Images of Medieval Art in the French Surrealist Periodicals *Documents* (1929–31) and *Minotaure* (1933–39)

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Tessel M. Bauduin and Julia W. Krikke
University of Amsterdam
t.m.bauduin@uva.nl and julia.krikke@student.uva.nl

ABSTRACT

One notable aspect of surrealism's self-construction as a movement is its frequent and intensive engagement with historical periods and objects, including the Middle Ages and medieval art and artists. Contributing to the wider discussion about surrealist medievalism and proceeding from the view that surrealist periodicals provide a tangible expression of its discourse, this article presents a case-study of the illustrations of medieval art in two of French surrealism's most prominent periodicals: *Documents* (1929–31; fifteen issues) and *Minotaure* (1933–39; thirteen issues). It provides a comparative overview of the medieval illustrations in these reviews, which both showcase a sustained interest in medieval art in a variety of forms. Observations are also made on the positioning of the images, as in both cases the editors frequently placed images of medieval art, individually as well as sequentially, in juxtapositions with art from other periods or other cultures. *Documents* and *Minotaure* reproduced medieval art in part to rival *Cahiers d'Art* as all-encompassing art reviews, yet as earlier and related surrealist periodicals published very little to no medieval art in their pages, they still introduced it prominently into the surrealist discourse. In line with its anti-classical agenda, *Documents* primarily featured art from the margins of Europe, ranging from manuscript illuminations to jewellery and vessels, and dating from the early to the High Middle Ages. *Minotaure*, a more luxury art review featuring colour inserts, mainly showed painting by late-medieval Germanic and Italian artists. The first sought to broaden the canon; the second to align late-medieval art with surrealism.

For the surrealists, periodicals were an important channel of communication. They established, edited, published in, and produced a great number and variety, in France as much as internationally.[1] A vibrant surrealist periodical culture persisted well into the 1970s and arguably even to this day. Scholars have often turned to surrealist periodicals, among other things, to understand the fragmentation of (Parisian) surrealism into groups (including their internal struggles); the political ambitions, projects, interests, and fascinations of individual surrealists; and how the surrealists communicated internally and how they presented themselves to the outside world. In other words, surrealist periodicals, as a tangible manifestation of that somewhat elusive mode we call 'discourse', provide a convenient starting point for tracing 'the ways that surrealism constituted itself as a collective movement and negotiated its position in society'.[2]

This article is directed towards a specific aspect of that discourse as shaped in periodicals, namely surrealist medievalism. One aspect of surrealism's self-construction is its frequent and intensive engagement with history. The surrealists found many sources of inspiration in the past and purposefully claimed historic figures as 'ancestors'. As Kristen Strom has noted, by adopting historical figures as 'pre-surrealists', the surrealists positioned themselves as part of a long-standing phenomenon. Surrealism was accordingly defined as not merely an artistic style but as a state of mind that had — apparently — prevailed throughout the ages.[3] Several surrealists were drawn to the Middle Ages in particular. Studies have explored medieval texts, tropes, and themes in surrealist thought and writing.[4] Less studied is the role of medieval art in surrealist discourse; that is to say, the visual presence of medieval art in surrealist sources and periodicals specifically. Contributing to the wider discussion about surrealist medievalism, this article presents a case-study of the illustrations of medieval art in two of French surrealism's most prominent periodicals, *Documents* (1929–31; fifteen issues) and *Minotaure* (1933–39; thirteen issues).

The development of surrealism's medievalism in some of its periodicals has already been noted, especially with regards to *Documents*. Yet while scholars have studied specific texts and art works in *Documents*,[5] this has been done at the expense of a more overarching focus on illustrations of medieval art. Nor has there been much discussion of the different (and similar) ways in which illustrations of medieval art appear in a range of surrealist periodicals. Merely by reproducing medieval art, reviews such as *Documents* and *Minotaure* actively introduced the art of this period to surrealist discourse as well as to surrealist artists. Since *Documents* and *Minotaure* were circulated also outside of

1   The seminal source for the study of dada and surrealist periodicals is Dawn Ades, *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978).

2   Raymond Spiteri, '"What can the surrealists do?" *Littérature* (1919–24); *La Révolution surréaliste* (1924–29); *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (1930–33)', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. by Peter Brooker and others, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), III, pp. 219–43 (p. 219).

3   Kirsten Strom, *Making History: Surrealism and the Invention of a Political Culture* (Lanham: University Press of America), pp. 101–04. Also see Simon Baker, *Surrealism, History, and Revolution* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).

4   See, for instance, Daniel Zamani, *In Search of the Holy Grail: Medieval Tropes and the 'Occultation of Surrealism' in the Work of André Breton, ca. 1928–1957* (doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2017).

5   George Bataille's medievalism is discussed in Bruce Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition: Medievalism and the Making of Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), chapter 1. On *Documents*, see Panayota Volti, 'Le Moyen Âge en mythe(s) dans la revue *Documents*', in *Art et Mythe*, ed. by Fabrice Flahutez and Thierry Dufrêne (Nanterre: Presses universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2011), pp. 47–57; and Daniel Zamani, 'Surréalisme & Moyen Âge: L'exemple de la revue *Documents* (1929–1930)' (unpublished master's thesis, École du Louvre, 2010). Medievalism in *Minotaure* is touched upon in passing in several articles in *Focus on Minotaure: The Animal-Headed Review* (Geneva: Musée Rath, 1987).

surrealist milieus, they can be said to have introduced medieval art into the discourse *about* surrealism as well.

These two periodicals form the primary source material and have been selected for several reasons. For one, they are associated with competing surrealist leaders: *Documents* with George Bataille (1897–1962) and *Minotaure* with André Breton (1896–1966). As such they represent two sides of the French surrealist discourse. Both brought together a diverse group of editors, contributors, and authors from a variety of backgrounds. Published between 1929 (first issue of *Documents*) and 1939 (last issue of *Minotaure*), these periodicals are associated with surrealism's second decade, the 1930s, a time when the movement rose to prominence both in France and internationally, and the impact of these periodicals extended far beyond surrealist circles. As both are primarily art reviews, they also testify to the growing prominence of the visual arts within surrealism, and to the movement's interaction with the discourse of art criticism and art history.[6] Furthermore, in its own way, each periodical aimed to compete with the already well-established review *Cahiers d'Art* (1926–60).

Illustrations form a key aspect of *Documents* and *Minotaure*. At both reviews, the editors positioned images in specific ways on the page, with the creation of particular visual effects in mind. It should be noted that the editors included a wide array of art, primarily contemporary art and non-Western art. European medieval art forms a subset but is an interesting aspect nonetheless. While *Documents* and *Minotaure* partly followed in the footsteps of *Cahiers d'Art* — which reviewed old, modern, contemporary, and tribal art — *Minotaure* and *Documents* also paid sustained attention to objects of contemporary visual culture not regularly considered art or of artistic interest, such as graffiti, nineteenth-century postcards, and photographs of street life.

