the northern wall of the cell that might be of medieval origin, but no further information has been found regarding this.

The hagioscope is 42 by 40 cm. It is in the shape of a trefoil and carved in a square block of stone. The focal point could be towards the main altar or towards the wall, where the pulpit is placed today, just south of the old rood arch. The pulpit is resting on the side altar of medieval origin.

2.2. The Paradoxical Barrier

Several factors have contributed to the development of barriers in the church. This chapter will touch on several subjects, such as theology (i.e. the study of the nature of God and religious belief), liturgy (i.e. how worship and rites are conducted), practical needs, the division of laity and clergy, and the emergency of the idea of Purgatory, among others. These themes do intersect and their somewhat conceptual and parallel lineages do coincide and affect the arrangement of the church room and the development of different barriers within the church. The text is thematically organized, and not chronological, and no theme can be said to be less important than the other. This text will

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50 Roosval, Hejde Setting, 72.
51 Roosval, Hejde Setting, 66.
52 Called “Västkinde” in Sveriges kyrkor.
53 Lundmark, Kyrkor i Bro Ting, 198–201.
54 Lundmark, Kyrkor i Bro Ting, 202.
provide an understanding, a horizon of knowledge, of the development of barriers—exclusive and simultaneously inclusive—in the medieval church room.

The undoubtedly most important area in a church is the main altar, at which the most important act of worship—the celebration of the mass—is held.\textsuperscript{55} Mass is the name of the major Eucharistic liturgical service. The composition of the Eucharist rite in medieval liturgy was fourfold, and while there is some debate regarding the development of the rite from the early years of church, the medieval liturgy is quite clear.\textsuperscript{56} Firstly, there is the Offertory, when the bread and wine are placed on the altar; secondly is the prayer, when the presider (on behalf of the gathered) thanks God; thirdly is the fraction, when the bread is broken; and finally is the Communion, when the bread and wine are distributed.\textsuperscript{57}

In the early church, when the entire congregation took part in receiving the sacrament, the altar was placed in the centre of the church. With a liturgical shift in the fourth century, however, the sentiment of the sacrament shifted from a shared meal and symbolic commemoration of the last supper, towards a divine sacrifice to God. This, in turn, created a need for priests that were chosen and initiated to carry out the sacrament and resulted in a rather slow movement of the altar towards the eastern part of the church into a sacred area where the clergy would have access, but the laity would not.\textsuperscript{58} This can be described as clericalisation of the liturgy.

At the council of Laodicea in the middle of the fourth century, it was decided that no one but the priest was allowed to celebrate the Eucharist near the altar, and that women were not allowed near the altar at all.\textsuperscript{59} Communion became monopolized by the clergy until the twelfth century with the exception of Rome, where the Eucharist still was considered to be a corporate rite for the entire congregation.\textsuperscript{60} The focus in the liturgy shifted from a symbolic recreation towards the more sacrificial character of the rite, which affected the design of the church room and the placement of the altar.

It is nonetheless important to not over interpret the impact of the council of Laodicea. Even during the eighth century, it was a common practice to place the altar in the crossing between the nave and the transept, or in the border between the chancel and the nave. The actual action of the eastward move of the altar happened between the late eighth century and the first decade of the thirteenth century. By that time, the altar was more or less placed in the apse. It is easy for a modern and secular reader to get the impression that the form of the liturgy and the rite was uniform throughout the Western church in the first millennium, but that was not the case. When the Western Roman Empire collapsed in the fifth century, several local traditions (or rites) arose. The political unity under Charlemagne in the ninth century sparked a trend, with a direct influence from the emperor, towards uniformity within the church. After his death, it retracted into local rites, albeit less pronounced.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{56} For further information regarding this debate, see Simon Jones, ‘Introduction’, in \textit{The Shape of the Liturgy}, 3 ed. (Norfolk, 2005), xiv–xxii.
\textsuperscript{57} Gregory Dix, \textit{The Shape of the Liturgy} (London: Continuum, 2005), 48–49.
\textsuperscript{58} Helge Nyman, \textit{Kyrkorum, Kyrkosl"{a}ng, Kyrkolibr} (Helsingfors: Församlingsförbundet, 1989), 18.
\textsuperscript{59} Nyman, 15–17.
\textsuperscript{60} Dix, \textit{The Shape of the Liturgy}, 598.
\textsuperscript{61} Dix, \textit{The Shape of the Liturgy}, 9.
The church grew substantially from the Carolingian Renaissance to the monastic and papal reforms in the eleventh century and reached a more clearly developed structure in the Middle Ages. Part of this centralization was the clericalisation of the liturgy; that is, the importance of initiated and chosen clerics being responsible for the sacraments and for leading the rites. This created a heightened awareness of the need for physical distancing in the church room between the clergy and the laity. The sacrificial character of the Eucharist was also further developed during this period when it was to be performed solely by the clergy, with less participation from the laity than in the earlier centuries.

At first glance, medieval churches might seem to differ greatly. They can be better understood by mentioning their two main purposes. First, the church is a space where the clergy can celebrate mass, which is usually an altar in the apse. Second, it is a space for the congregation to attend this celebration. These two areas do differ from church to church. The size of these two main spaces is dependent on several factors: the size of the congregation, the wealth of the congregation and the architectural trends. A stylized floor plan of a medieval church might therefore show substantial variation when compared to the floor plan of an actual medieval church. Changes in the size of the congregation, their wealth and the architectural trends might have motivated expansions or renovations of the building, consequently creating a floor plan with signs of different architectural styles and elements.

The transition from the Romanesque style to the gothic could, according to the theologian Allan Doig, be explained by more than just the liturgical development and material functionality connected to it. He argues that the new architectural elements such as rib vaulting, the pointed arch and flying buttresses made their appearance because of technical innovation driven by the Cistercians, and that this also contributed to the changes in liturgy and theology. The increased spaces in churches, the

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64 Kroesen and Steensma, *The Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 15.
architectonical focus on light aesthetics instead of heavy mass and weight radically changed the visual impression of the building and created a new visual focus on the heavenly, and the light.\textsuperscript{65}

The main focus on the Communion in the early church had changed by the early 1200s but until the doctrine of the transubstantiation was reaffirmed during the fourth Lateran Council in 1215 under Pope Innocent III, there was a widespread fear expressed by the clergy that the consecrated bread and wine could be desecrated by incautious handling by the laity. The focus on the Eucharist as the real presence of Christ was reaffirmed in 1215 and led to a cult around the embodiment of Christ. Although the idea of the embodiment might have been reaffirmed in 1215, it is important to understand that the reaffirmation was the peak of a long development. Due to the scarceness of sources, it is uncertain whether this doctrine had reached Sweden during the twelfth century. On the other hand, it is safe to assume that the idea of the real presence of Christ was adopted by the entire Western Church after 1215.\textsuperscript{66} The only known case in Sweden of a heretic sentenced to death was Botulf from Gotttröra, who was punished in 1310 for questioning this dogma.\textsuperscript{67}

In 1264, Pope Urban IV declared that the Festum Sanctissimi Corporis Christi, or the Feast of the Body of Christ, was to be celebrated throughout all Christendom and was an event centred entirely on the consecrated host. This should be perceived as the result of a new trend in visuality which, in turn, led to the creation of new objects in the church with the solemn purpose of displaying the consecrated host (such as the tabernacle and the monstrance).\textsuperscript{68} The consecrated host had been stored before the thirteenth century as well, in small and closed containers called Pyx, but the monstrance was built to actually display the host through a piece of crystal or glass. The monstrance and the tabernacle were eventually built with high towers to attract the attention of the observer and to guide the eye towards the holy Body of Christ.\textsuperscript{69}

Religious historian Richard Kieckhefer even claimed that the focus of the sacrament shifted even further with this development. He stated the altar went from being a place where the corporate Communion took place, to a place for the Offertory as a sacrifice, and finally to a place of display. The altar became a platform dedicated to show the host or a relic, a holy object that would persist and remain the focal point in the churches until the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{70}

It is questionable, however, if this can be described as a new visuality. The word ‘new’ indicates that something suddenly has appeared, but I argue that this is not the case. The visual elements in the thirteenth century church were rather things that had being lying latent throughout the development of the Christian Church since the eighth century. The movement of the altar caused by this clericalisation of the liturgy divided the laity from the clergy and was a shift from a corporate rite where the entire congregation participated, actively taking part in the liturgy, to one that was performed by the priest. The layman’s liturgy was practically removed from the rite and the clergy

\textsuperscript{65} Allan Doig, \textit{Liturgy and Architecture from the Early Church to the Middle Ages}, Liturgy, Worship, and Society (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 169–70.
\textsuperscript{66} Anna Nilsén, \textit{Focal Point of the Sacred Space: The Boundary between Chancel and Nave in Swedish Rural Churches: From Romanesque to Neo-Gothic}, (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2003), 93.
\textsuperscript{67} SDHK no. 2413, (Svenskt Diplomatariums huvudkartotek).
\textsuperscript{68} Nilsén, \textit{Focal Point of the Sacred Space}, 93; Jungmann and Mauritsson, \textit{Kyrkans Liturgi}, 31.
\textsuperscript{69} Kroesen and Steensma, \textit{The Interior of the Medieval Village Church}, 108.
became solemnly responsible. However such a division, excluding the laity from the altar, did not take place without including them in a new way, as listeners and observers.

Another phenomenon that can be related to this latent change of visuality within the church happened as early as in the eleventh century. A priest raised the host above himself; he elevated it. This custom seems to have been initially established in France. The bishop of Paris wrote in the Statues for Paris between the years 1196 and 1208 that the host was to be elevated for the congregation to see it. The Cistercian Order took up this practice and by the end of the thirteenth century, it was an established custom in the Western church.

The theologian Josef Andreas Jungmann, in his influential work on the development, suggests that the idea of the elevation of the host came from the laity, that during the twelfth century it was common practice for the laity in some areas to push forward in the church during the transubstantiation to get a glimpse of the consecrated host and believing that the visual experience brought a special blessing.

The consequences of the reaffirmation at the fourth Lateran council in 1215 are unambiguous. With the demands from the Curia that everyone was to see the consecrated host— and the increased importance of the sacrament— the interior of the church went through a change. The visual aspect led to beliefs that the observation of the consecrated host would protect the observer against death, fire, and accidents.

The ocular Communion, that is; partaking in the Communion by only observing the Eucharist, became common practice during the thirteenth century. In short, the observation of the Eucharist was perceived as almost equal to consuming the host, which, as shown above, led the elevation to be a main aspect of the liturgy. As a result, thenceforth, the increased focus on the sacrament from the eighth century led to the physical division between clergy and laity and the congregation became spatially separated from the high altar. Physical barriers divided the church into two main zones; the nave and the chancel became more apparent, which reinforced the heightened status of the sacrament and everyone who was associated with the space around it.

Screens covered in images or sculptures standing behind the altar and retabiles or altarpieces, appeared at the end of the thirteenth century. The art historians Justin Kroesen and Regnerus Steensma described these as ritual projection screens to help guide the vision of the observer, both as a pictorial bible but also as natural and common focal point for prayer and meditation.

Another art historian, Athene Reiss, drew the origin of the retable to around 1200 from the movement of the altar. After the altar had moved into the apse, the priest would, during the

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71 Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, 598.
73 Recht (2008) however, claims that the first recorded source of this happening is found in a synodal Statute from 1196-1201 by Eudes of Sully, the earlier bishop of Paris, p.71, while Nilsén claims it was written by Bishop Odo.
74 Nilsén, Focal Point of the Sacred Space, 94.
75 Jungmann and Mauritsson, Kyrkans Liturgi, 180.
76 Jungmann and Mauritsson, Kyrkans Liturgi, 31; Nilsén, Focal Point of the Sacred Space, 94.
78 Kroesen and Steensma, The Interior of the Medieval Village Church, 65.
celebration, be standing facing east. He would then stand between the altar and the congregation, instead of standing behind the altar, as the priest would have done with its previous placement. Reiss concludes that the movement of the altar created a need for a new visual background to which both the priest and the congregation could direct their vision. Cathedrals started to be built in a new fashion, where the construction and architecture of the nave prepared the eye and guided it towards the altar. This shows a progression in how the church created visual aids to include the congregation, who, due to movement of the altar, were spatially moved away from the central themes of liturgy. The retables constitute a visual aid, guiding the observer, and replaced the earlier spatial proximity to the altar.

