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CHAPTER

15 A History of Social Communication in East-Central Europe: Words, Scripts, and Beyond

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Abstract

This chapter discusses the various forms of social communication and symbolism that framed the meanings of the spoken word, letters, and images in medieval East Central Europe. Focusing on elements of non-verbal communication, it examines the diverse communication capacities of particular regional groups, as well as the varying expectations in the region's socio-cultural interactions. It is important not to put writing in radical opposition to oral and non-verbal communication; visual communication, for instance, combines crucial elements of these non-written forms by turning the sounds of the spoken word into a negotiated system of graphical signs. The ongoing investigation of the development of literacy in East Central Europe allows the conclusion that, despite some chronological delays, the implementation of writing in the region had a dynamic similar to that in many other parts of Europe. From the thirteenth century onwards, one can see both an apparent democratization and individualization in making, using, and keeping records in the ever-widening spectrum of pragmatic literacy, especially in urban environments.

Keywords: [social communication](#), [symbolism](#), [East Central Europe](#), [non-verbal communication](#), [writing](#), [visual communication](#), [literacy](#)

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THE history of social communication is a quickly expanding metadiscipline in contemporary medieval studies. Inspired by the “revolution of electronic media” in the second half of the twentieth century, it considers the exchange of information between individuals and societies through space and time, with “information” being understood in the broadest sense of the term. It concerns both statements (concerning knowledge, ideas, or beliefs) and instructions (purposes, values, and norms).¹ Scholarly attention has long been focused on the written and oral modes of communication. At present, the social history of communication considers all possible written, oral, and nonverbal forms of communication, as it has become ever clearer that the gradual dissemination of the written word in all domains of human activity did

not at all mean the elimination of other tools of communication.² This wide-ranging field of study draws on the achievements of many disciplines and trespasses their traditional boundaries.³

The starting-point for investigation is the study of “acts of communication,” which includes identifying the “sender” and the “receiver” of a message as well as analyzing the message’s contents and transmission.⁴ The success of any act of communication and the efficiency of its whole system depends on the ability of all the parties involved to use the tools that serve to encode and decode the message. The appraisal of this ability is important. This is a relatively new part of the investigation, as discussions of the possibility of failed communication have only started recently.⁵ Scholarly discussion of the preconditions for participation in written culture has led to renewed investigation of the concept of literacy. The traditional view of medieval society as consisting of a very small group of literate clergymen among vast numbers of illiterates is giving way to a much more nuanced approach. Today, scholars assume that even literates were

p. 340 ↳ able to navigate in only some registers of literacy, while the lack of practical skills did not exclude individuals from participating in written culture in many *intermediary* ways. When studying the efficacy of script as an instrument of communication, we are dealing with people who, irrespective of the presence or absence of their technical literacy skills, could participate in written culture in various registers of literacy and on different levels.⁶

The idea of “literacy”—in the sense not only of an ability to encode and decode written messages, but also in the sense of understanding how a tool of communication works and what purposes it can serve⁷—is also being introduced into the discussion of the other instruments of communication. For instance, the opinion, spreading in contemporary scholarship, that medieval images possessed their own “language” and “grammar” and were “read” resulted in the concept of “visual literacy.”⁸ Defined most often as the ability to decipher and interpret nonalphabetic signs and depictions, visual literacy leads beyond the usual analysis of the content of visual messages and the intentions of their senders. Instead, one starts to ask questions about how much of the information encoded in these messages *really* reached the recipients and how well prepared they were to decode them. Serious consideration of this question demands abandoning the old conviction that *pictura est laicorum scriptura* (“Pictures are writing for lay [illiterate] people”) and considering that “reading” signs, depictions, and objects required some preparation, and that—similarly to the handling of written texts—the “readers’” competence might vary considerably.⁹ Likewise, one may assume various levels of competence in decoding messages carried in other than visual channels: through sound, gestures, smells, or taste. Thus, the question of whether a message, encoded in one way or another, arrived conforming to the intentions of the sender has to become an inescapable component of an investigation. It would be accompanied by an equally important question concerning the cultural determination of sensual, especially visual, perception. Did medieval people perceive signs, colors, and depictions in the same way as we do? The preliminary results of ongoing discussions suggest that the conceptualization of visual messages can differ from one culture to another.¹⁰ For historians of social communication this conclusion is a clear warning against incautious overinterpretation of their sources.

The *Instrumentarium* of Social Communication in East Central Europe

Until now, the questionnaire of the history of social communication has been applied only partially to medieval East-Central Europe (understood as the kingdoms of Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland in their historical boundaries). Scholars have concentrated on the gradual passage from orality to literacy and on the development of written culture.¹¹ The aim of this article is to indicate some possibilities of placing script—

p. 341 ↳ the instrument of communication usually treated as “modern” and “rational”—into a broader context of practices involving all audible, visual, olfactory, sapid, and tactile forms, engaging all human senses. This chapter, however, makes no pretense of providing anything more than a step toward the future comprehensive study of modes of social communication in the region.

The application of the extended research questionnaire needs to be balanced by an awareness of the methodological and conceptual difficulties, starting with the fact that many forms of oral, nonverbal, and visual communication can be investigated only through the intermediary of written texts. Such texts often remain not only subject to scholarly discussion concerning their authorship, dating, and trustworthiness, but they may also offer a *discourse* about the phenomena rather than an accurate *description* because of their use of narrative strategies and commonplaces. When applying a regional perspective, one also notes the unequal preservation of both written and nonwritten material sources in the three East Central European kingdoms. Moreover, capitalizing on the achievements of the disciplines dealing with the various types of these sources also needs to take into account their uneven development in the countries that presently make up what was once medieval East-Central Europe. The considerable progress of research elsewhere in Europe concerning practices and strategies of communication offers opportunities for instructive comparison.¹²

This is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Most of the techniques and modes of communication were not “invented” in medieval times. The Christianization of the Western Slavs and Hungarians at the end of the first millennium, reinforced in the thirteenth century, resulted in the introduction of writing,¹³ first for religious and later for secular purposes. For several centuries this created a structural *diglossia* between Latin, the language of written communication, and local spoken vernaculars.¹⁴ At the same time, the Christian religion gave a new dimension to all the forms and instruments of communication used in pre-Christian times: a spoken word, a gesture, a pictorial sign, or a flavor might work as a renewed message in new religious (and secular) contexts.

