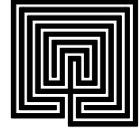


The Beast Within



Jill K. H. Geoffrion & Alain Pierre Louët

Abstract: A consideration of the centres of labyrinths in medieval manuscripts, including the 10th century labyrinth in Orléans BM 16

Introduction

Why are Minotaurs found in the centres of medieval manuscript labyrinths? Studies of labyrinths found in these manuscripts exist,¹ but further consideration of the themes emphasized in the labyrinths drawn from the ninth through the thirteenth centuries is needed. While medieval manuscript labyrinths have three essential parts, the doorway, the path, and the centre, in this article we will focus principally on the symbolism represented in the centres of these labyrinths. More specifically, this article will focus on the Minotaurs depicted in the central areas, and the symbolic presence of evil that they represent. It will also introduce a previously unknown manuscript labyrinth from the tenth century that includes a Minotaur figure at its centre.

Orléans BM 16, a 10th century manuscript from the Benedictine Abbey of Fleury, is found today in the municipal library in the nearby city of Orléans, France. At the very end of the manuscript is a labyrinth whose centre is filled with a triumphant Minotaur eating the arm and leg of its most recent victim. The presence of this malevolent figure was the beginning of our serious study of medieval labyrinth centres. At first glance, the idea of the centre as a place where evil resides seems opposed to the post-Renaissance understanding of the centre of the labyrinth as a place imbued with positivity.² As one considers the labyrinths of the ninth through eleventh centuries, Theseus, symbol of all that is good, is absent. He only begins to make cameo appearances in twelfth century manuscripts.

The modern practice of labyrinth walking often presupposes the idea of the centre as a place of rest, peace, and safety. Even if many who study the History of Religions consider the centre as a place of ambivalence, including Mircéa Eliade³ who has written extensively about this, most current labyrinth walkers consider the symbol of the centre as one of positivity. Yet the medieval manuscript labyrinth centres tell a different story. Let us consider these images.

Labyrinths in Medieval Manuscripts

Forty-two known labyrinths exist in medieval manuscripts.⁴ The five earliest, drawn in the 8th and 9th centuries all have seven circuit (classical) designs.⁵ In the second half of the 9th century, an eleven-circuit quadrant labyrinth prototype⁶ and two eleven-circuit labyrinths with sweeping paths and turns on only one axis, often called Otrifid-types exist.⁷ Then, in the manuscripts from the 10th and 11th centuries, one finds five examples of eleven circuit labyrinths with four quadrants framed within a cross design, and a meandering pathway similar to the one later installed in Chartres Cathedral.⁸

The Centres of Labyrinths in Medieval Manuscripts

The centres of these medieval manuscript labyrinths can be understood by studying the symbols found there.⁹ They either have (1) no explicit symbol,¹⁰ (2) words, phrases, or symbols unrelated to the Greek myth which includes the labyrinth that Minos built to imprison the Minotaur, or (3) words or images related to the Greek myth of the labyrinth, including images of a Minotaur.¹¹

Seven labyrinths have words and symbols that do not seem to be related to the Greek myth involving the labyrinth. Two reference Jericho, while the other five each seem to use imagery or symbolism that is unique to each labyrinth.

While nineteen of the forty-two manuscript labyrinths being considered here have “empty” centres, we cannot assume that medieval viewers who were well acquainted with the myth involving Theseus and the Minotaur, did not perceive a connection with it when they saw the blank space. The remaining fifteen manuscript labyrinths with imagery related to the myth seem to point in this direction. Clearly the medieval monks who created these labyrinths were making use of a symbol that was widely known and recognized.

How the symbols of the myth were presented in these labyrinths is of interest. Since the majority of the central images relating the myth of the labyrinth involve the Minotaur, our focus will rest there. The Minotaur reigns in the centre of the medieval manuscript labyrinths. This Minotaur, sometimes depicted as a demon or possibly the Devil, sits on a throne. His presence suggests that he is all-powerful.¹² Sometimes the Minotaur is shown eating human beings or parts of their bodies.¹³ These are obviously images of the Minotaur as Victor. In other manuscripts the Minotaur is shown as a powerful warrior standing alone, waiting for battle.¹⁴

The centre as a place of negativity is evidenced by the images found there. Although in antiquity the emphasis placed on the centre focused on the triumph of Theseus, in the medieval period more emphasis was put on the Minotaur and his power.¹⁵ There are only two exceptions, both from the twelfth century, where the central image involves Theseus fighting the Minotaur (with the implication that he will be victorious).¹⁶