There are contemporary descriptions regarding the spatial areas within the main room of the church and their differences within the church. The altar was the holiest, the chancel came thereafter, and the least holy part was the nave. Pierry Rossy, chancellor of Chartes (1205-1211), divided the church room in two—chancel and nave—and concluded that the former was holier than the latter. It becomes quite clear in medieval sources that a contemporary idea existed about different zones and areas in the church.

Romanesque churches in Sweden dating from the twelfth and thirteenth century often have a dividing wall (out of brick or stone) between the chancel and the nave, with a wide opening in the middle. Typical examples of this are the Munktorp Church and the Husaby Church. These walls are literally barriers between the chancel and the nave, the laity and the clergy.

No known screens from churches have survived in Sweden, but a Scandinavian example was found at the cathedral of Århus in Jutland, Denmark. Anna Nilsén argues against parish churches in Sweden having had screens and clearly shows in her dissertation that the remaining pieces that have previously been used as evidence for such screens are of a much later date than claimed.

Nilsén admits that screens have existed in cathedrals, bigger churches in medieval cities, and some monasteries, but attests that they are a very unusual feature in the parish church. It is deceptive to compare the parish churches in Sweden to those in England, where the screens have existed, or do exist, to a great extent, however. A more accurate comparison could be made with countries around—and mainly south—of the Baltic Sea, where cultural ties have been much closer. There seem to be no indications that screens were used in German parish churches, for example.

At the same time, the screen is worth mentioning, because it fulfilled another purpose than just being a physical barrier. Jacqueline Jung has suggested that the holes and crevasses became an optical device, guiding the vision of the congregation in a bigger church room filled with other visual distractions. Her theory is very feasible, but hard to prove. The plausibility lies in the context and other trends at the time: the development and popularity of gothic architecture, retables and the

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80 Recht, *Believing and Seeing*, 123.
82 ‘Manuale de Mysteriis Ecclesie’, fols 4r-163r.
83 Nilsén, *Focal Point of the Sacred Space*, 42.
84 Nilsén, *Focal Point of the Sacred Space*, 23,34-38,56.
increased interest in displaying the consecrated host in tall monstrances and tabernacles. All of these material utterances were created in order to affirm the holiness of the sacrament, guide the sight of the observer and make the ocular Communion possible, consequently and explicitly leading to changes in architecture and furniture as a result of the changed liturgy.

This syntax of research from different art historians and theologians clearly show that the Western church was affected by major changes in the thirteenth century that were partly influenced by technological advancements, but to a great degree by a new liturgy concerning the sacrament of the Eucharist.

In 1249, the general chapter of the Dominican Order made a decree stating that a window was to be opened in the church screen, separating the chancel from the nave, the monks from the laity, in order to make the ocular Communion possible for the gathered congregation while still keeping the friars out of sight. The Carthusian Order declared, in a similar fashion, that the doors [in the screen] were to be opened during the elevation, and thereafter closed again.\textsuperscript{86} Naturally, the liturgy of the religious Order differed from those of the parish church, but these sources indicate that the idea of ocular Communion, and the visual control, spread across different liturgical interpretations. The screen, and the optical devices in it, has controlled the vision of the observing laity in the abbeys, while partially or fully hiding the clerics. In essence, the screen not only divides and separates the church spatially, but also creates different observing experiences within the church—the screen creates the observer. The painting ‘The Raising of Lazarus’ by Albert van Ouwater, circa 1450, clearly shows an example of such a visual device in a church screen, and also shows that it remained as a practice throughout the medieval period.

Yet the hagioscope creates even another kind of observer: One who is just not spatially and visually separated from the clerics, but also from the congregation! What motivated this new layer of exclusion, or inclusion? The division between clerics and laity can be traced back to the changed perception of the sacrament, and the liturgical changes that followed. But what motivated another division among the laity? One major change of mentality and perception does coincide with the creation of most hagioscopes—the concept of Purgatory.

Around the year 1170, theologians in Paris started to discuss Purgatory in a new way, as a place for neither those spotless, who would go to Heaven, or neither the most gruesome sinners, who would go to Hell, but a place for the common sinner: the tolerably good who eventually would be destined for Heaven, but first had to atone for sins in a cleansing fire.

It is one of the major arguments in this thesis that the changed perception of Purgatory created a need for new spatial division in the church. Those doing penance for their sins had to be separated from the congregation: put outside of the church room—still included in religious life but also separated from the most gruesome sinners, the excommunicated.\textsuperscript{87} The most divine had their place in the chancel, the congregation had their place in the nave, the sinners doing penance had to stand outside, still able to conditionally observe.

\textsuperscript{86} Jung, \textit{The Gothic Screen}, 74.

\textsuperscript{87} Madigan, \textit{Medieval Christianity}, 309.
It is not meaningful to simply present the idea of Purgatory in the thirteenth century as causing the need for separation among the laity. The purgatorial theme existed in the earliest days of the church, but changed and evolved for over a thousand years. It was not until the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century that Purgatory reached its final form known to us today. Jacques Le Goff traced the development of its idea and doctrine in a highly detailed manner, from the so-called ‘founding fathers’ to what eventually developed into the doctrine adapted by the Latin Church.

An important and early thinker on the subject was Augustine of Hippo (†430) who was the first to make the connection between penitence and Purgatory, a concept that would blossom fully during the twelfth and thirteenth century. He introduced two major motifs that became crucial for the evolution of Purgatory: the fire in the interim between death and resurrection, and the purging of lesser and minor sins.

With the contributions made by the many early thinkers, Purgatory had become something between Heaven and Hell—in between eternal damnation and everlasting glory in Paradise. The concept of Purgatory made it possible for the church to shape the consequences of sin according to the gravity of the sin, rather than to push the consequence in the earlier binary construct of either Heaven or

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89 The themes presented here are practically excerpts from Le Goff’s work; for a more detailed and empirical argumentation for the changed status and form of Purgatory throughout the Middle Ages see Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*.
90 Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 69, 84.
Hell. The early ideas about the cleansing fire remained more or less unchanged until the twelfth century.\(^91\)

Hugh of Saint Victor (†1143) was one of the later thinkers who brought up the subject and discussed a geographically unfixed place; where those otherwise righteous people, who die with some sins, despite being destined for heaven, are tortured or purged from their sins.\(^92\) Hugh’s text discusses the highly important matter of classifying sin and sinners, a topic that actually existed since the earliest centuries of the church, but in a different form.

The early medieval thinkers, such as Gregory the Great and Augustine, also considered the consequences of sin, used different words for non-mortal sin.\(^93\) *Veniale* or *veniala*, that is, the venial sin, became common during the twelfth century and was at the time of Hugh put into a more intricate system in which it was compared and contrasted with the mortal sin to a greater level than previously. Hugh of Saint Victor differentiates between the very good, the *boni perfecti*, who go straight to heaven, and the very wicked, *valde mali*, who go straight to hell. The “imperfectly good”, the *boni imperfecti*, however, must go through the cleansing of Purgatory before they are able to enter Heaven.\(^94\) Pope Innocent III himself used the term the “not-so-good”, *mediocriter boni*.\(^95\)

This typology should be perceived as an evolution of the systematic way of sorting sins. The theme of venial sin had existed since the earliest years of the church, and there are several passages in the Bible that support this view. “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*” (1 John 1:8) and “*If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death*” (1 John 1:16-17).

The development of a methodological approach to sin finally became legislative with Canon 21, the decree of *omnium utriusque sexus*, presented at the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, which confirmed the new emphasis on penance and purging.\(^96\) The decree stated that everyone was to confess his or her sins at least once a year and fulfil the penance imposed. In sum, this act introduced the sacrament of Confession, which established even greater focus on penance than before. This decree has been suggested to be the most important legislative act ever presented by the Catholic Church, and that it created a ‘revolution’ in pastoral care.\(^97\)

By the year 1274, in the Second Council of Lyons, Purgatory officially became part of the doctrines of the Latin Church and by the end of the thirteenth century the idea of Purgatory was included in sermons, vernacular, literature, and to some extent, even wills.\(^98\)

The earlier system used by the church to classify a sinner could be divided into two categories: entirely good and entirely bad. However, the so-called birth of Purgatory created a middle place—a

\(^91\) Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 94–95.
\(^92\) Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 144.
\(^93\) Such as *minuta*, *parva*, *minora*, *levia*, *leviora* or *quotidiana*.
\(^94\) Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 144.
\(^95\) Madigan, *Medieval Christianity*, 311.
\(^96\) *Canon* is a decision with a legislative character from a church meeting.
\(^97\) Madigan, *Medieval Christianity*, 310.
third category.99 This new level, in the same manner as the changed perception of the Eucharist, created a barrier within the church room and divided the congregation. Those doing penance were temporarily shut out from the church, but were still differentiated from those excommunicated from the church. The penitent was allowed to stand outside and be included through the use of the hagioscope.

Another connection was made by Hugh of Saint Victor, who wrote that those who were righteous but died with venial sins might get relief and aid from Eucharistic sacrifice, or Holy Communion.100 Clear evidence for the birth of Purgatory, and people’s fear of its consequences, is the extreme increase in the number of masses being held. Henry VII of England (†1509) made a donation for ten thousand masses to be held after his death, in order to ease the suffering of his soul.101

Several factors affected the creation of barriers within the church, developed with the paradoxical meaning to exclude but also include. The changes in liturgy, from the symbolic recreation of the Last Supper to that of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the dividing of clergy and congregation, and the reaffirmation of the transubstantiation put an even bigger focus on the visual aspects of the room.

The birth of Purgatory, the introduction of confession, and the systematization of sin and penance, in combination with new social stratifications in society, created the need for another barrier, both physically exclusive but visually inclusive; the hagioscope.

2.3. The Visual Device

What does it mean to see? Throughout history there has not been unity around what constitutes ‘seeing’—neither the correct way of seeing, or how sight is possible mechanically and optically. Kate Giles stresses the importance of differentiating between seeing and visuality in the academic context to clarify the debate. These are terms that have been used quite generously, so some clarification is in order. The main difference between the two terms is that ‘seeing’ refer to the optical and mechanical function of the eye, while visuality denotes the cultural and social construction of sight.102 This chapter start with an introduction to how seeing was perceived and discussed by scholars around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and thereafter gradually shifts towards the examples presented in Peter of Limoges’s Tractatus Moralis de Oculo, or The Moral Treatise on the Eye.

The ideas and concepts presented and discussed throughout this chapter are meant to create an understanding for a normative perception of seeing; to understand seeing is to understand the subject’s relation to the object and in this particular case, to grasp how the hagioscope functioned as a visual device during the period.

The manual by Peter of Limoges in this context is not used to exemplify the development of the perspectiva—or optics—as a science. The works by Roger Bacon, Robert Grosseteste (†1253), John Peckham (†1292) among others influenced the trends and mentalities on how sight and vision were perceived during the period, but their work is of a different genre. In the context of this inquiry, the

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100 Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 144.
text of Peter of Limoges provides something else. The popularity of this work with its intricate mix of theology and perspectiva optics, and its purpose as a manual for priests, makes this text especially interesting. The treatise must have helped shape the normative concept of vision among the laity.

*The Mortal Treatise of the Eye* was filled with *exempla*, moralizing anecdotes, for priests to use in their sermons. The many metaphors and rhetorical figures describe a wide variety of subject. The physical parts of the eye are described as they connect to the seven principal virtues and the necessity of the will of the observer in order to have complete vision, equated with the wilful cooperation necessary for salvation.

As shown in the section “2.2. The Paradoxical Barrier”, the popularity of ocular Communion has a clear connection to the idea that actual sight of the observer, the external, is physically connected to something within the soul, the internal. In Peter of Limoges’ text, an example on this can be found in Chapter Eight, “On Seven Distinctions of the Eyes According to the Distinction of the Seven Capital Vices”, in which he explains the connection between sight and sin, the external physical and the internal spiritual. He says that the physical appearance and character of the eye changes depending on the capital vice a person has committed. The *Tractatus* was meant to clarify and instruct how seeing, as an action, could be transformed and trained to make the mind look for God rather than temporal sin and pleasure.

The cognizance of seeing—as well as of the functions of the eye—have changed drastically since the medieval period, and a great difference lies in whether seeing is an active or a passive action. In modern optics, it is known that light passes the lens, is registered on the retina and thereafter is transmitted through the optic nerve as an impulse to the visual cortex in the occipital lobe in the back of the brain. Sight, according to modern optics, is therefore understood as a passive action, and not dependent on the observer or the object. The classical and medieval conceptualization is that vision is active—seeing is doing—which consequently led to a different attitude towards ‘the act of seeing’ in comparison to today. It was common belief that sight could bewitch the observed object, or that a pilgrim could be reformed by observing a holy place, relic or icon.