This article aims to shed light on the medieval art reproduced in these reviews by providing part of the groundwork: it gives an overview of the medieval illustrations included in each periodical, as well as observations on the layout and positioning of images. The analysis is based on a dataset compiled by locating and indexing all illustrations of medieval material in *Documents* and *Minotaure*, as well as — for comparative purposes — a survey of closely associated French surrealist journals, *La Révolution surréaliste* (1924–29); *Le Surréalisme au service de la revolution* (1930–33); and the two journals' main competitor, *Cahiers d'Art*.[7]

Documents

Documents was founded in 1929. It is primarily associated with writer and philosopher George Bataille, who considered himself surrealism's 'old enemy from within'. Scholarship has consistently treated him as the main surrealist challenger of André Breton, author of the two surrealist manifestoes of 1924 and 1929.[8] Although it did end up an important mouthpiece for Bataille and his group of dissident surrealists, *Documents* was originally conceived by two of Bataille's colleagues at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Jean Babelon (1889–1978) and Pierre d'Espezel (1893–1959) (they all worked as numismatists). The initial editorial board further comprised the art dealer

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6   Kim Grant, *Surrealism and the Visual Arts: Theory and Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), especially part 3.

7   The periodicals have been indexed for visual material that may be qualified as Western medieval, with attention paid to positioning, captions, and whether the images are accompanied by text, as well as other potentially relevant data. Note: from the French surrealist perspective, medieval art extends to and includes work of artists qualified, in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century art discourses, as 'primitifs'. Hence, quattrocento and cinquecento Italian art, and fifteenth and sixteenth-century North-Western European art have been included in the survey.

8   Ades, p. 229.

Georges Wildenstein (1892–1963), curator of ethnographic art George-Henri Rivière (1897–1985), and German art historian and critic Carl Einstein (1885–1940).[9] Bataille was 'secrétaire général' from the sixth issue onwards, at which point other surrealists, including the poet Robert Desnos (1900–45), entered the editorial team.[10]

Documents published scholarly and philosophical articles, many illustrated, and in-depth studies as well as shorter, essayistic, and more poetic pieces. Images and illustrations are interspersed throughout the text, sometimes full-page. All in all, a third of its pages feature images, often of high quality.[11] *Documents* was initially subtitled 'Doctrines Archéologie Beaux-Arts Ethnographie', but by the fourth issue doctrine were dropped for 'Variétés', emphasizing popular culture at the expense of ideology. The broad cultural spectrum covered by these subtitles indicates how *Documents* was a mix of opposing trends, paradoxes, and widely diverging interests.[12] On the other hand, the already established *Cahiers d'Art* also boasted a much-encompassing subtitle: 'peinture, sculpture, architecture, art ancient, ethnographie, cinéma'. So while much of *Documents*'s content may have been distinctive, the periodical was hardly unique in its aim to address such a variety of subjects.[13] Underlying its omnivorous appearance were several unifying aims, among which are found a stringent anti-classicism and desire to explore more broadly manifestations of the non-classical in art and culture.[14]

Documents is characterized as 'one of the most important, distinctive, and highly influential avant-garde journals of the twentieth century', and its radical essays by prominent contributors and the disruptive views it promulgated are often remarked upon.[15] The roster of academics and scholars publishing in *Documents* is notable, including Carl Einstein, whose widely influential *Negerplastik* (1915) was one of the first European studies to discuss African sculpture as art.[16] The art reproduced in *Documents* is positioned as 'part of an academic discussion', methodologically treated by 'well-established art historians and other specialists', and contextualized by broader (theoretical and aesthetic) issues, as Ines Lindner has noted.[17] This is not to imply that *Documents* should be considered a conventional academic arts periodical. Although scholarly methodology, rhetoric, and style were adopted, these were 'polemically turned […] against the established academic rules'. *Documents* broke the rules both textually and visually by the montage-like practices that formed the bases of its visual communication and image positioning.[18] The anti-classical agenda is also apparent in the contributions by various foreign medievalists and their contra-nationalist emphasis on cultural exchange and artistic influences from the margins and outside of Europe.[19] This made the periodical

9   Dawn Ades, Simon Baker, and Fiona Bradley, *Undercover Surrealism: Georges Bataille and* Documents (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Eva van den Boogaard, '*Documents*: banaliteit gevierd in een modernistisch tijdschrift', *TS: Tijdschrift voor Tijdschriftstudies*, no. 32 (2012), 181–90; and Julia Kelly, 'Discipline and Indiscipline: The Ethnographies of *Documents*', *Papers of Surrealism*, no. 7 (2007), 1–20 (p. 3–4).

10   Eric Robertson, '"A shameless, indecent saintliness": *Documents* (1929–31) and *Acéphale* (1936–39)', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. by Peter Brooker and others, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), III, pp. 244–64 (pp. 244 and 247).

11   Ines Lindner, 'Picture Policies in *Documents*: Visual Display and Epistemic Practices', *Intermédialités*, no. 15 (2010), 33–51 (p. 35).

12   Kelly, p. 2.

13   For an introduction to *Cahiers d'Art*, see Christian Derouet, *Zervos et* Cahiers d'Art: *Archives de la bibliothèque Kandinsky* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2011).

14   This is the argument put forth by Jean-Philippe Antoine in '"Le Cheval Académique": Georges Bataille, *Documents* et le Classique', *L'immagine del "classico" negli anni venti e trenta del Novecento* (Pisa, 2006).

15   Robertson, p. 245.

16   See also Conor Joyce, *Carl Einstein in* Documents *and His Collaboration with Georges Bataille* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2003).

17   Lindner, p. 35.

18   Lindner, pp. 36 and 50.

19   Zamani, 'Surréalisme', pp. 35–40; Volti, paragraphs 8–9.

a podium for rather unconventional medievalist (and other) art historical thinking. These academics also provided a plethora of just as unconventional and diverse visual material.

Since three of its initial editors worked at the Bibliothèque Nationale, a good amount of the medieval art reproduced in *Document* derives from the library's extensive medieval collections, such as illuminated manuscripts and late-antique and early-medieval coins. An example is the eleventh-century *Apocalypse of Saint-Sever* that Bataille discussed in *Documents* 1.2 (1929), complete with six reproduced illuminations of scenes from the Book of Revelation.[20] Typical for Bataille is that the more bizarre and violent scenes have been selected for reproduction in *Documents*. The editors also looked further afield. For instance, panels from the bronze doors of the church of San Zeno (eleventh- to thirteenth-century) in Verona, Italy, feature in *Documents* 1.7 (1929), illustrating an anonymous essay by either Bataille or Einstein.[21]

With regards to the illustrations, the aim of the editors of *Documents* was to let the images speak for themselves.[22] Thus the captions are often rather minimal. Many illustrations are reproduced relatively large, half or even full-page, and images from or relating to the same artwork or artist are frequently reproduced in sequence. The images are often positioned to produce maximum effect. Unfortunately, there is not much certainty about the exact trajectory of editorial processes at *Documents*. However, overall, Desnos is thought to have been responsible for layout, with Bataille extending a strong influence over the selection and organization of articles and illustrations.[23] Bataille's selection of material for *Documents* — often with strange or violent iconography — bespeaks his fascination for sacrifice and the horrific and savage.[24]

When taken together, the variety of *Documents*'s medieval material is quite notable. It includes elevation and ground plans of Romanesque churches; photographs of the eight-century Viking Oseberg Ship excavated in 1904-05, including the treasures found in it; illustrations of Ottonian metalwork; images of early medieval vessels from the treasure of Nagyszentmiklós; gothic murals from Sicily (Figs 1 and 2); as well as several images from early medieval (eight to twelfth-century) manuscripts, such as portraits of evangelists: a detail of an angel, a Majestas Domini, and an initial.[25] As this list shows, the diversity of represented mediums — churches, ships, jewellery, sculpture, tableware, frescoes, and manuscript illuminations — is remarkable. Looking at the geographical locations of places of origin (or excavation) of the art, the range is extensive as well, stretching from Scandinavia to Spain, Sicily, and Russia. Additionally, a considerable span of centuries is covered, from the fourth century well into the renaissance, with attention being paid to Italian quattrocento and (late) cinquecento

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20 Georges Bataille, 'L'Apocalypse de Saint-Sever', *Documents*, 1.2 (1929), 74–84; and Georges Bataille, 'Le cheval académique', *Documents*, 1.1 (1929), 27–31. Other medieval examples from the Bibliothèque Nationale include the sixth-century Lupicin Gospels (*Documents*, 1.1 (1929), p. 59) and fifteenth-century tarot cards said to be of Charles VI (*Documents*, 1.2 (1929), p. 113).