The Minotaur of the medieval manuscripts is depicted in several different ways. In Antiquity he was shown with the body of a human being and the head of a bull. In some of the medieval manuscripts, he still appears this way, but at other times he is shown with the lower body of a bull and the torso and head of a man. This depiction is similar to those of the centaurs of the medieval bestiaries and zodiacs¹⁷ as well as those found on religious buildings illustrating the zodiac sign of Sagittarius,¹⁸ the mixing of a horse (rather than a bull) and a human being.¹⁹

The historian, André Peyronie, sees the inversion as the direct result of the oft-copied description of the Minotaur written by Isidore of Seville in 636 CE as having “a head or a body of bull.”²⁰ Another way to understand the inversion takes into account the well-known symbolic aspect of the head as representing the totality or highest nature of a being. The animal body, on the other hand suggests a lower “animal nature.”²¹

Introduction to the labyrinth in manuscript Orléans BM 16

Circular illustrations are found in many medieval manuscripts.²² Several appear in *Libri Veteris Testamenti*, a 252 page 10th century Latin parchment manuscript that is thought to have originally belonged to the Fleury Abbey.²³ This manuscript, now classified as Orléans BM 16, is reported to have a “sketch for an astrological drawing which is formed from twelve concentric circles with a drawing of a centaur in the central circle.”²⁴ This drawing that indeed has a centaur in the middle, is in fact a twelve-circle/eleven circuit labyrinth with the same path design²⁵ that was later installed on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in the early thirteenth century.²⁶

Orléans Ms. 16 contains a number of books from the Hebrew Bible: Proverbs, Songs of Songs, Job, 1 & 2 Maccabees, and Tobias. It includes nine large coloured, decorated letters with knot motifs.²⁷ Part of page 250 and all of page 251 include a variety of words, alphabets, and musical notations that were added in the eleventh to twelfth century.²⁸ Lessons read during the feast of the Birth of Mary²⁹ and the Feast of St. Benedict can also be found.³⁰ The labyrinth, found on the final page,³¹ is considered part of the original manuscript (unlike the doodles and additions found on pages 250-251) and is thus dated to the 10th century.³²



Figure 1: the Labyrinth and Minotaur depicted in Orléans Ms. 16

The use of a compass and ruler for the construction of the eleven-circuit³³ labyrinth is obvious as one examines the hole at the centre of the design, the regularity of the arcs of the twelve circles, and the faint brown lines that crisscross the page forming a grid that was obviously used to position the labyrinth and its elements.³⁴ The labyrinth entrance, which is now missing, would have been found on the bottom of the page.

On the top left hand side of the page are a series of letters which follow the vertical grid (at a 90 degree angle to the labyrinth): La', b, c, u, l. Several words, now mostly unreadable, can be found on the top right hand of the page, written in the same brown ink that was used on the rest of the page. Most are hard to identify, but the letters forming *Dedal' hanl(d?)(?)ato* seem discernible. Since the bottom of the page no longer exists, it is impossible to know if any text existed there.



Figure 2: text at top right of page

A centaur appears in the centre of the labyrinth. It has the lower body of a four-legged horse-like animal and the upper body and head of a human. A decorative “belt” circles the animal body where it joins the human torso. Many examples of this type of decoration can be found on the bodies of depictions of Sagittarius in various medieval manuscripts. Two roundish forms, most likely representing breasts, are visible on the upper torso.³⁵ A tail appears to rise off the centaur's back haunch;³⁶ part of it no longer exists, so it is hard to make out the exact nature of the appendage.³⁷



Figure 3: the central centaur

The four hooves of the centaur seem placed to communicate a sense of presence and power. The back right and front left hooves touch the circle's edge on opposite sides, about one fifth of the way up from the bottom. The front right split hoof is placed in the centre of the path that leads to and from the centre directly, as if to block it.³⁸ Under the centaur's right hoof is the disembodied and bearded head of a man whose face points in the direction of the centaur's body.³⁹

A large eye-like figure covers about most of the centaur's belly and is centred with the incoming pathway. It is placed where an umbilicus could be expected. Its pointed ends and dark centre seem to suggest a symbolism not of creation and birth, but of the power of sight. That it is directly lined up with the head above seems to underline this possibility.