The dominating optical paradigm during the late medieval period was the so-called extramission theory, which was based upon the concept of particles, rays, or passive beings leaving the eye and bouncing on the object being observed, before returning to the eye. Seeing was therefore perceived as active and entailed that the observer and the observed experienced seeing as a form of actual physical contact. Some medieval thinkers also supported the intromission theory, where it was believed that something emanated from an observed object that reached into the eye, making a passive observer receptive to his or her surroundings. The theories of extramission and intromission at their core address the issue on how a subject meet an object.

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104 James D. Mixson and Bert Roest, *A Companion to Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 187.
105 There is on the other hand a lot of research on how the mind interprets the visual impression, from a more psychological point of view.
These radiations, or particles, coming from the object or the observer is what Roger Bacon (†1292) called *species*. This rather wide term, which might appear strange, was used for lack of a better name to “designate the first effect of any naturally acting thing”\(^{107}\). Bacon also listed several synonyms that could be used to describe these rays such as similitudes; intensions; shadows; passions; impressions, and so on. The species, in his work is not to be understood as a beam, or an unbroken ray. Bacon used the word *multiplacatione* in his text, metaphorically interpreted as multiplying waves in water.\(^{108}\) Grosseteste, however, wrote, “This power is sometimes called species sometimes likeness, and it is the same thing whatever it may be called”\(^{109}\); therefore, it seems that despite a problem with nomenclature, the idea of species was accepted.

One of the biggest reasons for a change in the perception of optics in the late twelfth and thirteenth century was the huge inflow of texts from the Arabic world that came through Spain and were translated to Latin. One of the noteworthy Arabic scholars, in this context is Ibn al-Haytam whose *Perspectiva* (or *Book of Optics*) written around 1030, had a huge influence on scholars in medieval Europe that would be called the perspectivists. In Europe, al-Haytam was called Alhazen and his work, *De aspectibus*.\(^{110}\) This coincided with the emergence of universities, as supplements to the earlier cathedral and monastic schools.\(^{111}\)

The first noteworthy work in medieval Europe on optics from a more direct religious perspective was written by Robert Grosseteste; his work was a mixture of theology and the science of optics, much like Peter of Limoges. The main argument and subject was that species was made of light, a material manifestation of divine grace, and that it existed both in a corporeal form and in a higher more spiritual manner. Grosseteste’s theory was based on both extramission and intromission, where light was the main substance of the universe, all objects and the eye of the observer emit light. Sight, according to him, was the meeting of emitted rays of divine light on geometrical conditions.

It is quite clear that Grosseteste had some knowledge of the earlier Arabic writer al-Kindi’s theory of extramission. Roger Bacon in turn, was considerably influenced by Robert Grosseteste and refined his theories, with knowledge from the newly translated Arabic manuscripts, such as Alhazen’s *Perspectiva*. Bacon thoroughly discussed the nature and multiplication of species. His first text on the subject was written circa 1262, and was then included in his *Opus Maius*, written on request from Pope Clement IV. John Peckham (†1292) would shortly thereafter, around 1265, write a text combining the ideas of Alhazen, Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, continuing the perspectivist tradition.

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111 For a more detailed discussion regarding the development, and conditions, for scholastic culture see Baldwin, John W., *The scholastic culture of the Middle Ages 1000-1300* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press 1971).
These three individuals are some of the major figures in perspectiva optics; and their theories would prevail until the late sixteenth century, when Johannes Kepler and Rene Descartes founded modern optics and radically changed the perception of the relationship between subject and object.\textsuperscript{112}

The late thirteenth century is the period when the Perspectivist optics affected Western theology the most, which adapted to the newly translated works from Alhazen, and the appearance of texts from John Peckham and Roger Bacon among others.\textsuperscript{113}

The reader is encouraged to remember that this thesis does not claim to give a full and lengthy description of the science of optics during the Middle Ages. It aims instead to create an understanding for laypeople’s perception of vision. Nevertheless, comprehension of the extramission and intromission theories is fundamental to interpreting medieval visuality, since they directly establish the relationship between the observer and the observed.

\textbf{Figure D. Species being emitted from the scriptures. Fransesco Traini / Lippo Memmi, “Il trionfo di Tommaso d’Aquino”, Pisa, Chiesa di sta. Caterina, c. 1340, Detail.}

The concept and meaning of light, and its importance, was much debated in the medieval intellectual environment, exemplified by Bartholomaeus of Bologna († circa 1294) who claimed that God is the source of light, or \textit{Lux}.\textsuperscript{114} On the other hand, both Thomas Aquinas and the earlier and anonymous

\begin{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{113} Newhauser, ‘Introduction’, xvii.

\textsuperscript{114} Recht, \textit{Believing and Seeing}, 101.
\end{flushleft}
writer of De anima et de potentissimis (circa 1225) disregarded this idea completely and claimed light to be natural rather than divine.\textsuperscript{15}

Peter of Limoges himself described the eyes as lamps, writing how they would receive light externally and “give it back by sharing what they have obtained”\textsuperscript{16}; nevertheless, his position in the extramission and intromission debate is similar to the other main perspectivists. Chapter Four in the treatise is dedicated fully to how both intromission \textit{and} extramission simultaneously are imperative for vision, much like the argument presented by Roger Bacon. Peter did, however, add another element to this argumentation that neither al-Hazen nor Bacon used. He insisted that the intention of the observer was important.\textsuperscript{17}

The chapter on optical illusions in the treatise is particularly interesting for understanding medieval visuality. In the first example, Peter explains how a single object can appear double if the eyes are pushed out of position with a finger.\textsuperscript{18} He uses this as an allegory to explain how prelates can be corrupted. Furthermore, in his second example, he describes how a rod, partly put in water, appears broken at the surface (looked upon from above).\textsuperscript{19} He uses this an allegory to how prelates should avoid setting bad examples. These moral allegories on how the clergy should behave are typical for Peter’s literal genre, but reflect deeper issues that lie behind these illusions.

Peter, in this chapter, is clearly partaking in discourse on one of the core issues in the scholarly discussion of optics at the time, the distinction of what appears and what exists.\textsuperscript{20} It is crucial to understand that optical illusions were a major problem for medieval scholars. If the perception of the real world can create illusions, what really exists and what does not?

Notwithstanding, so far, this chapter has focused on the medieval arguments on how the physical eye takes in information. The medieval concept of vision also consisted of other ideas that might appear more distant to us; the medieval discourse of visuality contained several kinds of seeing. This notion can be traced back to the fifth century and Augustine of Hippo. Augustine defined three kinds of seeing in his work \textit{De Trinitate}. The first, and least significant one is corporeal vision—lowest in rank since it is dependent on the material world and closest to what we today call seeing. In the medieval discourse, two other kinds of seeing existed as well: spiritual seeing and intellectual seeing.\textsuperscript{21}

Cynthia Hahn argues that Augustine’s \textit{De genesi ad litteram} is the most important work to understand the medieval perception of visuality, but also concludes that it is unclear intermittently. Corporeal vision is what the two eyes of the body see. Spiritual seeing, in turn, is pictures from dreams and fantasies that are based upon—but not dependent on—impressions from corporeal vision. The final level is intellectual seeing, in which the most important divine truths are observed, based on spiritual seeing.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Smith, \textit{From Sight to Light}, 250–51.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Peter of Limoges, \textit{The Moral Treatise on the Eye}, 67.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Peter of Limoges, 134.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Peter of Limoges, 19.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Peter of Limoges, 27.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Denery, \textit{Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World}, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Akbari, \textit{Seeing Through the Veil}, Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory, 26.
\end{itemize}
Thomas Aquinas exemplified and validated how this trilateral way of seeing remained during the medieval period and claimed in his *Summa theologica* “it is impossible to see God with the bodily senses.” Based upon this statement alone, it is remarkable that ocular Communion became so popular. The importance of Thomas in the medieval world of thought is hard to overestimate; nevertheless, Saint Bridget had, according to Alfonso, Bishop of Jaén (†1389), visions that transcended all the three categories of vision: intellectual, corporeal, and spiritual.

In the prologue of Saint Bridget’s *Sermo Angelicus*, probably written by Alfonso, it is described how happy Bridget was that she could see the body of Christ through a window from her desk. This resonates both with the conceptualisation of the ocular Communion, but also with the hagioscope being a window-like opening. Peter of Limoges distinctively makes the connection between the corporal eye and the spiritual eye in the first phrases of his treatise and describes how important the eye is for religious visuality.

If we want to contemplate the law of the Lord diligently, we are going to recognize very easily that those matters which pertain to vision and the eye are referred to more frequently than any others in the holy writings. From this fact it is obvious that a consideration of the eye and of the things that are related to it is very useful in order to gain a more complete understanding of divine wisdom. Thus, I am about to say a few words on the eye—since the fortifying of the soul is contained in them.

Not only does he address the connection between corporeal and spiritual vision, he also describes the eyes as the windows to the soul. Peter further explicitly states that people see things differently; that a humble person will see intricate matters more clearly than the proud.

Peter used the perspectivist ideas to explain the pious way of living in his text, combining and intertwining religion and science. His use of perspectivist optics and the popularity of his texts throughout medieval Europe both verify the unreliability of visual perception, that the bodily senses can be subject to illusions, but also provide a solution. By using the *tractatus* in their sermons, the preaching clergy could guide the eyes of the laity, helping them to enhance their vision.

The perception of optics did not however remain heterogeneous, or unchanged, until Kepler in the late sixteenth century. Paintings after 1400 display a clear difference in how the world was constructed, and consequently, affect how the art was perceived by the observer. That being said, to understand medieval discourse on visuality, we must turn away from the anachronistic Cartesian interpretation that the eye has only a solemn physical function. In the medieval discourse, the eye was a gateway between corporeal, spiritual, and divine dimensions.

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123 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, v. I, q.12, a.1,7. lat. "quod impossibile est Deum videri sensu visus, vel quocumque alio sensu aut potentia sensitivae partis”.
The function of the eye as a gateway can be illustrated by several examples from Peter’s *tractatus*. In his discussion about the seven vices in the eighth chapter, the intersection and interplay of the different levels of seeing becomes quite clear, drawing a connection between the physical eye, the eye of the soul, and sin. He describes how one affects another, saying that spiritual sloth makes the internal eye sleep out of laziness, but also the external and bodily eye can limit the spiritual view. He even describes how a person fallen to the sin of gluttony will have eyes that relate to the vice: “the eyes of the gluttonous are said to be fleshly since their entire intent is to obtain meat.” The eye, as presented in the text, takes the function of a gateway in and out of the soul: “the allurement of gluttony enters into the soul through the eye…” This approach has a biblical pretext, and Peter is explicitly referring to Jer. 9:21:

> For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets.

Furthermore, he quotes Quintillian’s *Book of Cases*: “The path for our vices goes through the eyes into the heart” and Lamentations 3:51: “Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.” He goes on to illustriously describe how the enemy enters and plunders the home of all its virtues, finally killing the spirit therein, undoubtedly referring to what happens when sin enter the soul through the eye.

In the eighth chapter, on the vice of lust, there are several examples on how the eye can radiate and spread sin in a similar way as an infection. The eyes of a woman are described as darts that can “wound” many, no matter the distance. Peter compares the function of female vision, to the basilisk, a creature in medieval bestiaries described with the head of a bird, the tail of a snake, claws of a lion and wings. Its breath and sight can kill. It was occasionally referred to as the king of reptiles, with clear connotations to evil and the devil, as the king of the demons. This beast was also connected to lust, and early descriptions of syphilis sometimes refer to it as the ‘poison of the basilisk’.

Moreover, he explains how the radiation of sin works in practice. It is a lustful vapour that emanates from her heart, rises through the body to the eyes, and infects the rays. Thereafter, it travels to the man’s eyes “assuming that we see by extramission”, where it infects the eyes, travels through the body towards the heart and in turn, infects it as well. That Peter decides to use the heart as the core for the utterance of lust is not strange. Within humoral pathology and Galenism—the concept of the four body fluids—the heart was closely connected to emotions and emotions were believed to stem from the heart. Similarly, Aristotle claimed that pain and pleasure emanated from the heart. The passage does, however, show an example of how the idea of extramission affected social norms in

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the discourse of visuality. Sight is describing as an actual ray and Peter illustrates how it can be charged and poisonous with sin.\textsuperscript{138}

It is however very clear in this chapter that the look of women, according to Peter, is much more dangerous than the look of men. Although Peter mentions in a shorter passage how the rays of “unchaste eyes of a young man” are sent out as if they were small hunting animals.\textsuperscript{139}

The presence of misogynistic ideas expressed by many medieval scholars can partly be explained by the biblical pretext in the fall of man, where Eve ate from the forbidden fruit in Eden and partly from antiquated ideas regarding the differences between the genders. The evidence from the example of gluttony and the eyes of young men, however, clearly show that the connection between soul and eye existed in both genders.

