

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Thesis

THE SEASON OF WINTER IN ART AND LITERATURE
FROM ROMAN NORTH AFRICA TO MEDIEVAL FRANCE

Submitted by

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In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
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**The Season of Winter in Art and Literature From Roman North Africa
to Medieval France**

BY

Carol E. Steer

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of
Master of Arts**

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ABSTRACT

The role of winter in the daily lives of Romans in North Africa was investigated, using evidence provided by the mosaic of Neptune and the Seasons at La Chebba and the calendar mosaic at El Jem as well as Columella's agricultural manual, *De re rustica*. Selected works of art and poetry from the Carolingian period and from twelfth-century France were examined in order to determine whether the experience of winter during these later periods differed from that of the Romans.

Illustrations of the winter months in the Vienna Calendar of 818/830 and in Wandalbert von Prüm's Martyrology of St. Goar were studied along with several Carolingian poems including Wandalbert's *De duodecim mensium*. The medieval period was represented in art by a cycle of the labours of the months sculpted onto the west facade of Chartres cathedral. Several Christian Latin poems were examined in order to investigate their relationship to the theme of winter in the illustrated calendars on church facades. The Christian poems were compared with secular poetry from the *Carmina Burana*.

Winter activities commonly represented in the art of all three periods were feasting, eating and drinking, and hunting boars or killing pigs. The effect of the cold winter weather is consistently represented by a warmly-dressed personification of the season. The symbolism of winter is connected with the recurring annual cycle of the months and seasons, indicating the passage of time. In literature, winter is described as a period of relative inactivity and relaxation. This is sometimes regarded positively and sometimes negatively.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations.....	vi
Abbreviations	ix
Introduction	1
Chapter I	
Winter in North African Mosaics.....	14
1. The La Chebba Mosaic, Second Century A.D.....	14
2. Summary: Winter in the La Chebba Mosaic.....	32
3. The El Jem Calendar Mosaic, Third Century.....	33
4. Summary: Winter in the El Jem Mosaic.....	40
Chapter II	
Winter in Roman Literature.....	41
1. Columella, <i>De re rustica</i>	41
2. Summary: Winter in Columella.....	56
3. Discussion: Winter in Roman Art and Literature	62

Chapter III

The Carolingian Period: Calendar Illustrations.....	64
1. Vienna Calendar of 818/830 A.D.	64
2. The Martyrology of Wandalbert, an Illuminated Manuscript.....	70
3. Summary: Main Themes in the Carolingian Art.....	75

Chapter IV

The Carolingian Period: Poetry.....	77
1. Alcuin's <i>Debate of Spring and Winter</i>	77
2. <i>Carmina salisburgensis</i> "Calendar Verses"	85
3. Wandalbert's <i>De duodecim mensium nominibus,</i> <i>signis aerisque qualitatibus</i>	89
4. Two Winter Laments: Walahfrid Strabo and Sedulius Scottus ..	106
5. Summary: Main Themes in the Poetry	110
6. Discussion: Winter in Carolingian Art and Poetry	111

Chapter V

Medieval Art: Labours of the Month at Chartres Cathedral.....115

 1. Sculpture, West Facade (Twelfth Century).....118

 2. Summary: Main Themes in the Art139

Chapter VI

Medieval Poetry.....142

 1. Christian Latin Poems.....142

 2. Summary: Main Themes in the Christian Poetry..162

 3. Secular Latin Poems: *The Carmina Burana*163

 4. Summary: Main Themes in the Secular Poetry171

 5. Discussion: Winter in Medieval Art and Poetry172

Chapter VII

Conclusions.....175

Appendix A. *Incipit Horologium*182

Bibliography185

Illustrations191

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Unless otherwise noted, photographs and diagrams were made by the author.

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. La Chebba: Neptune and the Seasons (after Blanchard-Lemée)	191
2. Pompeii, House of the Ancient Hunt: Winter (after Hanfmann)	192
3. Feneck, Budapest, bronze relief: Winter (after Hanfmann)	192
4. Carthage: Mosaic of Lord Julius (after Parrish 1984)	193
5. St-Romain-en-Gal, Roman house: Mosaic of Rural Labours (after <i>LIMC</i>)	194
6. Sousse, fountain-basin frieze: four beasts (after Kondoleon)	195
7. Haidra: Zodiac mosaic (after Dunbabin)	196
8. Carthage: Mosaic of the Boar Hunt (after Dunbabin)	197
9. Leptis Minor (Lemta): Apollo, the Muses, and the Seasons (after Parrish 1984)	198
10. El Jem (Thysdrus): Calendar Mosaic (after Parrish 1984)	199
11. "Vienna Calendar" of 818/830 A.D. (after Comet 1983)	200
12. Cherchel, mosaic: pig-butcherering (after Dunbabin)	201

13.	Tivoli, Villa Adriana: painted stucco vault with Seasons: Winter (after Hanfmann).....	202
14.	Chronograph of 354 A.D.: January (after Salzman)	203
15.	Rome, Vatican Library: Martyrology of Wandalbert (after Webster)	204
16.	Paphos, House of Dionysos, seasons mosaic: Winter (after Kondoleon)	205
17.	Dair Solaib, Church “A”, seasons mosaic: Winter (after Hanfmann).....	205
18.	Chartres, west facade: portals.	206
19.	Chartres, west facade: left (north) portal.	206
20.	Chartres, west facade, left (north) portal: Labours of the Months and Signs of the Zodiac.....	207
21.	Chartres, west facade, left (north) portal: Labours of the Months (after postcard)	208
22.	Chartres, west facade, left (north) portal, Labours: February, Capricorn, January; Scorpio, November, Libra, November (after Male 1963)	209
23.	Fulda Calendar: Janus (after Perez Higuera)	210
24.	Calendar of St. Mesmin: Janus (after Webster)	210
25.	León, San Isidoro, Labours of the Months: January-March; July-September (after Perez Higuera).....	211
26.	León, San Isidoro, Labours of the Months: April-June; October-December (after Perez Higuera).....	212

27.	Paris, Saint-Denis, Labours of the Months: January, February (after Blum).....	213
28.	León, San Isidoro, Labours of the Months: February (after Perez Higuera)	214
29.	Paris, Saint-Denis, Labours of the Months: November-December (after Gardner).....	215
30.	Chartres, north transept, right (north) foreportal: Labours and Signs of the Zodiac (after Marriage).....	215
31.	Chartres, north transept, right (north) foreportal: January and February (after Favier)	216

ABBREVIATIONS

Classical authors and works are abbreviated as in *OLD*.

LIMC Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae. 1981-97. Zurich and Munich: Artemis.

LS A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary. 1962. Revised, Enlarged, and in Great Part Rewritten by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short. Oxford: Clarendon.

MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica. 1879-1939. Ed. Ernst Dümmler. (Reprinted Zurich: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964.)

OLD Oxford Latin Dictionary. 1968. Oxford; London: Clarendon Press.

PL Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina. 1844-1904. Ed. Jacques Paul Migne. Paris.

Introduction

Vergil (*G. 4.130-37*) describes with admiration a poor but contented farmer who manages to coax an abundant harvest from his little plot of land. The “old man of Corycus” lives a simple life in the country, closely attuned to the land and to the cycle of seasons that marks out the progression of the year:

hic rarum tamen in dumis olus albaque circum
 lilia verbenasque premens vescumque papaver
 regum aequabat opes animis, seraque revertens
 nocte domum dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.
 primus vere rosam atque autumno carpere poma,
 et cum tristis hiems etiamnum frigore saxa
 rumperet et glacie cursus frenaret aquarum,
 ille comam mollis iam tondebat hyacinthi
 aestatem increpitans seram Zephyrosque morantis.

Yet, as he

planted herbs here and there among the bushes,
 with white lilies about, and vervain, and slender
 poppy, he matched in contentment the wealth
 of kings, and returning home in the late evening,
 would load his board with unbought dainties. He

was first to pluck roses in spring and apples in
 autumn; and when sullen winter was still bursting
 rocks with the cold, and curbing running waters
 with ice, he was already culling the soft hyacinth's
 bloom, chiding laggard summer and the loitering
 zephyrs.¹

Spring and autumn are seasons of abundance, and the warm breezes of summer are eagerly awaited. But what of the winter season? Winter is the "harsh," "sullen," "sad"² season, so severe that it breaks stone, and so opposed to all living things that it holds back the course of the running waters.³ It is undeniably appropriate for twentieth-century Manitobans to think of winter as a harsh and gloomy, life-denying season, considering the extremes of a Prairie climate. A Mediterranean winter is less severe than ours, yet Vergil's negative view of the season should not be unexpected. Even in the Mediterranean, winter is difficult in comparison to other seasons. Nevertheless, as the following study will demonstrate, the Romans did not always perceive winter as *tristis hiems*, the "mauvaise saison."

The primary intent of the study is to investigate the role of winter in the daily life of ancient Rome. The day-to-day activities of Romans during the winter season

¹ Translation from Fairclough (1935). All further translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

² The adjective *tristis* has several meanings, all of them related to a negative mood or character:

"depressed, gloomy, unhappy" (*OLD* 1); "stern, solemn, austere" (*OLD* 4); "harsh, grim, savage" (*OLD* 7).

³ Water and fire were considered necessities of life: "To forbid the use of fire and water (to a person) [was to] exclude from society, outlaw" (*aqua*, *OLD* 5h). The definition of *aqua* in *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (1968) includes the following example from Cicero: *aqua et igni interdicere alicui* ("to make life impossible for a person in a place," and so "to banish him").

will be delineated in order to ascertain whether these activities were significantly different from those throughout the rest of the year. On a more abstract level, the study will determine to what extent Romans as individuals viewed winter in negative terms. The symbolic meaning of the winter season will be addressed as well, since this is an important related issue.

As primary evidence for the study as outlined above, selected art and literature from the first century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. will be considered. A secondary goal of the investigation is to discover the ways in which the evidence from literary sources supplements or enhances the evidence presented in the artistic sources.

A considerable portion of the thesis will be devoted to the third goal of the investigation, which is to extend the study of winter through the Carolingian period and into the Middle Ages. Selected art and literature from the ninth to the twelfth centuries will be examined in order to compare the activities, experience, and meaning of winter in Roman times with those of the Carolingian and medieval periods. The focus will be to trace those activities and attitudes which were common to all periods. The extent to which Christianity alters the symbolic meaning of winter will also be considered.

Methodology

Throughout the following study, the winter season is defined as the months of November, December, January, and February. The Romans had not always

divided the year into four seasons.⁴ Initially, only two seasons were recognized: a hotter one, and a colder one. The division between the two was imprecise at first, but eventually the rising and setting of the Pleiades (about May 10 and November 10 respectively) came to mark the beginning of the warm and cold seasons. Spring later became identified with the commencement of the warmest season, and autumn with the period just prior to winter. From the Augustan period on, *bruma* (the winter solstice and a period of time following the solstice) was also identified with *hiems* (winter). However, most Roman authors refer to winter as beginning sometime in November and ending sometime in February.⁵

As the scope of the study is rather broad in that it encompasses an examination of both art and literature and covers the first century B.C. to the twelfth century A.D., it was decided to select two or three examples of art and literature from each of the three main time periods concerned. For the Roman period, two mosaics from the province of North Africa were chosen. The first is a seasons mosaic from La Chebba, dated to the mid-second century A.D.; the second a mosaic “calendar” originally from El Jem and dated to the Severan period. Literary evidence concerning the daily activities of

⁴ See Dehon (1993, 11-14) for the history of the Roman division of the year into seasons. The earliest extant illustration of the months is on a Hellenistic frieze which now forms part of the facade of the church of Hagios Eleutherios in Athens (second or first century B.C.; for a summary of various opinions on dating, see Parrish 1984, 30, n. 88). The relief sculpture on the frieze includes four figures which represent the four Greek seasons. Each season is followed by three months which are represented by several figures and the signs of the zodiac. Winter includes the Greek months of Maimakterion (November/December), Posideon (December/January), and Gamelion (January/February). For description, discussion, and an illustration of the frieze, see Webster (1938, 5-13 and fig. 1).

⁵ Dehon (1993, 13) quotes several ancient authors, giving the specific dates in November and February which they recognize as the beginning and ending of the winter season.

country-dwellers during the winter is provided by Columella's agricultural manual, *De re rustica* (ca. 60-65 A.D.).

Winter in Carolingian art is represented by illustrations of the months in two manuscripts. The first, known as the Vienna Calendar (818/830 A.D.), is the oldest illustrated calendar in the medieval West.⁶ The second manuscript is the Martyrology of Saint Goar written by Wandalbert von Prum in the ninth century and illustrated at the monastery at St. Gall in the early tenth century.⁷ Carolingian poetry provides references to winter in literature inspired by classical models as well as contemporary expressions of the effect of winter upon individual poets. The first category of poems is represented by Alcuin's *De conflictu veris et hiemis*, the earliest known Carolingian pastoral eclogue;⁸ and by Wandalbert's *De duodecim mensium nominibus signis culturis aerisque qualitatibus*, a mid-ninth century verse description of each of the twelve months of the year. The personal experience of winter is conveyed by brief selections from two ninth-century poets, Walahfrid Strabo and Sedulius Scottus.

The final period under consideration is represented in art by twelfth-century "labours of the months" sculptures on the facade of Chartres cathedral in France. Chartres is only one of many medieval churches whose decoration features cycles of the months. Typically, each month of the cycle is illustrated by a figure engaged in an activity that symbolizes that particular month. Chartres cathedral is not unusual in this respect, and accordingly, it has been neglected in previous studies of medieval labours of

⁶ Webster 1938, 37, 80; Comet 1992, 41.

⁷ Hubert 1970, 174.

the months.⁹ In an attempt to understand the Christian message represented by the labours of the months in medieval religious art, Christian Latin poetry from the fourth century onwards was surveyed.¹⁰ Selected examples of Christian references to winter in poems from the sixth to the twelfth centuries are presented. The Christian poems are then contrasted with four secular poems from the *Carmina Burana*.

Literature Review

Although the present study is focused on selected examples of references to winter in art and literature rather than a complete survey of the seasons in art and literature, it is broad in scope since it covers two different media throughout several centuries. The body of relevant secondary literature is considerable. However, most previous studies only discuss one medium and not the other, or deal with either the antique or medieval period but not both. The following review of the scholarly literature is organized by the time period covered so as to more readily point out the extent to which previous works have addressed the art and literature of that period, and to what degree the studies were focused on the season of winter.

I. The Roman Period.

Levi (1941) devotes most of his article, “The Allegories of the Months in Classical Art,” to a discussion of the illustrated Calendar of Filocalus (also known as the

⁹ The poem dates to the eighth century. See Godman 1985, 144, n. 14.

¹⁰ For example, Webster (1938, 77) dismisses Chartres as one of the “other scattered cycles in France [that] offer nothing of particular interest.”

"Chronograph of 354") and the verses specifically associated with it. The article is not confined to a description of the Chronograph, though. Levi includes remarks concerning possible iconographic sources in Attic calendars. He also deals with possible connections between the iconography of the seasons and illustrations of the months. The interrelationship of poetry and art in calendar cycles is discussed, and a twelfth-century Byzantine painted cycle of the months is described and compared with some of the antique cycles. The iconography of the months in medieval art is beyond the scope of the article, although Levi (1941, 287) acknowledges a connection between the calendars of antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Hanfmann (1951) surveys late-antique Roman cycles of the seasons in his monograph, *The Seasons Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks*. His analysis of the seasons in art and literature is detailed and thorough, covering not only late antiquity, but also all previous imagery and thought that might have influenced the art of the later period. Despite his thoroughness, Hanfmann does not consider any of the seasons mosaics in his analysis. Furthermore, no one individual season is singled out for study.

Henri Stern's monograph (1953) is a detailed and thorough analysis of the Calendar (Chronograph) of 354 A.D., examining the iconography of all illustrations in the calendar, some of which are representations of the months. The short poems that accompany each month in the Chronograph are compared with their illustrations and also with ten other poems of the months originally collected in Webster (1938). In his

¹⁰ The following anthologies of Latin poems were reviewed: Raby (1927) and Spitzmuller (1971), both of which deal specifically with Christian Latin poetry; Godman (1985) on Carolingian poetry; and Waddell

discussion of the antique tradition of representations of the months, Stern recognizes the important influence of illustrations of the seasons. A small number of Roman seasons mosaics are included as examples. He does not focus on any one season in any of his analyses, however.¹¹

Stern (1981) broadens the focus of his study in an article which surveys illustrated cycles of the months in the Roman West from the earliest (second century A.D.) to the latest (fifth century). The article covers several media, including mosaics, sculptures, and paintings. Literature is briefly discussed, and the eleven antique Latin poems specifically associated with the cycles of the months are noted. Seasonal imagery is excluded from the study.¹²

On the other hand, Parrish (1984) deals almost entirely with illustrations of the seasons. His monograph is a complete survey and thorough discussion of the eighty-two known seasons mosaics from Roman North Africa dating from the second century A.D. to the mid-sixth century. The iconography of the season of winter per se is only briefly discussed.¹³ The three cycles of the months in the North African corpus are

(1948) and Waddell (1976), both of which are collections of Latin lyrics.

¹¹ More recently, Salzman (1990) reconsiders the Calendar of 354, taking into account new archaeological and literary evidence, including additional Roman calendar inscriptions. The Calendar provides a basis for Salzman's investigation of the assimilation of pagan culture in fourth-century Roman Christianity, since the Codex-Calendar was produced for a certain Valentinus, a wealthy Christian living in Rome. Salzman includes a list of the eleven extant Latin poems of the months, along with a summary of scholarly opinion as to their probable dates. Like Stern (1953), Salzman does not focus on any particular season.

¹² Courtney (1988) also considers illustrations of the months in Roman art and their relation to the eleven poems described in Stern (1981), but supplements Stern by taking into account six mosaics discovered since 1953. Courtney also excludes seasons imagery from his discussion.

¹³ Parrish 1984, 32-34.

described in one paragraph.¹⁴ Parrish is only concerned with artistic representations; literary references to the seasons are beyond the scope of his work.

Dehon (1993) is the first in-depth study of winter as a theme in Latin poetry. The monograph covers the period from the origin of Latin letters to the end of the reign of Nero (68 A.D.). An entire chapter is devoted to each of seven authors: Lucretius, Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Manilius, Seneca, and Lucan. Other authors including agronomists such as Columella are not considered as important, but they are not neglected, since they are cited within the main chapters whenever additional discussion is required. Dehon's survey of literary sources is complete for the period covered, but the artistic tradition of the season of winter is outside the scope of his study.

2. Carolingian Period

There are no studies of the months or seasons in Carolingian art or literature. Some of the works covering the medieval period include information concerning Carolingian evidence, however.

3. Medieval

Fowler (1873) is the earliest survey of representations of the months and seasons in medieval art. Although Fowler cites many references to the seasons in poetry from ancient Rome down to the medieval period, he does not single out any individual season for study. Le Sénecal's analysis of medieval iconography (1921-23) focuses on the labours of the months. Le Sénecal was the first to recognize the role of seasons

¹⁴ Parrish 1984, 52.

iconography in the development of illustrations of the months.¹⁵ Denis Hue (1989) treats the theme of winter in French medieval literature in his eleven-page article, “L’Hiver du Moyen Age.” Carolingian “debate” poems, including Alcuin’s, are briefly noted, but much of the article deals with Bersuire (seventeenth century) and late vernacular literature.

The labours of the months at Chartres cathedral have received very little attention, although the literature on the cathedral itself is vast. Van der Meulen (1989) collected and annotated 3,464 primary and secondary sources on Chartres cathedral. Of these, only two or three minor works deal with cycles of the labours at Chartres. One notable exception to the lack of scholarship on Chartres is Panadero’s dissertation (1984), in which the west facade of Chartres is one of five monumental Romanesque calendar cycles selected for in-depth study. Panadero surveys Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine representations of the months (121-26), but Roman North Africa is only represented by two mosaics from Carthage. Panadero presents patristic and medieval literature as textual evidence to support her conclusions regarding the sacred meaning of twelfth-century calendar cycles on church facades. Her discussion of the meaning of the sculpted calendar at Chartres is brief and is limited to the meaning of the cycle as a whole (242-55). There is no attempt to study any particular month or season of the cycle.

In a lengthy article George Comet (1992) surveys the development of medieval cycles of the months in art from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries. antique and Carolingian literary sources are discussed as well, and the relationship of the art to

¹⁵ Stern 1953, 236.

the literature is noted. The role of Christianity in medieval imagery of the months is touched on briefly. A significant portion of the article is devoted to an attempt to correlate the imagery of calendar cycles with actual agricultural activities in medieval France. Comet does not consider individual seasons of the year in this article.

4. Works covering more than one period

Tuve (1933) analyses the literary and artistic traditions which lie behind the representations of seasons and months in Chaucer, Lydgate, and other Middle English poets. She begins with classical authors such as Vergil and Ovid, and then traces the Georgic, eclogue, and Ovidian traditions through the Carolingian period up to the Middle Ages. Her study includes discussion of the artistic tradition as it is represented by medieval series of the labours of the months. Chartres cathedral is singled out as an example of the interdependence of medieval art and contemporary literature, science, theology and philosophy, particularly as they relate to the months and seasons. Tuve's discussion of Chartres deals only with the meaning of the "labours" as part of the sculptural programme of the cathedral as a whole; she does not consider the iconography of each individual labour. The artistic tradition is only briefly traced, from the Chronograph of 354 through the Carolingian period and down to the thirteenth century. The important earlier period of the Roman seasons mosaics is not considered at all. Finally, in her discussion of both the literary and artistic traditions, Tuve does not single out any one particular season, except for an occasional reference to spring.

James Webster (1938) focuses on the iconography of the so-called labours of the months, tracing their artistic sources in antique Roman representations of the months. Webster excludes cycles of the seasons (as opposed to the months) and does not cover the medieval period after the twelfth century. Chartres cathedral is not mentioned except to point out that its sculpture is not distinctive enough to warrant further discussion.¹⁶ Webster includes eleven poems that refer to the months, but they are all very brief, late-antique verses written specifically to accompany illustrated cycles of the months.

James Wilhelm (1965) collects seasonal poetry from the classical period to the Late Medieval in his monograph, *The Cruelest Month: Spring, Nature, and Love in Classical and Medieval Lyrics*. The focus here is on spring, the season most commonly represented in medieval literature. There is no discussion of the relationship between literature and the art of the seasons.

The Present Study

The present study concerns several issues not sufficiently dealt with in previous scholarship on the seasons in art and literature. Although there have been some investigations concerning the representations of seasons and months in Roman art, none has singled out the season of winter as its focus. On the other hand, while references to winter in Roman literature have recently been collected and discussed in depth, there is no consideration of the relationship of the literature to the art of the seasons and months.

¹⁶ See above, n. 9.

Previous studies of Carolingian and medieval art have not concentrated on the winter months, and the influence of traditional representations of the seasons has not been sufficiently considered. The theme of winter in medieval literature has been addressed, but only briefly and without adequate examination of Christian Latin poetry. Some previous works have covered the art or the literature of seasons or months from the antique period up to the Middle Ages, but none have directed attention to the season of winter. In order to address these lacunae in previous research, the present study singles out the winter season as it is represented in both art and literature over the course of several centuries ranging from the Roman period to the twelfth century A.D.

CHAPTER I

Although the four seasons had been represented occasionally in Hellenistic Greek art,¹⁷ the theme became much more popular in the Roman period.¹⁸ The seasons appear most frequently in Roman funerary art, where personifications of each season often form part of the sculptural reliefs on sarcophagi. The second most frequent use of the theme is in mosaics,¹⁹ most of which are floor pavements in private dwellings.²⁰ Seasons are usually represented in the mosaics by personifications. Occasionally, though, seasonal activities are illustrated by “genre” scenes which may appear with or without the personifications.

A mosaic of Neptune and the Seasons from Africa Proconsularis is particularly rich in iconography, since it includes personifications of the seasons as well as genre scenes (fig. 1).²¹ North Africa produced the greatest number of mosaics in the Roman Empire²² and most are from Africa as well. Neptune and the Seasons is one of

¹⁷ The best known example of the seasons in Hellenistic art is a frieze in low relief now located on the facade of Hagios Eleutherios in Athens. The four seasons are accompanied by zodiac signs and figures which represent each of the months. The frieze originally formed part of a building dating to the second or first century B.C. (Webster 1938, 5 and fig. 1). Long (1989, 592 citing Simon 1983, 6-7) gives a date in the first century B.C.

¹⁸ Parrish 1979, 279.

¹⁹ Parrish 1979, 279.

²⁰ Based on his survey of all the African seasons mosaics, Parrish (1984, 69) notes a very strong preference for using the seasons theme in private dwellings, as opposed to public buildings: “Of the sixty-two pavements whose setting is specified, fifty-three adorned private dwellings, while only eight occurred in public structures. The latter include bath buildings and what may have been a shrine room or *sacellum* in a military camp.”

²¹ Roman Africa constituted an area equivalent to modern north-west Africa. The first Roman province, Africa Proconsularis, was established after the end of the Third Punic War in 146 B.C. Its territory covered nearly the same area as modern Tunisia. Other provinces were added later, with the Roman presence reaching its greatest extent in the third century A.D. Vandals invaded in 429 A.D., thus bringing an end to Rome's political connection with Africa. See Raven (1993) for chronology and history.

²² Picard 1978, 12; Parrish 1979, 279.

the one of the earliest examples,²³ dating to the mid-second century A.D.²⁴ This mosaic, originally from La Chebba in the Sahel region, has been chosen for an in-depth analysis of the Roman imagery of winter.²⁵

The La Chebba mosaic once formed the floor of a seaside villa.²⁶ The complete mosaic is almost exactly square (16 ft. 1 in. by 15 ft. 11 in.).²⁷ Triumphant Neptune occupies a large medallion in the centre of the square, where he is shown rising from the sea. He drives a chariot pulled by four *hippocampi*, and on either side of him are a Triton and a Nereid.²⁸ Surrounding the central medallion are various images representing the four seasons. The whole mosaic is enclosed by a wide border filled with abstract, geometrical designs.

The seasons imagery in the La Chebba mosaic is particularly rich. A full-length, standing personification of a season occupies each corner of the square. To the left of each personification appears the animal associated with that particular season. To the right of each personification, a genre scene illustrates a seasonal rural labour.²⁹ Finally, plant material appropriate to each season surrounds each personification and appears among its animal and genre scenes.

²³ North African mosaics began to be produced at the end of the first century A.D., but the “golden age” of African mosaics was from the mid-second century to the end of the third century (Picard 1978, 12). Seasons mosaics did not appear until the mid-second century.

²⁴ Opinions differ as to whether the oldest seasons mosaic is the one at La Chebba or the Baths of Trajan at Acholla. Both are dated to the mid-second century, based on stylistic grounds. For a discussion and bibliography, see Parrish 1984, 80-81.

²⁵ La Chebba is near Sfax in present-day Tunisia (Yacoub 1970, 60).

²⁶ Parrish 1984, 201-204, cat. no. 49, pl. 66b-68. For additional bibliography see Parrish 1994, 204; Parrish 1995, 170, n. 6.

²⁷ The dimensions of the mosaic are as given in Blanchard-Lemée (1995, fig. 90).

²⁸ The figures on either side of Neptune are identified as such by Yacoub (1970, 59).

Before turning to a more detailed discussion of the season of winter, it is necessary briefly to describe the imagery of all four seasons, since many aspects of Winter's depiction can only be explained in relation to the other seasons. All four personifications are standing female figures whose seasonal affiliation is marked by their apparent age, clothing, and attributes. As one faces Neptune, the seasons begin with "matronly"³⁰ Winter in the lower left-hand corner.³¹ Winter is the most fully dressed of all the female figures. She wears a long dark purplish-brown tunic and covers her head with a *palla* and a crown of reeds. She protects her feet with sandals, whereas all the other personifications are barefoot.

Winter's attributes are two ducks³² suspended at the end of a long, curving branch which she holds in her right hand.³³ To the left of Winter, and facing towards her, a boar stands among some reeds. To the right, Winter's seasonal labour is represented by a young male stooping over to gather olives from the ground. The youth is dressed in a short-sleeved tunic.³⁴ His head is protected by a close-fitting brown cap, but his feet are bare. A basket for holding the collected olives is suspended from the boy's upper back.

³⁰ The La Chebba mosaic represents the first known illustration of seasonal labours in Roman art (Parrish 1984, 203; Hanfmann 1951, 222).

³¹ Parrish 1984, 203.

³² Parrish (1984, 202) notes that the seasons cycle begins with the personification of Winter, "accented visually by Neptune's extended arm and downward glance, and by inward-turning pairs of figures on either side."

³³ The birds are identified as ducks by Parrish (1984).

³⁴ Parrish (1984, 203) describes the branch as a pole, but it is not rigid enough to be a pole. Perhaps the branch is a reed. White (1975, 226) points out that "Varro (*RR* I.55.1) insists on picking by hand when the berries can be reached from ground level or from ladders and with bare, rather than gloved hands. Fruit that cannot be reached by hand should be lightly struck with a reed (*harundo*) rather than a pole (*pertica*). Harsher methods, according to Varro, will knock off branches and thus diminish next year's crop."

³⁴ Parrish (1984, 32) identifies the garment as a "short tunic (*exomis*)."

Olives appear again in two sprays which rise upwards on both sides of Winter from the acanthus base below her feet.

Moving in a counter-clockwise direction, the next season is spring. The personification of Spring contrasts a great deal with that of Winter. To begin with, Spring is much more youthful in appearance than Winter, the older "matron." Secondly, Spring's clothing is scanty in comparison with Winter's. Whereas Winter is completely covered except for her ankles, Spring is nude except for a few accessories. A long pink shawl is draped around her upper arms and hangs down loosely behind her. She wears a necklace and a bracelet as jewelry and her head is adorned with a crown of pink flowers.³⁵

Spring's attributes consist of more flowers. She holds a single pink flower in her right hand, and a whole basket of the same flowers in her left. To the left of Spring, her seasonal animal, a smooth-haired brown dog, stands between two groups of tall flowering plants. The dog faces away from Spring and strains at his leash, which is attached to one of the sprays of flowers surrounding her. To the right of Spring, the season's labour is represented by a bare-headed young male. He carries a twig in his left hand and balances a basket of pink flowers on his shoulders, supporting it with his right hand. The boy wears a short tunic similar to the one worn by Winter's olive harvester, but his is loosely belted and sleeveless, whereas Winter's was unbelted and had sleeves. More of Spring's vegetation appears in a field to the left of the boy, where seven tall plants blossom with pink flowers. Sprays of the same flowers also encircle the personification of Spring.

Again moving in a counter-clockwise direction, the upper right-hand corner of the mosaic contains the personification of Summer. This woman appears to be older than Spring, though not as old as Winter. Like Spring, Summer is virtually nude. In fact, Summer's nudity is even more complete than Spring's, since she does not even drape her shawl around her back, but simply carries it at her side, letting it hang in long folds from her left arm. Summer's other accessories are similar to Spring's. She wears a necklace and a bracelet on her right arm and wrist. Her head is covered with a crown of wheat, the seasonal plant of summer.

Summer's attributes are both associated with the wheat harvest. In her right hand she carries a sickle, and in her left she holds a basket of wheat sheaves. More wheat grows up in sprays around her and intertwines above her head. To the left of Summer, a lion appears amidst more stalks of wheat. To the right of her, Summer's seasonal labour is represented by a youth in a short-sleeved tunic. He is busy filling a basket with wheat that has just been harvested from the fields of grain shown on either side of him.

The remaining corner of the mosaic is occupied by Autumn. She appears similar in age to Summer; that is, she seems younger than Winter and older than Spring. Autumn is more fully dressed than Spring and Summer, but she is still only partly clothed. She drapes a gold cloak around part of her lower body, covering most of her right side below the waist down to the ankles, but revealing the entire upper body. Other

³⁵ Parrish (1984) identifies the flowers as roses.

than the cloak, she wears nothing except bracelets on each of her arms and on her right wrist, a necklace, and a crown of grapes and vine leaves.

Both of Autumn's attributes refer to wine or wine-making. In her left hand she carries a *thyrsos* and in her right she holds a *kantharos* from which wine is spilling out towards the ground. Grapevines grow around her and encroach onto the space to the left, where her seasonal animal, the panther, turns back to look towards her. On the right of Autumn, an older, bearded man is engaged in the seasonal labour of the grape harvest. He wears a brief tunic that is similar to those worn by the other labourers, but he also covers his shoulders and back with a short cloak. The man carries a stick in his right hand, and two baskets of grapes are suspended from a pole balanced over his left shoulder.

Winter

As noted above, the personification of Winter in the La Chebba mosaic is set apart from the others by her apparent age, clothing, and seasonal attributes. She is a mature-looking woman, in direct contrast to youthful Spring, the season following her. Furthermore, she seems to be the oldest woman of all four personifications.³⁶ If the year begins with Winter,³⁷ one might expect that she would be the youngest of the seasons, and that the personifications would appear progressively older as one moves through the cycle from Winter to Autumn. But that is not the case in the La Chebba mosaic, nor in

³⁶ Précheur-Canonge (1962, 41) remarks that the La Chebba personification fits the traditional representation of Winter as an aged woman with a harsh, wrinkled face: "L'Hiver prend l'aspect d'une femme agée, au visage sévère et ride."

³⁷ See above, n. 31.

fact in most other seasons mosaics. Based on his survey of all known African seasons mosaics, Parrish (1984, 21) notes that “the [female] personification of Winter in African pavements usually is distinguished from her companions . . . by her elderly appearance (because she comes latest in the year).” Parrish’s explanation is flawed here, since he himself has stated that the La Chebba season cycle begins with winter. Perhaps the cycle at La Chebba begins with spring instead of winter. If so, the reason might be that the cycle is an astrological calendar, in which the year begins in spring.³⁸ On the other hand, Winter’s apparent older age may simply reflect the inactivity of the season. Compared to the rest of the year, winter is a time of rest, when colder weather limits the number of agricultural tasks that can be accomplished out of doors.

Another possible interpretation is that the four seasons represent the four ages of man. Spring is equated with birth and childhood, summer with youth, autumn with maturity, and winter with old age. Hanfmann (1951, 75) notes that the link between the seasons and the four ages of man appears much earlier in literature than in art. The first instance is in a Pythagorean poem (sixth century B.C.) praising “The Four.”³⁹ Hanfmann remarks (156 and n. 101) that the notion was still current in the later Roman empire. In the first century B.C., Lucretius associates winter with old age for four reasons: it is the last season of the year, as old age is the last of life; the cold of winter

³⁸ The original Roman calendar, attributed to Romulus, was agricultural and ran from March to December (Howatson, 1990, 109). The astrological year is intimately connected with agriculture and also begins in spring (with Aries, March/April). Astrology has always been closely associated with illustrations of the seasons and months. One of the earliest examples is the Hellenistic frieze now located on the facade of Hagios Eleutherios in Athens (see n. 4 above).

³⁹ Hanfmann 1951, 89.

and of old age are similar; the colour of snow is the same as an old person's hair (white); and trembling with the cold is like an old man trembling with age.⁴⁰

The personification of Winter at La Chebba is fully clothed from head to foot, whereas the other seasons are nude or only partly covered.⁴¹ She is the only one wearing sandals, and the only one whose head is covered by a cloak. It is this last feature that most frequently distinguishes Winter from the other seasons. Parrish (1984, 30) observes that in Roman art, "Winter's most characteristic feature is her hooded cloak." This warm clothing undoubtedly symbolizes the cold and rain of the winter season.⁴² La Chebba is located in the Maghreb region of Africa (present-day Morocco, northern Algeria, and Tunisia). The Maghreb extends 1,400 miles eastward from the Atlantic, and

⁴⁰ Dehon 1993, 28.

⁴¹ The association of winter with warm clothing is made very early on in literature. Hesiod (*Works and Days*) advises his readers to dress well in the month of Lenacon (the last part of January and the first part of February): "Then put on, as I bid you, a soft coat and a tunic to the feet to shield your body—and you should weave thick woof on thin warp. In this clothe yourself so that your hair may keep still and not bristle and stand upon end all over your body. Lace on your feet close-fitting boots of the hide of a slaughtered ox, thickly lined with felt inside. And when the season of frost comes on, stitch together skins of firstling kid with ox sinew, to put over your back and to keep off the rain. On your head above wear a shaped cap of felt to keep your ears from getting wet, for the dawn is chill when Boreas has once made his onslaught (translation Evelyn-White)." Dehon (1993, 76) points out that the association of clothing or of a coat in the cold season had particular success with the comic or satiric authors such as Aristophanes, Plautus, Martial, and Ovid. Columella (*De re rustica*, 11.1.21), writing in the first century A.D., advises farm managers to ensure the slaves are warmly dressed in winter, "carefully protected against cold and rain, both of which are kept off by coats of skin with sleeves and thick hoods. If this be done, almost every winter's day can be endured while they are at work (translation Ash)."

⁴² Parrish explains (1984, 30) that in Greek art the seasons were personified by three Horae, representing the spring, summer, and autumn harvests. The fourth personification, Winter, was added in Hellenistic times, and "the newcomer, Winter, was perceived primarily in climatic terms. . ." From the beginning, the fourth season was illustrated by a personification warmly wrapped up against the cold. Hanfmann (1951, 113 and fig. 80) states that in the first distinctive portrayal of four seasons (reliefs illustrating Dionysus leading a dance of the seasons, ca. 300 B.C.) "Winter is heavily muffed and has drawn her cloak over her head." Regarding the particulars of winter dress, Picard (1990, 247) confirms that the North African mosaics may be taken as evidence for contemporary everyday Roman costume: "Les sculptures représentant généralement des gens en costume d'apparat, ce sont les mosaïques qui nous renseignent le mieux sur la tenue de tous les jours." Precheur-Canonge (1962, 37) uses several African mosaics as evidence for the typical winter costume of agricultural labourers in Roman times: a brief tunic to which is added either a short coat thrown around the shoulders or a small hooded cape (*pelerine à capuchon*).

is bounded on the north by the Mediterranean and on the south by the Atlas mountains. Unlike other areas of North Africa, which are desert lands, the Maghreb is favoured with a regular supply of water. Most of this precipitation occurs in winter. Raven (1993, 4) notes that “the Maghreb’s source of water is . . . rain, brought in on the west winds of winter from the Atlantic and falling on the flanks of its many mountain ranges.” In his comments on the North-African climate, Picard (1990, 186) points out that winter precipitation includes snow in the interior as well as heavy rain on the coast: “L’intérieur de la Berberie connaît des froids rigoureux avec gelées et chutes de neige; la côte elle-même, où le thermomètre s’abaisse rarement au-dessous de zéro, souffre pendant les mois d’hiver d’une humidité fort désagréable et l’Européen moderne se passe difficilement de chauffage.”