Word and Sound

p. 342 The lasting importance of orality in East-Central Europe can be seen clearly in the communication strategies of the Roman Church and the State, paradoxically also the main agents of literacy in the region. In the Christian liturgy, the written word of the Gospel became an element in a multimedia spectacle engaging all the human senses, while the living word of the preacher remained the basic tool of pastoral care for the whole medieval period. Special value was also attached to the word of the ruler, who acted as the anointed “vicar of Christ” on earth and the source of law. The practice of government known as the perambulation of the country (*rex ambulans*) presupposed that the monarch could not only be seen in public by everyone but could also be heard when proclaiming his will during assemblies and court sessions.¹⁵ The extension of the ruler’s solemn word to his representatives and messengers (*praecones*, *camerarii*, *officiales*, *ministeriales*), attested for all three kingdoms,¹⁶ clearly reflects its public character. One expected the ruler to control his tongue and condemned immoderate speech by him.¹⁷ Attention is paid less often to the importance of the private dimension of the monarch’s word. Although his accessibility to all subjects was highly praised, the possibility of direct conversation with the ruler was treated as a (fragile) social privilege that could be lost.¹⁸

The spoken word played a crucial role in customary law, where the tension between orality and the new technology of writing is most visible. Even in the context of a legal system so closely connected with literacy as the so-called *ius Theutonicum*, the spoken word put into the form of a public declaration, agreement, testimony, or oath, took on religious and moral dimensions. Legal commitments presupposed the credibility of the parties involved (“a man a man, a word a word”), but God himself or his saints remained the guarantee of truthfulness in testimony and oath.¹⁹ Legal orality was strongly marked by putting speech into a framework of formulaic (often petrified) expressions and by reinforcing words spoken aloud with gestures and the use of meaningful objects. The transfer of land ownership might include, besides an oral declaration, for instance, the drinking of water or wine or passing a clod of earth from hand to hand.²⁰ Taking an oath usually included touching something with one’s hand—a crucifix or reliquary containing the relics of saints.²¹ All these elements together created a sort of *theatrum*, working as a memory prop not only

for the parties involved, but also for direct and indirect witnesses.²² The function of the spoken word as an instrument of artistic expression is also generally recognized, even if only small traces remain of what must have been an extensive body of oral poetry, songs, and stories. Quite rich evidence testifies to the continuity of indigenous oral Slavic and Hungarian literary culture as well as to the transmission of literary works by public recitation from the twelfth century onward.²³

The variety of orality, however, embraced much more than literary expression and solemn speech supported by the authority of religion or the power of law. In the everyday transmission of information the spoken word played the primordial role, often in the form of rumor and gossip disseminated by unofficial channels (networks of merchants, pilgrims, students, and so-called *Lose Leute* ("loose people," vagabonds and wandering clergymen). Rumor and gossip might concern the verifiable danger of approaching enemies or reflect a general feeling of being under threat from "strangers," be they Jews, lepers, or Germans.²⁴ In individual communities, rumor and gossip could easily turn into mocking, insult, and slander, sometimes damaging reputations (by calling someone a witch, for instance). In the fifteenth century, rich evidence of this phenomenon can be found in the documentation produced by ecclesiastical and municipal tribunals, as well as by the courts for the nobility. Besides offering valuable material for social history, they also provide insight into the sociolinguistic mechanisms of creating insults²⁵ as well as their moral and religious context as "sins of the tongue."²⁶ In the earlier Middle Ages, mocking and insult appear especially as part of political and military ritual, before battles, for instance; they were meant to weaken the morale of the enemy.²⁷ Offensive speech could become part of rituals, which might also include opprobrious gestures and behavior.

Communication through the spoken word was part of a much larger spectrum of communicating by sound ("soundscape"; *paysage sonore*²⁸). Many types of sounds produced by the human voice—articulated and unarticulated exclamations, singing, loud crying, and lamenting—clearly had an emotional character and often reinforced collective experiences, for instance, when mourning the death of the monarch.²⁹ A considerable part of the soundscape was shaped by various "instruments," not only musical ones.³⁰ Scholars agree that church bells had important communicative functions, especially in the countryside. Their sound provided an elementary measurement of time; indicated the presence of the *sacrum*, calamities, and joyful moments alike; notified of important Church rituals; and had protective functions, such as averting lightning strikes during storms.³¹ In the constricted space of late medieval towns, saturated with the sound of bells during public festivities, for instance, church bells might also cause auditory overload, difficult to endure on such occasions even for the main actors.³²

Another understudied element of the sonic landscape were sounds perceived as frightening. Sounds often announced transgression of the natural world and the appearance of evil. In contrast, the absence of sound, "dead" silence, could be perceived as reinforcing general horror, caused by war, for instance, and signal a threat.³³ Apart from the positive associations of monastic silence, the lack of *any* sound usually seems to have spelled misfortune, for instance, as a clear sign of bereavement.³⁴

Gesture

The evidence of the textual and iconographic sources of East-Central European origin shows that the spoken word was often accompanied by gestures, which could even substitute effectively for speech.³⁵

Gesture is a natural mark of human expression; the essence of gesture makes it a bridge between auditory and visual communication. The study of gestures in political, religious, and legal contexts allows some general observations on the nature of this instrument of communication. What is striking is, in the first place, their fluency and multiplicity of meanings. The engagement of the whole human body, for instance in shaking hands, removing headgear, nodding, kneeling, or bowing down before a lord (*proskynesis*) was widely used in religious rituals and devotional practices and also in the rituals developed by feudal society. The religious and secular (political) significances of these gestures reinforced each other. Fluency in attributing meanings to gestures can also be detected in popular culture. In the magical practices of peasants, gestures perceived as Christian were applied to activities judged by the theologians as “pagan” and “superstitious.”³⁶

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The value of gestures as an instrument of communication was determined by their conventional character, petrified by intense social control, and by the fact that they often expressed staged emotions. This certainly facilitated “reading” them,³⁷ but modern scholars tend to be ambivalent, keen to find psychological truths beyond conventional behavior. Undoubtedly, the corpus of meaningful gestures that can be established by analyzing sources was strongly determined socially. Coarse gestures and behavior were attributed to simple people, not only in daily life, but also in their devotional practices. The efficacy of gestures as a tool of communication may have been limited by their geographical variability; gestures of “strangers” might be difficult to understand or be completely misunderstood.³⁸ Such gestures would be noticed at least as something that differed from the local norm.³⁹

Touch, Taste, and Smell

Gestures that were part of religious, legal, or political rituals were often accompanied by touch, sometimes with meaningful objects or substances. They were widely used in both the religious and secular spheres; for instance, anointing with blessed oil was part of the last rites as well as the consecration of a bishop or a coronation of a king. The kiss, applied to various parts of the human body, was a meaningful component of religious and political rituals.⁴⁰ The essence of the combination of gestures with touch for purposes of communication can be seen in the ritual of oath-taking. Here, as was said above, touching a meaningful object in a prescribed way was as important as pronouncing the formula. In such a situation, the human body became an instrument of communication in a most physical, intimate way, showing clear analogies with various ways of being in contact with the sacred (*sacrum*) (especially relics), for instance, for the purposes of healing.⁴¹