It can be concluded that the sight from the eye works as a carrier of sin by creating a physical contact between the spiritual level of two individuals. This could also explain why the treatise in discussing the vice of lust has such an elaborate description on how the sin of lust infects another person through sight, and how it is connected to the soul. It involves two subjects, unlike gluttony, which involves one subject and one object.

The eye seems to have played a very important spiritual role. In the Stockholm Black Friars’ Book of Miracles, written in the first half of the fifteenth century, nine out of 87 miracles are connected to the loss of sight. One must keep in mind that the loss of an eye, or complete loss of eyesight must have been a severe, if not fatal handicap in medieval society. Then, assuming the connection between eye and sin, a new level of understanding can be reached. Almost all the miracles connected to eyes and sight in the book happened to individuals who had become blind during their lifetime, not those who were blind since birth.\textsuperscript{140} After promises of pilgrimage, sacrifices and penance, their sight returned.

Peter of Limoges has an example in which a prostitute lost one eye due to a disease. When confronted by a priest telling her it was God’s vengeance for her sins she replied, “I prefer to be content with one eye rather than with one man.” Peter’s comment on this incident is that she lost one bodily eye, but two from her mind.\textsuperscript{141} The theme of blindness because of sin was reoccurring and Peter uses a biblical pretext from Genesis 19:11.

\begin{quote}
And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.
\end{quote}

This passage is about the sinners and the people of Sodom being punished with blindness, and therefor unable to find the door to the house in which Lot was hiding. Peter states that the devil removes good deeds through sin and makes the sinner spiritually blind.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{138} Peter do mention how the other senses are used as well to “capture man”, but do not connect these to the soul in the same manner.

\textsuperscript{139} Peter of Limoges, \textit{The Moral Treatise on the Eye}, 101.


\textsuperscript{141} Peter of Limoges, \textit{The Moral Treatise on the Eye}, 107.

\textsuperscript{142} Peter of Limoges, \textit{The Moral Treatise on the Eye}, 172.
In summary, the relationship between the spiritual eye and the corporal eye and its connection to sin can be seen with the aid of Peters Limoges’ *tractatus*. The eye could be affected by sin, but also healed if penance was shown. We will shortly return to the tractatus, but in order for the discussion to move forward, we will once again briefly address the importance of ocular Communion, but this time, from a visual perspective rather than a physical one.

The importance of the ocular Communion was debated by theologians during the first half of the thirteenth century. Some expressed a fear that the laity would not feel satisfaction in only seeing the Host and not partaking in receiving it. Alexander of Hales (†1245) claimed that vision of the Host was sufficient, since sight was the least material sense and the Eucharist was spiritual.\(^{143}\) Alexander’s statement explicitly shows how the Eucharist is correlated to spiritual seeing and transcends corporeal and intellectual seeing.

Two vivid examples of how the laity acted on the increased popularity of ocular Communion are that people would rush from one church to another in order to experience the presence of Christ several times during one day, and that congregations would forcefully push forward in the church to get a glimpse of the Host.\(^{144}\)

Now take note! As she did this and with sincere love offered her prayer, a great press ensued, for a large crowd of people were jostling each other to get as close as possible to the high altar to witness the holy body of Our Lord about to be raised.\(^{145}\)

If the Eucharist is the material utterance of God, what is the effect on the beholder? If the ray of a sinner could infect another being, one must address the issue whether the observation of the Eucharist could heal.

One passage in Peter of Limoges’ treatise is particularly of note. He states that contemplation of punishment in hell causes the mind of the eye to open, quoting Gregory the Great (†604) that punishment, or penance, “*opens the eye which a misdeed closes*”. That the punishment works like a salve, a physical remedy for the eye that makes matter clearer “to the heart and mind”.\(^{146}\)

It is the main argument in this chapter that the hagioscope was constructed to limit the vision of the beholder and guide it: to reopen the spiritual eye of the sinner doing penance. Peter’s passages on how the eye of the sinner reacts are numerous; he states that many people are like pigs eating the fallen fruit of tree but never looking up towards the crown of it. He recites a verse from *Sententia communis*\(^{147}\) stating that a fickle mind, a restless foot, and a wandering eye are signs of someone that he has “*hope of no good*”.\(^{148}\)

The ocular Communion, as a phenomenon in history, does give a clearer insight regarding the relationship between subject and object. We, as modern beholders, are shaped by Kepler’s and even

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\(^{143}\) Recht, Believing and Seeing, 71.  
\(^{144}\) Recht, Believing and Seeing 71.  
\(^{147}\) A book containing beliefs that were not dogmatically asserted, but usually accepted by theologians.  
more so, Descartes’ ideas on optics that have mentally alienated us to the pre-Keplerian concept of vision. The consecrated Host, and the visual cult around it, is a matter of physicality.

The bread as an object is transformed with the transubstantiation into the body of Christ. Re-enacting the incarnation when God came into a human body as with the birth of Christ, the ocular Communion, from a visual perspective, is not only a relation between object and subject, but also an intersection between object, subject and God. It connects the observer with the material object, but also connects the eye of the mind—the spiritual vision—to the material world.

Overall, the complex intersection between subject, object, and God is the consequence of the desire for late medieval Christians to understand God, who constituted the opposite of matter as an eternal and divine entity.149

What appears and what exists seems to be at the core of the medieval discourse on visuality, aiming to connect material to spiritual.150 It is possible that the hagioscope was as visual device that enabled the penitent to see the holy Eucharist with the corporeal eye during the time of penance, to reopen the spiritual eye.

In the late sixteenth century, Kepler clearly distinguished the physical form of the retinal image from the soul’s perception of a picture, although, he never explained how the soul was connected to the picture. Descartes, for his part, resolved this problem in the seventeenth century, by rejecting it completely.151 Peter of Limoges’ tractatus, as shown above, provides insight—a horizon of understanding—on how vision was perceived during the twelfth and thirteenth century. There will be reason to return to his tractatus once again, to analyse the hagioscopes and cells on Gotland. It is necessary to understand the discourse of visuality in order to not misinterpret the hagioscopes. It is clear they were made for looking through, and to understand people’s way of seeing is to understand the hagioscope as a device. The discourse of visuality and the development of physical barriers within the church provide an understanding for hagioscopes in general; they are no longer just ‘unexplainable holes’ in a church wall. With this context in mind, case studies of a group of much-debated hagioscopes follow next.

2.4. Describing the Hagioscope: the Gotland Examples

2.4.1. Concerning Those Infected with Leprosy

There is a traditional argument that the hagioscope served as a leper window; this seems to stem from England, where the term appeared in the mid-nineteenth century.152 This subchapter will discuss the hagioscopes on Gotland from that point of view, in order to evaluate the plausibility of the argument.

Leprosy, or Hansen’s disease, existed throughout the entire medieval period but peaked during the thirteenth century. Gotland was without question affected as the other countries in northern Europe.

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150 Denery, Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World, 79.
151 Denery, Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World, 92.
It is known that leprosy spread to the Baltics, either from the Teutonic knights, or from Scandinavia, and the disease surely passed Gotland. The first hospitals in the Baltics appeared initially in the city of Riga, around the year 1225, followed by Reval in 1228 to 1238.\footnote{Mats Mogren, Spetälska Och Spetälskehospital i Norden under Medeltiden (Masters' thesis from Lund: Institutionen för medeltidsarkeologi, Lunds universitet, 1984), 4.}

Leprosy on Gotland, and in the Baltics, almost coincided with the construction of the hagioscopes, but there is another aspect to take into consideration. Those suffering from leprosy in medieval society were kept separated from the healthy, and were forced to live in enclosed asylums or villages, as shown in a decree from the third Lateran Council in 1179.\footnote{Nathaniel Saul Brody, The Disease of the Soul: Leprosy in Medieval Literature (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 74.} How this was enacted in Scandinavia in the late twelfth century remains unknown. In other parts of Europe, the isolation ceremony started with the diseased person being blessed by the parish priest, followed by a procession to the church where friends and family participated to show their respect. In the church, the sick person would be carried on a stretcher to the chancel where a funeral would take place, in which the person was symbolically buried in the graveyard. Forthwith, the diseased person was considered dead to the world and taken to the local leprosy hospital.\footnote{Mogren, Spetälska Och Spetälskehospital i Norden under Medeltiden, 8.}

The first reliable source that mentions a hospital on Gotland is from 1283. It was dedicated to St. Georg in Visby, to whom hospitals usually were accredited, however, evidence from archaeological excavations suggest that it existed from 1218.\footnote{SDHK no. 9144.} A donation from Johannes Castel dating from 1367 also mentions people infected with leprosy on the island.\footnote{Lars Öberg, ‘Ändrad Syn På Spetälska: Ett Referat Och Nägra Synpunkter’, Lychnos: Årsbok För Idé- och Lärdomshistoria: Annual of the Swedish History of Science Society, 78, 1977, 130.}

In medieval mentality, leprosy was closely connected to the idea of sin, and several early Christian thinkers, such as Justin Martyr (†165) and Tertullian († circa 240), interpreted leprosy to be a consequence of sin, drawing their pretext from the bible. Early-medieval and medieval thinkers, such as Rupert of Deutz († ca.1129) and Isidore of Seville († 636) made this connection as well.\footnote{Mogren, Spetälska Och Spetälskehospital i Norden under Medeltiden, 20, 26.} Likewise, the stigmatized status of lepers in certain areas is not to be underestimated: Philip V of France (1293–1322) thought the ceremony superficial and burned the diseased people alive, while Edward I of England (1239-1307) had the ceremony performed, but buried the people alive at the end.\footnote{Mogren, Spetälska Och Spetälskehospital i Norden under Medeltiden, 8; Brody, The Disease of the Soul, 69.}

Then again, it important is in this aspect to understand the medieval reasons for separating the diseased from the healthy. For the modern reader, it might seem obvious (since the idea of contagions and infections is deeply rooted since childhood), but the earliest source in Europe suggesting infection by transmission was from 1546, and therefore, unknown in earlier times. The medieval concept of isolation relied on religious arguments rather than medical ones and since the disease was so closely connected to the idea of sin, a diseased person was also considered morally dangerous, rather than medically dangerous.\footnote{Mogren, Spetälska Och Spetälskehospital i Norden under Medeltiden, 8; Brody, The Disease of the Soul, 69.}
Isolation of the sick could also be due to practical reasoning: to avoid that the diseased infect the congregation. William of Conches (†1145) described how the ray of a person carried his properties, and that a sick eye can infect the healthy if the observer would meet the gaze.\textsuperscript{161} All in accordance with the extramission and intromission perceptions of physical contact between the object and the subject. For this reason, the placement of hagioscopes in the apse makes clear sense. In addition those built in northern or southern walls also make sense; constructed at a steep angle, they give the observer a clear view of the high altar. A sick person would have been able to watch Communion and Mass, without looking at and infecting the gathered congregation. If the observer would have been in the cells on Gotland, with the exception of Vall—where the hagioscope is facing north—the rays, or the species could have been perceived to infect the congregation.

Hagioscopes in the outer wall from the early thirteenth century on the Swedish mainland might have been constructed for those infected with leprosy. Most hospitals in Sweden were created from the mid thirteenth century, with a few exceptions such as Skenninge, which is mentioned in 1220.\textsuperscript{162} These early hagioscopes could therefore, have been made in a period of transition, before more hospitals were created.

Rotha Mary Clay discredited the term “leper’s window” in 1914 based upon her research on English churches\textsuperscript{163} but as shown above, in certain areas, and during periods of transition, this could have been a possibility. The isolation of those infected and the hospital in Visby suggest however that no connection to the cells on Gotland can be made, and the argument in this case should be considered invalid. Nevertheless, it is impossible to prove whether a person infected with leprosy ever used the cells on Gotland. Based on the arguments presented herein, the theory seems farfetched and unconvincing.