Fig. 4: the centaur's belly



Fig. 5: the centaur's meal

An all-powerful malevolent creature reigns in the centre of this manuscript labyrinth. He clearly has the ability to destroy and dismember, all the while coolly maintaining a direct gaze at onlookers. The centaur, filling most of the central space, faces the reader, as if looking directly at him or her. Both the creature's arms are raised almost to shoulder level, and are bent at a ninety-degree angle at the elbow, with both hands exposed. There are bracelet-like circles around each wrist.⁴⁰ The centaur's head extends almost to the circle's edge while his front right split hoof rests where the circular arc on the bottom passes the empty path space used for entering the centre. He appears to be holding and possibly eating a human arm and hand in his right hand; it too nearly touches the edge of the centre circle. In his left hand, the centaur holds the right leg and foot of a human being. The foot extends beyond the centre circle, reaching well into the pathway.

Conclusion

Although nothing definitive has been written to date about the monastic theology that influenced these manuscript labyrinths, it may be helpful to remember that the manuscripts were copied and illustrated by medieval monks who had chosen to separate themselves from "the world" to pray. This world, as seen from inside the walls of the medieval monastery, was a place that was considered dangerous to the body and the soul, a place where evil reigned.⁴¹ To imagine the devil in the middle of this world of temptation and sin, or, in the case of labyrinth drawings, to imagine a Minotaur reigning in the centre, would have been congruent with the monastic understanding of life held in the ninth to the thirteenth centuries.⁴² Resisting all that was evil and overcoming all that was tainted by the forces of darkness was seen as necessary in order to reach paradise. There was a battle that needed to be fought; it simply could not be evaded.

The labyrinth symbol, like all universal symbols, is at its core neither positive nor negative.⁴³ The different meanings that become attached to symbols vary according to the world-views and needs of those who use them. The same symbol can be interpreted in a positive way during one period of history or culture and negatively during another. Symbols can also hold multiple and even paradoxical meanings simultaneously. This is certainly true of the symbolism of the labyrinth centre.⁴⁴

While modern labyrinth authors and walkers usually describe the centre as a place of peace or union, those who created manuscript labyrinths in the medieval period generally portrayed the centre as a place of danger and evil. While these interpretations of the nature of the centre appear to be contradictory, they may in fact be two different aspects of a greater understanding of a sacred space that holds an active tension of negativity and positivity.⁴⁵ The empty space of modern labyrinths may hold a symbolic fullness that incorporates not only the peace that followed the victory of Theseus, but the destruction and battle that took place there as well.

Jill K. H. Geoffrion & Alain Pierre Louët, Chartres, France; November 2014

Table 1: Medieval Manuscripts with Labyrinths

Eighth century: (1*) BNF Lat. 12048, fol. 80.

Ninth century: (2) Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, cod. Aug. CCXXIX, fol. 61v; (3) St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek cod. 878, p. 277; (4) Rome Vatican Reg. Lat. 438, fol. 35v; (5*) Paris BNF Lat. 4416, folio 35; (6) Vatican Lat. 4929, fol. 78r; (7) Vienna Codex 2687, fol. 1r; (8) Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana C. 74, sup, fol. 278; (9) Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 6394, fol. 164.

Ninth to Eleventh centuries: (10) BNF Lat. 1745, fol. 30v.

Tenth century: (11) St. Gall, Stifstbibliothek, cod. 197, p.122; (12) BNF Lat. 13013, fol. 1r (13) Orléans 16, fol. 252v.

Tenth to Eleventh centuries: (14) Montpellier, Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire, Section Médecine, MS H.360, fol. 136v; (15) St. Gall cod 825, p. 176.

Eleventh Century: (16) Monte Cassino, cod. 132, p. 348 (17*) Cambridge University Library, Kk 3.21; (18) BNF Ms. Arabe 6080, folio79v; (19) BNF Ms. Syriaque 70, fol. 154r; (20) New York Morgan Ms. 925 fol. 12r; (21) BNF Lat. 1745, fol. 40r; (22) BNF NAL 2169, fol. 17r; (23) Avranches, Ms. 240, folio 8v.

Twelfth century: (24*) British Library Cotton MS Tiberius BII, f 248v; (25) Ghent University Library, MS 92, fol. 20r; (26) BNF Latin 12999 folio 11r; (27) New York Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 832, fol. 10v; (28*) BNF Latin 5371, fol. 240v; (29) Amiens BM 147, fol. 1r; (30) Admont Benediktinerstift, Stiftsbibliothek cod. 89, folio 1v; (31) Munich Clm. 14731, fol. 82v; (32) St John's College (Cambridge) Library H.11, folio 124 v; (33) Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 14731, fol. 83r.