The reinforcement of gesture is only one aspect of the much larger role that touch played in the system of communication. Its “silent power,” resulting from the connection with the personal character of the human body, influenced individual and collective behavior. Evidence of practices of communicating by touch is as interesting as the evidence of the *refusal* to touch people or objects. This often resulted from religious prescriptions which organized and articulated deeply-rooted prejudices and disgust. Formal prohibitions or at least the informal avoidance of physical contact with “others” (be they Jews, pagans, lepers or people exercising so-called unclean occupations, such as executioners) were the most profound and painful form of the organization of society by exclusion in East-Central Europe as elsewhere.⁴²

A similar mechanism of going beyond the most private physical boundaries of individuals can be detected in the use of taste and smell as tools of social communication, as their perception has a place inside the human

body. They could communicate the highest spiritual values; a sweet fragrance⁴³ signaled the holiness of people whose bodies escaped repulsive decomposition,⁴⁴ while the Body of Christ was the ultimate food and his Blood the ultimate potion. In the Slavic world, the concept of an “edible” God fitted well into pre-Christian practices of communicating with the afterlife through food, feeding the souls of the deceased that returned to earth during some periods of the year.⁴⁵ ↪ From a symbolic perspective, smell and taste could also work as instruments of social exclusion.⁴⁶ But taste and smell could also carry information about the materiality of life. Thanks to archaeology and the study of material culture, we are capable of sketching an “olfactory map” of Central European towns, determined by the hygienic infrastructure and the topography of crafts in which one tried to move the smelliest businesses (such as the production of parchment and leather) to the peripheries of the settlement.⁴⁷

A growing scholarly interest in the role of conviviality and communicating through food⁴⁸ allows some general remarks on this phenomenon. The main functions of conviviality, rooted in the indigenous cultures of Slavs and Hungarians—exercising power, suspending violence, confirming the social order, and showing status—can be seen in all social strata throughout the medieval period and early modern times. What was communicated in this way more than anything else was social status. An abundance of (sophisticated) foods and beverages and beautiful fragrances were the privilege of elites. The rejection of this privilege, for religious reasons (for instance, by pious wives and daughters of the rulers in the thirteenth century), might cause anger because it disturbed the efficacy of this form of communication.⁴⁹

As mentioned earlier, drinking was an important element of legal rituals, which were usually followed by festive meals that often included entire communities. Food and drink could also work as a tool of time measurement, as certain types of food or abstinence from them were associated with liturgical and popular feasts and with the many periods of fasting.⁵⁰

Signs and (Visual) Images

The economy of using the most valuable Christian food—the Body of Christ in Holy Communion—leads to consideration of the second-most-used group of tools, those which belonged to the realm of visual communication. Everywhere in medieval Europe, “for most people, the Host was a familiar object of sight, but a much rarer object of touch and taste.”⁵¹ The overwhelming desire of medieval people to *see*, which can be detected in all spheres of social life,⁵² was at the same time the cause and the result of the development of the wide variety of visual signs and depictions (understood in the broadest possible sense of the term⁵³) that could carry information: the organization of space, architecture, images, colors, clothes, and many kinds of *signa* (signs of boundaries of spaces, insignia of power, mnemotechnic signs, coats of arms, banners, and so on). They are usually investigated in the isolation of individual disciplines, but even a limited attempt at a transdisciplinary approach reveals both the internal logic and the essential features of this system.

This shows the fluidity and multiplication of meanings between the sacred and secular spheres, also visible among various kinds of *sacrum*. The sign of the cross, the most explicit Christian symbol, rightly defined as omnipresent in the late medieval ↪ iconosphere, was widely used in the everyday magical practices originating in non-Christian rituals for the protection of crops and fertility.⁵⁴ An even more interesting mark of visual communication in East-Central Europe is the, sometimes extraordinary, accumulation of information carried by various means at the same time. This can be illustrated by the example of clothes. Literally *every element* of a garment (and also of hairdressing) contained information making it possible to identify the person wearing it: gender, age, social position, marital status, affiliation with a religious or ethnic community, profession, and emotional state (for instance, by clothes of mourning). This information was encoded not only by the cut of clothes, but also by their color, the kind of materials used, ornamentation, depictions put on the textiles (such as coats of arms), and also by accessories.⁵⁵ Every single

one of these elements could be loaded with symbolic value. The absence of some parts of garments (most often of shoes and headgear), as well as the complete nakedness, would be a message, for instance, about the wearer's attitude toward the world. This assemblage was used not only to identify an individual (the taxonomic function), but also to create communities and, even more, to exclude "others."⁵⁶ Clothing can be seen as the perfect expression of an "emblematic society."⁵⁷ The essential precondition for the efficacy of this tool of communication resulted from alertness about possible transgressions as far as gender and social position were concerned, as expressed by men wearing women's clothes, lay people wearing ecclesiastical garments, or town dwellers wearing rich garments appropriate for the well-born nobility. This vigilance was expressed in all kinds of regulations and prescriptions issued in the later Middle Ages by ecclesiastical and secular authorities.⁵⁸

The Written Word in the Multimedia System of Social Communication

The short (and selective) overview above leads to the question of how the written word fitted into this multifaceted system of social communication. It is important not to put writing in radical opposition to oral and nonverbal communication; visual communication, for instance, combines crucial elements of these nonwritten forms by turning the sounds of the spoken word into a negotiated system of graphical signs. The ongoing investigation of the development of literacy in East-Central Europe allows the conclusion that, despite some chronological delays, the implementation of writing in the region had a dynamic similar to that in many other parts of Europe. Generally speaking, during the first two centuries after the initial Christianization, it played several important roles, above all in the domain of sacred literacy and in reinforcing the memorial practices of social elites.⁵⁹ From the thirteenth century onward, one can see both an apparent democratization and individualization in making, using, and keeping records (paired with their linguistic diversification) in the ever-widening spectrum of pragmatic literacy, especially in urban environments.⁶⁰ Thus, the chronology of the gradual "reception of ↵ charters" (as it was called in traditional diplomatics⁶¹) in the various law systems used in the region indicated the progressive growth of the conviction that a piece of parchment or paper could have the same value in shaping or recollecting legal reality as the word of a living witness.⁶² The speed of this essential mental shift, however, which required operating with new conceptual categories ("abstract" signs of letters instead of spoken words; a piece of parchment instead of "real" money, and so on), did not reach all social strata equally and can only be measured in centuries. Growing trust in the written word was accompanied by an ever-wider awareness of the limitations of the written word, especially of the fact that charters could be forgeries and narrative texts might contain false information.⁶³

