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The Holy Land in Paris. Embroidering, Depicting, and Stamping the Passion in a Fifteenth-century Book of Hours (Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés.)

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Badges of various materials (metal, parchment, fabric) are usually described as 'souvenirs' of medieval pilgrims who traveled to holy places. The great number of such items discovered especially in Southern Netherlands, Northern France, and England, with both religious and secular subjects, attests that their use had a special relevance within religious practice and popular culture.¹ This article investigates the role these portable objects sewn into or glued in manuscripts had within domestic religiosity in the late Middle Ages.² By focusing on a 15th-century Book of Hours, MS 1176 A rés. (Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal), it will consider that the way badges were sewn into manuscripts not only allowed the recollection of a

1 Jos Koldeweij, "The Wearing of Significant Badges, Religious and Secular. The Social Meaning of a Behavioral Pattern," in W. Blockmans and A. Janse (eds.), *Showing Status. Representation of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 307–328; Idem, "'Shameless and naked images': Obscene Badges as Parodies of Popular Devotion," in S. Blick and R. Tekippe (eds.), *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 493–512; Idem, *Foi et bonne fortune. Parure et dévotion en Flandre médiévale* (Arnhem, 2006); Michael Garcia, "Medieval Medicine, Magic, and Water: The Dilemma of Deliberate Deposition of Pilgrim Signs," *Peregrinations: International Society for the Study of Pilgrimage Art* 1, no. 3 <http://peregrinations.kenyon.edu/vol1-3/garcia.pdf> (accessed October 2019).

2 With the exception of the Psalter for a Celestine monastery in eastern France, dated to the end of the 15th or early 16th century (Meaux, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 7), stamped, depicted, or printed badges were sewn or glued particularly into books of hours or breviaries. See Denis Bruna, "Témoins de dévotions dans les livres d'heures à la fin du Moyen Âge," *Revue Mabillon* 9, no. 70 (1998): 127–161 (pp. 145–146).

real penitential journey, but also made the experience of a mental/imaginary pilgrimage possible.³ Of course, a mental/imaginary pilgrimage could not lay claim to produce the same emotional reactions a real penitential journey was able to elicit. In the latter, along with sight and touch, also smelling and hearing played as an important role as the pilgrim's involvement with the visual and tactile experiences of other devotees. And yet, a mental/imaginary pilgrimage, substituting for a real one and perhaps made in the silence of one's own room, would have asked for a greater imaginative effort on the devotee's part to reconstruct the sacred environment she or he never directly experienced. Aided either by written or figural maps or by specific objects sewn into manuscripts, the devotee's daily exercise of Passion devotion would have paved the way to a more personal interpretation of the quest for salvation.

Arsenal MS 1176 A, a Parisian Book of Hours

Manuscript 1176 A rés., a small Book of Hours (129 x 85 mm) made around 1470 and held at the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal in Paris, begins with the Calendar (fols. 1r–12v) written in

3 Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700 – c. 1500* (Basingstoke, 2002), 44–77. On the specific pilgrimage to Lucca, where northern saints' shrines were held, see Loretta Vandì, "To the South Light. Eleventh-twelfth century Northern pilgrims towards Lucca," paper read at the Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Studies Conference (October 10-12, 2008), Villanova University, Pennsylvania, now in Loretta Vandì Academia.edu. On mental or imaginary pilgrimage, see Kathryn M. Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2011), with an extensive bibliography on the topic; Eadem, "Fragments of a Mental Journey to a Passion Park," in J.F. Hamburger and A.S. Korteweg (eds.), *Tributes in Honor of James H. Marrow. Studies in Painting and Manuscript Illumination of the Late Middle Ages and Northern Renaissance* (London, 2006), pp. 405–419; Megan H. Foster-Campbell, *Pilgrimage through the Pages: Pilgrims' Badges in Late Medieval Devotional Manuscripts*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011; Eadem, "Pilgrimage through the Pages: Pilgrims' Badges in Late Medieval Devotional Manuscripts," in S. Blick and L.D. Gelfand (eds.), *Push Me, Pull You: Imaginative, Emotional, Physical, and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 227–274; Vida J. Hull, "Spiritual Pilgrimage in the Paintings of Hans Memling," in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage*, I, pp. 29–50; Isabel von Bredow-Klaus, *Heilsrahmen: Spirituelle Wallfahrt und Augentrug in der Flämischen Buchmalerei des Spätmittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 2009).



Figure 1 *Assemblage with symbols of Christ's Passion, Book of Hours, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés., verso of the second guard sheet. Photo: author, work in the public domain.*

French and ends with a series of prayers both in French and Latin (fols. 147r–156v). The Arsenal MS 1176 A is especially interesting for its decorative apparatus made of material objects: on the verso of its second guard sheet has been preserved an assemblage of diverse items, which compose a symbolic ‘scene’ of Christ’s Passion.⁴ (**Fig. 1**) The assemblage is comprised of the *arma Christi*, the Passion’s symbols embroidered on a piece of fabric;⁵ a small Vera Icon with St Peter’s keys and a double arm cross (depicted in gouache on a slip of parchment); and a figural badge stamped on a thin silver sheet, representing St Martha, particularly venerated at Tarascon, south of France, standing erect upon a dragon.⁶ As already noted, these items are Passion souvenirs that could help facilitate both devotion and meditation upon the Passion mystery for the reader who would find the first image of the suffering Christ – *Christ bearing the cross* – only on fol. 139v.⁷ The badges were originally sewn to the parchment flyleaves at the

4 On the manuscript, see Denis Bruna, *Enseignes de pèlerinage et enseignes profanes* (Paris, 1998), pp. 17–18; Idem, “Témoins de dévotions,” p. 141; Hanneke van Asperen, *Pelgrimstekens op Perkament. Originele en Nageschilderde Bedevaartssouvenirs in Religieuze Boeken (c. 1450–c. 1530)* (Nijmegen, 2009); Foster-Campbell, *Pilgrimage through the Pages* (dissertation), p. 36, note 108.

5 Lisa Hyatt Cooper (ed.), *The ‘Arma Christi’ in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture; with a Critical Edition of ‘O Vernicle,’* (Farnham, 2013); Flora May Lewis, “The Wound in Christ’s Side and the Instruments of the Passion: Gendered Experience and Response,” in L. Smith and J.H.M. Taylor (eds.), *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence* (London, 1996), pp. 204–229.

6 Similar manuscripts are also Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 51; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 3-1954; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 77 L 60; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MSS Series Nova 2596, 2624, 12-897; the printed book Chantilly, Musée Condé, Impr. XIV.C.3. On silver badges, see Sarah Blick, “Popular and Precious: Silver-Gilt and Silver Pilgrim Badges,” *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 2, 1 (2005). <https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal/vol2/iss1/7>

7 *Christ bearing the cross* on fol. 139v is not the work of the illuminator who took charge of the whole decoration of Arsenal MS 1176 A. On Passion devotion and iconography, see James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, 1979); Nine R. Miedema, “Following in the Footsteps of Christ: Pilgrimage and Passion Devotion,” in A.A. MacDonald, H.N.B. Ridderbos, and R.M. Schlusemann (eds.), *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late Medieval Culture* (Groningen, 1998), pp. 73–92; Sarah McNamer, “The Origins of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*,” *Speculum* 84, no. 4 (2009): 905–955.



Figure 2 Book of Hours, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés, recto of the second guard sheet. Photo: author, work in the public domain.

beginning and at the end of the Arsenal Book of Hours; there are no offsets of badges on the inner pages of the manuscript.⁸

The recto flyleaf (signed ‘A’ with a modern pencil) along with its verso still bears the signs of further stitched items (perhaps another Vera Icon and badges of different size), now lost. **(Fig. 2)** Also, the verso of another unnumbered flyleaf preceding ‘A’ has six to eight badge

⁸ According to Megan Foster-Campbell, all the badges were originally collected at the end of the manuscript and only at a later date, the flyleaf ‘A’ with the stitched items was moved to the beginning of the book. See Foster-Campbell, *Pilgrimage through the Pages* (dissertation), p. 36, note 108. A much-quoted manuscript, the *D’Oiselet Hours* (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 77 L 60), made in Bruges between 1440 and 1460, is an example of re-arrangement of twenty-three metal pilgrim badges at the end of a book. See Foster-Campbell, *Pilgrimage through the Pages* (dissertation), pp. 55–58.