The climate of the Maghreb is much the same as that of areas lying to the north of the Mediterranean. In both regions, precipitation levels are significantly different in winter and summer: there is rain in winter and drought in summer.⁴³ Winter is the wettest season and also the coldest.⁴⁴ Although the Mediterranean winter is not as cold as it is in Canada, it is colder and wetter than all the other seasons of the year in that area of the world.⁴⁵ This explains why the Roman personification of Winter is warmly dressed.

⁴³ Raven 1993, 4.

⁴⁴ In present-day Tunisia, the coldest month is January, with a mean temperature of 10° Celsius. December and February are the next coldest, at 12°.

⁴⁵ Although the ancient climate may not have been exactly the same as it is now, the summer and winter weather in present-day Sfax may be compared with that of Palermo, Sicily for the sake of illustration. On January 31, 1998, the mean temperature in Sfax was 54.4° F, with rain and fog; on July 31, the mean was 80.5° with no precipitation. In Palermo, the weather was very similar: the mean for January 31 was 58.2° in rain; and the mean for July 31 was 78.2° with no precipitation.

The attributes of Winter in the La Chebba mosaic are typical for personifications of that season. The pair of ducks suspended from a pole is very similar to a pair carried by Winter in a wall painting at the House of the Ancient Hunt in Pompeii (fig. 2).⁴⁶ Ducks are still associated with winter as late as the fifth century. A bronze relief from Hungary, for example, shows Winter as a warmly-clothed young man carrying a pair of ducks over his shoulder (fig. 3).⁴⁷ The fifth-century “Lord Julius” mosaic from a house in Carthage is a realistic depiction of an African country estate and the various activities that take place there during each season of the year (fig. 4).⁴⁸ The upper left-hand corner represents winter, where one of the farm labourers is seen presenting two ducks to the lady of the “manor.” In all these works of art, the ducks are most likely references to winter bird-hunting.⁴⁹

Before continuing a discussion of winter in the La Chebba mosaic, mention should be made of one other attribute which is common on African mosaics, but

⁴⁶ Stern (1953, 237) notes the association of ducks with winter at Pompeii and also cites an even earlier example. On some terra cotta plaques from Southern Italy (attributable to the third century B.C.). Winter is “une jeune femme vêtue d'un long chiton et d'un manteau, la tête voilée. Elle rapporte le produit de sa chasse: sur l'épaule gauche elle tient un bâton auquel sont suspendus deux canards et un lièvre.”

⁴⁷ Hanfmann 1951, v. 2, 167 and plate 145.

⁴⁸ The Lord Julius mosaic, also known as the “Dominus Julius” mosaic, is dated to the late fourth-early fifth century by Parrish (1984, 111-13 and plates 15-16) and Blanchard-Lemée (1995, 290); to the fourth century by Fantar (1994, 108-9); and to the late fourth century by Picard (1990, 73) and Ling (1998, 93). Parrish (1984, 56) describes the mosaic as “a precious social document . . . unique among Roman pavements in showing genre images of the seasons within a unified landscape setting.”

⁴⁹ Parrish 1984, 27. Précheur-Canonge (1962, 41) describes the birds in the La Chebba mosaic as wild ducks, but (78-79) considers the ducks in the Dominus Julius mosaic domestic rather than wild. Hanfmann (1951, 88, n. 93) suggests that the association of ducks with winter arose in Hellenistic times. The original three seasons in Greek art carried the produce of their seasons, but when Winter was introduced as the fourth season, it was “given the attribute of a dead boar, a dead hare, or dead birds, an allusion to the winter pastime of hunting.” Levi (1941, 256 and n. 16) cites many examples of ducks as references to winter in Roman art.

not present at La Chebba. Many personifications of Winter in Africa carry a hoe,⁵⁰ symbolizing two seasonal tasks related to vine-tending: *ablaqueatio* (airing the vine roots) and *sarritio* (weeding).⁵¹ The earliest known examples of the hoe as an attribute are in two second-century African mosaics, one from the baths of Trajan at Acholla, and the other from La Maison de la Procession dionysiaque in El Jem. It is therefore thought that African mosaicists introduced this attribute into Roman imagery of the winter season.⁵² Parrish (1984, 34) attributes this innovation to the importance of agriculture in North Africa winters.

At La Chebba, each of the personifications is associated with one animal in addition to the animals which serve as attributes. One of these animals, Summer's lion, definitely has astrological significance. The lion is undoubtedly a reference to Leo (July/August). It is possible that all the other animals, including Winter's boar, are astrological references as well. Although the boar appears only rarely in connection with Winter in African mosaics,⁵³ there are numerous instances in other regions of the Roman empire.⁵⁴ At least some of these may be astrological in meaning. The best-known

⁵⁰ Parrish (1984, 33) notes that in African mosaics, the hoe is one of two types: the wedge-shaped *sarculum* or the two-pronged *bidens*. White (1967, 49-50) describes the *bidens* as "an obvious symbol of hard manual labour", adding that: "The heavy *bidens* . . . was commonly used for breaking the soil in stony ground, especially where vines and olives were to be planted, and where the land was infested with bracken or rushes."

⁵¹ White (1967, 26) describes *ablaqueatio* as an operation carried out early in January "designed to remove the deleterious surface roots, and at the same time provide a reservoir of moisture for the growing plant."

⁵² Parrish 1984, 33.

⁵³ Parrish (1984, 183) recognizes only one other African mosaic in which animals represent the seasons. In the "Procession of the Child Dionysos and the Seasons" from El Jem, dated on stylistic grounds to the Late Antonine period, Winter is a "pacing boar;" Summer is a lion, and Autumn is a leopard. Spring is missing.

⁵⁴ According to Parrish (1984, 27 with examples, n. 67) "Winter's boar is the most consistently used [animal] symbol" in use outside of Africa. Stern notes there is an early example on the terra cotta plaques from Southern Italy, where Winter is leading a boar in her right hand (see above, n. 46). Hanfmann (1951, 130-31) cites another early example on the Arretine vases by Ateius, where Winter drags a boar and carries

example is the Mosaic of Rural Labours from a Roman house at St-Romain-en-Gal, dated to the first quarter of the third century (fig. 5).⁵⁵ In the central area of the mosaic, personifications of the four seasons are shown riding animals with celestial associations. Winter, bundled up in warm clothing, is seated astride a boar, an animal linked with winter in some of the ancient zodiacs.⁵⁶ The other seasons are nude genii distinguished from each other only by their attributes and animals. Spring rides a bull, and Summer rides a lion, animals which represent the zodiac signs of Taurus and Leo respectively.⁵⁷ Autumn is mounted on a panther, the animal associated with Dionysus, god of wine.⁵⁸

There are only two other African mosaics in which animals represent the seasons. One is the mosaic of the Procession of the Child Dionysos at El Jem and the other is a mosaic fountain basin from Sousse (fig. 6).⁵⁹ Three of the animals in the El Jem Procession mosaic are the same as those at St-Romain-en-Gal (the spring season at El Jem is missing).⁶⁰ The frieze on the Sousse basin illustrates the same four animals as at St-Romain-en-Gal (fig. 6). Each animal is set within a simple landscape setting which

a hare and a bird (Hanfmann no. 57, datable from a type originating ca. 10-5 B.C.). In the earliest known season sarcophagus (from Kassel, dated ca. 210-240 A.D.) Winter is a winged, partly nude young man accompanied by a sitting boar (Hanfmann 1951, no. 461, pl. 20). Many other third- and fourth-century sarcophagi combine the personification of Winter with a boar.

⁵⁵ "Menses" no. 43 in *LIMC*. Webster (1938, no. 12 and plate VI) dates the mosaic to the third-fourth century; Stern (1953, Pl. 38, no. 3) dates it to the third century.

⁵⁶ Richer (1994) devotes an entire monograph to astrological symbolism in ancient Greek art and architecture. He connects the boar with a zodiac which predates the Greeks', and suggests (104) that the vestiges of the earlier zodiac remain in the legend of the labours of Heracles: "Only one symbol of the earlier zodiac has survived in the labors of Heracles: the Boar, which corresponds to the region later occupied by the signs of Aquarius and Pisces [that is, winter]."

⁵⁷ Stern 1981, 445.

⁵⁸ Dionysos is "patron of the grape harvest" because he is the god of wine (Parrish 1984, 26).

⁵⁹ See n. 53 above. Parrish did not include the Sousse fountain basin in his survey of African seasons mosaics.

⁶⁰ The panther at St-Romain-en-Gal and the leopard at El Jem may be taken as equivalent to each other in representing autumn: The panther is "Dionysos' customary animal along with the tiger and leopard. (Parrish 1984, 39, and n. 143)."

identifies him as a particular season. Winter's boar, for example, stands beside a patch of reeds, the plant traditionally associated with winter.⁶¹ It is very probable that the landscape settings are only a secondary means of identifying the seasons on the Sousse basin. The animals may be astrological symbols for the four seasons.⁶² Hanfmann (1951, 133) suggests this possibility when he points out that the iconographic development by which animals came to be used as symbols of the seasons "may well have been caused by the influence of the astronomic calendar . . . or in other instances, by the influence of festival calendars." It is interesting to note in this regard that when Macrobius (1.21.4) explains how Adonis came to symbolize the sun, he tells the story of how Adonis was killed by a boar:

Ab apro autem tradunt interemptum Adonin, hiemis imaginem in hoc animali fingentes, quod aper, hispidus et asper, gaudet locis umidis, lutosis pruniaque contectis, proprieque hiemali fructu pascitur glande. Ergo hiems veluti vulnus est solis, quae et lucem eius nobis minuit et calorem, quod utrumque animantibus accidit morte.

[The boar] is intended to represent winter, for the boar is an unkempt and rude creature delighting in damp, muddy, and frost-covered places and feeding on the acorn, which is especially a winter fruit. And so Winter, as it were, inflicts a wound on the sun [Adonis], for in winter we find the sun's light and heat ebbing, and it is an ebbing of light and heat that befalls all living creatures at death.

Later on the same chapter, Macrobius (1.21.18-27) explains how every one of the twelve signs of the zodiac "may be properly related to natural attributes of the

⁶¹ Parrish 1984, 28.

⁶² In her catalogue of Roman mosaics from Africa, Dunbabin (1978, 269) does not see any reference to astrology in the basin decoration, which she describes as follows: "On walls, beasts of amphitheatre in landscape setting: fish swimming on bottom."

sun.”⁶³ For example, Leo represents summer because the lion’s strength is greater in its breast and forequarters, just as the sun grows more powerful from spring (that is, the first part of the year) to summer. The lion is weaker in its hindquarters, just as the sun is weaker in winter (that is, the end of the year). Thus, Macrobius provides strong evidence that Hanfmann was correct in believing there is a connection between animal imagery of the seasons and festival or astrological literature.

The La Chebba mosaic, then, may have some kind of astrological significance. Some scholars have suggested such a possibility. Levi (1941, 278) describes the La Chebba mosaic as including the signs of the zodiac, but does not give any evidence in support of his statement. Précheur-Canonge (1962, 41-42) suggests that the mosaic seems to have a ritualistic, religious meaning, part of which derives from astrology:

L’interprétation de cette mosaïque est plus complexe: elle semble avoir un sens religieux, rituel. Le lion est associé à l’Eté, sans doute en rapport avec le signe du Zodiaque, de même la panthère est liée à l’Automne, cette panthère qui tire le char triomphal de Bacchus. Le lévrier du Printemps n’est pas sans rappeler la constellation du mois d’avril [Canis Maior or Minor]. Seul le sanglier, symbole des grandes battues d’hiver, n’aurait pas un sens astrologique.

Parrish (1984, 203) does not consider the mosaic as astrological but notes that all the animals in the La Chebba mosaic are traditional except for Spring’s dog. The dog, however, may have been used here because of its astrological associations.⁶⁴

⁶³ Translations are from Davies (1969).

⁶⁴ Dunbabin (1978, 110, n. 9) describes all four animals on the La Chebba mosaic as traditional: “The animals are those regularly associated with the Seasons: a dog for Spring, a lion for Summer, a leopard for Autumn, and a boar for Winter.”

Précheur-Canonge does not see Winter's boar as having any astrological meaning, but Richer (1994) traces the connection of boars and winter back to one of the most ancient zodiacs and he also links boars with the winter solstice.⁶⁵ As further evidence for the astrological meaning of the winter boar at La Chebba, it may be pointed out that a seasons mosaic in a private residence such as the one at La Chebba may have functioned as a type of astrological calendar specifically created for individuals. Salzman (1990, 8-9) notes the "growing tendency to include astrological information in Roman calendars made for private individuals as early as the first century A.D."⁶⁶ Finally, the only work that is similar in composition and style to the La Chebba pavement is the astrological mosaic of Aion and the Seasons from a house in Haidra (ancient Ammaedara) (fig. 7).⁶⁷ The central deity in the Haidra mosaic is a figure of *Annus* (the year) or *Aion* (eternity) holding an elliptical band on which the signs of the zodiac are inscribed. The seasons are placed at the four corners of the square surrounding him. Although the animal symbols do not appear in this mosaic, it is clear that there is a symbolic relationship between the zodiac, the seasons, and a central deity. Winter's boar seen in this light is simply one of the four seasons, all of which make up the orderly course of the year under the direction of a controlling deity.

⁶⁵ Richer (1994, 136) states that the ancient symbol of the winter solstice was the boar. He also notes (1994, 69) that "the boar seems to be a doublet of the bear, and whenever it appears on coins . . . its significance is either polar or associated with the winter solstice." The "bear" is, of course, the constellation of the Great Bear in the northern polar sky.

⁶⁶ Salzman bases this statement on "scattered literary references" such as Juvenal, "who satirizes popular belief in astrology when he describes a calendar with astrological information carried by a Roman lady of somewhat dubious character [Macrobius 6.569-75]."

⁶⁷ Parrish (1995, 170) dates the mosaic to the first half of the fourth century. He traces its type of design, "with a central deity or cosmocrator and diagonal seasons in corner plants" to the La Chebba mosaic, where the central deity is Neptune.

A more obvious explanation for the association of boars with winter is that boars were usually hunted in the winter.⁶⁸ Horace describes boar hunting as an activity specific to winter:⁶⁹

at cum tonantis annus hibernus Iovis
imbris nivesque comparat,
aut trudit acris hinc et hinc multa cane
apros in obstantes plagas . . . (Epode 2.29-32)

But when the winter-time brings the rains and snow of
thundering Jove, with many a hound one drives the fierce
boars here and there into the restraining nets . . .

According to Précheur-Canonge (1962, 87) the boar hunt was not simply a rural *divertissement*, but had a double objective: to reduce the destruction of property and to obtain good-tasting meat.⁷⁰ Wild boars could cause considerable damage to crops and domestic animals, so much so that hunting them was almost a necessity.⁷¹ Boar hunting is often illustrated in African mosaics. A fourth-century mosaic from Carthage is a particularly good example, as it illustrates two different methods for capturing the beast

⁸ Boars were also included among the wild beasts killed in the amphitheatre, but there is no link between the amphitheatre and any particular season of the year. Dehon (1993, 66) notes that winter was the preferred season for hunting large game, since tracks are easier to see in snow or on ice. Also, there was more time for hunting in winter than in other seasons.

⁶⁹ Noted in Parrish 1984, 26.

⁷⁰ Wild boar meat was a favourite of gourmands in the Roman Empire. See Précheur-Canonge (1962, 87) and Storr-Best (1912, 252, n. 1) where a dinner menu described in Macrobius (2.9) is cited as evidence.

⁷¹ Précheur-Canonge 1962, 75. See Ovid (*Fast. 1.349*): "The first to joy in blood of greedy sow was Ceres, who avenged her crop by the just slaughter of the guilty beast." In his commentary on the *Fasti*, Frazer (1929, 151) adds that "according to Pythagoras, the pig was the first animal to be sacrificed, because it harmed the crops" and "the ravages that wild pigs make in fields of corn are indeed notorious."

(fig. 8).⁷² In the lower register, men on foot use hunting dogs on leashes. In the middle, a man and dog chase the boar into a large circular net. In the upper portion of the mosaic, the dead boar is shown suspended on a pole held by two men on foot.

The La Chebba mosaic includes the first known representation of seasonal labours in Roman art.⁷³ Winter's labour is vividly illustrated by the vignette of a young man collecting olives. The youth bends low towards the ground in order to pick up the olives which have fallen from the trees. He places them in a basket which is suspended from around his upper back and hangs near the ground.⁷⁴ The olive harvest is connected with winter in the mosaic because olives were usually collected at that time of year.⁷⁵ Olives are associated with the winter season in art from other regions of the Roman empire, but not as frequently as in Africa, and not as early.⁷⁶ Parrish (1984, 15) believes that the La Chebba mosaic represents the first use of olives in Roman iconography of the winter season. Olive branches or fruit are commonly used throughout the late second and third centuries as attributes of the seasons in Africa, particularly in personifications

⁷² Précheur-Canonge (1962, 87) describes three different ways of hunting wild boars: "on foot without a net, on foot with a net, and on horseback." The Carthage mosaic of the boar hunt is the earliest of a series of third-century hunting scenes (Dunbabin 1978, 48).

⁷³ Hanfmann 1951, 222; Parrish 1984, 203. Stern (1981, 444) notes that a late first-century (Flavian period) mosaic from Zliten in Tripolitania is the first of four or five cycles in which the *months* of the year are illustrated by genre figures.

⁷⁴ White (1975, 54) describes the many uses of baskets as containers for a wide variety of farm produce and notes that basket-making is listed by Columella (*De re rustica* 2.2.90) among the tasks which may be carried out in winter.

⁷⁵ See Parrish (1984, 14, n. 12) for references to ancient and modern works concerning the olive harvest in winter. White (1975, 225-33) describes ancient methods of harvesting olives and making olive oil. He notes (225-6) that "the olive harvest falls conveniently into place in the farmer's calendar, well after the completion of the vintage (early in November, according to Columella (II.2.83) and Palladius (II.10)) and on into December, depending on the district."

⁷⁶ Parrish (1984, 15, n. 13) gives several examples in various media.

wearing crowns of vegetation.⁷⁷ The Lord Julius mosaic is an example from the fifth century, illustrating the olive harvest as a seasonal labour of winter (fig. 4). The boy on the left of the tree bends over to gather the olives from the ground while another boy hits the tree with a stick to make them fall.⁷⁸

The emphasis on olives in the African mosaics is likely a reflection of the importance of olives in the local economy.⁷⁹ Wheat, wine, and olives were the major agricultural products of Roman Africa.⁸⁰ Africa was a major source of grain for Rome, but in some regions, olive culture was much more important than grain-growing.⁸¹ The area in which La Chebba is located is one of those where olives were the predominant crop. Raven (1993, 94) remarks that “the whole of the area round Thysdrus (El Djem) became a vast olive grove, with trees planted some twenty or thirty yards apart.” Perhaps the abundance of olives in the area influenced the mosaicist who created the La Chebba pavement.

Olive sprays surround the personification of Winter at La Chebba, but the olive plant is not the only vegetation related to the season in the mosaic. Winter wears a crown of reeds and the boar is standing among more reeds to her left. The reed is the

⁷⁷ Olives also appear in connection with a winter month in one of the few mosaics that illustrate the months rather than the seasons. Stern (1981, 454) points out that a late second/early third-century mosaic from Sousse depicts January as the head of a woman wearing a crown of olive leaves and one black olive.

⁷⁸ Précheur-Canonge (1962, 51) comments that evidence from the mosaics indicates that this method of olive harvesting was common, although writers of ancient agricultural manuals advised against it: Varro (*R. 1.55*) explains that beating the olives bruises the young branches, and for that reason it is preferable to pick the olives by hand.

⁷⁹ For the extent of olive cultivation in Africa and the economic and social value of olives and olive oil, see Parrish 1984, 32; Picard 1990, 73-75; Raven 1993, 92-94.

⁸⁰ Précheur-Canonge 1962, 42.

⁸¹ Raven (1993, 79) states that “a century after Caesar north-west Africa’s cornlands provided two-thirds of the wheat the population of Rome required.”

plant traditionally associated with winter in antique art. Parrish (1984, 28) notes that “the reed or rush grows abundantly in the wet winter season, the time of year when Roman farmers cut its stalks in order to make baskets from its leaves.” Thus, reeds refer to the dampness of winter. The reeds have a practical use in the winter season as well. During the olive harvest, reeds were used to knock the berries down from the trees, and the collected berries were placed on reeds and mats.⁸² Many seasons mosaics from Africa in the second and third centuries include reeds as attributes of Winter, with or without the presence of olives.⁸³ In a mosaic from a villa in Leptis Minor, for example, Winter is identified simply by her warm clothing and her crown of reeds (fig. 9).⁸⁴

Summary: Winter in the La Chebba Mosaic

The La Chebba mosaic is an outstanding example of the iconography of the seasons in Africa. This mosaic is unusual in that it combines personifications with scenes from everyday life. The personifications are traditional in some ways, but innovative in others. In traditional manner, Winter is warmly clothed and she is further associated with the season by her ducks and the boar, both of which had been connected with winter in earlier times. The reeds are traditional attributes for Winter, but the olives are an innovation. An even more important innovation is that the personification of

⁸² See White (1975, 83) where he describes the use of reeds (*tegetes*) and mats in the olive harvest, based on Columella (*De re rustica* 12.52.9-10): *cannae, tegetes, quibus oliva excipitur; sereno caelo manibus destringi olivam oportebit, et substratis tegetibus aut kannis cibrari et purgari.*

⁸³ Reeds may also be associated with one of the winter months. The cycle of the months from Sousse shows February as the head of a woman crowned with plants that appear to be reeds, although Stern identifies them as millet (Stern 1981, 69 and pl. XXVI).

⁸⁴ Leptis Minor is located in Africa on the coast of Africa Proconsularis, north of the site of La Chebba. The mosaic is dated to the Severan period on stylistic grounds (Parrish 1984, 210).

Winter is combined with a “genre” scene illustrating the olive harvest, a typical labour of the season.

Having examined the La Chebba mosaic in detail and compared it with other seasons mosaics, we can make certain observations about winter in Roman North Africa. The season’s most distinctive characteristic is that it is cold and wet, at least in comparison to other times of the year. This is evident from the frequent portrayal of winter as a warmly-clothed woman. The dampness of the season is further indicated by the reed, a common attribute of personifications of the season. Hunting was a favourite occupation of winter, with wild ducks or boars being the typical game. The primary agricultural labour of the season was harvesting olives. The olive crop was particularly important to North Africans, and African mosaicists introduced the olive as an attribute of Winter in Roman art.

The Calendar Mosaic from El Jem

The “genre” scenes at La Chebba showing realistic figures engaged in a seasonal activity are closely related to ancient calendar art, in which one activity illustrates each month.⁸⁵ A mosaic calendar originally from El Jem (ancient Thysdrus) is important not only because it is an early example, but also because it is one of the few cycles of the months in Roman art (fig. 10).⁸⁶ This mosaic has been selected for study in

⁸⁵ Parrish 1984, 19.

⁸⁶ Stern (1981, 432-33) discusses the history of Roman illustrations of the months. The earliest cycles, of which there are twenty-one known examples, date from the second century A.D. Fifteen of these are mosaics. According to Stern, the earliest two (a stone disk known as the “Altar of Gabii” and a glass plaque from Tanis, Egypt) may date from the first quarter or first half of the second century, but the other

order to determine how the iconography of the winter months complements the imagery of the winter season.

The El Jem calendar mosaic once paved the floor of Room 6 in the west wing of the Maison des Mois, and is dated by Parrish (1984, 159-60) to the period of Alexander Severus, 222-235 A.D.⁸⁷ The mosaic comprises a series of twenty-four square panels set within a grid formed by wide, decorative borders. The panels are arranged in four horizontal rows of six each. Each row begins with a panel in which a single male figure is engaged in some type of activity which represents one of the seasons. The next three panels in the row illustrate the three months which correspond with that season. Finally, the last two panels in each row are decorative, consisting entirely of floral motifs.

If one assumes that the cycle begins at the top of the mosaic, the first season is spring and the last is winter.⁸⁸ Spring is illustrated by a barefoot young man in a long-sleeved tunic. He wears a crown of flowers on his head. Over his shoulders he carries a goat. To the right are the panels corresponding to the spring season. They are identified by inscriptions reading MARTIAS, APRILES, and MAIAS (March, April, and May). Each of these months is illustrated by two or more male figures engaged in a religious rite appropriate to the month.⁸⁹ March is the festival of the *Marmuralia*,⁹⁰ April,

cycles are no earlier than the end of the second century. Both early cycles symbolize the months by using the signs of the zodiac.

⁸⁷ Parrish (1984, 160) dates the mosaic on the basis of archaeological and stylistic evidence. The excavator (Foucher) found datable potsherds and lamp fragments under various mosaics in the west wing of the house, giving a *terminus post quem* at the beginning of the third century. Stern (1953) narrowed the dating to the period of Alexander Severus by comparing the month of October with illustrations on coins and other calendars. Stern (1981, 436) simply dates the mosaic to the first half of the third century.

⁸⁸ See n. 38 above regarding spring as the beginning of the year.

⁸⁹ In the following description of the seasons and months at El Jem, the images and the activities or rites illustrated are as described by Parrish (1984, 156-60) unless otherwise noted.

the *Veneralia*;⁹¹ and May, a sacrifice in honour of the birthday of Mercury, patron deity of the town of Thysdrus.⁹²

Continuing downwards from the top of the mosaic, the next row represents summer. The first panel depicts the season as a young man wearing a short tunic. His right shoulder is bare and he wears no shoes. On his head is a crown of wheat, and he carries a bundle of wheat on his shoulders. In his right hand he carries a sickle. The months of June, July, and August (IVNIUNIVS, IVLIVS, AVGVSTVS) are illustrated in the panels to the right. In two of them (June and July), an activity from Roman daily life is represented, rather than a religious rite. In June, a passerby purchases a beverage at a *thermopolium* (hot-drink stand).⁹³ In July, a young man wearing a short tunic carries a basket of dead branches on his shoulders.⁹⁴ The third panel, August, is a statue of Diana accompanied by a deer and a hound. The statue commemorates the *Natalis* of Diana.⁹⁵

The season of autumn is depicted by a barefoot young man wearing a green tunic with red stripes. He represents the vintage, since his head is crowned with grapes and he holds a drinking horn in his right hand. In his left hand he carries a *pedum* (shepherd's crook). September, October, and November (SEPTEMBER, OCTOBRES, NOVEMBER) each contain two or more male figures illustrating an agricultural labour

⁹⁰ Stern (1981, 436-37) describes the scene as a rite for which the significance is unknown. The *Mamuralia* were celebrated on fourteenth or fifteenth of the month.

⁹¹ The *Veneralia* were held the first of April. The panel shows two men dancing in front of a statuette of Venus. Stern (1981, 437) remarks that this is the oldest known image of the festival.

⁹² The *Natalis* of Mercury was celebrated on the Ides of May (Stern 1981, 437).

⁹³ The meaning of this panel is unknown. Stern (1981, 437) suggests the possibility that it may refer to the heat of the summer in North Africa.

⁹⁴ According to Parrish (1984, 158) this was an agricultural activity of July. Stern (1981, 437) admits that he cannot determine what is carried in the basket, but suggests that it may have been the deadwood that Columella (*De re rustica*, 11.52) and Palladius (*De re rustica*, 8.1) recommend collecting in July.

or a religious rite. September illustrates autumn wine-making. Two young men in loincloths hang onto ropes suspended above their heads so as to steady themselves as they tread the grapes. The imagery for October is very unusual.⁹⁶ Two men in long tunics face each other and raise one arm to meet the opposite arm of his partner. In between them appears a large star with eight long points. This scene is difficult to interpret, but may refer to the birthday of Alexander Severus.⁹⁷ November commemorates a feast of Isis (the *Hilaria*, festival of joy)⁹⁸ celebrated on the third day of the month.⁹⁹ Two priests of the Egyptian goddess Isis are accompanied by a man holding a sistrum¹⁰⁰ and wearing a jackal's-head mask in imitation of Anubis, who accompanied Isis in her search for Osiris.¹⁰¹ The cult of Isis was widespread in the ancient world, and was particularly important in Africa.¹⁰²

The final row represents the season of winter. The first panel shows a man who is obviously older than the other seasons. He is also the most fully clothed. His head is covered with a yellow *cucullus* (cowl or hood) and he wears a dark green tunic. His legs and feet are protected by leggings and boots. Winter's attributes are traditional: in his left hand he carries a reed stalk from which two ducks are suspended.¹⁰³ In his right

⁹⁵ The *Natalis of Diana* was on the Ides of August (Stern 1981, 437).

⁹⁶ Blanchard-Lemée (1995, 48) remarks that October, with its allusion to the emperor Alexander Severus, constitutes the only unusual iconography in the entire mosaic.

⁹⁷ Parrish's identification of the scene is based on Stern (1965) in which he demonstrates that this image evokes the birthday of the emperor, which fell on the first of October. Stern dates the mosaic to the time of Alexander Severus (222-238) based on his interpretation of this scene.

⁹⁸ Stern 1968, 191.

⁹⁹ Stern 1981, 438.

¹⁰⁰ Blanchard-Lemée 1995, 48.

¹⁰¹ Stern 1981, 438.

¹⁰² Yacoub 1970, 58.

¹⁰³ Blanchard-Lemée (1995, 48) identifies the plant as a stalk of millet.

hand he holds a hare.¹⁰⁴ The winter months (DECEMBER, IANVARIVS, FEBRVARIVS) all show two or more figures engaged in activities having to do with Roman customs or religious festivals.

December features the *Saturnalia*, a festival held from the seventeenth to the twenty-third day of the month.¹⁰⁵ Three barefoot slaves wearing light-coloured loincloths¹⁰⁶ and crowns of leaves seem “to argue about the possession of a torch, held by the central figure (Parrish 1984, 159).” The torch is either a reference to nocturnal celebrations¹⁰⁷ or a gift customarily given as part of the festival. Stern (1968, 194) states that a wax torch was, along with small terra-cotta figurines, the typical gift of the *Saturnalia*.¹⁰⁸ Salzman (1990, 75) describes the *Saturnalia* as a Roman holiday which included sacrifices in honour of Saturn as well as a public banquet and “continued for several days with entertainment and revelry in private homes.” This festival was “the most cheerful of the year, a time of enjoyment, goodwill, and licence, of present-giving and lighting candles (Howatson 1990, 509).”

The illustration for January represents the customary exchange of vows and gifts on the first day of the new (civil) year. Two men in festival tunics and thick hooded cloaks¹⁰⁹ are embracing each other, presumably as they exchange vows for the

¹⁰⁴ The hare also appears with Winter in African seasons mosaics, but only once. However, there are several instances of a connection between hares and winter in Roman art from other regions of the Empire. Hare-hunting in winter is described in Xenophon *Cyn.* 6.13, 8.1 (see Parrish 1984, 33, n. 103, 104).

¹⁰⁵ Stern 1981, 438.

¹⁰⁶ Stern 1968, 194 identifies the men as slaves because the *Saturnalia* is a festival of slaves, and the men are wearing *subligacula*, the customary garments of labourers.

¹⁰⁷ Stern 1981, 438.

¹⁰⁸ Salzman (1990, 75, n. 52) refers to the torch as a *cereus* (“wax candle”).

¹⁰⁹ Stern 1981, 438.

New Year.¹¹⁰ Beside them is a table holding ritual gifts. The base of the table takes the form of a statuette which may represent a *Lar*.¹¹¹ The subject of this panel is unique in antique art, but may be explained by certain texts, including a passage from Ovid (*Fast.* 1.175-76), which describes the Roman custom of exchanging vows on January the first (Stern 1968, 178). The embrace per se is also recorded in literary sources, but not until much later, in authors such as Libanius (314-393 A.D.)¹¹² and Bishop Maximus of Turin (end of the fourth century).¹¹³ The *strenae* (New Year's presents) on the table are difficult to identify, but Stern (1968, 180) recognizes branches of greenery and a large round cake, both customary gifts for this day. The other items may be fruit, since *strenae* usually included cakes, figs, pears, dates, and greenery.¹¹⁴

In her discussion of January's illustration in the fourth-century Roman manuscript known as the "Chronograph" or "Codex-Calendar" of 354, Salzman (1990, 79-83) suggests that the mosaic from El Jem represents a synthesis of two celebrations held at the beginning of the year: the offering of vows on the *Kalends* (first) of January, and the *ludi compitales* held for several days afterward. The *ludi compitales* were originally celebrated to close the old year and pray to the *Lares* for good fortune in the coming year.¹¹⁵ Based on evidence collected by Meslin (1970), Salzman (1990, 80, n. 75)

¹¹⁰ In his commentary on Ovid *Fast.* 1.175, Frazer (1929, 112) explains that "on the first day of the year the Romans wished each other joy in order by a good omen to ensure happiness and prosperity throughout the year."

¹¹¹ The statuette is identified by Stern (1968, 180) as a bronze divinity holding a rhyton. He suggests the deity could be a *Lar* (household god) or a Dionysos.

¹¹² Libanius writes that on New Year's Day, masters embrace their servants (Stern 1968, 179).

¹¹³ Bishop Maximus disparages the expensive gifts one gives on this day, without due regard for the poor. He sees the customary kiss as the mark of a hypocrite (Stern 1968, 179).

¹¹⁴ Stern 1968, 180.

¹¹⁵ Frazer (1929, 454-55) describes the *Compitalia* as "a festival of [the *Lares* and] cross-roads . . . celebrated annually a few days after the *Saturnalia*, with which it had some features in common, the slaves

describes the combined festivities as a series of ritual dances, banquets, public and private ceremonies, exchanges of gifts, and profession of vows or wishes for the coming year. New Year's Eve was celebrated with dances, banquets, and rituals which included setting up a *tabula fortuna* (table filled with good things for the new year). On New Year's Day, Roman consuls would offer their vows for the well-being of the state (*vota pro salute rei publicae*). After an exchange of gifts among public officials, vows and gifts (*strenae*) were exchanged by individuals among their friends. The evening was spent in banquets and dancing.

The final month, February, illustrates a popular Roman fertility rite celebrated during the *Lupercalia*, which was held on the fifteenth of the month.¹¹⁶ The *Lupercalia* was a very ancient Roman festival held in honour of the pastoral god Faunus, worshipped under the name of Lupercus.¹¹⁷ During the festival, worshippers would meet in a cave on the Palatine hill in Rome to sacrifice animals. A select group of worshippers, semi-nude and smeared with blood from the sacrifice, would run through the streets of Rome purifying everyone they met by hitting them with thongs (*februa*) made from skins of the sacrificed animals.¹¹⁸ Young women would put themselves in the way of the blows, since the purification was thought to increase fertility. The mosaic

being set at liberty for the occasion and even allowed to officiate at the religious services in honour of the dead." He adds that "at the festival of the *Compitalia* cakes were offered by every family, and woollen effigies of men and women and woollen balls were hung up by night at the cross-roads."

¹¹⁶ Frazer (1929, 328) commenting on Ovid (*Fast. 2.267*) says that the *Lupercalia* is "one of the oldest and most interesting, but at the same time most obscure and debated, festivals in the Roman year" and that it was only suppressed in 494 A.D. when it was converted into the Christian Feast of the Purification of the Virgin.

¹¹⁷ Howatson 1990, 333.

¹¹⁸ *Februa* from *februare* "to purify." Frazer (1929, 278) commenting on Ovid (*Fast. 2.19*) reminds us that "in the old Roman calendar February was the last month of the year," an appropriate time for purification.

represents two men holding a young woman while a young man whips her.¹¹⁹ The whipping is ritualistic, meant to render her fertile.

Summary: Winter in the El Jem Mosaic

The calendar mosaic from El Jem is an important visual record of popular religious festivals celebrated in the Roman empire.¹²⁰ The winter season per se is symbolized at El Jem by a traditional image in which a warmly-clothed personification carries two common attributes of the season: a duck and some reeds. The meanings of the clothing and attributes are familiar from previous discussion of the African seasons mosaics. The panels of the winter months deepen our understanding of the winter season. Both the *Saturnalia* in December and the New Year's festivities in January are particularly joyous celebrations, characterized by gift-giving and extended periods of feasting. The *Lupercalia* in February is not connected with such merriment, but with rites of purification. The entire month of *Februarius* (the cleansing month) derives its name from these rites, thus indicating their importance. Purification in turn is superstitiously linked with fertility. Perhaps fertility is most important in late winter, since this time of the year is just prior to spring, when the fertility of the soil will determine the abundance of the crops. January shares this concern for good fortune. The gifts and vows given on New Year's day are essentially best wishes for continued good luck during the rest of the year.

¹¹⁹ The two men are servants (Stern 1981, 438).

¹²⁰ Stern (1968, 200) refers to the El Jem calendar mosaic as the most complete example of Roman cycles of the month which are primarily religious in content.