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Rich and multifaceted evidence shows that one of the main ways of integrating the written word into the existing system of social communication was by introducing it as an additional tool to strengthen the meaning of visual images. From the eleventh century onward, inscriptions in East-Central Europe were applied to all kinds of materials (stone, wood, metal, textiles). They usually reinforced and deepened a visual message, but that message could also function well *without* inscriptions, at least on a basic level of understanding.⁶⁴ It is more difficult to evaluate the custom, spreading from the fourteenth century onward, of putting long written texts on display, accompanied by an image (or not). Displaying the texts of the Ten Commandments and basic prayers on large wooden boards is attested for many parochial churches, even in the countryside. Papal charters of indulgence were displayed in the same way.⁶⁵ The popularity of this practice does not, however, resolve an essential dilemma: Was it a result of growing familiarity with the written word and the spread of basic literacy skills or was it rather the long-term cause?

The study of royal coins and seals, the main tools by which the monarchs communicated their kingship to their subjects,⁶⁶ also provides interesting materials for investigating the relationship between image and script. Coins and seals transmit the intended message both by images (often complex ones in the late

medieval period) and by inscriptions around the images meant to identify the issuer and inform readers about his attributes. The organization of space on these artifacts (the central position of the image together with the rather poor legibility of the epigraphic message) and the generally applied conventionality of iconographic models do not suggest whether the image or the written message was primarily expected to be understood. One may assume that only some of the intended recipients were technically able to decipher the written message,⁶⁷ and—to be honest—really cared about it. Yet well into modern times, many recipients of monarchic charters paid substantial amounts of money for desirable large seals (preferably gold) to be attached to the charters they ordered. The seal's size and material were much more efficacious in communicating kingship than the inscription.⁶⁸

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The interaction between written and oral modes of communication is relatively easy to determine because the boundary between them was extremely soft⁶⁹ and in general practice, messages passed between them in either direction throughout the medieval period. The practice of reading aloud shaped a vast area of “aurality,”⁷⁰ embracing not only the Bible, devotional texts, and works belonging to the domain of so-called literature⁷¹ but also documents, legal statutes, and all sorts of administrative records.⁷² Aurality went far beyond minimizing the consequences of a lack of basic literacy skills among a considerable number of the audience. Any text approached by ear was easier to understand; at the same time, its oral rendering gave room for performance.

The word “performance” is often used to describe the acts of promulgating laws, publicizing information, or explaining the essence of the “grand occasions of State and Church.”⁷³ These rituals, marked by the overlap of the sacred and profane spheres, provided the favorite *materia scribendi* of medieval chroniclers, and, in consequence, an attractive topic for modern-day historians.⁷⁴ They also give clear evidence of the extensive use of all possible instruments of communication simultaneously. This array of tools was meant not only to transmit certain messages, but also to shape collective emotions, for instance, by the spectacular destruction of artifacts. Such gestures as smashing of the candles in the ritual of ecclesiastical excommunication or breaking the staffs of banners captured from a defeated enemy elicited strong emotional responses from spectators, in these examples horror and pride, respectively.⁷⁵ Similarly, collective feelings of joy and festivity were created by coronations, royal weddings and baptisms, episcopal inaugurations, and festive entries. In specially arranged surroundings, full of colors and heraldic badges, the principal actors, wearing special garments laden with symbolic meaning, performed meaningful gestures and spoke meaningful words. All this was usually accompanied by music and the ringing of bells and followed by an abundance of shared food. It seems that in the multimedia context of such occasions the written word did not play the primary role before the thirteenth century at the earliest.⁷⁶ Throughout the medieval period, it might on occasion even cease to fulfill its basic function as a carrier of information, as in many rituals involving written texts (the handing over of a book during a ceremony, the displaying of a charter, and so on), the materiality of script itself became much more important than the actual content of the book or document. This can be illustrated by the way manuscripts and archives were treated as war trophies which could be transferred, redistributed, or even destroyed.⁷⁷ The same can also be seen in widely spread magical practices. Carrying amulets containing words from the Gospel or other powerful words did not require reading them at all, as their very presence reinforced the power of the object on which they had been written.⁷⁸ In closing, even a brief—and necessarily incomplete—survey of the instruments of social communication in medieval East Central Europe illustrates how large the variety of tools was *beyond* the usually investigated realm of words and scripts. In future research, awareness and recognition of the importance of this variety is essential for a more balanced assessment of the role of the written word.

At the beginning of this article, the issue of the efficacy of the complex system of medieval communication was raised, emphasizing the importance of the skills of receivers in “reading” the content of all sorts of messages. It has been pointed out that these abilities might vary from one social group to another and from one person to another. Scholars may establish the contents of messages and the intentions of their senders

relatively easily, but how much of the message actually came through to the recipients is a different matter altogether.

p. 349 It is nevertheless worth mentioning another factor that could influence any act of communication. This might be called “the horizon of expectations” of the receivers, who could miss a part of the message, misunderstand it, or even decide not to open themselves to it whenever the message transgressed what they were used to in one way or another. An excellent example of such a disruption of communication is the well-known account by the thirteenth-century Dalmatian historian, Thomas of Split, of attending a sermon by St. Francis of Assisi, in Bologna on August 15, 1222. In Thomas’s opinion, Francis’s whole appearance contradicted everything that at the time might be expected from a preacher: He was uneducated, he did not behave as preachers usually did, he was not physically attractive, and he was wearing shabby clothes. Thomas’s concluding remark that “the veneration and devotion that people had for him were so great that men and women would rush in throngs to him, struggling to touch the hem of his garments or snatch a piece of his rags,”⁷⁹ expresses the total astonishment of someone whose horizon of expectation had been completely trespassed upon. At the same time, the example shows how even a well-educated professional of legal literacy could be deeply sensitive to all signals from nonverbal and visual communication.