21 'Les portes de San-Zeno de Vérone', *Documents*, 1.7 (1929), 373–76. Joyce, p. 140.

22 Van den Boogaard, p. 186.

23 Simon Baker, 'Doctrines [the Appearance of Things]' in *Undercover Surrealism: Georges Bataille and Documents*, ed. by Dawn Ades and others (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 34–41 (p. 35).

24 Marja Warehime, '"Vision Sauvage" and Images of Culture: Georges Bataille, Editor of *Documents*', *The French Review*, no. 60 (1986), 39–45 (p. 45).

25 Josef Strzygowski, '"Recherches sur les arts plastiques" et "histoire de l'art"', *Documents* 1.1 (1929), 22–26 (p. 25); F. Adema van Scheltema, 'La Trouvaille d'Oseberg', *Documents*, 1.3 (1929), 121–29 (pp. 121–23, 125–27); Wilhelm Kästner, 'Un atelier d'orfevrerie à Essen vers l'an 1000', *Documents*, 1.5 (1929), 240–47 (pp. 241–43, 246–47); Anon. [but possibly Marcel Griaule], 'Le Trésor de Nagy-Szent-Miklosz', *Documents*, 1.6 (1929), 320–23 (pp. 321–23); Maria Accascina, 'Les peintures du Palais Chiaramonte à Palerme', *Documents*, 2.7 (1930), 383–88 (pp. 383, 386–87); Heinrich Ehl, 'L'heure de naissance de l'art européen occidental', *Documents*, 2.8 (1930), 441–49 (pp. 441, 443–48) which also includes an even earlier fresco from the Villa Boscoreale (p. 442); and Michel Leiris, 'Dictionnaire: Ange', *Documents*, 2.6 (1930), 366–67 (p. 366).
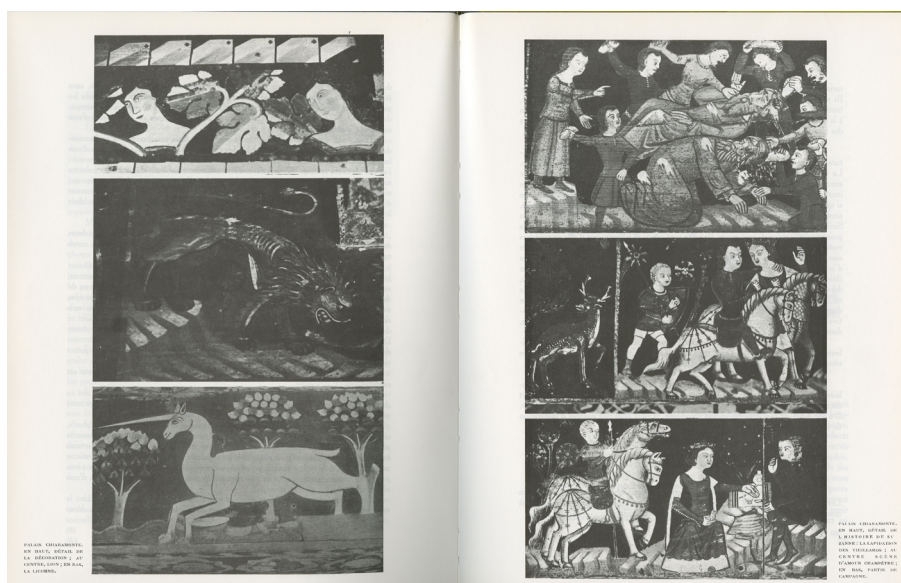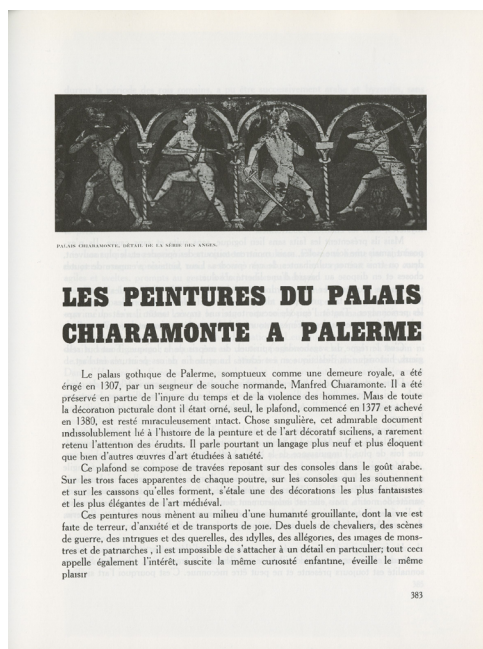
Figs 1 and 2   Opening page and illustrated pages from Maria Accascina, 'Les peintures du Palais Chiaramonte à Palerme', *Documents*, 2.7 (1930), p. 383 and pp. 386–87. Photo: authors

panel painting. Examples of the latter are a painting by Giovanni di Paolo (1403–82), a landscape by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1290–1348), and six works by Piero di Cosimo (1462–1522), which are reproduced in three different issues.[26]

Besides this diversity, another notable aspect of the medieval illustrations in *Documents* is their positioning within each issue's pages. Indeed, *Documents* functioned as site not only of controversy but also aesthetic dialogue, and much of this was enacted through visual strategies, especially the positioning of the pictures, in a practice that has

26   Georgette Camille, 'L'Exposition d'art Italien à Londres', *Documents*, 2.4 (1930), 245; 'C. E.' [prob. Carl Einstein], 'Paysage de Lorenzetti', *Documents*, 2.1 (1930), 49–50 (p.49); and Georgette Camille, 'Piero di Cosimo', *Documents*, 2.6 (1930), 329–35 (pp. 329–32, 335).

been described as 'montage-like'.[27] Images are placed in a juxtaposition that frequently invites visual correspondence between art which is not necessarily related. For instance, in the fifth issue a reproduction of the painting *Clown* (1929) by German Bauhaus artist and surrealist Paul Klee (1879–1940) is positioned alongside a tenth-century crucifixion page from an Irish manuscript; on the overleaf, another Klee painting is reproduced alongside the imprints of the front and back of a coin or medal of 'indeterminate periodicity' from the 'south of Russia' (Fig. 3).[28] As others have already pointed out, the positioning of the Klee paintings alongside the Psalter crucifixion and the coin, respectively, invite the reader to compare the images on the basis of form and style, which indeed — supported by *Documents*'s sustained (aesthetic) discussion about forms of primitivism in both contemporary and medieval or ancient art — appear analogous.[29] A game with the process of representation is being played here: by presenting unrelated images as if somehow connected, even if only by reproducing works next to each other, the concept of resemblance is undermined.[30] Bataille rejected the scientific categorisation of reality, considering 'reality' not as static but as continuously in motion, wherefore form and meaning cannot be stable.[31]