CHAPTER II

Columella and the "Farmer's Manual" Tradition

Among classical literary sources, the manuals on farming are particularly relevant to an investigation of the Roman experience of winter. Agriculture is intimately connected with the seasons, since rural life depends on nature in a very direct and obvious manner. Of all the extant Roman writings on agriculture,¹²¹ Columella's farm manual, *De re rustica*, is the most comprehensive.¹²² Written in the first century A.D., the manual is comprised of twelve books which give detailed instructions on all aspects of farming. In the preface, Columella makes it clear that he has consulted many previous works on farming, and has written the manual in order to convey his knowledge of agriculture to a certain person named Publius Silvinus. Silvinus is otherwise unknown, but he may have lived on a farm near Columella. It is known that Columella himself had practical knowledge of farm life. He was originally from Gades, in the Roman province of Baetica (Southern Spain), but eventually came to live near Rome and at various times owned farms in Latium and Etruria.¹²³ His intention in *De re rustica* is clearly to give practical advice on farm management, whether based on his reading of related texts, or his own personal experience. After citing a long list of previous writers on agriculture, both Greek and Roman, he advises Publius Silvinus to consult them as a first step in mastering the art of agriculture:

¹²¹ The other surviving ancient farm manuals are: Cato the Elder (234-149 B.C.) *De agri cultura*; Varro (116-27 B.C.) *De re rustica*; Palladius (fourth century A.D.) *De re rustica*. Palladius was the most popular agronomist in the Middle Ages, but his work is essentially the same as Columella's (Martin 1976, xxii). None of the extant works are African.

¹²² Ash 1941-55, xiii.

Hos igitur, P. Silvine, priusquam cum agricolatione contrahas, advocato in consilium, nec tamen sic mente dispositus velut summam totius rei sententiis eorum consecuturus, quippe eiusmodi scriptorum monumenta magis instruunt quam faciunt. (1.1.15)

These, then, Publius Silvinus, are the men whom you are to call into consultation before you make any contract with agriculture, yet not with any thought that you will attain perfection in the whole subject through their maxims; for the treatises of such writers instruct rather than create the craftsman.¹²⁴

And further along, he includes his own manual among those which Publius Silvinus is to consult:

Quare nostra praecepta non consummare scientiam, sed adiuvare promittunt. Nec statim quisquam compos agricolationis erit his perfectis rationibus, nisi et obire eas voluerit et per facultates potuerit. Ideoque haec velut adminicula studiosis promittimus, non profutura per se sola, sed cum aliis. (1.1.17)

These precepts of ours promise, not to bring the science to perfection, but to lend a helping hand. And no man will immediately become a master of agriculture by the reading of these doctrines, unless he has the will and the resources to put them into practice. We set them forth, therefore, in the nature of supports to those who wish to learn, not intended to be beneficial by themselves alone, but in conjunction with other requirements.

De re rustica, then, is a record of activities that were likely to have been carried out on a Roman farm during the first century A.D.¹²⁵ Furthermore, these practices remained the same for several centuries following Columella. *De re rustica* was highly

¹²³ Ash 1941-55, xi.

¹²⁴ All translations of Columella are from Ash 1941-55.

¹²⁵ Regarding the validity of the writings of the ancient agronomists as evidence for Roman agricultural history, White (1967, 7) points out that "our surviving authorities [including Columella] are handbooks for farmers, not scholarly treatises."

regarded not only by his contemporaries, but also by subsequent writers on agriculture. Columella's contemporary, Pliny the Elder (23/4-79 A.D.), cites him as an authority on natural history. Palladius (fourth century A.D.) relies heavily on Columella in his own *De re rustica*. Later authors such as Cassiodorus in the sixth century and Isidore of Seville in the seventh refer to Columella as one of the most outstanding writers on agriculture. Columella's work survived down to modern times partly because of its great popularity. *De re rustica* was edited and printed many times in western Europe in the century following the introduction of printed books.¹²⁶

The manual is comprehensive in subject matter and systematic in its presentation of information. Book 1 provides general directions regarding choice of suitable land, the water supply, arrangement of farm buildings, and distribution of tasks among the managers and labourers. The second book deals with agriculture proper, the ploughing and enrichment of the soil, and care of the crops. Books 3 to 5 cover the cultivation, grafting, and pruning of fruit trees and shrubs, vines, and olives. In Books 6 to 9, every aspect of animal husbandry is discussed, from the large animals down to the smaller domestic animals, poultry, fish, and bees. Book 10 is devoted to gardening. Book 11 addresses the duties of the farm overseer, and includes a *Calendarium rusticum* which gives the times and seasons for various kinds of farm labour. Finally, Book 12 defines the duties of the overseer's wife and gives recipes for wine and instructions for preserving vegetables and fruits.

¹²⁶ Ash 1941-55, xix.

Of all these books, Book 11 is the most relevant for determining the daily activities of each season. The whole of the second section of Book 11 is a calendar which lists all the farm labours that are to be carried out each month of the year. The weather for each season is, of course, of prime importance in determining what can and should be done. Columella makes this explicit in his introduction to Book 11, section 2:

Itaque praecipiemus, quid quoque mense faciendum sit, sic temporibus accommodantes opera ruris, et permiserit status caeli: cuius varietatem mutationemque si ex hoc commentario fuerit praemonitus villicus, aut nunquam decipietur, aut certe non frequenter. (11.2.1)

We will, therefore, prescribe what work must be done each month, accommodating the operations of agriculture to the seasons of the year, as the state of the weather shall permit, and if the bailiff has been warned by our brief explanation about the variety and changing of the weather, he will never, or at any rate, very seldom be deceived.

The description of each month is divided into two halves. Each half begins with a forecast of expected weather and wind conditions. Since the weather is perceived to be intimately connected with the heavens, the forecast is based on the particular constellations which are rising and setting during the period.¹²⁷ The movements of the constellations also mark the passage of time. For both these reasons, a description of each month's astrological/astronomical events forms an essential part of the calendar.

¹²⁷ Vergil (*G.* 1.252-58) underlines the importance of the rising and setting constellations for weather and the seasons: "Hence, though the sky be fitful, we can foretell the weather's changes, hence the harvest-tide and sowing-time; when it is meet to lash with oars the sea's faithless calm, when to launch our well-rigged fleet, or in the woods to fell the pine in season. Not in vain do we watch the signs as they rise and set (*nec frustra signorum obitus speculamur et ortus*), and the year, uniform in its four several seasons (translation from Fairclough 1935)." The "signs" are the twelve signs of the zodiac (Fairclough 1935, 97, n. 4 on *G.* 1.232).

The calendar begins with the second half of January. Following is a detailed summary of the labours which Columella recommends for each month of the year. The entire year is presented here in order to facilitate later discussion of the winter months in comparison with other times of the year.

Month	Labours
January (Second Half)	cultivating pruning vineyards thinning brier-hedges weeding piling twigs cutting wood for fuel cleaning meadows and protecting them against cattle breaking land hoeing sowing vetch (if not sown in the previous month) trenching vines grafting fruit trees making vine-props or stakes

	<p>cutting down trees for buildings</p> <p>marking lambs and cattle with branding irons</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
February (First Half)	<p>cleaning meadows and cornfields and putting them into hay (for districts near the sea)</p> <p>propping and tying vines</p> <p>digging up vineyards</p> <p>pruning trees</p> <p>transplanting</p> <p>finishing the trenching and planting vines</p> <p>spreading manure on the meadows and around olive and other trees</p> <p>putting in poplars, willows, ash and elm</p> <p>pruning and digging around existing trees</p> <p>removing twigs from vines and the trees which support them</p> <p>making hedges from branches and briars</p> <p>planting new rose beds or cultivating old ones</p> <p>making willow beds or cutting back existing ones</p> <p>sowing broom and three-month corn</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>

February (Second Half)	<p>setting mallet-shoots and quick-sets</p> <p>grafting trees and vines (in warm regions)</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
March (First Half)	<p>putting the gardens in order</p> <p>pruning vines</p> <p>choosing scions</p> <p>grafting vines and trees</p> <p>planting vines (in cold and damp localities)</p> <p>setting the tops of fig-trees</p> <p>hoeing cornfields a second time</p> <p>cleaning meadows and preventing cattle from entering them (done from January onwards in warm, dry districts)</p> <p>making planting-holes for trees to be planted in autumn</p> <p>making furrows for planting vines and trees</p> <p>finishing the digging and preparing of rose beds</p> <p>pouring unsalted oil-lees around olive-trees which are in poor condition</p> <p>establishing seed-nurseries</p> <p>sowing laurel and myrtle and other evergreens in beds</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>

March (Second Half)	<p>breaking up marshy and rich lands and fallows which were previously broken up in January</p> <p>pruning arbours of vines</p> <p>pruning any single tree mated to vines</p> <p>sowing ordinary millet and Italian millet</p> <p>castrating cattle and other four-footed beasts (but in warm districts, castration is between February 13th and April 13th; and in cold districts, between March 15th and May 15th)</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
April (First Half)	<p>the first digging of the vineyards must be finished (in cold districts)</p> <p>grafting fig-trees and vines</p> <p>weeding and digging up the seed-nurseries previously planted</p> <p>washing sheep with soapwort (<i>radice lanaria</i>) to prepare them for shearing</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
April (Second Half)	<p>same as in first half of April. In addition:</p> <p>grafting or budding the olive-trees and other fruit-trees</p> <p>first trimming of the vines</p> <p>mending broken frames or replacing poles in the vineyard</p> <p>branding the cattle from the second birth</p>

	feeding the oxen
May (First Half)	<p>weeding cornfields</p> <p>cutting hay</p> <p>digging around trees</p> <p>digging up all the seed-nurseries</p> <p>last season for planting cuttings of olive in the nursery-bed</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
May (Second Half)	<p>digging over an established vineyard once again</p> <p>trimming vineyards</p> <p>shearing sheep (in some districts)</p> <p>surveying stock to see how many were born and lost</p> <p>“Also he who sows lupines for manuring the land now finally turns it in with the plough.”</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
June (First Half)	<p>“During these days, if we have been overwhelmed with work, the same tasks must be carried out which should have been done at the end of May”</p> <p>digging around fruit trees and earthing them up</p> <p>breaking up the earth for the first time, or repeating the process</p> <p>preparing the threshing-ground</p>

	<p>providing fodder, if available, to the cattle feeding the oxen</p>
June (Second Half)	<p>same as for first half June. In addition:</p> <p>cutting vetch for fodder</p> <p>reaping barley</p> <p>pulling up the late beans</p> <p>crushing ripe beans and storing their pods</p> <p>threshing the barley and storing up the chaff</p> <p>cleaning beehives</p> <p>harvesting the honeycombs (if they are full and are sealed up)</p> <p>"In the overseas provinces some people sow sesame in this or the following month."</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
July (First Half)	<p>carrying on the tasks mentioned above. In addition:</p> <p>breaking the fallow a second time</p> <p>clearing stumps from woodlands while the moon is waning</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
July (Second Half)	<p>"the harvest finishes in temperate places near the sea, and within thirty days of the cutting of the corn the straw which has been cut is gathered into heaps."</p>

	<p>digging around all the trees which were on the cornfield and heaping earth around them</p> <p>ploughing land for a second time (if preparing for a heavy sowing)</p> <p>digging and cultivating new vineyards</p> <p>cutting foliage for the cattle (also done in August)</p> <p>sowing sesame (in some districts; in the damp regions of Italy it can be done in the previous month)</p> <p>hanging branches of the wild fig on the fig-trees (to prevent the fruit from falling off, and to make it mature faster)</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
August (First Half)	<p>same tasks as above. In addition:</p> <p>gathering honeycombs (in some regions, if the honeycombs are full of honey and are sealed up; if not, delayed until October)</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
August (Second Half)	<p>inoculating (grafting) fig-trees</p> <p>finishing the vintage (in places such as the coastal regions of Baetica and in Africa)</p> <p>harrowing the vineyards (in colder regions)</p> <p>sowing and harrowing lupine into the vineyards (as fertilizer)</p> <p>making raisins and dried figs</p>

	uprooting ferns and sedge feeding the oxen
September (First Half)	finishing the vintage (in warm places near the sea) ploughing a second or third time getting sea-water (to boil for use in preserving wines) feeding the oxen
September (Second Half)	vintage (in most places) preparing wine-jars and other equipment for making wine making beds for navews and turnips (in dry places) sowing mixed fodder, fenugreek and vetches (for fodder) sowing lupine reaping millet feeding the oxen
October (First Half)	vintage (in cold regions) sowing early-ripening cereal grains (in cold regions) feeding the oxen
October (Second Half)	transplanting seedlings and shrubs mating the elms with the vines propagating the vines

	<p>weeding and digging up the nurseries</p> <p>digging up the earth around trees and in the vineyards</p> <p>pruning trees</p> <p>cutting back the vines which are supported by trees</p> <p>pruning small fig-trees growing in nurseries</p> <p>cleaning out ditches and streams and making drains and gutters for the water</p> <p>"At this time too if anyone is minded to make a wilderness, that is a wood where various trees are planted together, he will do well to plant it with acorns and seeds of the other trees."</p> <p>stripping olives from the olive-trees (if green oil is wanted)</p> <p>providing oxen with ash leaves or mountain-ash or holm-oak leaves giving oxen mast mixed with chaff</p>
November (First Half)	<p>carrying out tasks which could not be done the previous month</p> <p>sowing beans and covering them with earth and harrowing them</p> <p>digging around the olive-trees and spreading goat manure around them</p> <p>pouring pigeon manure, human urine, or some other manure on each vine</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
November (Second Half)	<p>finishing the tasks omitted during the previous days</p> <p>completing the sowing</p>

	<p>feeding the oxen</p> <p>The following work is to be done by artificial light:</p> <p>cutting and sharpening poles and props for the vineyard</p> <p>making hives for the bees (from fennel or bark)</p> <p>making frails and baskets (from palm-trees or broom)</p> <p>making hampers from osiers</p> <p>cleaning willows and preparing them as ties for the vines</p> <p>sharpening iron tools and making handles for them, or fitting them to handles already made</p>
December (First Half)	<p>“Tasks which have been omitted in the preceding month will have to be completed, obviously in temperate and warm regions; for in cold regions they cannot now be properly performed.”</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
December (Second Half)	<p>“The soil ought not be disturbed with any iron tool, unless you trench it for the sake of the vines.”</p> <p>But other work may be done:</p> <p>gathering olives and preparing them</p> <p>staking vines and fastening them</p> <p>placing frames in the vineyards</p> <p>grafting fruit trees</p>

	<p>sowing pulse</p> <p>feeding the oxen</p>
January (First Half)	<p>"The more scrupulous husbandmen abstain from operations upon the soil, except that, on January 1st, for the sake of good luck, they make a beginning of work of every kind, but they put off the working of the soil until the ensuing 13th day of the month."</p> <p>However, at least one task must be done:</p> <p>feeding the oxen chaff with vetch soaked in water, or chaff with chickpea, or a fodder-basket filled with leaves, or chaff and hay, or foliage of the holm-oak or bay tree, or a dry mash of barley. The same diet is to be given again in February and March)</p>

The labours outlined above may be grouped into seven types of activities:

(1) planting and preparing soil, (2) maintaining the plants by weeding, fertilizing, pruning, etc., (3) harvesting and storing, (4) feeding animals, (5) maintaining animals by branding, castrating, washing, and shearing, (6) making tools and equipment, and (7) maintaining or constructing farm buildings. The activity that is carried out most often throughout all the months is (1) planting and preparing the soil. This type of work is to be carried out in every month of the year. The only exception is December, which as Columella notes, may be too cold in some climates to allow planting and working with the soil. The second most frequent category is (2) maintaining the plants. Activities of this type are required from January to August, and then from October to December.

Again, Columella recognizes that December may be too cold for this sort of work. As might be expected, harvesting and storing (3) take place in fewer months of the year. This work is carried out from May until December, with the usual proviso concerning those regions where December is too cold for harvesting. Feeding the oxen is mentioned for every month of the year, but different types of feed are to be given in certain seasons. The other labours involving animals (4) are indicated only for January through June. Making tools and equipment (5) is described as a labour for the second half of January, April, and November, and the first half of December. Finally, maintaining buildings (gathering wood for fuel) is only scheduled for the second half of January.

Winter

Columella's calendar records the one certainty in rural life: the labours of the farm are never-ending. In his didactic poem about farming and Roman country life, Vergil says (*G.* 2.401-402):

redit agricolis labor actus in orbem,
atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.

The farmer's labour is a treadmill.

All round the year he treads in his own tracks.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Translation from Wilkinson 1969.

Compared to other times of the year, though, the winter season is a period of rest. For at least one month in winter (the second half of December and the first half of January) very little work is done. Columella explicitly states that there is to be no working of the soil in the last half of December except for trenching of vines (11.2.95):

His diebus qui religiosius rem rusticam colunt, nisi si vinearum causa pastines, negant debere terram ferro commoveri.

During these days [in December], according to those who practise husbandry with unusually scrupulous care, the soil ought not be disturbed with any iron tool, unless you trench it for the sake of the vines.¹²⁹

Vergil (*G. 2.315-17*) had given a similar warning:

nec tibi tam prudens quisquam persuadeat auctor
tellurem Borea rigidam spirante movere.
rura gelu tunc claudit hiems

Let no counsellor seem so wise as to persuade you to stir the stiff soil when the North-wind blows. Then winter grips the land with frost.¹³⁰

Vergil also prohibits seeding in winter, due to the cold rains of the season (*G. 1.210-11*):

serite hordea campis
usque sub extremum brumae intractabilis imbrem.

¹²⁹ Translation from Ash 1941-55.

¹³⁰ Translation from Fairclough 1935.

sow barley in your fields

up till the end, near the rain of inconvenient winter.¹³¹

Columella suggests that one should take advantage of the relatively light demands of winter agriculture by preparing farm equipment indoors. The days are short, but the hours of work may be extended using artificial light (11.2.90-92):

But also, when the nights are long, some time must be added to the period of daylight; for there are many things which can be properly done by artificial light. For if we possess vineyards, poles and props can be hewn and sharpened; or if the district is productive of fennel or bark, hives should be made for the bees; or if it is rich in palm-trees or broom, frails and baskets can be made; or if it abounds in twigs, hampers can be made from osiers. Not to go now into detail of all the other things than can be made, there is no district which does not provide something which can be made by artificial light; for he is the lazy farmer who waits for the short day to begin, especially in regions when the winter days last for only nine hours while the night goes on for fifteen hours. Willows also cut down the previous day can be cleaned by artificial light and prepared as ties for the vines. . . . Then too you should sharpen iron tools by artificial light and make handles for them or fit to them handles already made.¹³²

Vergil (*G.* 1.259-67) also advises his readers to attend to other types of chores when winter weather prevents working on the fields. Dented ploughshares may be beaten sharp, troughs made by hollowing out trees, flocks branded, and the piles of stored

¹³¹ These admonitions against winter labours are ancient in origin. Hesiod (*Works and Days*, 1.493-97) advises to "pass by the smithy and its crowded lounge in winter time when the cold keeps men from field work (translation from Evelyn-White, 1914).

¹³² Translation from Ash 1941-55.

grain (*acervi*) labeled. Stakes may be sharpened, baskets woven, and grain (*fruges*) roasted and ground. Vergil later discusses the types of labours that may be carried out at night. He describes a farm couple happily working at various tasks on a winter evening (G. 1.291-96):

et quidam seros hiberni ad luminis ignes
pervigilat ferroque faces inspicat acuto;
interea longum cantu solata laborem
arguto coniunx percurrit pectine telas,
aut dulcis musti volcano decoquit umorem
et foliis undam trepidi despumat aeni.

One there is I know
Who sits up late in winter and by firelight
With a sharp blade trims his torches, while his wife,
Singing to mitigate her drudgery,
Passes the piercing shuttle through the web,
Or boiling down sweet must over the hearth
Skims froth with a bunch of leaves from the bubbling
cauldron.¹³³

The winter tasks outlined by Columella and Vergil are not at all onerous in comparison with the labours of the other seasons. The farmer is relatively inactive in

¹³³ Translation from Wilkinson 1969.

winter, and there is time for leisure. Columella does not speak directly of the farmer's enjoyment of winter's leisure, but it is explicit in Vergil (*G.* 1.299-302):

hiems ignava colono.
frigoribus parto agricolae plerumque fruuntur
mutuaque inter se laeti convivia curant.
invitat genialis hiems curasque resolvit

Winter's for holidays: when it's cold outside
Farmers enjoy their gains and give themselves
To mutual entertainment. Self-indulgent
Winter plays host and charms away their worries.¹³⁴

Dehon (1993, 64) points out that Vergil (*G.* 1.302) suggests the festivities and banquets of winter are to be enjoyed as a reward for agricultural labours carried out during the rest of the year. Winter personified receives the farmers at his table and invites them to have a good time, “*indulgere genio, d'où son epithète *genialis** (v. 302).”¹³⁵ The farmers' leisure and feasting are well-earned.

The association of winter with rest and good times is firmly entrenched within the Roman mind. When Vergil (*G.* 3.349-83) describes eternal winter in Scythia,

¹³⁴ Translation from Wilkinson 1969.

¹³⁵ See Dehon 1993, 64 for the literary precedents for winter feasts and banquets. Even before Vergil, the idea had been expressed by Lucilius (ca. 180-102 B.C.) (Fg., 564-565 [Kr.]). Winter personified receives the farmers at his table and urges them to have a good time, whence his epithet *genialis*. After Vergil, several late-antique authors, including Ausonius and Prudentius, refer to Winter as *genialis hiems* (“cheerful Winter”).

he exaggerates everything that characterizes the season in Italy.¹³⁶ Scythia is a fabulous land in the farthest northern regions of the world where winter is permanent. This is the ultimate winter: nothing but snow, ice, cold, wind, and darkness. Just as the Romans enjoy rest in winter, the Scythians enjoy leisure, but here it is never-ending; it lasts the whole year long. The northerners live in caves (376-77) deep within the earth, and they keep warm beside a blazing hearth, just as the Romans do. But the Scythians' fires are fueled with whole elm-trees (378), not just with logs. Finally, the Scythians are not content with a few dinner parties, but spend whole nights drinking and entertaining themselves (G. 3.379-80):

hic noctem ludo ducunt, et pocula laeti
fermento atque acidis imitantur vitea sorbis.

here they spend the night, and joyfully
with beer and fermented service-berries imitate cups of
wine.

Vergil adds a personal and picturesque dimension to Columella's more basic inventory of agricultural labours throughout the year. It is clear from both writers that a farmer's work is never done. However, winter is a season of comparative leisure, since the cold and rain prevent work on the fields. Certain tasks may be completed inside the house, using artificial light to extend the working day. The most characteristic features of the season are that it is cold and wet; and that it is the one time of the year in

¹³⁶ Dehon 1993, 72-85.

which it is possible to relax and enjoy food and drink. The discomfort of the winter climate is balanced by inactivity and feasting.

Winter in Roman Art and Literature

The literary evidence that has been examined greatly supplements our understanding of winter derived from ancient mosaics. Columella is comprehensive in his listing of farm activities for the season, in a way that is not possible in artistic representations. Many of the labours in Columella's calendar for the winter months would not "translate" well into art. Some examples are: manuring;¹³⁷ branding the flocks; cleaning meadows; planting or transplanting trees; thinning hedges; propping, tying, and staking vines; and feeding the oxen. Many activities are carried out in other seasons besides winter, and so would not be suitable for symbolizing winter in art. Feeding cattle, for example, is a year-round activity and so would not be distinct enough to represent winter in the mosaics.

The interpretation of the La Chebba mosaic is in some respects confirmed by the literary evidence in Columella. The fully-clothed personification of Winter is a reference to the cold and rain which Columella describes as preventing further work in the fields. The agronomist also advises the farm manager to make sure the slaves are dressed warmly at this time of year. One of the attributes of Winter, the reed, is used for making baskets and hampers in November. The olive harvest shown on the mosaic is scheduled for December in the calendar. Finally, if the La Chebba mosaic has

¹³⁷ There is one mosaic that illustrates two men carrying manure out to the fields.

astrological significance, it is because agricultural calendars such as Columella's farming manual relate every labour to the prevailing weather, as determined by the rising and setting of the constellations.

The El Jem calendar mosaic does not illustrate any labours for the winter months, and so is less directly connected with Columella's calendar. However, the religious rites and festivals to which it refers confirm the sense of ease and enjoyment that comes with the relative inactivity of the winter season. The *Saturnalia* in December and the New Year's banquets and gifts in January correspond well with the winter feasting and entertainment described by Vergil.

The mosaics and the agricultural manuals together present a picture of the Roman winter as being cold and wet. One needs to protect oneself from the weather by dressing appropriately. The inconvenience and discomforts of the season are balanced by pleasant activities such as hunting, feasting, and resting. Some labours are still required in winter, but they are not as strenuous as at other times of the year.

CHAPTER III

After the late antique period, the four seasons are not often represented in art. However, images of the months become increasingly common. During the Carolingian period (eighth and ninth centuries) labours of the months and signs of the zodiac appear most often in illuminated manuscripts inspired by late antique models.¹³⁸ Most often, the labours and signs are included within secular “scientific” manuscripts such as texts of astronomy, astrology, or computus (time-reckoning used to calculate the date of Easter based on lunar and stellar positions).¹³⁹ Occasionally, “scientific” calendar illustrations (with or without the zodiac) are adopted for use in religious manuscripts.¹⁴⁰ Two ninth-century manuscript calendars, the Vienna Calendar of 818/30 and Wandalbert’s illustrated Martyrology of Saint Goar, have been selected in order to study the theme of winter in Carolingian art.

The Vienna Calendar of 818/830 A.D.

The oldest illustrated calendar of the medieval West is an illuminated manuscript associated with the Salzburg school.¹⁴¹ The Salzburg manuscript exists in two identical copies, one now in Vienna, dated to about 818; the other in Munich, dated no

¹³⁸ The Carolingian “renaissance” looked to antique sources for its literary and artistic inspiration. Carolingian illustrated calendars were heavily indebted to late antique calendars. One well-known example is the Chronograph of 354 A.D., which was copied in the ninth century. (See Salzman (1990) for a history of the manuscript’s transmission.) Webster (1938, 46) provides evidence that the Chronograph of 354 was not the only antique calendar copied and circulated in the West in the Carolingian period.

¹³⁹ Panadero 1984, 127. For a brief history of the computus as calendar treatises, see Tuve (1933, 135-36).

¹⁴⁰ Panadero (1984, 127-28) gives as examples the illustrated Martyrology of Wandalbert, the First Bible of Charles the Bald (the Vivian Bible), and the representation of Heavenly Jerusalem in the Utrecht Psalter.

¹⁴¹ Webster 1938, 37; Levi 1941, 286; Comet 1992, 41.

later than 830.¹⁴² Both copies are hereafter referred to as the “Vienna Calendar” (fig. 11).

The calendar constitutes one page of a secular manuscript containing computus and astronomical texts.¹⁴³ Each of the twelve months is represented by a single figure engaged in some type of activity or holding an attribute which has some relevance to that particular month. In all the months, with the possible exception of March, the activity is secular and has no connection with religious rites.¹⁴⁴ In most months, the reference is to a rural labour such as ploughing (June) or vintaging (October). Each month is identified by an inscription which appears above the figure for the month. The twelve months are arranged in four rows of three each, beginning with January at the upper left. Each row is separated from the next by a thin red line, and a similar line appears at the bottom of the series, seeming to close it off from the rest of the page. The figures are outlined in pen using dark brown ink, while washes of various colours are applied to the bodies and clothing.¹⁴⁵

The iconography of the months derives in part from antique sources. Classical references are obvious in the clothing of the figures and in some of their attributes. All months are depicted as men wearing tunics, and some figures also wear togas. January warms his hands before a fire; February holds a large bird (hawk?)¹⁴⁶ on

¹⁴² One manuscript is in Vienna (Staatsbibliothek, MS. 387) and is dated not later than 830. The other is in Munich (Staatsbibliothek, MS. Clm. 210, cim. 309), dated ca. 818 (Webster 1938, catalogue no. 24, p. 37 and p. 129). Comet (1992, 41, n. 15) dates the Salzburg calendar in Vienna to “avant 830” (before 830).

¹⁴³ The calendar page precedes an illustrated enumeration of the signs of the zodiac. Given that the context is an astronomical treatise, the calendar has a close connection with the zodiac.

¹⁴⁴ See n. 147 below.

¹⁴⁵ A coloured illustration appears in Perez Higuera (1998, 12). All other illustrations known to me are in black and white.

¹⁴⁶ The identity of the bird is in question. Webster (1938, 37) describes February in the Vienna Calendar as “a man with a falcon (?) on his hand.” Comet (1992, 42) describes the bird as “un gros volatile qui pourrait être un canard (“a large bird which could be a duck”). Perez Higuera (1998, 12) refers to the bird

his right hand; March carries a snake in his left hand and a small bird in his right hand.¹⁴⁷

April stands next to a blossoming tree in which a speckled bird is nesting.¹⁴⁸ May, a man with outstretched arms, holds a bouquet of flowers and a long object which hangs down towards the ground.¹⁴⁹ June is ploughing behind two yoked oxen. July is a bare-footed man with a scythe over his shoulder, preparing to cut the hay below him. August is reaping wheat with a sickle, and September is seeding. October holds a vine in his left hand and places grapes (?) down on the ground with his right hand.¹⁵⁰ November and December are killing a pig.¹⁵¹

Winter

as a "swan." It is possible that the bird is indeed a falcon. According to Perez Higuera (1998, 201), falconry (hunting with birds of prey) originated in the East. It was known to the Romans, but not often practiced. It is probable that falconry was introduced to the Iberian peninsula through the Moorish kingdom of al-Andalus, since "according to the chronicles, al-Hakam I practised falconry and Abd al-Rahman II hunted cranes with hawks in the Guadalquivir valley." From there it seems to have quickly spread to the Christian kingdoms, because in his will (dated 812) Alfonso II bequeathed some goshawk chicks to the cathedral of Oviedo. Levi (1941, 271, n. 49) cites Paulinus of Pella (end of the fourth century A.D.) as the first author in the West to exactly describe a hunt using the falcon.

¹⁴⁷ As Perez Higuera points out (1998, 12) it is difficult to interpret the meaning of March, who holds a bird in one hand and a snake in the other. Webster (1938, 37) believes that March personifies the month that brings serpents out of hibernation. He notes that the scene here is "explainable only by the verse of the *Carmina Salzburgiana*, 'Martius educit serpentem, alite gaudet' ("March calls forth the serpents, and rejoices in the bird"). Webster (1938, 80) also notes that the snake is paralleled only once, in the Gerona tapestry (twelfth century). It is possible that the illustration is connected with Vergil G. 2.318: *optima vinetis satio, cum vere rubente / candida venit avis longis invisa colubris*, "The best planting season for vines is when in blushing spring the white bird [*Ciconia alba*, the white stork], the foe of long snakes, is come" (translation from Fairclough 1935). In the Gerona tapestry, the figure representing March "grasps a snake and has a swan at his side, confirmed by the label 'CICONIA'" (Perez Higuera 1998, 12).

¹⁴⁸ Webster (1938, 37) sees April as "a man with a bundle in his arm beside a tree."

¹⁴⁹ Webster (1938, 37) describes the object as "a vine (or string of onions or the like)."

¹⁵⁰ Webster (1938, 38) interprets October as "a man [who] plucks the grapes with his left hand, and with his right pours the wine into a cask which lies on the ground."

¹⁵¹ Webster (1938, 38) describes November and December as follows: "November: killing hogs (?); a man stabs a hog with a long spear. December: killing hogs (or rather butchering, here); i.e., a man hacks a ham from the hog of November, this cycle being peculiar in its use of the same hog for the November and December illustrations."

The months of November and December share a scene in which two men are killing a hog. The man at the left is identified as November by the inscription (NOUB) which appears just to the left of his head. He faces towards December, also identified by an inscription (DECEM). The hog stands between them and faces November, who is sticking a long spear into his head between the eyes.¹⁵² December grabs one of the pig's hind trotters with his left hand; with his right, he raises a broad-bladed knife above the hog's hind quarters. These two months represent the pig slaughter carried out in late autumn and early winter in preparation for the cold season ahead. Pig slaughter is only represented once in antique cycles of the months.¹⁵³ As for literary evidence, of all the antique and Carolingian poems written specifically for calendars, the only reference to killing pigs is in one dated to the Carolingian period.¹⁵⁴ Thus the surviving art and literature seem to indicate that pig-killing was introduced as a symbol of winter in the Carolingian period.

It is possible, though, that the Carolingian pig is simply an adaptation from ancient illustrations of the winter season. At least one season (?) mosaic from Roman North Africa (Cherchel in present-day Algeria) includes butchering a boar among the activities of late autumn (fig. 12). The boar is associated with winter in the La Chebba

¹⁵² Comet (1992, 71) suggests that the implement might be a pike.

¹⁵³ Pig-killing is an activity for November in third-century relief sculpture on the "Porte de Mars" in Reims. According to Comet (1992, 62 citing Stern 1953) "l'Antiquité ne présente pas d'abattage du cochon, sauf à Reims au IIIe siècle et cela semble bien indiquer une origine gauloise à ce thème qu'ont choisi les Carolingiens." Stern (1981) dates the "Porte de Mars" to the second to third centuries; Picard (1978) to the end of the second century. Courtney (1988, 36) states that pig slaughter appears "in November on the Gate of Mars at Reims of unknown date [emphasis mine], and becomes a feature of mediaeval representations and poems."

¹⁵⁴ *The Officia duodecim mensium*, considered Carolingian by Stern (1953). See Courtney 1988, 36.

mosaic, either as a reference to the hunt or as an astrological symbol for the season.¹⁵⁵ There is also a long-standing tradition in ancient literature which associates the winter season with boar-hunting, and several mosaics illustrate the boar hunt.¹⁵⁶ It is therefore probable that the link between boars and winter in ancient sources was transferred to the Carolingian period. The winter boar of Roman art became the winter pig of the Carolingian calendars.

January is shown in the Vienna Calendar as a fully-clothed man huddled in front of a fire. Clearly, the scene is meant to portray the cold winter weather. A fire is rarely associated with winter before the Carolingian period. However, there is at least one example in ancient illustrations of the seasons. On the painted stucco vault of the Villa Hadriana in Tivoli (ca. 125-135 A.D.) personifications of the four seasons appear within medallions. Winter is represented as an old man warming his hands before a fire (fig. 13).¹⁵⁷ A fire also appears in the Chronograph of 354, although it is intended there for ritual purposes rather than for warming (fig. 14). January is represented in the Chronograph as a man wearing a fur cap, long tunic, and toga. Incense is smoking in the flames which rise from a tall metal burner at his side.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ See above, pages 22-40.

¹⁵⁶ Levi (1941, 287) points out that "the actual scene of hunting could easily find a prototype in the numberless representations of hunting of late antique art, where the motive of the boar is almost never lacking."

¹⁵⁷ Levi (1941) notes the possible connection between the Villa Hadriana "warming" scene and the medieval imagery of winter, but no other scholar since him has mentioned it.

¹⁵⁸ See Salzman (1990, 79-83) for description and interpretation. She traces the January incense-burning to earlier representations such as January in a mosaic from St.-Romain-en-Gal, dated to the second to third centuries A.D. (Stern 1981, 445-49).

February in the Vienna Calendar holds a large bird in his right hand. It is possible that this is a reference to a Carolingian practice of hunting with falcons in winter.¹⁵⁹ If not specifically a falcon, the bird undoubtedly refers to the ancient tradition which associates birds with winter. The Chronograph of 354 specifically describes February as the month which “sets out to catch the birds of the marshes.”¹⁶⁰ Birds in Roman seasons mosaics, for example, allude to duck hunting in winter and to the rainy winter weather which is suited to these aquatic animals.¹⁶¹ Levi (1941, 286) observes that February in the Vienna Calendar recalls “the hunter of water-birds in classical art.” Comet (1992, 43) concurs, adding that the bird in February is a reminder of the representations of water-birds such as one finds in the Chronograph of 354 or in the Roman mosaics.

The Vienna Calendar presents a different view of winter from that shown in the ancient calendar mosaic at El Jem. Most of the activities depicted in the Vienna manuscript are secular, rural “labours” whereas those in the El Jem mosaic are primarily religious rituals. The iconography of the Vienna Calendar is derived from classical imagery found in the seasons mosaics, rather than the calendar mosaic at El Jem. The ideas about winter in the Vienna Calendar also show a striking similarity to those expressed via the seasons mosaics. November and December in the Calendar are associated with killing a hog, just as winter is linked with boar-hunting in the mosaics. January represents the idea that winter is cold. The manuscript symbolizes the frigid cold

¹⁵⁹ See n. 146 above.

¹⁶⁰ See n. 205 below.

¹⁶¹ See discussion of the symbolism of birds in connection with the La Chebba mosaic above, p. 23.

of winter by a man warming himself by a fire. The seasons mosaics illustrate the same idea by depicting a woman bundled up in warm clothing. Finally, February is shown in the manuscript as a man holding a bird, a clear reference to the winter bird hunt. Birds are commonly included in the ancient mosaics, where they represent the winter bird hunt and the rainy weather of the season.

The Illustrated Martyrology of Wandalbert

There are few similarities in iconography between the Vienna Calendar and another Carolingian cycle of the months, the late ninth-century manuscript known as the “Martyrology of Wandalbert” (fig. 15).¹⁶² The origin of the manuscript is not known definitively, but on stylistic grounds, the text appears to have been illuminated at the monastery of St. Gall in the early tenth century.¹⁶³ Each month is represented in the manuscript by a single figure placed within an architectural frame. Most of the months incorporate the signs of the zodiac with which they are associated. There are no inscriptions labeling the months, since the zodiac signs and the attributes of the figures provide sufficient identification. January is shown holding Capricorn in his right hand and a small pig in his left.¹⁶⁴ February is a bearded man who pours water (the sign of Aquarius) from a jug onto a fire below. March holds a pair of large fish, a reference to Pisces. April holds flowers in his right hand and snaps the fingers of his left hand. Near his feet at the bottom right appears a goat, the symbol of Aries. May is a man crowned

¹⁶² Vatican Library *Reg. lat. 438*. By the Carolingian period, it was common to include calendars in Christian martyrologies. The so-called Martyrology of Wandalbert concerns the life of Saint Goar; Wandalbert of Prüm is the author of its text.

¹⁶³ Hubert 1970, 174 and figs. 159-60. July is mislabeled as November in the illustration.