Twelve to Thirteenth centuries: (34) Herzog August Bibliothek Cod Guelf. 1 Gud. Lat. Catalog 4305, 19v; (35) Zwettl Monastery, Lower Austria, cod. 255, fol.12v.

Thirteenth century: (36) BNF Français19093, fol. 7v; (37*) Oxford MS Bodley Auct. F. 6.4 (S.C. 2150), fol. 61av; (38*) Oxford MS Bodley Auct. F. 6..4 bv; (39*) BNF Arsenal Ms. 8530, fol.175; (40) Hereford Cathedral, Mappa Mundi; (41) Paris BNF Fr. 20125, fol. 158r; (42) New York, The New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, Hebrew MS1, fol. 1r of part 2.

*These eight labyrinths are not listed in Kern, 2000, English edition.

Table 2: Centres of Medieval Manuscripts

1. Manuscripts with a labyrinth that has no explicit symbol in the centre:

Blank

1. Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, cod. Aug. CCXXIX, fol. 61v. (9th century)
2. Monte Cassino, cod. 132, p. 348⁴⁶ (11th c.)
3. BNF NAL 2169, fol. 17r (11th c.)
4. Paris BNF Fr. 20125, fol. 158 (13th c.)

Coloured in

1. BNF Lat. 12048, fol. 80 (8th c.)
2. Rome Biblioteca Apostolica Vatican Vat. Reg. Lat. 438, fol. 35v (The centre of the centre is coloured in⁴⁷) (9th c.)
3. BNF Arabe 6080, folio 79v (11th c.)

Centre point

1. Vatican Lat. 4929, fol. 78r (9th c.)
2. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana C. 74, sup., fol. 278 (9th c.)
3. BNF Lat. 1745, fol. 30v (9th-11th c.)
4. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod. 197, p.122 (10th c.)
5. Montpellier, Biblio. Interuniversitaire, Section Médecine, MS H.360, fol. 136v (10th-11th c.)
6. St. Gall cod 825, p. 176 (10th-11th c.)
7. Avranches, Ms. 240, folio 8v (11th c.)
8. British Library Cotton MS Tiberius BII, f 248v (12th c.)
9. St John's College (Cambridge) Library H.11, folio 124v (12th c.)
10. BNF Français 19093, fol. 7v (13th c.)
11. BNF Arsenal Ms. 8530, fol.175 (13th c.)
12. Hereford Cathedral, Mappa Mundi (13th c.)

2. Manuscripts with a labyrinth that has words, phrases or symbols unrelated to the Greek myth of the labyrinth in the centre:

Words and phrases

1. *Phas*: Vienna Codex 2687, fol. 1r.⁴⁸ (9th c.)
2. *EST*: Cambridge University Library, Kk 3.21. Part of *Assumpta est Maria ad Caelestia, Alleluia!* (11th c.)
3. *Jericho*: Amiens BM147, fol. 1r (12th c.)
4. The barely legible words *Nomina eorum (?) sunt in (?) labore*⁴⁹: Zwettl Monastery, Lower Austria, cod. 255, fol.12v (12th-13th c.)
5. "This is the city of Jericho itself": New York, The New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, Hebrew MS1, fol. 1r of Part 2 (13th c.)

Symbols

1. Dark square with 4 empty circles: BNF Ms. Syriacque 70, fol. 154 (11th c.)
2. An image of three heads⁵⁰: New York Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 832, fol. 10v (12th c.)
3. Four-lobed flower: Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 14731, fol. 83r (12th c.)

3. Manuscripts with a labyrinth containing words or images related to the Greek myth of the labyrinth, including images of a Minotaur in the center:

Words relating to Greek myth: domus Dedali (the house of Dedalus)

1. St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek cod. 878, p. 277: *Domus*⁵¹ (9th c.)
 2. Oxford MS Bodley Auct. F. 6..4 (S.C. 2150), folio 61av (13th c.)
 2. Oxford MS Bodley Auct. F. 6. 4 (S.C. 2150), folio 61bv⁵² (13th c.)
- See 3.2 below: BNF Latin 12999 folio 11r (12th c.). *Minotaurus. Domus Dedali* (Minotaur. House of Dedalus)

See also 3.1b below: BNF Latin 5371, fol. 240v (12th c.): *Talia deus monstra/Patria depellat ab ista* (May the Lord remove such monsters from the homeland) see Wright, p. 126

