

2011

# The Leprous Christ and the Christ-Like Leper: the Leprous Body as an Intermediary to the Body of Christ in Late Medieval Art and Society

Jenna Noelle Ogden  
*Cleveland State University*

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THE LEPROUS CHRIST AND THE CHRIST-LIKE LEPER:  
THE LEPROUS BODY AS AN INTERMEDIARY TO THE BODY OF CHRIST IN  
LATE MEDIEVAL ART AND SOCIETY

JENNA OGDEN

Bachelor of Arts in Art History and English

Cleveland State University

May, 2009

submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

at the

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

May, 2011

This thesis has been approved  
for the Department of HISTORY  
and the College of Graduate Studies by

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Thesis Chairperson, Dr. Marian Bleeke

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Department & Date

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Dr. Kathy Curnow

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Department & Date

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Dr. Stella Singer

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Department & Date

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Dr. Laura Wertheimer

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Department & Date

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JENNA OGDEN

**ABSTRACT**

I will argue that the leprous body was an intermediary to the body of Christ in the minds of late medieval viewers. They could utilize this accessible body as a tool to cultivate a closer relationship with Christ. I will explore imagery of Christ and lepers created in England, Flanders, France, Germany, and Italy from 1300 through 1500 to demonstrate my argument. I will compare representations of the Flagellation of Christ and Christ as the Man of Sorrows to images of Christ healing lepers in order to show that the leprous body could be understood as a substitute for the body of the Crucified. The visual similarities of spots on the skin and bent fragmented bodies establish the conflation of these two body types. I argue that the leprous body was like the stigmaticized body because both used physical pain to facilitate a closer relationship with Christ. An analysis of images of the Stigmatization of Saint Francis and those of lepers will show that late medieval viewers could imagine reenacting the Crucifixion themselves to gain access to the body of Christ. In addition, I will analyze imagery of the Raising of Lazarus, the Deposition of Christ, and the Pieta in order to argue that late medieval viewers could reenact the Pieta with the leprous body as well to cultivate an intimate relationship with Christ based on compassion. As a result, I will demonstrate that lepers were essential members of the late medieval community as opposed to outcasts because

they offered a body onto which late medieval people could project their empathy for the Crucified on a daily basis.

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## CHAPTER I

### PREFACE

Draped in a black cloth with a black veil covering his face, a man stands in an open grave. A priest throws dirt on his head while declaring him dead. This man is a leper who has been shunned by society and declared legally dead. His living death is cemented by the loss of his right to own or inherit property and to make contracts.<sup>1</sup> According to the Third Lateran Council of 1179, he must now live outside of the main community in a *leprosarium*.<sup>2</sup>

France had the largest number of *leprosaria* with 2,000 by King Louis VIII's death in 1228.<sup>3</sup> Life in a leprosarium was similar to life in a monastery because both were isolated lifestyles patterned on a set of rules. The leprosarium in Lille, France, for example, had a set of rules, approved by the Bishop of Tournai in 1239, that specified its regulations: lepers were not allowed to leave the leprosarium without permission, they had to travel in pairs, and private conversations between men and women were prohibited. Also, unlike other leper houses, the leprosarium in Lille was located in the

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy S. Miller and Rachel Smith-Savage, "Medieval Leprosy Reconsidered," *International Social Science Review* 81/1 (2006): 24.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Zimmerman, "Leprosy in the Medieval Imaginary," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38/3 (Fall 2008): 560.

<sup>3</sup> Miller and Smith-Savage, 18.

city not isolated from it.<sup>4</sup> The Lille leprosarium shows that different degrees of isolation existed between lepers and the healthy laity.

Although lepers were predominantly isolated from the rest of the late medieval community, imagery of lepers could still be used to help late medieval people visualize closer relationships to Christ. Indeed, lepers offered late medieval people the opportunity to perform aspects of late medieval Christian religion in which they used visualization to develop their spirituality. On the one hand, saints and mystics may have physically touched the leprous body while caring for it in their attempts to imitate Christ, but on the other hand, the majority of late medieval people would have been exposed to it primarily through imagery.

For example, miniatures from manuscripts, like Books of Hours, were used in private prayer sessions, wherein late medieval people would meditate on Passion imagery to cultivate their spirituality. Since the focus of these images was the visualization of Christ's pain with gaping wounds and dripping blood, higher class people like saints and mystics would gravitate towards the method of pain to access Christ. On the other hand, the majority of the laity would more frequently be exposed to public imagery, like sculptures and altarpieces. Since it was popular to depict the pieta in sculpture, the laity was more likely to develop their spirituality through compassion instead of pain. Throughout my thesis, however, I intend to focus on manuscript miniatures to maintain consistency in the demonstration of my argument. I will argue that the leprous body was an intermediary to the body of Christ in the mind of late medieval viewers.<sup>5</sup> They could

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<sup>4</sup> Miller and Smith-Savage, 23.

<sup>5</sup> I chose to refer to "late medieval viewers" plural instead of "the late medieval viewer" singular because the plural acknowledges the variety of the audience with regards to class and gender, to name just a few demographics. Although the space of my thesis does not allow for a thorough investigation into the

utilize this accessible body with in imagery as a tool to cultivate a closer relationship with Christ.

I will explore imagery of Christ and lepers created in England, Flanders, France, Germany, and Italy from 1300 through 1500 to demonstrate my argument. First, I will compare images of Christ's Flagellation and Christ as the Man of Sorrows to those of Christ healing lepers in order to show that the leprous body could be understood as a substitute for the body of the Crucified. The visual similarities of spots on the skin and bent fragmented bodies establish the conflation of these two body types. In each of the next two chapters, an additional body type will be introduced to highlight the leprous body's function as an intermediary to Christ: the stigmaticized body in Chapter Five and the dead body in Chapter Six.

In Chapter Five, I argue that the leprous body was like the stigmaticized body because both used physical pain to facilitate a closer relationship with Christ. Lepers and holy stigmatics, like Saint Francis of Assisi, imitated Christ's Crucifixion through the pain of their wounds. An analysis of imagery of the Stigmatization of Saint Francis and that of lepers will show that late medieval viewers could imagine reenacting the Crucifixion themselves to gain access to the body of Christ. Thus, an investigation of the crucified body, the leprous body, and the stigmaticized body will reveal the significance of wounds which are visualized as spots on the surface of the skin with Christ's side wound being the most prominent of all of them.

The final iconographic chapter examines Christ's crucified body as a dead body, which will demonstrate that late medieval viewers imitated Christ's compassion to

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responses of different kinds of viewers to the imagery that will be discussed here, I will closely explore the reactions of medieval male monks and female mystics.

develop a closer relationship with him. I argue that late medieval viewers could reenact the Pieta with the leprous body as a way of cultivating an intimate relationship with Christ. An analysis of imagery of the Raising of Lazarus, the Deposition of Christ, and the Pieta will demonstrate the similarities between the Crucified body, the leprous body, and the dead body. By recreating the pieta in their daily lives with the leprous body, late medieval people could heighten their spirituality. As a result, I will demonstrate that lepers were essential members of the late medieval community as opposed to outcasts because they offered a body onto which late medieval people could project their empathy for the Crucified on a daily basis.

## CHAPTER II

### INTRODUCTION

The *Calvary* scene by the “Master of the Munich Domkreuzigung” (Figure 1, mid-fifteenth century Upper Bavaria) presents the late medieval audience with three bodies in pain: that of Christ, the Good Thief, and the Bad Thief. The Good Thief on Christ’s right faces him, but the Bad Thief who is covered in painful welts turns away from Christ while curling his body over the cross. Art historian Mitchell B. Merback argues that the Good Thief was understood as a double for Christ because the criminal’s suffering was familiar to the late medieval audience. In addition to the Good Thief, late medieval people sought many stand-ins for Christ in order to perform their devotion to him through another accessible body.

The sores that cover the Bad Thief’s body are evocative of the leprous body which could function as another accessible, familiar, and immediate substitute for Christ to the late medieval audience. Today, viewers would most likely understand these spots as wounds inflicted on him during his torture, but late medieval viewers would have had an additional layer of understanding. In medieval imagery, spots on the body were a common convention to identify people as lepers.

In a wooden sculpture of the *Pieta* produced in Flanders (Figure 2, 1400-1410) Christ's body has taken on the spots of the leprous body. Such sculptures allowed late medieval viewers to interact with the scene and thus feel as if they were present at the base of the Cross. In this example, the Virgin Mary's body is wrapped in a blue robe with a red interior and her head is draped in a light blue veil. As she affectionately gazes down at her dead son's body, she supports him with one arm behind his neck and the other holding his hands. Since Christ's body is displayed with leprous spots, late medieval viewers would conflate his body with the familiar leprous body. As the body gained new religious significance in the late Middle Ages, the leprous body became an accessible substitute for Christ.

Although late medieval people were repulsed by the smell and appearance of the leprous body, they were drawn to it as well. The fear of contagion caused late medieval people to separate themselves from lepers, but the lure of the physical suffering that lepers endured daily attracted them to the leprous body at the same time. In the late Middle Ages, the body became the intermediary through which the individual related to Christ because both experienced physical suffering.<sup>6</sup> Physical pain, whether inflicted on the body voluntarily or imposed on the body through illness or mysticism, was welcomed by late medieval people as a method of reenacting Christ's Passion and hence cultivating a more intimate relationship with him.

While meditating on miniatures or sculptures of the crucified Christ, like the altarpiece of the Crucifixion called the *Crucifixus dolorosus* (Figure 3, *Plage Cross*, 1304 Cologne), late medieval viewers were attracted to the wounds on his body which testify

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<sup>6</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 184.

to the pain he suffered during his Passion. Viewers would have imagined this pain being inflicted on their own bodies in a mental exercise to identify with Christ and thus build a closer relationship with him. In the *Crucifixus dolorosus*, Christ's gaunt body is stretched on the Cross with his arms extended and raised above his head. His head droops to his right, telling viewers that his is a dead body. His wounds and the blood gushing from them are represented as spots on his arms, legs, and torso. As a replica of the crucified body, the leprous body would have been available to late medieval viewers as an alternative to the Crucified's body on which they could project and perform their feelings of empathy, sympathy, and devotion.

My argument that the leprous body was an intermediary to the body of Christ for late medieval viewers builds on the argument Merback presents in *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*. Merback argues that the criminals with which Christ was crucified were understood as "pseudo-martyr" or "Christ-like" figures. Late medieval viewers could imitate the good thief and repent their sins, or be like the bad thief and refuse to repent. If they repented, viewers could become Christ-like as well by visualizing joining the criminal on the Cross.<sup>7</sup>

My thesis expands on Merback's argument by proposing that late medieval viewers imagined the leprous body as a Christ-like double through which they could gain physical and spiritual access to Christ. Therefore, I intend to challenge the assumption that lepers were isolated from late medieval communities through the pronouncement of their deaths and their confinement to *leprosaria*. Instead, they needed to be visible

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<sup>7</sup> Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 19-20.

members of the community whom late medieval people could access in their devotion to Christ. Late medieval people had two alternatives for using the leprous body to build a closer relationship with Christ: the first was physical suffering, and the other was compassion.

According to Merback, seeking physical pain was an extreme imitation of Christ. Instead, most late medieval people cultivated an attitude of humility and sympathy towards Christ's physical suffering. These two options were modeled by Saint Francis of Assisi who became Christ-like through his stigmatization, and the Virgin Mary who imitated her son with her compassion.<sup>8</sup> The origin of organization of the iconographic chapters in my thesis resides in Merback's statement regarding Saint Francis and the Virgin Mary, but I will begin with a visual comparison of the similarities of Christ's crucified body to that of the leprous body. This chapter establishes the special relationship between Christ and the leper, which helped late medieval people accept the leprous body as a substitute for the Crucified's body.

The next two iconographic chapters focus on the role of Saint Francis and the Virgin Mary as models for late medieval viewers to follow in their relationship with Christ and lepers. I will investigate the significance of the wounds to late medieval clerics and mystics through an in-depth analysis of imagery of the Crucifixion and the Stigmatization of Saint Francis. Spots on the skin symbolize the physical pain Christ suffered during his Passion: a small group of late medieval clerics and mystics wanted to imitate his physical suffering. I chose imagery of the Crucifixion and the Stigmatization of Saint Francis to demonstrate my thesis because the focus of these images is the vast physical suffering of the body. The last iconographic chapter examines how late

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<sup>8</sup> Merback, 151.

medieval viewers could interact with lepers in order to express compassion. I chose imagery of the Deposition of Christ and the Pieta because late medieval viewers could reenact these moments with the leprous body to build a closer relationship with Christ. The Virgin Mary's compassionate reaction to Christ's death is the hub of my analysis in this part. Interacting with the leprous body allowed late medieval viewers to reenact the stigmatization of Saint Francis as well as the pieta of the Virgin Mary in order to become more Christ-like themselves.

### CHAPTER III

#### STATE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

Since the early 1980s, historian Carolyn Walker Bynum has immeasurably influenced medieval studies with her investigation into the significance of the body in medieval Christian religion. In *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, Bynum argues that spirituality was expressed through the body in late medieval society.<sup>9</sup> According to Bynum, late medieval people manipulated their bodies through such methods as self-flagellation, fasting, and nosebleeds, for religious purposes.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, Bynum demonstrates that the body remained significant even after death in medieval society. For example, the lack of bodily decay after death became a sign of holiness because it mimicked the bodies of Christ and the Virgin Mary who ascended to Heaven with their bodies intact directly after their deaths.<sup>11</sup> Although the absence of physical deterioration after death indicated holiness, holy persons sought to suffer physically during life to get closer to Christ. The body needed to be human and

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<sup>9</sup> Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 183.

<sup>10</sup> Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 184.