¹⁶⁴ All descriptions of the Martyrology are as given in Webster (1938, 41-46).

with flowers; he holds flowering twigs in his right hand and more flowers in his left. Taurus, the bull, is curled up at his feet. June is a semi-nude man holding a platter on which he has placed miniature busts of two young men in reference to Gemini, the Twins. July shows a man mowing with a large scythe. A small crab to the right of his knees represents the sign of Cancer. August is a man cutting wheat with a sickle. Leo, the lion, appears at the bottom right. The month of September has been lost. October holds the scales (Libra) in one hand and a vine in the other, symbolizing the vintage. November is a young man who drinks from a cup (?) and holds (or leans on) a staff.¹⁶⁵ The sign of Scorpio is added at the bottom right. December is a bearded man who sits with his legs crossed, warming at a fire.¹⁶⁶

Before focusing on the winter months, it is necessary to briefly discuss the signs of the zodiac, since they are of considerable importance in the Martyrology. It is not at all uncommon to see zodiac signs in ancient and Carolingian calendars.¹⁶⁷ However, the particular combination of months and signs in the Martyrology is very unusual. A series in which January is paired with Capricorn, February with Aquarius,

¹⁶⁵ Webster (1938) describes the object that the man is holding up to his lips as a “cup”; but it seems more likely that it is a drinking horn, since it has a long, conical shape.

¹⁶⁶ Webster does not say whether the sign of Sagittarius is present in the illustration of December. The only reproduction available to me is not distinct enough to permit verification that a zodiac sign accompanies this month.

¹⁶⁷ As noted above (n. 4), the Hellenistic calendar at St. Eleutherios in Athens included signs of the zodiac as well as representations of the seasons and months. Roman seasons mosaics occasionally contain zodiac signs. Four examples from North Africa represent a “zodiac-equipped young Aion” and the seasons (Parrish 1984, 192). They are: Parrish nos. 7 (from Carthage, fourth century); 44 (from Haidra, end of the third century or early fourth century); 46 (from Hippo Regius in Algeria, fourth century); and A-3 (from Silin near Leptis Magna in Libya, of uncertain date). Salzman (1990, 270) cites a second- or third-century mosaic from Hellin (Spain) which combines the signs of the zodiac with the months. Zodiacs are often found in manuscript calendars. Webster (1938, 46) describes a Carolingian copy of a manuscript of Aratos’ *Phaenomena* (a didactic poem about astronomy) in which the planets and months are illustrated along with the signs of the zodiac. At least two other ancient manuscripts combining the months and the

etc. is rare in illustrated calendars. January is almost always associated with Aquarius, February with Pisces, and so on.¹⁶⁸ The only other illustrated cycles of the months with the same combination as the Martyrology are a black-and-white floor mosaic from the crypt of S. Savino in Piacenza (tenth century), the twelfth-century manuscript *Martyriologum Zwiefaltense* (also known as the “Swabian Calendar”), and the twelfth-century labours of the months sculpted on the west facade of Chartres cathedral. It should be noted that some of the ancient and Carolingian calendar verses also link January with Capricorn.¹⁶⁹

Winter

The Martyrology of Wandalbert clearly refers to antique models for much of its iconography. All the months are represented by single figures holding attributes or engaged in activities relevant to the month. The zodiac signs, for which there is a long tradition in ancient art and literature, constitute an important means of identification for each of the months.

November

zodiac are known to have been copied in the ninth century: an illustrated Ptolemy dated 250 A.D. (Vatican Library MS.gr.1291) and the Chronograph of 354 A.D.

¹⁶⁸ Each sign of the zodiac may be associated with two months. As Courtney (1988, 39) observes, the “signs of the zodiac succeed each other about the 20th of the month, so they may be applied to either of two months.” Almost all medieval calendars in all media show only one symbol or activity and one zodiac sign for each month. The exceptions (*Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* and the printed *Grand Kalendrier des bergiers*) are much later in date (Perez Higuera 1998, 72).

¹⁶⁹ For ancient literary sources connecting January with Capricorn, see the *Menologium Rusticum Colotianus. Inscriptiones urbis Romae latinae*, reprinted in Webster (1938, 104). Panadero (1984, 183) notes that the sequence at Chartres follows Bede (*De temporum ratione*) and that in the Carolingian period, Rabanus Maurus (*De computo*) repeats the first two lines of Bede. Another example from the Carolingian period is Wandalbert’s long poem about the months, *De duodecim mensium* (see below, p. 89-106).

November is obviously indicated by the small sign of Scorpio. It is difficult to interpret the meaning of the central figure, a young man who appears to be drinking from a horn while he leans on a staff. Webster (1938, 45) believes this is a reference to tasting the new-made wine at vintage time. This may be so, since at least one Carolingian poem refers to drinking the new wine in November.¹⁷⁰ It is possible, though, that the scene represents a swineherd calling the pigs in from the forest after they have fattened themselves on acorns. From ancient times onward, pigs were pastured in the woods and trained to return home at the sound of a horn.¹⁷¹ Fowler (1883, 206) describes this procedure in connection with the mast season in late eighteenth-century England. The season began at the end of September and lasted for about six weeks. Every day the pigs would wander from their sty into the forest, where they would feed on acorns which had fallen down onto the ground. At the end of the day, the swineherd would call them back home by sounding a horn. He further comments (206) that "the horn is used to this day to call the swine in the forests of Germany, and that it was the instrument by which the swineherd called his herd in the Middle Ages, is clear from various sources."

December

December is a man warming himself by the fire. This scene is simply a visual representation of how one deals with the cold winter weather. As discussed above

¹⁷⁰ Wandalbert (*De duodecim mensium*) concludes the section on November with the words: *tum dulces ludi, tumque est gratissimus ignis. Atque novo oblectat somnum invitare lieo* ("Then there are pleasant pastimes; and then, a welcome fire. And it is pleasing to invite sleep with new wine").

¹⁷¹ Varro (*R.* 2.20.7). See Storr-Best 1912, 178, n. 1.

with reference to the Vienna Calendar, the winter season had been connected with symbols of "warming" since at least the second century onwards.

January

January holds the sign of Capricorn in one hand and a small pig in the other. Although the act of killing is not represented, the pig undoubtedly refers to winter feasting. The hogs were slaughtered in late autumn to provide food for the winter. Again, as discussed in relation to the Vienna Calendar, the association of pigs with winter has certain precedents in ancient art.

February

The illustration for February appears to be mainly astrological, since it features a man pouring a jug of water, the traditional sign of Aquarius. Aquarius is a "watery" sign and it corresponds to the rainy weather of winter. While this sign is not commonly used outside of zodiacs, it had been used occasionally in ancient seasons mosaics as the symbol of winter. An early example (second century A.D.) comes from the House of Dionysos in Paphos on Cyprus (fig. 16). Winter is represented by the bust of a bearded man who is supporting an overturned jug of water. Aquarius is clearly equated with winter in this mosaic. A fifth-century seasons mosaic from a church in Dair Solaib also symbolizes winter as Aquarius (fig. 17). Here, the bust of a warmly-dressed young woman holds a jug from which water is flowing upwards in two large streams. The woman is identified as Winter by the Greek inscription XIMERINH [χειμερινή] at the upper left of the panel.

The meaning of the fire in the Martyrology's illustration of February is difficult to determine. Webster (1938, 42) describes February as a "man putting out the fire which should warm him." This could have no practical application to daily life in the winter, of course. It is possible that the scene refers to a balancing of the four elements. The fire (hot and dry) equalizes the rainy winter weather (cold and wet).¹⁷²

Main Themes in the Carolingian Art

The foregoing examination of two different ninth-century manuscripts has shown that the Carolingian iconography of the winter months was inspired directly or indirectly by ancient illustrations. Many of the same notions regarding winter are common to both periods. The principal idea is that winter is cold. Warming scenes are featured in January in the Vienna Calendar and in December in the Martyrology. The second important concept is that winter is a time for hunting and feasting. The birds which appear in the manuscripts as the attribute of February represent the winter bird hunt, just as they had in ancient mosaics. Pigs appear in the manuscripts because they are the source of the ham which will be eaten during the winter months. Pig-slaughter is particularly important in the Vienna Calendar, where November and December are represented by killing and butchering a hog. Boars had occasionally been used to represent winter in Roman mosaics, primarily because the boar hunt was commonly carried out during the winter.

¹⁷² See Dehon (1993, 54-54, 82) for ancient thought regarding the balance between winter and summer. The opposites of cold and hot, wet and dry were seen to cancel each other out, resulting in stability and order.

The main difference between the two manuscripts is the presence of zodiac signs in the Martyrology. This in itself is not an innovation, since the zodiac appears in ancient and Carolingian calendars, either alone or accompanied by the seasons or months. It must be remembered, too, that even though the Vienna Calendar page does not include the signs of the zodiac, it immediately precedes a zodiac in the manuscript. The calendar and the zodiac must be read in conjunction with each other. In the Martyrology, the signs of the zodiac help identify the months. The iconography of individual zodiac signs does not necessarily have any direct relevance to winter. Aquarius seems to be an exception, since the sign's pouring water effectively suggests the wet weather of February.

CHAPTER IV

While there are few sources for the study of winter in Carolingian art, there are several sources in literature. Six Latin poems have been selected as representative of the period, beginning with the eighth-century *Carmen de conflictu veris et hiemis* (Debate of Spring and Winter). This classically-inspired pastoral poem is light-hearted, but sophisticated. The debate summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of winter as compared with spring. A simpler description of winter appears in the *Carmina salisburgensia*, two sets of ninth-century “calendar verses” from Salzburg. The fourth poem is the *De duodecim mensium nominibus, signis aerisque qualitatibus* composed by Wandalbert of Prum in the mid-ninth century. This is a much longer work which successfully combines classical literary traditions with vivid descriptions of contemporary rural activities for each month of the year. The last two poems, by Walahfrid Strabo and Sedulius Scottus, provide a rare glimpse into the personal experience of a Carolingian winter.

Alcuin's Poem: The Debate of Spring and Winter

Dating to the eighth century, the *Carmen De Conflictu Veris Et Hiemis* is the earliest of the Carolingian pastoral eclogues.¹⁷³ The author of the poem may have been Alcuin (735-804) although authorship is not known for certain.¹⁷⁴ The poem takes the form of a debate between Spring and Winter. Spring wishes to see the cuckoo come

¹⁷³ The poem is dated to the eighth century by Tuve (1933, 15). Godman (1985, 144, n. 14) points out that the debate “draws on the conventions of Virgilian pastoral (cf. *Eclogue 3*).”

¹⁷⁴ The poem has often been attributed to Alcuin. For discussion of authorship, see Godman (1985, 144-45, n. 14); Tuve (1933, 15).

again, since it will bring Spring's warmth and fertility. Winter wants the cuckoo to stay away. He prefers his own season, a time of pleasant rest:

Carmen De Conflictu Veris Et Hiemis

Conveniunt subito cuncti de montibus altis
 Pastores pecudum vernali luce sub umbra
 Arborea pariter laetas celebrare camenas.
 Adfuit et iuvenis Dafnis seniorque Palemon;
 Omnes hi cuculo laudes cantare parabant.
 Ver quoque florigerò succinctus stemmate venit,
 Frigida venit Hiems rigidis hirsuta capillis.
 His certamen erat cuculi de carmine grande.
 Ver prior adlusit ternos modulamine versus:

Ver

'Opto meus veniat cuculus, carissimus ales!
 Omnibus iste solet fieri gratissimus hospes
 In tectis modulans rutilo bona carmina rostro.'

Hiems

Tum glacialis hiems respondit voce severa:
 'Non veniat cuculus, nigris sed dormiat antris!
 Iste famem secum semper portare suescit.'

Ver

'Opto meus veniat cuculus cum germine laeto,
 Frigora depellat, Phoebo comes almus in aevum.
 Phoebus amat cuculum crescenti luce serena.'

Hiems

'Non veniat cuculus, generat quia forte labores,
 Proelia congerminat, requiem disiungit amatam,
 Omnia disturbat: pelagi terraeque laborant.'

Ver

'Quid tu, tarda Hiems, cuculo convitia cantas,
 Qui torpore gravi tenebrosis tectus in antris
 Post epulas Veneris, post stulti pocula Bacchi?'

Hiems

'Sunt mihi divitiae, sunt et convivia laeta,
 Est requies dulcis, calidus est ignis in aede.
 Haec cuculus nescit, sed perfidus ille laborat.'

Ver

'Ore feret flores cuculus et mella ministrat,
 Aedificatque domus, placidas et navigat undas,
 Et generat soboles, laetos et vestiet agros.'

Hiems

'Haec inimica mihi sunt, que tibi laeta videntur,
 Sed placet optatas gazas numerare per arcas
 Et gaudere cibis simul et requiescere semper.'

Ver

'Quis tibi, tarda Hiems, semper dormire parata,
 Divitias cumulat, gazas vel congregat illas,
 Si ver vel aestas ante tibi nulla laborant?'

Hiems

‘Vera refers: illi, quoniam mihi multa laborant,
 Sunt etiam servi nostra ditione subacti;
 Iam mihi servantes domino quaecumque laborant.’

Ver

‘Non illis dominus, set pauper inopsque superbus,
 Nec te iam poteris per te tu pascere tantum,
 Ni tibi qui veniet cuculus alimonia praestet.’

Palemon

Tum respondit ovans sublimi e sede Palemon
 Et Dafnis pariter, pastorum et turba piorum:
 ‘Desine plura, Hiems; rerum tu prodigus atrox.
 Et veniet cuculus, pastorum dulcis amicus!
 Collibus in nostris erumpant germina laeta,
 Pascua sit pecori, requies et dulcis in arvis,
 Et virides rami praestent umbracula fessis,
 Überibus plenis veniuntque ad mulctra capellae
 Et volucres varia Phoebum sub voce salutent!
 Qua propter citius cuculus nunc ecce venito!
 Tu iam dulcis amor, cunctis gratissimus hospes:
 Omnia te expectant--pelagus tellusque polusque--
 Salve, dulce decus, cuculus, per saecula salve!’,¹⁷⁵

Poem About the Debate of Spring and Winter

Suddenly all the shepherds of the flocks came together

¹⁷⁵ Text from *MGH, Poetae I*, 270-2; reprinted in Godman (1985, 144-48).

From the high hills on a bright spring day, to sing pleasant
poems

Under the shade of the trees.

Young Daphnis and Old Palaemon were there as well.

All were getting ready to sing praises to the cuckoo.

Spring also came, armed with a flowery garland;

Cold Winter came, covered with stiff hair.

They had a big contest about the song of the cuckoo.

First, Spring played with three verses in song.

Spring

I wish my cuckoo would come, the dearest of birds;

He has a way of being a very agreeable friend to everyone.

He would enter singing good songs with his red beak.

Then icy Winter replied with a clear voice:

Winter

Let not the cuckoo come, but let him sleep in dark hollows.

He has a way of always carrying hunger with him.

Spring

I wish my cuckoo would come, along with the fertile bud.

He's the nurturing friend of Phoebus forever; he'd drive
away the cold.

Phoebus loves the cuckoo when the light of day increases.

Winter

Let not the cuckoo come; he perchance produces labours,

Doubles battles, takes us from our pleasant rest.

He disturbs everything; the seas and the lands suffer.

Spring

Why, Slow Winter, are you singing insults to the cuckoo,
 You, covered in heavy sluggishness within the dark hollows
 After the feast of Venus, after the drinks of fool-making
 Bacchus?

Winter

I have riches, and there are pleasant dinners.

There is sweet repose; the fire is warm in the house.

The cuckoo doesn't know these things, but he faithlessly
 toils away.

Spring

The cuckoo brings flowers in his mouth, and he sees to the
 honey,

And he builds homes, and sails over the still waters,

And he produces offspring, and dresses the pleasant fields.

Winter

These things that seem pleasant to you do not seem so nice
 to me.

But I'm pleased to count the riches I've desired, that are now
 prepared for me,

And to rejoice in food, and to always be at rest.

Spring

Who for you, Slow Winter, always prepared to sleep,

Is heaping the wealth, or collecting any riches,

If Spring or Summer has toiled at nothing for you before?

Winter

You're telling the truth. Since they work at many things for me,

They're slaves indeed, acting under my authority,

Laying up for me, their master, the things at which they toil.

Spring

To them you're not a master, but a helpless, haughty pauper.

Now you'll not be able to feed yourself

Unless the cuckoo comes and offers you some food.

Palaemon

Then Palaemon replied, rejoicing, from his seat on high,

And Daphnis, too, and the throng of good shepherds:

Say no more, Winter, you terrible waster of things.

And may the cuckoo come, sweet friend of shepherds;

On our hills may the pleasant buds burst forth;

May there be pastures for the flock, and pleasant rest in the fields;

And may the green branches serve as arbours for the weary.

And may the goats come with full udders to the milk pails,

And may the birds greet Phoebus with varied song.

Therefore, quickly! Let the cuckoo come now!

And then, sweet love, most pleasing friend to all!

Everything awaits you; the sea and earth both greet you.

Greetings, sweet glorious cuckoo! Through the ages, greetings!

Spring wants the cuckoo to return, since it will bring warmth, light, and fertility. Winter argues that the cuckoo should not come, because it will bring summer's

labours and battles, and will disturb his pleasant rest and feasting in front of the warm fire. In the end, Palaemon, Daphnis, and the shepherds all support Spring's arguments against Winter, calling him *rerum prodigus atrox* ("a terrible waster of things"). The shepherds look forward especially to the fertility of spring, not only in the fields and among the flocks, but also among humans.¹⁷⁶ This insistence on spring's fertility emphasizes the infertility and barrenness of Winter.

Throughout the debate, Spring characterizes Winter as cold (*frigida*, 7; *glacialis*, 13), frozen stiff (*rigidis hirsuta capillis* ("shaggy with stiff hair"), 7), slow (*tarda*, 22, 34), sluggish (*torpore gravi*, 23), and sleepy (*semper dormire parata*, 34). These are all negative attributes as far as Spring is concerned. Winter may enjoy taking it easy, eating, sleeping, drinking, and counting his riches, but he is not earning his keep.¹⁷⁷ Winter would not even have food to eat if the cuckoo did not return in spring, bringing with it the fertility of the season. If there is a moral to the poem, it is that pleasant repose cannot continue uninterrupted. Labour is a necessary part of life.

Whether or not the poem is intended to have a moral, the arguments advanced by Winter on his own behalf indicate that his season is a period of rest from the labours required at other times of the year. Winter mentions the pleasure of a warm fire in the house (*calidus est ignis in aede*, 26) and twice he describes the joys of eating (*Sunt mihi . . . convivia laeta*, 25; *Sed placet . . . gaudere cibis*, 32-33). He makes even more references to his delight in idleness (*Non veniat cuculus, generat quia forte labores*, 20;

¹⁷⁶ Tuve (1933, 15) sees the poem as a statement of "the idea of a victorious principle of active growth" in which the cuckoo is praised "as the bird of fruitfulness."

requiem disiungit amatam, 21; *Est requies dulcis*, 26; *Sed placet . . . requiescere semper*, 32-33). He does not want the cuckoo to come because Spring “produces labours” and “takes us from our pleasant rest.” He enjoys the “sweet repose” of his own season, when he can “always be at rest.” Spring may be warmer and prettier, but winter is not without its own pleasures, and its main pleasure is inactivity.

The *Carmina salisburgensia*

In his survey of the labours of the months in antique and medieval art, Webster (1938) compares the Vienna Calendar with two ninth-century poems that are also associated with Salzburg: The *Carmina salisburgensia*, I: *Ydioma mensium singulorum*; and II. *Item alii versus*.¹⁷⁷ Both poems consist of brief descriptions of each month of the year and are similar to other sets of verses known to have accompanied illustrations of the months in antique and Carolingian calendars.¹⁷⁸ The earliest extant copies of the Salzburg poems are only slightly later in date than the Vienna Calendar and therefore may be considered as contemporary sources.¹⁷⁹ The winter months in the two poems are described as follows:

I. *Ydioma mensium singulorum*

Fertur de Iano dictus Ianuarius olim,

¹⁷⁷ Tuve (1933, 16) observes that Winter is reproached “for an ease which is only supported by the work of others.”

¹⁷⁸ Webster (1938, 111-13) published the two poems without translation, reprinted from *MGH*. The second poem, *Carmina salisburgensia II*, is reprinted with French translation in Comet (1992, 79-80).

¹⁷⁹ The most important “calendar verses” from the earliest (the *Menologia rustica*, Roman inscriptions listing monthly agricultural activities) up to the ninth century are collected in Webster (1938, 104-116 and Appendices A-N). Salzman (1990, Appendix III, 273-74) has compiled all the calendar verses along with the opinions of various scholars as to their dates. The Chronograph of 354 A.D., copied in the ninth century, is the most important example of late-antique calendars which combine illustrations with verses.

¹⁸⁰ Webster 1938, 39.

Vel quia sit anni ianua semper ibi.
 Quamvis hic solem notet ascendere mensis,
 Vestibus atque foco membra calere monet.
 A Februa dictus quondam Februarius extat,
 Quae dea de stultis iam vocitata fuit,
 In quo ver oritur et hieme sopita resurgunt
 Atque simul crescunt quae iubet ipse deus . . . (1-8)

Ipse November agit glaciem, qui nonus in anno est,
 Veste simulque foco membra fovere studet.
 Tunc alit in silva porcos bene saepe subulcus,
 Praemia post eo quod semet habere putat.
 Ecce December habet frigus perforte sub imbre,
 Quique diem decimus crescere notat ovans.
 Tunc quoque de silva porci mactantur obesi,
 Post illis fruitur, qualiter inde placet. (41-48)

I. Special Character of the Separate Months.

The name January was borne from Janus once upon a time,
 Or because the entrance of the year is always then.¹⁸¹
 Although this month might mark the sun's rising,¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Comet (1992, 47, n. 37) cites an anonymous *computus* from the ninth century (*PL* 129:1275) which states for the month of January: *Sicut homo ingreditur per ostium in domo, ita anni ingrediuntur per istum Januarium* ("Just as a man goes into the house through a door, so the years enter through January").

¹⁸² The medieval encyclopaedist Durandus (*Rat. Off. 8.3*, as cited by Fowler 1873, 203) explains why the sign of Capricorn represents the winter months of December and January: "For as the he-goat feeds among rugged mountains or lofty precipices, so the sun is then lowest upon the meridian; or as the he-goat

It tells us to warm hands and feet with clothing and a fire.

The name February once existed from Februa,

Which the goddess was called because of the foolish
things,¹⁸³

The month in which spring appears and things fallen asleep
in the cold rise up again,

And also things grow which the very god commands . . .

November, which is the ninth in the year,¹⁸⁴ brings icy cold,

And is eager to warm the limbs with a garment and a fire.

Then the swineherd often feeds the pigs well in the forest,

For after that, he thinks he'll have the rewards.

Behold December has very strong cold in cloud and rain,

And the tenth month, rejoicing, marks the day's increase.¹⁸⁵

Then too fat pigs from the woods are slaughtered.

After that, they're enjoyed, just as one pleases.

II: Item alii versus

Pone focum mensis dictus de nomine Iani

Heret contractus frigore sive sedet.

Annua quem quondam sacrarunt Februa mensem

Ova fovet quorum portat aves manibus . . . (1-4)

is accustomed to climb mountains, so the sun then begins to ascend toward us." The days increase after the winter solstice in late December.

¹⁸³ Perhaps the *stultia* ("foolish things") refer to the *sacra dira* (sacred rites) of the *februa* which Wandalbert mentions in his poem about the months (see n. 206 below).

¹⁸⁴ See n. 199 below regarding the ten months of the ancient Roman year.

¹⁸⁵ This is a reference to the increasing hours of daylight after the winter solstice in December. Wandalbert also describes December as the month in which the longer days begin to appear (see n. 219 below).

Decidua porcos pascit quia glande Novimber,
Horridus effuso saepe crux madet.
Glande sues reduci pastos pastore Decimber
Rimatur fibris, sordet et obsonio. (21-26)

II. The Same; More Verses

Behind the hearth the month named from the name of Janus
Lingers, or sits inactive, numbed by cold.

The annual Februa once made sacred the month

Which warms the eggs of which it carries the birds in its hands.

Frightful¹⁸⁶ November, since it feeds the pigs with the fallen acorn,

Often streams with poured-out blood.

When the herdsman brings back the pigs fed on mast,

December roots through the entrails, and gets dirty from the food.

The two Salzburg poems are not identical in content, but they describe the winter months in much the same way. Both sets of verses emphasize the season's cold weather, inactivity, and feasting. The cold is referred to directly in both poems (January, February and December in the first poem and January in the second). Cold is alluded to indirectly in both poems. Warming by the fire and dressing in warm clothing are

¹⁸⁶ The word *horridus* ("frightful") has several other meanings, many of which may apply here: "having a rough, bristly, prickly, etc., surface (*OLD* 1a); "rough in manner, rude, uncouth" (*OLD* 4); "harsh, grim, severe" (*OLD* 5); "causing horror, dreadful, horrible" (*OLD* 6). Vergil (*G.* 4.407) applied the term to a pig

described in January and November in the first poem. January in the second poem is even personified as someone sitting behind the hearth. Winter's inactivity is referred to in the first poem in February, when the end of the season is near and things which have "fallen asleep in the cold" will soon begin to rise up in the spring weather. January in the second poem "sits inactive" in front of the fire. November and December in both poems describe fattening the pigs and slaughtering them to provide for winter feasting.

Wandalbert of Prum On the Twelve Months

From about the same time as the Salzburg verses (mid-ninth century) comes a much longer and more sophisticated poem about the months, *De duodecim mensium nominibus signis culturis aerisque qualitatibus*.¹⁸⁷ The poem was composed by Wandalbert of Prum, the same monk who wrote the Martyrology of Saint Goar.¹⁸⁸ Little is known about Wandalbert's life except that he was born in 813, became a Benedictine monk at the monastery of Prum in Germany,¹⁸⁹ and died in 870.¹⁹⁰ Wandalbert was a major Carolingian scholar¹⁹¹ whose surviving works include several didactic poems about the measurement of time.¹⁹² The longest is the *De duodecim mensium nominibus, signis*

(sus), and its use in the description of November in the *Carmina salisburgensia* is appropriate because that month is very closely associated with fattening and killing pigs.

¹⁸⁷ Dated mid-ninth century by Webster (1938, 40-41).

¹⁸⁸ The illustrations in Wandalbert's Martyrology of Saint Goar are discussed above, p. 70-76.

¹⁸⁹ The town of Prum is in the Rhine Palatinate of Germany, forty-five miles northwest of Trier (Hubert 1970, 378).

¹⁹⁰ Chevalier 1960.

¹⁹¹ McCulloh 1983.

¹⁹² All the extant poems of Wandalbert are edited by Dümmler (1964, T. 2, 566-622). Many of the poems describe different ways of marking the passage of time. For example, the *Incipit horologium per duodecim mensium punctos* is a mathematical table by which the length of shadows at different times of the year may be used to calculate the (variable) hours of the day for each of the twelve months (see Appendix A). The *Comprehensio temporum mensium dierum atque horarum* is a description and interpretation of the division of time into months, days, and hours.

aerisque qualitatibus, a calendar which constitutes “one of the best ethno-historical statements of the Middle Ages” (Butzer 1993, 562). The monthly activities which Wandalbert describes are not simply picturesque vignettes, but a record of actual Carolingian life. Wandalbert himself makes this clear when he states (362-64):

Huncque modum et morem sibi Gallica rura retentant
Quem breviter signans digessi carmine, lector

The Gallic lands preserve for themselves this way and
manner of living

Which I Wandalbert have recorded, briefly noting in a poem.

The poem begins with a short introduction in which Wandalbert explains his intentions. He proposes to describe how each month received its name, the zodiac sign associated with the start of each month, the effect of seasonal changes upon the lands, and the rural labours or activities appropriate to each month. The calendar proper begins with January and continues through to December. Each month starts with a short account of the derivation of its name, followed by a brief outline of the most important astrological information for the month. A longer section then describes the landscape, weather, and monthly labours. The texts of the introduction and the months of January, February, November, and December are given here in their entirety.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ The Latin text is from *MGH* ed. Dümmler unless otherwise noted. There is no other published English translation except for lines 336-66 of *December* (Wilkinson 1969, 281); therefore, the complete text and translation are included here although they are quite lengthy.

**De duodecim mensium nominibus, signis aerisque
qualitatibus**

Nominibus mensum quae sit rationis origo,
 Annum bis seno volvunt qui sidere magnum,
 Quae illustrent pariter duodenas signa Kalendas,
 Quid connexa ferat mensum discretio terris,
 Quos usus generet cultus, quos formet habendi:
 Servato breviter referemus in ordine, lector.

De Januario

Quem primum mensem servari Julius anni
 Decrevit, Jani effertur cognomine regis,
 Saturni gentem Latio qui rexit et urbem
 Laurentum sceptris populoque et legibus auxit.
 Huic gemino praesunt Capricorni sidera monstro,
 Bis duodena uno pariter splendentia signo.
 Tum tempus campus lepores lustrare nivosis;
 Artibus et variis pictas captare volucres,
 Per campos volitant, colles quae et flumina circum.
 Dum capus, accipiterque placet, curisque solutis
 Per brumam genio vacat indulgere, domique
 Diversos usus veri proferre futuro.
 Nam neque tum cervos cervasve agitare fugaces;
 Nec spumantis apri lato configere ferro,
 Armos, ex usu est: Borea cohibentur et artus
 Exesos macies stringit tenuatque ferarum.

Semina nec cultis facile est committere terris;
Urit cuncta gelu, et glacies riget horrida campis.
Robora tum silvis prodest et fissile lignum
Caedere; tum domibus classique aptare secures.

De Februario

Anni quo numerum regnans Pompilius auxit,
 Quo sacra dira urbem solitum lustrare togatam,
 Inferni Februi retinemus nomine dictum.
 Bis sex hunc stellis astrum praesignat Aquari:
 Quam tamen australi caelo demittere nimbis
 Cernitur, haec fulget tricenis ignibus unda.
 Hunc hiemis verisque tenent confinia mensem;
 Frigore nuncque riget, nunc aere mulcet amico.
 Tum tempus tractis terram proscindere aratis,
 Semina et hinc sulcis prodest mandare secundis.
 Hordea tum campis serimus peregrina per agros;
 Postquam candet avis pietatis nomine praestans:
 Vitibus hinc cultum mos est adhibere putandis,
 Sarmentisque novas gemmas proferre recisis.
 Incipiunt salices nodis canescere glaucis;
 Cum primum et coryli nucibus frondere futuris.
 Tunc canibus cervas spiculisque agitare repertas,
 Ac valido aprorum praefigere corpora ferro,
 Informesque cavis ursos lustrare sub antris
 Venantum de more placet; tunc piscibus altas

Praestruere aggeribus piscoso in flumine saepes.

De Novembri

Undecimus magno nunc volvitur orbe November,
 Anno quem nonum antiquo dixere parentes,
 Ex numero atque imbri primum nomenque retentat.
 Scorpius huic denis pariter micat atque novenis
 Stellis, sed flammae nunc Libram quatuor implent,
 Astrorum cultrix Chelas quas repperit aetas,
 Ter quinoque ardet nunc tantum Scorpius igne.
 Hoc mense autumnus hiemi decidere durae
 Incipit, et gelidis conflantur frigora ventis,
 Aere sed dubio diversam terra figuram
 Concipit, in pluvias Zephiro nunc flante soluta,
 Nunc Borea in rigidam speciem concreta furente.
 Hinc cum forte datis licet exercere sub auris
 Terram, proscissis committere semina campis
 Prodest, autumno superant que forte peracto,
 Porcorumque greges silvis consuescere foetis¹⁹⁴
 Dum pingue vento tribuit quassante ruinam
 Quercus et effusa sternuntur nemora glande.¹⁹⁵
 Tunc et apres silvis cura est quam maxima duros
 Quaerere, et ex luco canibus producere nigro,
 Dum validos crebris praedurant ictibus armos,

¹⁹⁴ MGH gives *faetis*.

¹⁹⁵ Line 316 is a variant reading for: *Quercus dumque nemus glandis vestitur honore* (Dümmler 1964, 614).

Antiquaque fricant solidandas arbore costas
 Caeci nec lato metuunt venabula ferro.
 Quod superest curas genialis bruma resolvens,
 Dulcibus ad requiem illecebris vocat, horrida postquam
 Ruralem cohibent ventorum flabra laborem.
 Tum dulces ludi, tumque est gratissimus ignis,
 Atque novo oblectat somnum invitare lieo.

De Decembri

Extremum bis sena regit nunc linea mensem,
 Quem decimum auctore scripsit nova Roma Quirino,
 Nomine qui numerum et nimbos designat eodem,
 Nunc etiam Martis dictus de mense December;
 Arcitenens Phoebum angustis cui cursibus effert
 Ternis ac denis prae fulgens ignibus una.
 Hoc mense australem caeli demissus in axem,
 Exiguoque orbem perlustrans tramite nostrum
 Sol iterum ad Boream convertit lumina celum.
 Hoc etiam hiberno terras urente rigore,
 Maxima nox modicae causantes munera lucis
 Agricolas fovet, oblitos tandemque laboris,
 Ingratosque sibi blandus sopor inrigat artus.
 Nec tamen imbrifero desunt sua munera mensi,
 Nec gelidis cogit penitus cessare sub auris
 Tempus, et in faciem tellus coniecta nivosam.
 Tum quoque cum pluviis campus ventoque madescit,

Vomere gleba iacens sulcanda est, hordea demum
 Qua serere, aut laetum cupit exercere legumen
 Agricola, immundumque fimum iactare per agros
 Tum licet. At cum terra hebeti torpore rigescit
 Multa domi tamen et tectis properare sub ipsis,
 Mox vacat, algentis relevant quae frigora brumae.
 Retibus hinc varias pelagi prensare volucres,
 Aut igni et sonitu per campos fallere, sive
 Lentandis usu pedicas aptare repertum;
 Amnibus hinc etiam piscosis ponere crates
 Vimineas, densosque ad littora figere fasces,
 Qua vado rapidum tranquillant flumina cursum¹⁹⁶
 Inventum, facilern capiant ut retia praedam.
 Hoc sub mense sues pasta iam glande madentes
 Distento et plenam monstrantes ventre saginam,
 Caedere, et ad tepidum mos est suspendere fumum,
 Terga, prius salis fuerint cum sparsa madore.
 Bis sena hos cultus renovant vertigine menses.
 Huncque modum et morem sibi Gallica rura retentant:
 Quem breviter signans digessi carmine, lector,
 Wandalbertus ego, hortatu compulsus amici,
 Dulcia me Hreni quo tempore litora alebant,
 Maxima Agrippinae veteris quis moenia praesunt.

¹⁹⁶ Line 355 is a variant reading for *Qua vada demisso tranquillant flumine cursum* (Dümmier 1964, 615).

Concerning the names of the twelve months, the signs of the zodiac,¹⁹⁷ and the qualities of the air

We shall briefly relate in the observed order, Reader,
 The origin of the reason for the names of the months,
 What twelve constellations turn the great year round;
 What signs might show, as well, the twelve Kalends;¹⁹⁸
 What the related division of the months might bring to the lands;
 Which practices of cultivation it [the differentiation of the months] might engender;
 And what benefit there might be in having it.

Concerning January

The month which Julius decreed to be observed as first¹⁹⁹
 Is derived from the name of king Janus,²⁰⁰
 Who ruled the race of Saturn in Latium,²⁰¹
 And increased the city of Laurentum in power, in people, and in laws.

¹⁹⁷ The *signa* ("signs") are signs of the zodiac.

¹⁹⁸ The *Kalends* is the first of the month. Wandalbert follows the unusual practice of associating each month with the zodiac sign which is in place at the beginning of the month, rather than the sign which enters at mid-month. Thus, he associates January with Capricorn rather than with Aquarius.

¹⁹⁹ By Julius Caesar's time, the Roman year consisted of twelve months, totaling 355 days. When he reformed the calendar in 45 B.C., he added another ten days to the year and reestablished January as the first month (Lefevre 1927, 216; Howatson 1990, 109).

²⁰⁰ The Chronograph of 354 A.D. includes distichs (two-line verses) for each of the months. The distichs are earlier than the Chronograph; they date to the mid-first century A.D. (Salzman 1990, 273, item 5). January's distich reveals that the name of the month is derived from Janus: *Primus, Iane, tibi sacraiture, eponyme, mensis, / Undique cui semper cuncta videre licet*, "To you, O Janus who gives it its name, the first month is sacred, to you who can always see all things from both sides" (translation from Levi 1941, 253). In the seventh century, Isidore of Seville (*Etymologiae* 5.33) attributes the name of the month to Janus since his two faces show both the beginning and the end of the year: *Ianuarius mensis a Iano dicitur, cuius fuit a gentilibus consecratus; vel quia limes et ianua sit anni. Vnde et bifrons idem Janus pingitur, ut introitus anni et exitus demonstraretur*.

²⁰¹ "According to one Roman tradition, he [Janus] was an early king of Latium" (Howatson 1990, 304).

To this [month] belong the stars of Capricorn, double in appearance,²⁰²

Shining twenty-four at once in one sign.

Then is the time to look for hares on the snowy fields,

And, by various means, catch coloured birds,

Which fly through the fields and around hills and streams.

Now a capon and a hawk are pleasing; and freed from care,

There is time in winter to indulge the spirit, and in the house,

To put off different chores until the coming spring.

For then it's of no use to hunt the flying stags or deer,

Or with broad sword pierce the sides of a frothing boar.

They're restrained by north wind; and thinness

Draws tight the worn-down joints of animals and makes them lean.

And it's not easy to entrust the seeds to the cultivated land.

The icy cold pinches them all, and rough ice stands stiffly on the fields.

Then it's good to cut down oaks in the woods and split the timber;

Then it's useful for axes to shape it for houses and ships.

Concerning February

By which [month] when Pompilius ruled, he increased the size of the year,²⁰³

²⁰² Manilius (2.159-160, 2.169-72) describes Capricorn as one of the double signs of the zodiac. Capricorn is double because he is made up of parts from two different animals: a goat and a fish.