Notes

1. For a detailed analysis of the concept of “medieval communication,” see Marco Mostert, “Introduction,” in *A Bibliography of Works on Medieval Communication*, edited by Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 2. This publication provides a comprehensive overview of the state of research on the subject up to 2012. Recent developments are quite well mirrored by the subsequent volumes of the series *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy* (Brepols). The length of the present chapter does not permit extensive bibliographical references.
2. The persistence of oral and visual communication well into modern times is acknowledged even for England, which probably had the highest rates of literacy in Europe (see also Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 33. See also István G. Tóth, *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000), chapters 2–4.
3. Mostert, *A Bibliography*.
4. Perhaps the most peculiar mark of communication in the medieval period was that, in the collective imaginary, its framework easily crossed the frontier with the supernatural and included communication with God, saints, devils, and the souls of the deceased in the exchange of information with living people (see Mostert, *A Bibliography*, 6). As everywhere in Western Christendom, in East Central Europe people from rulers and bishops to peasants, from all strata of society, experienced communication with supernatural beings. See, e.g., *Chronica Ecclesiae Pragenis Benessi Krabice de Weitmile*, edited by Josef Emler, *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum* 4 (Prague: Naklada Nadání F. Palackého, 1884), 502; *Chronica Poloniae Maioris/Kronika Wielkopolska*, edited by Brygida Kürbis, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, n.s. 8 (Warsaw: Monumenta Poloniae Historica, 1970) [*ChPM*], 89, 94–95; *Canonici Wissegradensis Continuatio Cosmae*, edited by Josef Emler, *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum* 2, no. 1 (Prague: Naklada Nadání F. Palackého, 1874) [= *Canonicus Wissegradensis*], 225–226.
- p. 350 5. See especially John H. Arnold, “Belief and the Senses for the Laity,” in *Les cinq sens au Moyen Âge*, edited by Eric Palazzo (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2016), 623–645.
6. On levels and registers of literacy, see Marco Mostert, “Forgery and Trust,” in *Strategies of Writing: Studies on Text and Trust in the Middle Ages*, edited by Irene van Renswoude, Petra Schulte, and Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 40. The refinement of the criteria of analysis also becomes apparent in the discussion of the “knowledge” of languages (especially Latin) in the medieval period. One is ever more inclined to assess each of the four linguistic competencies—reading, writing, speaking, and understanding—separately. This distinction is most present in medieval sources: e.g., Emperor Charles IV Luxemburg explained his proficiency in Czech because this language was as suitable as any other “to write, read, speak and understand” (*ad scribendum, legendum, loquendum et intelligendum*); *Vita Caroli IV*, edited by Josef Emler, *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum* 3 (Prague: Naklada Nadání F. Palackého, 1882), 8, 348).

7. Mostert, "Introduction," 9.
8. Mostert, *A Bibliography*, 118–126 ("language," "grammar"); William W. Diebold, "Verbal, Visual and Cultural Literacy in Medieval Art: Word and Image in the Psalter of Charles the Bald," *Word and Image* 8 (1992): 89–99 ("visual literacy").
9. For the main points in the ongoing discussion, see Laurence G. Duggan, "Reflections on 'Was Art Really the 'Book of the Illiterate'?" in *Reading Images and Texts as Forms of Communication*, edited by Mariëlle Hagemann and Marco Mostert (Turnhout, Brepols, 2005), 109–119; Herbert Kessler, "'*Aliter enim videtur pictura, aliter videntur litterae*': Reading Medieval Pictures," in *Scrivere e leggere nell'alto Medioevo*, vol. 2 (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 2012), 701–726.
10. Anna Wierzbicka, "The Meaning of Color Terms and the Universals of Seeing," *Semantics: Primes and Universals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 287–334.
11. See Anna Adamska, "Intersections: Medieval East Central Europe from the Perspective of the Study of Literacy and Communication," in *Medieval East Central Europe in Comparative Perspective: From Frontier Zones to Land in Focus*, edited by Gerhard Jaritz and Katalin Szende (London: Routledge, 2016), 225–239.
12. On the possibilities of a comparative approach, see Adamska, "Intersections."
13. The far-reaching consequences of choices about alphabets which split the Slavic cultural entity until our times cannot be discussed here in detail. See Adamska, "Intersections," 228.
14. *Diglossia* means simultaneous use of two languages (or variants of the same language), possessing specialized functions. The so-called high register, marked by stable grammar and spelling and enjoying high prestige, serves as the written language. The low register is used for the purposes of oral communication in daily life and is less prestigious. See the seminal article by C. A. Ferguson, "*Diglossia*," *Word* 15 (1959): 325–340.
15. See also Piotr Węcowski, "Polskie itineraria średniowieczne i nowożytnie: Przegląd badań i propozycje badawcze" [Polish medieval and early modern itineraries: A survey of research and new propositions of investigation], *Studia Źródłoznawcze* 37 (2000): 13–48; Janós M. Bak and Pavel V. Lukin, "Consensus and Assemblies in Early Medieval Central and Eastern Europe," in *Political Assemblies in the Earlier Middle Ages*, edited by Paul S. Barnwell and Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 95–113.
16. See, for example, *Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas von Prag*, edited by Bertold Bretholz, *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, n.s. 2 (Berlin: Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, 1923), vol. 1, 34, 62; vol. 3, 2–83; Simon Kézai, *Gesta Hungarorum*, edited by László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer (Budapest: CEU Press, 1999), 28–29; *Chronici Hungarici compositio* ↪ *saeculi XIV*, edited by Alexander Domanovszky, *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum* 2 (Budapest: Academia Litteraria Hungarica atque Societas Historica Hungarica, 1937), 359; Tomasz Jurek, "Pismo w życiu społecznym Polski późnego średniowiecza" [The written word in the social life of late medieval Poland], in *Historia społeczna późnego średniowiecza: Nowe badania* [Social history of the late Middle Ages: New research], edited by Sławomir Gawlas (Warsaw: DiG, 2011), 207. From the thirteenth century onward this communication system of the State was reinforced by town criers in the quickly growing urban network; see Agnieszka Bartoszewicz, *Urban Literacy in Late Medieval Poland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 302–307.
17. See the account on John of Luxemburg, playing dice, and "*proferrens verba inhonesta*," *Chronicon Francisci Pragensis/Kronika Františka Pražského*, edited by Jana Zachová, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, n.s. 1 (1997): vol. 2, 4, 93–94.
18. *Liber Foundationis Claustris Sanctae Mariae Virginis in Heinrichow*, edited by Józef Matuszewski (Poznań: Muzeum Archidiecezjalne, 1991), 143; *Magistri Rogerii Epistola in Miserabile Carmen super destructione regni Hungarie per Tartaros facta*, edited by Martin Rady, János M. Bak, and László Veszprémy (Budapest, CEU Press, 2010), 144–147.
19. Evidence concerning the supernatural "guarantees" of oath-taking in most parts of late medieval Europe, including Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland, was collected by Michalina Duda and Sławomir Józwiak, *Ze świata średniowiecznej symboliki: Gest i forma przysięgi w średniowiecznej Europie* [From the world of medieval symbols: Gestures and forms of oath making in medieval Europe] (Cracow: Universitas, 2014).
20. See also Józef Matuszewski, "*Aqua abrenuntiationis*: Studium z średniowiecznego prawa prywatnego" [*Aqua abrenuntiationis*: A study of medieval private law], *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne* 4 (1952): 164–237; Martin Rady,

“Literacy, Performance and Memory: The *Áldomás* (*Trankopfer*) in Medieval and Early Modern Hungary and Transylvania,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “G.Barițiu,” Series Historica*, Supplement 1 (2015): 370.