The visual juxtapositions that can be found in several issues of *Documents* are certainly not limited to medieval art, and were more often applied to modern European and (undated) art from outside the West. In such instances too the intention was for readers to perceive them as analogous.[32] In several cases, the medieval works are not overtly juxtaposed but part of a sequence relating to the same subject. Even so, they often stand out stylistically or iconographically, as with the Saint Sever illustrations. Moreover, the potential for entering into a visual dialogue with other — often unrelated — images is played up by repeating layout patterns, such as reproducing distinctly different and otherwise unrelated images in the same size, on the same side of the page. For instance, the full-page illustration of an eleventh-century Majestas Domini from an Ottonian manuscript is followed by a full-page reproduction of *Sunflowers* (1888) by Vincent van Gogh on the overleaf page (Figs 4 and 5), offering a striking and provoking contrast.[32]

Minotaure

In the early 1930s, Breton was approached by the Swiss publisher of high-end art books Albert Skira (1904–73) to participate in a new, highly luxurious art review entitled *Minotaure*. Greek-French art critic Stratis Eleftheriades, publishing as Tériade (1889–1983) and formerly co-editor of *Cahiers d'Art*, was the artistic director. In *Minotaure*, Skira and Tériade sought for a combination of the glamourous appearance and broad appeal of *Cahiers d'Art* and the intellectual, even scholarly, nature of *Documents*.[33]

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27 As analysed in Lindner, especially pp. 33, 36, and 40–42.

28 *Documents*, 1.5 (1929), pp. 286 and 287.

29 Volti, paragraph 12.

30 Baker, 'Doctrines', p. 38.

31 Van den Boogaard, p. 189. This has been related by some to Bataille's notion of the *informe* (later made famous by Rosalind Krauss and others), which he started to develop around this time, but, as Joyce (pp. 161–90) has traced, the *informe* was primarily developed in response to Einstein and the latter's concept *tectonic*.

32 *Documents*, 2.8 (1930), pp. 8 and 10 [448, 450].

33 Jed Rasula, 'Dangerous Games and New Mythologies: *Cercle et Carré* (1930); *Art Concret* (1930); *Abstraction-Création* (1932–35); and *Minotaure* (1933–39)', in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. by Peter Brooker and others, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), III, 265–85 (p. 276); Véronique Yersin, 'Genèse d'un mythe', in *Chants exploratoires:* Minotaure, *La Revue Albert Skira, 1933–1939*, ed. by Véronique Yersin (Genève: Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et histoire, 2008), pp. 17–21; and Ades, p. 279.
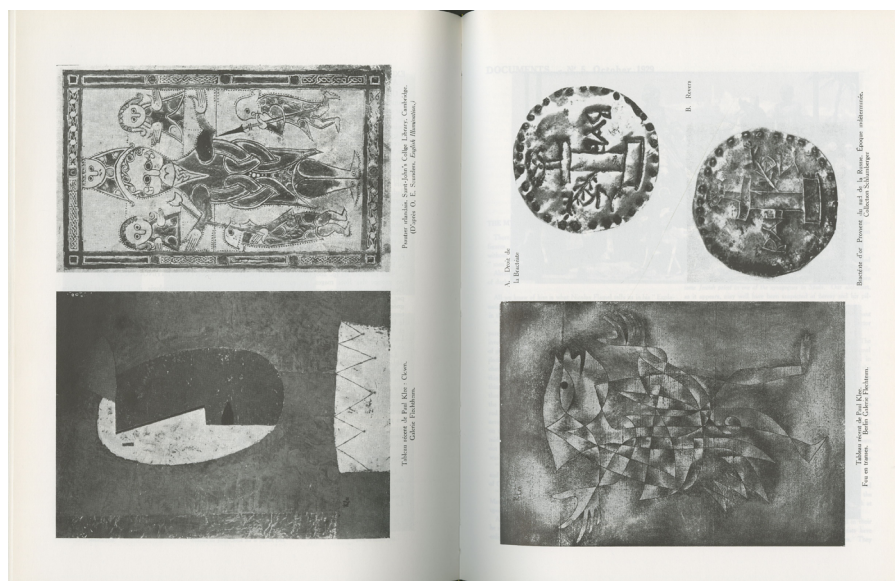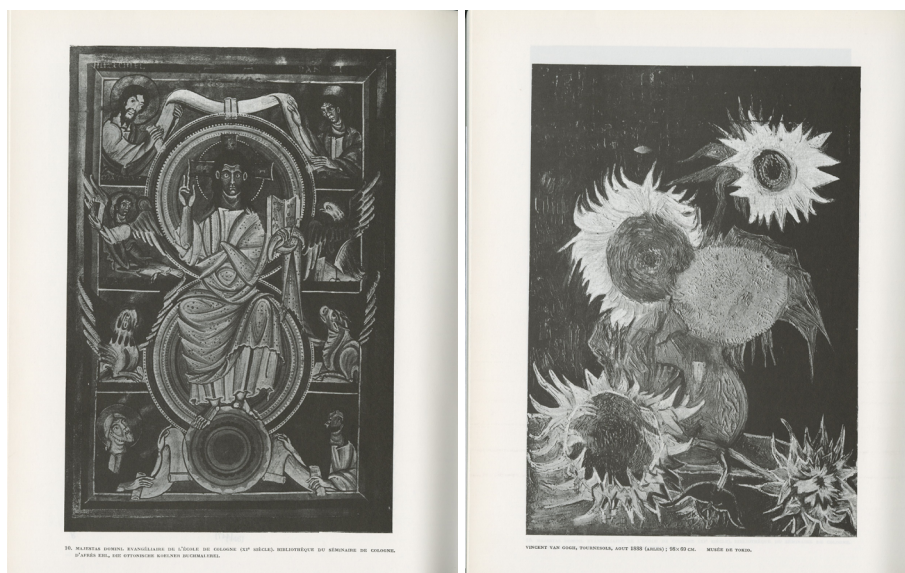
Fig. 3   Double page spread from *Documents*, 1.5 (1929), pp. 286–87. Photo: authors

Figs 4 and 5   Two pages from *Documents*, 2.8 (1930), p. 8 [448] and p. 10 [450]. Photo: authors

The first two issues of *Minotaure* came out in June 1933; eight hundred readers had already subscribed.[34] Targeting the high-end market, it featured custom-designed covers by well-known artists (the first by Pablo Picasso, for instance) and high-quality, full-page colour inserts. This immediately set it apart from *Documents*, which sported austere text-only covers and images in black and white. Initially starting off at fifteen francs, the price of an issue doubled to thirty francs by 1937, limiting *Minotaure* to an affluent audience. In comparison, *Documents* had sold for fifteen francs. On the other hand, issues of *Cahiers d'Art* cost thirty francs in 1932 and forty-five in the late 1930s.[35]

34   Its overall circulation was 3,000 and later 2,000 copies. Ades, pp. 251–63; and Spiteri, pp. 236–43.
35   Chara Kolokytha, 'The Art Press and Visual Culture in Paris during the Great Depression: *Cahiers d'Art*, *Minotaure*, and *Verve*', *Visual Resources*, 29.3 (2013), 184–215 (pp. 187–88); and Rasula, p. 277.