Figure 3 *Book of Hours*, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés., on the right: offsets on the folio facing the assemblage. Photo: author.

imprints and needle holes. Perhaps the St Martha badge might not have belonged to the original assemblage because it seems isolated from the embroidered piece and the Vera Icon; in addition, it is sewn over the signs of a previous larger stitched item. Moreover, on the folio facing the ‘Passion assemblage,’ it is still possible to distinguish, along with the offset left by the embroidery, a circular offset that does not correspond to the size of the St Martha badge. (Fig. 3) Nonetheless, the St Martha badge fits well into the general meaning of the Passion scene, which might have had a specific function: since no further offsets mark the different sections of

Arsenal MS 1176 A, the items sewn on the flyleaf could have acted as introductory material to the whole contents of the manuscript.⁹ It would have been the user's devotional duty to unfold the symbolic synthesis of the different moments of Christ's Passion into a series of precise episodes.

Considering the kind of items sewn on the flyleaf, most probable that the owner (or one of the owners) of Arsenal MS 1176 A was a well-to-do lady. The Arsenal Book of Hours contains an expensive silver badge,¹⁰ and many illuminations and ornaments done in costly colors such as blue and gold, used to highlight blue and yellow surfaces (cloaks, mantels, and straw roofs) and naturalistic elements (trees and bushes) as in the *Nativity* on fol. 48r. **(Fig. 4)** She might have been from Paris or at least her Book of Hours was made in Paris, as prayers to specific Parisian saints (St Etienne, fol. 137v; St Denis, fol. 141v; St Genevieve, fol. 144v) and two miniatures suggest. The first on fol. 14r features St John the Evangelist who is writing his gospel aided by an eagle that holds an ink-pot. If the environment had to be that of Patmos, the illuminator made it undergo a dramatic transformation: the background, instead of being characterized by the wilderness of the Greek isle, is occupied by a cityscape, unmistakably dominated by the facade of Notre Dame Cathedral.¹¹ **(Fig. 5)**

9 For further functions of badges within manuscripts, see Hanneke van Asperen, "The Book as Shrine, the Badge as Bookmark: Religious Badges and Pilgrims' Souvenirs in Devotional Manuscripts," in M. Faini and A. Meneghin (eds.), *Domestic Devotion in the Early Modern World* (Leiden and Boston, 2018), pp. 288–312 (303–308).

10 Jos Koldewej, "Sacred and Profane: Medieval Mass-produced Badges," in G. de Boe and F. Verhaeghe (eds.), *Art and Symbolism in Medieval Europe*, vol. 5 (Zellik, 1997), p. 137.

11 Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York, 1988), p. 104; Victor Leroquais, *Les Livres d'heures manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale*, 3 vols (Paris, 1927), I, xliii.



Figure 5 *St John the Evangelist*, Book of Hours, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés., fol. 14r. Photo: author, work in the public domain.



Figure 6 *St Genevieve*, Book of Hours, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés., fol. 144v. Photo: author, work in the public domain.

146r), only St Genevieve wears a very simple dress and is portrayed with a small devil who is trying to extinguish, by means of a pair of bellows, the flame of a candle she holds in her right hand. She is also represented in the action of attentively reading the scriptures, reminding the devotee of where salvation was to be searched from, not only whenever evil powers threatened the individual, but also during the course of their entire life.¹² When the devotee looked at this image, St Genevieve's action may have reflected what the reader was doing. The Book of Hours, containing excerpts from liturgical texts and personal prayers, acquired its full meaning within an intercessory framework referencing universal and personal values.¹³

The 'Passion assemblage'

The owner of Arsenal MS 1176 A, who probably never traveled to Jerusalem¹⁴ nor to St Martha's shrine at Tarascon, could still experience these pilgrimages through a mental/imaginary journey.¹⁵ If the goal of some such journeys was to engage the viewer's

12 Søren Karspen, "Framing History with Salvation," in A. Bolvig and P. Lindley (eds.), *History and Images* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 379–414.

13 Flora May Lewis, "From Image to Illustration: The Place of Devotional Images in the Book of Hours," in G. Duchet-Suchaux (ed.), *Iconographie médiévale: Image, Texte, Contexte* (Paris, 1990), pp. 29–48; Virginia Reinburg, *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c. 1400-1600* (Cambridge, 2012). See also Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," in M. Erler and M. Kowaleski (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Atlanta, 1988), pp. 149–187; Sandra Hindman, "Books of Hours: State of the Research," in S. Hindman and J.H. Marrow (eds.), *Books of Hours Reconsidered* (New York, 2013), pp. 5–16.

14 Leigh Ann Craig, *Wandering Women and Holy Matrons: Women as Pilgrims in the Later Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 221–260 ("Women and Non-Corporeal Pilgrimage").

15 Hanneke van Asperen, "'As if they had physically visited the holy places.' Two Sixteenth-century Manuscripts Guide a Mental Journey through Jerusalem (Radboud University Library, Mss 205 and 233," in J. Goudeau, M. Verhoeven, and W. Weijers (eds.), *The Imagined and Real Jerusalem in Art and Architecture* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 190–214.

empathy with the Passion episodes, as stated by Kathryn Rudy and Robert Ousterhout,¹⁶ then the composition of the 'Passion assemblage' may be taken as introduction to that mental/imaginary journey. We are not claiming that badges and other material were the only instruments able to support the devotional exercises of a mental/imaginary pilgrimage, but they belong to the general category of objects that made the user recall imaginary or real events, helping shape a spiritual development.¹⁷ Yet medieval commentators saw that traveling to a sacred place did not grant in itself the efficacy of the pilgrimage.¹⁸ Mental devotion, especially Passion devotion, had to be a daily spiritual exercise that, in the long run and in some cases, would have substituted for the real spiritual journey. The 'pilgrimage of the mind' was the Christian conception of life seen as a continuous peregrination.¹⁹ By living and traveling abroad, even in a mental way, the devotee would have demonstrated that she refused any kind of worldly possession: her quest was the Heavenly Jerusalem.²⁰ In such an ideal light, a Book of Hours was not a possession in itself, because, even if personalized through stitching or gluing into it different objects of the devotee's choice, it was one of the means to organize in time and

16 Kathryn M. Rudy, "Virtual Pilgrimage through the Jerusalem Cityscape," in B. Kühnel, G. Noga-Banai, and H. Vorholt (eds.), *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 381–393; Robert Ousterhout, "'Sweetly Refreshed in Imagination': Remembering Jerusalem in Words and Images," *Gesta* 48 (2009): pp. 153–168.

17 Gabrielle Parkin, "Read with your Hands and not with your Eyes: Touching Books of Hours," in B. Gastle and E. Kelemen (eds.), *Later Middle English Materiality and Culture: Essays in Honor of James M. Dean* (Delaware, 2018), pp. 147–166; Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2002), pp. 41–59.

18 Jennifer O'Reilly, "The Bible as Map, on Seeing God and Finding the Way: Pilgrimage and Exegesis in Adomnán and Bede," in M. Boulton, J. Hawkes, and H. Stoner (eds.), *Place and Space in the Medieval World* (New York, 2018), pp. 210–226.

19 Kathryn Beebe, "The Jerusalem of the Mind's Eye: Imagined Pilgrimage in the Late Fifteenth Century," in Kühnel, Noga-Banai, and Vorholt (eds.), *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, pp. 409–420.

20 M.A. Claussen, "'Peregrinatio' and 'Peregrini' in Augustine's *City of God*," *Traditio* 46 (1991): 33–75.

space the quest for salvation. But the objects composing the ‘Passion assemblage,’ which may be called ‘triggering objects,’ addressing especially sight and touch, would have created the conditions for such a quest. The daily participation in a Passion exercise would have depended on the devotee’s willingness to pray and on her desire for a moral change.