\subsection*{2.4.2. Concerning Penitents}

The idea that the hagioscope is constructed for those doing penance, or the excommunicated, is widespread\textsuperscript{164}, and as shown in the two previous chapters, is highly plausible if not confirmed. This argument, was until now, based upon assumptions.

In all previous research on the Gotlandic hagioscopes, the discussion has taken for granted that all the cells were of one category, that they were identical. It is remarkable that no one has discovered that they clearly are two types! The first category exists in Atlingbo, Martebo and Väskinde; all have a hagioscope in the shape of a trefoil and lack other openings or windows. The second category exist in Vall, Bro, and presumably Endre, and have cells that are larger in size with and additional openings or windows. Furthermore, the cells are quite easy to date due to the large amount of churches on Gotland with the help of written sources and considering the changes in medieval architecture on different churches, one can make significant conclusions. The cell in Martebo was built between 1250 and 1280, Väskinde circa 1275, and Atlingbo between 1240 and 1280. The cells

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{hahn175} Hahn, ‘Visio Deo’, 175.
\bibitem{tuulse193} Tuulse, Armin, ‘Bønekarar och Hagioskop’, 16; Lundmark, \textit{Kyrkor i Bro Ting}, 193.
\end{thebibliography}
of the second category are as follows: Endre circa 1297, Bro 1302 to 1304, and finally Vall 1230 to 1300.

The mode of procedure in the expansion of the churches is quite clear; first the old apse was torn down and a new and bigger apse was built with windows and connected to the old nave. Secondly a new nave was constructed, followed by a phase in which the tower was rebuilt if funds were sufficient. Churches on Gotland were built and renovated from the eastern part of the church to the western part, and finalized the renovation with the tower, so the dating should be in the later part of the years suggested. All the hagioscopes and cells were constructed in renovations or during rebuilding. That is; they were deliberately added in the expansion of the building. Based upon stonemason's marks, it is possible that most of the churches on Gotland were built by a single, or a few, stonemasons’ lodges over two or three generations. It is therefore plausible that, since the trefoil-category was built almost simultaneously, the builders came from the same lodge, or even were identical.

Presuming that the cells in the first category were used by penance-doers, let us try to imagine and speculate what the experience could have been. It is not known whether the observer would enter the cell before, after, or at the same time as the congregation, but the entrance is indeed separate. While those attending mass enter through the church portal, a separate door with scarce decorations, if any, led into the small and dark room for the repentant. A high threshold, perhaps with wooden stairs, or a ladder could lead to the door and if the threshold was low, the door could be either short, or narrow.

After entering the dark chamber and closing the door, some noise of the gathered congregation would have been heard through hagioscope in the end of the deep niche. A face might be recognized but the deep niche acts like a dividing barrier. The cell lies in darkness, but a ray of light emanates from the opening towards the high altar. Guiding the gaze to the centre of the trefoil opening. And then it happens, the priest is raising the Host.

It is of essence here to address the play of light in the cell. Peter of Limoges addresses this in an interesting manner: “For it often happens that when the light of the corporeal eyes is lost, that of the spiritual eyes is rejuvenated.” The opening of the hagioscope is constructed so to guide the corporal sight of the observer standing in darkness towards the holy, and re-open the spiritual eye of the sinner. Another theme that is reoccurring throughout Peter’s text is seeing and being seen in terms of how things appear and what they really are. He states:

An eye located in the light does not see someone in darkness, but rather the other way around. Thus, sinners persisting in darkness recklessly presume to judge those living in the light of grace, but the just, the illuminated by the light of heaven, do not know how to judge sinners as soon as we see them, but rather let us weep and suffer with them in their miseries, since either we have fallen ourselves in similar circumstances, or we could fall.

The darkened cell would effectively have hidden the person from the congregation standing in the more lightened nave. Considering the mixture of intromission and extramission optics—where

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species from both object and subject meet—the unseen look from the observer the cell might not have been perceived as a moral threat.

The trefoil shape of the hole, with its arms reaching to the centre, guides the eye of the observer like a sniper scope, by being the only source of light. It could have ensured that the species emanating from the consecrated Host entered the cell, while all else was covered, creating a concentrated and controlled ray of holiness, with little to no possibility for the observer to see anything else. Furthermore, there is a clear connection between the trefoil shape in architecture and the dogma of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Conversely, Augustine of Hippo wrote that trinity is to be sought by examining the trinity within: memory, understanding and will. Thus, a trefoil hagioscope not only encased the ocular Communion with the dogma of Trinity, it might also have encouraged the penitent to reflect according to the internal trinity presented by Augustine.

One should also remember that the shape of the hagioscope casts a formed projection of light into the cell and the observer therein. The shape is therefore not only of importance because it controlled the vision of the observer, but also because it literally projected a certain shape onto the observer. The three churches of Atlingbo, Martebo, and Vall all share the same shape of the hagioscope, which supports the theory that they were built by the same lodge or by the same builders.

Two later built-up hagioscopes in churches on the Swedish mainland are worth mentioning: one in Frötuna Church and one in Munkaby Church. They are larger, square-shaped, barred openings, connecting the porch and the nave. Written sources mention that Sten Sture the Elder did penance between 1488 and 1491, and his coat of arms (along with his wife’s) is painted in the porch ceiling of the church. Sten Sture the Elders’ brother-in-law built towers, walls and other buildings at

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Olavinlinna, in modern Finland, 1477, where another hagioscope connected to a cell still exists. The coat of arms of both Sten Sture and his family appears in several places there as well. A windowless cell in the southwest corner of the tower chapel there is about 110 by 260 cm and shows a clear similarity to the cells of Atlingbo, Martebo, and Väskinde, both in location and structure. I argue herein that these chronologically later hagioscopes (in Olavinlinna, Frötuna, and Munkaby) should be perceived as the continuing of an ongoing tradition of doing penance and partaking in ocular Communion, which also ended with the reformation.

The themes presented in the following chapters all include the idea of penance—penance for knights, penance for pilgrims and lifelong penance, of sorts, for a recluse. The hagioscope as a visual device can be understood by applying the discourse of visuality and the development of barriers within the church room. Creating a focal point towards the embodiment of Christ in the sacrament of Communion is a way of re-opening the eye of the sinner.

2.4.3. Concerning Germans and Knightly Orders

It is now time to address the context and existence of the cell: why do they exist on Gotland? Both Tuulse and Eimer, among several others, have compared the cells on Gotland to the small cells with hagioscopes in the castles of the Teutonic Order. This argument is mainly based upon architectural resemblance. This discussion aims to present a connection from another angle than just the architectural. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that the architectural influence from Germany on Gotland during the thirteenth century was of great importance. This is clearly visible in the Church of the Holy Spirit in the city of Visby. This is mostly due to the close trading connections at that time with the cities of Saxony, Westphalia and the Rhineland. Visby worked like a gateway for cultural and architectural influence. German merchants from cities like Essen, Lübeck, Köln, Magdeburg, Münster and so on, increased in numbers in the city of Visby from around 1200, consequently leading to two city councils: one Gotlandic and one German. Given these points of a German architectural influence, can the cells found in chapels of the Teutonic Order and their close resemblance to the cells of Gotland be explained? Indeed, the Order owned the island between 1398 and 1407; however, an earlier connection can be made.

A common argument in previous research connects the cells to a specific phrase in the rule for the Teutonic knights. The phrase state that a brother, doing penance for a wrongdoing, should not share the same table as the other brothers: “fratrum consorsio sequestretur nec cum illis in eadem mensa edat…”. To put it differently, the knight should be isolated from the others during meals. This

176 Andrén, Det Medeltida Gotland, 73.
The phrase is conclusively and commonly connected to the many small cells with hagioscopes that exist in castle chapels in Golub, Marienburg, Reden, and Lochstedt (which was destroyed in 1945). See Appendix III for floor plans of these chapels. Although this may be true, the rule of the Order presents several punishments, and the cells may not necessarily be directly connected to this exact phrase. Nonetheless, isolation of a brother would certainly have had several levels, with some isolation more circumstantial than others, depending on the severity of the wrongdoing.

The rule of the Order came into being in the mid thirteenth century\(^{179}\), that is, at the same time of the construction of the cells on Gotland. On the other hand, the presence of Teutonic knights on the islands was limited in the early thirteenth century, so we should address another knightly religious order that had a bigger prevalence in the area, and came to be merged with the Teutonic knights in the middle of the thirteenth century: Fratibus milicie, or the Sword Brethren.

The Sword Brethren were founded in 1202 by the bishop of Riga, Albert von Buxthoeven, commonly referred to as bishop Albert of Riga (†1229). The brethren were not crusaders per se, but rather a private force of the bishop, used for missions in Livonia. They seem to have been of mixed social backgrounds, mostly from the Lübeck-area, and were described, by a condescending chronicler, as rich merchants in exile. At the same time, since they never reached great numbers through their short existence, they constantly remained dependent on supporting military forces from the West.\(^ {180}\) This is interesting since the Sword Brethren had a connection to Gotland. Albert of Livonia owned the Church of St. Jacob in Visby 1226, since the first years of the century, and it remained in the custody of the archbishop of Riga until 1272, possibly even longer.\(^ {181}\) It is also known that Meister Volkwein (leader of the Order) and bishop Albert passed Gotland on their way to Rome 1210.\(^ {182}\)

Of great importance is a charter from Innocent III directed towards the Sword Brethren in 1213 concerning all the estates they owned on Gotland!\(^ {183}\) Considering the few numbers of the Brethren, their connection to cities in Germany and the growing German population in Visby, this charter could indicate a direct presence of the Sword Brethren, or people closely connected to them on Gotland.

After a devastating defeat at the battle of Saule against the Samogitians in 1237, the remaining Sword Brethren became a part of the Teutonic Order, under the new name of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword.\(^ {184}\) If the Sword Brethren owned property on Gotland, it would have been assigned to the Teutonic Order. In addition, a record in the Visby Greyfriars book mentions the death of a “Rutthwi

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\(^ {182}\) Benninghoven, *Der Orden Der Schwerbrüder*, 105.

\(^ {183}\) SDHK no. 336: “Magistro et Fratribus militiae Christi in Livonia constitutis. Cvm a nobis petitur &c. usque assensu, Saccale ac Hugenhusen Gutlandiae adjacentes & omnia bona quae obtinetis in Gutlandia, sicut ea omnia juste ac pacifice possidetis…”.

\(^ {184}\) Benninghoven, *Der Orden Der Schwerbrüder*, 363–65.
Regardless, the Sword Brethren expanded on territory belonging to their Christian neighbours in the Baltics in 1234, and killed men enlisted by papal legates, resulting in damage to land and property for a value of 45000 marks. They did not receive any known penalties for this, so one could speculate how this affected the Sword Brethren when they became a part of the Teutonic Order; it seems logical that they would have had to do penance for these wrongdoings.

Tuulse argued that the cells on Gotland show close resemblance to two chambers in Strängnäs cathedral. These were constructed in the first years of the fifteenth century and were built in two stories, having two hagioscopes in each chamber facing a Lady chapel in the south-western corner of the cathedral. The knight Sten Bengtsson Bielke, among a few other contributors, donated land for the Lady chapel in 1404, which was founded by Gjurd Petersson, who in 1408 was elected bishop of Strängnäs. Tuulse claimed that the cells were created for the sick and the excommunicated, and that Sten Bengtsson Bielke made this donation because of crimes he committed against the church 30 years earlier. Tuulse failed to notice that Sten Bengtsson Bielke had clear connections to the Teutonic Order. Sten Bengtsson gave a total of three falcons, one in 1400, and two in 1401, to the grandmaster of the Order; it is highly plausible that he was a so-called familiari: a supporting knight. Furthermore, the chapel was dedicated to Mary, in similarity with the cult around the Virgin Mary in the Order. It is highly plausible that the chapel was made for the Teutonic order, which lived in the diocese of Strängnäs in the commandry of Årsta until 1467. Strängnäs was their closest cathedral. Documents bear witness that the members of the Årsta commandry always were German, but a letter from 1429 mention how the Swedish nobility tried to commit their sons to the Order and equip them but were faced with general reluctance.

Moreover, the chambers in Strängnäs do share some similar properties with the cells of the Teutonic chapels, however, there are also some differences. They have an entrance from outside the church, though the chamber on the second floor has been connected to a stairwell as well; they also have several hagioscopes connected to one cell (like the cell in Marienburg). Furthermore, they show a certain resemblance to a big chamber with three hagioscopes to the west of the chapel in the castle of Golub, of unknown use (see Appendix III).