Over the 1930s, surrealism became increasingly visible. *Cahiers d'Art*, for one, had been discussing surrealism and reproducing surrealist art since the late 1920s.[36] This may have helped to make surrealism respectable enough for *Minotaure* — after all, it was a luxurious art glossy clearly targeted at a readership of art enthusiasts rather than the small group of surrealists and avant-garde artists and writers to whom earlier surrealist periodicals had catered. In fact, Skira and Tériade seem to have aimed to compete directly with *Cahiers d'Art* by allying with surrealism.[37] *Minotaure* was first and foremost an art periodical in which politics took a backseat, a requirement Skira had stipulated when he initially asked the surrealists to come on board — perhaps a lesson taken from *Documents*, where Bataille's political agenda and radical views had set the tone early on and had eventually alienated the other editors. Nonetheless, in tone, subject choice, and layout *Minotaure* can be considered surrealist. Skira acknowledged the considerable — even 'the greatest' ('la plus grande') — influence of the surrealists on the periodical on several occasions.[38] In addition, it should be noted that *Minotaure* was a far cry from an easily accessible magazine and remained 'very avant-garde', as Skira also remarked.[39] Tériade ceded editorial directorship to Breton and a varying editorial committee of surrealists after the ninth issue. Several surrealists were also regular contributors, in addition to an international group of authors and specialists, some from academia.

A decent amount of illustrations of (late-)medieval material appears in *Minotaure*. Overall, images are a very prominent part of *Minotaure*, more so than of *Documents*. Regarding the images, the editors seem to have taken a leaf from *Documents*'s book to pay considerable attention to visual organisation of images and page-spread, minimising captions and otherwise eliminate intervening text as much as possible. Typical for *Minotaure* is that the illustrations are thematically organized over multiple pages and sometimes even entire issues, a remarkable and innovative visual strategy initially carried out by Tériade and later continued by the surrealists.[40]

It should be noted that this explicit focus on visual material and its positioning throughout each issue, together with the inclusion of reproductions of medieval art, set both *Documents* and *Minotaure* apart from earlier surrealist periodicals such as *La Révolution Surréaliste* and *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution*. The latter, already sparsely illustrated, published only contemporary visual material which was moreover relegated to a separate quire at the back of each issue.[41] In *La Révolution Surréaliste* the images are integrated into the text, usually inserted into page columns and accordingly generally of small size. It features only one medieval work of art: a detail of the second panel from Italian painter Paolo Uccello's *Miracle of the Profaned Host* (1467–69).[42] Uccello (1397–1475) would prove an obsession which the Bretonian surrealists returned to in *Minotaure* a decade later, as we will see. *Documents* and *Minotaure* therefore stand out from this group of periodicals: by illustrating medieval art, at larger size and full-page, and even, in *Minotaure*, in colour.

36 Kim Grant, '*Cahiers d'Art* and the Evolution of Modernist Painting', *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 1.2 (2010), 216–27 (pp. 218 and 221).

37 See Kolokytha, p. 189.

38 Valerie Holman, 'The Artist in his Element: *Minotaure*'s Coverage of the Visual Arts', in *Focus on Minotaure: The Animal-Headed Review* (Geneva: Musée Rath, 1987), 43–77 (p. 43).

39 Kolokytha, pp. 185–86.

40 Gwilherm Perthuis, 'Deux regards sur l'art ancien dans *Minotaure*: Tériade (1933–1936) et les surréalistes (1937–1939)', in *Chants exploratoires:* Minotaure*: La Revue Albert Skira, 1933–1939*, ed. by Véronique Yersin (Genève: Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et histoire, 2008), pp. 38–43 (p. 42).

41 Except for the first issue. Spiteri, p. 238.

42 It accompanies a ruminating essay by Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) that does not discuss this panel, 'Uccello, le poil', *La Révolution surréaliste*, no. 8 (1926), 22–23. See also Leslie Boldt-Irons, 'Walking the Fine Line: *Le Poil* as *Garde-Fou* in Artaud's "Uccello Le Poil"', *Neophilologus*, 84.1 (2000), 37–57.

Striking is that while northern renaissance art is nearly entirely absent from *Documents*, it is all the more visible in *Minotaure*.[43] *Minotaure*, no. 9 (1936), for instance, includes several pages of reproductions of works by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553), Cranach the Younger (1515–86), and Hans Holbein (1497–1543). These accompany two essays, one by the eminent French art critic (mainly of contemporary art) Maurice Raynal (1884–1954), the other by the surrealist patron Edward James (1907–84) (Fig. 6). In both cases — and in particular in Raynal's essay, where the actual text comes to only two pages while the images extend over several — the visual element dominates strongly; in effect, these are visual essays accompanied by text rather than the more conventional other way around.[44] Also remarkable is the amount of works reproduced: nineteen paintings by both Lucas Cranach the Elder and the Younger, including some portraits — a sustained visual focus usually reserved for eminent contemporary artists such as Picasso. Two pages of reproductions of engravings by Swiss printmaker Urs Graf (c. 1485–c. 1528) in *Minotaure*, no. 6 — with six drawings and prints, one full-page (Figs 7 and 8) — further emphasizes the focus on Germanic exponents of northern renaissance art or 'primitifs'.[45]

Fig. 6   Two pages with illustrations from Maurice Raynal, 'Realité et Mythologie des Cranach', *Minotaure*, no. 9 (1936), pp. 12–13. Photo: authors

Documents dedicated a considerable amount of space to art of the early Middle Ages. *Minotaure*, on the other hand, tended to reproduce late-medieval art works. In addition to the works noted above, it printed the *Portrait of Gabrielle de Rochechouart* (c. 1574) by the French court painter Corneille de Lyon on a separate colour insert.[46]

