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***Visual Thinking and the Creation and Transmission of Knowledge  
in Medieval Philosophical and Scientific Manuscripts***

Diagrams and other images produced and reproduced by medieval authors and readers of philosophical, scientific and encyclopaedic works formed a crucial part of the creation and transmission of knowledge throughout the Middle Ages. Each medieval manuscript was handmade, many with its layout designed anew in the process of copying. This characteristic offers an exceptional opportunity for the study of how layouts and images were re-designed by the creative mind to suit new audiences or new purposes. They show us what was, at a given time, considered to be the visually most helpful way of transmitting or explaining a body of knowledge and how visual rhetoric has changed. The images eased the mind and eye of the writer, reader, teacher and student by introducing a break in the textual monotony. Images helped the comprehension of concepts by a visual clue. They could also provide an alternative visual interpretation. Sometimes in the absence of a textual explication, they remain our only indication of how a concept was received. But most crucially, they can reflect the visual thinking of the individual behind their design. The paper explores visual thinking through examining images and their variants created by various individuals in medieval manuscripts.

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