The purpose of these cells remains unknown. It is plausible that they might have been multifunctional, used by brothers of the Order doing penance; serving as two private chapels; used as

187 Christiansen, The Northern Crusades, 128.
188 Tuulse, ‘Bönekamrar Och Hagioskop’, 16.
189 SDHK nos. 16351, 16540, 17003; Erik Bohrn, Sigurd Curman, and Armin Tuulse, Strängnäs Domkyrka. 1. 1, Medeltidens Byggnadshistoria, Text (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell international, 1964), 214–16.
an initiation room for new Brothers; used as a general meeting room; or serving as the dwelling for a recluse, a devoted person living in a small room connected to the church.\footnote{192 For more on this subject see “2.3.5. Concerning Recluses”.
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A clear and strong German influence on the island of Gotland can be proven, but it is insurmountable to present solid evidence for a clear connection between Germany and the hagioscopes without giving way for ad-hoc-theories. There was, nonetheless a presence of knightly religious Orders on the island, and a generation of masons that might have been influenced by German architecture. It is known that the Teutonic knights had the support of ten armed men per knight, who usually were lower-ranking members (so-called \textit{familiani}) of the Order and served for shorter periods.\footnote{193 William Urban, \textit{Tyska Orden: Nordens Korsridder}, trans. Per Nyqvist (Stockholm: Prisma, 2006), 27.} If the Sword Brethren had a similar custom, these supporters could have originated from Gotland, and therefore adapted to some customs. For example, according to the chronicle of Henry of Livonia, a force of supporting Gotlanders left to attack the Kurs in the late twelfth century.\footnote{194 Henricus de Lettis, \textit{The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia}, trans. James A. Brundage, Records of Western Civilization (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 30.} One surviving example of a hagioscope with a connected cell, dating back to the fourteenth century, has also been found in old-Livonia.\footnote{195 Jekaterina Lissitsina et al., ‘Archaeological Research in Vastseliina’, \textit{Archaeological Fieldwork in Estonia}, 2015, 188.}

\subsection*{2.4.4. Concerning Pilgrims}

Tuulse, as well as Roosvall initially, claimed that the cells could have been made for pilgrims or wayfarers\footnote{196 Tuulse, ‘Bönekamrar Och Hagioskop’, 13.}; his argumentation was based upon the geographical location of the cells. This subchapter consider that plausibility. Tuulse argued that the pilgrims, going to the harbour in Fårö [from Visby or further south] passed the churches with proximity to the main roads, and that both Martebo and Bro have a reputation of being pilgrimage churches.\footnote{197 Tuulse, ‘Bönekamrar Och Hagioskop’, 16.} Eimer claimed that there was no pattern in the geographical location of the hagioscopes;\footnote{198 Eimer, ‘Mauerdurchbrechender Blick Und Hagioskop’, 236.} however, they are actually centered in the north-western part of the island in two of the six settings: in Väskinde, Martebo, Endre and Bro in Bro Setting and Atlingbo and Vall in Hejde Setting.

Gotland was a hub for the missions to the Baltic region. Innocent III declared as early as 1204 that those taking pilgrimages could do so to Livonia instead of Jerusalem.\footnote{199 Armin Tuulse, ‘St Görans Kyrkoruin i Visby’, \textit{Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research}, vol. 90 (1970), 105.} Several mentions in the chronicle of Henry of Livonia attest to this. The bishop of Lund and his men passed the island on their way home in 1207; merchants and other Germans arrived from Gotland to Livonia circa 1208; merchants waited to take the bishop and other pilgrims with them on boats from the Baltics to Gotland in 1211; two bishops intended to go with the pilgrims from Estonia towards Gotland with nine cogs in 1215; a messenger from the Danish king denied a ship to the merchants from Livonia to Gotland, and from Gotland to Livonia; and furthermore, a papal legate tried to make the inhabitants of Gotland take the cross, i.e. go crusading, without success, in 1226.\footnote{200 Henricus de Lettis, \textit{The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia}, 68, 84, 107, 147, 197, 239.}
Henry of Livonia also described an attack in 1210 by the Kurs, killing 30 knights that were later devotedly buried by citizens of Gotland. Describing the islanders' presence, several papal letters portray how this came to continue until the middle of the fourteenth century. These are as follows: a letter in 1230 when Pope Gregory IX encouraged the people on Gotland to help the Teutonic Order; a 1257 letter in which Pope Alexander IV encouraged the Dominicans to preach about crusades (on Gotland and in other countries); and finally, Pope Clemens VI writing in the middle of the fourteenth century to grant permission for pilgrims to replace their promise of a trip to Jerusalem with one to Livonia instead.

Conclusively, Gotland was one of the most—if not the most—important junction points in the area around the Baltic Sea from the twelfth until mid-fourteenth century. Mission to the Baltics, the papal encouragement of pilgrimage to the region, and the immense trade must have created a large increase in people traveling through the island of Gotland.

Some ships that went to Livonia must have started their journey in Visby, on the western side of the island, but it would also make perfect sense to use a harbour that lay closer. A ship that left Visby would have to encircle Gotland on the north side around the island of Fårö before going East toward a destination in the Baltics. Pilgrims, troops and horses could have instead travelled about 70 km by land; passing close by the churches of Väskinde, Martebo, and Bro; to depart from a northern point. Tuulse presented this as one of his major arguments, and based it upon the late iron-age route to Constantinople from Gotland.

One harbour that could have been big enough to fit for this project is Gamlehamn, located on the western side of Fårö, but which was destroyed by storms in the fourteenth century. Several traces of ballast were found close to surface level at the location in 1942, as well as an abundance of glazed and burnt tiling, and fragments of ceramics (of which a few were suggested to derive from the Rhine area). At the time of discovery, it was unclear what kind of goods could have been traded in a harbour of that size on Fårö. On the other hand, the current knowledge of medieval harbours on Fårö, as well as Gotland is very limited; is a burgeoning field of research. It is hypothesised that Gamlehamn was the major harbour for missions and pilgrimages to Livonia; however, archaeological investigations might be able to provide a better answer.

Peter d’Agnan argued for the importance of harbours other than Visby on the island during the Middle Ages. If a known pilgrim route existed on the island, pilgrims might have arrived from Öland, where ships easily could have followed the coastline, avoiding open water, to arrive at the western side of Gotland, on the coast south of Visby, where several harbours existed. This route was similar to the route the Danish king Valdemar Atterdag took when he invaded the island in 1361,

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202 SDHK nos. 757, 43143.
204 Tuulse, ‘St Görans Kyrkoruin i Visby’, 105.
travelling from Öland to the western part of Gotland, south of Visby. The precise location of the invasion is not known, but the harbours of Fröjel, Västergarn and Kronvall have been suggested as the site of disembarkment. A pilgrim traveling by land from those harbours would have passed in proximity to the churches in Atlingbo, Endre and Vall, as well as Martebo, Bro and Väskinde on the way to Fårö. Close to this hypothetical route is also the Cistercian Abbey of Roma, which had significant landholdings in the Baltic region.

To argue that either pilgrims or crusaders used the hagioscopes while doing penance is anachronistic. Pilgrims in Livonia are mentioned in many passages in Henry of Livonia’s chronicle, but the word could refer to fighting knights or unarmed travellers going towards the holy region. The same word is used for both in Latin: peregrini. I therefore argue that those traveling along the route to Livonia could both be armed knights or unarmed travellers. Both had a need to do penance, and many went to be cleansed from sin.

A fragment of a pilgrim badge from Livonia—dating from the first half of the thirteenth century—was found in Lödöse, and based upon a similar complete badge found in Lübeck, bore the inscription “Signum S. Marie in Livonia remissionis peccatorum”: Saint Mary of Livonia, sign of forgiveness. If armed and unarmed pilgrims went to Livonia, the land of forgiving Mary, to be relieved from their sins and be cleansed, would those doing penance have entered the churches on their way with a clear consciousness, or, was the cell intended for them?

Since the cell is only connected to the church room through the hagioscope, it could also be plausible that the cell was used by devout pilgrims passing the church when it was closed, enabling them to observe the altar. In another church on Gotland, a small device in the church is possible proof that the church was not constantly open: a small slot in the door of the church slot dedicated to receive offerings and coins. Such a device would have been superfluous if the church was continually open. The many traces and remains of locks on the churches on the island also acknowledge this fact.

### 2.4.5. Concerning Recluses

Roosval suggested that all the cells on Gotland were dwellings for recluses, individuals who withdrew from secular society to live prayer-oriented lives with the Eucharist in focus. Tuulse claimed that none of the cells were for recluses, and Eimer left the issue open-ended. They drew their conclusions based upon the fact that all five cells were more or less identical. Their arguments were loosely based upon architectural resemblance, and a few written sources. This section aims to discuss this plausibility.

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208 Lagerlöf et al., *Gotlands Kyrkor*, 212.
210 Tuulse, ‘Maarjama’, 211.
The name of the so-called recluses, recluses, hermits—and their cells—varied greatly during the Middle Ages and differed depending on time and place. Belgium, France and Italy favoured reclusus or reclusa; in England the words were ancren or ancrest; while sources written in German use the terms inclusus or inclusa. The cell itself goes under a wide range of names: cella, clusa, claustrum, clausula, reclusorium, inclusorium, and reclusia, among others. Conclusively, this indicates that no heterogeneous nomenclature existed for these phenomena during the time. Hereafter, for simplicity, the dweller will be called a reclus, and the cell designated a reclusorium.

Tuulse claimed that no records for recluses exist in Sweden. Albeit, Christian Lovén presented evidence for two: the first is found in the chronicle of Charles VII, in which a passage tells of how the king met a “spiritual virgin” enclosed for 20 years. Additionally, she is referred to as a “inclusa” in the chronicle of Ericus Olai (from the 1470s). The second case is a little more speculative, but is worth mentioning; it consists of a source mentioning “a holy man” in Borgholm in combination with archaeological evidence from a structure that has been interpreted as a chapel, due to two or three graves found under the floor. In addition, at least one case is known of a recluse in England who was buried in his cell.

It is also known that Christina von Stommeln was invited to become a recluse in Sweden by Petrus de Dacia (†1289), but declined and sent her brother to Visby instead. Petrus the Dacia was born on Gotland and corresponded with Christina between 1269 and his death. He was Lector in Visby from 1280 and stayed there until his death.

Tuulse also argues that the known reclusoriums in England are significantly bigger in size than the cells on Gotland (as well as having built-up doors, a hearth, and no door towards the churchyard). The phenomena were widespread in England and Ann K. Warren mapped out anchorites, whereof 600 are known between 1100 and 1539. She clearly shows in her research that the cells in England were of variable size; some had one room, some had several and some had gardens, while others did not. Despite being few in the region around the Baltic Sea, at least one recluse in Prussia from the thirteenth century is known: Jutta of Kulmsee.

The earliest known rules for recluses is Grimlaicus († circa 900) In Regula solitariorum, a chapter was dedicated to the construction of a cell. However, it seems that the text became dated quite quickly, since Grimlaicus stated that no less than two, or even three recluses should stay together, and that

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215 ”godelik iumfriu”.
218 Eimer, ‘Mauerdurchbrechender Blick und Hagioskop’, 236.
222 Eimer, ‘Mauerdurchbrechender Blick und Hagioskop’, 233.
the reclosorium should have a little garden.\textsuperscript{223} An actual measurement is presented in an undated and anonymous Bavarian rule. It says that the cell should be attached to a church or a convent and be 12 feet square (equivalent to 348 cm square)\textsuperscript{224} which is a lot smaller than many English cells. One of the smaller cells was found in Surrey that was approximately 2.5 m square, but it also included a loft for sleeping. One of the bigger reclosoriums in England from the fifteenth century was a little over 220 square meters.\textsuperscript{225} The height to the ceiling in the cell of Väskinde (circa 410 cm) is more than enough for a sleeping loft and traces remain in the walls from old beams; however, based upon other details in the cell, it is highly unlikely that it was used for sleeping.

It is not uncommon that the hagioscope in the English reclosoriums are in the shape of a narrow cross, similar to one in the Church of St. John Baptist in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.\textsuperscript{226} That device bears great resemblance to the hagioscope in Bro, despite not being as wide. However, based upon the mean medieval height for a man standing straight up, the high altar in Bro would only have been partially visible if a congregation would have been present in the nave. At the same time, if the observer knelt on the floor in the cell, the focal point is the rood arch, which today is an empty space, but from 1240, harboured a Calvary, with Jesus on the cross and several figures.\textsuperscript{227}

In the Church of Vall, the hagioscope is facing north(!), so the high altar would not have been visible at all, effectively ruling out the notion that it was used by penitents during mass. They would not have been able to partake in the Communion from that vantage point. In comparison, the sightlines from the trefoil hagioscopes in Atlingbo, Martebo, and Väskinde are clear when the congregation is gathered at mass.