Minotaur Alone

1. Minotaur (horned head of bull, body of human)
 - a. Seated with human on lap: BNF Lat. 13013, fol. 1r (10th c.)
 - b. Seated, playing a psaltery and a drum (cacophony)⁵³: BNF Latin (12th c.), fol. 240v. There is an inscription around him.⁵⁴ (12th c.)
 - c. See C1 below: Admont Benediktinerstift, Stiftsbibliothek cod. 89, folio 1v (12th c.)
2. Centaur or Minotaur (Head of human, body of horse or bull)
 - a. Eating a person BNF Lat. 4416, folio 35 (9th c.)
 - b. Eating a human head, another head below: BNF Latin 12999, folio 11r⁵⁵ (12th c.)
 - c. Eating an arm and leg: Orléans BM 16, fol. 252v (10th c.)
 - d. With sword and shield: New York Morgan Ms. 925 fol. 12r (11th c.)
3. Horned head of a bull, torso of a human, body of a bull:
 - a. Holding a sword in his right hand, pointing outward with his left pointer finger: Ghent, University Library, MS 92, fol. 20r (12th c.)
 - b. Appears to be a copy of Ghent image above: Herzog August Bibliothek Cod Guelf. 1 Gud. Lat. Catalog 4305, 19v (12th-13th c.)
4. Unclear combination of bull and human
Bull's body and a human or devil-like upper body⁵⁶ Munich, Bayerische Staatbibliothek, Clm 6394, fol. 164⁵⁷ (9th c.)

Battle Scene: Theseus and Minotaur

1. Theseus with club holding on to the Minotaur who has a bull's head and a human body: Admont Benediktinerstift, Stiftsbibliothek cod. 89, folio 1v (12th c.)
2. Theseus with sword and shield fighting a Minotaur with an animal head and upright (human-like) body of a bull: Munich Clm. 14731, fol. 82v (12th c.)

4. Manuscript with Unknown Centre

BNF Lat. 1745, fol. 40r (probably a simple compass point) (11th c.)

Note: the authors would like to offer thanks to Monsieur Olivier Morand, the conservateur of the manuscript library in Orléans, for his warm welcome and help in making the consultation of BM Orléans 16 possible.

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Notes:

- 1 For the most complete discussion, see Hermann Kern, *Through the Labyrinth: Designs and Meaning Over 5,000 Years*, pages 104-141. See also: Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity Through the Middle Ages*, 133-144, Jeff Saward, *Labyrinths and Mazes*, 86-91, and Craig Wright, *The Maze and the Warrior: Symbols in Architecture, Theology, and Music*, 20-27.
- 2 Consider for example the book entitled, *Le labyrinthe du monde et le paradis du coeur (The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart)* by Jan Amos Komenski (Comenius) (ed. et trad. par Christian Fleischl. Ottawa, eBooksLib, 2005), first published 1631.
- 3 See Mircea Eliade, *Images et symboles*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1952. Chapter 1, "Symbolisme du centre," pages 33-72 are of particular interest.
- 4 See Table 1 at the end of this article for the full list.
- 5 BNF Lat. 12048 (c. 790), Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, cod. Aug. CCXXIX (806-822), St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek cod. 878 (825-849), Vatican Reg. Latin 438 (c. 850), and BNF Latin 4416 (unspecified date in the 9th century)
- 6 See Vatican Latin 4929, fol. 78r (860-862).
- 7 See: Vienna Codex 2687, fol. 1r (871) for an eleven-circuit labyrinth (called Otfrid-type) that has sweeping paths like those in the earlier seven-circuit classical labyrinths. For a second Otfrid-type eleven circuit labyrinth from the 9th century see: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana C. 74, sup., fol. 278. These are named after Otfrid of Weisenburg, a priest who worked on the Milan manuscript. See Kern, p. 110.
- 8 This pattern has been called the Chartres-style labyrinth even though its placement in the cathedral follows the earliest manuscript example by at least two centuries. BNF Latin 13013, fol. 1r (10th century), Monte Cassino, cod. 132, p. 348 (1023), BNF NAL 2169, folio 17r (1072), Avranches, Ms. 240, folio 8v (11th century) and BNF Lat. 1745, fol. 30v (9th to 11th century)
- 9 See Table 2 for a listing of the labyrinth centres using the categories described in the following sentence.
- 10 We will include those manuscripts that have a single point in the centre (often made by the point of a compass placed there, and those centres that have been completely filled with colour.
- 11 Although its centre is "empty," one manuscript labyrinth from this period (1023) includes an image of Theseus with his sword standing outside the door of the labyrinth. See: Monte Cassino, cod. 132, p. 348.
- 12 See: BNF Latin 13013, fol. 1r (10th century; when we viewed this labyrinth we identified a child laying across his lap), BNF Latin 5371, fol. 240v (12th century), and BNF Latin 5371, fol. 240v (12th century; he is playing two incompatible musical instruments). Wright, a musicologist at Yale, suggests he is "creating a cacophony of hell" see p. 126.

