

Analysis of Materiality

After having analyzed manuscripts in a visual manner during these past few weeks, I noticed that viewing the materiality of a manuscript teaches the reader on how to see these artifacts from a different perspective (i.e. materiality as well as context of the manuscript itself). One manuscript that I have been using to analyze its materiality is *The Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, Queen of France*, which is currently located at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It is composed of 209 folios, according to the museum's website, along with 25 full-page paintings. This manuscript was created by Jean Pucelle, a Parisian illuminator and it was used by the Queen of France as a prayer book. A relationship between the Queen of France and Jean is seen through an analysis of the manuscript's content and size, language and origin, and binding and illustrations as well as its owners, or individuals who made the manuscript firsthand.



These folios demonstrate the life of Saint Louis in relation to the Catholic Church. (Folios 82v-83r) "Jean Pucelle | The Hours of Jeanne D'Evreux, Queen of France." *The Collection Online*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Web. 18 Oct. 2015. <<http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/cl/web-large/DP237308.jpg>>

The text of *The Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, Queen of France* contains different scenes of the life of Saint Louis, a saint from France who was well known for serving meals to the poor. The creator of *The Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, Queen of France* made this manuscript specifically for the Queen of France (which she must have used as a prayer book). Every page seems to have been placed in a particular order, purposely made by the author, in order to effectively communicate its story to the audience as well as to the Queen. However, by looking at the size of the manuscript, one can assume that it was used as a book because of its one fold or folio-like appearance. The underlining under the words (as seen in the image below) and around the margins indicates that Jean Pucelle used an instrument to write on the prayer book. Also, its length, width, and height of 3 7/8 x 2 13/16 x 1 1/2 in. indicates that the manuscript was easy to carry. Furthermore, the size and content of the manuscript demonstrates that the Queen always had this "prayer book" at hand rather than having it placed somewhere in her room or residence.



The underlining is noticeable in this image as well as the characters of the prayer book. The top figure looks like a drawing of a queen. (Folio 167v) "Jean Pucelle | The Hours of Jeanne D'Evreux, Queen of France." *The Collection Online*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Web. 18 Oct. 2015. <<http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/cl/web-large/DP233923.jpg>>

Not only can the size and content of the manuscript help a person analyze it as a whole, but the language and place of origin are also indicators of why and how the manuscript was initially created. As seen in the image above, this manuscript was undoubtedly written in French (the word "que", a French word, is shown on the upper right corner of the page). Jean Pucelle and the Queen were both French, therefore, the manuscript had to be written in this language in order for the Queen to understand as well as other individuals who speak this language regularly. Moreover, this manuscript was made in Paris, France, which is also another reason why this manuscript had to be written in French. Like many texts, books, or in this case, manuscripts, have to be composed in a language where most individuals can understand what the author is communicating, especially if the text was made for another individual within the same country as the author. However, Latin is also incorporated into some of the pages within this manuscript. It is not officially known why some parts of this folio are written in Latin (while other parts are in French), but one can indicate that, other than writing it for communication purposes between Jean and the Queen, it might have been also written for a specific group. Other than that, Latin was also very frequently spoken during the Middle Ages, also known as Medieval Latin, therefore, most people in France could have understood the manuscript anyways.



The colors of the castle have range from a variety of inks, specifically gold, red, and brown. (Folios 154v-155r) "Jean Pucelle | The Hours of Jeanne D'Evreux, Queen of France." *The Collection Online*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Web. 18 Oct. 2015. <<http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/cl/web-large/DP233778.jpg>>

The illustrations also depict the composition of the manuscript (physical characteristics of the folio). They were made with a variety of colors of ink, such as reds, blues, oranges, yellows, pinks, lilacs and turquoises. During that period of time, individuals who would make manuscripts with a large variety of colors were said to be people with large amounts of money, therefore, one can infer that Jean Pucelle was either wealthy enough to create this manuscript, or the Queen of France had given him money in exchange for a well-made manuscript. Moreover, the illustrations between each line and at the end of each sentence can possibly represent some of the characters that the text of the manuscript is mentioning throughout each scene.

The manuscript on Saint Louis makes a good portion of the audience think more about the manuscript and why it creates a relationship between Jean Pucelle and the Queen of France. Since he is a saint who is dedicated to the poor, a wealthy lady like the Queen might have been interested in this manuscript in two ways. She may have viewed this manuscript as a way to show the people of France that she cares about individuals from the lower class, or she actually cares about those individuals. Given the fact that there might have been a possibility that she was carrying the prayer book around with her, this can also indicate that the queen only asked for the prayer book to be made in order to get the attention of the people around her as well as to get the attention of the people of her country. Also, by formulating a relationship with Jean Pucelle, the Queen had a probability of being more recognized by attaining the prayer book from him.

Overall, *The Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, Queen of France* is a manuscript that says a lot about the relationship between the author, Jean Pucelle, and the Queen of France as well as the Queen's whereabouts during that period of time. Meanwhile the size of the manuscript shows the audience that she used to carry it around, the language of this artifact would also indicate the method of communication between Jean and the Queen as well as the resources that he would use to make the manuscript. Additionally, the characters that were drawn within this manuscript, such as Saint Louis, say a lot about the Queen of France's way of perceiving her own people as well as how she would act in front of them. Even though today's society mostly utilizes modern technology to say a lot about themselves (such as through social media), people such as the Queen of France said a lot about herself as well as the people she communicated with through the usage of manuscripts and how those manuscripts were used from one individual to another. Because of this, many museums, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, preserve these manuscripts as artifacts in order to understand and analyze a specific society's language, culture and religion.

Reflection:

Expanding and revising my analysis of materiality was a process. This manuscript contained a lot of content to talk about, yet in the previous version of the analysis, most of the content was covered. For this revision, however, I took into account the involvement of Saint Louis in the manuscript and how the Queen, a wealthy woman, would be perceived for owning a prayer book on a saint that was dedicated to the poor. Because I had already talked about the manuscript's aesthetics, I wanted to go more in depth into the analysis other than its physical characteristics. It took me a while to think about the manuscript and how it delivered information on the Queen of France as well as the story of Saint Louis. I also expanded on the language of the manuscript. After having my analysis revised throughout the semester, it was noted that this manuscript had some pages written in Latin as well as French, therefore, I added that detail to my analysis. Also, towards the conclusion, I wanted to add the importance of why one should learn the history of manuscripts and how they can teach an audience about the way people were during the Middle Ages. In this case, however, I focused on the interaction between the Queen of France and Jeanne Pucelle. I was very brief with my points as I did not want to deviate from the analysis of the manuscript itself.