<sup>11</sup> Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 187.

life-like even after death in order to legitimize the theological basis of creation and incarnation.<sup>12</sup>

The centrality of the body to orthodox Christian religion was based on humankind's creation in the likeness of God and the incarnation which is the guarantee of humankind's connection to God through the humanity of Christ.<sup>13</sup> In *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Bynum shows that Christ was compared to a mother in the writings of Cistercian monks, such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Aelred of Rievaulx, which expressed the new trend of affective piety in late medieval society. It aimed to make God more accessible to late medieval people.<sup>14</sup>

According to Bynum, the Virgin Mary could function as an intermediary to Christ because they shared maternal traits. For example, Mary suffered physical pain during the birth of her son, just like Christ suffered physically during the Passion for the salvation of humankind. Also, both were nurturers, Mary fed her son with her breast milk, as Christ spiritually fed humanity with the water and blood from his side wound during the Crucifixion. In fact, Mary's breast milk was understood as the equivalent of the blood from Christ's side wound. Furthermore, maternal love, like divine love, was considered unconditional and perpetual.<sup>15</sup> In regards to my thesis, Bynum's *Jesus as Mother* was influential because she suggests that any mother could function as an intermediary to Christ through her love and sacrifice for her child. Thus, ordinary mothers could reenact the Virgin Mary's relationship with Christ in order to develop their spirituality.

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<sup>12</sup> Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 294.

<sup>13</sup> Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982), 130.

<sup>14</sup> Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 129.

<sup>15</sup> Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 131-132.

Fifteen years later, the art historian Mitchell B. Merback was clearly influenced by Bynum's argument in his search for accessible, familiar alternatives to the body of Christ that late medieval people could utilize in their personal devotion. In *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, Merback argues that the good thief became Christ-like by imitating Christ's physical suffering on the Cross. According to Merback, public executions offered late medieval viewers the opportunity to project their devotion to Christ onto the body of the executed criminal. Thus, publicly executed criminals, like the lepers of my argument, could act as intermediaries to Christ for late medieval viewers.<sup>16</sup> They were familiar with public executions and so used them as a framework for their understanding of Calvary imagery.<sup>17</sup>

According to Merback, executions by the wheel were the second most common kind of execution after hanging. Although this type of execution had many variations, the basic aspects were that the criminal's arms and legs were broken, attached to a wheel, and displayed in a public place until death.<sup>18</sup> Merback points out the similarities between execution by the wheel and crucifixion in order to prove that late medieval viewers could conflate the two and thus identify the criminal with Christ. For example, both death by the wheel and crucifixion were shameful ways to die because they were historically associated with lower class people and slaves.<sup>19</sup> Also, they were social disgraces because the criminals were denied the freedom to move their limbs and the dead were not given

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<sup>16</sup> Merback, 19-20.

<sup>17</sup> Merback, 32.

<sup>18</sup> Merback, 158.

<sup>19</sup> Merback, 201.

proper burials.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, the two types of execution were alike because the methods of performing them offered the executioner a great deal of variation. Saint Peter, for instance, was crucified with his head down because he did not believe he was worthy to die like Christ.<sup>21</sup> Lastly, both death by the wheel and the crucifix prolonged the physical suffering of the criminal through their exposure to the natural elements. Merback's argument that the public executions of criminals allowed them to become Christ-like is significant because it was a point of departure for my own search for a Christ-like double in the leprous body.

Historian Carolyn Muessig proposed that the public performance of Passion plays allowed the actors, like the good thief, to become doubles for Christ. In her essay "Performance of the Passion: the Enactment of Devotion in the Later Middle Ages," Muessig explores the quality of performance in late medieval Christian religion. She argues that stigmatization, like Passion plays, was a kind of public performance. She defines performance as the enactment of a ritual or an action that is repeated based on certain guidelines.<sup>22</sup> Passion plays that told the story of Christ's death were particularly useful in teaching the audience of God's love for humanity through the evocation of their emotions. At a play, the audience experienced the Passion as if they were witnesses at the events, and thus had an immediate and strong emotional reaction to them.<sup>23</sup>

Like Passion plays, holy stigmatics could act out the Crucifixion for their community every day. A beguine named Gertrude van der Oosten, for example, received

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<sup>20</sup> Merback, 214.

<sup>21</sup> Merback, 208.

<sup>22</sup> Carolyn Muessig, "Performance of the Passion: the Enactment of Devotion in the Later Middle Ages," in *Visualizing Medieval Performance: Perspectives, Histories, Contexts*, ed. Elina Gertsman (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 129.

<sup>23</sup> Muessig, 129.

the stigmata in 1340 and bled seven times a day to mark the canonical hours. Her fear of pride and that the community would disrupt her mediation caused her to pray that the stigmata would be taken away. God answered her prayers when she ceased to bleed from the marks on her hands and feet, but she later regretted the elimination of her stigmata. She realized that the community needed to see her stigmata in order to strengthen their faith and connect them to God.<sup>24</sup> Muessig's argument demonstrates the search for immediate substitutes to the body of Christ in the form of actors in Passion plays and holy stigmatics. Also, it shows that late medieval people sought to reenact the narrative of the Passion in order to gain a better understanding of Christ and become closer to him. Thus, I will demonstrate that lepers, like Passion plays and stigmatics, were significant instruments in the reenactment of both Christ's Crucifixion and the Virgin Mary's Pieta.

Late medieval people visualized performing these key biblical moments with the leprous body. In *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation*, art historian Paul Binski elaborates on the process of visualization late medieval people practiced in order to develop their spirituality. Binski argues that the body of Christ could be broken down during the Passion and rebuilt during his Resurrection in the imagination of late medieval viewers. Passion imagery, such as the *Arma Christi* and the Man of Sorrows, was "a kind of internalized pilgrimage of the mind" which offered late medieval people an alternative to the expensive and arduous journeys of pilgrimage to visit sacred relics.<sup>25</sup> Binski's argument that Passion imagery could be used to facilitate devotional imaginings was instrumental in the development of my thesis because it allowed me to think of the

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<sup>24</sup> Muessig, 133.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), 125.

leprous body as a kind of immediate and accessible living relic. Hence, the leprous body could function like a relic does as an intermediary to Christ.

Furthermore, exercises in devotional imagining helped late medieval people hope for resurrection. In *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England*, historian Christine Peters argues that the cult of the Five Wounds of Christ and devotion to the *Arma Christi* allowed late medieval people to distance themselves from Christ despite the fact that their devotion was Christocentric.<sup>26</sup> Peters maintains that the spiritual significance of the wounds of Christ was only understood by a select group of late medieval mystics. They conceptualized the five wounds as entrances to the body of Christ and therefore, as a method of achieving unity with him. On the other hand, the majority of society understood Christ's wounds as "marks of human failure and of divine assistance."<sup>27</sup> The wounds of Christ's body showed that humankind failed to recognize Christ's divinity on earth, but they also acknowledged the sacrifice Christ made for humanity's salvation and future resurrection. Peters' argument helped me develop an alternative method of reaching Christ through the hope of resurrection instead of physical pain.

I will expand on the work of the scholars I have singled out here by offering the leprous body as an intermediary to the body of Christ, like the Virgin Mary, the good thief, relics, the *Arma Christi*, and wounds. Bynum has firmly established that the body was used by late medieval people as a tool to further their religious purposes. In addition to Bynum, Merback, and Binski have examined the relationship between Christ and other types of bodies, such as the criminal's body and the saint's body, but these scholars have

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<sup>26</sup> Christine Peters, *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 87.

<sup>27</sup> Peters, 88-89.

neglected the spiritual potential of the leprous body. Therefore, I will examine late medieval peoples' use of the leprous body in visual exercises that developed their relationship to Christ. In doing so, I will challenge the assumption that lepers were shunned in late medieval society. Although they may have been physically isolated in special communities, they were key members of the mental imaginings of late medieval people who sought a more intense relationship with Christ.

## CHAPTER IV

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Leprosy can act as a frame for late medieval people's understanding of imagery of Christ because the late Middle Ages experienced a dramatic increase of those affected by the disease.<sup>28</sup> Leprosy was the equivalent of social death in the late Middle Ages: when a person was declared a leper, his property was taken from him, his marriage was dissolved, and he endured a religious process that declared him legally dead.<sup>29</sup> The Third Lateran Council of 1179 restricted lepers to special houses called *leprosaria* outside the city walls. Paris, for example, had forty-five *leprosaria* by 1220 and Europe had thousands.<sup>30</sup> Although lepers were technically banished, they came into the city to go to the market. They had to wear special clothes and carry a bell or clapper to warn others that they were near. Also, lepers begged in the city because they were not permitted to work. Lepers could not work because late medieval people feared contagion.

Although late medieval people feared contracting leprosy, modern knowledge shows their fears were misplaced. Today, leprosy is understood as a chronic bacterial

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<sup>28</sup> Miller and Smith-Savage, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Lewis Allen, "To Live Outside the Camp: Medieval Leprosy," in *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease, Past and Present*, ed. Peter Lewis Allen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 28-37.

<sup>30</sup> Miller and Smith-Savage, 17.

infection of the skin. Although it is contagious, most people have a natural immunity to the disease.<sup>31</sup> It causes skin lesions, thickened skin, eyebrow loss, sterility, and blindness. The early stages of the disease could be confused with other conditions such as vitiligo, chronic psoriasis, eczema, scabies, herpes, and syphilis. Leprosy can appear in various forms, but the most severe cases result in facial disfiguration. In the final stages, the upper jaw and nose collapse into the face, the limbs become deformed, and fingers and toes rot away.<sup>32</sup> Since their flesh disintegrates and rots, lepers were associated with putrefying corpses in the late Middle Ages.

Despite leprosy being understood today as an airborne disease, medieval people tended to explain the onset of leprosy through illicit sexual encounters. Sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman was the most commonly provided explanation for the contraction of leprosy.<sup>33</sup> This highlights the fact that leprosy was a disease associated with internal sin. The possession of a malignant soul caused a person to act on unhealthy sexual desires and thus contract leprosy. The notion that illicit sexuality caused leprosy emphasizes the gendered construction of the disease. Leprosy was visible on male bodies, but caused by female bodies. Many believed that women were immune to leprosy because menstrual blood, which was perceived as a type of poison, increased their immunity to all diseases.<sup>34</sup>

According to historians Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset's *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, leprosy may have been more prevalent in men because women were confined to the home, the incubation period for women may have been

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<sup>31</sup> Miller and Smith-Savage, 17.

<sup>32</sup> Elinor Lieber, "Old Testament 'Leprosy': Contagion and Sin," in *Contagion: Perspectives from Pre-Modern Societies*, eds. Lawrence I. Conrad and Dominik Wujastyk (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 101-102.

<sup>33</sup> Zimmerman, 563-565.

<sup>34</sup> Zimmerman, 564.

longer, and the first signs of leprosy could be hidden by female genitalia. Also, they suggest that prostitutes would not benefit from advertising the signs of disease on their bodies: they would need to cover skin lesions and other blemishes to work every day.<sup>35</sup> By and large, imagery of lepers depicts nude men, which suggests the exposure and vulnerability of the male body to the prostitute who disguises her leprous condition. The nudity of the leprous body allowed late medieval viewers to identify with it because of the exposure of all bodies to external threats, like the leprous prostitute, and internal attacks, such as a corrupt soul.

Furthermore, theological explanations for leprosy stressed that external disease mirrored an internal sinful soul. For example, in the early fifteenth century, the Franciscan reformer Colette of Corbie experienced a vision while praying to the Virgin Mary: she saw a dish filled with severed pieces of flesh while the voice of God told her that human sin transformed Christ's whole body into pieces.<sup>36</sup> Her vision of Christ's fragmented flesh highlights the significance of the body in late medieval Christian religion. The body was interpreted as a repository for the soul that visualized the soul's level of sin. In Colette's vision, God implies that Christ willingly allowed the sinfulness of humanity to appear on his body in the form of bloody wounds in order to save humankind. Christ's body was vulnerable to wounds inflicted on it by outside forces, such as his executioners, but the leprous body visualized individual internal sin. Thus, in order to redeem themselves, lepers could reenact Christ's suffering by offering their bodies to the late medieval imagination as an accessible space on which they could project their own sin.

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<sup>35</sup> Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 186-189.

<sup>36</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 181.

One story from the Old Testament tells of Miriam, Moses' sister, who was punished with leprosy because she questioned her brother's choice of a wife and thus his authority as God's intermediary. Her sin of disobedience is expressed on her body with leprosy spots in a miniature from a fourteenth century English Psalter (Figure 4, *Miriam Struck with Leprosy*). The leprosy sores on her body are covered by the dress and veil she wears, but they appear on her face and hands to mark her as a leper. Two monstrous creatures with beaks, tails, and webbed feet surround the miniature; they seem to be visual embodiments of Miriam's disobedience because dragons were associated with evil and sin. The monster under the miniature has white spots along the bottom edge of his body which resemble the dark leprosy sores covering Miriam's face and hands. Its head curves backwards as its mouth opens and presses against the circular border of the scene with Miriam as if trying to consume her. The juxtaposition of the altarpiece to which Miriam prays with the dragon shows that Miriam, like other lepers, had two choices: she could pray to God, repent her sin, and be forgiven or be overwhelmed by sin and go to Hell.