A recluse would have been required to take Communion through the hagioscope, and physically receive the consecrated bread and wine, while the person doing penance only could partake in the ocular Communion, if at all. It is therefore necessary to compare the depth of the niches around the hagioscopes to illustrate the great difference between the two categories of cell. The niche to the hagioscope in Bro is only about 60 cm deep in total, which is enough to spatially distance, but still enable the observer in the cell to partake in the Communion through the window. In Vall, the niche is about 75 cm deep, enabling an observer to receive an object, or the sacrament. One can only speculate on the original shape of the Vall hagioscope, since it has been rebuilt. Based upon the present size and the angle of the niche, however, it is safe to assume that it was narrow (less than 15 cm or so).

The niche creates a clear spatial distance between the person in the cell and those in the church room and this distance clearly demarcates the two types of cells. In Martebo, the niche is 111 cm deep; in Väskinde it is 115 cm; and in Atlingbo it is 142 cm. The hagioscopes in Vall and Bro also have rounded edges, making them easier to reach through, while the trefoil shaped hagioscopes’ sharp edges add even further depth, making it close to impossible to reach for an object from the nave in the cell.

\textsuperscript{223} Grimlaicus, Rule for Solitaries, 52,54.
\textsuperscript{224} J. Patrick Greene, Medieval Monasteries (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005), 67. Drawn from an inquiry of a monastery of Bordesley, England and is 29.5 cm, corresponding to a measurement used in Burgundy, as well as the Roman measure.
\textsuperscript{226} Clay, The Hermits and Anchorites of England, 82.
\textsuperscript{227} Lundmark, Kyrkor i Bro Ting, 256.
Roosval, for several reasons, interpreted the cells as reclosoriums. For one, he used the southern windows as evidence, which in the case of Bro was opened later in history. Based only on size requirements in the Bavarian rule above, the trefoil category of cells could be interpreted as reclosoriums. But the Bavarian rule also mentions that the cell should have three windows: one facing the church room to make the mass visible, receive Communion and do confession (the hagioscope); a second to provide food and other things required for living; and a third, to let in light. Dorothea von Montau (†1394) is a known recluse from Prussia. Examining the vitae, the documents written by Johannes Marienwerder (†1417) in request for her canonization, a few conclusions can be drawn. The cultural influence from Germany on Gotland was significantly larger than that of England. It stated that beyond the hagioscope “Du salt halden eine glasfenster, das man und uffe czu mag thu czu deiner nödurt.”

The built up semi-circular window in Bro has a peculiar, splayed shape that also gives the impression that something can be placed in the bottom of it. Would this have sufficed for passing food into the cell and to pass out the chamber pot for emptying? It seems highly plausible and it would probably have been perceived as blasphemous to send the pot into the church room through the hagioscope; the same opening that the body of Christ would pass through.

One example remains from England on what a recluse could have been given for maintenance in 1235. This particular reclosorium was in an abbey and had three dwellers. They received twigs, turf and oil for light and heating and were every week given seventeen loaves of bread, seven loaves of lesser quality bread and eight gallons of beer. At the celebration of All Saints they were also given one bushel of rye, one bushel of oatmeal and ten large stock fish. The opening in Bro, 230 cm above ground today, is high enough to ensure that the person standing outside cannot see the person therein, and is still low enough so that a taller individual could place an object on the deep windowsill with stretched arms. Standing on a small wooden staircase or ladder, it would be even easier. The dweller in the cell would have an easier reach, since the floor in the cell is raised.

In Vall, the window is 200 cm from the ground and faces south. Since this window has been partly built up it is hard to say if an object could have been placed on the windowsill. The opening is however, quite deep. This opening would have been easy to reach from the outside, but due to a significantly raised floor, it is only about 130 cm from the floor of the cell to the windowsill. The threshold to the door in Vall is almost 115 cm, suggesting a rare use of the entrance.

English sources indicate that the recluse needs a good view of the Communion, while remaining unseen by the congregation. The act of holiness is controlled by this interrelation, much like it would

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228 Roosval, ‘Poenitens-Cellen’ i Atlingbo och Andra Gotlandskyrkor, Ett Medeltida Inclusorium’.
229 This is actually of interest for the western chamber in Golub, mentioned in 2.3.3. Concerning Germans and Knightly Orders, which is of significant size, and have three openings towards the chapel.
231 Theodor Hirsch, Max Töppen, and Ernst Strehlke, Scriptores rerum Prussicarum: die Geschichtsquellen der Preussischen Vorzeit bis zum Untergange der Ordensherrschaft (Hirzel, 1863), 286.
233 Roosval, Hejde Setting, 66.
for the observing temporary penitent. The darkness in the smaller cells for the penitents would have kept the observer hidden, while the windows in Vall and Bro would have resulted in a brighter cell, making the dweller visible. Many reclosoriums in England are connected to the church with a hagioscope in the apse, to guarantee a good view and ensure the interrelation of seeing while being unseen. This could explain the position of the hagioscope in Vall, which could have been directed towards a side altar, lost today. In the vita of Dorothea, it is described how her visions intensified throughout her long stay in the cell; this clearly indicates that her closeness to the sacrament made her open her spiritual and intellectual eye so she: “forgot all external things and was drawn up high into contemplation of the godhead.” The hagioscope enabled the same for the recluse as it did for the penitent, but under different circumstances.

A practical issue that needs addressing is that of heating. If Vall, Bro and possibly Endre were reclosoriums, how did the dweller keep warm during the winter? Tuulse stated correctly that all cells lack any trace of a fireplace. The vitae of Dorothea can again provide some information; she was claimed to have lived through the winter without freezing, since it was not the clothes that kept the cold away, but the Lord. It is remarkable in this context that no hearth is mentioned, but this statement does however tell, if true, that she survived the winter with just her clothes to keep her warm. In modern photographs of Dorothea’s reclosorium, which still exist, a fireplace can be seen, but it is uncertain whether it is of medieval origin. One could speculate that warm furs or other thick garments could have been given to a recluse through the windows of the Gotlandic cells, since they lacked fireplaces.

The walls in the cell of Vall are today plastered white, giving an impression of how well lit the cell could have been from light reflecting from the small window. Evidence points to Vall, Bro, and possibly the lost cell at Endre having been used as reclosoriums. In England, the cells have different histories; some were constantly occupied, while others were built for a single individual and fell into ruin after their death. Some were empty, lacking a suitable candidate.

Since the cells on Gotland appeared for such a short time in history, it is possible that they were built as reclosoriums. It is remarkable that Petrus of Dacia’s invitation to Christina von Stommeln coincides with the construction of the reclosoriums on Gotland. Perhaps one, or even several recluses dwelled within the walls, living through purgatory on earth. On the other hand, they might have proved to be too cold and impractical, and were rebuilt into cells for temporary penitents, or excommunicated people, either living on the island or passing it on their way to Livonia.

3. Summarizing Remarks and Conclusions

The hagioscope appears when it does because of a concoction of crucial events and developments. It is clearly understood as a materialized visual device connected to the perception of vision. This

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thesis, and the arguments presented are transparently built upon a medieval discourse of vision, and
the new stratification of sinners who, in their penance, were spatially demarcated through a hole in
the wall. Those stratified could have included a leper kept from infecting the congregation through
his gaze, a penitent paying for his sins while having his eye guided, a recluse hiding out of sight, or a
pilgrim striving to see to the holy objects of the church. Optics today are understood in a completely
different way and the medieval conceptualization of the active vision has led to a crucially different
attitude towards ‘the act of seeing’. The bewitching gaze, the reforming gaze, the eye-opening gaze,
and the infecting gaze are all examples of this chronologically-distant reality.

The perception of vision in the thirteenth century was a radical development with inflows of optical
texts, and emerging universities studying the phenomenon. It is not surprising that the new
discoveries from the Muslim world became heavily saturated with religious perspective on arrival and
reception in Europe. Grosseteste’s theories of extramission and intromission, mirrored by Peter of
Limoges, gained great influence on all levels in society. How species left the eyes of the subject and
then returned, and how the rays of an object and subject met are both reflected in the construction
of the hagioscopes. The sinner, the recluse and the leper were all able to see, while remaining out of
sight. The congregation would never meet the species of the observer hidden in darkness, since the
species needed light to travel. They would not be touched. If a member of the congregation in the
nave looked over his shoulder toward the opening in the wall, the cell would have been black,
nothing would be seen. But for the person in the darkness within the cell, it would appear that their
eyes would meet. One is affected by the species, while the other is not. This can clearly be illustrated
by other hagioscopes with an angled opening, enabling the observer to see the high altar, but not the
congregation—to see while not being seen.

The hagioscope could have acted as a device guiding the vision of the observer and intensifying the
experience of ocular Communion. The discourse from Peter of Limoges is evidence that the eyes, in
their mixture of intromission and extramission, created a connection between the corporeal and
spiritual; between the physical body and the soul therein; and between the worldly and the divine.
There was a change in how vision was perceived that, in combination with theological development,
led to the ocular Communion, which in turn is clearly connected to the appearance of the
hagioscope. The preaching clergy gained the ability to guide the eyes of the laity, helping them to
enhance their vision.

The hagioscope worked as an element of church architecture with clear foundations in emerging
theological ideas. The ocular Communion grew significantly in the thirteenth century and coincided
with the new classifications of sinners and the revolution of pastoral care. It is hard to underestimate
the importance of Canon 21, introduced at the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, which formally
legislated confession into the religious dogma, and stressed the importance of penalties imposed. The
introduction of Purgatory as a physical place heavily played into the church developments that
followed. Sin became systematized, and led to the sinner being stratified. Furthermore, the
stratification of the sinner coincided with other changed social norms within society, supporting an
overarching idea of division and demarcation. By the eleventh and twelfth century, slavery was
disappearing in medieval society, and new social classes started to develop: the chivalric aristocracy in
the feudal system emerged. The triparty division between oratores, those who pray; bellatores, those
who fight; and laboratores, those who work, was articulated in the eleventh century but intensified in the twelfth.\textsuperscript{239}

It has been shown how liturgical changes concerning the sacrament of Holy Communion shaped the church room, and contributed to the demarcation of the spatial areas between the clergy, laity, and penance-doers. Previous research has explained the appearance of the screen as a result of changed visual practices and the physical separation and distancing between clerics and laity. I argue and add that the hagioscope—in similarity to the screen—should be perceived as another additional barrier physically separating the sinner from the congregation. By studying what, or who, could have been seen or unseen from different places in the church, further knowledge about the division and participation of the laity in medieval liturgy can be attained.

In reviewing the changes in the church interior and the hagioscope from a medieval discourse, a few crucial events, leading to bigger changes within society, have been identified:

- The movement of the altar from the nave towards the apse
- The theological development of Purgatory as a physical place of cleansing
- The introduction of the church screen, separating clergy from laity
- The confirmation of transubstantiation in the fourth Lateran Council of 1215
- The revolution of pastoral care that followed Canon 21
- The influx of optical texts from the Muslim countries

Bear in mind that a selection of major events like this always becomes extremely simplified, but it is helpful to illustrate the outline of the different religious, optical, social and architectural developments of the time.

It is a matter of interest why the church-screen became so popular in English parish churches, but not in Sweden. The same goes for recluses and their frequency. These are subjects for future research to explore whether these differences arise from different perceptions of the division between clergy and laity or from another discourse of visuality.

Research can certainly give insights into for whom the cells on Gotland were made, but since solid evidence mentioning and describing the cells is lacking, the findings will not be more than insights. Tuulse determined that all the cells were for penitents. Roosval suggested they were all for recluses, while Eimer acknowledged the existence of a new visuality, choosing neither side. Eimer also claimed that no similarities existed in the direction of the hagioscopes of Gotland. But in fact, they all, with the exception of Vall, have a similar orientation, facing the high altar east from the south-western corner.

The theories presented by Tuulse, Roosval and Eimer are not faulty per se. The hagioscope on Gotland can be understood as a device for penitents or the excommunicated; it can also be understood as a device for pilgrims in need of seeing the holy; and it can be understood as a device

\textsuperscript{239} Le Goff, \textit{The Birth of Purgatory}, 130–31.
for a recluse. These understandings do not cancel each other out, but rather work together as holistic whole reflecting the complex reality.