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43   With the exception of a detail of Cranach the Elder's *Judith with the head of Holofernes* (ca. 1530), namely the head itself, in Ralph von Koenigswald, 'Têtes et crânes', *Documents*, 2.6 (1930), 352–58 (p. 356).
44   Maurice Raynal, 'Réalité et mythologie des Cranach', and Edward James, 'The Marvel of Minuteness', both in *Minotaure*, no. 9 (1936), 11–19 and 20–24 respectively.
45   Pierre Courthion, 'Le sadisme de Urs Graf', *Minotaure*, no. 6 (1934–35), 35–37. The overt interest in artists such as these partly resulted from a countercultural interest in aspects of German culture on the part of leading surrealists such as Breton and Max Ernst (1891–1976), as further explored in Tessel M. Bauduin, 'Surrealist Medievalism: A Case Study', in *Studies in Medievalism XVII*, ed. by Karl Fugelso (Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2018), 151–77 (pp. 172–75).
46   *Minotaure*, no. 6 (1934–35), between pp. 60 and 61.
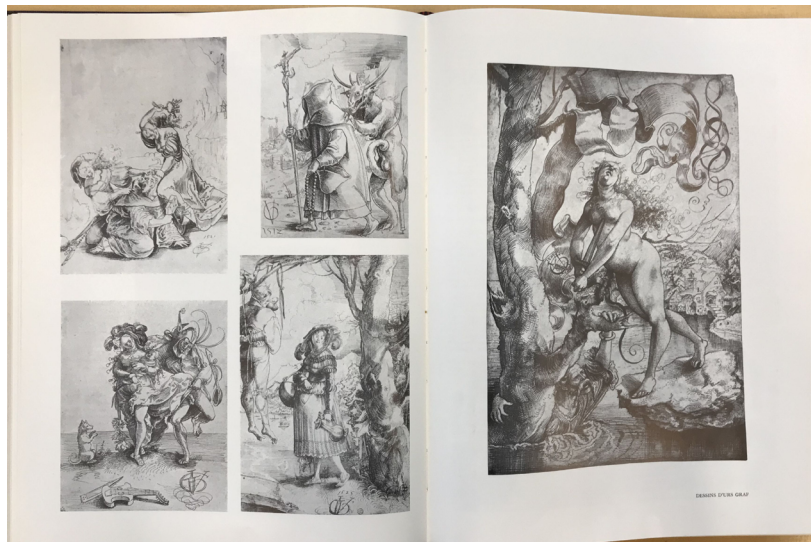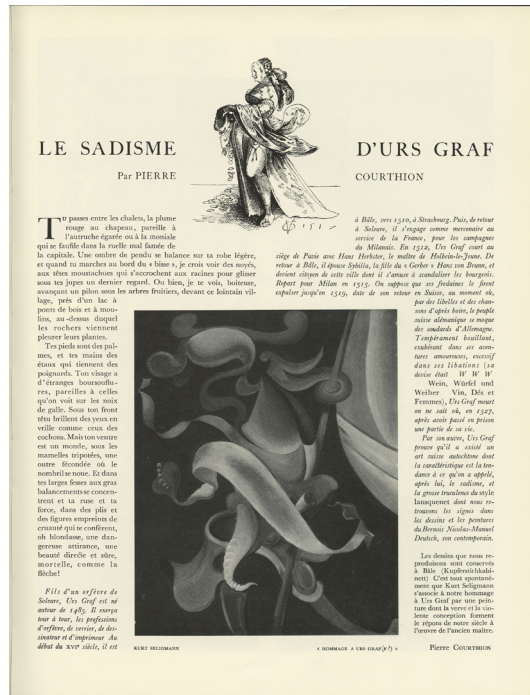
Figs 7 and 8   Pages with illustrations from Pierre Courthion, 'Le sadisme d'Urs Graf',
in *Minotaure*, no. 6 (1935), pp. 35–37. Photo: authors

Its caption notes that 'This reproduction is taken from the book LES TRÉSORS DE
LA PEINTURE FRANCAISE' (emphasis original), a book project by Skira edited by
Tériade. Advertisements for the first volume, *Des primitifs au XVI siècle*, can be found in
several issues of *Minotaure*, with the label 'primitifs' indicating artists from the fourteenth
and fifteenth centuries. Tables of reproductions are listed in some of these ads and
include artists and their works, such as 'Pol de Limbourg' and his *Anatomical Zodiac Man*
(1411–16) (Fig. 9), and a page from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* now ascribed

to the Limbourg brothers (active 1385–1416).[47] *The Anatomical Zodiac Man* was included as a full-page colour insert in *Minotaure*, just as De Lyon's portrait: the review therefore not only advertised but prominently featured such apparent masterpieces of French art.[48] This is not unique: *Documents* ran advertisements for Wildenstein's publishing project *L'Art français*, although without illustrations.[49] Both periodicals associated with art publishing projects of members of their editorial teams, which aimed at providing (visual) overviews of French art for a broader audience.[50] *Minotaure*'s editorial team went the furthest by publishing (a selection of) the reproductions Skira had obtained for *Trésors*. Late-medieval French art is therefore visually prominently present in this periodical. This aligns with the fact that art by French artists, albeit primarily contemporary art, also plays a much larger role in *Minotaure* than in *Documents*. In the latter, by contrast (and only with regards to medieval art), it is art from outside of France that sets the tone, in line with the periodical's objective to focus on the marginal, understudied, and anticlassical.
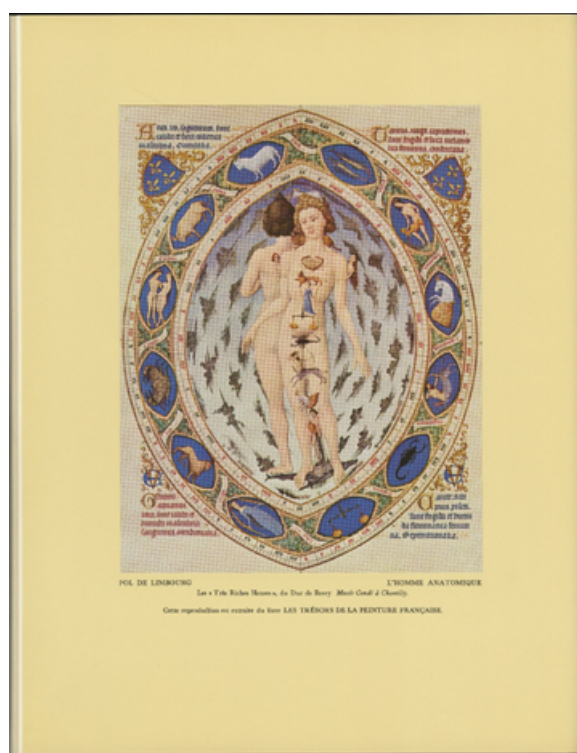

Fig. 9   Colour insert of the Limbourg brothers, *Anatomical Zodiac Man* (1411–16), in *Minotaure*, no. 6 (1935), no page. Photo: authors

Other medieval material in *Minotaure* includes a reproduction of an automaton (dated 1513), a full-page photo of the mid-twelfth-century sculpture of two shepherds (without the angel annunciating to them) from Chartres Cathedral (Fig. 10), and

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47   Two somewhat related images were reproduced in *Documents* by Michel Leiris, namely astrological microcosmical charts from the fourteenth and fifteenth century, 'Notes sur deux Figures microcosmiques des XIVᵉ et XVᵉ siecles', *Documents*, 1.1 (1929), 48–52 (p. 49).

48   *The hors-texte L'homme anatomique* precedes p. 1 of *Minotaure*, no. 6 (1934–35). Further ads for *Trésors* I (and sometimes also for vol. II: *Le XVII siècle*) in *Minotaure*, no. 1 (1933), *Minotaure*, no. 7 (1935), *Minotaure*, no. 9 (1936), *Minotaure*, no. 10 (1937), and *Minotaure*, nos 12–13 (1939), all unpaginated.