Miriam shows the conventional way of representing lepers with spots on their skin, but she is also a notable exception to the conventional imagery of nude male lepers because she is a fully clothed woman.<sup>37</sup> Although Miriam is an exception, she is still shown with spots on her face. The spots literally mark the leprosy body as different or special. Elinor Lieber suggests that Miriam had an attack of chronic psoriasis, not

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<sup>37</sup> Although gender and sexuality framed the late medieval understanding of leprosy, I will not address these issues in my thesis. According to Carolyn Walker Bynum, imagery of the Passion is less about sexuality and more about spirituality: "Medieval images of the body have less to do with sexuality than with fertility and decay. Control, discipline, even torture of the flesh is, in Medieval devotion, not so much the rejection of physicality as the elevation of it – a horrible yet delicious elevation – into a means of access to the divine ." (Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 182) Therefore, I have chosen to focus on the use of the body as a pathway to the divine, instead of the framework of gender and/or sexuality.

leprosy, because she was permitted to return to camp after a week of exclusion.<sup>38</sup> The priest named Aaron reacted to Miriam's punishment by saying, "Let her not become as a dead thing, as one that comes out from the womb of its mother and its flesh is half eaten away."<sup>39</sup> Aaron's reaction is significant because it compares leprosy to death and to a kind of birth defect. Parents who took part in illicit sexual behavior could be punished with leprous children.<sup>40</sup> Miriam was not afflicted with leprosy at birth, but the inclusion of the allusion here reinforces the association of leprosy with sex, decay, and death.

On the other hand, in the New Testament, Christ has a special interest in curing lepers. The miniature from William of Nottingham's *Commentary on the Gospels* (Figure 5, late fourteenth century England) illustrates the special relationship lepers had with Christ, who heals them here. William of Nottingham's miniature is a typical image of lepers, which I will refer to frequently throughout this thesis, because of the nudity and spots covering their bodies. Their nudity contrasts with the completely clothed figures of Christ and the Apostle, which creates opposition between the two groups. Christ and the Apostle stand upright, but the bodies of the lepers are bent in an awkward position between sitting and standing. Another oddity in the depiction of the leprous bodies is the absence of the legs and left arm on the leper in the background. The absence of limbs may be an extreme illustration of the decay and fragmentation of the leprous body.

As we have seen in the last two images, spots were a well established convention to show leprous bodies, but Christ's crucified body transformed from an unblemished body in the early Middle Ages to one littered with sores, bruises and wounds which are visualized as spots in the late Middle Ages. For example, the *Crucifixion* from the

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<sup>38</sup> Leiber, 108.

<sup>39</sup> Leiber, 109.

<sup>40</sup> Zimmerman, 563-564.

Lorsch Sacramentary (Figure 6, 990 France) shows Christ who has a large golden halo on the Cross which is edged with gold. The halo and the golden Cross indicate that Christ's divinity, not his humanity, was emphasized in the early medieval images of the Crucifixion. This conclusion is reinforced by the absence of nails driven into his hands, a gash in his side, and blood gushing from his flesh. Instead, Christ's skin is flawless and unbroken. Although there is rarely any indication of Christ's physical suffering in early medieval Crucifixion imagery such as this one, an interest in visualizing Christ's physical pain developed in the later Middle Ages.

A miniature of the *Crucifixion* from the Psalter of Robert, Baron of Lisle, (Figure 7, 1339 England), for instance, shows the interest in the pain and agony Christ experienced on the Cross that developed in the later Middle Ages. Christ's head dramatically droops to his right to rest on his shoulder as a sign of his exhaustion. Also, his body hangs on the Cross with a large crescent shaped space between his arms and shoulders and the Cross. On the other hand, in the image from the Lorsch Sacramentary Christ's arms extend evenly with the Cross which does not convey the sense that the weight of his body pulls him towards the ground. In the Psalter, Christ's torso curves inward both to express his pain and draw attention to the wound on his side. His body bends at the knees as well, while his right foot twists over his left with a nail driven into them. Furthermore, streams of blood flow from his side wound and from the wounds in his feet showing the pain he suffers.

Christ's body has completely transformed into a broken, bloody body in Lucas Cranach's *Crucifixion* (Figure 8, 1500 Germany) in which the blood surging from his wounds covers his entire body. Like the miniature from the Psalter of the Baron of Lisle,

the weight of Christ's body pulls it down to hang from the Cross. Also, his bent knees lead viewers' eyes down to his feet which are pierced with a nail in each. His side wound and the wounds in his hands and feet cause blood to stream down his body in large rivulets to descend the Cross. In addition to the increased amount of blood, Cranach's *Crucifixion* shows an increase in the number of bruises and sores on Christ's flesh: he is covered in spots of blood, bruises, and open wounds. Likewise, the lepers in William of Nottingham's miniature are shown with spots on their skin. The similarities of spotty skin and bent bodies in the imagery of lepers and of the Crucifixion illustrates that late medieval artists deliberately began to utilize the familiar physical suffering of the leprous body in their depictions of Christ on the Cross. Therefore, the profusion of lepers in late medieval society allowed late medieval people to understand the leprous body as an intermediary to Christ.

## CHAPTER V

### THE LEPROUS CHRIST, THE CHRIST-LIKE LEPER

In a woodcut by Israhel van MacKenem, the Cross has been overturned and Christ sits upon it with his face downcast in sorrow (Figure 9, *A Woodcut of Christ as the Man of Sorrows*, late fifteenth century the Netherlands). A large mass of thorns tops his head as he contemplates the Passion that led to his death in this version of the Man of Sorrows. Although a hammer is included among the *Arma Christi* or tools of the Passion, which are here placed at Christ's feet, his hands are bound with rope and held at his chest. Another oddity in this woodcut is the absence of the Five Wounds of Christ, which are the wounds in his hands and feet that were created by the nails that attached him to the Cross and the side wound that was inflicted on his body by Longinus at the Crucifixion. Instead, Christ's body is consistently covered with dark bruises or lesions.

How can viewers understand the spots covering Christ's body in this Man of Sorrows? How would late medieval viewers have perceived these spots, which otherwise appear on Christ's body, dripping blood to indicate his physical suffering? I propose that the Man of Sorrows of Figure Nine presents Christ as a leper with his body covered in

leprous sores. Hence, the body of Christ and the leprous body have become one in this image in which the leprous Christ has been crucified.

Christ's special relationship with lepers reinforces this argument. During his lifetime, one of Christ's miracles was the healing of lepers, which is shown in a miniature from William of Nottingham's *Commentary on the Gospels* (Figure 5, late fourteenth century England). Christ raises his right hand to bless the leper and heal him of his ailment. The leper mimics Christ's hand gesture and lifts his right hand toward Christ. Their raised hands hover in the center of the image with the tips of their fingers brushing one another. This slight physical contact heals the lepers of their disease. If we return to the leper in the foreground of Figure Five and compare him to the body of Christ in Figure Nine, we notice that their bodies are bent to the right at the knees and their right hands are raised. Furthermore, both bodies are covered in spots. Since spots were a convention used to identify lepers, we can assume that the image of the pieta in Figure Nine deliberately conflates imagery of Christ with that of lepers.

In addition to spots, the fragmented body of the leper in a miniature produced in Venice, Italy (Figure 10, mid-fourteenth century) reinforces the special relationship lepers had with Christ. Like the image by William of Nottingham, the Venetian miniature depicts Christ healing a leper. The convention of spots again identifies the man in the Venetian miniature as a leper. Like the lepers of Figure Five, this leper has a fragmented body because his left foot has been excluded from the illumination. This physical fragmentation heightens the conveyance of the leper's suffering because, in the most severe cases of leprosy, he may lose limbs and digits.

An analysis of images from Western Europe, produced in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, of the Flagellation and the Man of Sorrows will demonstrate the conflation of imagery of lepers with that of the Crucified Christ. I will argue that the leprous body could be understood as an accessible substitute for the body of Christ to which late medieval people could direct their devotional empathy. I will use the visual similarities of skin with spots and bent, fragmented bodies to demonstrate the connection between lepers and Christ. I will show that lepers were integral members of the community instead of ostracized outcasts whom late medieval people relied on as an intermediary through which they could interact with Christ.

Medieval viewers understood the leprous body as an intermediary to the body of Christ because lepers were like Christ through their physical suffering. Christ accepted the mutilation of his body during the Passion in order to absolve mankind of sin.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, lepers had a unique opportunity through their chronic illness to daily reenact Christ's suffering. Thus, they were perceived as Christ-like figures and objects of piety. By patiently enduring and accepting their pain, lepers could ultimately reside in Heaven with God.<sup>42</sup> Also, Christ offered lepers a hopeful model for the repair of their fragmented bodies. Like Christ, lepers could anticipate the reconfiguration of their bloodied, severed bodies in the form of the resurrection body in the afterlife.

The similarities between Christ and lepers are highlighted in an opening from a Book of Hours that juxtaposes the *Baptism of Christ* with the *Cleansing of Naaman* (Figures 11 and 12, 1500 Flanders). The *Baptism of Christ* occupies the miniature on the right side of the opening. Here, Christ stands in the river Jordan with his knees slightly

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<sup>41</sup> Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993), 23.

<sup>42</sup> Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2006), 56-59.

bent and turned to his right side. His hands are clasped in prayer while John the Baptist raises his right hand to bless him by pouring water over his head. An angel witnesses the event as he waits to cover Christ's semi-nude body with his blue robe. Also, the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers above Christ's head, paying witness to the event. Christ's posture and attire are imitated by Naaman in the miniature of the left side of the opening in which he cleanses his body of leprosy.

The visual similarities between Christ and Naaman allowed late medieval viewers to perceive curing leprosy as a religious action which was particularly Christ-like. The image illustrates a biblical story in which the Prophet Elijah tells Naaman to wash in the river Jordan to cure his leprosy. Like Christ, the biblical leper Naaman stands with a nude torso and legs knee-deep in the river Jordan. While Christ's body is smooth and unblemished, however, Naaman's body is covered in leprous sores that are visualized as spots on his flesh. He raises his right arm to his left shoulder as he tries to wash his body free of the disease.

A second miniature of *Naaman Washing in the river Jordan* from a copy of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Figure 13, 1460-1470 Flanders) also clearly parallels the Baptism of Christ in Figure Eleven. While the bodies of Christ and Naaman differ, they are both surrounded by holy figures: John the Baptist stands to Christ's right where he raises his right arm in blessing and the Prophet Elijah on Naaman's right side points his right hand as if he is instructing Naaman. Also, God's presence is depicted in the corona ensconced dove of the Holy Spirit in the Baptism and by God the Father in a ring of clouds in the cleansing scene. The similarities of the three images suggest that lepers were perceived as Christ-like. Leprosy helped certain people cultivate a closer

relationship with Christ through the imitation of his life, like the Baptism, and his suffering through physical wounds.

Like Naaman, the miniature of the *Flagellation of Christ* from the *Luttrell Psalter* (Figure 14, fourteenth century England) shows Christ's body covered with sores during the Flagellation. The small dots represent wounds which recall leprous sores. In addition to the spots on the skin, the lepers of Figure Five are similar to this image of Christ in their bent body positions. The leper in the front of Figure Five has his legs bent as if he is sitting on the ground or awkwardly crouching over. Likewise, Christ in Figure Fourteen has his legs contorted in an odd position; while his right knee bends behind the pole, his left knee protrudes past the pole in the image.

Furthermore, the image of the *Flagellation of Christ* from the *Holkham Bible* (Figure 15, 1325-1330 England) also shows Christ with spots and a bent and contorted body, like the lepers in Figure Five. In this image, Christ is tied to a tree trunk while his torturers whip him. The tree trunk is shorter than Christ which causes him to bend awkwardly in order to receive the blows. His back forms a diagonal line declining to the left where his right leg bends slightly forming a diagonal line declining to the right. Christ's left leg is in the midst of a deeper bend than his right leg. Both the lepers of Figure Five and Christ in Figures Fourteen and Fifteen bend their bodies in awkward positions which suggest their physical pain. Their similar bent body positions reinforce the relationship between Christ and the lepers.

The tools of the Flagellation became objects of piety along with other objects associated with Christ's Passion in the later Middle Ages. The term *Arma Christi* refers to the instruments used during Christ's Passion, such as the lance, crown of thorns, whip,

and nails.<sup>43</sup> The *Arma Christi* from the Hours of the Maréchal de Boucicaut (Figure 16, Paris, France) display objects from Christ's Passion for the perusal of late medieval viewers who could meditate on the part of the narrative each object recalled. The flagellation pole, for example, is flanked by two whips which would encourage viewers to contemplate the pain inflicted on Christ's body during his torture. The absence of Christ's body allows viewers to imagine the whips lashing their own bodies which would heighten their sympathy for Christ's suffering. Likewise, viewers could imagine the hammer driving the nails deep into their own flesh and the lance piercing their side. The result of the lance's work appears at the bottom of the collection of objects in the form of a large side wound.

As the narrative of the Passion has been broken down into a series of objects, so too has Christ's body been reduced to its most fundamental component, the side wound. It represents the whole of Christ's body. An image of the *Arma Christi* created in 1320 in Paris (Figure 17) clearly demonstrates how the side wound was understood as a substitute for the whole of Christ's body. An image of the Crucifixion complete with Christ on the Cross and a collapsing Virgin Mary appears on the top panel of the image, but the body of Christ has been replaced by a large vertical elliptical shape directly below it. The pointy oval which represents the side wound stands-in for the body of Christ. The bottom panel of Figure Seventeen shows two penitents praying before the flagellation pole. Hence *Arma Christi* images encouraged viewers to ponder Christ's body as a broken, fragmented, and wounded body. The *Arma Christi* provides distance between the body of Christ and viewers by eliminating his whole body and thus making viewers more

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<sup>43</sup>Kathleen Kamerick, *Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages: Image Worship and Idolatry in England 1350-1500* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 159.

aware of the potential their own bodies hold to experience pain: late medieval viewers could imagine the effect the tools of the Crucifixion would have on their own bodies instead of that of Christ.

In addition to the *Arma Christi*, images of the wounded body of Christ facilitated late medieval viewers' sympathy for his suffering. The effects of Christ's torture during the Flagellation can be seen in imagery of Christ as the Man of Sorrows. The Man of Sorrows is an image which shows an exhausted Christ covered in bloody wounds.<sup>44</sup> He displays his wounds to viewers who he meets with a confrontational stance.<sup>45</sup> This fosters an intimate relationship between viewers and Christ. It encourages viewers to meditate on Christ's pain and identify with him through it.<sup>46</sup> Thus, physical pain allows Christ to be accessible to the late medieval audience. Since late medieval people were encouraged to nourish their relationship with Christ by identifying with his physical suffering, the leprous body also could offer them a mechanism through which to enact their empathy.