The most remarkable find on the hagioscopes of Gotland is that the cells are of two kinds. Those in Väskinde, Martebo, and Atlingbo are small and lack windows, and all have a trefoil-shaped hagioscope and a deep niche that significantly distances the observer from the nave. These may have even been constructed by the same builders. Of a little later date are the cells in Endre, Vall and Bro, which are bigger, equipped with a single window, a niche spatially closer to the nave, and with different shapes of hagioscopes.

Can one say with certainty for whom the cells on Gotland were made? It is hard to say. One could compare it to a shopping mall, a modern and constantly changing type of building. A certain space in a mall could have been made for a specific restaurant or clothing store. The size, furnishing and style depend heavily on the brand of the store. If that store closes, another shop or restaurant would take its place, changing and adapting the space for its own purpose and brand. It is difficult to tell, when visiting such a store, for what purpose it was originally built. I argue that the same applies to the cells of Gotland. Some might have originally been constructed as reclosoriums, but with changing social dynamics and political situations like the pilgrimages, the crusades and the 1288 civil war, the purpose of the space in the cell might have changed. It is plausible that the cells in Vall, Bro, and possibly Endre, were made for recluses, maybe a predetermined individual or a hypothetical one, in case one with the economical ability showed up. Consequently, unused cells may have been used for something else in the meantime—such as pilgrims or penitents—in the same way as a shopping mall today would try to find a new tenant, or restructure an unused space for another purpose.

Despite Väskinde having enough space for a sleeping loft, all other evidence indicates a different use. The wide variety of rules for recluses, geographically and chronologically, mentioning the necessity of a window makes it safe to assure that a reclosorium would have a required window. It is remarkable that the cell of Bro is presented as a cell for penitents, lepers and pilgrims and that Atlingbo is described as a cell for recluses in Sveriges Kyrkor.²⁴⁰

The cells on Gotland are too few for drawing any grand conclusions. Perhaps the answer can be found in the international status of the island in the thirteenth century. Nonetheless, they do coincide with the immigration of merchants from Germany, the Baltic Crusade, the time of pilgrimage in the Baltic Sea, and the 1288 civil war on the island that divided city and countryside. In the early fourteenth century, all church construction declined drastically. In either case, since the hagioscopes only existed in two out of six settings on Gotland, with most of them in Bro Setting, it is also impossible to rule out private initiatives. As an extreme speculation, all of the hagioscopes could have been built by a single German merchant family with close connections to the Sword Brethren, and estates outside of Visby, during two or three generations.

To confirm the function of the hagioscope as a device for people with leprosy is not important. It is instead, relevant to understand the hagioscope as a device that could have been used by people with leprosy. In the same manner; the understanding of the recluse constitutes a totally different subject, but to have the understanding of the hagioscope as a device in the reclosorium is fundamental. By

²⁴⁰ Lundmark, Kyrkor i Bro Ting, 247; Roosval, Höjde Setting, 110.
defining what could be seen, what could not be seen, and to what end, the hagioscope created an observer and contributed to the social stratification of society.

Several ideas for further research have been discovered through the course of this investigation. Comparative research on hagioscopes in the outer wall of churches on the mainland and those on Gotland would be fruitful. It seems farfetched that the cells on Gotland were used by those infected with leprosy, but another case study in a different geographical region might be beneficial in giving clearer answers. To increase the understanding of the infrastructure of medieval Gotland, more research on the islands historical harbours is strongly encouraged. This could give new insights regarding the many crusades, and the great numbers of pilgrims and merchants who visited and passed the island.

It has been proven that Gadamer’s thoughts and ideas can be applied to material objects. However, the object in this study is silent, in comparison to written text. The understanding of material culture is about understanding a different mentality and much like research on black holes, conclusions are drawn from the object’s proximal surrounding since the object itself cannot be studied in isolation. Consequently, one can gain knowledge about the hagioscope; however, in reality, the knowledge obtained is not about the object itself, but about the world it exists within.

Based upon the sources and scientific methods known today, it is impossible to say whether someone once spent a lifetime in the cells on Gotland—the cold stone walls and the churches are silent. But one can come to understand them as an expression of a culture signified by a different mentality. Such an understanding creates insight into the differences and similarities of societies and mentalities other than our own. In essence, the understanding of the hagioscope is a theoretical contribution to the understanding of the Other.

4. Sammanfattning


Denna undersökning är tredelad och inleds med att den historiska uppkomsten av barriärer i kyrkorummet analyseras, därefter presenteras och redogörs den medeltida uppfattningen av syn utifrån Peter av Limoges De oculi morali. Avslutningsvis förs en diskussion kring de fem kända hagioskopen på Gotland, som alla är placerade i kyrkans sydvästra hörn och är sammankopplade med en cell, som endast går att nå utifrån. De första två delarna syftar till att skapa en förståelse för hagioskopets tillkomst generellt och konceptuellt, emedan det sista kapitlet undersöker huruvida de faktiska hagioskopen på Gotland går att förstå.

Studien kretsar kring tre frågeställningar:
1. Varför uppkommer hagioskopet; kan det förstås och förklaras som ett materialiserat optiskt hjälpmedel förknippat med en förändrad uppfattning av synen?
2. Hur skulle hagioskopet fungera som en del av kyrkoarkitekturen, och vilka teologiska idéer skulle kunna ha motiverat det?
3. Kan cellerna med hagioskop på Gotland ge några insikter kring vem som skulle bruka dem genom att placeras i en kontext?

Som övergripande mål har denna text också syftat till att bidra till en förståelse av den medeltida diskursen om religion och visualitet, i hermeneutikern Hans Georg Gadamers anda. Studien syftar till att vara ett tentativt exempel i hur hermeneutik kan appliceras på materiell kultur ochämnar belysa uppdelningen av sociala sfärer, och förändrade mentaliteter.

Det första undersökningskapitlet påvisar att ett flertal faktorer påverkade konstruktionen av barriärer i kyrkorummet, och att barriärerna är paradoxala. De syftar både till att excludera och markera sociala stratifieringar, men också samtidigt villkora en inkludering. Förändringar av liturgin, från den äldre gemensamma nattvarden till ett ökat fokus på det gudomliga offeret, leddes till en uppdelning av prästerskap och församlings befästade av transsubstantiationsläran 1215 innebar ett ytterligare ökat fokus på de visuella aspekterna av kyrkorummet.

I och med en ny uppfattning av skärselden som fysisk plats vid elvahundratallets slut, införandet av bikt som kanoniskt lag, och en systematisering tillika stratifiering av synd, uppsto behovet av ny barriär som fysiskt kunde excludera men visuellt inkludera: hagioskopet.

Det andra kapitlet beskriver hur den så kallade extramissions-teorin dominerade optiska diskussioner i Europa under medeltiden. I korthet baserades den på att partiklar, strålar eller en sorts passiva och icke-tänkande varelser, lämnade ögat för att studsa på det objekt som betraktades och sedan återvände till ögat. Syn uppfattades som en aktiv handling vilken innebar att den som observerade upplevdes ha fysisk kontakt med det som observerades.

Synen ansågs ha flera nivåer som definieras utifrån Augustinus. Den första nivån var den kroppsliga synen (mer eller mindre synonym med vad vi uppfattar som syn idag) och ansågs vara minst viktig, då den var beroende av den materiella världen. De ytterligare två sorters syn som existerar i den medeltida visuella diskursen är den spirituella synen; som gav upphov till religiösa visioner, samt den intellektuella syn som möjliggjorde insikten av de stora gudomliga sanningarna.


De Gotländska hagioskopen diskuteras utifrån olika hypoteser i tidigare forskning, varav en långvarig sådan har varit huruvida hagioskopet brukats av spetälska. Påståendet är osannolikt för de gotländska
exemplen, då det funnit ett stort hospital för de smittade i Visby. All tidigare forskning har framhävt en universell teori för samtliga hagioskop och celler på Gotland och utgått från att de nästan är identiska. Det är därför anmärkningsvärt att ingen tidigare påvisat att de tydligt utgör två kategorier! Kyrkorna Atlingbo, Martebo och Väskinde har samtliga ett hagioskop i formen av ett trepass emedan kyrkorna i Bro, Vall (och förmodligen den rivna kammaren i Endre, som skall ha liknat den i Vall) är större och har haft ett fönster eller en öppning utåt. Kyrkorna är förhållandevis lätt att datera då ett fåtal skriftliga och arkeologiska dateringar existerar och de arkitektoniska trenderna var korta. Den första kategorien av celler är äldst och skulle till och med kunna vara byggda, eller beställda, av samma person.

Baserat på omnämningar av fönster i regler för recluser, människor som likt eremiter bott inmurade i anslutning till kyrkan, så kan slutsatsen dras att kammarna i Vall och Bro har varit för recluser, även om skriftliga källor till detta saknas. Ytterligare en faktor som bidragit till denna konklusion är också djupet på den nisch som kringgår hagioskopen. En reclus skulle haft behov av att fysiskt ta emot nattvarden genom hagioskopen, emedan en syndigare endast skulle betrakta den okulära nattvarden. I Vall och Bro skall detta ha varit möjligt, men avståndet är så pass stort i Atlingbo, Martebo och Väskinde att detta skulle varit svårt. Ett fönster skulle också föranflett en mer upplyst cell vilket inneburit att individen i cellen skulle varit möjlig att skåda utifrån, genom hagioskopen. Cellerna med trepass-form saknar samtliga fönster och skulle således dolt individen i mörkret.


Sammanfattningsvis går en förändring att pävisa i hur syn uppfattades kring 1200-talet som kombinerat med teologiska utvecklingar ledde till den okulära nattvarden, som i sin tur är starkt förknippad med uppkomsten av hagioskopen. Prästerna fick vägleda församlingens blickar och hjälpa dem att skåda det gudomliga.

Hypoteserna av Armin Tuulse, Johnny Roosval och Gerhard Eimer i den tidigare forskningen är inte direkt felaktiga per se. Hagioskopen kan förstås som hjälpmedel för botgörare och exkommunicerade, de kan förstås som heliga öppningar för pilgrimer i sitt betraktande av det heliga och de kan förstås som en öppning för en reclus, som både emotar nattvarden och betraktar det heliga genom det i sin renande och skrala tillvaro som rensade dem från synd. Dessa olika förståelser för hagioskopet som har pävisats står inte emot varandra, utan är snarare del av en holistisk helhet, reflekerandes vår komplexa verklighet.
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6. Table of Figures

A. The placement of churches with hagioscopes on Gotland. By the author.
B. The conceptual movement of the altar. By the author.
E. The hagioscope in the cell of Atlingbo church, Photo by the author.
Appendix I: Floor Plans

Based upon Floor Plans presented in Sveriges Kyrkor. The cell is marked with a dotted area. The plans are not in the same scale.

Atlingbo

Bro
Appendix II: Doors, Windows, and Hagioscopes

Pictures by the author.

Atlingbo

*Picture 1. The hagioscope seen from the cell.*

*Picture 2. The hagioscope seen from the nave.*
**Picture 3. Entrance to the cell.**

![Entrance to the cell](image1)

**Bro**

*Picture 4. The hagioscope seen from the cell.*

![The hagioscope seen from the cell](image2)
Picture 5. The hagioscope seen from the nave.

Picture 6. The entrance to the cell.
Picture 7. The western wall with the old and built-up window to the left, and the more recent one to the right.

Endre

Picture 8. The built-up entrance to the now lost cell.
Martebo

*Picture 9. The hagioscope seen from the cell.*

*Picture 10. The hagioscope seen from the nave.*
Picture 11. The entrance to the cell.

Vall

Picture 12. The hagioscope seen from the cell.
Picture 13. The reopened hagioscope seen facing north from the nave.

Picture 14. The entrance to the cell, and the partly built-up window.
Väskinde

*Picture 15. The hagioscope seen from the cell.*

*Picture 16. The hagioscope seen from the nave.*
Picture 17. The entrance to the cell.
Appendix III: Floor Plans of Known Cells in Castles of the Teutonic Order

All plans below are details, showing the chapel, taken from *Preussen zur Zeit der Landmeister: 1230-1309* (1888) by Conrad Steinbrecht. The cells are marked with dots.

*Picture 1. Marienburg.*

*Picture 2. Lochstedt, (destroyed in 1945).*
Picture 3. Reden.