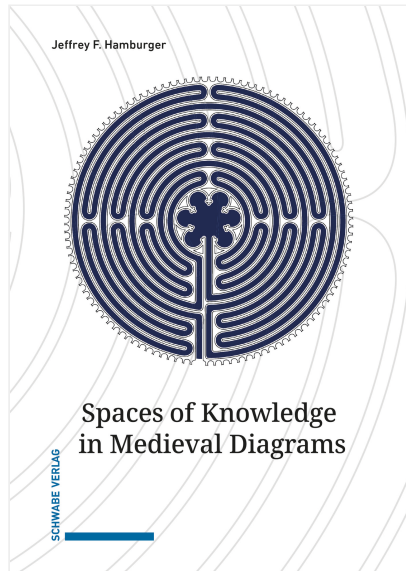


Diagrams in European art and culture



Jeffrey F. Hamburger

Spaces of Knowledge in Medieval Diagrams

The spatial structure of diagrams can be described in algebraic, geometric, cognitive or semiotic categories. Based on the 'Ur-diagram' of the Divided Line, as in Plato's 'Republic', diagrams can be understood as representations of the visible and the intelligible world. However, the knowledge thus conveyed is subject to the contingency of material and contextual, i.e. time-specific, circumstances. How is the spatial organization of diagrams in medieval manuscripts structured under such conditions? The examples dealt with in this essay range from depictions from the late antique 'Corpus Dionysiacum' to the visualizations of the powers of perception and cognition by the Renaissance scholar Charles Bovelles. Over the centuries, the spatial disposition of the diagram proves to be an image of a world which, according to the medieval view, was created by a deus artifex with geometric skills.

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