The embroidered badge

The first item of the ‘Passion assemblage’ that stands with its shape, size (54 x 56 mm), and colors, is a rare piece of linen fabric with the *arma Christi*, carefully embroidered and stitched on a thick piece of parchment.²¹ **(Fig. 7)** It can be compared with a sampler of German origin, dated to the beginning of the 16th century, now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.²² **(Fig. 8)** The German sampler, containing more than fifty motifs, the alphabet and mottos, is a piece of color silk embroidery, worked in various stitches as a specimen of skill. Among the various geometrical and floral patterns, images connected to Christ’s passion stand out, such as a small crucified Christ covered by wounds and copiously bleeding **(Fig. 9)**, two representations of a pelican nourishing his little ones with its blood referring to Christ’s sacrifice. **(Fig. 10)** There are also different renditions of Jesus’ name as monogram (JHS), of the Virgin Mary’s in its complete form, and of both names, Jesus’ monogram within a frame

21 On the Passion embroidery, see Bruna, “Témoins de dévotion,” p. 141.

22 On the Victoria & Albert Museum sampler, see Donald King, *Samplers. Victoria & Albert Museum* (London, 1960), p. 4, fig. 59; Anne Sebba, *Samplers: Five Centuries of a Gentle Craft* (London, 1979), p. 24; Kay Staniland, *Embroiderers (Medieval Craftsmen)* (London, 1991), fig. 71; Elisabeth Coatsworth, “Opus what? The Textual History of Medieval Embroidery Terms and their Relationship to the Surviving Embroideries c. 800–1400,” in M. Clegg Hyer and J. Frederick (eds.), *Textiles, Text, Intertext* (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 43–67.



Figure 7 *Arma Christi*, Book of Hours, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés., verso of the second guard sheet, embroidered linen fabric. Photo: author, work in the public domain.

surrounded by the letters forming Mary's name alternating with leaves. **(Fig. 11)** The *arma Christi* here, embroidered within an escutcheon, is outlined by a red thread. All the symbols of Christ's Passion are displayed in an orderly manner within a frame -- no dramatic note is



Figure 8
 Sampler with
 various
 embroidered
 motifs,
 Germany,
 early 16th
 century.
 Photo:
 London,
 Victoria &
 Albert
 Museum.



Figure 9 *Sampler with various embroidered motifs, Germany, early 16th century, detail with Christ crucified.* Photo: London: Victoria & Albert Museum.

present as if the Passion symbols had become elements of a historical archive waiting to be interpreted. **(Fig. 12)**

The Victoria & Albert Museum sampler presents four colors (red, green, brown, and ecru) that have lost their former brightness, while the Arsenal embroidery is a bright multi-color work. Only the fabric background is pale yellow (perhaps due to aging) while the threads used are of diverse and brilliant hues. A saturated hue of scarlet red prevails in the Arsenal embroidery as is employed in the rendition of many subjects, such as Christ's monogram (JHS), five flowers, the flagellum and, mixed with white, the column at the top of which stands a



Figures 10, 11 Sampler with various embroidered motifs, Pelican (left) and Christ's monogram (right). Germany, early 16th century. Photo: London, Victoria & Albert Museum.



Figure 12 Sampler with various embroidered motifs, Germany, early 16th century, detail *Arma Christi*. Photo: London, Victoria & Albert Museum.

rooster. As regards flowers, they form a red-blue-gold border alternating with green vine leaves. By rhythmically wrapping around the embroidery's Passion composition, the flowers enhance what can be considered an icon of sorrow. Within this small icon, no visual reference to blood is made, unless the three red lines descending from the letters forming Christ's monogram are not flourishing strokes, but instead blood rivulets.

The second, most used color is green, in two hues: emerald green for fourteen vine leaves and the inner square frame; and kelly green for the Crown of Thorns and the small pedestal for the rooster, perhaps reproducing the leaves of a capital. The third color, chestnut brown, is employed for the ladder, the two poles of the lance and sponge, and the wooden cross that stands on the letter 'S' of Christ's monogram. If the stem of the letter 'H' with the sign of the horizontal abbreviation was meant to represent a cross, then the brown wooden cross would have stood for worldly objects, while the red cross recalled Christ's pure blood. The rooster in profile and many other small objects, including a lantern, three nails, a pincer, and a hammer, are done in black, while sky blue is used for four flowers and the sponge. Finally, rose salmon is present in the rooster's cockscomb and beak, and mixed with ecru, it renders the moiré effect of the marble column shaft. Making the small items more valuable, precious metal thread was used: silver mixed with black, for the three dice in the foreground; gold, for some coins and flowers, for highlighting some objects, and for the embroidery's border. Perhaps it is the nature of the Arsenal Passion embroidery – a piece of accomplished stitched work instead of a sampler – that gives the diverse elements their impressive visual power.

Embroidery shares with illumination both design and colors but, contrary to illumination, has a tactile quality which can stimulate the eyes much more than a two-dimensional composition which looks three-dimensional. Also, because the threads are in relief and never fuse with the background, it is an overt demonstration of physical presence, a

Figure 13

Arma Christi,
 Pilgrim's
 Guide, Paris
 workshop, c.
 1470, Paris,
 Bibliothèque
 de l'Arsenal,
 MS 212, fol.
 9r. Photo:
 Paris,
 Bibliothèque
 de l'Arsenal,
 work in the
 public
 domain.



product of human hands that keeps a dynamic relation with the observer. In Arsenal MS 1176 A the textile piece resembles a small painting thanks to its colors and its three-dimensional

rendering of each object. Moreover, along with the specific iconography of the instruments of Christ's Passion, even the imposing *JHS*, which occupies the center of the piece, becomes an iconographic element.²³ Within the devotion exercises allowed by such a Book of Hours, Christ's monogram could be transformed into a visual symbol through the mediation of touch, making the immersion in sight possible.²⁴

The hand, that is the human instrument through which all the Passion instruments displayed in the Arsenal MS 1176 A were used, is not represented in this embroidery as it is in MS 212, a fifteenth-century pilgrim's guide held in Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.²⁵ (**Fig. 13**) On fol. 9r of MS 212, many hands are at work: three within a blue escutcheon and one outside of it. This is Christ's hand, surrounded by four Passion instruments, which rises from the Crown of Thorns and points to the heaven. Stressing the importance of this instrument, the illuminator depicts Christ's haloed hand as a substitution for his face. As Barbara Baert remarks, "The hand is mold and matrix at the same time: It is the bearer of the mystery and the pointer to that mystery."²⁶ In the Arsenal MS 1176 A it was the devotee's hand that, as the most appropriate

23 On *nomina sacra*, see Ludwig Traube, *Nomina sacra. Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung* (Munich, 1907); Larry W. Hurtado, "Early Christian Graphic Symbols: Examples and References from the Second/Third Centuries," in I. Garizpanov, C. Godson, and H. Maguire (eds.), *Graphic Signs of Identity: Faith and Power in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2017), pp. 25–44.

24 This statement contrasts with what Walter Ong said in regard to seeing and hearing: "You can immerse yourself in hearing, in sound. There is no way to immerse yourself similarly in sight." Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London, 1982), p. 82.

25 Kathryn M. Rudy, "A Guide to a Mental Pilgrimage: Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 212," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 63 (2000): 494–515.

26 Barbara Baert, "Textile, Tactility, and the Senses: The Thirteenth-century Embroidered Antependium of Wernigerode Revisited," in M. Kapustka and W.T. Woodfin (eds.), *Clothing the Sacred: Medieval Textiles as Fabric, Form, and Metaphor* (Berlin, 2015), pp. 89–119 (at 113).