A woodcut which depicts Christ as the Man of Sorrows from a copy of the *Illustrated Bartsch* (Figure 18, fifteenth century Germany) shows a bloody Christ who holds two whips in his crossed arms. Like the images of the Flagellation and those of lepers, Christ's body is covered in spots to represent the dripping blood and wounds inflicted on his flesh during the Flagellation. His eyes are downcast as well in an expression of pain and sadness that shows the viewer how to react to this image.

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<sup>44</sup> Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 308.

<sup>45</sup> Kamerick, 159.

<sup>46</sup> Kamerick, 159.

A significant addition to Figure Eighteen is the church in the right background corner of the image. The proximity of the church building to the suffering Christ suggests that devotion to Christ's physical suffering was an integral element in late Medieval Christian theology. Furthermore, the relationship between Christ's bleeding body and the church indicates that the relationship between Christ and the body of Christian believers is based on his physical suffering as well. Figure Eighteen shows that physical suffering was a significant part of late Medieval Christian spirituality. Therefore, the suffering leprous body could act as an immediate space onto which late medieval people could project their identification with Christ.

The role of lepers as intermediaries between late medieval people and Christ is strengthened by the visual similarities between Figures Five, Thirteen, and an image of the Man of Sorrows that is currently in the Chicago Art Institute (Figure 19). In Figure Nineteen, Christ raises his arms to display the wounds on his hands. The spots on Christ's torso represent drops of blood flowing from the wounds in Christ's palms and circular wounds from the Flagellation. Blood also flows from the wounds on his torso and the crown of thorns on his head to create spots. The lepers of Figures Five and Thirteen also have spots on their skin which visualize their physical suffering. Like the second leper in Figure Five and Naaman in Figure Thirteen, Christ is reduced to a torso in this image, which fragments his body. The visual similarities of bloody spots covering their flesh and fragmented bodies which are limited to torsos would have encouraged late medieval viewers to relate to the accessible and three-dimensional leprous body as a legitimate proxy for Christ.

Like Figure Nineteen, the body of Christ is fragmented by a contract held before his legs in the *Charter of Christ* (Figure 20, fifteenth century England). The *Charter of Christ* uses a legal contract as a metaphor for the promise that Christ's suffering during the Passion will ensure the redemption of humanity. Christ displays the contract in front of his body which, in a sense, makes the contract and Christ's promise of redemption and resurrection to humanity become part of his body. His blood is used to write the contract and his wounds are the language through which it can be understood.<sup>47</sup> Also, Christ displays the wounds on his hands and feet, which are still punctured by nails, to the viewer. The wounds on his body are represented as spots as in the images of the Flagellation and the lepers of Figure Five and Figures Ten through Thirteen. In particular, the gaping gash of Christ's side stands out because it is larger than the other wounds, has an oblong shape, and drips blood onto the contract as do his hands.

While the side wound allowed late medieval viewers to ponder the pain of the Passion being dealt to their own bodies, it also held the promise of salvation through the shedding of Christ's blood. A woodcut created in 1490 (Figure 21) presents the fragmented body of Christ as if it is a puzzle. The objects and body parts are presented with space between them to help viewers utilize them for individual contemplation. The Veronica Veil serves as Christ's head while his arms and legs are reduced to his impaled hands and feet. The lozenge-shaped side wound provides the Son of God with his body, which is flanked by two scrolls. They speak to the contract Christ's death made with humankind, which guaranteed its salvation and resurrection. The juxtaposition of parts of Christ's body with the contract scrolls suggests that individual contemplation of these body parts provided late medieval viewers with comfort for their own afterlife.

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<sup>47</sup> Rubin, 306.

Contemplation of the living, breathing leprous body helped medieval viewers cultivate their relationship with Christ as well. A comparison of Figure Thirteen and Figure Twenty-Two shows the conflation of imagery of lepers with imagery of Christ was deliberate. Christ gestures to his side wound in a miniature of Christ as the Man of Sorrows from an English Book of Hours that contains Passion Psalms (Figure 22, fifteenth century). The relationship between Christ and lepers is alluded to in Figure Thirteen because Naaman points to a wound in his chest which mimics Christ's side wound. He displays his side wound like Christ does in Figure Twenty-Two. Christ points to his side wound with one hand in order to draw attention to the physical suffering he endured for humanity. Naaman gestures to the wound in his side thus suggesting that lepers and late medieval people understood leprous wounds as analogous to Christ's wounds. In addition, Figure Twenty-Two is decorated with foliage along the top and bottom borders of the manuscript page. The flowers that symbolize life contrast with the sarcophagus in the miniature that represents death. The juxtaposition suggests that Christ's death ensured the resurrection of humanity. Christ's gesture is another method of visualizing the contract of Figure Twenty.

In addition to the contract, the two skulls and bones at the bottom of Figure Twenty near Christ's feet guarantee the resurrection of humanity. The placement of the skulls and bones at Christ's feet suggests his defeat of Death through his Resurrection, but the bones have a broader significance for viewers as well. They refer not only to Christ's personal triumph over Death, but also his promise of redemption and resurrection for Christian believers. The promise of resurrection and redemption would be particularly powerful for those suffering from leprosy. The conflation of visual

qualities in images of lepers and Christ would have encouraged them to both model their behavior on that of Christ and anticipate the reward of redemption and resurrection.

The spots and fragmented body of the Man of Sorrows in the fresco from the church of San Francesco in Lodi, Italy (Figure 23, early fourteenth century) reinforce the special connection lepers had with Christ. Like Figure Nineteen, Figure Twenty-Three is a close-up of Christ's torso, but in this image Christ's legs are engulfed by a small sarcophagus. Like the lepers of Figure Five, Christ has small dots covering his torso and arms to represent his wounds. The visual similarities between the Man of Sorrows and the lepers suggest that the medieval viewer could have conflated these two bodies. Therefore, medieval viewers were meant to embrace bloody, fragmented bodies like Christ's body as instruments of salvation and redemption. The spots and bent, fragmented bodies of lepers and Christ visualize a relationship between them which would have encouraged late medieval viewers to use the leprous body as a bridge to gain access to Christ. Consequently, the leprous body was an accessible intermediary through which late medieval viewers could cultivate their relationships with Christ.

In the *Fritzlar Pieta* (Figure 24, mid-fourteenth century Germany), the spots on Christ's skin and his bent body reinforce the association of the leprous body with the crucified body of Christ. Figure Twenty-Four is a scene after Christ's Deposition from the Cross in which he lays across the Virgin Mary's lap. A comparison of Figures Five and Twenty-Four highlights the association of Christ's crucified body with the leprous body. Christ lays in a position that bends his body at the knees, like the bent position of the lepers in Figure Five but in reverse. The similarities of Figures Five and Twenty-Four, which consist of the spots of bloody wounds and bent bodies, show that the leprous

body was understood as a likeness to Christ's body. Thus, the leper could stand in for Christ in the medieval imagination as a model with which they could physically interact.

Despite the similarities of the leprous body and Christ's body, they differ in the treatment of blood. Both Christ and the lepers have small circular wounds covering their bodies, but Christ's wounds are actively dripping blood.<sup>48</sup> Christ's spots are wounds inflicted at the Flagellation or globs of blood oozing from his body, while the spots on the lepers represent skin lesions. Christ's body actively bleeds in Figure Twenty-Four, but the wounds of the lepers appear to be dried up scabs. This distinction suggests the special nature of Christ's blood as a kind of elixir that could rejuvenate the soul. Christ's blood can heal and bring life, which is a power that could not be imitated.

For example, *Crucified Christ with a Female Figure Bathing in His Blood* is a miniature from Strasbourg, France (Figure 25, early sixteenth century) that displays the power of Christ's blood to bring life. The heart-shaped mouth and long, flowing hair give Christ a feminine appearance as he hangs on the Cross dripping blood. His body is covered with red spots, and large smudges of blood slide down his body. It runs into the basin where a female figure bathes herself. The bather may be Mary Magdalene who was present at the base of the Cross during the Crucifixion where she showered in Christ's blood. Also, large drops of blood ooze onto the ground from the wounds in Christ's hands. The ground is covered in bright and vibrant plants that bloom with red and blue blossoms, which suggest that the blood has rejuvenated them. Christ's blood will rejuvenate the woman's soul like it has revived the plants.

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<sup>48</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 147.

In addition, Christ's blood is significant in the late thirteenth century text called the *Book of the Three Scriptures* by Bonvesin de la Riva, in which he describes what happens to the body on earth and in Heaven. The text combines many themes from this section including the similarity between the broken, bloodied body of Christ and the leprous body. In it, the earthly body is characterized by decay and rot, but the Heavenly body or resurrection body is perfectly flawless. In the text, Christ's Passion links the earthly or fragmented body with the resurrection body.<sup>49</sup> Riva compares Christ's bloody body during the Crucifixion to the leprous body:

There was no spot two fingers broad on His entire body that was not broken and bruised to such a degree that the flesh looked almost as black as a kettle. They had no mercy on Him but laid it on with a will. The race of the Jews beat Him so violently that all His limbs were lacerated. His whole body seemed to be leprous, and His blood fell to the ground on every side. His flesh was everywhere battered and torn. The blood dripped down from His limbs to the ground. That renegade race had no pity but only kept laying it on and lacerating Him all over.<sup>50</sup>

The surface of Christ's body is the focus of the passage: it is covered in sores and broken into pieces. Also, his life-giving blood drips to the ground to rejuvenate the earth as in Figure Twenty-Five. The author even clearly compares Christ's crucified body to the leprous body. Hence, we can assume that the visual conflation of Christ and lepers was deliberate because it was depicted in images as well as expressed in literature.

In conclusion, three characteristics visualize the close relationship between Christ and lepers in the later Middle Ages: spots on the skin, bent bodies, and fragmented bodies. I have argued that the leprous body could act as a substitute for the body of Christ because it was an accessible example of perpetual physical suffering onto which

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<sup>49</sup> Manuele Gragnolati, "From Decay to Splendor: Body and Pain in Bonvesin de la Riva's *Book of the Three Scriptures*," in *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, eds. Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 83-88.

<sup>50</sup> Gragnolati, 92.

late medieval viewers could project their identification with Christ. Spots on the skin are the most obvious visual link between Christ and lepers. Also, legs bent at the knee are a common visual similarity between Christ and lepers. The lepers of Figure Five have oddly bent knees like Christ in images of the Flagellation. Third, fragmented bodies, in the form of missing legs, visualize the connection between Christ and lepers. Like Naaman in Figure Thirteen, the second leper in Figure Five does not have legs. Also, the images of Christ as the Man of Sorrows standing in a tomb, Figures Twenty-Two and Twenty-Three, reduce his body to a torso.

Figure Nine demonstrates the visual conflation of imagery of Christ with imagery of lepers and the conflation of the two in the mind of late medieval viewers. This is also shown through a comparison of Figure Thirteen and Figure Twenty-Two wherein the leper Naaman mimics the gesture of pointing to the side wound that Christ exhibits as the Man of Sorrows standing in a tomb. The side wound held a prominent place in the minds of late medieval people who saw Christ himself point it out in a number of images.

For example, Christ and the three angels who surround him direct late medieval viewers' gaze to the side wound by pointing to it in Meister Francke's *Man of Sorrows* from Leipzig, Germany (Figure 26). Both of Christ's arms are bent, which allows him to hold a whip in his left hand and point to his side wound with his right hand; Christ's thumb and index finger are bent around the side wound as if he wants to show viewers how long it is. Also, the angel who supports Christ's torso from behind points to the side wound with the index finger of his right hand. The angel to Christ's right even goes so far as placing his thumb directly over Christ's wound in his hand to ensure that viewers' contemplate the wounds as well as the *Arma Christi* in the image.

Furthermore, Christ points out his side wound to a nun in Quirizio da Murano's *The Savior* (Figure 27, 1460-1478). Here, Christ's body is obscured by a robe, but he deliberately parts it to expose his side wound to a nun who kneels before him. As he parts his robe, his left index finger slightly enters the side wound, which draws viewers' gaze because it is Christ's only exposed flesh here. With his right hand, Christ offers a Eucharistic wafer to the nun: by simultaneously pointing out his side wound and offering the wafer, Christ implies that the wafer itself came from the side wound. In both Figure Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven Christ seems to encourage viewers to spiritually and physically penetrate the side wound by emphasizing its function as a permeable boundary that allows viewers access to Christ.

Wounds visualized as spots in images of Christ and lepers suggest that the conflation of imagery of Christ and that of lepers was deliberate. Leprous spots cover Christ's entire body in a uniform pattern in Figure Nine, but the wounds of the Crucifixion are especially prominent on his side and feet because they are darker than the other spots. Christ's Five Wounds of the Cross became an object of piety for late medieval clergy and mystics. They imagined the side wound as a door into the body of Christ: it allowed them to spiritually and physically unite with him. In the next section, we will examine the meanings of the side wound to late medieval monks and mystics, such as Saint Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena, who used it as an expression of their journey to become Christ-like.