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- 13 See: BNF Lat. 4416, folio 35 (9th century; eating a person with the head closest to his mouth), Orléans BM 16, fol. 252v (10th century; eating a dismembered arm and leg), and BNF Latin 12999 folio 11r (11th century; eating a human head).
 - 14 See: Ghent, University Library, Ms. 92, fol. 20r (1060-1123, standing with a sword in his right hand and pointing with his left) and Herzog August Bibliothek Cod Guelf. 1 Gud. Lat. Catalog 4305, 19v (12th-13th century; this appears to be a copy of the Ghent 92 manuscript image). See also: New York Morgan Ms. 925 fol. 12r (11th century; the Minotaur seems to march forward with his sword drawn in his right hand. He holds his shield in his left hand next to his side.)
 - 15 Craig Wright notes that in BNF Lat. 13013, fol. 1r on the same page as the labyrinth with its reigning Minotaur, one finds a “text... from the ninth-century *Liber glossarum*” that recounts the story of the Cretan labyrinth: the maze was fabricated by Daedalus and is so complex that, once ensnared, it is “impossible to progress from the darkness back to the light.” Wright, p. 25 and note 40 on p. 305.
 - 16 See: Munich Clm. 14731, fol. 82v (late 12th century; Theseus is shown with a large sword raised in his right hand and a large shield with a long point-extension that is between him and the Minotaur. The Minotaur stands up on his back legs and has no weapon. He looks fierce, but the image suggests he will soon be defeated. The inscription on the outer circular edge of the labyrinth reads, “Theseus fights with the Minotaur in the labyrinth.” See also Admont Benediktinerstift, Stiftsbibliothek cod. 89, fol. 1v (12th century; Theseus has the Minotaur by the neck and appears to be ready to administer a blow with a large club).
 - 17 An example of Sagittarius looking like the centaurs of the labyrinths can be found in the Glasgow University Library, Ms. Hunter 229, fol. 6r (from the Hunterian Psalter, c. 1170).
 - 18 At least five such centaurs (sometimes in the form of Sagittarius) can be found among the sculptures and stained glass at Chartres Cathedral: one on a pillar in the west narthex, two on the west porch (north portal), one on the north porch, and a final one in the Zodiac window of the choir ambulatory.
 - 19 A centaur is a beast with the lower body of a horse and the upper body of a person. A centaur like those found in the manuscript labyrinths can be found in BNF, lat. 14429, Fol. 116v (1250-60). One also finds in these bestiaries other creatures mentioned by Isidore of Seville, such as onocentaurs (half donkey, half man - Etymologies, XI. iii 39).
 - 20 Etymologies Book 11, as quoted André Peyronie, p. 122.
 - 21 When the Minotaur is represented with the lower body of an animal with a human head, it can be understood as a reminder that all people have the capacity to rise to their best selves or to descend to their lowest selves.
 - 22 These include maps of the world and the heavens.
 - 23 The current Abbey of Saint Benoit-sur-Loire in central France. By the middle of the 9th century it had one of the most complete libraries in Europe.
 - 24 Pellegrin and Bouhot, p. 17.
 - 25 Various features of the two labyrinths differ ever so slightly. The diameters of their centres have slightly different ratios to their overall diameter (1:3.5 for *Ms. 16* and 1:4 for the Chartres labyrinth), and the placement of the path entering the centre in *Ms. 16* is a bit more to the right of the overall pattern than the one found at Chartres.
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- 26 The most convincing dating for the Chartres labyrinth is from the early 13th century: opinions vary between c. 1201-1205 (John James, 1990) to c. 1215-1220 (Jeff Saward, see: <http://www.labyrinthos.net/chartresfaq.html>).
- 27 Two of these, the C on page 51 and the Y on page 53, have complex knot patterns. In the middle of the C is an additional four-branch “Solomon’s knot.” It is not entirely impossible that the labyrinth with its centaur in the middle echoes these knots. They, like the labyrinth, have “convoluted” pathways that are impossible to get out of. A Solomon’s knot is found directly to the right (touching) the Jericho labyrinth in Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, cod. Aug. CCXXIX, fol. 61v.
- 28 Pellegrin & Bouhot, p. 17.
- 29 Ibid., p. 250.
- 30 Ibid., p. 251.
- 31 It is interesting to note that at least a quarter of the known medieval labyrinths can be found at the beginning or end of the manuscript, as is the case of Orléans Ms. 16. See Doob, 139: “...the labyrinth appears at the work’s end, as if it were a fitting emblem of the labyrinthine artistry and intellectual complexity of the composition...”
- 32 Pellegrin & Bouhot, p. 17.