Figure 14 *Vera Icon*, Book of Hours, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés., verso of the second guard sheet, gouache on parchment. Photo: author, work in the public domain.

instrument within a devotional context, would have established the necessary contact between her body and the instruments which touched Christ's body during his Passion. If the Victoria & Albert sampler and the Arsenal specimen were objects sewn in by women, then they helped foster embroidery skills and served as a devotional/meditative activity. So, the Arsenal piece of fabric could have been a meditative embroidery project for its owner, with its own distinct, personal meaning, taking on an

additional significance when juxtaposed with the other souvenirs on the page.²⁷

The parchment Vera Icon

If the embroidered piece stimulated touch, the small Vera Icon (20 x 38 mm) depicted in gouache on a small strip of parchment, addressed primarily vision. **(Fig. 14)** Even if rather

²⁷ I would like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reader for *Peregrinations* who suggested this interpretation for the piece of fabric. See also Roszika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London, 1984), 1–7.

small, the face's large eyes surrounded by dark color and emerging from a pale green halo, may have exerted a compelling attraction for the viewer as soon as her gaze moved from the multicolored embroidery to the simple set of colors shaping Christ's image.²⁸ The so-called 'Holy Face,' the imprint of Christ's face on a linen cloth, was believed to be the relic of the veil with which Veronica wiped Jesus' face while he suffered on the path to his crucifixion, when his sweat had become like drops of blood flowing to the ground.²⁹ The Passion relic of the Holy Face (Vera icon or Veronica), believed to not be made by human hands,³⁰ was kept in Rome from the 12th century onward and shown to pilgrims during specific periods.³¹ By the late Middle Ages, the Veronica had become well-known in Western Christendom through legends and indulgences, as well as through the popular production of copies of the sacred image. The iconographical formula consisted of the neck-less face of Christ represented against or within a white linen held by St Veronica, by angels, or by the Apostles.³²

28 Hanneke van Asperen, "Où il y a une Veronique atachée dedens." Images of the Veronica in Religious Manuscripts, with Special Attention for the Dukes of Burgundy and their Family," in A. Murphy, H.L. Kessler, M. Petoletti, E. Duffy, and G. Milanese (eds.), *The European Fortune of the Roman Veronica in the Middle Ages* (Brno, 2017), pp. 232–249.

29 Petrus Mallius, "Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae aucta atque emendata a Romano presbitero," in R. Valentini and G. Zucchetti (eds.), *Codice topografico della città di Roma*, III (Rome, 1946), pp. 375–442 (420). In the Middle Ages the term 'Veronica' was explained as if formed by 'vera icon,' that is, true image. Giraldus Cambrensis, *Speculum Ecclesiae* (c. 1220), in *Rerum Britannicarum scriptores*, XXI, 4, 278.

30 Gerhard Wolf, "From Mandyllion to Veronica," in H.L. Kessler and G. Wolf (eds.), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, Papers from a Colloquium at the Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome and the Villa Spelman, Florence, 1996 (Bologna, 1998), pp. 153–179 (157). See also Kurt Weitzmann, "The Mandyllion and Constantine Porphyrogenetos," *Cahiers archéologiques* 11 (1960): 163–184.

31 Gerhard Wolf, "Pinta della nostra effige. La veronica come richiamo dei romei," in M. D'Onofrio (ed.), *Romei e Giubilei. Il pellegrinaggio medievale a San Pietro (350–1350)* (Milan, 1999), pp. 211–218.

32 Karl Pearson. *Die Fronica. Eine Beitrag zur Geschichte des Christusbildes in Mittelalter* (Strasbourg, 1887); André Chastel, "La Véronique," *Revue de l'art* 40/41 (1978): 71–82.

One of the first examples of the use of a Veronica is to be found in an English manuscript of c. 1260 (London, British Library, Arundel MS 157, fol. 2r)³³ and in French illuminated works, such as the 1280-1299 Psalter–Book of Hours of Yolande of Soissons (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 729, fol. 15r),³⁴ but the mass diffusion of the small reproductions of the Vera Icon intended as badges – of the genre sewn in Arsenal MS 1176 A – may have started with the celebration of the Holy Year of 1300 and gained even more fame with the Jubilee of 1350.³⁵ It was then that images of the relic were produced and sold in Rome by the *pictores Veronicarum* who depicted the Holy Face on parchment, leather, paper, and pieces of fabric.³⁶ Vera icons were also produced outside Rome. An uncut parchment sheet, from the early 16th century, was found under the choir stalls of a nunnery at Wienhausen, Germany. Containing eight Holy Faces, depicted with dark colors, with no papal tiara, crossed keys, or simple crosses, it suggests a non-Roman origin.³⁷ But even when such items are present, it cannot be

33 Otto Pächt, “The ‘Avignon Diptych’ and its Eastern Ancestry,” in M. Meiss (ed.), *De artibus opuscula. Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky* (New York, 1961), I, pp. 402–421; Lucy Freeman Sandler, “Face to Face with God. Pictorial Image of the Beatific Vision,” in W.M. Omrod (ed.), *England in the Fourteenth Century* (London, 1985), pp. 24–35; Nigel J. Morgan, “Veronica Images and the Office of the Holy Face in Thirteenth-century England,” in A. Murphy and others (eds.), *The European Fortune of the Roman Veronica* (Brno, 2017), pp. 84–101.

34 On the Hours of Yolande of Soissons, see Karen Gould, *The Psalter and Hours of Yolande of Soissons* (Cambridge, MA, 1978); Alexa Sand, “Vision, Devotion, and Difficulty in the Psalter Hours of ‘Yolande of Soissons,’” *The Art Bulletin* 87, no. 1 (2005): 6–23.

35 Wolf, “From Mandylyon to Veronica,” p. 173.

36 Koldeweij, *Foi et bonne fortune. Parure et dévotion en Flandre médiévale*, p. 238; P. Pecchiai, “Banchi e botteghe dinanzi alla Basilica Vaticana nei secoli XIV, XV e XVI,” *Archivi* 2, no. 18 (1951): 81–123. For the salvation power of Vera Icons, see Paul Vandenbroeck, Luce Irigaray, and Ann Bries (eds.), *Hooglied. De beeldwereld van religieuze vrouwen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, vanaf de 13de eeuw* (Bruxelles, 1994), p. 59.

37 H. Appuhn, C. von Heusinger, “Der Fund kleiner Andachtsbilder des 13. bis 17. Jahrhunderts in Kloster Wienhausen,” *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* (1965): 157–238. In the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid are exhibited eight panels by Gabriel Mälesslircher, dated 1478. They feature the four evangelists writing their gospels. In the panel with St Matthew, inside of the lid of his desk, one can distinguish a very small

demonstrated with certainty that the devotee undertook a pilgrimage to Rome: they may have as well received the small Vera Icon as a gift by someone who did make the penitential journey.

The owner of our small Book of Hours did not limit herself to simply looking at the image, but also intervened with her hands, touching St Peter's keys and the arms of the cross inside the Holy Face's halo so much as to make the black color disappear.³⁸ This action is not exclusive to Arsenal MS 1176 A 'Passion assemblage': it seems to have been a usual practice on the part of the users of such personal books, particularly to receive protection in the most difficult moments of life.³⁹ The use of the hand on the devotee's part testifies to the belief that sight was not enough to grant badges their full power: a more bodily intervention was needed, which would establish a contact between two bodies – Christ's and the devotee's – accompanied by intercessory prayers. The disembodied word and the embodied image conjured up the idea that Christian faith faced the issue of connecting materiality with immateriality in order to give the spirit its true substance.

devotional image: the black Volto Santo of Lucca, very similar to the Vera Icon of Arsenal MS 1176 A. I would like to thank Sarah Blick for the reference.

38 Kathryn M. Rudy, "Dirty Books: Quantifying Patterns of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, 2, nos. 1-2 (2010) doi:10.5092/jhna.2010.2.1.1.

39 Kathryn M. Rudy, "Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges, and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Ritual they Reveal," *eBLJ*, 2011, article 5, (<http://www.bl.uk/eblj/2011articles/article5.html>). On fol. 72 of the *Book of Hours* MS 132 G 38 (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek), it is said that: *Item / soe wat vrouwe dat beelt vanden / vironica aensiet die in arbeyt / gaet van kinde si sel verblijt ende vertroost worden inden noot* [A woman who looks at the image of the Veronica during childbirth will be helped and soothed of her pains].