²⁰³ The original Roman calendar totaled 304 days and was divided into ten months which ran from March to December, with an uncounted gap in the winter months. Numa Pompilius, legendary successor to Romulus as king of Rome, added January and February to the year (Howatson 1990, 109).

In which [month] it is customary to purify the toga'd city²⁰⁴
by means of a fearful sacred rite,²⁰⁵

We continue to call it by the name of infernal "februus."²⁰⁶

The constellation of Aquarius first marks this month with
twelve stars,

But when it's decided to send it away with rain and cloud to
the southern sky,

This water gleams with thirty fires.²⁰⁷

The boundaries of winter and spring hold this month,²⁰⁸

Now it stiffens with cold; now it soothes with caressing
breeze.

Then it's time to break the land with drawn ploughs,

And then it's good to entrust the seed to the favouring
furrows.

Then in fields we sow the foreign barley throughout the
lands.

²⁰⁴ The city of togas is Rome.

²⁰⁵ The *Februa*, the feast of purification held February fifteenth. In the Chronograph of 354, the tetrastich verses for February (dated to the fourth or fifth century, Salzman 1990, 273, item no. 3) refer to the Roman purification rites: *At quem caeruleus nodo costringit amictus / Quique paludicolam prendere gestat avem / Daedala quem iactu pluvio circumvenit Iris, / Romuleo ritu Februar mensis habet*, "But the month wrapped in a blue mantle, who sets out to catch the birds of the marshes, and whom under a shower the multicolor rainbow surrounds, in the Roman rite performs the ceremonies of purification" (translation from Levi 1941, 255). A distich for the month of February in the *Laus omnium mensium* (sixth century; Salzman 1990, 273, item no. 1) also refers to the rites: *Rustica Bacchigensis intentans arma novellis / Hic meruit Februi nomen habere dei*, "This month which turns the agricultural implements to Bacchus' vines, was worthy to derive its name from the god of purification" (translation from Levi 1941, 256).

²⁰⁶ The *februa* are a "means of purification, expiatory offerings" (OLD). The reference to the "infernal" is connected with the "Shades" of the nether regions. The Chronograph's distich for February reads: *Umbrarum est alter, quo mense putatur honore / Pervia terra dato Manibus esse vagis*, "This second is the month of the Shades, in which it is believed that the wandering Manes have access to the earth when the honors due them are rendered" (translation from Levi 1941, 255). Isidore of Seville (*Etymologiae* 5.33.4) says that the name "February" is derived from sacrificial rites to Pluto, a god of the infernal regions: *Februarius nuncupatur a Februo, id est Plutone, cui eo mense sacrificabatur. Nam Ianuarium diis superis, Februarium diis Manibus Romani consecraverunt. Ergo Februarius a Februo, id est Plutone, non a febre, id est aegritudine nominatus*.

²⁰⁷ Aquarius is followed in mid-February by Pisces. Both constellations are considered "watery" signs.

²⁰⁸ Manilius (2.192-93) notes that Pisces is a double sign, made up of two fishes, one of them denoting the end of winter; and the other, the beginning of spring.

Afterwards the bird of *pietas* shines white,²⁰⁹ distinguished by its name.

Then it's the custom to turn to the tending of vines that need pruning

And to bring forth new buds from the branches cut back.

The willows begin to grow white with grey knots,

And then the hazels become green with future nuts.

Then it's pleasing to hunt for deer with dogs and spears,

And to pierce through the bodies of boars with strong sword,

And look for monstrous bears in hollow caves,

According to the custom of hunters.

And then with heaps to build deep fences

For the fishes in the fish-filled stream.

Concerning November

Now is rolled round in the great circle²¹⁰ the eleventh,
November,

Which our ancestors called the ninth in the ancient year

At first, keeping the name from this number and from the
rain.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ *Candet* from *candeo* “to be white, gleam white” (*OLD* 2). Vergil (*G.* 2.319-320) says that the best time for planting vines is in spring when *candida venit avis longis invisa colubris*, “the white bird, the foe of long snakes, is come” (translation from Fairclough 1935). Fairclough (139, n. 1) identifies the white bird as the white stork, *Ciconia alba*.

²¹⁰ The *magnus orbis* (“great circle”) is the circle of the year. Macrobius (1.14.4) says that the lunar cycle is the “short year” (that is, month) and the solar cycle is the “great year.” The great year is “reckoned by the number of days which the sun takes to turn again to that sign of the zodiac from which it began its course. That is why the common year is styled the ‘turning’ year and is held to be the ‘great’ year” (translation from Davies 1969).

²¹¹ November was the ninth (*novem*) month in the ancient Roman calendar, which began with March. It is a rainy, cloudy month, as is implied by its name, a compound of *novem* and *imber* (“rain; a shower or storm of rain; also, a snow- or hailstorm” (*OLD* 1, 1b)). Isidore of Seville (*Etymologiae* 5.33) also attributes the name of the month to the number (nine) and to the rains: *Sic et October, November atque December ex numero et imbris acceperunt vocabula* (“thus October, November and December take their names from their number and the rains”).

Flickering Scorpius flashes with nineteen stars,
 But now four stars are filling Libra,
 The Claws that Time, the tender of the stars, has obtained.
 And now Scorpius glows with only fifteen fires.²¹²
 In this month autumn begins to make way for harsh winter,
 And the cold is blown up together with the icy winds.
 And in the uncertain air, the earth takes on a different form,
 Now dissolved into rains by the blowing west wind;
 Now stiffened into a hard face by the raging north wind.
 When by chance one can work the soil under cover of
 favouring winds,
 And it's profitable to commit to the ploughed fields
 The seeds which by chance remain when autumn's done.
 And to accustom herds of pigs to the teeming forests
 While the oak gives a rich fall when the wind has shaken it,
 And the woods are spread with acorns far and wide.
 And then there's great concern to seek the hardened boars in
 the woods,
 And bring them out from the black grove by means of
 dogs.²¹³
 While they harden strong shoulders with numerous blows,
 And rub their sides on an ancient tree to make them firm,
 Unseeing, they've no fear of broad-bladed spears.²¹⁴

²¹² The Claws (*Chelae*) of Scorpio extend into the constellation of Libra.

²¹³ Vergil (*G. 3.411*) describes boar-hunting in the forest with dogs: *saepe volutabris pulsos silvestibus apros / latratu turbabis agens*, “oft you will rout the boar from his forest lair, driving him forth with the baying pack” (translation from Fairclough 1935).

²¹⁴ Vergil (*G. 3.255-58*) speaks of the mating season and its effects on animals: *ipse ruit dentesque Sabellicus exacuit sus. / et pede prosubigit terram, fricat arbore costas, / atque hinc atque illinc umeros ad*

That which is left [of the year] cheerful Winter, dispelling
cares,

With pleasant enticements invites to rest,

When rough blasts of wind restrain the work on the farm.²¹⁵

Then, there are pleasant pastimes; and then, a welcome fire,

And it is pleasing to invite sleep with new wine.

Concerning December

The twelve-fold boundary-line now rules the last month,

Which the new Rome, when Quirinus was king,²¹⁶ drew up
as the tenth,

Which signifies by its name the number ten and also rain and
clouds,²¹⁷

And now is called December [tenth] from the month of
Mars.

To this month Sagittarius²¹⁸ with shortened courses brings
out Phoebus,²¹⁹

Shining forth with thirteen fires at once.

Sol in this month, having been sent to the southern sky,

And lighting our world in his diminished path,

volnera durat, “[The wild boar] whets his tusks, his foot paws the ground in front, he rubs his sides against a tree, and on either flank hardens his shoulders against wounds” (translation from Fairclough 1935).

²¹⁵ In the *Georgics* (1.299-302), Vergil describes winter in much the same terms. It is a time of relaxation and feasting after the labours of the harvest are complete: *hiems ignava colono. / frigoribus parto agricolae plerumque fruuntur / mutuaque inter se laeti convivia curant. / invitat genialis hiems curasque resolvit*, “winter is the farmer’s lazy time. In cold weather farmers chiefly enjoy their gains, and feast together in merry companies. Winter’s cheer calls them, and loosens the weight of care” (translation from Fairclough 1935).

²¹⁶ December was the last month in the ancient calendar established by Romulus (*Quirinus*), the first ruler of Rome. According to Howatson (1990, 479) “Quirinus was identified with the deified Romulus by the Romans of the late republic.”

²¹⁷ “December” is the tenth (*decimus*) month. It also brings rain and cloud (*imber, imbris*) (see above, n. 212).

²¹⁸ Sagittarius is the *Arcitenens* (“bow-holding”) constellation.

²¹⁹ After the winter solstice in December, the hours of sunlight begin to increase.

Again turns light towards the north on high.
 And in this month that has pinched the lands with wintry
 numbness,
 The longest night favours the farmers pleading the duties of
 limited light,
 And at last caressing sleep floods over the limbs,
 unresponsive and forgetting labour.
 But duties there are for the rain-bringing month,
 Nor does the season entirely compel ceasing work,
 When the winds are freezing and the earth is covered in
 snow.
 Then also with rains and the wind the field grows moist,²²⁰
 And the land lies waiting to be ploughed by the share.
 In this the farmer wants at least to seed the barley or
 cultivate fertile plants.
 And then it's allowed to spread the foul dung through the
 fields,
 But when the land is rigid with sluggish numbness,
 There is soon time at home and inside buildings
 To quickly complete many things
 Which lighten the cold of freezing winter.
 There's time now to catch different sea-birds in nets
 Or deceive them with fire and noise through the fields
 Or, by using sticky materials, to fit a device for traps.

²²⁰ This line is reminiscent of the first two lines of the tetrastich for December in the Chronograph of 354: *Annua sulcatae conlectens semina terrae/ Pascit hiems: Pluvio de Iove cuncta madent* ("Winter, collecting in the furrows of earth the seeds of the annual sowing, makes it fertile. Everything drips with rain" (translation from Levi 1941, 272).)

There's time now to place wicker hurdles in the fish-filled streams,

And on the shores, put closely-placed bundles of sticks

Whereby in the shallows the waters calm the swift course

They've come upon, so the nets can catch easy prey.

In this month it's the custom to kill pigs²²¹ fed with mast and fattened up,²²²

And with distended belly, appearing fully stuffed;

And to hang the carcasses in warm smoke²²³

Before they've been sprinkled with brine.

Reader, the twelve months repeat these labours in turning round,

And the Gallic lands preserve for themselves this way and manner of living

Which I Wandalbert have recorded, briefly noting in a poem,

Compelled by the exhortation of a friend

When the pleasant shores of the Rhine were nurturing me,

Before which the massive walls of Ancient Agrippina stand.²²⁴

Winter in Wandalbert's Poem

²²¹ In the *Officia duodecim mensium* (dated to the fifth century by Courtney and to the Carolingian period (755-877 A.D.) by Stern as cited in Salzman 1990, 273, item no. 4) the occupations of each month are described by one line of verse. December is devoted to killing the pigs: *More sues proprio mactat December adultas*, "December in its own custom slaughters the grown sows" (translation from Levi 1941, 272).

²²² *Madentes* may mean "fattened" or "moist" (LS). For *madeo*, the *Novum glossarium mediae latinitatis* gives the meaning, "être gorgé de, être ivre: Wandaib. *mens.* 357: glande." The pigs would appear moist because they are shiny and oily after fattening up with mast (acorns).

²²³ Cato (*Agr.* 162.3) explains how to cure pork: *pernas in fumo suspendito* ("hang the hams in smoke").

²²⁴ The Roman town *Coloni Agrippinensis* (now Cologne, Germany) was named in honour of Agrippina.

November takes its name from its having been the ninth month of the ancient year, and also from the rain that is common to that month. The constellation associated with the beginning of November is Scorpius. Autumn ends in this month, and *dura hiems* ("harsh winter") begins. The cold weather blows in with the winds, and the earth is dissolved by rain and stiffened by the raging blasts. There is still work to be done, however. Any seeding that remains may now be completed before the land is frozen solid. Pigs must be herded into the forests to fatten up on the acorns blown down from the trees by fierce November winds. Wild boars are tracked with dogs. But after the "rough blasts of the winds restrain work on the farm" there is time for rest. Now one may enjoy *dulces ludi* ("pleasant pastimes"), *gratissimus ignis* ("a nice fire"), and sleep induced by new wine.

Wandalbert says that December derives its name from its position in the ancient calendar; that is, the tenth and last month of the original Roman year (reckoned from March). He suggests another derivation that has to do with the cloudy weather. December is a stormy, wet month and so brings clouds (*nimbos*). The precise connection between *nimbos* and December is not clear. The sign of Sagittarius is associated with the first part of the month. After the winter solstice, the hours of daylight begin to increase. The longest night encourages the farmers to relax from their labours, and *blandus sopor irrigat artus* ("caressing sleep floods over the limbs"). But some work can also be done at this time of the year, even though the winds are freezing cold and the earth is covered with snow. This is the last opportunity to sow barley (*hordea*) or beans (*legumen*). Manure can still be spread on the land. When the weather finally becomes too severe and

the land is frozen stiff, many chores can be done inside the house. Outdoors, one can hunt for birds and trap fish in the streams. Now is the time to kill the fattened pigs and cure the ham.

Wandalbert's description of January begins with the origin of the month's name (*Januarius*). Julius Caesar is said to have named the month after the Roman god Janus. Capricorn is the astrological sign connected to the first part of January. The activities of the month are: hunting hares and birds, hawking (?), cutting wood, and preparing timber. The hunting of larger game such as deer and wild boar is discouraged at this time, since by now the frigid north wind has worn the animals thin. Seeding is set aside due to the icy coldness and the rigidity of the soil. January is a time to relax, and *curisque solutis per brumam genio vacat indulgere* ("freed from care, one may indulge the spirit throughout the cold weather"), putting off various tasks until the spring.

Wandalbert traces the origin of the name "February" (*Februarius*) to the *Februa*, the Roman feast of purification held February fifteenth. The first half of the month is associated with Aquarius, and the second half with Pisces. Both signs are connected with water and thus to the wintry rains of February. Winter is nearing an end, and it is possible now to begin ploughing and seeding. Other activities permitted in February include pruning vines and trapping fish in streams. Hunting for large game resumes. Deer are chased with dogs and killed with spears, wild boars are pierced through with swords, and bears are tracked down in their hollows. Besides providing a list of activities for the month, Wandalbert describes the February landscape and incidentally reveals himself as a keen observer of nature. Using a few well-chosen

words, he describes the unpredictability of the late-winter weather and the effect that it has on the land: “Now it stiffens with cold; and now it softens with friendly Spring.” Friendly Spring brings grey pussy willows and hazel trees covered with new green leaves. Winter is at an end.

Two Personal Laments on Winter’s Cold: Walahfrid Strabo and Sedulius

Scottus

Winter is described from a realistic, personal point of view only rarely in Carolingian poetry. The rigours of the cold season are vividly portrayed, though, in some of the poems of Walahfrid Strabo (ca. 809-849)²²⁵ and Sedulius Scottus. Walahfrid was a German poet and theologian who had entered the monastery at Reichenau early in life, becoming abbot there in 838.²²⁶ Between 827 and 829, he left the monastery for a period of study at Fulda, where he composed an “elegy” on Reichenau.²²⁷ The poem is a lament on the hardships of self-imposed “exile” in Fulda. Walahfrid finds the bitter cold especially distressing:

4. Frigus invadit grave nuditatem,
non calent palmae, pedibus retracta
stat cutis, vultus hiemem pavescit
valde severam.

5. In domo frigus patior nivale,
non iuvat cerni gelidum cubile,

²²⁵ Spitzmuller 1971, 294.

²²⁶ “Walahfrid Strabo.” *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

²²⁷ Godman 1985, 225, n. 1-2.

nec foris lectove calens repertam
prendo quietem.²²⁸

4. Bitter cold assails my naked flesh,
there is no warmth in my hands,
goose-pimples stand out on my feet
and my face flinches before the harsh winter.

5. Indoors I suffer the icy cold,
the sight of my frozen bed gives no pleasure,
warm neither when I get up nor where I sleep,
I snatch what rest I can.²²⁹

Sedulius Scottus also writes about his personal experience of winter.

Again, he speaks from the point of view of an exile. Like many other Irish scholars in the ninth century, Sedulius came to Francia to write for various members of the Carolingian court and its circle. In a poem addressed to Lothar, bishop of Liege, he pleads for better living conditions. Sedulius' intent is serious, but his description of the terrors of winter on the Continent is not without a certain amount of comic exaggeration:

Flamina nos Boreae niveo canentia vultu
Perterrent subitis motibus atque minis,
Tellus ipsa tremit nimio perculta pavore,
Murmurat et pelagus duraque saxa gemunt,

²²⁸ Text from *MGH* (Dümmler 1964, 412).

²²⁹ Translation from Godman 1985, 225-227.

Aereos tractus Aquilo nunc vastat iniquus
 Vocibus horrisonis murmuribusque tonans;
 Lactea nubifero densantur vellera caelo,
 Velatur nivea marcida terra stola,
 Labuntur subito silvoso vertice crines,
 Nunc stat harundineo robur et omne modo.
 Titan, clarifico qui resplendebat amictu,
 Abscondit radios nunc faciemque suam.
 Nos tumidus Boreas vastat--miserabile visu--
 Doctos grammaticos presbiterosque pios:
 Namque volans Aquilo non ulli parcit honori
 Crudeli rostro nos laniando suo.
 Fessis ergo favens, Hartgari floride praesul,
 Sophos Scottigenas suscipe corde pio:
 Scandere sic valeas caelestia templa beatus,
 Aetheream Solimam perpetuamque Sion.

The gusts of the north wind are blowing and there are signs
 of snow;
 they terrify us with their sudden threatening movements;
 the earth itself trembles, stricken by great fear,
 the sea murmurs and the hard stones groan, as the wind from
 the north
 sweeps on its violent way through the expanses of heaven
 with thunder-claps and terrible rumblings:

the fleecy milk-white clouds are banked in the sky
 and the earth withers under its snow-covered mantle,
 from the tops of the woods the leaves suddenly fall,
 all the oak trees are standing at this moment like reeds.

The sun which had been shining resplendently in its brilliant array
 has now withdrawn its beams and disappeared.

the gusts of the north wind ravage us--a pitiable sight to see--
 learned grammarians and pious priests:
 sweeping down from the north, it has no mercy on anything,
 however distinguished; it tears us to pieces with its cruel beak.

And so, splendid bishop Hartgar, look graciously on our weariness
 and, of your kindness, aid us, your Irish scholars:
 may you thereby succeed in climbing to the temples of heaven,
 to heavenly Jerusalem and everlasting Sion.²³⁰

Winter for Sedulius Scottus, then, is a continual assault by wind, snow, cloud, barrenness, and darkness. The north wind is threatening, violent, ravaging, merciless, and cruel. Winter affects both the land and the people. The earth trembles with fear, the sea murmurs, and even the stones complain. The pitiful Irish scholars are ravaged and worn out.

²³⁰ Text and translation from Godman 1985, 286-287.

Summary: Winter in Carolingian Poetry

The main characteristic of winter as it is described in the poetry is that it is cold. All six poems refer to the coldness of the season. Wandalbert's poem provides more details about the harsh weather than do most of the other poems. He comments on the cold, icy wind and rain of November and the stormy, wet month of December with its freezing winds, rain, and snow. January has icy cold, snow, ice, and fierce north winds. February is sometimes stiff with cold, and sometimes softened by the coming spring. For Walahfrid Strabo and Sedulius Scottus, winter is nothing but bitter cold.

The second most common theme is inactivity. The debate poem, the Salzburg verses, and Wandalbert's poem all describe winter as a time of rest. Winter in the debate is personified as idle, slow, sluggish, and sleepy. January in the Salzburg verse "sits inactive, numbed by cold." Wandalbert describes November and December as months in which one may rest and sleep; and in January, there is time to relax and "indulge the spirit."

Eating or feasting is the third most common theme in the poems. Eating features most prominently in the debate poem and the Salzburg verses. Wandalbert refers directly to feasting when he speaks of drinking the new wine in November and killing pigs and curing ham in December. He also refers to feasting indirectly, through his frequent references to hunting and fishing.

Wandalbert's poem is the only one to include any activities or labours (except for killing pigs, which is also described in the Salzburg verses). The chores

which may be carried out in winter include seeding (November, December, and February), manuring the fields (December), cutting wood (January), pruning vines (February), and ploughing or cultivating (February and December).

Winter in Carolingian Art and Poetry

The essential characteristics of the winter months are the same in the art and in the poetry, with one major exception. The prime feature of winter is that it is cold. Both illuminated manuscripts and all the verses emphasize the cold weather, either through references to warming by the fire or descriptions of the fierce north winds and icy rains. The second most common theme is hunting or feasting. Both manuscripts and most of the poems refer to hunting birds in winter. Pig-killing is frequently associated with winter in the art and the poetry. This is simply another activity related to feasting, since the pigs are butchered in the late autumn to provide food for the winter. A third common theme in the art and poetry is the zodiac. The signs of the zodiac are directly represented in one of the illuminated calendars (the Martyrology) and indirectly connected with the other (the Vienna Calendar). The only poem actually to include references to the zodiac signs is Wandalbert's. The zodiac is essential here because the rising and falling of the constellations causes the weather and governs the hours of daylight throughout the year. The weather and light conditions in turn determine which activities can be carried out in each season.

The major difference between the art and literature is that the poems emphasize winter's inactivity, and the art does not. Most of the verses describe winter as

a time of rest, sleep, or relaxation, but none of the illustrations show any figures in an inactive state. The reason may be that it is difficult to represent inactivity in an artistic medium. It may be argued that the figures who are sitting before a fire represent idleness, but that is not the meaning of the figures *per se*. Rather, they symbolize the necessity to warm oneself during the harsh cold of the winter season.

Another difference between the art and the poems is that Janus and the *Februa* are referred to in some of the verses, but not in any of the illustrations. The two Salzburg verses and Wandalbert's poem cite Janus and the *Februa* in their explanations of the derivation of the names "January" and "February." The Roman rites of the *Februa* were not, in fact, represented in art after the El Jem calendar mosaic. However, Janus was to become extremely popular in art after the Carolingian period. During the Middle Ages, the month of January was most often illustrated by a Janus figure. This suggests the importance of literature as a source for medieval artistic representations of some of the months.

Two of the Carolingian poems provide more details about the activities (or inactivity) of winter than is seen in the manuscript illustrations. The debate poem, for example, reveals Winter's connection with "pleasant dinners", "sweet repose", rejoicing in food, and always being at rest. Wandalbert's poem describes a far greater number of activities and labours than appear in the art. In January, he refers to hunting hares on the snowy fields, cutting trees in the forest, and preparing wood for houses. February is a time for ploughing and seeding barley; pruning vines, fishing, and hunting deer, boars, and bears. November is suitable for ploughing and seeding, but also enjoying the new

wine and falling asleep by the fire. In December "caressing sleep floods over unresponsive limbs" but it is still the time to spread manure on the fields, catch birds in nets, fish, and prepare the ham from freshly-killed pigs.

Compared to the illustrated manuscripts, Wandalbert's poem is much more descriptive of the effect of the seasons upon the landscape. The illustrations cannot convey the harshness of the cold as well as Wandalbert does. In January, for example, he describes the effect of the cold on the land: "And it's not easy to entrust the seeds to the cultivated land. The icy cold pinches them all, and rough ice stands stiffly on the fields." Similarly, Wandalbert describes the onset of winter in November in a way that would be impossible to portray in the art. He refers to November as the month in which:

Autumn begins to make way for harsh winter, And the cold
is blown up together with the icy winds. And in the
uncertain air, the earth takes on a different form; Now
dissolved into rains by the blowing west wind; Now stiffened
into a hard face by the raging north wind.

The most expressive poems of all are the ones written by Walahfrid Strabo and Sedulius Scottus. Walahfrid's complaint that "bitter cold assails my naked flesh . . . and my face flinches before the harsh winter" conveys his personal, emotional reaction to winter. Sedulius describes the movement of the north winds as they blow through the heavens in gusts and make the earth tremble and the sea murmur. The sounds of the winds are as terrifying as their movements. The wind sweeps down from the north "with thunder-claps and terrible rumblings." The force of the winds and the sounds of winter

storms can only be described adequately in poetry. The art functions on a much more symbolic, abstract level.

CHAPTER V

The seasons are rarely represented in medieval art, whereas illustrations of the months of the year are very common.²³¹ Beginning in the twelfth century, numerous examples of the so-called labours of the months are found, almost all of them sculpted on church facades or appearing as illustrations in liturgical manuscripts.²³² The “labours” are calendar cycles in which each month of the year is symbolized by an activity which is specifically related to that month. For most months, the activity is connected with an agricultural labour such as seeding, ploughing, pruning vines or trees, reaping or threshing grain, vintaging, or killing pigs. The twelve signs of the zodiac often accompany the labours, and help to indicate the passage of time throughout the cycle of the year.

The cathedral of Notre-Dame at Chartres, France, is particularly rich in medieval iconography. The labours of the months and corresponding signs of the zodiac at Chartres appear in prominent positions and form an intimate part of the religious

²³¹ Cycles of the seasons almost disappeared in the Middle Ages (Perez Higuera 1998, 102). In his comprehensive survey of medieval calendars in France, Comet (1992, 37) finds very few in which the seasons occur, and in all of them, the months appear as well as the seasons. To these may be added two seasons cycles located in England (Fowler 1873, 156, 180). The twelfth-century manuscript Swabian Calendar (Stuttgart Württembergischen Landesbibliothek Cod. Hist. 2° 415) includes personifications of the seasons along with the labours of the months.

²³² For a survey of the calendar cycles in all media from the ninth through the twelfth centuries, see Panadero (1984, 126-154). In the early Middle Ages, illustrations of the months were relatively infrequent, but by the twelfth century, they had become very numerous, particularly in France and Italy (Webster 1938, 57). Comet (1992, 36) counted 113 examples from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in France alone. Webster (1938, 2) notes that many churches were erected in the twelfth century, thus providing the occasion for rendering the labours of the months on church facades.

programme of the cathedral facade.²³³ Before focusing on a discussion of the labours and signs of the zodiac at Chartres, it is necessary to place them in historical and architectural context. There had been a cathedral at Chartres since at least the eighth century,²³⁴ and Chartres became a major pilgrimage destination in the twelfth century, when the cult of Mary gained great importance in Western Christianity.²³⁵ By then the cathedral's school had also become preeminent as a centre for scholarship and learning. As the cathedral grew in reputation and status, the building was reconstructed and enlarged several times. The present cathedral dates from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The west facade and its sculptures date from the mid-twelfth century.²³⁶ The rest of the cathedral, including the facades of the north and south transepts, was constructed in the thirteenth century. The building was virtually complete by 1260²³⁷ and has changed very little since that time.²³⁸ The appearance of the cathedral is essentially the same today as in the thirteenth century, and therefore Chartres is a living document of medieval architectural sculpture.

The west front of Chartres, the so-called Royal Portal, is flanked by two towers, between which are three monumental portals, all of which open directly into the nave. Above the portals are three windows, surmounted by one large rose window. The

²³³ Panadero 1984, 23.

²³⁴ Miller 1996, 8.

²³⁵ Chartres owned an important Marian relic (the *Sancta Camisia*) believed to have been the garment worn by the Virgin when she gave birth to Christ (Miller 1996, 9).

²³⁶ The precise dating of the west facade of Chartres cathedral cannot be determined. For discussion of the complicated problem of the cathedral's chronology, see Van der Meulen 1989, 42-47. Stoddard (1986, 160-169) summarizes the conflicting opinions of various scholars from the nineteenth century onwards.

²³⁷ The sculptures of the foreportals (porches) of the north and south facades were not complete until about 1280 (Marriage 1909, 6).

²³⁸ The most significant changes to the cathedral since the thirteenth century are summarized in Miller (1996, 16-18) and in "Chartres," *Dictionnaire des Eglises de France, IV. Ouest et Ile-de-France*.

north and south transept arms of the cathedral are almost identical to each other in form and size, and both transepts are entered through three portals.²³⁹ Each transept arm has an attached foreportal (outer porch) which is three bays in width. Almost all available surfaces of all nine portals are covered with stone carving. The labours of the months and signs of the zodiac appear in portal sculptures on the west facade and on the foreportal of the north transept.

The cathedral of Chartres, France, makes an exceptionally good case study for the theme of winter in medieval art. Chartres features five cycles of the labours of the months and signs of the zodiac. Three of these cycles are complete; that is, they include all twelve months of the year. The other two cycles are incomplete. The earliest complete cycle (twelfth century) is sculpted onto the west facade of the cathedral. The two other complete cycles are both from the thirteenth century. One appears in the sculptures of the right foreportal (porch) of the north transept, and the other is executed in stained glass on the south transept windows (south wall) of the cathedral. The two incomplete cycles are both on the west facade and date to the twelfth century. In addition to the cycles of the months, Chartres has one of the few medieval representations of the seasons. The personifications of Winter and Summer appear on the north transept in conjunction with the thirteenth-century cycle of the labours on the right foreportal. This study will deal mainly with the twelfth-century labours from the west facade, left (north) portal, hereafter referred to as "Chartres West." After an examination of the winter

²³⁹ Van der Meulen 1975, 526.

labours at Chartres, the Chartrain cycle will be compared with calendars at two other contemporary churches, San Isidoro in León (Spain) and Saint-Denis in Paris.

The Labours on the West Facade

No adequate discussion of individual sculptures from medieval cathedrals is possible without considering their place within the building as a whole.²⁴⁰ Therefore, it is necessary to begin with a brief description of all the sculptures on the west facade of Chartres cathedral (fig. 18). The central tympanum features a Christ in Majesty surrounded by the four beasts of the Apocalypse.²⁴¹ In the lintel below are twelve seated apostles flanked by two standing figures representing Enoch and Elijah. There are three orders of archivolts: the inner, containing twelve angels; and the outer two, representing the elders of the Apocalypse. The right (south) portal deals with the Incarnation of Christ. The enthroned Virgin and Child appear in the tympanum. In the double lintel below them are scenes from the infancy of Christ: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, and the Presentation in the Temple. The inner order of archivolts carries two signs of the zodiac (Pisces and Gemini) and a female personification of Music (one of the seven Liberal Arts). The outer order contains the remaining six Liberal Arts.

The left (north) portal will be described in more detail, since it is the portal on which one of the two complete cycles of the labours of the months is sculpted (fig.

²⁴⁰ Van der Meulen 1975, 514.

²⁴¹ The description of the central and right (south) portals are as given in Panadero (1984, 71-72).

19). On the left side of the door are statues of two kings and a queen.²⁴² Above the door, the lintel is divided into two registers. Four winged angels in the upper register look down on ten apostles in the lower register. The tympanum represents the Ascension.²⁴³ In the centre, Christ stands with outstretched arms, flanked on both sides by standing angels. All three figures in the tympanum stand on top of a cloud, in which the four angels of the upper lintel are suspended. To the right of the door are two statues, one a saint or prophet, the other unidentifiable due to its mutilated condition. The labours of the months and signs of the zodiac appear in both orders of the archivolts (fig. 20).²⁴⁴ Beginning on the bottom left of the door and moving towards the top of the arch, the first (inner) order of the archivolts contains April, Aries, May, Taurus, and June. Again moving from the bottom left, the second (outer) order includes six more figures: July, Cancer, August, Leo, September, and Virgo. On the right side of the door, moving from bottom right towards the top of the arch, the first order of archivolts contains January, Capricorn, February, Aquarius, and March; the second order is composed of October,

²⁴² Except where noted, all identifications of the figures are as given by Marriage (1909).

²⁴³ Most scholars interpret the tympanum as an Ascension, but Van der Meulen sees it as a Creation. Panadero (1984, 83-89) summarizes the controversy.

²⁴⁴ The arrangement of labours of the months and signs of the zodiac at Chartres is highly unusual in several respects: (1) the cycle begins with Aries/April rather than January; (2) Gemini and Pisces are missing from the sequence, and (3) the pairing of April with Aries, etc. rather than April with Taurus, etc. is very rare. Favier (1990, 149) describes the cycle as "ambiguous.... Subsequently, the sculptor became more disciplined in his imagery. On the north portal voussoirs [thirteenth century]... the calendar which begins below on the left opens with the month of January." Lefevre (1927) suggests that the pairing of April with Aries at Chartres derives from Mithraism, since all the Mithraic zodiacs link April and Aries. He points out that the unusual combination of months and signs at Chartres is the same as in Wandalbert's poem about the months, *De duodecim mensium* (1927, 210, citing Emile Male). I propose that the sequence of labours and zodiac signs at Chartres West is deliberate. Although not necessarily a direct source, Wandalbert's *Incipit Horologium* concerning the connection of each month to one other month shows that at least from the ninth century onwards, January is sometimes related to December, February to November, March to October and so on (see Appendix A). The number of hours of sunlight in January is the same as in December; February the same as November, etc. At Chartres West, February and November are side-by-side. January and December may be connected by a diagonal line running from bottom left

Libra, November, Scorpio, December, and Sagittarius. Gemini and Pisces are absent from the cycle, but appear by themselves on the same facade, in the right (south) portal inner archivolts.

A discussion of the iconography of all twelve months and zodiac signs is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is important to note briefly what activity or "labour" is illustrated for each of the months at Chartres West, so that the winter months may be seen in their context as part of the complete cycle of the year (fig. 21). January is a Janus figure eating and drinking; February, an old man warming himself in front of a fire; March, a man pruning vines; April, a man holding the branch of a blossoming tree; May, a horseman holding a large bird (hawk?); June, a man cutting hay (his scythe is missing); July, a man reaping hay with a sickle; August, a man threshing grain; September, a vintaging scene; October, a man beating a tree to knock acorns down for the pigs; November, a man about to kill a pig with an axe; and December, a feasting scene. The iconography for November, December, January, and February will be discussed in more detail so as to explore the sources and adaptations of the medieval imagery of winter.

January

(January) to upper right (December); and March and October are connected diagonally as well. The other three pairs of months on the left-hand side of the arch are linked in the same manner.

January at Chartres is a *Janus biceps* (two-headed Janus),²⁴⁵ one of the most common medieval representations for this month (fig. 22).²⁴⁶ The connection between January and Janus is, of course, ancient. In Roman religion, Janus was “the god of gates and doorways, and subsequently of beginnings in general.”²⁴⁷ His shrine in the Roman Forum symbolized this role, since it was an arched passageway with doors on both the eastern and western ends. When Julius Caesar reformed the old Roman calendar in 45 B.C., he moved the first of the year from March (*Martius*) to January (*Januarius*), so that the beginning of the year would be closer to the winter solstice.²⁴⁸ Thus, Janus’ month, January, had long been associated with the beginning of the Roman civil calendar.²⁴⁹

In ancient literature, Janus was always conceived either as a god with two-faces (*Janus bifrons*) or with two heads (*Janus biceps*). He is described both ways in Latin literature of the first century B.C. Vergil (*Aeneid* 7.245) refers to the *Janus bifrons*: “ancient Janus, with his double face / And bunch of keys, the porter [doorman] of the place.”²⁵⁰ When Ovid (*Fast.* 1.65) explains the derivation of the word *Januarius*

²⁴⁵ A Janus with two heads is either referred to as *Janus bifrons* (with two faces) or *biceps* (with two heads). Some medieval illustrations of Janus show him with three heads. A triple-headed Janus appears in the thirteenth-century stained glass “zodiac” window at Chartres.

²⁴⁶ Perez Higuera 1998, 116.

²⁴⁷ See “Janus” in Howatson (1990, 304).

²⁴⁸ Duncan 1998, 34. Duncan notes that there had been earlier attempts before Caesar to change the beginning of the year to January, but they were not successful. Howatson (1990, 109) dates the change to 153 B.C. rather than 45 B.C.

²⁴⁹ The civil year is not connected with the astrological year or the liturgical year, though. The beginning of the astrological calendar continued to be Aries (March): “The zodiacal year begins with Aries, which marks the spring equinox; and Aries was in fact placed first in medieval texts on the subject” (Perez Higuera 1998, 72). The liturgical year originally began on March 25, but after the feast of Christmas was introduced in the fourth century, it began on the first Sunday in Advent (Perez Higuera 1998, 220).

²⁵⁰ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/te....+a.+7.245.dryden&vers=Dryden&word=janus>, August 15, 1999 (Dryden’s translation). Fowler (1873, 209-210) cites Ovid (*Fast.* 1.117-21; 1.163-64) for the notion

("January") he refers to a Janus *biceps*: *Jane biceps, anni tacite labentis origo* ("Two-headed Janus, source of the year quietly slipping by").²⁵¹ In the fourth century, Ausonius (*Eclogues* 5.3) continues to link Janus *bifrons* with the month of January: *Jane nove, primo qui das tua nomina mensi / Jane bifrons, spectas tempora bina simul* ("New Janus, you who give your name to the first month; two-faced Janus, you look at two seasons at the same time").²⁵²

Janus is known to have been represented in ancient art, as there is literary evidence for representations of Janus in Roman sculpture. The god is not illustrated in any of the extant Roman calendars, though.²⁵³ The oldest Roman calendar known, the so-called Altar of Gabii (first to second centuries A.D.), represents the months with twelve different deities and the twelve signs of the zodiac, but Janus is not one of the gods depicted.²⁵⁴ Isidore of Seville, writing in the seventh century, indicates that Janus *does* appear in illustrations of January (*Etymologiae* 5.23):

Ianuarius mensis a Iano dictus, cuius fuit a gentilibus consecratus; vel quia limes et ianua sit anni. Vnde et bifrons idem Ianus pingitur, ut introitus anni et exitus demonstraretur

The month of January (*Ianuarius*) takes its name from the god Janus, to whom the pagans consecrated it; or perhaps because this month is the threshold and door (*ianua*) of the year. For this reason too Janus is represented with two faces, so as to indicate that it is the entry and exit of the year.²⁵⁵

that Janus is a guardian of the universe and presides over the four seasons, especially winter, because in that season the old year goes out and the new year comes in.

²⁵¹ Cited in Fowler 1873, 210.

²⁵² Cited without translation by Comet 1992, 46.

