

scholarly texts. The *De Natura Rerum* of Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636), which was one of the most important medieval school texts, was referred to throughout the Middle Ages as the *Liber Rotarum* because of Isidore’s frequent recourse to the rota, to summarize visually what he had explained in pages of text.⁶⁵ As such, the rota was both a tool and an emblem of medieval learning, involving the reader-viewer’s reasoning to actively connect disparate arguments and synthesize them into a single memorable form (or contrasting pair). Given the important heuristic role that the rota played in medieval scholarly texts, the appearance of early rose windows may also refer to the *activity* the rota signals — its role as a visual instrument that stimulated its beholders to think connectively. Here then is a scholarly connection of the kind Panofsky provokes us to think about, compatible with, yet expanding beyond, what he outlined in *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*.

As my remarks have sought to make clear, Panofsky’s text can only be recommended with reservation as a sustained examination of the development of 12th- and 13th-century architecture, as a consideration of questions of artistic agency, or as an investigation of rose windows. But as a short, thesis-driven study introducing key principles of Gothic architecture and its context in a stimulating way, it remains a study that is good to think with and a springboard for further work.

SUMMARY

Elizabeth Carson Pastan

A WINDOW ON PANOFSKY’S

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AND SCHOLASTICISM

Erwin Panofsky’s *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, an essay-length work of little over 100 pages, has been garnering scholarly attention ever since it was written in 1951. His interdisciplinary approach to church buildings and analogies he sought to establish with the structure of arguments advanced by scholars at the university of Paris have made it a foundational work in the study of iconology. Yet it has also been the subject of numerous critiques as a “master narrative” of the study of Gothic architecture. In this essay, I focus on his discussion of the placement of rose windows in the facades of Gothic buildings in order to highlight what was important about Panofsky’s work, what he might have developed further, and in some cases did develop in other writings, and what kinds of current thinking did not figure in his argument.

⁶⁵ Noted in H. BOBER, ‘An Illustrated Medieval School-Book’, p. 85, n. 43 (as in note 56); M. EVANS, ‘The Geometry of the Mind’, pp. 42–43 (as in note 55); and also F. WALLIS, ‘What a Medieval Diagram Shows: A Case Study of *Computus*’, *Studies in Iconography*, 35, 2014, pp. 1–40, with extensive further bibliography, esp. pp. 1–4, and p. 37, n. 35.