- 33 During the medieval period eleven was considered a number that among other things symbolized evil. This connotation stemmed from its being one less than twelve (a holy number, e.g. the twelve Disciples of Christ), and one more than ten, a number symbolizing completion (e.g. the Ten Commandments). Depending on the emphasis given to the symbol of a labyrinth, it can be understood as having eleven circuits (dangerous terrain), twelve circles (holy ground), or both. Wright (p. 23) explains, “...from the time of Augustine and throughout the Middle Ages the number eleven signified sin, dissonance, transition, and incompleteness.” See: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFgundgHgak for commentary on the number eleven by Jean-Pierre Brach.
- 34 The horizontal lines begin 3.3 cm (1.3 inches) from the top of the page and continue all the way to the bottom. On the part of the page that remains, twenty-six are visible. There are ten vertical lines on the page. The space between them measures anywhere from 0.7 to 1.2 cm (quarter to less than half an inch).
- 35 This may represent the abnormality of the creature, or the medieval fear of women as being somehow linked with evil. There is a similar depiction of a centaur in the 9th century labyrinth depicted in BNF Lat. 4416, folio 35. See: Jean Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident*, chapter 10: Les agents de Satan 3: La femme. (Paris: Fayard, 1978) 398-449.
- 36 This part of the designs seems to have been reworked. The “tail” area, which is a lighter brown than the rest of the design, has four or possibly five extensions. In its current manifestation, it resembles a flame. It also resembles an animal with two horns.
- 37 It is clear that the centre figure has been erased and changed. The changing of images in manuscript labyrinths has occurred elsewhere as well. For example, see: BNF Lat. 1745, fol. 40r and comment by Kern, 111. See also: BNF Latin 5371, fol. 240v, the erasures were very evident when we viewed this labyrinth.
- 38 This hoof rests directly on the horizontal line of the grid.
- 39 A decapitated head can also be found in BNF Latin 12999 folio 11r. It is dated from the 11th century.
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- 40 Possibly representing shackles?
- 41 Recall the negative symbolism of the eleven circuit labyrinths discussed in note 33.
- 42 When in the 12th and 13th centuries labyrinths began to move off the page and onto the floors of cathedrals, not cloistered away from the rest of society, but in its midst, the meaning of the labyrinth and its centre may have shifted to become more congruent with the more optimistic view of humanity and life that were expressed in the cathedral schools of the late Middle Ages. This difference of approach to life can be understood as one considers the theological tensions expressed by St. Bernard (1090-1153), founding Abbot of the Clairvaux Abbey in Burgundy and many other Cistercian monasteries, and Suger (1081-1151), Abbot and builder of the St. Denis Cathedral outside Paris.
- 43 See Gilbert Durand. *L'imagination symbolique*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964.
- 44 See Mircea Eliade. Of particular interest is chapter 1: "Symbolisme du centre," p. 33-72. See also Paolo Santarcangeli, chapter 8, "Méditation, danse, et ténèbres."
- 45 In a similar vein one may consider the fathers of the church who described the spiritual journey as necessarily including the purgative, illuminative and unitive stages. Later, Dante, in *The Divine Comedy* structured his journey in three parts, Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, each of which was needed for ultimate spiritual realization.
- 46 Note that to the left of the labyrinth entrance is a Theseus-figure with a sword.
- 47 There may be a figure in the centre, the only image available in Kern, p. 111, does not allow the viewer to be able to discern the exact nature of the center.
- 48 Kern, p. 110, "Batschelet-Massini interprets them as "fas." or divine right."
- 49 See Kern, p. 112: "Haubrichs suggests that this phrase refers to a list of names of friends of the author who were in difficulties of one kind or another."
- 50 When consulting the manuscript in person, it was impossible to understand Kern's assertion that there was a snail or small flower.
- 51 Kern, p. 117 says: "Domus dedali...hac minotaurum" but this appears to be an error. To view an image of the labyrinth, see: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/csg/0878/277/small>
- 52 See Doob, p. 341: the centre bears the inscription *dominus dedali* followed by the lyrics of a hymn about Christ and the man born blind. "...Christ however forsees what the blind man did not see at once. The man born blind will never see unless he is first baptized in the waters of the sacrament." She includes the Latin text as well.
- 53 Wright, p. 126.
- 54 "Around him runs an inscription: 'May the Lord remove such monsters from the homeland' (*Talia deus monstra/Patria depellat ab ista*).'" Wright, p. 126.
- 55 The centre also includes the words: *Minotaurus. Domus Dedali* (Minotaur, The house of Dedalus).
- 56 Kern, p. 137.
- 57 See Kern, p. 136-137: "...surrounded by the Latin distich: 'Ecce minotauros vorat omnes, quos Laborinthus. Implicat: Infernum hic notat, hic zabulum' (See, here the minotaur devours everyone enveloped in the labyrinth. This represents Hell and that is the devil.)"
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Contents