²⁵³ Webster (1938, 63) notes that "[Janus] does not appear in the extant antique cycles, which, in accord with the early verses [Appendix B, etc.] refer rather to an offering to the gods."

²⁵⁴ The stone "altar" is encircled by sculpted heads of the twelve deities. See Stern 1981, 434-435.

²⁵⁵ Webster (1938, 63) includes the Latin text of Isidore's *Etymologiae* 5.23 in his Appendix M. The English translation is from Perez Higuera (1998, 116).

Thus, by at least the seventh century, Janus represents January in the illustrated calendars. But none of the surviving Carolingian calendars have any images of Janus. He only begins to appear in manuscripts of the tenth century, and did not become the predominant symbol for January until the twelfth century. His first appearance in medieval art is in the Fulda Calendar, a tenth-century manuscript originally from the monastery of Fulda.²⁵⁶ In the Fulda Calendar, Janus is a two-headed young man holding a broad-bladed sword (fig. 23). This “military” Janus is very rare. Much more common is the “warming” Janus. An early example of this type may be seen in the Calendar of St. Mesmin (eleventh-century). In this manuscript, Janus is conflated with the older imagery of warming by a fire (fig. 24).²⁵⁷ Many English manuscripts from the eleventh century illustrate January with scenes of ploughing and sowing.²⁵⁸ An eleventh-century manuscript from Venice even represents January as a feasting scene without Janus.²⁵⁹

In media other than manuscripts, there are no examples of calendars with labours of the months until the twelfth century, when monumental calendar cycles on church facades began to appear in large numbers.²⁶⁰ By that time, Janus had already

²⁵⁶ Comet 1992, 46.

²⁵⁷ Vatican Library ms. Reg. Lat. 1263, dated to ca. 1000 by Mane (1986, 262). Webster (1938, 51) believes the Calendar was copied from an Italian manuscript. Perez Higuera (1998, 120) refers to this manuscript as a very early example of Janus warming by the fire. The “warming” Janus is less frequent in medieval art than the “feasting” Janus.

²⁵⁸ Two examples are MS. Cott. Julius. A. VI and MS. Cott. Tiberius B. V, both in London, British Museum.

²⁵⁹ Venice, Library of St. Mark’s MS. gr.DXL. Webster (1938, catalogue no. 22) describes this January as “Killing hogs, for feasting? According to Strzygowski the figure carried the head of a hog on a dish, although this does not appear distinctly in the published photograph.”

²⁶⁰ There are illustrated calendars in certain church mosaics before the twelfth century, but they use the signs of the zodiac rather than the labours of the months. Fowler (1983, 172) cites the following examples:

become the most common symbol of January. From the twelfth century onwards, Janus represents January in several different media located throughout Western Europe. Janus appears in sculpture, mosaics, and manuscripts found in France, Spain, England, and Italy.²⁶¹

Janus figures in the twelfth century are frequently combined with representations of winter feasting.²⁶² The connection between Janus and winter feasting is medieval and has no precedents in ancient art or literature. This new iconography is explicitly described in the *Libro de Alexandre*, a late twelfth-century Spanish romance:²⁶³

Don Ianero was there, looking both ways,
surrounded by roasted meat, carrying wood for the fire,
he had large hens and was cooking them,
he was at the grill, preparing sausages.²⁶⁴

Janus at Chartres West is characteristic of most others of the “feasting Janus” type. He is seated at a table, eating a loaf of bread and drinking a cup of wine.²⁶⁵

the mosaic around the altar of the crypt in the Church of S. Gereon in Cologne and the floors at Rheims and Tournus.

²⁶¹ Some twelfth-century examples of Janus as January in church architecture are the Aosta cathedral floor mosaic, a baptismal font from Brookland (Kent), sculpture on the west facade of Chartres cathedral and the abbey church of Saint-Denis in Paris, and wall paintings at the church of San Isidoro de León in Spain. In manuscripts, January is illustrated by Janus in at least two twelfth-century calendars from England: Cambridge, St. John’s College MS. 42; and MS. 233, London, British Museum Lansdowne 383.

²⁶² According to Tuve (1933, 160), “the Janus head, eating and drinking usually beside a table, remains the most frequent January illustration.” Examples of the “feasting Janus” are found at the cathedral of Borgo San Donnino (now Fidenza) in Italy (Webster no. 41); a baptismal font from Brookland (Kent) (Webster no. 90), and sculptures from the facade of the cathedral at Ferrara (Webster no. 40). Several manuscript calendars also illustrate January by a feasting Janus.

²⁶³ The poem dates to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century,. It survives in two manuscripts, one in Madrid and the other in Paris (“*Libro de Alexandre.*” In Newmark 1956).

²⁶⁴ The English translation appears without original text in Perez Higuera (1998, 117).

A simple meal of bread and wine is the most common type of “feast” in the twelfth-century illustrations. Occasionally, though, Janus’ meal is more elaborate. The feasting Janus on the apse of the cathedral at Borgo San Donnino (Italy), for example, is not simply eating bread and drinking wine, but is busy cooking himself a meal.²⁶⁶ At the cathedral of Cremona (twelfth to thirteenth centuries), January is a man (not Janus) seated before a fire, holding a cup and apparently waiting for some sausages which are roasting in the hearth.²⁶⁷ Thus, there is a connection between January and feasting, whether or not Janus is present.

February

February at Chartres West is an old man seated beside the fire and warming himself (fig. 22). His head is covered, and his body is bundled up in full-length, warm clothing. This “warming” scene with a fire is the most common image for February in medieval calendars.²⁶⁸ The iconography of warming in winter has a long tradition. As early as the ninth century, January is illustrated in Carolingian manuscripts as a man warming his hands by the fire.²⁶⁹ The Carolingian iconography of warming, in turn, has earlier precedents. The Chronograph of 354 A.D., for example, shows January

²⁶⁵ Panadero (1984, 74-75) notes that Janus at Chartres is depicted cutting the bread, the first such representation in sculpture. Comet (1992, 72) points out that the images of bread and wine are connected with ancient seasons imagery in which Autumn carries grapes and Summer brings wheat. He adds that bread and wine are also symbolic of the Christian Eucharist.

²⁶⁶ Perez Higuera (1998, 171) describes the scene as a “rustic Janus . . . in the kitchen watching a kettle hanging over the fire.”

²⁶⁷ Webster (1938, catalogue no. 39) describes the meal as “objects such as sausages [which] hang over a stick back of the fire.”

²⁶⁸ Fowler 1873, 207; Tuve 1933, 161; Perez Higuera 1998, 170.

²⁶⁹ Perez Higuera (1998, 171) cites the Vienna Calendar as a precedent for the medieval winter warming scenes. For discussion of the imagery of the Vienna Calendar and its precedents in ancient art see above, p. 64-70.

as a man wearing a long tunic, heavy toga, and a fur cap. He extends his hands towards a tripod in which he is burning incense (fig. 14). It has been suggested by several scholars that this image was the source of medieval representations of February.²⁷⁰

November

November at Chartres West performs a much more active labour than January and February. A man grasps an axe with both hands and raises it up behind his back, about to swing it down onto the pig below (fig. 22). The animal is about to be struck with the blunt end of the axe, in order to stun it before it is killed and butchered.²⁷¹ Fowler (1873, 207) remarks that “pork was the favourite winter food of the Middle Ages.”²⁷² The popularity of pork in the winter months is likely due to the ease with which it can be preserved by curing. Pigs were commonly fattened in the late autumn by letting them graze on fallen acorns in the woods. Therefore they were in prime condition for slaughter just before the winter season began. These factors may explain why pig-slaughter is an extremely frequent subject in the winter months of medieval calendars.

²⁷⁰ For a recent restatement of this idea, see Comet (1992, 44). A thorough description and interpretation of the imagery of January in the Chronograph of 354 appears in Salzman (1990, 79-83). Perez Higuera (1998, 104-105) cites W. Endrei as “having drawn attention to the widespread diffusion of this image [a warmly-clothed old man], beginning with Roman calendars, such as the *Chronograph of 354*, where it appears as the personification of January.”

²⁷¹ Perez Higuera (1998, 164-66) remarks that most French calendars show a man swinging an axe, blunt end first, towards the pig in order to stun it. In Spain and Italy, the axe is sometimes replaced by a mallet. Fowler (1873, 207) describes the “modern” English custom of killing pigs by sticking them and leaving them to bleed to death. This method appears in some of the medieval illustrations of the months, along with two other methods: decapitation and stunning. Fowler comments that “the mode of killing by decapitation, sometimes represented [in labours of the months] can scarcely have been general, or the plan of stunning the animal by a blow upon the head before sticking it. The latter device appears to have been introduced into England by the German pork-butchers, and is barbarous and improper.” See Comet (192, 70-71) where he describes the various implements used to kill pigs, and remarks that in nineteenth-century France it was still a common practice to stun the pig and then cut its throat.

²⁷² As evidence, Fowler cites Vinc. Bellov. (*Spec. Nat.* 18.82): *Caro . . . levior est carnibus domesticis, fortis ac plurimi nutrimenti est, et velocis digestionis, et est melior quam potest esse in hyeme.*

Pig-killing is the most common illustration for December, but it is frequently found as the month of November as well.²⁷³ Very often, the slaughter scene is preceded by one in which the pigs are shown fattening up on acorns in the forest. Taking the slaughter and fattening scenes together, there is always at least one winter month, and sometimes two, in which a pig appears.²⁷⁴

December

December at Chartres West is a bearded man seated at a table. He takes a cup (or bowl) from a woman (?) who stands slightly behind him.²⁷⁵ On the table in front of him is a round loaf of bread. This is the “feasting” scene which is typical of December in many medieval calendars.²⁷⁶ Feasting appears to have been introduced into the iconography of the winter months sometime during the early Middle Ages. The table laden with food has no precedent in antique calendar illustrations.²⁷⁷ One of the earliest December feasting scenes appears in a calendar painted on the walls at San Isidoro de León in Spain (fig. 26). San Isidoro dates to ca. 1130; that is, shortly before Chartres West.²⁷⁸ December at León is very similar to the one at Chartres. He is a bearded man seated at a table beside a fire. He holds a round loaf of bread in his left hand, and food

²⁷³ In his summary of twelfth-century labours of the months, Webster (1993, 99) states that “the preparation of food for the winter, usually illustrated in the activity of killing hogs” is one of the two most important activities of autumn.

²⁷⁴ Comet 1992, 62.

²⁷⁵ The figure cannot be identified with certainty. Panadero (1984, 81) describes it as “a youth or woman.”

²⁷⁶ Tuve (1933, 166) comments that “the regular December labor—a pig being killed with an axe—is sometimes pushed up into November to make room for a December feast scene, or a cook putting bread into an oven (quite frequent, especially later).”

²⁷⁷ Perez Higuera 1998, 169. In ancient art, there is a tradition of still-life paintings of food, and Roman mosaics represent the agricultural products of the seasons, but food is not illustrated in the calendars. See Comet’s remarks above (n. 262) regarding the “feasting” Janus in January and possible sources of imagery.

and drink have been placed on the table in front of him.²⁷⁹ Feasting is such an important theme for the winter months that it is not uncommon for feasting scenes to appear twice within the same calendar cycle. One example is at St. Ursin in Bourges (twelfth century), where January is a seated man watching a pan on a tripod and December is a man at a table prepared for a feast.²⁸⁰ The same doubling of feasting scenes in January and December occurs at several other twelfth-century churches in France, including Chartres.²⁸¹

Chartres and Other Twelfth-Century Churches

The imagery of the labours of the months at Chartres West is consistent with other medieval cycles on churches; that is, it fits within an established tradition. Within that tradition, there are many variations in relatively minor details.²⁸² This is evident when comparing Chartres with other twelfth-century churches. Two contemporary churches, San Isidoro de León (Spain) and the abbey church of Saint-Denis (France) have cycles of the labours in which each month has a theme identical to the one at Chartres. For the winter months at all three churches, January is a Janus figure; February, a warming scene with a fire; November represents killing a pig; and December

²⁷⁸ Webster (1938, catalogue no. 83) dates the paintings at San Isidoro to the twelfth century; Perez Higuera (1998) dates them to ca. 1130.

²⁷⁹ The table holds a footed cup of wine and a small round object (bread?).

²⁸⁰ Dated to the twelfth century by Webster (1938, catalogue no. 62).

²⁸¹ Important examples are at Fenioux, the cathedral of Senlis, and the abbey church of Ste. Madeleine, Vezelay (Webster 1938, catalogue nos. 67, 76, and 81). January at Vezelay is a feasting scene with a man cutting a round loaf of bread; December is probably a feasting scene, since there is a seated figure holding a cup of wine (or a drinking horn).

²⁸² Medieval literature is also characterized by its insistence on the same themes with many different variations. "Aiming at originality and diversity was foreign to medieval thought and literature. In the endless repetitions, in the variations on the same theme and in the handling of standard concepts and images, medieval man found confirmation of his beliefs" (Gurevich 1990, 123).

is a feasting scene. In the Royal Pantheon of San Isidoro de León in Spain, dated to ca. 1130,²⁸³ January is represented here by a Janus *bifrons*, as at Chartres. But Janus at León is not seated; rather, he is standing with arms outstretched towards gates at either side of him (fig. 25). He represents a common medieval type known as *Janus inter portas* (Janus between the gates).²⁸⁴ The León February is also a hooded man warming by the fire, but unlike the Chartres figure, he extends bare feet towards the flames (fig. 25). In November at León, a young man in a short tunic pins down the pig by bracing his left leg against the animal's flank while grasping its ears with his hand (fig. 26). In his right hand, the man raises a small hatchet above the pig, and is just about to strike the animal. At Chartres, the man is older and the implement is a large axe. December is a feasting scene at both churches, but whereas at Chartres there are two figures, at León there is only one (fig. 26). A man is seated alone at a table on which there is a cup of wine and a small round object (bread?). In his left hand he holds a round loaf of bread, while he raises his right hand in a gesture that suggests a benediction.²⁸⁵ Unlike the one at Chartres, the León December includes a blazing fire, towards which the man raises his left foot.

The Chartres cycle also has much in common with a cycle of the months located at the abbey church of Saint-Denis in Paris, only sixty miles from Chartres. Dated to 1140, Saint-Denis is nearly contemporary with San Isidoro de León, and both

²⁸³ Perez Higuera 1998, 26-31, 127, 132

²⁸⁴ According to Perez Higuera (1998, 118), the *Janus inter portas* is the type of medieval Janus figure closest to its Roman origins, derived from *Ianus*, the first king of Latium, to whom Julius Caesar dedicated the first month of the year when he instituted the new calendar in 45 B.C.

²⁸⁵ "This [the blessing] is a unique gesture, unknown in the other schemes, and has been interpreted as an allusion to the Eucharist" (Perez Higuera 1998, 170).

the León and Saint-Denis churches slightly predate Chartres West.²⁸⁶ At Saint-Denis, once again the subjects chosen for each of the twelve months are the same as at Chartres. There are some interesting variations in the iconography of the winter months among the three churches. January at Saint-Denis is represented as a two-headed Janus figure with one beardless (young) face and one bearded (old) face (fig. 27). Janus at Chartres has two faces, one young and one old. San Isidoro is different from the other two churches, since Janus' faces are both young and beardless. Janus at Saint-Denis is the Janus *inter portas* type, as at San Isidoro. He stands “between cabinets with open doors, into one of which the elderly half places an object while the young half removes something from the other.”²⁸⁷ Janus at Chartres is a “feasting” Janus seated at a table.

February at all three churches is represented by a “warming” scene in which figures are seated in front of a fire. Chartres and San Isidoro show a single person (a man) warming himself. This is the most frequent way in which warming is portrayed in medieval representations of the months. The Saint-Denis February is very unusual in that it is almost a genre scene, with two warmly-dressed seated figures looking towards each other from both sides of the fire (fig. 27). The man on the left has tongs in his hand, while the other figure holds out her hands towards the fire.²⁸⁸ The figures in all three churches are warmly bundled up, with their heads covered. However, the man at San Isidoro has taken his boots off and is toasting his bare feet near the flames (fig. 28).²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶ Saint-Denis can be dated from its dedication on June 9, 1140 (Blum 1986, 219).

²⁸⁷ Panadero 1984, 65.

²⁸⁸ Panadero (1984, 65) describes her as reading from a book.

²⁸⁹ Perez Higuera (1998, 174) cites the Martyrology of Wandalbert as one of the earliest depictions of a man warming his bare feet before the fire. She notes that there is an unusual warming scene at Belena de Sorbe, where February is shown as a partly-nude peasant “exposing his genitals over a fire.”

The occupation for November (pig-killing) is the same at Chartres, Saint-Denis, and San Isidoro. At Chartres and San Isidoro, a man is seen about to swing an axe down on a pig. This, as noted above, was a method commonly used to stun the animal before killing it.²⁹⁰ The next step in the process would have been to slit the animal's throat and suspend it head downwards so as to let it bleed to death.²⁹¹ Then, of course, the pig could be butchered. November at Saint-Denis illustrates these last two steps. A man is cutting up a pig at the left and another pig hangs from a tree on the right (fig. 29). It is unusual to see this part of the killing process represented in French sculpture. The only other location is at the cathedral at Amiens (thirteenth century).²⁹²

The month of December at Chartres, San Isidoro, and Saint-Denis is a bearded man seated at a table "feasting." Again, there are some minor differences in the iconography among the three scenes. At Saint-Denis and Chartres, a woman appears slightly behind the man and serves him some food or drink.²⁹³ At San Isidoro, the feasting man is alone. There is no fire in the December feast scene at Chartres, but at San Isidoro and Saint-Denis, the feasting man sits near a roaring fire. Even though both these are warming scenes with a fire, they are slightly different from each other. At San Isidoro, the man is actively warming himself by extending his hands and feet towards the flames. At Saint-Denis, the old man and his servant both face away from the hearth (fig. 29).

²⁹⁰ See above, n. 268.

²⁹¹ Comet 1992, 70-71; Perez Higuera 1998, 164-166.

²⁹² Mane 1986, 261. At Amiens, one pig is suspended over a large scalding tub, another is lying on the ground, and a third is about to be killed with a sharp knife which is lying on the floor nearby. In Italian calendars, the most frequent pig-killing scene is of a man cutting the pig's throat or hanging it to bleed (Perez Higuera 1998, 166).

It is obvious from the foregoing that by the twelfth century, a strong tradition for each of the months had already been established in medieval art. The existence of a set tradition for the cycle of the months is confirmed in the "scientific" literature. For example, an eleventh-century Latin poem published in one of the editions of Bede briefly describes the symbolism of each month:

Poto, ligna cremo, de vite superflua demo,
 Do gramen gratum, mihi flos servit, mihi pratum,
 Foenum [var. spicas] declino, messes meto, vina propino,
 Semen humi jacto, mihi pasco sues, immolo porcos.

I drink, I burn firewood, I take away superfluous branches
 from the vine

I give the welcome plant, the flower is gratifying to me, and
 the meadow

I cut the hay, I reap the harvest, drink wine.

I throw the seed to the ground, I pasture the pigs, I kill the
 pigs.²⁹³

The *Breviari d'amor*, a late-thirteenth-century Provençal encyclopaedia compiled by Matfre Ermengaud, is more elaborate but is nearly identical in its identification of the activities for each month.²⁹⁵ In a section entitled *La natura dels XII*

²⁹³ The servant at Chartres is identified as a woman by Marriage (1909, 34).

²⁹⁴ The poem is reprinted in Comet 1992, 48. It had originally been published in a sixteenth-century Cologne edition of Bede.

²⁹⁵ Madrid, Biblioteca National, Res. 203. For a discussion of the *Breviari* and its relation to medieval thought concerning the seasons, see Tuve (1933, 152-55).

mes de l'an (The Nature of the twelve months of the year), Ermengaud describes how each month is illustrated in the calendars:

Javier en la penchura ab doas caras per figurar que a l'issir e a l'intrar de l'an doblamen esgara . . . issamen per aiso manjan e beven . . . / Fevrier . . . al foc estan sos pes calfans per la freidura quez es grans . . . / Mars . . . a manierade podador, podadoira portan el ma . . . / Abril . . . portan joiozamen la flor . . . Mais e la penchura es penh a ley de cavalier el ponh portan son esparvier . . . Junh a manierira de vila segan prat am lo dalth al ma . . . Aquest mes de Juli portan la fau el ma sos blatz seguan . . . Aost a ley de batedor, am lo flagel baten son blat . . . / . . . Septembres . . . a ley de vendemiador. . . . Octobre son blat semenan ab l'araire quelh vai denan / ... depenh hom Novembre en lo boscatge porcx gardan a la pastura de la glan / ... Dezembre penh hom aissi a manieira de mazelier quez am lo destral lo porc fier. . . .²⁹⁶

January has two faces in order to show that he looks at the exit and entrance of the year . . . one also paints him eating and drinking because the cold outside makes it necessary to fill the body with warmth.²⁹⁷ February with an old face warms himself at the fire because the cold is great. March carries in his hand the pruning hook for vines because that is the task of the time; also for other trees. April joyously carries a flower because the trees are in flower, and so are the orchards. May [is] a rider carrying a hawk on his wrist, because the meadows are green and because one likes the creatures [logic?]. June is a peasant who cuts [hay], the scythe in his hand. July holds a sickle in his hand and harvests his wheat. August beats the wheat with a flail. September [is] a vintager at work October seeds his wheat and the plough goes in front [of him]. November guards the

²⁹⁶ Text from Comet 1992, 49, n. 43.

²⁹⁷ The need for eating more in winter is explicitly addressed by Honorius Augustodunensis (1075/1080-1156) in his *Quare sol oblique moveatur, et de hieme et vere* (Book 2, Chapter 26; Latin text in *PL* 172:67): *utile est in eodem [i.e. hiems] augmentare cibum* ("it is useful in winter to increase food"). He adds that *apud antiquos Deus hiemis, pinguis venter pingebatur* ("among the Ancients, the God of winter was painted [as?] a fat belly").

pigs in the woods where they feed on the acorns. December is painted as a butcher who, with his axe, hits the pig.²⁹⁸

All the months at Chartres West are identical to those described by Ermengaud except for the last three. Ermengaud's October seeding and ploughing have been omitted, and the November and December pig-fattening and killing have been moved up to October and November. December at Chartres is a feasting scene, which Ermengaud combines with the Janus figure in January.

The comparison of the three twelfth-century churches confirms that there is a core medieval tradition for the iconography of the months. Yet the illustration of each month is not identical from one church to another. There seems to have been considerable freedom for minor variation within the given tradition. The three churches are all nearly contemporary with each other, and all represent the winter months with the same subjects. There are several differences in the details, though. Chartres West is very similar to Saint-Denis for the three months of January, February, and December, but is most similar to San Isidoro for the month of November. It is probable that these differences are of no importance for the meaning of the calendars as a whole, but simply allow for different interpretations of the same theme. Winter is no more important than any other season in the medieval cycles of the months, and the same ideas about winter are repeated without substantial change from one church to another. The "warming"

²⁹⁸ Translated from Comet's French translation (1992, 49) of the original Provencal. As further evidence that medieval illustrations of the months were handed down according to a well-established tradition, Comet notes that the same scenes described by Ermengaud are later attributed to the same months, without any change, by Bartholomaeus Anglicus in book 9 of his encyclopedia, *De proprietatibus rerum*. Tuve (1933, 156) remarks that both Matfre and Bartholomaeus "refer to a wide-spread manuscript convention."

scenes all convey the same message: winter is cold. The many feasting scenes indicate that eating is simply one way to cope with the cold. As Ermengaud says in the *Breviari d'amor*, "the cold outside makes it necessary to fill the body with warmth." The pig-killing scenes are closely related to the feasting scenes, since pigs were commonly slaughtered in the autumn in order to have meat for the winter. The month of January is most often represented by Janus, a reference to the beginning of the new year in the secular, civil calendar.

The Seasons Sculptures at Chartres

There are very few representations of the seasons as such in medieval art. In all of them, winter is clearly equated with cold weather.²⁹⁹ The typical representation of Winter is an old man whose head and body are fully covered with thick, warm clothing. The personification of Winter at Chartres is no exception. Winter and Summer, the only two seasons represented at Chartres, are both added to a complete thirteenth-century cycle of the labours and zodiac signs on the north facade, west (right) foreportal.³⁰⁰ Winter is placed at the bottom left of the second (outer) order of archivolts, balancing Summer at the bottom right. Winter is an old (bearded) man, hooded and draped with a long cloak (fig. 30). He holds one foot out towards the fire below him for

²⁹⁹ There may be one exception. The fourteenth century glass medallions from Dewsbury church, Yorkshire may show Winter as a man killing a pig. It is not certain whether the medallions represent months or seasons (Fowler 1873, 178).

³⁰⁰ The central bay of the north foreportal represents the Creation and the Fall; the left (south) bay, the Active and Contemplative Life and the Beatitudes; and the right (north) bay, the labours of the month and signs of the zodiac (Tuve 1933, 137).

more warmth. Summer is his opposite, wearing a “light garment [that] streams in the wind.”³⁰¹

The cycle of the labours with which Winter and Summer are associated begins with January at the bottom left of the first (inner) order of the archivolts. Thus, Winter and January are placed side-by-side. A comparison of Winter, January, and February reveals that there are several differences even though all three symbolize the same time of year. January is a “feasting” Janus holding a loaf of bread and a cup of wine (fig. 31). February, just above him, is very similar to Winter in that he is an old man wearing a hooded cloak and warming himself by a fire (fig. 31). February and Winter are not presented in an identical manner, even though they are both “warming” scenes. February sits in front of a solid mass of fire, whereas Winter stands above tongues of flame curling up from a fire below. February sits politely with both feet on the ground on either side of the fire, while Winter holds out his toe towards the flames. Winter wears a boot on his left leg, but his right foot is bare. He holds out both hands towards the fire and raises his outer robe to warm his legs. Both February and Winter are covered with warm clothing, but their robes are different. February’s hooded cloak is parted below his neck to reveal a long tunic underneath, whereas Winter has his outer garment gathered up closely to protect his middle. Thus, just as there are many minor variations among the representations of the winter months in medieval cycles of the labours, there are minor differences between February and Winter at Chartres, even though they both represent the cold weather of winter.

³⁰¹ Marriage 1909, 180.

The Signs of the Zodiac

The meaning of the labours of the months at Chartres cannot be fully understood without a discussion of the signs of the zodiac with which they are associated.³⁰² Both the labours and the signs of the zodiac are reminders of the ordering of the universe under the direction of God.³⁰³ By the time the first monumental calendar cycles began to appear on twelfth-century churches, it had already become common practice to include the twelve signs of the zodiac. The zodiac is, of course, ancient and is not Christian in origin. That did not necessarily mean that Christians would entirely reject the zodiac as pagan. Just as pagan Romans had not established a strict distinction between astrology and astronomy,³⁰⁴ medieval Christians had not done so either. In fact, “natural astrology” (astrology related to natural events) was embraced by the Church, even though other aspects of astrology were rejected.³⁰⁵

From at least the sixth century onwards, the signs of the zodiac began to appear in Christian churches. Some of the “calendars” in Carolingian crypt mosaics, for

³⁰² Tuve (1933, 169) points out the essential relationship between the labours of the months and the signs of the zodiac in medieval books of Hours. Panadero (1984) devotes a considerable portion of her dissertation to the connection between the labours and the zodiacs on twelfth-century church facades.

³⁰³ In his discussion of the role of nature in medieval art and literature, Lewis (1994, 203) points out that the ‘medieval and Renaissance delight in the universe was ... a ‘love of nature’. Merely to imitate or to comment on the human life around us was therefore not felt to be the sole function of the arts. The labours of men appear on Achilles’ shield in Homer for their own sake. In the Mutability cantos or the Salone they appear not only for their own sake but also because of their relation to the months, and therefore to the zodiac, and therefore to the whole natural order. . . . Where Homer rejoiced in the particulars the later artist rejoiced also in that great imagined structure which gave them all their place. Every particular fact and story became more interesting and more pleasurable if, by being properly fitted in, it carried one’s mind back to the Model as a whole.’

³⁰⁴ Dehon 1993, 227, n. 1

³⁰⁵ See Lewis (1994, 102-112) for a discussion of Christian astrology during the Middle Ages. He points out (103) that astrology was not medieval, but was inherited from antiquity, and that medieval theologians accepted the notion that the planets had an effect on events, on psychology, on plants and minerals, and on

example, consist only of zodiac signs, without any other representation of the months.

Zodiacs had appeared in the archivolts of the portals of churches in France since the eleventh century, and the large cathedrals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were all provided with the signs of the zodiac, always in a very similar manner.³⁰⁶

The zodiac signs are included in twelfth century Christian cycles of the months because they are intimately connected with the “scientific” calendar, that is, the calendar which keeps track of man’s time on earth.³⁰⁷ Calendars on churches did not necessarily illustrate the Liturgical year, which begins in a different month than the civil year.³⁰⁸ The active “labours” (those that show man actively engaged in work) are almost all agricultural tasks. Although the Church set a high value on work, that is not the reason that calendars are so frequent on twelfth-century churches.³⁰⁹ The work portrayed in the calendars simply symbolizes the characteristic activities of each month according

the bodies of men. The Church fought only against three of astrology’s offshoots: predictions of the future, astrological determinism, and the worship of planets.

³⁰⁶ Viollet-le-Duc, director of antiquities for France in the nineteenth century, is quoted in Fowler (1873, 146) as writing (*Dictionnaire Raisonné de l’Architecture Français. Art. Zodiaque*): “ ‘Des le xi^e siècle, les portails de nos églises possèdent des Zodiaques sculptés sur les archivoltes des portes. Nos grandes cathédrales des xii^e et xiii^e siècles sont toutes pourvues de ses signes, sculptés toujours d’une manière très apparante.’ ” Fowler (1873, 178) quotes Viollet-le-Duc as remarking that the signs of the zodiac were also common in the rose windows of French churches of the twelfth and thirteenth century.

³⁰⁷ Tuve (1933, 169-170) concludes that “the series [of labours and signs of the zodiac] as one sees it in the ecclesiastical calendars is inextricably mingled with the tradition as found in the scientific treatises, the almanacks, and the encyclopaedias of knowledge. The liturgical calendar popularized and helped preserve a seasons tradition of complicated and serious background.” Webster (1938, 93) sees the Romanesque calendar illustrations as springing from two sources: (1) “scientific,” in which the annual movement of the sun through the constellations of the zodiac produces a succession of definite periods of time, and (2) “humanistic,” reflecting upon man’s life on earth as it is affected by changes in weather. Perez Higuera (1998, 14) notes that in some of the twelfth-century Christian manuscripts and floor mosaics, Christ replaces the classical *Annus* (the personified year) as “the Sun of Justice who governs the course of time, marking the passing of the months and the seasons.” Panadero (1984, 210) considered several artistic and textual sources which differ from the ones examined in the present study, yet came to the same conclusion; that is, that the cycles of the zodiacs and labours represent the passage of time.

³⁰⁸ The medieval civil year began at different times in different places. At Chartres, the civil year began with April up until 1567 (Lefevre 1927, 219).

to a firmly-established tradition of calendar illustration. The calendars, in turn, represent the passage of time. Winter seen in this context is merely one of the seasons which make up the annual cycle of man's life on earth. Beyond the realm of earth lies *caelum ipsum* ("the very Heaven") of God, where there is "neither place nor void nor time. Hence whatever is there is of such a kind as not to occupy space, nor does time affect it."³¹⁰ Earthly life is marked by the passage of time, but life in Heaven is eternal. Heaven and earth are necessarily connected in medieval thought. In the medieval Model of the Universe "everything links up with everything else; at one, not in flat equality, but in a hierarchical ladder."³¹¹ Time on earth is related upwards in the hierarchy to timelessness in Heaven. God is at the top of the hierarchy, and is responsible for the whole universe beneath. Thus, the signs of the zodiac become Christian symbols of the passage of time in the "temporal" world. The temporal world in turn reminds Christians of timeless eternity with God. All things in Heaven and earth are encompassed within a divine Unity.³¹²

Winter at Chartres Cathedral

Winter at Chartres cathedral is primarily seen as one of four seasons necessary to complete the annual cycle which marks the passage of time on earth. As can

³⁰⁹ See Panadero (1984, 188) for evidence against Male's interpretation of medieval labours of the months. Male (1913) argued that the labours reminded the peasants of their duty to work.

³¹⁰ Aristotle, *De caelo*, 279 as cited by Lewis (1994, 96-97). Lewis explains that Aristotle's cosmology was adopted into Christianity, so that the ancient conception of what lies beyond the heavens becomes in the Middle Ages "'the very Heaven', *caelum ipsum*, and full of God, as Bernardus says."

³¹¹ Lewis 1994, 12.

³¹² In *De sex dierum operibus*, Thierry of Chartres, one of Chartre's most famous teachers, clearly states his understanding of the created universe as the "divine Unity of all things, all time, all space and movement" (Tuve 1933, 139-40).

be seen from the comparison of Chartres with contemporary churches, calendars on twelfth-century facades are remarkably similar in content from one location to another. There are indeed many variations in the iconography, but they are all in relatively minor details. Each of the months is illustrated according to a tradition which had already been firmly established by the mid-twelfth century. Chartres is typical of very many other churches in its choice of subjects for the winter months. January is represented by a Janus figure, the most common symbol of the month in medieval calendars. Janus is a pagan god taken from antique literary sources and introduced into medieval art around the tenth century. The medieval Church did not deny his pagan origin, and did not attempt to "Christianize" him. Janus was accepted simply because he was a traditional symbol for the closing and opening of the civil year.

At Chartres, Janus is combined with winter feasting. The "feasting" Janus is the most common type of Janus in medieval calendars. Feasting was introduced into the iconography of the winter months during the Middle Ages, and appears frequently in the calendars on church facades. Often, feasting is the theme of more than one winter month. At Chartres, feasting is represented not only in January, but also in December. December is a festive scene in which a man is seated at a table spread with food and drink. This again is a typical illustration for the month. Feasting is referred to indirectly in November, where a man is shown killing a pig. The association of late autumn or early winter with pig-killing is very persistent in medieval calendars. Although the slaughter does not illustrate feasting per se, it symbolizes feasting because pigs are turned into ham to supply meat for the long winter months ahead.

The primary characteristic by which the winter season distinguishes itself from the others is that it is cold. At Chartres, Winter and February are personified by old men warming themselves by the fire. These figures are not just bundled up against the cold, but they also extend their hands and feet towards a fire. This is the typical medieval winter "warming" scene.

CHAPTER VI

Since most of the illustrated cycles of the months in medieval art were created for churches or liturgical manuscripts, it is reasonable to expect that an examination of Christian literature should complement a study of winter in medieval art. Selections from eight poems by Christian authors were chosen as examples of sacred literature with seasonal content. The poems represent four different themes, all of which are variations on Christian symbolism of the seasons. Early and medieval Christian poetry is almost always allegorical and indirect.³¹³ To provide a more personal perspective on winter, four additional poems were selected from the *Carmina Burana*, an eclectic collection of popular medieval songs.

Christian Latin Poems and the Seasons

Any survey of anthologies of Christian poems yields only a small number with any seasonal content.³¹⁴ The few poems that are found may be divided into four categories: (1) the four seasons as they symbolize the four elements. Each season constitutes merely one part within a system in which opposites balance each other,

³¹³ A system of allegorical interpretation was normal procedure in medieval schools, where students were trained to look for the "higher" meanings behind what they read (Jackson, 1960, 5). Harrison (1968, 2) remarks that from the time of the Christian Fathers onwards for the next thousand years, sacred literature was thought to possess four different levels of meaning: (1) a literal, surface meaning (*sensus historicus*); (2) an allegorical meaning; (3) a moral meaning; and (4) an anagogical meaning, pointing towards heaven. As an example, he cites the Christian interpretation of the meaning of 'Jerusalem'. "In the literal sense, it is the historical city; allegorically, it represents the Church of Christ dispersed throughout the world; morally, each Christian soul 'militant here upon earth'; and lastly, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem."

³¹⁴ For example, Spitzmuller (1971) includes poems from the third to the fifteenth centuries in his anthology. In 1,627 pages of verse, less than twenty poems have any relation to the seasons or months.

thereby creating order and stability; (2) the seasons as indicators of time. God is the creator and regulator of the heavens and the earth, and He is the “prime mover” of the universe. Under His direction the seasons come and go in eternally recurring cycles. The year is simply one complete cycle of the four seasons; (3) the seasons as natural phenomena. Nature honours God and is a reflection of Him. The cycle of life and death is observed throughout the seasons and interpreted as the cycle of human life, death, and spiritual rebirth; and (4) the seasons as allegories of timeless spiritual values which oppose each other. Winter is eternal Hell and spring is eternal Paradise.

The first category of thought is exemplified by certain passages of the *De consolatione philosophiae* of Boethius (480-ca. 524). This work continued to be read throughout the Middle Ages, and its importance to medieval thought may be judged by its great popularity. *De consolatione philosophiae* was the most widely read book of the Middle Ages, next to the Bible.³¹⁵ Boethius describes God as creator of the four elements (*Metrum* 3.9):

O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas
 Terrarum caelique sator qui tempus ab aevo
 Ire iubes stabilisque manens das cuncta moveri,
 Quem non externae pepulerunt fingere causae
 Materiae fluitantis opus, verum insita summi
 Forma boni livore carens, tu cuncta superno
 Ducas ab exemplo, pulchrum pulcherrimus ipse

³¹⁵ Waddell 1976, 88. “[In the Middle Ages] the works of Boethius were probably of greater significance than those of any other classical author except Vergil” (Jackson 1960, 11).

Mundum mente gerens similique in imagine formans
 Perfectasque iubens perfectum absolvere partes.
 Tu numeris elementa ligas ut frigora flammis
 Arida convenient liquidis, ne purior ignis
 Evolet aut mersas deducant pondera terras.