**CHAPTER VI**

**CHRIST, SAINT FRANCIS, AND THE LEPER: THE SIDE WOUND, THE  
STIGMATA, AND THE LEPROUS SORE**

Catherine of Siena has imagined herself on Mount Calvary during the Crucifixion while she thrashes her body with a whip (Figure 28, *Catherine of Siena Flagellating Herself*, early fifteenth century Upper Rhine or Alsace). While she inflicts pain on herself, Catherine meditates on Christ on the Cross. Her meditation is so focused on the body of Christ that holy persons who typically appear in a Calvary scene, such as the Virgin Mary or Saint John the Evangelist, have disappeared. Since Mary Magdalene was her model, Catherine may be imagining herself in the biblical follower's place at the Crucifixion: Catherine longed to shower in Christ's blood like Mary Magdalene did at the base of the Cross.<sup>51</sup> The blood dripping from head to toe on the bodies attests to this desire. Through self-flagellation Catherine has succeeded in making her body a wounded, bloody replica of that of Christ. Thus, the image illustrates a moment of intense private devotion between Catherine of Siena and Christ in which pain facilitates her access to his body.

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<sup>51</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 166.

During the later Middle Ages, Christian saints like Catherine of Siena wished for the opportunity to identify with Christ through the act of physical suffering. Figure Twenty-Eight demonstrates the prevailing desire among those in the religious life to identify with Christ through pain. Some saints were so honorable and morally righteous that they were allowed to suffer like Christ through the miracle of the stigmata. During stigmatization, the saint would receive Christ's wounds from the Cross on his or her right side, hands, and feet. Saint Francis of Assisi, who founded the Franciscan order within the Church in the first decades of the thirteenth century, was the first person to receive the stigmata. The process of stigmatization was an opportunity for the saint to reenact the Crucifixion everyday as part of Francis' dedication to imitating Christ's life and death.

At first glance, the right wing of the fourteenth century diptych from Germany (Figure 29, *The Crucifixion, Flagellation, the Carrying of the Cross, and the Stigmatization of Saint Francis*) appears to be an ordinary image of the Passion of Christ with a scene of the Crucifixion, Flagellation, and Carrying of the Cross. Upon closer inspection, the viewer may be surprised to find an image of the stigmatization of Saint Francis occupying the bottom section of the panel. The image deliberately aligns the Crucifixion with Saint Francis' stigmatization to illustrate the special status of Saint Francis as a Christ-like person.

The angel that appears to Saint Francis does so while suspended on a miniature cross that recalls the Cross of the Crucifixion. Therefore, the stigmata that Francis received were sent by Christ as a method of attaining a deeper and more intimate relationship with God. The angel emits streams of blood that mark the places on Francis' body that will receive the stigmata. Also, the blood creates a pathway from the Christ-

like angel to Francis, which implies both that the wounds make Francis Christ-like and that the wounds provide a point of entry into the body of Christ.

While hanging on the Cross, Christ twists his torso to his right when he feels the pain of the lance piercing his body under his right breast. The lance that pierces Christ's side appears in the image, in addition to the one that provides Christ with the sponge soaked in vinegar. The conflation of these two moments in the narrative creates two diagonal lines in the panel that lead the viewer's eyes to Christ's side wound. The juxtaposition of the diagonal lines leading to the side wound and Francis' stigmatization presents the existence and pain of physical wounds, particularly the side wound, as direct openings into the body of Christ, a place where many religious persons sought to take refuge from the misery of earthly life.

The open wounds on the bodies of Christ and Saint Francis offered medieval viewers a way to imagine entering these bodies and thus, becoming like them. Physical pain was the common denominator that could unite medieval viewers with Christ and Saint Francis. Although the bodies of Christ and Francis were accessible only through images, lepers offered another wounded body that was available for direct observation from life. The leprous body had disintegrating boundaries through which medieval viewers could enter and imagine experiencing the Crucifixion for themselves.

A mid-fifteenth century panel from Upper Bavaria (Figure 1, *Calvary*) that I first presented in the Introduction shows the Crucifixion complete with Longinus, Stephaton, the Three Marys, and the Two Thieves. The thief to Christ's left, usually known as the bad thief, is particularly noteworthy because of the leprous wounds covering his body. According to Mitchell Merback, the thief is bent over the lintel with his back to Christ

and the crowd as if he shamefully rejects salvation.<sup>52</sup> His arms are twisted around the lintel of his cross and his legs are broken to increase his pain. Since there were no theological guidelines for the thieves' torture, Merback argues that artists were free to draw from their observations of local justice and life for their depictions of the two thieves.<sup>53</sup> Thus, we can infer that late medieval artists and viewers had the opportunity to observe the leprous body and imagine it as an analogous body to that of Christ on the Cross.

Indeed, lepers were encouraged to cultivate an intimate relationship with Christ based on physical suffering. As Figure One and Figures Twenty-Eight and Twenty-Nine reveal, saints of the later Middle Ages tried to create an intimate relationship with Christ by physically experiencing the pain of the Crucifixion. The body was the medium through which saints sought to reach a higher spiritual experience. Both holy stigmatics and lepers lived with constant pain from open and bloody wounds. The hands and feet were prominent sites of pain for both those suffering from the stigmata and leprosy: stigmatics suffered from Christ's wounds in their hands and feet and leprosy typically caused rapid degeneration of those body parts as well. Hence, both saints and lepers used physical pain to cultivate an intimate relationship with Christ: open, bloody wounds like the five wounds of Christ allowed holy stigmatics and lepers to imagine imitating the Crucifixion.

An analysis of European images from 1300 to 1500 depicting the stigmatization and martyrdom of saints and images of lepers will demonstrate the similarities between stigmatics and lepers. Like stigmaticized saints, I will argue that lepers offered another

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<sup>52</sup> Merback, 124.

<sup>53</sup> Merback, 101-104.

intermediary body through which people of the later Middle Ages could experience Christ. Lepers possessed physical wounds that acted as direct links to the body of Christ for medieval viewers. Lepers' wounds allowed medieval viewers to imagine reenacting the Crucifixion of Christ through their immediate access to the Christ-like wounds of the leprous body.

Saint Francis of Assisi became the first person to experience the stigmata on September 14, 1224.<sup>54</sup> Saint Francis founded the Franciscan Order which supported the apostolic life. This involved imitating Christ and his apostles by living a life of poverty and suffering.<sup>55</sup> In September 1224, Francis went to Mount LaVerna in Southern Tuscany with Brothers Masseo, Angelo, and Leo to celebrate Lent. He saw a vision of a bloody angel upon a cross and then the wounds of the Crucifixion appeared on his body.<sup>56</sup>

Although we can only imagine the emotions that Saint Francis experienced at this moment, the body of Saint Francis in fourteenth century images of his stigmatization suggests that he was surprised or shocked, while early fifteenth century images convey a sense of his acceptance or even welcome of the stigmata. A miniature from a Franciscan Breviary, *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, (Figure 30, mid-fourteenth century Paris, France) shows the saint upon his knees with his forearms bent up and his hands close to his shoulders while the vision of the angel appears before him. Francis' stiff and straight torso and thighs give the impression that both fear and shock have paralyzed his body. Further, he has his arms bent up at a sharp angle like he is protecting himself.

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<sup>54</sup> Nitza Yarom, *Body, Blood, and Sexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study of Saint Francis' Stigmata and Their Historical Context* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1992), 25.

<sup>55</sup> Yarom, 25.

<sup>56</sup> Yarom, 26.

The saint's body seems to begin to open up in welcome to the angel in another image of Francis' stigmatization from the same Franciscan Breviary (Figure 31, mid-fourteenth century Paris, France). In this miniature, his left arm extends out further than his right which remains in a position similar to that of the arms in Figure Thirty. Also, Francis has his left leg on the ground at the knee and his other leg is bent with the foot on the ground. This posture allows the left side of his body to open up more and thus seems more accepting of the events that are taking place.

In addition, in a miniature from the Suffrages of a Book of Hours (Figure 32, *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* 1410-1415 France) Francis' arms extend in a similar way with one further out, and he gazes at the angel with longing and adoration. The different styles of Figures Thirty and Thirty-One may suggest that different artists worked on this Breviary or that the miniatures were completed at different times. If they were completed at different times, images of Saint Francis' stigmatization appear to change from conveying a sense of shock to welcoming the wounds of Christ.

Saint Francis' arms extend out from his body even further in a miniature from a Book of Hours created in Nantes, France in 1440 (Figure 33, *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata*). His biceps remain close to his torso, but both of his forearms extend out and away from his body. The extension of Francis' arms seems to mimic the outstretched arms of the angel he sees in his vision. This can be seen most dramatically in the miniatures from a Book of Hours created in Flanders (Figure 34 and Figure 35, *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* early sixteenth century) in which the entire length of Francis' arms extends out and up as if he is welcoming and embracing the angel before him.

By embracing the angel, Saint Francis welcomes the opportunity to become more Christ-like through the experience of the Crucifixion. In Figures Thirty-Four and Thirty-Five, the angel himself has taken on the standard characteristics of the crucified Christ in western art: long, dark hair atop the head of a semi-nude body. Although the angel is not attached to a wooden cross, his outstretched arms and vertical body allowed medieval viewers to imagine his body hanging from it in torment. Saint Francis' outstretched arms highlight his willingness to imitate the life of Christ, particularly the Crucifixion, on a day to day basis. Some artists may have been encouraged by the clergy to depict Francis welcoming the stigmata, as opposed to being shocked by their appearance, in order to strengthen his claim to sainthood during his canonization process.

During this procedure, written testimonials were given to the existence of Saint Francis' wounds. The stigmatization of Francis took place two years before his death at the age of forty-five. After his death, many of those in the clergy saw his wounds and testified to their existence. The stigmata needed to be verified, particularly to ensure that it was not a hoax to better Francis' situation. Immediately before Francis' stigmatization, the Franciscan Order grew too large for him to administer effectively. Therefore, Pope Honorius III pressured him to rewrite the Rule of the Franciscan Order in order to universalize the behavior and conduct of the Order. In addition, Francis was being pushed aside in the Order in favor of the influence of Cardinal Ugolino, the patron of the Franciscans in the Church, and Friar Elias, Francis' heir to the Order.<sup>57</sup> As a result, the clergy and the laity needed proof that the stigmata were real and not an attempt by Francis to regain his supremacy within the Order.

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<sup>57</sup> Yarom, 26.

In the testimonials, the form of Francis' wounds became a topic of interest among theologians. The clergy gave meticulous descriptions of the size, shape, and appearance of the wounds. Apart from his notoriety as the first stigmatic, Saint Francis' wounds were different than the wounds of subsequent stigmatics in terms of their bloodiness and appearance.<sup>58</sup> First, the wounds on Francis' feet and hands did not bleed. Instead, the nails of the Crucifixion were formed from his flesh which became inflamed and sore.<sup>59</sup>

Secondly, although Christ's side wound appeared on Francis' right side, later stigmatics would experience this phenomenon on their left side. According to Nitza Yarom, later stigmatics experienced the wounds of Christ by meditating on an image of the Crucifixion. Hence, the wound appeared on the opposite side of the saint's body, which is typically the left side.<sup>60</sup> Giovanni di Paolo's depiction of *Saint Catherine of Siena Receiving the Stigmata* (Figure 36, fifteenth century Italy) shows the saint kneeling before an altar on which a sculpture of the Crucifixion hangs. Catharine's intense meditation on the wounds of the Crucifixion causes her to experience them herself. The five wounds will be duplicated on Catharine's body as if with a mirror. Thus, the side wound will be on her left side instead of her right.

The testimonials for Francis' canonization focus on the discomfort caused by the wounds on his hands and feet. Thomas of Celano was the first hagiographer to write about Saint Francis in his *Vita Prima S. Francisci*, which Pope Gregory IX requested for the process of canonization.<sup>61</sup> He writes in vivid detail of the appearance of the wounds.

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<sup>58</sup> Yarom, 9.

<sup>59</sup> Yarom, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Yarom, 9.

<sup>61</sup> Yarom, 33.

He particularly notes their placement in the middle of the hands, the round shape of the nail head, and the oblong shape of the protruding end:

Francis' hands and feet were seen to be pierced in the very middle with nails, with the heads of nails appearing on the inside of the hands and on the upper part of the feet, and their pointed ends on the reverse sides. The marks of the hands were round on the inner side and oblong on the outer side, and small pieces of flesh looked like the top part of the nails bent and beaten back and rising above the rest of the flesh. In the same way, the marks of the nails were impressed also on the feet and elevated above the rest of the flesh.<sup>62</sup>

That the nails were composed of Francis' flesh is significant because it highlights the nature of stigmata itself. The stigmatic wanted to become like Christ through the experience of the Crucifixion. The nails of the Crucifixion literally became part of Francis' body, which allowed him to both physically and spiritually become the likeness of Christ.

In addition, the testimony of Saint Bonaventure notes the incredible pain Francis would endure because of the wounds. The wounds on his feet caused Francis particular discomfort due to his inability to place his feet completely on the ground. According to Bonaventure, the loops in the end of the nails were so big that a man could put his finger through them, which prevented Francis from walking normally:

The curved portion of the nails on the soles of his feet was so big and stood out so far that he could not put his foot firmly on the ground; a man could put his finger through the loop without difficulty, as I have been told by people who saw the Stigmata with their own eyes.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Thomas of Celano, *Vita Prima S. Francisci (First Life of Saint Francis) (1228-1229)*, in *The Stigmata of Saint Francis of Assisi: A Critical Investigation in the Light of Thirteenth-Century Sources*, Octavian Schmucki (New York: The Franciscan Institute, Saint Bonaventure University, 1991), 269.

<sup>63</sup> Saint Bonaventure, *Legenda Minor S. Francisci (Minor Life of Saint Francis)*, in *The Stigmata of Saint Francis of Assisi: A Critical Investigation in the Light of Thirteenth-Century Sources*, Octavian Schmucki (New York: The Franciscan Institute, Saint Bonaventure University, 1991), 281.