Cover : “Caerdroia” labyrinth design, graphic by Jeff Saward, inspired by Petrella Tifermina

1 **Frontis** : Limnerlease Labyrinth. Photo: Jeff Saward, January 2014

3 **Editorial** : Jeff Saward reviews this edition, marking 35 years of publication

4 **City of Troy** : a note reprinted from Peter Roberts’ *Cambrian Popular Antiquities*, first published two hundred year ago

5 **A Transylvanian Wunderkreis** : Richard Myers Shelton documents a previously unrecorded turf labyrinth with a curious origin in Romania

10 **The Beast Within** : Jill K. H. Geoffrion & Alain Pierre Louët describe a previously unrecorded manuscript labyrinth, and consider the Minotaur at its centre

23 **Stone Labyrinths of Finnmark & Arctic Russia** : Vyacheslav Mizin proposes a common origin and chronology for two groups of labyrinths in the far north, and suggest a purpose for their locations and construction

40 **Heavenly Jerusalem and the Labyrinth** : Claus Bernet compares depictions of Jerusalem associated with labyrinths

44 **Wayland’s New Labyrinths** : Richard Myers Shelton examines the structure of a group of labyrinths that first appeared in 14th century Iceland and remain popular today

56 **Notes & Queries** : a newly discovered stone labyrinth in India; the labyrinth graffito at Petrella Tifermina, Italy; a maze (at last) for the Shining hotel; mysterious circles at Chartres; The Labyrinth Society

60 **Caerdroia** : submission details, subscriptions, etc.

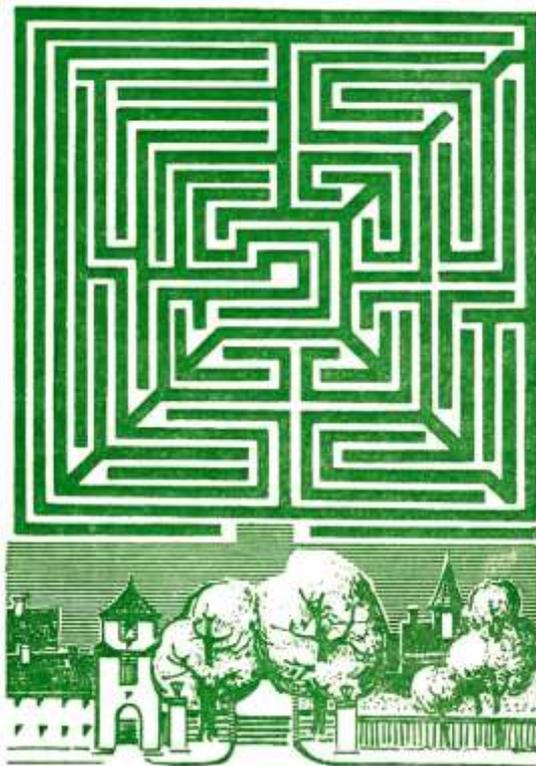
61 **Labyrinthos** : who we are and what we do, etc.

Back cover : the “Irrgarten” hedge maze, Altjeßnitz, Germany. Design from a communist-era linocut postcard (c.1985) in the Labyrinthos Collection

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