Downright Medieval: Information Visualization in the Middle Ages

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Carolingian Renaissance

8th to 9th Century

Charlemagne (742 – 814)

- Increased Scholarship
- Standardized:
  - Language
  - Writing
  - Education

Charlemagne overseeing the construction of a church
Bay 07, The Legends of Charlemagne, Chartres Cathedral
Tables

King List, Almanac, 1^{st} qtr 14^{th} C

Harley MS. 2332, British Library
Religious & Medical Text, Roger Frugard of Parma, 1st qtr. 14th C

Sloane MS. 1977, British Library
Consanguinity Table,
Isidore of Seville (c. 560 – 636),
*Etymologiae*, c. 880

St. Gallen, Cod. Sang. 231
Table of the Ten Commandments, c. 1310 -1320

Arundel MS 83, British Library
Tower of Wisdom, *Speculum Theologiae*, c. 1300

Beinecke MS 416, Yale University
Trees

Miniature of the Crucifixion and the Tree of Life, c. 1310 -1320

Arundel MS 83, British Library
Vices and Virtues, c. 1310 -1320, Arundel MS 83, British Library
Peraldus, 2nd or 3rd quarter of the 13th C, Harley MS 3244, British Library
Diagram illustrating a treatise on free will, 1176, Harley MS 3038, British Library

Royal MS 5B XII, British Library
Porphyry’s Tree, 2nd half 12th C or 1st half 13th C.

Royal MS.15 B IV, British Library
Elements Diagram,
1st half of the 12th century
MS. Digby 23 (Pt 1), Bodleian Library, Oxford
Planetary Diagram, Macrobius (395–423)

Right, 820 CE, MS Lat. 6370, BNF

Left, 1st half 12th C MS. Digby 23 (Pt 1), Bodleian Library, Oxford
Boethius (c. 480 – 524), *De Institutione Musica*, c. 11C, Arundel MS. 77, British Library
Utriusque Cosmi maioris salicet et minoris metaphysica..., 1617 – 1619, Robert Fludd

Four Seasons (Autumn), Vivaldi, Martin Wattenberg, 2001
Rota

Annus - Mundus - Homo diagram, Isidore of Saville (c. 560 – 636), c.760-797, St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 225

Isidore of Seville, 1136, *Etymologiae & De natura rerum*, Harley MS 2660, British Library
De natura rerum, Isidore of Seville, c. 760-780

St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 238
Ten Ages of Man, c. 1310 - 1320

Arundel MS. 83, British Library
Wind Diagram,
Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, On Architecture (De Architectura),
1st qtr of 9th C

Harley MS 2767, British Library
Diagram of the personifications of the 12 Aristotelian winds, 1130

Harley MS 3667, British Library
Tidal wheel with 30 day lunar cycle, corresponding tides, earth at center and four circles representing four moons, c. 861

Harley MS 3017, British Library

Isidore of Saville, *Etymologiae*, last qtr.11th C, Royal MS. 6 C I, British Library
Isidore of Saville, *Etymologiae*, last qtr. 11th C, Royal MS. 6 C I, British Library
Microcosm & Macrocosm

Universal Man, Hildegard of Bingen (1098 –1179), Liber Divinorum Operum, c. 1220
Four Winds, The Hinton St Mary Mosaic
Dorset, England, Roman Britain, 4th C, British Museum
Byrhtferth's Diagram,
c. 1102–10

*Thorney Computus*
(Cambridgeshire, England, Saint John’s College, Oxford, MS 17)
Byrhtferth, a monk of the abbey of Ramsey, composed this diagram on the concord of the months and the elements.

These are the solar\(^1\) months that have thirty-one days: January, March, May, July, August, October, December.

And these have thirty:\(^2\) April, June, September, November, February, indeed, differ from them all.

This figure contains the twelve signs and the two solstices and the two equinoxes and the twelve months of the year; and in it are described the four names of the elements.

It also demonstrates which months have a thirty-day-old moon and which twenty-nine.

\(^1\)That is, they are so called because they are considered according to the sun's course.
\(^2\)That is, have [no more] days according to the sun's course.
\(^3\)Or Apollos.
\(^4\)Or Calvus.

Peter S. Baker, Translation
Portable Visualization

Physicians Folding Almanac, 1463
MS. 40, Wellcome Library, London

15th C, Crawford Collection, Royal Observatory, Edinburgh
Urine Flasks, Physician's folding almanac, 1406, Harley MS 5311, British Library
Table of Eclipses, Physician's folding calendar, c. 1400 -1450

Sloane MS 2250, British Library
Blood Letting Man, Physician's folding almanac, 1406, Harley MS 5311, British Library
Thank you for listening!