21. “Zo sal her legin czwene vinger der rechter hant, den by dem dumen unde mittelsten vinger, uff des cruczes vuse. Wo her andirs dy vinger leget, zo wirt im bruch. Dy wort zal her vorsprechin unde den daz crucze ruren.” *Najstarszy zwód prawa polskiego* [The oldest collection of the Polish law], edited by Józef Matuszewski (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1959), 162–163.
22. On the performative aspect of urban legal procedures, see also Bartoszewicz, *Urban Literacy*, chapter 4.
23. See also *Galli Anonymi Gesta principum Polonorum*, edited by János M. Bak (Budapest: CEU Press, 2003), II, Epistola, 70–71; *Anonymi Bele regis notarii Gesta Hungarorum*, edited by Martin Rady, János M. Bak, and László Veszprémy (Budapest: CEU Press, 2010), prologue, 4–5, and chapter 42, 90–91, 100–101; *Chronica Benessi* IV, 5378. In the opinion of late medieval Polish theologians, some vernacular ceremonial songs might have contained references to Old-Slavic pagan cults (discussed in Stanisław Bylina, *Kultura ludowa Polski i Słowiańszczyzny średniowiecznej* [Folk culture of medieval Poland and Slavic lands] [Warsaw: Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1999], 59).
24. See also *Thomae archidiaconi Spalatensis Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum*, edited by Damir Karbić, Olga Perić, and James Ross Sweeney (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006), 254–255; *Magistri Rogerii Epistola*, 156–157; *Joannis Długosi Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae, liber decimus, liber undecimus, liber duodecimus* (Warsaw, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1985), lib. X–XI, 142–143; *Chronicon Francisci*, II, 2, 89; II, 8, 100. *Chronica Benessi*, II, 474, 477. For more about conspiracies of “strangers,” see Anna Adamska, “Latin and Three Vernaculars in East Central Europe from the Point of View of the History of Social Communication,” in *Spoken and Written Language: Relations between Latin and the Vernacular Languages in the Earlier Middle Ages*, edited by Mary Garrison, Arpad Orbán, and Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols 2013), 336–340.
25. E.g., during the fifteenth century many terms connected to the Hussite movement in Bohemia changed into common insults in Poland. See Stanisław Bylina, “Wizerunek heretyka w Polsce późnośredniowiecznej” [The picture of a heretic in late medieval Poland], *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 30 (1985): 19.
26. Cf. Silvana Vecchio and Carla Casagrande, *Les péchés de la langue* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007).
27. See also *Anonymi Bele regis notarii*, 38–47 and 84–85; *Galli Anonymi Gesta*, 52–53, 88–89; *Thomae archidiaconis Spalatensis Historia*, 116–117.
28. On the application of these terms, see Ari Y. Kelman, “Rethinking the Soundscape: A Critical Genealogy of a Key Term in Sound Studies,” *Senses and Society* 5, no. 2 (2010): 212–234; Nira Pancer, “Le silencement du monde: Paysages sonores au haut Moyen Âge et nouvelle culture aurale,” *Annales: Histoire Sciences Sociales* 72, no. 3 (2017): 659–699.
29. A remarkable example of affirmative exclamations was the shout “*Krlessu*” (a mispronunciation of “*Kyrie eleison*”) by the lay audience during liturgical and political gatherings (e.g., after the election of the ruler) in early medieval Bohemia. See *Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas*, I, 42, 78; II, 4, 88. On auditory expressions of mourning see, e.g., *Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas*, III, 13, 174; *ChPM*, 118, 109; *Petri Zittaviensis Chronica Aulae Regiae*, edited by Josef Emler, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum* 4 (Prague: Naklada Nadání F. Palackého, 1884), 80, 98–100; *Joannis de Czarnkow Chronicon Polonorum*, edited by Jan Szlachetowski, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* 2 (Lviv: Naklada Akademii Umiejetności, 1872), 4, 636.
30. On the development of musical culture in East-Central Europe see chapter 23 in this volume.
31. See Stanisław Bylina, *Chryścianizacja wsi polskiej u schyłku średniowiecza* [Christianization of the Polish countryside at the end of the Middle Ages] (Warsaw: Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2002), 126, 154.
32. See on the aversion of the Bohemian king, Wenceslas I, to the sound of church bells, *Chronicon Francisci*, I, 1, 5.
33. E.g., Joannis de Czarnkow, “*Chronicon Polonorum*,” in *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 2, edited by Jan Szlachetowski (Lwów: Nakł. Akademii Umiejetności, 1872), 56, 712–713. A suitable source for the study of the sonic imaginary of traumatized war victims is Master Roger’s autobiographical account of the Mongol attack on Hungary (*Magistri Rogerii Epistola*, 190–191; 22–23, 284–285).
34. E.g., *Galli Anonymi Gesta*, 70–71. On the functions of silence, see also Alexandre Vincent, “Une histoire de silences,”