49   Van den Boogaard, pp. 184–85.

50   Such conservative-seeming projects were in fact grounded in socialist ideology and about bringing art to the people, as discussed in Kolokytha.

photographs of armour dated to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[51] In a rare pictorial overlap with *Documents*, *Minotaure* also paid attention to Piero di Cosimo. *Documents*'s coverage of Cosimo had been topical, as the article was prompted by an exhibition. Of the six illustrations, three are full page, and all the paintings are reproduced in their entirety.[52] *Minotaure*, no. 11 reproduced ten paintings and details from paintings from between 1490 and 1510, accompanied by a brief essay by German art historian Georg Pudelko (1905–1972) on the artist.[53] To *Minotaure*, no. 7, Pudelko had already contributed an article on Uccello that featured ten illustrations, six full-page.[54]
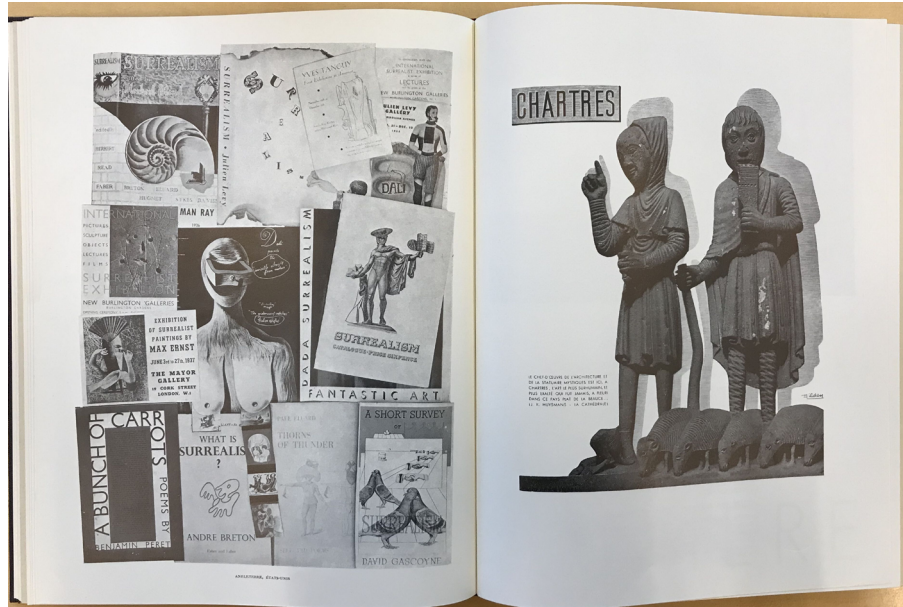

Fig. 10   Page spread from *Minotaure*, no. 10 (1937), pp. 64–65. Photo: authors

Further Comparison of Medieval Art Reproduced in *Documents* and *Minotaure*

Whereas academic specialists were amongst *Documents*'s prominent contributors, certainly with regards to medieval art, in *Minotaure* art was discussed by diverse authors with differing expertise, including contemporary art critics such as Raynal, collectors such as James, and art historians of the renaissance such as Pudelko. As noted, the majority of medieval art reproduced in *Minotaure* is late-medieval, as opposed to art from the early and high Middle Ages in *Documents*; it is also more conventional than that in *Documents*, with the reproductions such as those taken from Skira's *Trésors* belonging to the canon of French art.

There are also several parallels, such as the fact that both reviews employed an innovative organisation of visual features in an essentially discursive manner:[55] images were arranged in ways intended to create a complex interplay between them and thereby prompting, at the very least, an association of art of one kind, type, or period with that of another, across borders of medium, style, iconography, and time. Moreover, already

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51 *Minotaure*, nos 3–4 (1933), p. 31; *Minotaure,* no. 10 (1937), no page; and Benjamin Péret, 'A l'intérieure de l'armure', *Minotaure*, no. 11 (1938), 54–56.

52 Camille, 'Piero di Cosimo'.

53 Georges [sic] Pudelko, 'Piero di Cosimo, peintre bizarre', *Minotaure*, no. 11 (1938), 19–26.

54 Georges [sic] Pudelko, 'Paolo Uccello, peintre lunaire', *Minotaure*, no. 7 (1935), 32–41.

55 See Perthuis, p. 42.

in *Documents* a play upon and with size of art works and enlarged details thereof was experimented with for effect, and this surrealist aesthetic strategy was developed further in *Minotaure*. Well known are Brassaï's photos of small, even tiny daily objects taken in the early 1930s — 'sculptures involontaires' such as a rolled-up subway ticket, a lick of soap — that were blown up to huge proportions in *Minotaure*.[56] Skira observed how *Minotaure* was about the rapport between consciousness and the unconscious, and about expressing the latent content of an age in addition to its manifest, or apparent, content. The organisation of images in *Minotaure* was accordingly designed so as to maximise opportunities for latent content to manifest in interactions between images.[57] Rather than presenting individual objects or topics arranged one after the other, as done, for instance, in *Cahiers d'Art* as well as in several of the issues of *Documents*, individual issues of *Minotaure* were arranged with an overall thematic development in mind. This is most prominent when it comes to the illustrations, which are organised in and between articles in a manner so as to maximize their impact as such; their associative or analogical interaction with other images; and the cumulative impact of the images. The strong visual thematic overlap that is frequently created operates entirely independently from the textual content, and indeed transcends it: an intentional effect orchestrated by Tériade and continued by his successors.[58] Such interplay between image and text, as well as between image and image, 'transforms the visual material in *Minotaure* from "illustration" to *manifestation*'.[59] This is also where *Minotaure*'s visual strategies differ from *Documents*'s. In the latter, the images were similarly positioned and arranged for particular, often subversive, effect, but these montage practices operate primarily on the basis of groupings of images, and the associative connections *within* such groups, rather than across an issue as a whole.[60]

Both *Documents* and *Minotaure* aimed to draw medieval art into dialogue with the contemporary by reproducing medieval art and contemporary art and culture side-by-side.[61] In *Documents*, for instance, an illumination of the angel Gabriel from a twelfth-century manuscript is positioned immediately alongside two contemporary photographs on the same theme from theatre and cinema, one of actor Wesley Hill as Gabriel in a contemporary play and one showing American actress Bessie Love in angel costume.[62] In a similar vein, the editors of *Minotaure* chose to reproduce a photograph of the two twelfth-century sculpted shepherds from Chartres alongside a collage of covers of surrealist manifests, books, and invitations (Fig. 10). But *Minotaure* takes another tack as well: it features modernist/avant-gardist works that explicitly reference or are inspired by medieval imagery. Picasso's suite of drawings after an altarpiece by the sixteenth-century artist Matthias Grünewald is one example which appeared in the first issue.[63] The original work that inspired it, Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece* (ca. 1510–15), is not reproduced,

56 Lindner, p. 45–47; and Brassaï, 'Sculptures involontaires', *Minotaure*, nos 3–4 (1933), 68. Experimentation with art of the small and on a small scale was given an impetus by Salvador Dalí, who during these years was exploring the aesthetic potential of the diminutive: Roger Rothman, *Tiny Surrealism: Salvador Dalí and the Aesthetics of the Small* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), for instance, pp. 86–90.

57 Holman, pp. 51 and 76.

58 Holman, pp. 72 and 45.

59 Rasula, p. 284 (emphasis original).

60 Lindner, pp. 36, 40, and 42.

61 Note that in both reviews this is also done textually, an aspect not taken into discussion here.

62 *Documents*, 2.6 (1930), p. 367: the juxtaposition of images not only opens a dialogue between the medieval and the contemporary, but also contrapositions manuscript art with performative and screen arts. Moreover, as Wesley Hill is black, the images also introduce the theme of ethnicity; see also Volti.