O Thou whose reason guides the universe,
 Maker of earth and heaven,
 Who from eternity dost send forth Time
 And thyself motionless
 Givst all things power to move.
 No cause outside thyself prevailed on Thee
 To fashion floating matter to a world,
 But an instinctive pattern in thy mind.
 Utterly good, and with no taint of malice
 Thou didst fashion all things in that heavenly mould.
 Thou the supreme in beauty, carrying
 A world of beauty in thy mind, didst shape
 A perfect whole and bade it then release
 Its perfect parts: numbered the elements,
 That cold might contain fire, and dryness water:
 Lest fire too pure might vanish into air,
 Or weight of water drag down flooded earth.³¹⁶

³¹⁶ Text and translation Waddell 1976, 112-113.

Boethius subsequently links these four elements (cold, heat, wetness, and dryness) to the four seasons (4.6):

Haec concordia temperat aequis
 Elementa modis, ut pugnantia
 Vicibus cedant umida siccis
 Iungantque fidem frigora flammis
 Pendulus ignis surgat in altum
 Terra que graves pondere sidant.
 Isdem causis vere tepenti
 Spirat florifer annus odores,
 Aestas Cererem fervida siccatur,
 Remeat pomis gravis autumnus,
 Hiemem defluus irrigat imber.
 Haec temperies alit ac profert
 Quidquid vitam spirat in orbe.
 Eadem rapiens condit et aufert
 Obitu mergens orta supremo.
 Sedet interea conditor altus
 Rerumque regens flectit habendas
 Rex et dominus fons et origo
 Lex et sapiens arbiter aequi.

This concord tempers then the elements
 In equal measure, so that warring waters

Yield in their turn to drought,
 And frosts make league with flame;
 The pendulum of fire swings to high heaven,
 The heavy clod settles with its weight.
 By selfsame cause the flowering year
 Breathes fragrance in the growing warmth of Spring.
 Hot Summer ripens grain: and Autumn
 Comes laden home with apples: and the rain falls on the
 winter fields.
 This tempering of things gives food and brings to life
 Whatever breathes:
 And merges all that's born in final death.
 And in the midst the Maker sits on high.
 The reins are in his hands,
 Master and King, the well-spring and the source,
 The Law and arbiter of equity.³¹⁷

Winter has meaning here only as one of the four equal parts of a perfect, divine whole. The cold rains of winter balance the heat and dryness of summer. This balance is necessary for all living things, and has its origin in God, the creator and director of the universe.³¹⁸

³¹⁷ Text and translation Waddell 1976, 118-119.

³¹⁸ See Dehon 1993, 29 where he discusses Lucretius. Lucretius' "scientific" explanation of the seasons, in which they are compared to the four elements, was followed by Boethius, and was still current in the thirteenth century. Matfre Ermengaud's encyclopedia, for example, makes the same type of analysis.

The second category of seasonal references in Christian poetry is closely related to the first. God is again seen as the creator of the universe, but his role in regulating the heavens and earth is more specific here. He is the prime mover of the heavenly bodies and He keeps them moving in perpetual cycles. The motion of the sun, moon, and stars is regulated as if by a divine machine.³¹⁹ The circular movement of the heavens causes the cycle of seasons on earth. Time is marked out by the movements of the heavens and the consequent changes of the seasons because they are regular and recurring. Boethius sees God as the creator who regulates and turns the universe according to His own law (*De consolatione philosophiae* 1. 5). The completion of each month is marked by the phases of the moon. Each season is succeeded in turn by the next. Time moves in accordance with the divine plan of God:

O stelliferi conditor orbis
 Qui perpetuo nixus solio
 Rapido caelum turbine versas
 Legemque pati sidera cogis,
 Ut nunc pleno lucida cornu
 Totis fratris obvia flammis
 Condat stellas luna minores,
 Nunc obscuro pallida cornu
 Phoebo propior lumina perdat,
 Et qui primae tempore noctis

³¹⁹ This idea is ancient in origin. For example, Dehon 1993, 29 points out that Lucretius had envisaged winter almost exclusively as merely an integral part of a natural cycle. It is the regular mechanism of the cycle that is of primary interest to him.

Agit algentes Hesperos ortus,
 Solitas iterum mutet habenas
 Phoebi pallens Lucifer ortu.
 Tu frondifluae frigore brumae
 Stringis lucem breviore mora:
 Tu, cum fervida venerit aestas,
 Agiles nocti dividis horas.
 Tua vis varium temperat annum
 Ut quas Boreae spiritus aufert
 Revehat mites Zephyrus frondes
 Quaeque Arcturus semina vidit
 Sirius altas urat segetes.
 Nihil antiqua lege solutum
 Linquit propriae stationis opus.
 Omnia certo fine gubernans.

O Maker of the starry world
 Who, resting on thy everlasting throne,
 Turnst heaven like a spindle
 And hast the stars brought under law,
 So that the moon, now shining at the full,
 Straight in the pathway of her brother's flame,
 Blots out the lesser stars:
 Now with her crescent dim
 Draws near the sun and loses all her light:

And Hesperus, in the first hour of eve,
 Awakens the cold welling of the stars,
 And then as Lucifer
 Grows pallid in the rising of the sun.
 It is thy power tempers the changing year
 So that the leaves the North Wind swept away
 The West Wind brings again.
 Arcturus watched the sowing of the seed
 That Sirius parches in the standing grain.
 Naught is there that escapes the ancient law,
 Or leaves the work of its appointed ward.
 Thou guidest all things to their certain goal.³²⁰

Boethius' cosmological views were still very much alive during the Middle Ages. An anonymous hymn from the tenth century, the *Hymnus Cotidianus ad vesperas*, makes the same connection between the heavens, the seasons, and the passage of time.³²¹ God the eternal Creator regulates heaven and earth according to His divine law. He does so by means of his *magnam machinam* ("grand machine"). The sun rises and sets, *momenta volvens aeterna per aetatum milia* ("turning the eternal movements through thousands of ages"). Acting in accordance with laws established by God, the sun *horas fingit, dies agit* ("forms the hours and sets the days") throughout the twelve months of the year. Time on earth is a result of the eternal movements of the heavens.

³²⁰ Text and translation Waddell 1976, 96-97.

³²¹ Text in Spitzmuller 1971, 1232-1234.

Arnulf of Lisieux (d. 1184) emphasizes the cyclical nature of the seasons in his poem, *De alterna temporum successione*. He also acknowledges God as the divine time-keeper who sets the seasons in motion:

Tempora circuitu veteri revoluta vicissim,
 Effectus variant restituuntque suos,
 Mater hiems patris autumni semina servat,
 Vere novo stabili restituenda fide,
 Ver mundi sterilis gelida praeeunte senecta
 Solvitur in fetus, luxuriatque novos.
 Productosque fovens blando natura favore,
 Aestivo in formam provehit auspicio:
 Autumni demum proventibus omnia cedunt,
 Cui totas reliquus congerit annus opes.
 Quid concepit hiems, peperit ver, nutritit aestas,
 Hic metit atque suo conficit arbitrio.
 Sola reservantur conceptibus apta futuris
 Semina, dispositas nata novare vires.
 Sic abit ut redeat, reddit ut transeat annus,
 Praecipitem revocans praecipitansque rotam.
 Sic rata perpetuos agit alternatio menses,
 Et veteres renovat inveteratque novos.
 Hunc divina frequens ludit sapientia ludum,
 Et varianda movens invariata manet.³²²

³²² Text from *PL* 201:197.

The seasons in turn having rolled round again in
their ancient circuit

Vary and replace their effects.

Mother Winter preserves the seeds of Father Autumn
Which must be restored in youthful Spring with certain
confidence.

The icy old age of the barren world going before it,
Spring dissolves into the seeds, and makes the young ones
grow,

And Nature, caressing the children with her coaxing
support,

Brings them to form in the protection of Summer.

Finally, all things give way to approaching Autumn,
For whom the remaining year collects all the abundance.

What Winter has conceived, Spring brings forth, Summer
nourishes,

Autumn harvests and completes under his own control.

Only the seeds fit for future conceivings are kept,
Offspring to revive the stored-up strength.

Thus the year goes away so it might return; returns so it
might pass by,

Bringing back the year that's fallen and pressing the wheel
of time ahead.

Thus a fixed alternation sets the months in continuous
motion,

And renews the old and makes the new ones old in turn.

Divine wisdom often plays this game,

And setting in motion the things to be changed, itself
remains unchanged.

In this poem, winter is merely part of a cycle of time. The cycle itself is more important than any one of its constituent parts. All parts, though, are necessary to complete the cycle. Winter is essential because during that season the seeds lie protected in the earth. The seeds sprout in spring, grow in summer, and produce the harvest collected in autumn. The cycle of growth then begins all over again.

In the third approach to interpreting the seasons, winter is seen as part of an allegorical system which links God to nature and then relates nature to man. Human fate can be understood by observing the cycle of the seasons in nature because both man and nature are creations of God. In his *Descriptio verna pulchritudinis*, Marbod of Rennes (ca. 1035-1123) sees all four seasons as natural phenomena which must be appreciated by man since they honour and are subservient to God:³²³

Qui speciem terrae non vult cum laude referre,
Invidet auctori, cuius subseruit honori
Bruma rigens, aestas, autumnus, veris honestas.³²⁴

He who does not wish to recall the appearance of the earth
with praise

Does not praise its originator, to whose honour are subject

³²³ Marbod became master of the cathedral school of Angers in 1067, and later (1096) was made Bishop of Rennes (Waddell 1976, 240).

³²⁴ Latin text from Waddell 1976, 240.

Frozen-stiff winter, summer, autumn, and the beauty of the spring.

In another of his poems, the *De resurrectione corporum*, Marbod makes the link between the cycle of the seasons and man's death and spiritual rebirth. All natural phenomena have been created by God and are paradigms for the course of man's earthly and spiritual life (5-7):

Clamat idem mundus, naturaque provida rerum,
Quas Deus humanis sic condidit usibus aptas,
Ut possint homini quaedam signare futura.³²⁵

And Earth cries it aloud; and Nature, provider of things
Which God established for the use of man,
So that they might signify certain future things to him.

Marbod goes on to describe the monthly waxing and waning of the moon, the daily rising and setting of the sun, and the seasonal cycles of trees and grass, sowing and reaping. He sees all of these phenomena as allegories of Christian death and resurrection. The human body dies and is buried, but is restored to eternal life in Heaven (14-26):

Ipsa parens tellus, quae corpora nostra receptat,
Servat in arboribus vitae mortisque figuram.
Et similem formam redivivis servuat in herbis,
Nudatos foliis brumali tempore ramos,

³²⁵ Latin text from Waddell 1976, 256.

Et velut arentes mortis sub imagine truncos
 In propriam speciem frondosa resuscitat aestas;
 Quaeque peremit hiems nova grama vere resurgunt,
 Damnaque temporibus restaurant printina certis,
 Semina jacta manu sulcis moriuntur operta,
 Quae velut e tumulis cito vivificata resurgunt,
 Ut suus incipiat labor aridere colonis.
 Nos quoque spes eadem manet et reparatio viae,
 Qua revirescat idem, sed non resolubile corpus.

Mother earth, who receives our bodies,
 Preserves in trees an image of life and death.
 And keeps the same form in plants that revive;
 Branches stripped of leaves in the winter
 And trunks dried up in a likeness of death
 Leafy Summer brings back to proper appearance.
 Grass which Winter destroys rises anew in the spring,
 And by the fixed seasons Springtime restores the losses.
 Seeds thrown by the closed hand die in the furrows,
 And quickly as if from the grave they rise, again made
 alive,
 So that their labour begins to smile upon the farmers.
 The same hope awaits us too, and the restoration of life,
 By which the same body might be revived, but not dissolved
 again.

Marbod equates spring with life, and winter with death. This is not a new conception. Ancient Roman authors from at least the time of Lucretius onwards (98-ca. 55 B.C.) had associated winter with death, and Christian writers had expanded upon the theme.³²⁶ One example from among the early Christian authors is Fortunatus (530/40-600/10), who describes spring as an allegory of Christ's resurrection in his *Versus de resurrectione Domini*.³²⁷ Fortunatus sees winter as a destructive force, the effects of which are only repaired by spring (21-22):

Tempore sub hiemis foliorum crine revulso
Iam reparat viridans frondea tecta nemus.³²⁸

Its crest of leaves torn away in the winter,
The grove now restores its leafy green cover.

Further on in the same poem, Fortunatus makes an explicit connection between spring and Christ's resurrection from the dead. Winter is the equivalent of spiritual death (33-40):

Namque triumphanti post tristia tartara Christo
Undique fronde nemus, gramina flore favent.
Legibus inferni oppressis super astra meantem

³²⁶ For evidence in the ancient authors, see Dehon 1993, 29, 76, 85. Dehon (1993, 85) points out that Lucretius is following earlier Greek poets such as Hesiod.

³²⁷ Panadero (1984, 193) notes an even earlier precedent in Christian literature. In his *Apologeticus* (48.4) Tertullian (ca. 160-ca. 225 A.D.) "established very early a tradition for the symbolic use of these motifs [i.e. the cycles of nature as similes for the resurrection of the body]."

³²⁸ Latin text from Spitzmuller 1971, 192.

Laudant rite Deum lux, polus, arva, fretum.

Qui crucifixus erat, Deus, ecce, per omnia regnat,

Dantque creatori cuncta creata precem.

Salve, festa dies, toto vernerabilis aevo,

Qua Deus infernum vicit et astra tenet.

For after harsh death, the grove with its leaves,

The grass with its bloom, everywhere favours victorious
Christ.

The light, the sky, the lands, the sea rightly praise God,

Passing above the stars from the crushing rule of Hell.

Behold! God who was crucified reigns over all things,

And all created things offer prayer to the Creator.

Greetings, festive day, revered in all eternity,

In which God vanquished death and possesses the

stars.

Winter is always presented in negative terms in poems of the final category, in which Paradise is an eternal spring and spring is defined as the absence of winter. Hildebert of Lavardin (ca. 1056-1133) describes a heavenly Paradise in his *De ornatu mundi*.³²⁹ Plants and animals are flourishing in abundance, fragrance fills the air, and the honey is flowing:

Est nemus unde loquor, nemus ausum tangere nubes,

³²⁹ PL 171:1235-37.

Hic locus aemulus est, o paradise! tuus.

Hic experta fuit natura quid ars sua posset,

Et, quanto potuit, pinxit honore locum.

Nam stillavit in haec loca quaedam gloria rerum,

Sed quasi cum nimbo copia fluxit opum.

Spirat ibi nardus, nascuntur aromata, nectar

Conficitur, sudant balsama, mella fluunt.

Poma rubus, laetus bacchus, oleaster olivam,

Spina rosas gignit, lac pecus, uva merum . . . (1235A-B)

Dulcis odore, fluens humore, colore nigrescens,

In ripa redolent cassia, myrrha, piper.

Vox avium, dulcor specierum, purpura florum

Dulce canit, nares allicit, ornat humum.

Perflat ibi Zephyrus, non Eurus; aromata sudant,

Non glacies; ibi ver, non ibi regnat hiems.

Nardus, flos, ales spirat, ridet, modulatur;

Hinc erumpit odor, hinc decor, inde melos.

Flagrat enim nardus, rosa vernat, avis canit; ista

Naribus, haec oculis, auribus illa placent . . . (1236A-B)

Non ibi conspirant in cedri damna sagittae,

Non imber, torpor frigoris, ira Noti.

Fullo novus viridi tunica vel fronde virenti

Adversus brumae vim tunicavuit eam . . . (1237A)

Hinc aviam pomparam quasi junctis valle choreis
 Ludere tunc favor cum rosa pinget humum.
 Hic praeponit hiems, abit, hic assumit, adest ver. (1237B-C)

There is a wood of which I speak, a wood that dares to touch
 the clouds.

This place could be your rival, Paradise!
 Here Nature found out what her skill could do,
 And she adorned the place with beauty as much as she could.
 For a certain glory of things dropped into these regions,
 And, as if in a cloud, an abundance of riches flowed.
 There the nardus³³⁰ grows, spicy fragrance arises, nectar
 Is made, balsam exudes, and honey flows.
 The bramble grows fruit; the laurel, berries; the oleaster,³³¹
 olives;
 The thorn, roses; the herd gives milk; the vine gives wine . . .

Sweet with fragrance, flowing with moisture, darkened with
 colour,
 Wild cinnamon, myrrh, and pepper emit their fragrance on
 the shore.
 The voice of the birds, the sweetness of the spices, the purple
 of the flowers,
 Sings with charm, entices the nose, adorns the earth. . . .

³³⁰ The *nardus* is an “Indian plant yielding nard-oil” (*LS*).

³³¹ The *oleaster* is the wild olive.

There the West Wind blows, and not the East. Fragrance³³²
is exuded,

And there is no ice. There Spring, not Winter, reigns.

There lives the nardus, the flower smiles, the bird sings.

Hence bursts the fragrance, the beauty, the song.

For the nardus is fragrant; the rose blooms; the bird sings.

One pleases the nose, one the eye, another one the ears. . . .

There the rain, the numbness of cold, the raging of the South
Wind

Do not conspire to damage the branches of cedar.

A new cloth-maker, against the power of the cold, has
clothed it with green cloak or verdant branch. . . .

Hence it is a pleasure, as if in dances joined in a valley,

To enjoy the revel in the countryside

At the time when the rose is colouring the ground.

Here Spring commands Winter; Winter goes away.

Here Spring begins; here it is Spring.

St. Peter Damian (1007-1072) also describes Paradise as perpetual spring in his hymn, *De Gloria paradisi*.³³³ The flowers always bloom, the air is filled with

³³² *Aromata* means “spices” in classical Latin. In medieval Latin, the term acquired the meaning “fragrances.” In the *OLD*, *aroma* is defined as “an aromatic substance, spice.”

³³³ Poems comparing spring with Paradise belong to a long tradition. An early example in Christian poetry is the *De laudibus Dei sive Carmen de Deo* by Blossius Aemilius Dracontius (? -post 496 A.D.).

pleasant scents, and the trees bear fruit forever. The harshness of winter and the burning heat of summer are banished (13-21):

- V Hiems horrens, aestus torrens illic nunquam saeviunt,
 Flos perpetuus rosarum ver agit perpetuum,
 Cudent lilia, rubescit crocus, sudat balsamum.
- VI Virent prata, vernant sata, rivi mellis influunt,
 Pigmentorum spirat odor liquor et aromatum,
 Pendent poma floridorum non lapsura nemorum.
- VII Non alternat luna vices, sol vel cursus siderum,
 Agnus est felicis urbis lumen inocciduum,
 Nox et tempus desunt, aevum diem fert continuum.³³⁴

Rugged³³⁵ winter, scorching summer there never rage,
 The everlasting bloom of the roses brings eternal spring.

The white lilies shine, the crocus reddens, the balsam
 exudes.

The meadows are green, the crops are growing, the streams
 are flowing with honey,

The scent of coloured [flowers] is exhaled, and the nectar of
 spicy fragrance.

Dracontius describes Paradise as an eternal spring characterized by the absence of winter. Two brief examples may be cited: (1) *Illic floret humus semper sub vere perenni* ("There the earth always flourishes in eternal spring"); and (2) *Non glacies districta domat, non grandinis ictus / Verberat, aut gelidis canescunt prata prunis* ("The ice does not rule, and the blows of hail do not beat; and the meadows do not whiten with icy frost").

³³⁴ Text from Spitzmuller 1971, 394, 396.

³³⁵ The basic meaning of the participle *horrens* is "bristling," but the term implies being "savage" or "rough" as well as "rugged"; *horreo* means "to be stiffly erect, stand, up, bristle" (*OLD* 1); "to have rough, unkempt, unsightly, or sim. appearance" (*OLD* 3); or "to have a dreadful, gloomy, etc. aspect or character" (*OLD* 3b).

The fruits of the blossoming trees hang heavy, not about to fall.

The moon does not alternate her phases, or the sun the courses of the stars,

The unblemished Lamb is the light of the blessed city;

Night and time are absent; eternity brings a day without end.

Early Christian literature also opposes winter and spring on a more temporal, earthly plane. Isidore of Seville, the seventh-century encyclopaedist, describes the four seasons in his *De natura rerum* Chapter VII, *De temporibus*. He begins the chapter by setting out the “scientific” explanation of the seasons; that is, the relationship between the seasons and the movement of the sun throughout the course of a year.³³⁶ Isidore then explains the allegorical meanings of the seasons. First he describes their connection with the four elements. Then he gives a second, more spiritual, interpretation, in which winter is seen as a period of tribulation. The storms of the winter season are replaced by the calm of the Church when spring returns. Easter is celebrated as the resurrection of Christ, the renewal of man’s spiritual life, and the restoration of natural abundance on earth:

2. Juxta Latinos autem unius anni quatuor tempora ascribuntur: hiemis, veris, aestatis, atque autumni. Hiems est cum sol in meridianis partibus immoratur, tunc enim sol longius abest, terraque rigescit gelu, atque stringitur, et prolixiora sunt spatia noctis quam diei. Hinc causa oritur, ut hibernis flatibus nimia vis nivium, pluviarumque fundatur.

³³⁶ Isidore’s *Etymologiae* was one of the most important compendia of general knowledge in the Middle Ages (Strayer 1986, 361). Isidore was “enormously influential” in the medieval period (Jackson 1960, 11).

6. Caeterum juxta allegoriam hiems temporalis intelligitur tribulatio, quando tempestates et turbines saeculi incumbunt. . . Ver autem novitas est fidei, sive pax, quando post hiemis tribulationem tranquillitas Ecclesiae redditur, quando mensis novorum, id est, pascha agni celebratur, quando terra floribus, id est, Ecclesia sanctorum coetibus decoratur.³³⁷

According to the Romans, four seasons of a year are ascribed: winter, spring, summer and autumn. Winter is when the sun remains in the southern regions, for then the sun is further away, and the land is stiff with cold, and is drawn tight, and the times of the night are longer than those of the day. Hence the reason arises, so that because of the wintry winds, the excessive strength of snow and rain is found.

According to others, temporal winter is understood to be an allegory of tribulation, when tempests and storms of this world impend. . . Spring is newness of faith, or peace, when after the tribulation of winter, the calm of the Church is brought back; when the month of renewal, that is, the paschal Lamb, is celebrated, when the earth is adorned with flowers; that is, the Church is adorned with the gatherings of the holy.

Main Themes in the Christian Poetry

The Christian poems all treat the seasons as part of a natural system created and regulated by God. The system is ordered and balanced; the opposites cancel each other out. Winter is merely one part of the system. The cold and damp of winter balance the heat and dryness of summer. The winter of Hell balances the spring of Paradise. The natural cycles of the heavens are fixed by God and create the orderly cycles of time on earth. Winter is nothing more nor less than one of the units of time. The minutes, hours, days, months, seasons, and years mark the recurring circles of time. These circles of time will continue on throughout eternity, as ordained by God.

³³⁷ Latin text from *PL* 83:975, 976C-977A.

When viewed as part of a system of interrelated parts, winter does not necessarily have negative connotations. Arnulf of Lisieux, for example, sees winter as a positive, protective force within the cycle of the seasons. Mother Winter (*mater hiems*) preserves the seed of Father Autumn. When winter is conceived in terms of the cycles of time, it is neither positive nor negative, but simply one of the many units of time that make up the recurring cycles ordained and regulated by the Creator. The sense of order, balance, and stability implicit in the system is more important than its individual parts.

When winter is regarded in isolation, taken out of its context within the system, it is most often characterized in negative terms. The season is rainy (Boethius 4.6), windy (Boethius 1.5), rough (St. Peter Damian), icy (Arnulf), frozen stiff (Marbod), barren (Arnulf, Marbod, and Fortunatus), old (Arnulf), and death-like (Marbod and Fortunatus). Furthermore, all the spiritual values explicitly given to winter are negative. Isidore refers to winter as a time of tribulation. Fortunatus associates winter with Hell (*tartara*) and the death of Christ (*Deus infernum vicit*). The most significant condemnation of winter is that Paradise is defined as the absence of winter. Paradise is not only an ideal state of existence from the point of view of its sensory delights, but also from a spiritual standpoint. It is the spiritual reward for a life of holiness. Just as sinners are prevented from entering Paradise, winter is also barred from Heaven. Winter is the equivalent of sin.

Secular Songs and the Seasons: The *Carmina Burana*

Verses with seasonal content are found much more often in secular songs than in the sacred poems. Almost all the “seasons” songs are love lyrics in which the joy of springtime is associated with the flowering of youthful passion. If winter is mentioned at all, it is described in negative terms; that is, as the opposite of spring. Spring is the season for lovers and youth, whereas the cold season of winter is barren, old, and loveless.

Several examples of secular songs with seasonal content appear in the *Carmina Burana*, an anthology of popular medieval lyrics collected in a manuscript which dates to the thirteenth century.³³⁸ Four songs were selected from the *Carmina Burana* to illustrate the role of winter in secular verse of the twelfth century. The first example, *Terra iam pandit gremium*, contrasts harsh winter with gentle spring, and explicitly connects winter with a lack of love.³³⁹

Terra iam pandit gremium
 vernali lenitate,
 quod gelu triste clauserat
 brumali feritate;
 dulci venit strepitu
 favonius cum vere,
 sevum spirans boreas
 iam cessat commovere.

³³⁸ For a description of the history and contents of the manuscript, see Waddell (1948, 301-32). According to Wilhelm (1965, 105, n. 61), Raby (1957, II, 257), dates most of the poems in the manuscript to the twelfth century, with some of them dating to an earlier period.

³³⁹ Text and translation Waddell 1948, 206-209.

**tam grata rerum novitas
quem patitur silere? . . . (1-10)**

**Ecce, iam vernant omnia
fructu redivivo,
pulso per temperiem
iam frigore nocivo. . . . (19-22):**

**Verum cum mentes talia
recensent oblectamina,
sentio quod anxia
fiunt mea precordia.
si friget in qua ardeo
nec mihi vult calere,
quid tunc cantus volucrum
mihi queunt valere,
cum tunc circum precordia
iam hyems est vere. (39-48):**

The earth lies open breasted
In gentleness of spring,
Who lay so close and frozen
In winter's blustering.
The northern winds are quiet,
The west wind winnowing,

In all this sweet renewing
how shall a man not sing? . . .

Behold, all things are springing
With life come from the dead,
The cold that wrought for evil
Is routed now and fled. . . .

And yet when all men's spirits
Are dreaming on delight,
My heart is heavy in men,
And troubled at her sight:
If she for whom I travail
Should still be cold to me,
The birds sing unavailing,
'Tis winter still for me.

Another love song, *Cedit, hyems, tua durities*, begins with a description of the winter just past. The first half of the poem constitutes a veritable catalogue of all the negative aspects of the winter season. The second half describes bright and gentle spring, the direct opposite of winter:

Cedit, hyems, tua durities,
frigor abiit; rigor et glacies
brumalis et feritas, rabies,

**torpor et improba segnities,
pallor et ira, dolor et macies.**

**Veris adest elegans acies,
clara nitet sine nube dies,
nocte micant Pliadum facies;
grata datur modo temperies,
temporis optima mollities.**

Now, Winter, yieldeth all thy dreariness,
The cold is over, all thy frozenness,
All frost and fog, and wind's untowardness.
All sullenness, uncomely sluggishness,
Paleness and anger, grief and haggardness.
Comes now the Spring with all her fair arrays
Never a cloud to stain the shining days;
Sparkle at night the starry Pleiades.
Now is the time come of all graciousness,
Now is the fairest time of gentilesse.³⁴⁰

A third poem from the *Carmina Burana* begins with the onset of winter.

In the *Estas in exilium*, the poet is not dismayed by winter's barrenness and silence, but affirms the power of love to overcome the death-like torpor of the cold season:

Estas in exilium

³⁴⁰ Text and translation Waddell 1948, 210-211.

iam peregrinatur,
 leto nemus avium
 cantu viduatur,
 pallet viror frondium,
 campus defloratur,
 exaruit quod floruit,
 quia felicem statum nemoris
 vis frigoris
 sinistra denudavit,
 et ethera silentio turbavit,
 exilio dum aves relegavit.
 Sed amore, qui calorem
 nutrit, nulla vis
 frigoris
 valet attenuare,
 sed ea reformare
 studet, que corruperat
 brume torpor.
 amare crucior, morior
 vulnere, quo glorior.
 eia, si me sanare
 uno vellet osculo,
 que cor felici iaculo
 gaudet vulnerare!

Summer to a strange land
 Is into exile gone,
 The forest trees are bare
 Of their gay song.
 The forest boughs are wan,
 Deflowered the field,
 Withered that which was fair,
 Naked and bare
 The happy greenwood is,
 Stripped by the cruel cold,
 And silence grieves the air,
 For all the birds are into exile gone.
 But upon love,
 Love that itself is fire,
 No power hath the cold,
 For love's desire
 Kindleth afresh that which was dead and old
 In winter's hold.
 I suffer, yea, I die,
 Yet this mine agony
 I count all bliss,
 Since death is life again
 Upon her lips!³⁴¹

³⁴¹ Text and translation from Waddell 1948, 272-273.

Many of the poems of the *Carmina Burana* are anonymous drinking songs. A good example is the *Ecce gratum*, written to celebrate the coming of spring. The verses are short and use a simple vocabulary. Rhythms are repetitious and uncomplicated, and the rhyming scheme is more important to the song than its intellectual content. Nevertheless, this simple poem conveys the opposition of spring and winter. Winter is a time of sadness and barrenness; spring is a time for pleasure and release.

Ecce gratum / et optatum / ver reducit gaudia.
 purpuratum / floret pratum, / sol serenat omnia.
 iamiam cedant tristia! / aestas redit / nunc recedit / hiemis
 saevitia.
 Iam liquescit / et decrescit / grando, nix et cetera;
 bruma fugit, / et iam sugit / ver aestatis ubera.
 illi mens est misera / qui nec vivit / nec lascivit / sub aestatis
 dextera.
 Gloriantur / et laetantur / in melle dulcedinis, /
 qui conantur, / ut utantur / praemio Cupidinis.
 simus iussu Cypridis / gloriantes / et laetantes / pares esse
 Paridis!³⁴²

Behold! The welcome, wished-for Spring returns with delights and joys.

The meadow now is in purple bloom; the sun makes all things bright.

³⁴² Text from *Carmina Burana* 1961, 66-68.

And now all sad things end! Summer's back and savage
cold retreats.

The hail and snow and other things are melting; all subside.

The cold flees away and now Spring is sucking Summer's
breasts.

His mind is wretched who does not live and does not frolic
in the favour of the summer.

They're glorying, rejoicing in sweet honey of pleasure

Who try making use of the freedom of passion.

May we live by command of Venus, in glory and rejoicing;
equals to those in Heaven!

Main Themes in the Secular Poetry

The songs from the *Carmina Burana* all describe winter in very negative terms. Most of them include at least one reference to the cold weather. Not only is winter cold (*frigus*), but it is “icy” cold (*gelu, glacies*). One poem, the *Terra iam pandit gremium*, mentions the blowing north wind (*spirans boreas*) in addition to the cold. The *Ecce gratum* even speaks of hail (*grando*) and snow (*nix*).

There are many references to the harshness, severity, or harmfulness of winter. All the poems except for the *Estas in exilium* characterize the winter as “harsh” (*tristis, durities*). *Cedit, hyems, tua durities* describes the season with several different words that indicate the severity of the season. It is “savage” (*feritas, durities*), “raging” (*rabies*), and “violent” (*ira*). This poem is the only one to note the inactivity of winter, and it does so frequently. Winter is “stiff” (*rigor*) and “sluggish” (*torpor, segnities*). The

slowness of winter even has moral implications. The winter torpor is described as “wicked slothfulness” (*improba segnities*).

Two of the *Carmina Burana* songs also characterize winter as lifeless. *Cedit, hyems, tua durities* refers to the paleness (*palor*) and thinness (*macies*) of winter. *Estas in exilium* is particularly thorough in its description of winter’s barrenness and infertility. The fields are stripped of plants (*defloratur*) and winter has laid the land bare (*denudavit*). Crops which had once flourished have now been ploughed under (*exaruit quid floruit*). The forest is pale (*pallet*) and silent, deprived of the song of the birds (*viciuatur cantu avium*). It is the paleness and silence of death (*leto*).

Winter in Medieval Art and Poetry

The labours of the months and signs of the zodiac at Chartres cathedral are typical of twelfth-century calendar cycles on church facades. The medieval cycles of the months derive from ancient illustrated calendars in which each month is represented by one figure or activity. By the twelfth century, there was already a firmly-established iconographic tradition according to which the “labour” chosen to represent each month was determined. The labours for the winter months at Chartres are the same as those at other churches from the same time period. January is a “feasting” Janus figure; February, a warmly-dressed man warming by a fire; November, a man killing a pig with an axe; and December, a feasting man seated at a table. From these common symbols of the winter months, three things can be said about winter: (1) it is cold; (2) it is a time for eating and drinking; and (3) January marks the end of one year and the beginning of another. The

cold is not necessarily negative here, since sitting before the fire may be considered a pleasant form of inactivity. One is required to eat extra food in winter because of the cold, but eating is not unenjoyable. The beginning of a new year may be regarded as a positive event. Janus looks forwards and backwards at the same time, a symbol of the annual cycle of months which is continually repeating according to the will of the Creator. Winter is simply one of the four seasons which make up the cycle of the year. The signs of the zodiac which accompany the labours of the months emphasize that calendars on churches function as reminders of the passage of time on earth. Earthly time is in turn related to timeless eternity with God.

The Christian poems support this interpretation of the sculptures. For medieval man, the literal meaning of winter is not as important as its allegorical meaning. As part of the calendar cycle, winter represents part of a divine system of balance, order, and stability. God has created the universe and is responsible for its continuation and regulation. He rules over the heavenly bodies whose movements direct the course of the months and seasons throughout the cycle of the year. The seasons oppose and balance each other. Winter's cold and rain is set against summer's heat and dryness. All parts of the system are necessary in order to achieve stability.

The negative aspects of winter are not nearly as apparent in the art as in the poems. The songs from the *Carmina Burana* present winter from a personal point of view. Winter is uniformly seen as a dreadful time of year. The weather is freezing cold, there are piercing winds, and an abundance of frost, hail, and snow. Winter is dark, silent, and barren. The season is equated with emotional loss and death of spirit. The

Christian poems go much farther. They associate winter not only with spiritual death, but also with eternal damnation. Winter is an everlasting Hell which contrasts directly with the never-ending Paradise of spring.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The similarities among the Roman, Carolingian, and Medieval periods regarding the treatment of the theme of winter in art and literature far outnumber any differences. In all three periods, the art is created from within an established iconographic tradition. North African seasons mosaics share a tradition in which winter is commonly represented as an older woman. She is distinguished from the other seasons primarily by means of her warm clothing. Thus, from the mosaics, it appears that the most fundamental characteristic of winter is that it is cold.

A separate Roman tradition in calendar illustrations became the basis for calendar cycles in Carolingian manuscripts and on medieval church facades. As in the calendar mosaic at El Jem, each month in the later cycles is represented by an activity or event that has a specific connection with that month. By the twelfth century, the subjects chosen to illustrate each month were firmly established and did not vary significantly from one church to another. Although the Carolingian and medieval iconography for the winter months is not identical with that of the seasons mosaics, the ideas represented are very similar. Once again, the primary characteristic of winter is that it is cold. In Roman mosaics, the cold is represented by a warmly-clothed woman. In Carolingian and medieval calendars, the cold weather is indicated by a fully-dressed man who sits in front of a fire.

The second most important characteristic of winter in medieval art is that it is a time for feasting. The imagery of feasting per se is a medieval innovation. However, there are many earlier (indirect) references to feasting in the North African seasons mosaics. The Roman personifications of Winter often carry birds, for example, because winter was the season when birds were commonly hunted. The mosaic at La Chebba is only one example among many in which birds are attributes of Winter. This mosaic is outstanding because of its rich iconography, which includes not only the birds of winter, but also the winter boar. The boar may or may not be an astrological symbol in this mosaic, but it is certain that this animal represents the winter hunt. Beginning with Carolingian calendars, the boar hunt is a common illustration for the winter months. In the Middle Ages, this image becomes the pig-killing which usually represents November or December.

In the art of all three periods, winter is always represented as part of a complete cycle. The seasons mosaics always depict all four seasons, and in the Carolingian and medieval calendars, there are always twelve “labours” of the months and/or signs of the zodiac. Seen in this light, the winter season is important only because it forms one part of the whole cycle. Each season is a necessary part of the cycle, but the cycle is more important than its individual parts. The recurring cycles of the months and the seasons mark the passage of time. This notion is emphasized by frequent inclusion of the signs of the zodiac in ancient and medieval art. The signs sometimes accompany the illustrations of the seasons or months, and sometimes represent the months on their own. The “pagan” zodiac remains in use along with the Roman calendar, as symbols of time on

earth. The temporal world is linked in medieval thought with timeless eternity and so acquires a Christian theme on church facades.

The main characteristic of winter in the art of all three periods is undoubtedly that it is represented as being colder than the other seasons. The cold weather does not necessarily imply anything negative, though. The winter "warming" scenes in medieval calendars, for example, suggest the pleasant sensation of warming as much as the unpleasant feeling of being cold. Winter is in some ways a desirable season, at least as it is depicted in the art. The El Jem calendar mosaic, for instance, refers to the holiday festivities of the *Saturnalia* in December. Although the *Saturnalia* subsequently disappeared from calendar illustrations, the frequent references to winter feasting in medieval calendars surely allude to the same kind of pleasure in eating and drinking at this particular time of year.

There are several similarities in the treatment of winter in the literature of all three periods as well. First, the tradition of the Roman agronomists survived well into the medieval period. Most of the activities detailed by Columella in the first century are the same as those described by Wandalbert in the ninth. Although the particular winter months specified for the labours are not necessarily the same in both authors, they both recommend the following activities: cultivating or ploughing, spreading manure, seeding, pruning vines, sharpening tools, splitting wood for the fire, and cutting down trees for building materials. Both authors suggest a period of rest and relaxation during the winter, although in Columella the period is restricted to the first half of January, whereas Wandalbert refers to relaxation in all the winter months except February. It is

certain that ancient farming manuals similar to Columella's continued to be in use throughout the Middle Ages. Palladius (ca. 400 A.D.) compiled a detailed monthly agricultural calendar based in part on Columella's manual. Palladius' work "became an important manuscript for the Carolingian revival, and formed the major source for Albertus Magnus (1193-1280)" (Butzer 1993, 553).