35. E.g., *Magistri Rogerii Epistola*, 222–223.
36. Bylina, *Kultura*, 103.
37. See Adam S. Labuda, “Czytanie Drzwi Gnieźnieńskich: Przekaz i język obrazu” [Reading of the Door of Gniezno: The message and language of the image], in *Tropami Świętego Wojciecha* [In the footsteps of St. Wojciech], edited by Zofia Kurnatowska (Poznań: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 1999), 245.
- p. 353 38. Another interesting subject is the legibility of threatening gestures in political communication. See *Galli Anonymi Gesta*, 88–91. *Chronicon Francisci*, I, 9, 26; *Anonymi Bele regis notariis*, 46–47; *Joannis Dlugossi Annales*, XI–XII, 102–103.
39. See the remark that John of Capistrano, an Italian preacher active in Central Europe in the 1450s, was preaching *manibus et pedibus more ytalico*—gesticulating a great deal (after Thomas Krzenck, “John of Capistrano as a Tireless Preacher in Leipzig,” in *The Grand Tour of John of Capistrano in Central and Eastern Europe (1451–1456): Transfer of Ideas and Strategies of Communication in the Late Middle Ages*, edited by Paweł Kras and James D. Mixson (Warsaw: Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk–Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2018), 119.
40. E.g., *Galli Anonymi Gesta* I, 88–89. *Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas*, III, 9, 169. *Joannis Dlugossi Annales*, lib. XI–XII, 168. *Chronica Oliviensis*, in *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 6, edited by Wojciech Kętrzyński (Lviv: Nakłada Akademii Umiejetności, 1893), 333.
41. Among many examples from the hagiography of the region, see the extraordinary account of the healing performed in Prague in 1338 using the head of St. Wenceslas pressed against the head of a paralyzed man (*Chronicon Francisci*, III, 12, 168).
42. Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and “Pagans” in Medieval Hungary, c. 1000–c. 1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Hanna Zaremska, “Jews and Their Attitude towards Christians in Medieval Poland, *Acta Poloniae Historica* 101 (2010): 125–161.
43. See the analysis of this multidimensional concept in Marry Carruthers, “Sweetness,” *Speculum* 81 (2006): 999–1013.
44. E.g., *Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas*, II, 4, 88. *ChPM* 154, 123; *Canonicus Wissehradensis*, 226. For more examples, see Anna Adamska, “Zapach dobra i odór zła: Z zagadnień wyobraźni religijnej w średniowieczu” [The smell of the good and the stench of the evil: A problem of the medieval religious imaginary], *Zeszyty Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego* 39, no. 3–4 (1996): 31–46.
45. Bylina, *Kultura*, 15–27.
46. On the disgusting odor of onions and garlic as a sign of Jews in Polish late medieval religious literature, see Rafał Wójcik, “Anti-Jewish Motifs in the Poetry of Blessed Władysław of Gielniów c. 1440–1505),” in *Identity and Alterity in Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, vol. 1, edited by Ana Marinković and Tripmir Vedriš (Zagreb: Hagiotheca, 2010), 235–244.
47. See also Robert Krzywdziński, “Ścieki i latryny średniowiecznego oraz nowożytnego Gdańska w świetle źródeł archeologicznych” [Sewage and latrines in the medieval and early modern Gdańsk in the light of archeological sources], *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* 53, no. 3–4 (2005): 279–291; Weronika Konkol, “Brud i smród w świetle polskich, średniowiecznych źródeł hagiograficznych: Próba rozpoznania tematu” [Filth and stench in the light of medieval Polish hagiographical sources: An attempt of approach to the subject], *Studia Historica Gedanensia* 1 (2010): 19–34. On stench as a result of calamities, see *Magistri Rogerii Epistola*, 200–201, 206–207; *Chronicon Francisci*, I, 4, 16.
48. See the literature in Anna Adamska, “Founding a Monastery over Dinner: The Case of Henryków in Silesia (c. 1222–1228),” in *Medieval Legal Process: Physical, Spoken and Written Performance in the Middle Ages*, edited by Marco Mostert and Paul Barnwell (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 223, and also Magdalena Beranová, *Jídlo a pití v pravěku a ve středověku* [Food and drink in the prehistory and the Middle Ages] (Prague: Akademie věd České republiky, 2008).
- p. 354 49. Gabor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. 195–279.
50. See a detailed overview by Izabela Skierska, *Sabbatha sanctifices: Dzień święty w średniowiecznej Polsce* [*Sabbatha*

51. Arnold, “Belief,” 640.
52. See, for instance, the statement of a Bohemian chronicler that heaven communicates with people by *signa* (*Canonicus Wissehradensis*, 213). Also indicative is the enthusiastic reaction to the decision of Charles IV Luxemburg to show his collection of relics to the people, which received the remarkable comment by a chronicler: “*quod nullus crederet, nisi qui oculis suis videret*” [no one would believe it, unless he had seen it with his own eyes] (*Chronicon Francisci*, III, 29, 211).
53. The issue of the unbalanced accessibility of images in the narrow sense—manuscripts, miniatures, wall paintings, and the like—rightly mentioned by scholars today (Arnold, “Belief,” 628; Marie Bláhová, “Obrazové dějiny v českých zemích ve středověku” [Pictorial history in medieval Bohemian lands], in *Imago narrat: Obraz jako komunikat w społeczeństwach europejskich* [Imago narrat: Image as a message in the European societies], edited by Stanisław Rosik and Przemysław Wiszewski (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2002), 219–230), reflects only one of the many aspects of visual communication. In fact, everything that might be seen could become a *signum*, a representation of something else.
54. Arnold, “Belief,” 630–631; Bylina, *Kultura*, 180.
55. The same strategy of multiple layers of information, provided in the same ways, can be detected in the visual organization of banners and flags thanks to rich iconographical and textual evidence, from Hungary and Poland especially. See also Jan Ptak, *Chorągiew w komunikacji społecznej w Polsce piastowskiej i jagiellońskiej* [The banner in the system of social communication in Piast and Jagiellonian Poland] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2002); László Veszpremy, “A középkori zászlóhasználat kezdetei Magyarországon, Kézai Simon olvasatában” [The beginnings of the use of flags in medieval Hungary, according to Simon Kézai], *Lovagvilág Magyarországon: Lovagok, keresztesek, hadmérnökök a középkori Magyarországon* [The chivalrous world in Hungary: Knights, crusaders, and military engineers in medieval Hungary] (Budapest: A Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum Könyvtára, 2008), 146–154.
56. See also Nora Berend, “Medieval Patterns of Social Exclusion and Integration: The Regulation of Non-Christian Clothing in the Thirteenth-Century Hungary,” *Revue Mabillon* 69 (1997): 155–176.
57. For more on the development of this concept and the communicative function of clothes, see Anna Adamska, “Czy Pan wie, kto ja jestem?”: Kilka uwag o mechanizmach percepcji wzrokowej i skuteczności kodów westymentarnych w późnośredniowiecznej Europie” [“Do you know who I am?”: Some remarks on the mechanisms of visual perception and the efficacy of the vestimentary codes in late medieval Europe], in *Habitus facit hominem: Społeczne funkcje ubioru w średniowieczu i w epoce nowożytnej* [Habitus facit hominem: Social functions of clothes in the Middle Ages and Early Modern times], edited by Ewa Wólkiewicz, Monika Saczyńska, and Marcin R. Pauk (Warsaw, Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2016), 19.
58. See, for example, Gabor Klaniczay, “Disciplining Society through Dress: John of Capistrano, the ‘Bonfire of Vanities’ and Sumptuary Law,” in *The Grand Tour*, 101 ff. ↪ On disturbing the communication through clothes, see *Annales Boemorum Vincentii Pragenses*, edited by Josef Emler, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum* 2 (Prague: Naklada Nadání F. Palackého, 1875), 414; Simon, 134–136.
59. For chroniclers, providing the first accounts of local dynasties only written history was valuable. See also *Galli Anonymi Gesta*, III, Epistola, 210–213; *Anonymi Bele regis notariis*, 4–5, 90–91; *Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas*, I, 14, 32.
60. This process was stimulated in great measure by the necessity of adapting to standards and practices of written communication imposed from outside, first of all by the ever-growing bureaucratic machine of the Roman Church. In this respect, the role of contacts with the Holy See and the papal fiscal bureaucracy cannot be overestimated. See, e.g., Roman Zaoral, “The Management of Papal Collections and Long-Distance Trade in the Thirteenth-Century Czech Lands,” *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome: Moyen Âge* 127 (2015): 335–345.
61. On the problem of trust in writing as the main precondition of the growth of pragmatic literacy, see *Strategies of Writing: Studies on Text and Trust in the Middle Ages*, edited by P. Schulte, Marco Mostert, and Irene van Renswoude (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).
62. See Szende, *Trust, Authority, and the Written Word in the Royal Towns of Medieval Hungary* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 115, 197, 244, 318.