Figure 15 *St Martha*, stamped silver badge, Book of Hours, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés., verso of the second guard sheet. Photo: author, work in the public domain.

The St Martha silver badge

The third item of Arsenal MS 1176 A flyleaf is the stamped silver badge (diameter 37 mm) stitched on the parchment and representing St Martha in front of a fleur-de-lys background.⁴⁰ (**Fig. 15**) St Martha, whose feast is celebrated on the 29th of July, was the sister of Mary Magdalene and Lazarus. In the Gospel of Luke (8, 40) she is described as preparing fish for Christ’s supper and speaking to Him about her sister.⁴¹ A Provençal legend has it that she evangelized Aix and Tarascon and founded many monasteries in the area. She is generally

40 F.C. Husenbeth, *Emblems of Saints: By Which They Are Distinguished in Works of Art* (Norwich, 1882), pp. 140–141; George Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art. Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), p. 681; M.E. Tabor, *The Saints in Art. With their Attributes and Symbols Alphabetically Arranged* (London, 1969), p. 134; H.L. Keller, *Reclams Lexikon der Heiligen und der biblischen Gestalten. Legende und Darstellung in der bildenden Kunst* (Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 417–418. Along with the Arsenal St Martha badge, another one, preserved on fol. 98r of the *D’Oiselet Hours* (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 77 L 60), testifies to the pilgrimage to Tarascon. See Foster-Campbell, *Pilgrimage through the Pages* (dissertation), p. 56.

41 Since Martha was burdened by so much serving, she came to Christ saying: “Lord dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?” She is credited to have acted as intermediary in the conversion of her sister.



Figure 16 *St Martha*, Breviary of Queen Isabel of Castile, Bruges workshop, c. 1497, London, British Library, Ms Add. 18851, fol. 417r. Photo: London, British Library, work in the public domain.

represented as a nun, wearing a white tunic, collar, black cloak, and veil. She also holds an *aspergillum* [asperges brush] in her right hand and a pot with holy water in her left or a ladle and keys, as in the Breviary of Queen Isabel of Castile (1451–1504) (London, British Library, MS Add. 18851, c. 1497, Southern Netherlands, Bruges, fol. 417r).⁴² (**Fig. 16**)

St Martha is also associated with a dragon, the Tarasque.⁴³ The legend of the Tarasque is reported in several sources, but was most-widely

known in the story of St Martha in the *Golden Legend*.⁴⁴ Hrabanus Maurus in his *Vita Sanctae*

42 Matilde López Serrano, *Libro de horas de Isabel la Católica: estudio preliminar* (Madrid, 1969); Barbara F. Weissberger (ed.), *Queen Isabel of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona* (Woodbridge, 2008); Nigel J. Morgan, Scot McKendrick, Elisa Ruiz García (eds.), *The Isabella Breviary: The British Library, London Add. MS. 18851* (Barcelona, 2012).

43 The monster, which inhabited the area of Nerluc in Provence, and devastated the landscape, was a sort of dragon with a lion's head, six short legs like a bear's, an ox-like body covered with a turtle shell, and a scaly tail that ended in a scorpion's sting. St Martha found the beast, charmed it with hymns and prayers, and led back the tamed Tarasque to the city. The people attacked it and it died there. Martha then preached to the people and converted many of them to Christianity. Nerluc then became Tarascon. On the legend, see Louis Dumont, *La Tarasque. Essai de description d'un fait local d'un point de vue ethnographique* (Paris, 1951).

44 Jacopo da Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints* (Princeton, 1995), s.v.: "There was, at that time, on the banks of the Rhône, in a marsh between Arles and Avignon, a dragon, half animal, half fish, thicker than an ox, longer than a horse, with teeth like swords and big as horns, he hid in the river where he took the life of all passers-by and submerged vessels."

Marthae describing the saint as having “*Alba tyara de pilis velata caput*” [her head covered with a white tiara made of hair], recalls a legend harking back to the second century BC. Martha, a prophetess at the time of Caius Marius (157–86 BC), helped him defeating the Gauls and to conquer what was to be called later Provence. Martha the Prophetess is described as having a camel’s hair tiara, a buckled mantle, a thyrsus in her right hand and a stone in her left. In the early days of Christianity, the change from Martha the Prophetess to Martha the hostess of Christ, the sister of Lazarus and Mary Magdalene, was but a slight one as much as the transformation of the ‘Barbarians’ of southern France into a unique entity, a monster called the Tarasque.

At Tarascon, the feast of the Tarasque on the 14th of April was celebrated every year since 1474, when King René of Anjou (1409-1480) started it; but the production of objects connected to St Martha’s cult might have started much earlier, well before the construction of the church dedicated to her in 1197.⁴⁵ The St Martha badge in Arsenal MS 1176 A may be one of the devotional objects produced at the time of King René, bearing Christian iconographic attributes that can be interpreted as a transformation of the pagan ones: the tiara had become a veil, the mantle a long dress, the *thyrsus* had metamorphosed into an *aspergillum*. The stone became a pot containing the holy water by means of which Martha tamed the monster.

45 Theodore Andrea Cook, *Old Provence*, 2 vols (London, 1905), I, pp. 42–44. Before the construction of the church at Tarascon, there was a shrine devoted to St Martha. Clovis, king of the Franks, was said to have attributed his recovery from illness to a visit paid to that shrine. See James Murray MacKinley, *Ancient Church Dedications in Scotland*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1910), p. 197. In the twelfth century the Tarasque started to appear as an iconographic subject in the south of France, particularly on architectural elements, such as the capital in the cloister of Saint Trophime at Arles. On Saint Trophime, see Odile Caylux (ed.), *Le cloître Saint-Trophime d’Arles* (Arles, 2017).

As we have already hinted, it seems that St Martha badge was not part of the original ‘Passion assemblage,’ not only because of the already-mentioned offset on the facing page, but also from a number of holes still visible on the badge’s surface, reflecting its previous use in another folio of the same or of a different manuscript or on another object altogether. Kurt Köster classified stitched badges in manuscripts according to their material, form, and place of origin.⁴⁶ He noted that the imagery of stamped (or bracteate) badges do not differ from traditional cast badges, which were produced in the West from the 12th century onward, but in their material, size, shape, and weight they do. Cast badges were usually made of pewter, a tin and lead alloy, in contrast to the silver, copper, brass, and rarely, gold foil. While some badges bore images not necessarily tied to a location, featuring widely venerated saints, the St Martha badge is directly connected to a specific place, Tarascon in Provence.⁴⁷

Although the St Martha badge and the small strip of parchment Vera Icon could have been cherished as proof of pilgrimage and as aids to devotion in Arsenal MS 1176 A, their value rested on the idea that they had been pressed, either by the owner or by the shrine keeper, against the saint’s relics, shrine, or image that they commemorated, transforming the badge from a souvenir into a touch-relic.⁴⁸ As previously mentioned, not all Vera Icons came from

46 Kurt Köster, “Religiöse Medaillen Wallfahrts-Devotionalien in der Flämischen Buchmalerei des 15. und Frühen 16. Jahrhunderts,” in *Buch und Welt* (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 459–504; Idem, “Kollektionen metallener Wallfahrts-Devotionalien und kleine Andachtsbilder, eingenäht in spätmittelalterliche Gebetbuch-Handschriften,” in B. Haller and G. Liebers (eds.), *Das Buch und sein Haus: Erlesenes aus der Welt des Buches. Gedanken, Betrachtungen, Forschungen* (Wiesbaden, 1979), pp. 77–130.

47 Esther Cohen, “*In haec signa*: Pilgrim-badge Trade in Southern France,” *Journal of Medieval History* 2, no. 3 (1976): 193–214.

48 Brian W. Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges. Medieval Finds from Excavations in London* (London, 1998), p. 17.

