

chicago manual for religious iconography citation

Mastering Citations: A Comprehensive Guide to the Chicago Manual for Religious Iconography

chicago manual for religious iconography citation is a crucial aspect of scholarly research and writing, particularly when engaging with the complex and visually rich field of religious art history. Accurately attributing the sources of information and images related to religious iconography ensures academic integrity, allows readers to verify claims, and contributes to the broader scholarly conversation. This article provides a detailed exploration of how to apply the principles of the Chicago Manual of Style to citing religious iconography, covering everything from identifying the necessary bibliographic information to formatting specific types of religious artifacts and representations. We will delve into the nuances of citing textual sources that discuss iconography, visual primary sources, and the specific challenges presented by diverse religious traditions and their symbolic representations.

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Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style's Approach to Art and Visual Sources

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) offers comprehensive guidelines for citing a wide array of sources, including those pertaining to art and visual culture. When addressing religious iconography, this means understanding how CMOS categorizes and requires documentation for works of art, sculptures, manuscript illuminations, architectural elements, and other visual representations that carry religious meaning. The manual emphasizes the importance of providing sufficient detail for readers to locate the source material themselves. This typically involves identifying the artist or creator, the title of the work, the date of creation, the medium, the dimensions, and crucially, its current location or repository.

CMOS recognizes that visual sources often present unique citation challenges compared to traditional textual materials. The interpretation of iconography relies heavily on understanding the context of its creation and display. Therefore, accurate citation becomes even more vital to ground any analysis. Whether you are citing a photograph of a fresco, a digital image of a manuscript page, or a physical artifact in a museum collection, the principles of clear and consistent attribution remain paramount. The goal is to provide a complete bibliographic record that acknowledges the origin of your information and the visual

evidence you are interpreting.

Identifying Key Bibliographic Information for Visual Art

When citing religious iconography, especially when the source is a visual artwork itself, several pieces of information are essential for a complete citation. These elements help distinguish one work from another and provide context for its study. Failing to include these details can render a citation incomplete and therefore less useful to your audience.

- **Artist/Creator:** The individual or group responsible for creating the work. If unknown, this should be noted.
- **Title of Work:** The official or commonly accepted title of the artwork.
- **Date of Creation:** The period or specific year the work was produced.
- **Medium:** The materials used in its creation (e.g., oil on canvas, bronze, marble, ink on parchment).
- **Dimensions:** The physical size of the artwork.
- **Current Location:** The museum, archive, private collection, or other institution where the work is housed.
- **Accession Number:** A unique identifying number assigned by the holding institution.

Distinguishing Between Primary and Secondary Visual Sources

In the study of religious iconography, it is crucial to differentiate between primary and secondary visual sources. Primary sources are the original works of art themselves, or contemporary reproductions or depictions. Secondary sources are later analyses, reproductions, or scholarly interpretations of these works. CMOS guidelines for citation will vary depending on which type of source you are referencing.

Citing Textual Sources on Religious Iconography

Much of the scholarly understanding and interpretation of religious iconography is derived from written sources. These can range from ancient religious texts and theological treatises to modern art historical analyses and encyclopedias. The Chicago Manual of Style provides robust frameworks for citing these textual materials, ensuring that your engagement with them is properly credited.

When citing texts that discuss religious iconography, the standard CMOS rules for books, articles, and other written publications apply. This includes providing author names, titles, publication dates, page numbers, and publisher information. The specific format will depend on whether you are using the notes-bibliography system or the author-date system. For religious iconography, paying close attention to the specific chapter or section that details iconographic elements is particularly important for precise referencing.

Citing Books and Chapters on Religious Iconography

Books dedicated to religious iconography or containing significant sections on the subject require careful citation. This includes identifying the author, the full title of the book, and publication details. If you are referencing a specific chapter or essay within an edited volume, you will need to include the chapter author, chapter title, the editor(s) of the volume, the book title, and the full publication details of the book.

For example, a footnote citation for a book chapter might look like this:

1. Author Last Name, Author First Name, "Title of Chapter," in *Title of Book*, ed. Editor Last Name Editor First Name (Place of Publication: Publisher, Year), page number(s).

The corresponding bibliography entry would follow a similar pattern but without the page numbers unless referring to a specific range within the chapter.

Citing Journal Articles and Scholarly Essays

Academic journals are a vital source for contemporary research on religious iconography. Citing articles from these journals requires providing the author's name, the article title, the journal title, the volume and issue numbers, the publication date, and the page range of the article. For online journal articles, you may also need to include a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) or a stable URL if readily available and required by your specific citation style preference within CMOS.

A typical footnote citation for a journal article would be:

1. Author Last Name, Author First Name, "Title of Article," *Title of Journal* Volume, no. Issue (Year): page number(s).

The bibliography entry would omit the specific page number of the citation and instead list the full page range of the article.

Citing Visual Primary Sources of Religious Iconography

The most direct engagement with religious iconography often involves citing the visual artifacts themselves. This requires a different set of citation principles than for textual sources. CMOS provides guidance on citing artworks, photographs of artworks, and other visual reproductions, all of which are essential when discussing the visual language of religious traditions.