63 'Crucifixions: Suite de dessins de Picasso, exécutés d'après la *Crucifixion* de Grünewald (Musée de Colmar) (inédits)', *Minotaure*, no. 1 (1933), 30–32. For an analysis of the drawings, see Susan Grace Galassi, *Picasso's Variations on the Masters: Confrontations with the Past* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), pp. 66–86.

but without a doubt Picasso's drawings would have raised interest in it.[64] Another instance is the painting entitled *Hommage à Urs Graf* (currently known as *Heraldry*, 1934) by the Swiss-American surrealist artist Kurt Seligmann (1900–62), printed in *Minotaure* no. 6 alongside the reproductions of Graf's work discussed above (Figs 7 and 8). Graf's etches are clearly positioned as an important source of inspiration for Seligmann. Depicting these works side by side not only highlights Seligmann's interaction with and revision of Grafian themes and styles, it also brings a modern flavour to Graf's etchings.[65] Such visual framing of surrealist art by late-medieval/early-renaissance art, and medieval art by surrealist art, establishes a relation between surrealist and medieval art more direct than anything seen in *Documents*. [66]

Both periodicals' editorial boards clearly considered it necessary to engage with medieval art — something earlier surrealist periodicals had not done at all — to establish themselves as serious art and literature reviews. In this, *Documents* and *Minotaure* followed in the footsteps of *Cahiers d'Art*, though, on the whole — in its choice of subject and reproductions — *Documents* adheres more closely than *Minotaure* to *Cahiers d'Art*'s model. Medievalism was not one of *Cahiers d'Art*'s main concerns, but medieval topics and illustrations did crop up in several issues.[67] For instance, thirteen figures of art from and related to the Oseberg Ship (a topic also discussed in *Documents*) can be found in *Cahiers d'Art* 5.3 (1930). Moreover, the subsequent issue of *Cahiers d'Art* presents twelve figures illustrating tenth and eleventh-century Armenian and Georgian churches and sculpture.[68] Thus, reproducing medieval art and diagrams of medieval art was not unique to *Documents* or *Minotaure*; the particulars of positioning and engagement still make the periodicals stand out.[69]

Conclusion

As we have detailed here, both *Documents* and *Minotaure*, for all that their main focus was not art of the Middle Ages, did showcase a sustained interest in medieval art in a variety of forms. The difference between the periodicals when it comes to the number of issues published is slight (fifteen to thirteen), and overall *Documents* pays just a bit more attention to medieval art than *Minotaure* does. On the other hand, *Minotaure* dedicates more spreads of pages to it, as in the cases of the many paintings of Cranach the Elder and the Younger and of Uccello that were illustrated in it. Moreover, more pages are dedicated to illustrate details of artworks in *Minotaure*.

In its coverage of medieval topics, *Documents* could be described as eclectic, transdisciplinary, and more or less against the grain. It aimed to beat academia at its own game, which shows in its roster of contributors and images. The medieval art reproduced

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64 This is further explored by Bauduin, pp. 162–65.

65 Moreover, the essay by the Swiss-French art critic Pierre Courthion specifically explores sadism in the works of Graf, thus applying a contemporary surrealist Sadean framework to these early-modern prints. Nathalie Strasser, 'Le blanc et le noir: Les bannerets d'Urs Graf (vers 1485–1527)', in *Chants exploratoires:* Minotaure*: La Revue Albert Skira, 1933–1939,* ed. by Véronique Yersin (Genève: Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et histoire, 2008), pp. 82–84.

66 Although space is lacking here to pursue this further, the form of surrealist appropriation of past masters we find in *Minotaure* fits the strategy of constructing a surrealist history, which was much less a concern of Bataille and his group; Strom, pp. 101–02.

67 Linda Steer, *Appropriated Photographs in French Surrealist Periodicals, 1924–1939* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

68 Josef Strzygowski, 'Des problèmes soulevés par la nef d'Oseberg et sa gargaison d'objets d'art', *Cahiers d'Art*, 5.3 (1930), 121–28; and Georges Duthuit, 'Documents sur l'Arménie et la Géorgie', *Cahiers d'Art*, 5.4 (1930), 191–96.

69 See, for instance, fifty illustrations of medieval Catalan art in Christian Zervos, 'A l'ombre de la Guerre Civile: L'Art Catalan du Xe au XVe siècle au Musée du Jeu de Paume des Tuileries', *Cahiers d'Art*, 11.8–10 (1936), 213–56.

in it spans the entire chronological breadth of the Middle Ages and covers a whole variety of media, while in *Minotaure* it is chiefly limited to painting and sculpture. This suggests that *Documents* was interested in medieval *art*, whereas *Minotaure* was mainly focussed on late-medieval art and, moreover, primarily showed late-medieval *artists*, such as Cranach, Graf, Cosimo, and Uccello. Taking into account the overview of European medieval works reproduced in the periodical overall, *Documents* can be said to challenge the canon of art by presenting art from the margins of Europe and also providing a podium for art forms often called 'applied arts', such as jewellery, vessels, and precious silverware. *Minotaure* is less radical in its focus on painting by 'primitifs', but provokes in a different way by connecting late-medieval and surrealist art much more directly than *Documents*. In both reviews, illustrations were strategically positioned: in *Documents* to provocative effect, drawing parallels between very different kinds of art; in *Minotaure*, to draw art more emphatically into correspondence with surrealist art. *Minotaure* was certainly less academic than *Documents* in its approach, though it did publish some scholarly material. Its association with Skira's art publishing projects was more overt than was the case with Wildenstein's book series in *Documents*.

In both reviews, the medieval material was fully integrated into the periodical and an inherent part of its appearance and presentation, thereby — on a relatively minor scale but still pervasively — introducing the art of the European Middle Ages into surrealism and its discourse. In this article, we have deemed it important to point out the visual element and treat that on its own. For some readers, language obstacles may complicate the text in these periodicals, whereas the images are accessible to analysis independent of language — indeed, this is how some international artists familiarised themselves with surrealism and its interests. It was also common for artists to cut out images from the issues and post them on studio walls. Reproductions in these periodicals therefore operated discursively on their own. Scholars have started to trace the trajectory of some images from their original locations to *Documents* and *Minotaure*; however, the study of the trajectory from these periodicals into the work of artists and others is still in its infancy. With this overview and preliminary analysis of the medieval material, we have aimed to provide a starting point for further efforts.

Tessel M. Bauduin is an independent art historian, associated with the University of Amsterdam. Her monograph *Surrealism and the Occult* was published in 2014 and she has further published on modern art, surrealism, occultism and automatism, the Hilma af Klint and Jheronimus Bosch, among other things. She has co-edited *Surrealism, Occultism and Politics: In Search of the Marvellous* (2017); *The Occult in Modernist Art, Literature and Cinema* (2018); and a special issue of *The Journal of Art Historiography* on 'The Canonisation of Modernism' (2018). A co-edited issue of *Stedelijk Studies* on 'Modernism in Migration' is forthcoming (2019). A laureate of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research's VI-programme for Excellence in Research, her study of the reception of the old masters of surrealism will come out in 2020.

Julia W. Krikke is a graduate of the MA Arts of the Netherlands, a collaborative programme run jointly by the University of Amsterdam and Rijksmuseum that focusses on Dutch art from an international perspective. She specializes in the art and culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and her research interests include reception history, medievalism, nationalism, and mobility. She was a speaker at the symposium *Surrealism as Art History* at the University of Amsterdam (2019), where she presented a case-study on the surrealist reception of Dutch Golden Age artist Hercules Segers. As an intern at the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), Julia

researched the presentation and reception of modern Dutch art in the United States around 1900 for her MA dissertation.

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