Rome, so they would necessarily not have been pressed against a relic; yet they still carried with them the association with the specific relic by means of similarities of visual features.⁴⁹ In the Arsenal MS 1176 A assemblage, only the embroidered piece seems not to belong to the category of touch-relic and therefore can be interpreted as a creation on the part of the Book of Hours' owner for herself. Too, the book might have been presented as a gift for the owner from someone else and the additions might have been made before its gift.⁵⁰ Even if the badges forming the 'Passion assemblage' were not used to remember a pilgrimage taken by the book owner herself, they could still help shape a series of devotional exercises grounded in feelings produced by tactile and visual sensations.⁵¹

Touching as devotional exercise

Some badges were able to amplify "the spiritual power of the manuscript's contents, distributing the spiritual and apotropaic power of the pilgrimage shrine through the pages of the book," since they were placed next to a specific prayer,⁵² but this is not the case for Arsenal MS 1176 A flyleaf. The 'Passion assemblage' preceded the moment in which the devotee would start her contact with the written contents of the book. Before this, a sensorial preparation may

49 Hanneke van Asperen, *Pelgrimstekens op Perkament. Originele en Nageschilderde Bedevaartssouvenirs in Religieuze Boeken (c. 1450–c. 1530)*, chap. 4.

50 Ursula Weekes, *Early Engravers and their Public: The Master of the Berlin Passion and Manuscripts from Convents in the Rhine-Maas Region* (Turnhout, 2004), p. 177.

51 David Ganz, "Touching Books, Touching Art: Tactile Dimensions of Sacred Books in the Medieval West," *Postscripts* 8, nos. 1-2 (2012): 81–113.

52 Foster-Campbell, *Pilgrimage through the Pages* (dissertation), p. 59.

have taken place made of seeing what could be touched and touching what had been seen, material actions to be interpreted as a silent *introitus* to the prayers proper. Reading the contents of the Hours was perhaps the most ritualistic part of the contact with the book, while a more intimate ceremony was displayed in the objects sewn on the flyleaf.⁵³ The contents of the flyleaf with the 'Passion assemblage' are connected to episodes before the Resurrection, just indicated by the *arma Christi*. They would have led to a meditation on the body of Christ not represented, referring to his Passion by object-symbols that inspire the viewer to imagine the figure of Christ through his absence.⁵⁴ Notwithstanding the earlier warnings, such as that by Jacques de Vitry in his *Vita* of Marie d'Oignies (1215): "The woman must believe with the spirit, not with the body," the physicality of the relation with one's own book, and with its images in particular, could not be avoided in order to attain the daily expected emotional reaction produced by the sacred.⁵⁵

The tactile pilgrimage proper took place within the 'Passion assemblage,' passing through vision and combining three kinds of tactile sensations: the smoothness of the parchment Vera Icon; the unevenness and coolness of the St Martha silver badge, and the softness and light roughness of the different threads of the embroidery with the *arma Christi*. Yet, the contact relation with the Book of Hours did not end with the 'Passion assemblage.' The owner (or owners) of Arsenal MS 1176 A manifested their physical contact with the images illustrating the diverse prayers by selectively rubbing portions of them, wearing away some of

53 D.H. Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2007), especially part 1.

54 Gerhard Wolf, "Christ in his Beauty and Pain. Concepts of Body and Image in an Age of Transition (Late Middle Ages to Early Renaissance)," in S.C. Scott (ed.), *The Art of Interpreting* (University Park, 1996), pp. 164–197.

55 Jacques de Vitry, "Vita Mariae Oigniencensis," June 23, 5, in D. Papebroeck (ed.), *Acta sanctorum*, ed. novissima (Paris, 1867), pp. 542–572.

the pigment, including the right shoulder of *St John the Evangelist*, fol. 14r; *Christ bearing the cross*, fol. 139v (**Fig. 17**), and *St Anthony*, fol. 142v. There are also signs of a more intimate touching experience as that of repeatedly kissing images (devotional osculation), which was reserved to an illumination with *Mary and Christ Child* on fol. 20r, so much empathetic an involvement as to almost erase Christ's face. (**Fig. 18**)

Figure 17 *Christ bearing the Cross*, Book of Hours, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés., fol. 139v. Photo: author, work in the public domain.





Figure 18 *Mary and Christ Child*, Book of Hours, Paris workshop, c. 1470, Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 1176 A rés., fol. 20r. Photo: author, work in the public domain.

The 'Passion assemblage' and the Enclosed Gardens

The 'Passion assemblage' of Arsenal MS 1176 A can be compared with the ornamental apparatus of the Flemish *Enclosed Gardens* at the Hof van Busleyden (Municipal Museum) in Mechelen, Belgium, with their varying textures and colors of the souvenirs. These medium-size triptychs contain relics, statues (Mary and the Christ Child, various saints), and wax



Figure 19 *Enclosed Garden with St Ursula (detail)*, Flemish, 15th century, Mechelen Museum, Belgium. Photo: author, work in the public domain.

representations of the *Agnus Dei* that are surrounded by hand-wrought flora, fauna, and fruits along with metal badges and medallions.⁵⁶ Two kinds of badges in particular resemble the ‘Passion assemblage’ iconographically. The first is an enameled badge in the *Enclosed Garden*

⁵⁶ Marjolijn Kruip, “Metal Badges: Miniature Media of Great Significance,” in L. Watteuw and H. Iterbeke (eds.), *The Enclosed Gardens of Mechelen: Late Medieval Paradise Gardens Revealed* (Veurne, 2018), pp. 192–213. According to Marjolijn Kruip, commissioners and users of the Enclosed Gardens were not necessarily the Mechelen Hospital sisters although the place of conservation of the Gardens was the Hospital of Our Lady. See also Barbara Baert, *Late Medieval Enclosed Gardens of the Low Countries: Contributions to Gender and Artistic Expression* (Leuven, 2016). On badge images, see the online database of Radboud University Nijmegen: www.kunera.nl (last consulted October 2019).

with the *Hunt of the Unicorn*, where an angel shows to the Christ Child the Cross and the *arma Christi*. The second is in the *Enclosed Garden with St Ursula*, which contains a badge with the Vera Icon, surrounded by the first lines of a popular prayer: *Salve Sancta Facies Nostrae Redemptoris* [Hail, Holy Countenance of our Redeemer]. **(Fig. 19)** In the same *Enclosed Garden* some badges were used in a manner subservient to relics, forming a sacred package, made of a thin sheet of brass placed between two pieces of parchment, the uppermost of which bears a line of text that describes a relic (*cedula*). Added to this is a metal badge and then the relic itself.⁵⁷

Seeking for the meaning of inserting badges into the *Enclosed Gardens*, some precise suggestions are offered by a text preserved in the *Enclosed Garden with a Calvary Scene*: “Christ died for us in great need at the Hill of Golgotha where he met the bitterest death: our grace and the forgiveness of our misdeeds and sins are in the wounds of Jesus.”⁵⁸ This text leads the viewer to interpret the badges as contemplative tools used to understand the inner message of the imagery and objects contained therein.

The Mechelen assemblages are three-dimensional, but it does not seem they were made to be touched in each and every one of their components, suggesting instead the idea of complex and immutable wholes. This highly decorated assemblages of diverse items may have contributed to the enhancement of the sacred meaning, but at the same time would have

⁵⁷ Kruip, “Metal Badges,” p. 201.

⁵⁸ Kruip, “Metal Badges,” p. 198: *Xps is voer ons ghestoruē in grot' noot inden berch van caluariē die alder bitterste doot: In Ihs wondē is ons ghenade ende verlatenisse van onsen misdaden ēn sonden.*

distanced the devotee from the spiritual sphere in which she would have wished to enter.⁵⁹ In contrast, the small size of Arsenal MS 1176 A, together with the possibility of opening and touching its contents, contributes to the viewer's sensorial experience; its depicted images and objects were visible at a close distance and could be manipulated, before or after reading the text.⁶⁰ Moreover, the text of this devotional book became an 'object' in itself, equaling visual material, with the images acting as material elements and text as material object, suggesting a dynamic interaction with both on the part of the book's owner. Regarding the badges and embroidery here, there are two aspects at work: that they are contact relics and the physicality of the objects' actual texture. In such a way, touch and contact truly work on several levels.