When citing a visual work of religious iconography, the goal is to provide enough information for the reader to identify the specific artwork and, if possible, to locate it or a reproduction of it. This includes details about the artwork's creation, its medium, its current location, and any identifying numbers assigned by its repository.

Citing Physical Artworks and Artifacts

When you have direct access to a physical artwork that embodies religious iconography, such as a statue in a church or a manuscript in an archive, your citation should reflect this. The essential elements include the creator, title (if applicable), date, medium, dimensions, and the collection or location where it is housed, along with its accession number.

A note citation for a physical artwork might appear as:

1. Artist Last Name, First Name, *Title of Artwork*, Year of Creation, Medium, Dimensions, Collection Name, Museum or Institution, City, Country, Accession Number.

For example:

1. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Pietà*, ca. 1498–1499, White marble, 174 cm × 195 cm, St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City.

The bibliography entry would omit the specific page number of your reference to the artwork and focus on the artwork's full identification.

Citing Reproductions of Artworks (Photographs, Digital Images)

In most academic research on religious iconography, you will be citing reproductions of artworks rather than the original artifacts. This could be a photograph in a book, a digital image on a museum website, or an image from an online database. The citation needs to account for both the original artwork and the reproduction itself.

When citing a photograph or reproduction in a book, you would typically cite the original artwork first, followed by the details of the book and the page number where the reproduction appears.

1. Artist Last Name, First Name, *Title of Artwork*, Year of Creation, Medium, Collection Name, Museum or Institution, City, Country, Accession Number. Photograph by Photographer Last Name, First Name (if known). In *Title of Book*, edited by Editor Last Name, page number(s). Place of Publication: Publisher, Year.

For digital images, the citation requires the creator of the original work, its title and date, the name of the website or database, the specific URL, and the date you accessed the image. The Chicago Manual of Style encourages providing the most stable and accessible citation possible.

1. Artist Last Name, First Name, *Title of Artwork*, Year of Creation, Medium, Collection Name, Museum or Institution, City, Country, Accession Number. "Title of Web Page or Image," Name of Website/Database, accessed Month Day, Year, URL.

For instance:

1. Fra Angelico, *Annunciation*, ca. 1438–1447, Tempera on wood panel, Museo di San Marco, Florence. "Annunciation," Google Arts & Culture, accessed October 26, 2023, https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/annunciation-fra-angelico/XAEsW09b3gP_aQ.

Citing Architectural Elements and Sites

Religious architecture itself can be a rich source of iconography, from the layout of a temple to the carvings on a cathedral facade. When citing architectural elements or entire religious sites, the focus shifts to identifying the structure, its location, its architects or builders (if known), and the specific features you are analyzing.

For a specific architectural element like a sculpted tympanum or a stained-glass window, you would cite the building and the specific part of it. If discussing a religious site as a whole, the citation would focus on the overall structure and its significance.

Specific Challenges and Considerations for Religious Iconography Citations

The study of religious iconography presents unique challenges that require careful consideration when applying citation styles. These challenges often stem from the diverse nature of religious traditions, the evolution of symbolic meanings over time, and the often-anonymous creation of religious artifacts.

One significant challenge is the attribution of authorship for many religious artworks. Numerous icons, manuscripts, and sculptures were created anonymously by monastic communities or guilds, making traditional attribution difficult. In such cases, the Chicago Manual of Style suggests noting the anonymity or attributing the work to the collective or institution responsible for its creation. Similarly, the dating of religious artifacts can be approximate, necessitating the use of terms like "ca." (circa) or providing a range of dates.

Handling Anonymous and Attributed Works

When a work of religious iconography lacks a known creator, it is essential to acknowledge this in your citation. Instead of leaving a blank space, you should explicitly state that the author is unknown or attribute the work to the presumed group or institution responsible for its creation. This transparency is crucial for

academic honesty and allows readers to understand the context of your research.

- For a completely anonymous work, the citation would begin with the title of the artwork.
- If attribution is to a school or workshop (e.g., "School of Avignon"), this would be used in place of an individual artist's name.
- For works commissioned by a religious order or patron, their role might be noted.

Dating and Chronology in Iconography

The dating of religious iconography can be notoriously complex. Art historians often rely on stylistic analysis, historical context, and textual evidence to date artifacts. When precise dates are unavailable, it is standard practice to use approximations. The Chicago Manual of Style recommends using "ca." (circa) followed by the approximate date or date range. For example, a manuscript illumination might be dated "ca. 1200" or "mid-14th century."

It is also important to be consistent with how you represent dating, whether in notes or bibliography entries. If a range is provided, ensure it is clearly indicated (e.g., 1450–1460). This precision, even in approximation, helps establish the historical context for the iconographic analysis.

The Role of Context and Interpretation

Religious iconography is deeply tied to its cultural, historical, and theological context. When citing sources, especially those that interpret iconographic meanings, it is vital to acknowledge the interpretative framework being used. This might involve referencing scholarly works that propose specific meanings for symbols or discussing the historical development of iconographic conventions within a particular religious tradition. The citation process helps ground these interpretations in established scholarship.