Although the wounds in Francis' feet and hands did not bleed, they prevented him from walking comfortably. The back of the nail would be pushed into his flesh with every one of his steps which caused him increased pain. Francis' ill health was perpetuated by the stigmata.<sup>64</sup> Some scholars contend that Francis had malaria, tuberculosis, or brucellosis. Scholars Schatzlein and Sulmasy argued in 1987 that Francis was also a leper.<sup>65</sup>

Schatzlein and Sulmasy argued that Francis had tuberculoid leprosy and died from subsequent complications.<sup>66</sup> Their argument is based on three of Francis' symptoms: eye disease, dropsy or kidney disease, and his inability to feel pain immediately before his death.<sup>67</sup> Francis began to experience constant eye pain in 1220, which progressed into blindness by the time of his death.<sup>68</sup> According to Schatzlein and Sulmasy, ninety-six percent of lepers have ocular complications. Saint Francis' ocular malady took the form of dacryocystitis or an infection of the tear glands which resulted in excessive crying and pus formation.<sup>69</sup> Also, he suffered from kidney disease, which is common among lepers and probably was the direct cause of his death. In addition, the year before Francis' death he lost his ability to feel pain due to a leprous infection of his trigeminal and peripheral nerves.<sup>70</sup> This infection would explain the decay of his fingers and toes as well as his inability to walk.<sup>71</sup> The scholars concluded that Saint Francis deliberately became a leper in order to become Christ-like:

Francis can be seen as one who became profoundly Christlike in his transformation into the very outcast and suffering Christ he embraced in the leper.

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<sup>64</sup> Yarom, 29.

<sup>65</sup> Yarom, 30.

<sup>66</sup> Joanne Schatzlein and Daniel P. Sulmasy, "The Diagnosis of Saint Francis: Evidence for Leprosy," *Franciscan Studies* 47/25 (1987): 181.

<sup>67</sup> Schatzlein and Sulmasy, 213.

<sup>68</sup> Schatzlein and Sulmasy, 184.

<sup>69</sup> Schatzlein and Sulmasy, 212.

<sup>70</sup> Schatzlein and Sulmasy, 213.

<sup>71</sup> Schatzlein and Sulmasy, 214.

His stigmata can be understood as the wounds of a man who became a leper precisely because of his love for the Crucified Leper.<sup>72</sup>

This excerpt is significant because it reveals that the authors perceived the stigmata as parallel to leprous wounds. Thus, in addition to stigmata, the wounds of the leprous body can be seen as a living reenactment of the Crucifixion.

Francis' interaction with lepers strengthens Schatzlein and Sulmasy's argument. Francis' physical contact with lepers began in 1206 when he lived with, kissed, and ate food onto which the pus from their wounds dripped.<sup>73</sup> Saint Francis perceived helping lepers as an imitation of Christ's humility. For example, Christ washed the feet of his disciples to show his humility. A woodcut from the *Mirror of Human Salvation* series of *The Illustrated Bartsch* (Figure 37, 1477 Germany) depicts Christ kneeling before a seated disciple who has his feet in a water basin. Christ gently washes the disciple's foot to demonstrate his humbleness. The action also reveals the equality of all Christian believers before God because Christ disregards his status as the Son of God to perform the task of a servant. In order to imitate Christ's life, Francis cared for lepers by washing their bodies as is shown in Bonaventura Berlinghieri's altar in the church of Santa Croce in Florence, Italy (Figure 38, *Saint Francis and Scenes from His Life, detail of the Saint with the Lepers and His Appearance at Arles*). Francis comforts an ailing leper who sits on his lap in the left portion of the top panel, and on the other side of the panel he washes the feet of a leper. Like Christ, Francis cleanses the leper's leg in a basin of water while a group watches and waits in the background.

Saint Francis' stigmatization was his ultimate imitation of the life and death of Christ. If we return to Figure Thirty-Two, in which Francis' longing gaze reveals his

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<sup>72</sup> Schatzlein and Sulmasy, 217.

<sup>73</sup> Schatzlein and Sulmasy, 183.

desire to unite with Christ bodily, we see that his side wound is prominently displayed. The ring of nude flesh around the side wound highlights it, while bringing it to viewers' attention. Also, Francis' right hand eloquently reaches out to the angel, which leads viewers' eyes to the side wound. His gesture of reaching out to the angel with his right arm resembles the right arm of the leper in the forefront in the miniature from William of Nottingham's *Commentary on the Gospels* (Figure 5, late fourteenth century England). The trail of spots running down the leper's arm leads viewers' eyes to the leprous body which is covered in open sores.

In Figures Five and Thirty-Two, the spots that represent wounds are prominent on Saint Francis' side, hands, and feet, and on the entire body of the lepers. For Saint Francis, the stigmata were a physical sign of his relationship with Christ. In Figure Five, Christ heals the first leper by touching his hand. Both Christ and the leper hold up their hands as if they are mirror images of each other, which suggests that the lepers' imitate Christ through the physical pain of the body.

In addition to stigmatization, the pain of martyrdom offered other saints the opportunity to imitate Christ's Crucifixion. The similarities of saints and lepers are visualized with spots on the skin in the image of *Saint Vincent Tortured* from the *Stuttgart Passional* (Figure 39, early twelfth century). Both Saint Vincent and the lepers in Figure Five have spots covering their bodies, but the wounds on Saint Vincent are concentrated on the torso of his body. One torturer stabs Saint Vincent in his left side, which recalls the placement of Christ's side wound. Thus, Saint Vincent's martyrdom evokes both Christ's Crucifixion and the physical suffering of lepers. The emphasis placed on the side wound in images of saints, like Figures Thirty-Two and Thirty-Nine, is

absent in images of lepers that display spotty wounds all over the body. This suggests a hierarchy in Christ's wounds with the side wound being at the top and the wounds of the hands and feet at the base. Nevertheless, the open sores of the directly observable leprous body offered a model for medieval viewers to mold into an image of the Crucifixion.

The leprous body was used as a model for the image of Christ as a leper in a stained glass window from Suffolk, England (Figure 40, fifteenth century) in which the wounds on his feet are especially prominent, while his side wound is obscured by the numerous wounds on his torso. The wounds inflicted on his feet are particularly conspicuous because of their darker color. The wounds on lepers' feet would be visible to observers because of the need to wash them of daily dirt and grime. Thus, the similar wounds in the feet of the lepers and Saint Francis accentuate the leprous body's function as an intermediary. Medieval Christian saints were known for their ability to act as mediators between worshippers and God; lepers could also serve this purpose. The creator of this image probably saw lepers and used his experience to orchestrate this image. Consequently, the boundaries between the body of Christ and the leprous body disintegrated along with the physical borders of the body.

As Christ's physical body began to breakdown during the torture he endured, the side wound was the favored access point for holy persons who wished to cultivate an intimate relationship with him. They could enter his body through the side wound in order to intensify their devotion. Aelred, a Cistercian monk, was one such holy person who wished to experience this. He compares Christ's body to a piece of architecture with walls where you can hide and worship Christ privately:

From the rock streams have flowed for you, wounds have been made in his limbs, holes in the wall of his body, in which, like a dove, you may hide while you kiss them one by one. Your lips, stained with blood, will become like a scarlet ribbon and your word sweet.<sup>74</sup>

Aelred imagines Christ's body as a church building, such as a cathedral, that he can enter and meditate on Christ's wounds in private. Also, Aelred wants to physically unite with Christ by kissing his bloody wounds. Thus, he expresses a desire to unite with Christ physically by entering his body as he would a church building and by kissing his flesh. Aelred shows the common use of the side wound as the door to a more intimate relationship with Christ. His desire to kiss the side wound was expressed by mystics, such as Catherine of Siena, as well.

Like Aelred, Catherine wanted to enter Christ's body through his side wound then kiss it with her mouth. First, she conceptualized Christ as her mother who offered the mystic her breast to suckle, and then she wished to kiss the wound:

He behaved like a mother with her favorite child. She will show it the breast, but hold it away from it until it cries; as soon as it begins to cry, she will laugh for a while and clasp it to her and, covering it with kisses, delightedly give it her full breast. So the Lord behaved with me that day; he showed me his most sacred side from afar and I cried from the intensity of my longing to put my mouth to the sacred wound. After he had laughed for a little while at my tears – at least that is what he seemed to do – he came up to me, clasped my soul in his arms, and put my mouth to where his most sacred wound was, that is to say, the wound in his side. Then with its great longing my soul entered right into that wound and found such sweetness and such knowledge of the Divinity there that if you could ever appreciate it you would marvel that my heart did not break, and wonder how ever I managed to go on living in the body in such an excess of ardour and love.<sup>75</sup>

Catherine's conceptualization of Christ as a mother illustrates a common metaphor used by medieval people to understand their relationship with him. Like a mother nourishes her child with milk, Christ nourishes the soul of his believers with the blood from his side

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<sup>74</sup> Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 123.

<sup>75</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 173.

wound, which washes them clean of sin. For Catherine, she understands Christ as a mother playfully interacting with her babies. The playful quality of the first half of the passage contrasts with the serious tone that Catherine takes on when her soul enters Christ's body through the side wound. Passing into the side wound provides the mystic with a better understanding of the Divine. Consequently, physical contact is necessary to fully understand Christ which highlights the corporeal nature of late medieval religion.

In conclusion, I argued that both holy stigmatics, like Saint Francis, and lepers used physical wounds to imitate the Crucifixion of Christ. The open wounds of the leprous body, like Christ's crucified body and the stigmatized body of Saint Francis, provided medieval viewers with an observable body in pain from which they could imagine reenacting the Crucifixion as well. Figure Twenty-Nine deliberately juxtaposes scenes from the Passion of Christ, including the Crucifixion, with the stigmatization of Saint Francis. This comparison implies that stigmatization was the final step in Francis' imitation of Christ's life and death. Also, it clearly demonstrates that stigmatization was an experience analogous to crucifixion, which highlights Francis' Christ-like status. The controversy surrounding Francis' stigmata, which is illustrated by the testimonials affirming their existence, may have provoked a more welcoming and accepting method of depicting his stigmatization, such as in Figures Thirty-Three through Thirty-Five. The saint's interest in caring for lepers suggests that he would ultimately have longed for the chance to physically become more Christ-like.

In Figure Forty, Christ's body displays both the wounds of the Crucifixion and leprous sores. The boundaries between the bodies of Christ, holy stigmatics, and lepers disappear here and viewers are left with a conglomeration of all three body types in one

image. Thus, medieval viewers could easily image entering this battered body through one of the numerous bloody openings and experiencing the pain of the Crucifixion with their own flesh.

The story of how Saint Francis healed a leper reveals the close relationship between Christ, saints, and lepers as well as introducing a new theme: compassion. The leper acts as the intermediary through which Christ communicates with Francis. When Francis encountered a group of friars building a *leprosarium*, they told him that there was one leper who taunted them constantly with his impatience. The leper cursed Christ and the Virgin Mary while in the presence of the friars because he was bitter and angry at the wretched state of his body. Francis told the friars that he would take charge of the care of this particularly bothersome leper because caring for lepers expresses your love of Christ who willingly was treated as a leper.

The leper asked Francis to wash his body because his smell was so awful that even the leper could not bear it. Francis did as the leper requested and the leper's soul and body were healed in the process. Then, the leper confessed his sins to a priest and further rid his body and soul of sin by crying continuously for fifteen days. When the fifteen days were completed, the leper contracted another disease and died right away. On his soul's way to Heaven, the former leper appeared to Francis and thanked him. The former leper also told Francis that he would save many more people.<sup>76</sup>

In the story, the leper acts as the intermediary between Christ and Saint Francis because it is through the leper that Christ is able to communicate with Francis. While acting as an agent of God, the leper provides the means through which Francis discovers

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<sup>76</sup> Robert H. Hopcke and Paul A. Schwartz, *Little Flowers of Francis of Assisi: A New Translation* (Boston: Random House, 2006), 78-80.

his miraculous healing abilities. Also, the story illustrates how Saint Francis' imitation of Christ's compassion allowed him to develop spiritually. Like his imitation of the Crucifixion with the stigmata, Saint Francis became more Christ-like by imitating the compassion Christ showed lepers, but as we've seen, the stigmatization was more frequently illustrated in images. In a woodcut from *The Illustrated Bartsch*, Saint Francis kneels in front of Christ on the Cross with his hands extended to receive the stigmata, but this time he receives the wounds directly from the crucified body of Christ rather than an angel (Figure 41, *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, 1500 Germany). The smudges of ink create a dramatic environment of extreme light and shadow, which highlights the intense emotion of the scene. The wounds in Christ's hands drip large globs of blood that fall to the ground below. Although images such as this visualize Saint Francis' imitation of Christ through stigmatization, the story of Saint Francis and the leper shows another method of imitating Christ by compassionately caring for lepers.

**CHAPTER VII**  
**CHRIST, THE VIRGIN MARY, AND THE LEPER: A COMPASSIONATE**  
**EMBRACE**

A mother tenderly cradles her son in her lap in an image from a stained glass window in Suffolk, England (Figure 40, fifteenth century); the mother is the Virgin Mary and the son is Christ. Their bodies are intricately entwined with her left arm supporting his back and her right arm clasping his hip, while his right arm seems to reach out to her body. In her grief, Mary wraps her robe around Christ's waist to draw him even closer to her. Despite his death, Christ's eyes gaze at Mary, who returns his stare. After his Deposition from the Cross, Mary took her dead son in her arms and grieved over his bruised and bloodied body. Mary's private moment of suffering became a model for late medieval viewers, such as the monk who kneels and prays at the base of the window, in their reaction to the anguish and death of Christ.

For example, a Dominican nun imitates the Virgin Mary in a miniature from a fifteenth century Book of Hours (Figure 42, Strasbourg, France) in which Christ seems to collapse from the flagellation pole into her arms. She wraps her arms around his torso like the Virgin Mary does in Figure Forty, supporting him as he falls from his place on

the pole. Christ in turn encircles the nun with his arms while engaging her eyes in a potent gaze. She eagerly embraces Christ who has thick streams of blood running down the length of his body. The static spots that cover Christ's body are visible evidence of the torture he suffered during his Passion. Since Figure Forty captures a moment after the Deposition of Christ, modern-day viewers may be surprised to see spots covering his entire body here. On the other hand, in the minds of late medieval viewers the spots would conflate Christ with lepers who they could embrace as Christ-like substitutes.