Real and depicted badges

Because the materiality of religious souvenirs or touch-relics were so central to many devotees, used for the authentication of their mental/imaginary pilgrimage,⁶¹ it comes perhaps as a surprise to see that in the second half of the 15th century, book illumination workshops of Southern Netherlands and Northern France depicted fictive badges in the margins of the books or even occupying the whole page, acting as substitutes for real badges. This is seen in the

59 Barbara Baert, "An Odour, a Taste, a Touch. Impossible to Describe. *Noli me tangere* and the Senses," in W. de Boer and C. Göttler (eds.), *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 111–151.

60 On touching of manuscripts, see van Asperen, *Pelgrimstekens op Perkament. Originele en Nageschilderde Bedevaartssouvenirs in Religieuze Boeken (c. 1450–c. 1530)*, pp. 178, 247, 346.

61 On pilgrim seals, amulets, ampullae, reliquaries, and iconography, see the essays collected in Sarah Blick (ed.), *Beyond Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges: Essays in Honour of Brian Spencer* (Oxford, 2007). See also Jeffrey F. Hamburger, "Seeing and Believing: The Suspicion of Sight and the Authentication of Vision in Late Medieval Art and Devotion," in K. Krüger and A. Nova (eds.), *Imagination und Wirklichkeit. Zum Verhältnis von mentalen und realen Bildern in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit* (Mainz, 2000), pp. 47–69.



Figure 20 *Book of Hours* of Engelbert II of Nassau, Ghent workshop, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 219, c. 1470, fol. 16v. Photo: Oxford, Bodleian Library, work in the public domain.

twenty depicted badges on fol. 16v of the *Book of Hours* of Engelbert II of Nassau (Ghent workshop, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 219–220, c. 1470).⁶² (Fig. 20) Kurt Köster and others have argued that stitching metallic thin badges within the pages of a prayer book was one of the few cases in which a non-artistic religious practice influenced an artistic enterprise,⁶³ so these painters were enlarging a cultural and religious practice, pressing it beyond some limits that the real badges could not afford as, for example, the introduction into a book of a three-dimensional object of a certain size. Such depictions could create illusions, but not

⁶² On Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 219–220, see Foster-Campbell, *Pilgrimage through the Pages* (Dissertation), pp. 227–231.

⁶³ Köster, “Kollektionen metallener Wallfahrts-Devotionalien und kleine Andachtsbilder,” (see note 46).

deceptions and perhaps a collection of depicted badges would never completely substitute for a fewer but real badges in the devotional attitudes of the devotees.⁶⁴

Hanneke van Asperen distinguishes Books of Hours with real badges from Books of Hours with depicted ones with regard to their patrons' social background. In her opinion, manuscripts with real badges belonged to people who could not afford to purchase a fully decorated book. Only devotees belonging to the highest economic spheres could purchase a richly illustrated book, which would be used as precious item to be read and later to bequeath to family members or given as a sumptuous gift.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, as Books of Hours were devised, reading them was connected to looking at images, whether actual or depicted badges.⁶⁶ Both were part of a proliferation of religious images – sculptures, stained glass, paintings, tapestries, illustrations, and prints – which appeared in Europe during the second half of the 15th and in the early 16th centuries in public places and private settings. This phenomenon can be partially explained by the economic prosperity enjoyed by the nobility and bourgeoisie after the Hundred Years War ended (1453) but also to a change in religious attitudes.⁶⁷

Arsenal MS 1176 A belongs to this cultural climate, with its rich iconographic apparatus comprising fifty-six miniatures and many ornamental borders. Yet, while these elements

64 Sixten Ringbom, "Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (March 1969): 159–170.

65 van Asperen, "The Book as Shrine," p. 309.

66 Reinburg (2012), chap. 3: "Prayer book and primer," pp. 84–128; Roger S. Wieck, *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York, 2004), pp. 9–25.

67 Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War 1300–1450* (Cambridge, 1988); David Green, *The Hundred Years War: A People's History* (London, 2014); Kody E. Whittington, "The Social Impact of the Hundred Years War on the Societies of England and France" (2016), Honors Undergraduate Theses.115
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honortheses/115>

bespeak an owner of high rank, they chose to adorn their personal book with sewn-in badges. The St Martha badge and those that have been detached from the flyleaves do not belong to the genre of thick and heavy cast badges suitable for clothes or hats.⁶⁸ Instead, being thin and fragile, they were particularly adaptable to manuscript pages and perhaps, as Hanneke van Asperen has argued, they were expressly produced to be sewn onto a page.⁶⁹ Miniaturists in Ghent, Bruges, or Paris might have appreciated these thin items and depicted in advance such badge-manuscripts as a permanent feature of their workshop ready to be shown to the possible clients.⁷⁰ In this light, they may have offered a choice of images to those who could not go to sanctuaries or to those who traveled to some, but could not undertake further journeys. In such a way, badges depicted in the margins of the books or filling the entire page of a manuscript, might have become important factors for changing a portion of the market.

Badges and the dissemination of images

If the early mass-production of such culturally valuable items as badges played an important role in the late Middle Ages as catalysts for economic differentiation, they were also

68 In the twelfth century the mold makers who started the pilgrim souvenir trade at Canterbury were identified in the cathedral rental as specialized in a new craft. According to the *Livre des Métiers* drawn up by the provost, Etienne Boileau, Paris also had by c. 1260 a category of specialists in the pewter trade who produced badges, bells, rings and mirrors in tin and lead. By the fourteenth century, records at Le Puy reveal instances of the souvenir trade as a family business, extending over several generations and perhaps handing down molds from one generation to the next. See Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, p. 7. See also Jos Koldeweij, "Notes on the Historiography and Iconography of Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges," in C. Hourihane (ed.), *From Minor to Major: The Minor Arts in Medieval Art History* (Princeton, 2012), pp. 194–216.

69 van Asperen, "The Book as Shrine," p. 293.

70 Anne Margreet W. As-Vijvers, "More than Marginal Meaning? The Interpretation of Ghent-Bruges Border Decoration," *Out Holland* 116, no. 1 (2003): 3–33.

contributing to the dissemination of religious ideas, usually assigned to the advent of wood and metal cuts, promptly followed by mechanical printing.⁷¹ This oft-repeated interpretation does not explain the complexity of the topic and is in need of revision. By considering the pressing demand of religious books in the 15th century on the part of an ever increasing number of literate lay people, perhaps concomitant with the appearance of wood and metal cuts in the production of printed texts, also manuscript texts, namely Books of Hours, which were not supplanted by the printed forms, underwent a change of decoration. Using depicted badges responded to a religious audience sensitive to the topic of pilgrimage, either real or mental.⁷² It might have been in the interest of manuscript workshops to have more items to offer, either more expensive or cheaper according to the material used and the richness of decoration, making their goods substantially different from what was sold by a print workshop. The meaningful difference between a real badge arranged personally on the page and a painted one is that the latter was not personal, but books with illusionistic painted badges belonged to the category of personal thesaurus.⁷³ By means of original badges or their depicted representations applied to the borders of manuscripts, the dissemination of religious penitential ideas and acts would have had a direct effect on the devotee. The aura of an 'indirect' relic such as a badge

71 David S. Areford. "Multiplying the Sacred: The Fifteenth-Century Woodcut as Reproduction, Surrogate, Simulation," in P. Parshall (ed.), *The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, Proceedings of the Symposium "The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe," organized by the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (New Haven & London, 2009), pp. 119–153.