For instance, when discussing the symbolic meaning of a specific gesture or attribute in Christian iconography, you would cite the art historical or theological texts that explain this symbolism. This demonstrates that your interpretation is informed by existing scholarship and not merely personal conjecture.

Best Practices for Chicago Manual Religious Iconography Citation

Adhering to best practices when citing religious iconography ensures the clarity, credibility, and accuracy of your academic work. Consistency is key, and understanding the nuances of the Chicago Manual of Style will allow you to navigate the complexities of this specialized field effectively.

Always strive for the most precise and complete citation possible. If you are referencing an artwork, try to find information about its original creation, medium, and current location. When citing textual analyses, ensure you are referencing the specific passages that discuss the iconography you are analyzing. Double-checking your citations against the requirements of the Chicago Manual of Style, and perhaps even consulting style guides specific to art history, can prevent errors and enhance the overall quality of your research.

Maintaining Consistency and Accuracy

Consistency in formatting is paramount. Whether you are using the notes-bibliography system or the author-date system, maintain the same format throughout your entire work. This includes how you capitalize titles, format dates, and present author names. Accuracy in details, such as page numbers, dates, and accession numbers, is also critical. A misplaced digit or an incorrectly spelled name can lead to confusion or make it impossible for your reader to locate the source.

Utilizing Digital Resources and Databases

Numerous digital resources and databases now provide access to images and information about religious iconography. When using these resources, it is important to cite them correctly. This often involves treating the database or website as the publisher and providing a stable URL. Always note the date of access, as online content can change or be removed.

Many museum websites offer detailed catalog entries for their collections, which are excellent sources for citation information. Academic art history databases also compile extensive bibliographies and image collections that are invaluable for research.

Consulting Specialized Art History Citation Guides

While the Chicago Manual of Style provides a robust foundation, some art history departments or journals may have specific supplementary guidelines for citing visual materials. It is always advisable to consult

these specialized guides if they are available or required for your work. These guides often address specific conventions within the field of art history that might not be explicitly covered in the general CMOS text.

Q: What is the primary difference between citing a text about religious iconography and citing a visual artwork depicting religious iconography in the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: The primary difference lies in the type of information required. Citing a text focuses on author, title, publication details, and page numbers, similar to any other written source. Citing a visual artwork, however, necessitates details about the artwork itself, such as artist (if known), title, date of creation, medium, dimensions, and its current location or accession number, along with any relevant reproduction details if not citing the original.

Q: How should I cite a religious manuscript if I am referencing its illuminations as religious iconography?

A: When citing a religious manuscript for its illuminations, you would treat it as a primary visual source. Your citation should include the title of the manuscript (if it has one), its date, the medium (e.g., ink and pigment on parchment), and its location (e.g., name of the library or archive and its city). If specific illuminations are discussed, you would also include folio numbers or page numbers where they appear. If the manuscript is reproduced in a book or online, you must also cite that reproduction's details.

Q: What if the religious artwork I am citing is anonymous? How does the Chicago Manual for Religious Iconography citation handle this?

A: The Chicago Manual of Style instructs that anonymous works should be cited by their title. In the context of religious iconography, if an artwork is anonymous, you would begin your citation with the title of the artwork. It is also good practice to mention its anonymity in your text if relevant to your analysis, and to provide as much detail as possible about its date, medium, and location to help identify it.

Q: How do I cite a photograph of a religious artifact used in my research?

A: When citing a photograph of a religious artifact, you must cite both the original artifact and the photograph (or the source of the photograph). The citation typically begins with information about the original artifact (artist, title, date, medium, location) followed by details of the reproduction (e.g., the book title, editor, publisher, year, and page number where the photograph appears, or the website URL and access date for an online image).

Q: What is the role of the accession number in citing religious iconography?

A: The accession number is a unique identifier assigned by a museum or collection to each object it holds. It is crucial for citing physical artworks and artifacts accurately. Including the accession number in your citation ensures that if your reader needs to locate the specific object in a collection, they can do so precisely, especially if there are multiple similar works.

Q: How does the Chicago Manual of Style address the dating of religious iconography when a precise date is unknown?

A: When a precise date for religious iconography is unknown, the Chicago Manual of Style recommends using approximations. This is typically done by employing "ca." (circa) before the date or by providing a date range (e.g., "ca. 1450" or "mid-14th century"). It is important to be consistent in how these approximate dates are presented throughout your work.

Q: Should I cite an entire religious site, such as a cathedral, or specific iconographic elements within it?

A: The decision to cite an entire site or specific elements depends on your research focus. If you are discussing the overall symbolic program or architectural iconography of a cathedral, you might cite the cathedral as a whole, noting its architects, construction dates, and general style. If you are focusing on specific iconographic elements, such as a sculpted portal or a series of stained-glass windows, your citation should be more specific, identifying those elements and their location within the larger structure, along with relevant artistic details.

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