The pieta from Suffolk, England is a visual expression of Mary's compassion for Christ's physical suffering, where the monk who prays at the bottom of the window could imitate in his daily life by caring for the leprous body. By caring for lepers, late medieval people could reenact Christ's compassion for humanity, which he displayed at the Crucifixion and Mary's compassion for the physical suffering of her son. I will analyze European images created in the fourteenth through the early sixteenth century of the *Raising of Lazarus*, the *Harrowing of Hell*, the *Deposition of Christ*, and the *Pieta* in order to show that late medieval viewers imitated both Christ's and Mary's compassion by caring for the leprous body. As an alternative to replicating Christ's physical pain, compassion for lepers could be played out in daily life by tending to their wounds and reenacting the pieta with them.

Christ's greatest miracle and display of compassion was the Resurrection of Lazarus. Lazarus' death may have been a result of leprosy; thus, late medieval viewers would have recognized Christ's experience with a leper as the most effective way to show compassion. Two men named Lazarus appear in the New Testament which causes confusion between their stories to the present day. The first Lazarus, who was a leprous

beggar near death, went to the house of Dives for shelter and nourishment but the only help he received there came from dogs licking his sores. After his death, this Lazarus went straight to Heaven, but Dives went to Hell as punishment for his greed and pride. The other Lazarus was the brother of Martha and Mary of Bethany with whom Christ often found shelter. When he fell ill, Martha and Mary sent for Christ, but he arrived four days after Lazarus' death. Upon his arrival, Christ performed his greatest miracle when he resurrected Lazarus from the dead.<sup>77</sup> The two characters could be confused in the minds of late medieval people who believed that Christ not only healed, but later resurrected a leprous man. Also, Christ showed compassion for the emotional sorrow of Martha and Mary of Bethany by resurrecting their brother. After hearing this story, late medieval people would have been encouraged to imitate Christ's compassion by caring for lepers.

The miniature from a Book of Hours made in Florence in 1507 (Figure 43, *Raising of Lazarus*) shows Lazarus with a leprous body. Christ stands on the left side with a group of Apostles as he raises his right arm and points to Lazarus. The Virgin Mary has fallen to her knees to honor Christ after he worked his greatest miracle. As she clasps her hands in prayer, Mary has her back to viewers which invites them to follow her lead and take part in the scene. The object of Christ's miraculous work stands within his tomb, wrapped in his burial shroud and raising his arms in a gesture of prayer. The spots on Lazarus' body resemble the ones that punctuate the skin of the lepers in images of Christ healing them.

For example, in William of Nottingham's miniature of Christ healing two lepers (Figure 5, after 1396 England), Christ appears as he does in the scene of Lazarus'

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<sup>77</sup> Rawcliffe, 114-117.

resurrection while the lepers take the place of Lazarus. Late medieval viewers conflated Lazarus with a leper through spots on the skin and similar compositions. In both scenes of Christ's miracles, he stands on the left side of the image with Apostles occupying the space behind him as he raises his right arm to interact with the ill and the dead. The white skin of the lepers and Lazarus' white burial shroud provide a light background on which the spots of bloody wounds are highlighted. The consistent composition of Christ's miracles and the spotty flesh of Lazarus helped late medieval viewers approach the leprous body in their daily lives with the understanding that it offered them an intermediary with which to build a closer relationship with Christ through the imitation of the compassion he showed a leper.

Furthermore, the Raising of Lazarus resembles Christ's Harrowing of Hell, in which he entered Hell before his Resurrection and led people who appeared in the Old Testament to Heaven. Christ showed compassion to these people by forgiving their sins. A miniature created between 1325 and 1350, for instance, has a panel of the Harrowing of Hell in the upper right corner which is across from Christ's own resurrection (Figure 44, *Life of Christ and the Saints*). Christ, whose body is covered in spotty wounds, pulls Eve out of Hell. The spots covering Christ's body would remind late medieval viewers of the lepers they encountered in their own daily lives. Therefore, Christ has become the leprous Lazarus and traveled to Hell to display his compassion. Late medieval people would be encouraged to follow his lead by caring for the leprous body.

Likewise, the vignette on the bottom of a manuscript page from the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame* (Figure 45, late fourteenth through mid fifteenth century) shows Christ leading a chain of dead bodies to Heaven. Christ appears with a gold halo

surrounding his head and holding a golden staff, while his other hand takes the arm of a resurrected man who emerges from the open mouth of a black beast that represents Hell. A line of naked bodies follows the first man towards Christ. The linear composition of bodies with linked hands resembles images of the Dance of Death in which Death personified leads a line of people of all classes to their end.

One such image is a miniature from a Book of Hours (Figure 46, late fifteenth century Paris, France) wherein the *Dance of Death* takes the form of a procession of people being led by Death to their final fate. A bishop crosses his arms on his chest as if in prayer as Death grabs his cloak to lead him on his journey. Death's body resembles that of Christ in the miniature from the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame*. Both Death and Christ hold an object with their right hand while they look over their left shoulder at the line of people following in their footsteps: Death holds a bier on his shoulder with his right hand and Christ clasps his golden staff. Their left arms reach back towards the first person in the processional behind them, but only Christ's hand touches the arm of the man behind him. On the other hand, Death only clasps the robe of the man behind him as if the bishop were reluctant to touch the body of Death, or Death zealously nabbed the closest bit of the bishop in his hurry to have him.

In addition to the miniature from the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame*, Death in Figure Forty-Six imitates Christ in scenes of the *Carrying of the Cross* such as the miniature produced in Venice, Italy in the fourteenth century (Figure 47). Christ looks to his right as he carries the Cross to its place on Mount Calvary. The beam of the Cross rests on Christ's left shoulder with his hands draped over it. Like Christ, Death carries a bier over his right shoulder as a group of people follow him. Although a group of

soldiers and a city elder follow in Christ's path with the purpose of prodding him along, Christ leads the procession forward. Both Christ and Death take the lead in their scenes. They both show compassion to the dead by personally leading them to their next destination.

During the Carrying of the Cross, Veronica, who is sometimes identified as a leper, showed compassion for Christ's physical pain by offering her veil to the Virgin Mary who wiped his brow.<sup>78</sup> Veronica demonstrated her compassion here and was cured of the illness of leprosy by the image of Christ's face that was left on her veil. A tapestry created in 1510 in Brussels shows Veronica using the image of Christ to cure other lepers: she showed the image of Christ on her veil to Emperor Vespasian who was cured of leprosy as well (Figure 48, *Saint Veronica with her Veil with Image of Christ Healing Emperor Vespasian*). Thus, a leper had an important role at the Passion by reciprocating the compassion Christ showed to the leper Lazarus. She was rewarded with health and the ability to care and cure other lepers. Lepers became pivotal figures in the narratives of many saints lives.

For example, holy persons and mystics, such as Saint Francis, expressed their compassion for Christ's Crucified body by caring for lepers in *leprosaria*. Francis began working with lepers in 1206: he lived with them and frequently kissed them. He ate food with the pus from their wounds upon it as well, but he is consistently depicted washing their feet and calves in images.<sup>79</sup> Bonaventura Berlinghieri, for example, created an altar front entitled *Saint Francis and Scenes from His Life* (Figure 49, 1235 Chiesa di San Francesco, Pescia, Italy) which includes his stigmatization on the top right side and the

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<sup>78</sup> Rawcliffe, 243.

<sup>79</sup> Schatzlein and Sulmasy, 183.

saint washing a leper's feet in the central panel of the left side. Francis is known as the first stigmatic, but the inclusion of his work with lepers here shows that it was as significant to late medieval viewers as his stigmatization. Both allowed the saint to imitate Christ, thereby intensifying his spiritual devotion to the Son of God.

Indeed, working with lepers was common in narratives of saints' lives. Saint Anthony of Padua, for example, was known for working miracles, one of which involved healing a leper. Baccio Baldini's engraving, *Saint Anthony of Padua with Thirteen Scenes from His Life*, shows the saint performing numerous miracles (Figure 50, 1460-1480). On the right side, the second panel down shows Anthony healing a leper who has spots covering his exposed legs; Anthony stands on the right side and raises his arm in blessing towards the leper who sits opposite him. By healing the leper as well as caring for him, Anthony imitates the compassion Christ showed the leper Lazarus and his grieving sisters. Thus, the saint was able to become closer to Christ.

In addition, Pope Gregory the Great had an encounter with a leper that enhanced his spiritual devotion to Christ. Gregory showed compassion to a leper by carrying him to a monastery for treatment. When they entered the monastery, the leper became Christ and ascended to Heaven.<sup>80</sup> Like Saint Francis, Gregory the Great recognized the special likeness lepers had with Christ and cared for the leprous body in order to cultivate a closer relationship with him. Gregory's encounter with a leper is significant because he embraced the leprous body like Joseph of Arimathea and the Virgin Mary tenderly held Christ's body in images of the Deposition and the Pieta. Holding a sickly or dead body imitates the compassion that Mary showed her son after his horrific death.

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<sup>80</sup> Rawcliffe, 63.

According to historian Sarah McNamer, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus removed Christ from the Cross after his death to alleviate Mary's emotional suffering. The embrace that occurred between Joseph of Arimathea and the dead body of Christ was sanctioned by the Virgin Mary's presence in images of his Deposition or Descent from the Cross.<sup>81</sup> This embrace foreshadowed the Virgin Mary's own tender moment with Christ's dead body, which is known as the Pieta. McNamer argues that Mary's act of holding Christ's dead body in her arms was an important step in establishing the compassion of late medieval people. She contends that late medieval people's compassion would be intensified because the broken, bloody body of Christ was lovingly embraced.<sup>82</sup> McNamer's argument can be seen in images of the Deposition of Christ in which Joseph of Arimathea removes Christ's body from the Cross with great care.

The bodies of Christ and Joseph of Arimathea embrace in the *Deposition from the Cross* from the Barlow Psalter which was created in Peterborough, England (Figure 51, 1321-1341). The manuscript page tells the story of the Passion from the Crucifixion to Christ's Resurrection, with the scene of the Deposition in the top right corner of the image. In the *Deposition from the Cross*, Joseph of Arimathea removes Christ's body from the Cross by wrapping his arms around the dead man's torso, which causes Christ's arms to envelope Joseph's torso at the same time. The embrace between Joseph of Arimathea and Christ indicates the compassion that Joseph displayed for Christ and Mary by removing his body from the Cross.

Furthermore, another layer of meaning is added to the *Deposition from the Holkham Bible* (Figure 52, 1325-1330 England) because of the leprous spots covering

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<sup>81</sup> Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 140.

<sup>82</sup> McNamer, 137.

Christ's body. Here, Christ's body dramatically falls from the Cross and curls around the body of Joseph of Arimathea who clasps the Son of God at the waist to hoist him to the ground. The dots covering the surface of Christ's body attest to the pain he endured during his Passion while also recalling the pain suffered by the leprous body. His right arm draps over Joseph's shoulder leading viewers' eyes to the large red wound on his right hand which hangs before the face of the Virgin Mary. She clasps his right hand with her own while her other hand caresses his forearm. Behind Mary, John the Baptist supports Christ's head. Joseph of Arimathea, the Virgin Mary, and John the Baptist all interact with Christ's body gently and tenderly to show their compassion for his physical suffering. Since the spots on Christ's body conflate him with a leper, late medieval viewers would interpret this image as encouragement to imitate the compassion Joseph of Arimathea, the Virgin Mary, and John the Baptist exhibit through the care of lepers.

In addition, the delicately intertwined bodies of Christ and Joseph of Arimathea appear in a miniature of the *Deposition* from Paris, France (Figure 53, 1415) in which the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist mimic their gestures. Like the miniature from the Barlow Psalter, Joseph grasps Christ around the torso and Christ's arms drape over his shoulders. Christ's body slumps to his right where it is supported by Joseph's full form. Likewise, in a vignette to the left of the *Deposition*, the Virgin Mary collapses to her right to create an S-shaped curve in her body like Christ's form on the Cross. She is caught by John the Evangelist who wraps his arms around her in support. The Virgin Mary's emotional reaction to Christ's physical suffering is so intense that it causes her to collapse. The similar movements of Christ and Mary's bodies indicates her role as a model of suffering for late medieval viewers to follow. As Christ's mother, her

emotional sorrow was the best example for them to imitate because it was the most intense.

The dead body of Christ seems to float before the Cross as Joseph of Arimathea supports his torso and another man clasps his feet in Rogier van der Weyden's painting of the *Deposition* (Figure 54, 1436 the Netherlands). Christ's head falls to his right shoulder as he is lowered from the Cross which tells viewers that they gaze upon a dead body. Despite Christ's recent death on the Cross, his body curves with eloquent movements as if in the midst of a dance. As Joseph of Arimathea clasps him beneath his armpits, Christ's left arm bows up to create a fluid curve, while his right arm reaches towards the ground. His torso bends in a curve as well because a man lifts his feet from the ground.

Further analysis of Weyden's *Deposition* reveals that Christ's partner in his dance of death is his mother, the Virgin Mary. Her body imitates the curving bends of Christ's body which is placed above her. As with Christ, a female figure supports Mary's body under her armpits as she collapses to her right. Also, Mary's left arm bows out while her right arm reaches straight to the ground. Both Christ's and Mary's bodies nearly create horizontal lines as if they are going to be placed within their tombs. As a model of suffering, Mary's imitation of Christ encourages late medieval viewers' to experience an intense emotional reaction to the death of Christ similar to her own.