72 Foster-Campbell, "Pilgrimage through the Pages," both article and dissertation (as in note 3).

73 van Asperen, "The Book as Shrine," pp. 298–299.

was more than a pilgrimage souvenir, it was the memory of a special occasion, even though it did not concern an actual penitential journey.⁷⁴

CONCLUSIONS

The Passion embroidery, the silver St Martha stamped badge and the strip of parchment with the Vera Icon – all badges of diverse materials – formed a small assemblage that played an introductory sensory role to the more general and accomplished visual and oral performance of the Hours. The senses have a fundamental role in establishing a personal relation with the sacred, giving the devotee the daily opportunity to experience the mysteries of the Christian faith. Christ, though absent in the image with the *arma Christi*, is recalled by the instruments of his Passion, so aptly rendered in relief in the embroidered piece and the Vera Icon, as well as Christ's power to redeem, testified by the presence of St Martha badge. The viewer enacts the devotional object not only through scopic acts, but through actual touch.⁷⁵

As Kathryn Rudy noted regarding depicted cityscapes bearing the Passion narrative, they had two important qualities related to pilgrimage: dramatic revelation and physical participation.⁷⁶ If pilgrimage was a space-time journey, suspended between past and present,

74 According to Kathryn Rudy, not all metal badges in books were pilgrimage souvenirs; some of them may have been souvenirs of the taking of Communion; see Kathryn M. Rudy, "Sewing the Body of Christ: Eucharistic Wafer Souvenirs Stitched into Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts Primarily in the Netherlands," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 8, no. 1 (2016): DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2016.8.1.1; Eadem, "Sewing as Authority in the Middle Ages," *Zeitschrift für Medien- und Kulturforschung* 6, no. 1 (2015): 117–131.

75 Horst Bredekamp, *Theorie des Bildakts. Frankfurter Adorno-Forlesungen* 2007 (Berlin, 2010); Engl. trans. *Image Acts: A Systematic Approach to Visual Agency* (Berlin, 2018), pp. 77–97 and 193–208.

76 Rudy, "Virtual Pilgrimage through the Jerusalem Cityscape," p. 393.

and between the pilgrims' own experience and what they could derive from the worshiped figure, then the mental/imaginary pilgrimage required much more control to organize the different impressions drawn from memory or simply from imagination. For, an exercise of mental pilgrimage does not necessarily imply that a real one had occurred, where the stress was put not on the journey, but on the destination so that a badge with a specific saint or with the Virgin Mary could help with one's devotion without leaving one's home.⁷⁷ The Arsenal 'Passion assemblage' shows no explicit narrative content, but it could become a dramatic revelation leading to physical participation.

The images of Arsenal MS 1176 A are not meant to invite the devotee to enter the sacred space: Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints are all firmly enclosed within frames, establishing a distance between them and the reader/viewer. But the devotee could easily overstep the fictive boundaries created by colors (by touching the images with their hands and kissing them with their mouths), going beyond the picture plane that kept the sacred figures as one with the page. The 'Passion assemblage,' made of real objects, enabled the devotee to establish a direct contact with the images, a contact which was to keep its importance unchallenged since images were also powerful symbols.

In conclusion, Arsenal MS 1176 A is important because it belongs to a small number of surviving manuscripts with real badges inserted and because it raises the question of the religious involvement of the devotee with devotional practices requiring movement, substituted by imagination essentially based on vision and touch. Yet there is a difference

⁷⁷ van Asperen, "The Book as Shrine," p. 302.

between a flat, two-dimensional image, and a three-dimensional object, which by its existence in space, seems to possess more life or authority than a two-dimensional rendering.

Such badges were generally added to religious books by lay people who demonstrably used these books repeatedly. The badges were likely gazed at and touched daily, not only at the very opening of the book, which may have corresponded to the preparation for praying, but also sometimes within the manuscript pages, and at the end of the book. The practices of observing and touching conjure up the idea that the book with badges was a complex item connected to an indirect and direct spiritual experience.

St Martha's badge belongs to an indirect spiritual experience. As one who stood at Golgotha during the Crucifixion of Jesus and later came to the Holy Sepulcher with myrrh, she became an early witness to Christ's resurrection. So, by means of a mental transfer, St Martha could substitute for the devotee in the Holy Land. Indeed, as St Martha's badge resembles a seal stitched under the two previous images (the embroidered badge and the Vera Icon), it could validate their content. The direct experience, instead, was created by the devotee herself using the multi-sensory quality of the Passion-page, reminding the reader of the diverse surfaces present at the real places. In the 'Passion assemblage,' the devotee would have placed their hand on the different threads, soft (the colored ones) and rough (silver and golden threads) at the same time; then the distinctive sensory quality of the Veronica-image would have been softness, while the silver badge would have offered another different sensory experience, more varied and detailed (torque-thread, flat surface, minute concavities), but at the same time, more elusive.

The difference between manuscripts with badges and printed cheap illustrated books – sometimes sold in the same places and also spread by peddlers – does not reside in that the former were usually connected to a specific sanctuary, while the latter had a more universal value.⁷⁸ Rather, the difference is to be found in the diverse sensorial experiences a book with badges allowed, based as it was on the direct contact with the materiality – and therefore, truthfulness – of the sacred. Whether or not the devotee wished to make her journey last forever, the ‘Passion assemblage’ may have acted as a seal testifying to the truthfulness of their penitential journey, reminding them of the diverse surfaces present at the real places, and of the objects that touched Christ and which Christ had touched. By handling the Book of Hours, the devotee would have experienced a retrieval of the dramatic moments which constituted Christ’s passion, recalled with no temporal or spatial limits within the frame of a search for personal salvation.

Appendix

MS 1176 A rés., c. 1470, Paris Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, parchment, mm 129 x 85, A–D, fols. 1–156, 56 miniatures. It belonged to Antoine-René de Voyer, marquis de Paulmy d’Argenson (1722–1787), French politician.

Fols. 1r-12v: **Calendar** with the zodiac and labors of the months. January starts with a banquet while the calendar ends with the Capricorn; fol. 13r blank; **Excerpts from the four Gospels**: fol. 14r *St John the Evangelist*; fol. 15v *St Luke*; fol. 17r *St Matthew*; fol. 18v *St Mark*; fol.

⁷⁸ Hanneke van Asperen, “Praying, Threading, and Adorning: Sewn-in Prints in a Rosary Prayer Book (London, British Library, Add. MS 14042),” in K. M. Rudy and B. Baert (eds.), *Weaving, Veiling, and Dressing: Textiles and Their Metaphors in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 81–120; Jennifer M. Lee, “Beyond the *Locus Sanctus*: The Independent Iconography of Pilgrims’ Souvenirs,” *Visual Resources* 21, no. 4 (2005): 363–382.

20r *Mary and Christ*; fol. 24r *Mary enthroned with Christ Child*, two angels, one playing the flute, the other the lute; fol. 28r blank; **Hours of the Virgin**: fol. 29r *Annunciation*; fol. 38r *Visitation*; fol. 48r *Nativity*; fol. 53r *Annunciation to the shepherds*; fol. 57r *Adoration of the Magi*; fol. 61r *Presentation to the Temple*; fol. 65r *Flight into Egypt*; fol. 71r *Mary kneeling before God*; **The Seven Penitential Psalms and Litanies**: fol. 76r *David and Goliath*; **Hours of the Holy Cross**: fol. 92r *Christ before Pilate*; **Hours of the Holy Ghost**: fol. 95r *Pentecost*; **Vigils of the Dead**: fol. 97v *Incipiunt vigiliae mortuorum*; **Suffrages**: fol. 136r *Archangel St Michael*; fol. 136v *St Etienne*; fol. 137v *St Christopher*; fol. 138v *St Sebastian*; fols. 139r–140v were added; fol. 139r blank; fol. 139v *Christ bearing the cross*; fol. 140r–v *Jeremiah's prayer*; fol. 141v *St Denis*; fol. 142r *St Nicholas*; fol. 142v *St Anthony*; fol. 143v *St Catherine*; fol. 144r *St Mary Magdalene*; fol. 144v *St Genevieve*; fol. 145v *St Barbara*; fol. 146r *St Margarita*; **Prayers**: fols. 147r–156v; fol. 156v *Explicit: per dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Amen*. Folios C and D contain later Latin texts and a prayer on folio D (*Gratias ago tibi domino omnipotens deus qui me...*). 🐼