63. E.g., Marie Bláhová, “*Vera ac falsa discernere* in the Přemyslid Czech lands (until 1306),” in *Arcana tabularii: Tanulmányok Solymosi László tiszteletére* [Studies in honor of László Solymosi], edited by Attila Bárány et al. (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 2014), vol. 1, 21–30.
64. Among many examples, see P. Lővei, “Epigraphy and Tomb Sculpture,” in *The Art of Medieval Hungary*, edited by Xavier Barral i Altet et al. (Rome: Viella, 2018), 253–267; Labuda, “Czytanie Drzwi,” 239.
65. See Bylina, *Chrystianizacja wsi*, 64–65.
66. See Zenon Piech, *Monety, pieczęcie i herby w systemie symboli władzy Jagiellonów* [Coins, seals, and coats of arms in the system of symbols of power of the Jagiellonian dynasty] (Warsaw: DiG, 2003); Tomáš Krejčík and Robert Psík, “Písmo a pečeť: Texty na pečetích jako dobové doklady kultury” [Script and seal: Texts on seals as evidence of the culture of the period], in *Kultura psaní v dějinách* [Written culture in history], vol. 1, edited by Ladislav Nekvapil (Pardubice, Univerzita Pardubice, 2016), 93–107; *Az Árpád-házi királyok pecsétjei/Royal Seals of the Árpád Dynasty*, edited by Imre Takács (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2012).
67. As far as seals are concerned, this capacity can be attributed primarily to the professionals of the written word employed in the chanceries of Church and State. For them, the coherence of information encoded in image and text was the main indicator of the authenticity of charters. Extensive evidence of the procedures applied can be found, for example, in *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum. Spory i sprawy pomiędzy Polakami a Zakonem Krzyżackim: Akta postępowania przed wysłannikiem papieskim Antonim Zeno z Mediolanu w latach 1422–1423* [Disputes and cases between the Poles and the Teutonic Knights: The records of proceedings before the judge Antonio Zeno of Milan in the years 1422–1423], edited by Sławomir Jóźwiak et al. (Toruń, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2015), 155–233.
68. See splendid examples in Tóth, *Literacy*, chapters 3 and 4.
69. Both modes of communication were challenged by the issue of multilingualism. In the context of orality it is vividly discussed by scholars dealing with pastoral care, especially with preaching. See, for example, Edit Madas, “Les ordres mendiants en Hongrie et la littérature médiévale en langue vernaculaire (XIII^e–XV^e siècle),” in *Entre stabilité et itinérance: Livre et culture des ordres mendiants*, edited by D. Nebbiai-Dalla Guarda, N. Bériou, and M. Morard (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 367–374; Pavel Soukup, “Die Predigt als Mittel religiöser Erneuerung: Böhmen um 1400,” in *Böhmen und das Deutsche Reich: Ideen- und Kulturtransfer im Vergleich (13.–16. Jahrhundert)*, edited by Eva Schlotheuber and Hubertus Seibert (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009), 235–264.
70. Leidulf Melve, “Literacy–Aurality–Orality: A Survey of Recent Research into the Orality/Literacy Complex of the Latin Middle Ages (600–1500),” *Symbolae Osloenses* 78, no. 1 (2003): 153.
71. To the chagrin of some scholars, the boundaries of medieval “literature” (in the modern sense of texts having entertainment as the main purpose) cannot be easily determined. This entertainment function could also have been fulfilled by hagiography and even by the Old Testament.
72. *Annales de rebus gestis Wenceslai I. regis*, edited by J. Emler, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum* 2 (Prague: Naklada Nadání F. Palackého, 1874): 304–305; *Chronica Benessi* II, 486. On reading charters aloud, see Anna Adamska, “Studying Preambles Today: A Paradigm Shift in Diplomatic?” in *Urkundenformeln im Kontext: Formen der Schriftkultur im Ostmitteleuropa des Mittelalters (13.–14. Jahrhundert)*, edited by Sébastien Rossignol and Anna Adamska (Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), 42.
73. See the elaborate analysis by Marco Mostert, “Introduction,” in Mostert and Barnwell, *Medieval Legal Process*, 3–10.
74. Among numerous descriptions of public rituals, see *Thomae archidiaconis Spalatensis Historia*, 96–97; *Chronici Hungarici Compositio Saeculi XIV*, 500–503. *Chronicon Francisci*, I, 3, 13; I, 12, 34; I, 16, 42. From the wide scholarly literature, see *Imagines potestatis: Rytuały, symbole i konteksty fabularne władzy zwierzchniej* [Imagines potestatis: Rituals, symbols and narrative contexts of supreme power], edited by Jacek Banaszkiewicz (Warsaw: IH PAN, 1992); Martin Wihoda, ed., *Stát, státnost a rituály přemyslovského věku* [State, statehood, and rituals in the Premyslid period] (Brno: Matice moravská, 2006); Dušan Zupka, *Ritual and Symbolic Communication in Medieval Hungary under the Árpád Dynasty: East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages (450–1450)* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
75. E.g., *ChPM* 116, 106; Joannis de Czarnekow, *Chronicon Polonorum* 12, 648; Joannis Dlugossi *Annales*, lib. XI–XII, 119, 168.
76. See Adamska, “Founding a Monastery,” 222–223.

77. E.g., *Joannis Dlugossi Annales*, lib. XI, 150–151, 156.
78. See, for example, Marija-Ana Dürriegl and Stella Fatović-Ferenčić, “*Marginalia miscellanea medica* in Croatian Glagolitic Monuments: A Model for Interdisciplinary Investigation,” *Viator* 30 (1999): 386; František Šmahel, “Stärker als der Glaube: Magie, Aberglaube und Zauber in der Epoche des Hussitismus,” *Bohemia* 32, no. 2 (1991): 322.
79. *Thomae archidiaconis Spalatensis Historia*, 178–179.

Further Reading

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