These manuals form part of a very long tradition going back to at least the time of Hesiod (eighth century B.C.). In all the manuals, the monthly agricultural activities are very closely connected with the rising and setting of the constellations. The movements of the heavenly bodies determine the weather on earth, and the weather in turn determines the kind of activities the farmer is able to do each month. Hesiod advises (*Works and Days* 1.383-4) "When the Pleiades, daughters of Atlas, are rising, begin your harvest, and your ploughing when they are going to set [in November]."³⁴³ This is very similar in spirit to Vergil's introduction to the *Georgics* (1.1-5):

Quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram vertere,
Maecenas, ulmisque adiungere vites conveniat hinc canere
incipiam.

What makes the crops joyous, beneath what star, Maecenas,
it is well to turn the soil, and wed vines to elms . . . --hence
shall I being my song.³⁴⁴

Wandalbert is simply following this tradition when he describes the purpose of his poem, *De duodecim mensium* (1-6).³⁴⁵ He specifically relates the "twelve

³⁴³ Translation from Evelyn-White 1914.

³⁴⁴ Translation from Fairclough 1935.

³⁴⁵ See above, p. 90-91.

constellations which turn the great year round" to the weather. The weather in turn determines what particular practices of cultivation are possible each month. Medieval "science" did not question the connection of the stars with agriculture. The Church regarded this kind of astrology as a manifestation of the Creator's regulation of the universe. Seen in this light, winter is nothing but a natural consequence of the movements of the heavens, which turn in perpetual cycles under the direction of God.

The negative aspects of winter appear in the poetry of all three periods. Vergil (*G. 4.125*) refers to winter as *tristis* ("sad"). Columella calls winter *intractabilis* ("inconvenient"). Isidore of Seville, writing in the seventh century, explains that winter symbolizes the period of tribulation and testing before the Easter celebration of the renewal of life. In the Carolingian period, the debate between Winter and Spring characterizes Winter as *rerum prodigus atrox* (a terrible waster of things), *tarda* ("slow"), *torpore gravi* ("sluggish"), and *semper dormire parata* ("always ready to sleep"). Wandalbert refers to the season as *dura hiems* ("harsh winter"). The two poets in "exile", Walahfrid Strabo and Sedulius Scottus, express their dismay in dealing with the horrors of the savage winter on the Continent. In the medieval period, Marbod of Rennes compares winter to spiritual death in his poem, *De resurrectione corporum*. St. Peter Damian and Hildebert of Lavardin both regard spring as Paradise and winter as Hell. The poems from the *Carmina Burana* are uniformly negative as far as winter is concerned. *Cedit, hyems, tua durities*, for example, criticizes Winter for its *pallor et ira, dolor et macies* ("paleness and anger, grief and haggardness") and attacks Winter for its *improba segnities* ("wicked slothfulness").

There are few differences in the art and literature of winter from the Roman period to the Middle Ages, but they are significant. In art, the most important development was the disappearance of calendars illustrating the religious rites characteristic of each month. The mosaic calendar of El Jem seems not to have been pursued except for its format, where one activity or symbol represents each of the months. The other changes over time concern particular details of iconography. Some of the attributes common to winter in the seasons mosaics were abandoned. The birds, reeds, and olives of the Roman mosaics were not used in connection with the Carolingian manuscripts and the twelfth-century church facades. New iconography appeared between the ninth and eleventh centuries, and was quickly incorporated within the medieval iconographic tradition. The most important of these innovations are the fire in winter “warming” scenes, the table spread with food and drink in “feasting” scenes, and the appearance of Janus as the most common representation of January.

In literature, the changes in the perception of winter from one period to the next are more significant than in the art. The most important development is that the Romans regarded winter’s inactivity as positive. After the hard work of the rest of the year, the farmer is able to enjoy a brief pause in his labours. This is the cheerful side of winter, the *hiems genialis*. During the Carolingian period, there is some ambivalence concerning the moral value of winter inactivity. The debate poem especially criticizes Winter for his laziness. On the other hand, Wandalbert suggests that one may “indulge one’s spirit” in relaxation not only during the month of January, but also in every other winter month except for February. One of the great pleasures of November, he says, is to

rest after the work on the farm is done, to sit in front of a fire and invite sleep by drinking the new wine. Winter's inactivity is definitely seen as negative by the later medieval period. Inactivity has taken on a connotation of immorality. The torpor of Winter is described as *improba segnities* ("wicked slothfulness") in the *Cedit, hyems, tua durities*. Taken to its extremes, the inactivity of winter is the same as spiritual death.

The prime characteristic of winter in the art and literature of the entire period from the second century up to the twelfth is that winter is cold and wet. The Mediterranean and European winters may not be as severe as Canadian winters, but they are still frosty, icy, and windy. Sometimes there is even snow. The nasty side of winter is expressed in the literature. Winter is indeed *tristis* and *intractabilis*. At its worst, winter implies personal deprivation and spiritual death. There is a good side to winter, though. It is a time for rest and relaxation, drinking and eating. Winter is simply part of the natural cycle of seasons. Each season follows the next in a never-ending cycle. The system has been created by a divine being and is regulated and ordered by Him. One need not despair--spring will surely come again!

APPENDIX A

Incipit Horologium³⁴⁶

Here begins the time-table (*horologium*) through the points
of the twelve months.

Now, reader, in a poem, in a few words, I shall tell you

Which months unite their times to the course of the sun. Pay
heed!

The beginning of the year is January now, and the end of it,
December.

The orb of the sun turns these months round together with
their points.

It turns February round; directs November, the eleventh
month.

March connects itself with October in the same measure:

Then April rushes into the sphere to meet with September:

May looks towards August from the exact centre:

June's circuit drags along ascending July, the fifth month.

Regard which things join which hours in front of them,
Reader;

Remember to attend equally to all things.

In every month the first hour is joined with the eleventh:

Then the second by its shadows connects in its course the
tenth.

The third then embraces the ninth with these points.

Likewise the fourth while proceeding is joined with the
eighth.

After, the seventh follows fifth in regular measure.

³⁴⁶ Translation based on the Latin text, *PL* 121:631D-634A.

Only the sixth keeps to its measures alone.

Joining these hours to all the months, observe, Reader,

In which distance of shadows they advance or recede.

But knowing this, especially remember what thing in the world

The different parts might put in order, and also remember the various turning points.

For those in the south burnt beneath the near sun

As they shine with more light can bring forth

little darkness; those in the north which are cold and lie beneath the pole

Are pressed by a longer night, and by dark, shadowy nights.

And those in the middle regions away from each pole

Between both light and shadow are restrained.

Come, if this page moves you while reading,

You shall prove it in this region of the West,

Which turns from the Danube in the East,

And in the distinguished city of Lyons and the flowing Rhone;

It looks on the Britons shut off by the circle of the Ocean.

And the measure of the hours shall justly remind you of this,

If perchance you wish to place the movements of shadows from the Kalends

And continue along towards the end of the month.

For at night, the turning point of the shadows, which existed the day before,

Cannot be changed into various returnings.

But little by little from middle to middle we are shown the month

Does grow, or the shadows diminish by an order that's true,
From middle to middle as the rising of signs is rolled round.

Now we shall compile in order the turning points of the hours;

Which the shadow of a human body shows to those who do not know.

Concerning January and December

The boundary which is the first of January and December

Stretches the shadow by thirty-two feet,

And following soon the shadow, with eleven feet having been cut-back,

Spreads to the extent of twenty-one.

And then the third boundary, falling two feet,

Itself attaches to the shadows nineteen.

And then in return when the sun is increasing, when Gemini has been driven away,

The fourth measure keeps seventeen feet.

Then with this shadow fleeing, having been cut back by two feet,

Its boundary extends the fifth with fifteen feet.

And then with the sun now marking its brief centre,

With two feet having been cut away, the sixth retains for itself thirteen [feet].

Here you shall observe that the manner for cutting everywhere is given.

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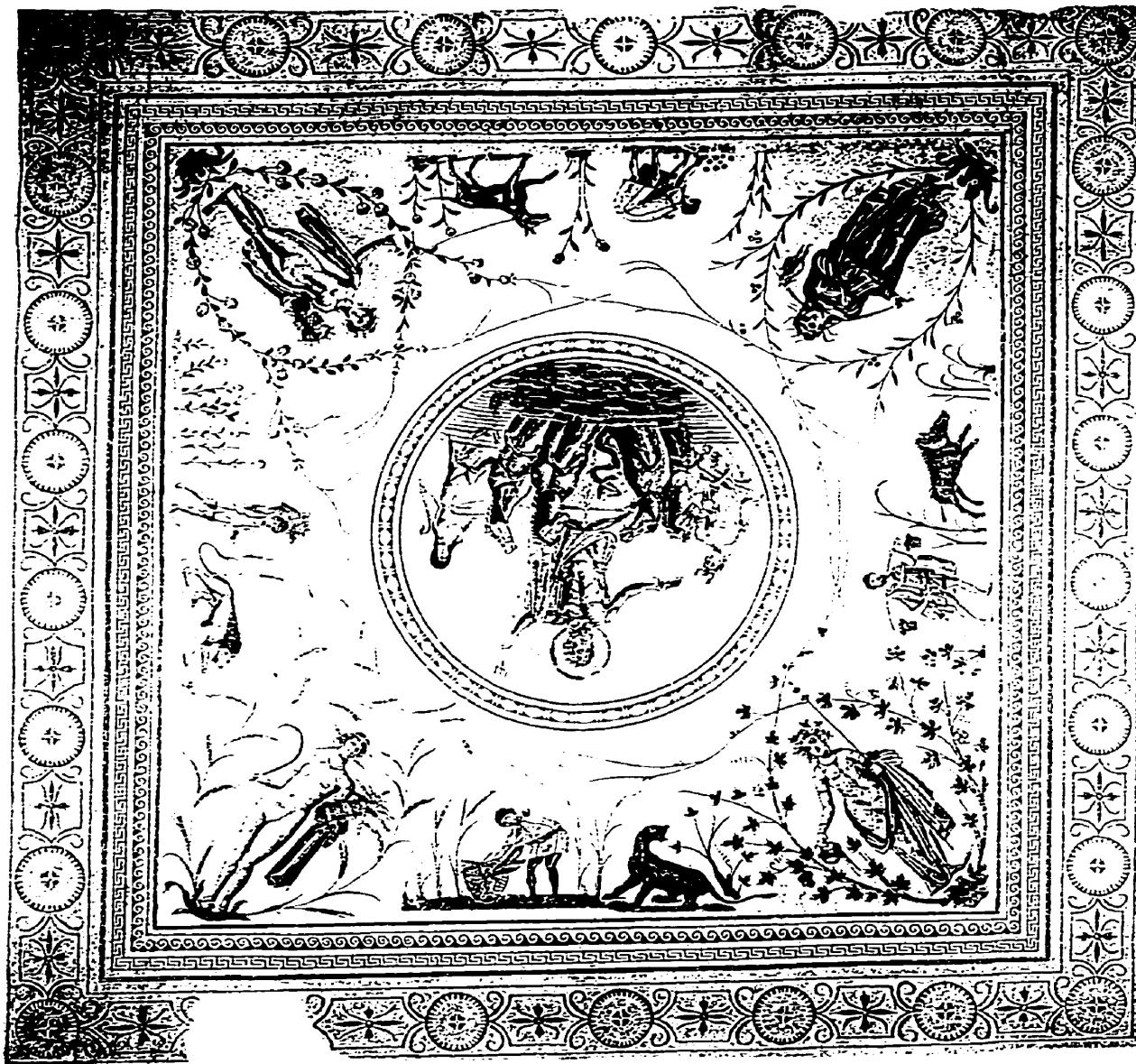
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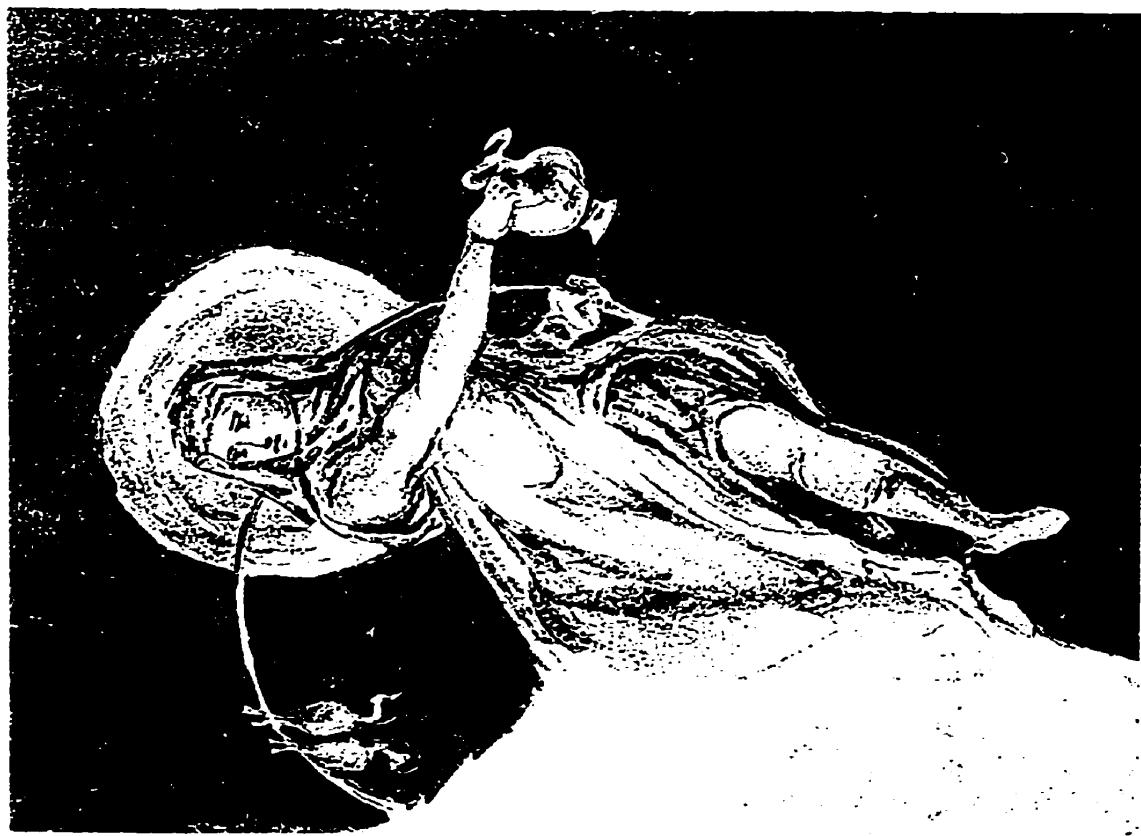
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1. La Chebba: Neptune and the Seasons (after Blanchard-Lemée)

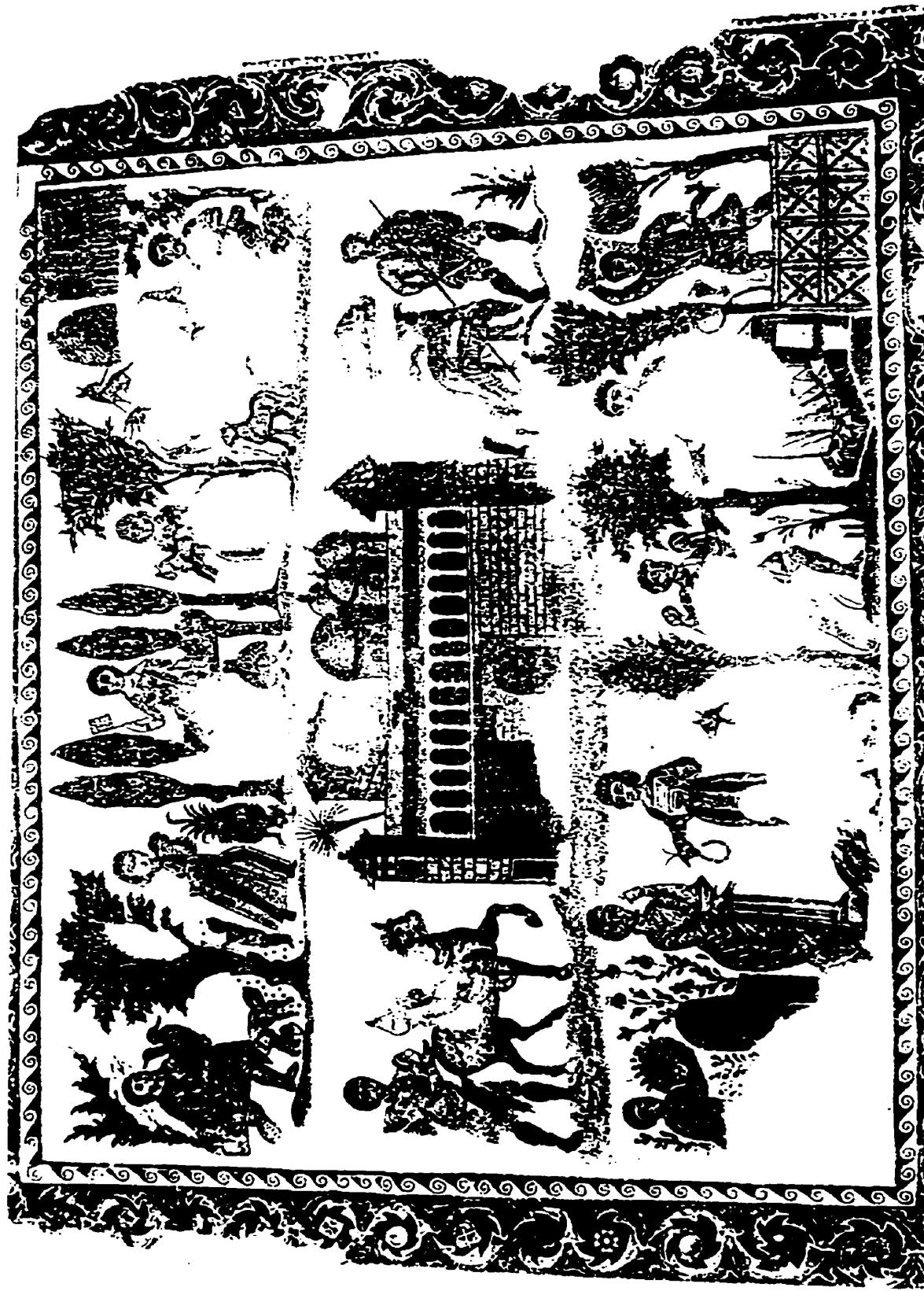




2. Pompeii, House of the Ancient Hunt: Winter (after Hanfmann)



3. Fenek, Budapest, bronze relief: Winter (after Hanfmann)



4. Carthage: Mosaic of Lord Julius (after Parrish 1984)



5. St-Romain-en-Gal, Roman house: Mosaic of Rural Labours (after LIMC)



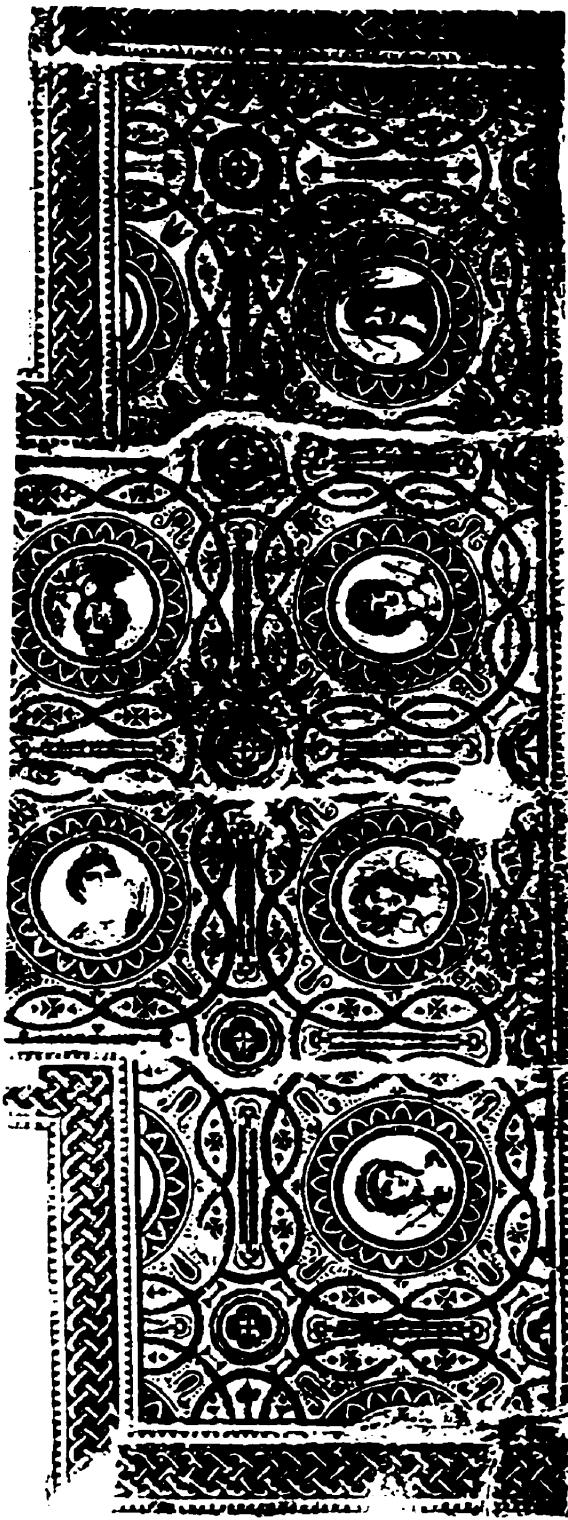
6. Sousse, fountain-basin frieze: four beasts (after Kondoleon)



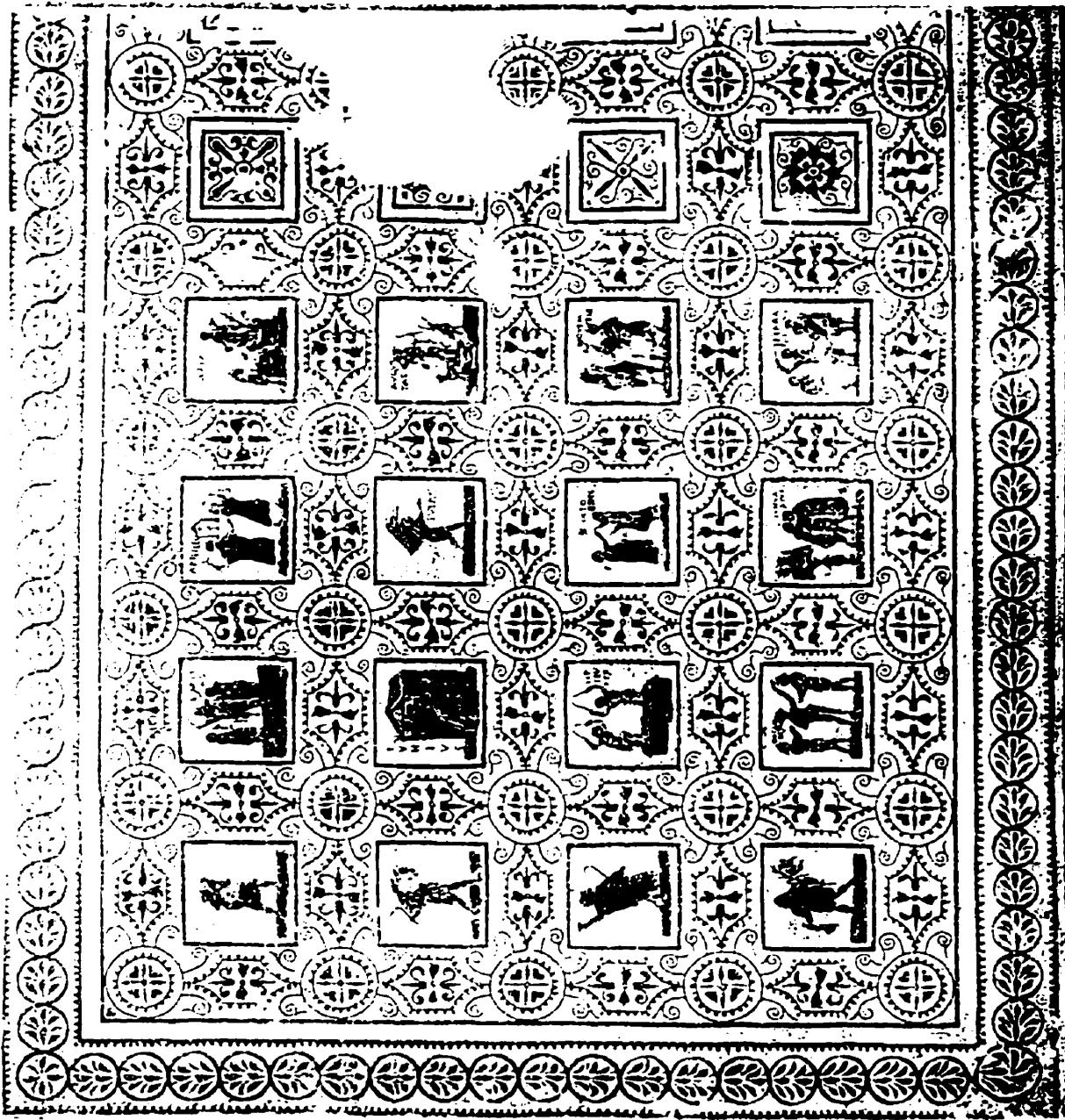
7. Haidra: zodiac mosaic (after Dunbabin)



8. Carthage: Mosaic of the Boar Hunt (after Dumbabin)



9. Leptis Minor (Lemta): Apollo, the Muses, and the Seasons (after Parrish)



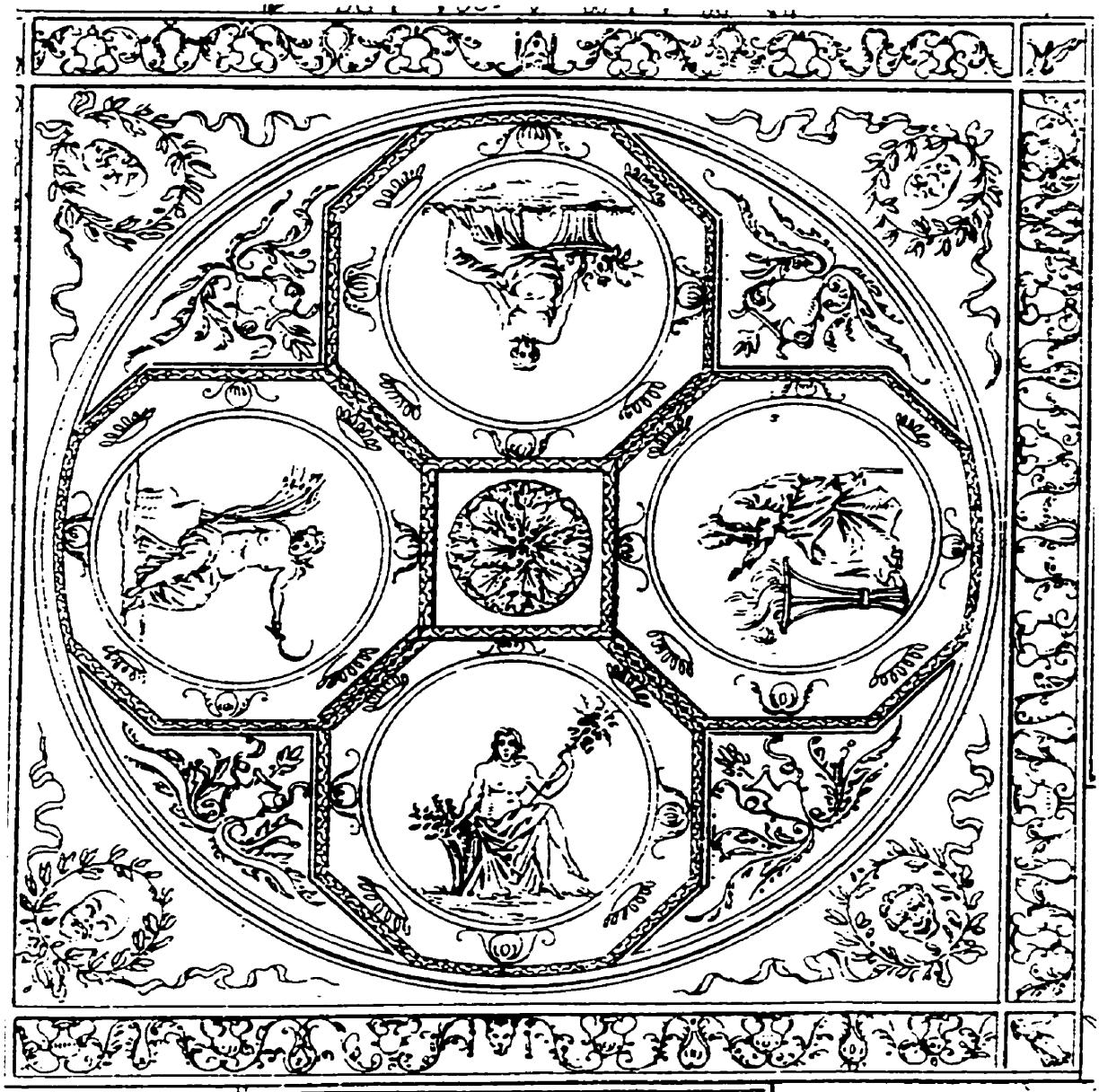
10. El Jem (*Thysdrus*): Calendar Mosaic (after Parrish 1984)



11. Vienna Calendar of 818/830 A.D. (after Comet 1983)



12. Cherchel mosaic: pig-butcherering (after Dunbabin)



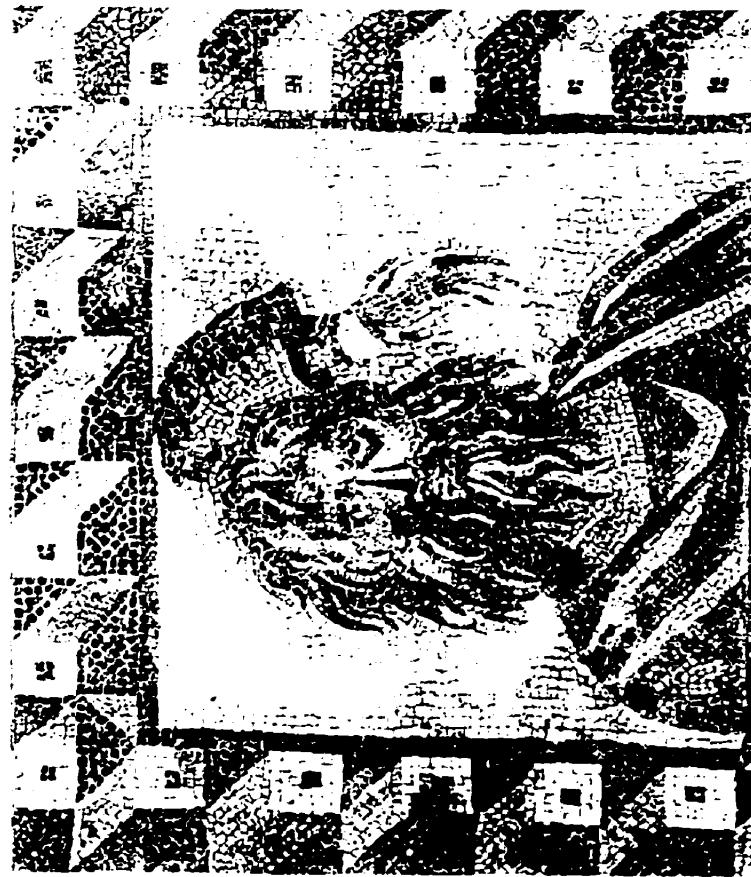
13. Tivoli, Villa Hadriana: painted stucco vault, the Seasons: Winter warming (after Hanfmann)



14. Chronograph of 354 A.D.: January (after Salzman)



15. Rome, Vatican Library: Martyrology of Wandalbert (after Webster)

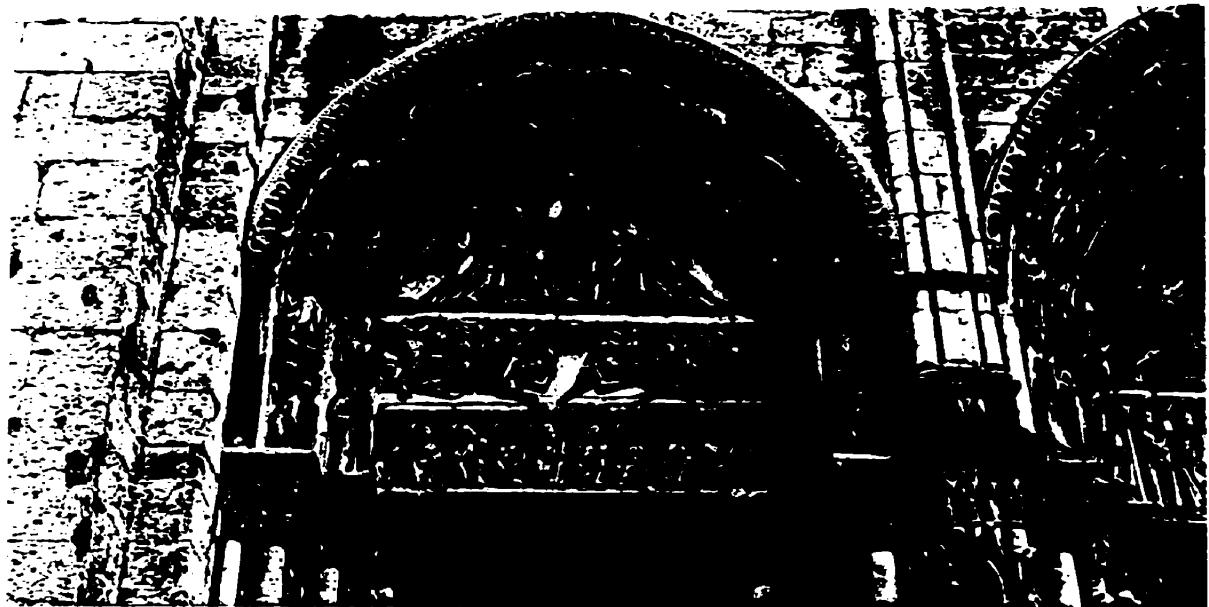


16. Paphos, House of Dionysos: Winter (after Kondoleon)

17. Dair Solaib, Church "A": Winter (after Kondoleon)



18. Chartres, west facade: portals



19. Chartres, west facade: left (north) portal

Left archivolts		Right archivolts	
2nd order (outer)	1st order (inner)	1st order (inner)	2nd order (outer)
Virgo			Sagittarius
September	June <i>cutting hay</i>	March <i>pruning</i>	December <i>fearing</i>
Harvesting grapes			Scorpio
Leo	Taurus	Aquarius	
August <i>threshing</i>	May <i>man with horse</i>	February <i>warming by a fire</i>	November <i>killing pig</i>
Cancer	Aries	Capricorn	Libra
July <i>reaping</i>	April <i>man with tree</i>	January <i>Janus</i>	October <i>knocking down acorns</i>

20. Chartres, west facade, left (north) portal: Labours of the Months and Signs of the Zodiac



21. Chartres, west facade, left (north) portal: Labours of the Month (after postcard)



22. Chartres, west facade, left (north) portal, Labours: February, Capricorn, January; Scorpio, November, Libra, November (after Male 1963)



23. Fulda Calendar: Janus (after Perez Higuera)



24. Calendar of St. Mesmin: Janus (after Webster)



25. León, San Isidoro, Labours of the Months: January-March; July-September (after Pérez Higuera)



26. León, San Isidoro, Labours of the Months: April-June; October-December (after Pérez Higuera)



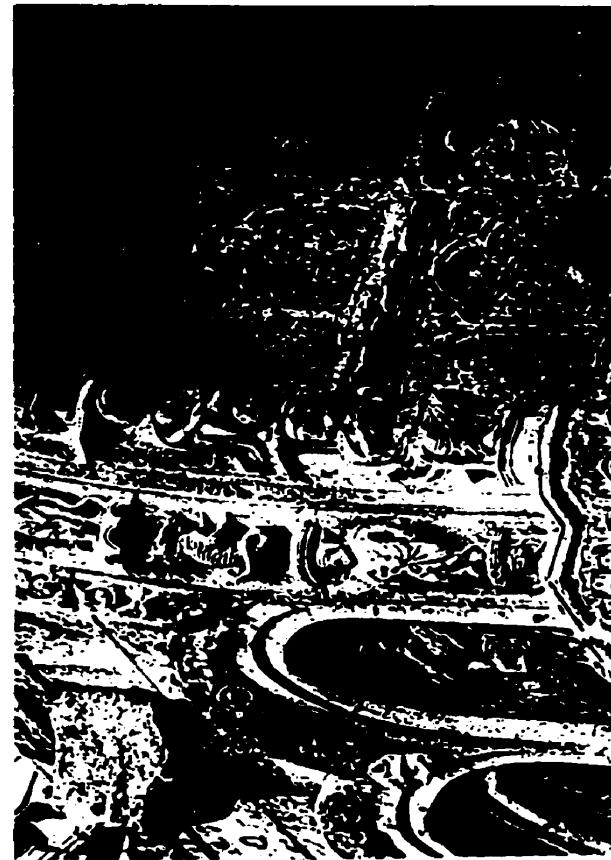
27. Paris, Saint-Denis, Labours of the Months: January and February (after Blum)



28. León, San Isidoro, Labours of the Months: February (after Perez Higuera)



29. Paris, Saint-Denis, Labours of the Months:
November, December (after Gardner)



30. Chartres, north transept, right (north) foreportal,
bottom to top, left to right: Winter and Capricorn; January and
February (after Marriage)



31. Chartres, north transept, right (north) foreportal: January and February (after Favier)