As Christ's mother, Mary's emotional pain at his Crucifixion was magnified due to her physical connection to him. Late medieval people understood conception as a process wherein the father contributed the fetus' spirit and the mother gave the fetus its fleshly body. Consequently, Christ's physical body came only from Mary's body, which added an additional layer to her grief. For example, Jean Gerson, a priest of the late

Middle Ages, wrote a Passion sermon entitled “Ad deum vadit” of which an excerpt perfectly captures the physical bond between Mary and Christ. In the following passage, Mary appeals to God and asks him why he has allowed Christ’s body to become broken and beaten:

My God, My God, why have you forsaken the flesh which was taken from me with such holiness and purity, conceived and born from the overshadowing and work of the Holy Spirit? I suffer in it. Since it is one flesh with mine, its grief comes back to me.<sup>83</sup>

Gerson’s sermon is significant because it shows how late medieval people conceptualized the Virgin Mary’s suffering at the Crucifixion. Mary’s emotional sorrow is rooted in the physical connection that she shares with Christ’s body. Since Mary and Christ are two forms of the same body, both of them are crucified, but Mary’s crucifixion is expressed through emotional sorrow while that of Christ is expressed in physical pain.

Late medieval people understood Christ’s suffering as the physical pain of torn, bloody flesh and Mary’s suffering as the emotional pain of grief and sorrow. Since Christ’s body came from Mary’s body, she suffered at the base of the Cross more than other witnesses who did not have this unique connection to Christ;<sup>84</sup> Mary’s suffering was more intense than that of other witnesses to the Crucifixion because a part of her extended body was physically suffering.<sup>85</sup> The blood pouring from Christ’s wounds acted as a visual symbol of his suffering while the tears that Mary shed visualized her grief.<sup>86</sup>

Historian Donna Spivey Ellington explains that late medieval people conceptualized

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<sup>83</sup> Jean Gerson, “Au deum vadit,” in *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Donna Spivey Ellington (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 79.

<sup>84</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, “Women Mystics and Eucharistic Devotion in the Thirteenth Century,” in *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*, eds. Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 210-211.

<sup>85</sup> Donna Spivey Ellington, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 2-4.

<sup>86</sup> Ellington, 97.

Christ and the Virgin Mary as complimentary models of suffering: Christ suffered physically in his body and Mary suffered emotionally in her heart.<sup>87</sup> The following is a passage from a Passion sermon by François De Sales that illustrates the complementary suffering of Christ and the Virgin Mary at the Crucifixion:

The body of Our Lady was not joined to, and did not touch that of her son in his Passion, but in her soul, she was inseparably united to the soul, to the heart, and to the body of her son, and if the blows that the blessed body of the Savior received on the cross did not wound the body of Our Lady, they were massive wounds to her soul.<sup>88</sup>

The priest powerfully conveys the conceptualization of the two holy figures' suffering at the Crucifixion: Mary feels every pain inflicted on Christ's body as a wound in her heart. The significance of the sermon lies in its ability to show that Mary's connection to her son went beyond the physical bond of shared flesh to reach her heart and soul. Therefore, late medieval people could build a closer relationship with Christ by imitating the compassion the Virgin Mary felt for Christ's physical suffering.

The complementary physical and emotional pain of Christ and Mary was clearly addressed in late medieval textual sources, such as poetry and Passion sermons. Jacophone da Todi's poem "Donna del paradiso" shows how late medieval people looked for aids that would help them visualize a closer relationship with Christ, such as through their immediate presence at the Passion. By reading the poem, late medieval people could visualize speaking with the Virgin Mary at the Passion of Christ. Readers address her as "Lady" while they describe how Christ's hands and feet have been nailed to the Cross:

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<sup>87</sup> Ellington, 91.

<sup>88</sup> François De Sales, "Passion Sermon," in *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Donna Spivey Ellington (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 192.

Lady, they have taken your son,  
Lady, they've taken one of His hands,  
Pressed it against the cross,  
And the nail has ripped through the flesh.  
They've taken the other hand,  
Stretched it out on the cross,  
And the pain spreads and grows.  
Lady, they've taken His feet  
And nailed them to the tree;  
They have broken all His bones and joints.<sup>89</sup>

In addition to capturing the physical suffering of Christ through word choices like “ripped” and “stretched,” the passage is significant because readers offer the Virgin Mary a description of the pain inflicted on her son’s body and they seem to wait for her response. Late medieval people perceived the Virgin Mary as the model Christian.<sup>90</sup> Thus, readers of the poem await her reaction to Christ’s suffering in order to model their own behavior after that of the Virgin. Thus, in “Donna del paradiso,” the physical pain of Christ which readers describe to the Virgin Mary is used to elicit her emotional pain.

Late medieval viewers could reenact the pieta in order to cultivate a more intimate relationship with Christ based on compassion. The center panel of Rogier van der Weyden’s *Triptych of the Virgin* is a Pieta (Figure 55, 1445 the Netherlands) in which the Virgin Mary passionately embraces Christ’s dead body as the final expression of her maternal love. Mary appears to kneel on the ground with Christ’s rigid body wrapped in her arms. Her arms encircle her son’s torso and meet at his abdomen where she tightly twines them together slightly below his side wound. Christ’s right arm is caught beneath Mary’s arm in her embrace, but his other arm hangs down towards the ground like his right arm in Weyden’s *Deposition*. The tight hug that Mary gives Christ’s body

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<sup>89</sup> Jacophone da Todi, “Donna del paradise,” in *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, Sarah McNamer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 94.

<sup>90</sup> Ellington, 4.

expresses the close, intimate relationship they shared. Also, she presses her cheek to that of her son to further express her love and grief. By emulating Mary's compassion viewers could become closer to Christ.

One method of imitating Mary's compassion would be for holy persons to reenact the pieta with a leper. Therefore, the leprous body becomes their intermediary to Christ which helps them cultivate their own personal relationship with Christ. A miniature from the *Illustrated Bartsch* which combines the *Arma Christi* with the *Pieta* (Figure 56, 1500 Germany) shows Christ with leprous sores covering his dead body as the Virgin Mary holds him in her lap. The spots of blood from the Passion resemble the dots used to represent leprous wounds. These spots recall the ones on the bodies of the lepers in William of Nottingham's miniature of Christ healing them. The vast number of spots and their placement throughout the body relate the bodies of lepers with that of Christ. As an immediate and accessible wounded body, lepers could be embraced by late medieval people in order to imitate Mary's compassion for Christ and gain an intimate relationship with him.

Reenacting the pieta with lepers is endorsed by both angels and God in a miniature from a Book of Hours (Figure 57, beginning fifteenth century Normandy, France) in which angels witness the *Pieta*. Behind the Cross which is pierced with nails and draped with the crown of thorns, two angels watch as Mary embraces the dead body of her son for the last time. The composition of the miniature allows viewers to feel closer to the scene, as if they are witnesses as well. Mary sits with a stiff, thin Christ across her lap, but the frame of the miniature cuts off his legs at the knees as well as blocking Mary's feet from viewers' gaze. Thus, viewers can feel as if they are sitting in

front of Mary and grieving with her. The spots on Christ's body that appear as paired short dashes would be understood as leprous sores to late medieval viewers because of their more immediate familiarity with leprous bodies. Late medieval viewers grieved for a leprous Christ which allowed them to translate their feelings of compassion for him to the live leprous body to develop their spiritual devotion.

In addition, a sculpture of the *Pieta* created in Flanders around 1410 (Figure 2) shows Christ's body covered in leprous wounds: the three-dimensional sculpture provided viewers with an even more life-like model of compassion for the leprous body. In the Flemish *Pieta*, the compassion the Virgin Mary demonstrates for Christ by holding him in her arms is reciprocated by Christ despite his death. His left hand seems to clasp Mary's hand in order to offer her comfort. Although he is dead, Christ seems to interact with Mary to lessen her grief and sorrow. Thus, this *pieta* is both an expression of Mary's compassion for her son and of Christ's compassion for his mother. The leprous sores covering his body encouraged late medieval viewers to hold the leprous body in their arms to facilitate a more developed relationship with Christ who would reciprocate with his own love and compassion for them.

Furthermore, a miniature of the *Pieta* from a Book of Hours (Figure 58, 1409) shows Christ splayed across the laps of both Mary and a man who may be John the Evangelist or an anonymous member of the clergy. Christ's body bends back over one of Mary's knees, but his head rests on the lap of the holy man, who cradles it with his hand. Mary has passed along Christ's dead body to the unidentified man which allows him to recreate the *pieta* for himself. In addition to the dark round circles that represent the Five Wounds of Christ, spots cover his body in a regular pattern. The spots could be

understood as leprous sores by late medieval viewers who had more experience with the leprous body than the crucified body. The man cradling Christ's head in his lap would provide viewers with a model of how they could reenact the pieta in their own daily lives by caring for lepers in order to strengthen their bond with Christ by demonstrating the virtue of compassion.

For example, the altarpiece by Bonaventura Berlinghieri of *Saint Francis and Scenes from His Life* (Figure 38, Florence, Italy) shows the saint caring for lepers: on the right side of the top panel, he washes the feet of a leper and, on the other side, he sits with a leper on his lap. As previously discussed, by washing feet Francis imitated Christ who washed the feet of his Apostles to show his humility. Francis achieved the ultimate imitation of Christ through the stigmata, but the altarpiece shows that he also imitated the Virgin Mary's compassion for Christ to gain a more intimate relationship with him. The saint reenacts the pieta by cradling a leper who has light spots covering his brown skin in his lap with one arm behind his neck and the other resting on his thighs. By comforting the leper, Francis reenacts the pieta wherein he plays the role of Mary and cradles the leprous Christ in his lap. In Francis' mind, he could imagine cradling and comforting Christ's broken, bloody body in his arms. Thus, the leprous body offered an intermediary to the body of the crucified Christ which allowed Francis to cultivate a closer relationship with him based on compassion.

In conclusion, I argued that imitating the compassion of Christ and the Virgin Mary was an alternative to imitating Christ's physical pain to gain a closer relationship with him. The Raising of Lazarus is an example of both Christ's compassion and his special connection to lepers: his compassion alleviated Lazarus' sisters' emotional

suffering and reversed the death of a leper. Many saints, including Saint Anthony and Saint Francis, imitated Christ's compassion by caring for and healing lepers. Like Christ's compassion for Martha and Mary of Bethany, Joseph of Arimathea showed compassion for Mary's emotional sorrow after Christ's death by removing her son's body from the Cross. The Deposition of Christ from the Holkham Bible depicts Christ with leprous spots covering his body. Thus, late medieval viewers would have been encouraged to show compassion to lepers by embracing and caring for their bodies.

During the Pieta, the Virgin Mary had her own opportunity to show her compassion for Christ's physical suffering. When Christ appears in the Pieta with leprous spots on his body, such as in the Pieta from Suffolk, late medieval viewers would have been encouraged to recreate this moment of compassion with lepers as an exercise to increase their compassion and devotion to Christ. Berlinghieri's altarpiece in Florence, Italy shows Saint Francis holding a leper in his lap and thus, reenacting the Pieta. Thus, Saint Francis used the leprous body as an intermediary to build a closer relationship with Christ.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

I have argued that the leprous body could function as an intermediary to Christ for late medieval viewers because it was both familiar and accessible in late medieval society. Although lepers may have been physically isolated in *leprosaria* or simply through the fear of catching the disease, they played an important role in the devotional imagination of late medieval people. Even if they were not physically present, lepers could help late medieval people perform aspects of their religion: they could harness the pain of the leprous body or the compassion they felt for lepers' suffering to cultivate a closer relationship with Christ. The *Pieta* from *The Illustrated Bartsch* (Figure 56, 1500 Germany) encompasses many themes that I have explored in this paper.

Behind the bodies of the Virgin Mary and the crucified Christ, stands the Cross that is adorned with the *Arma Christi* of nails and whips. The *Arma Christi*, as I have traced, were used as devotional tools for late medieval viewers. For example, they could meditate on the nails that are placed on the Cross and imagine them driven into the flesh of their hands and feet like they pierced Christ's flesh. Thus, the *Arma Christi* allowed late medieval viewers to reenact the Crucifixion in their minds by channeling Christ's

physical suffering into their own bodies. The juxtaposition of Christ's crucified body and the Virgin Mary's body with the *Arma Christi* encourages late medieval viewers to approach these bodies as tools for their own spiritual enhancement.

In their devotional exercises, late medieval people would take note of the visual similarities, such as spots on the skin and bent, fragmented bodies, which Christ's crucified body held with the leprous body. Since spots on the skin were a well established convention for the depiction of lepers, the spots on Christ's flesh in the *Pieta* from *The Illustrated Bartsch* would allow viewers to conflate Christ with lepers in their imaginations. Therefore, the three-dimensional leprous body could function as a type of *Arma Christi* in motion, wherein late medieval viewers could imagine reenacting both the Crucifixion of Christ and the *Pieta*. The leprous body would function as an intermediary to Christ to late medieval viewers who aimed to nurture a closer relationship with him.

When they gazed on the leprous body, late medieval viewers had two methods of accessing Christ. First, they could exploit the leprous body's physical suffering to gain access to the pain riddled body of the Crucified. This option was popular among mystics, such as Catharine of Siena, and the clergy, such as Saint Francis of Assisi. Saint Francis, for example, reenacted Christ's Crucifixion every day after he received the stigmata. In the miniature of the *Pieta*, the prominent spots on Christ's right foot and hand represent two of the Five Wounds of the Crucifixion that holy stigmatics were privileged to receive. Late medieval viewers could imagine receiving the stigmata like Saint Francis and thus, building a closer relationship with Christ through pain. The gritty quality of this miniature, with its smudges of ink for wounds, effectively communicates the rawness of the pain viewers wished to imitate. Likewise, the raw, immediate pain that lepers

experienced in their hands and feet could be utilized by viewers in their mental devotional exercises during their quests for access to Christ.

The second option late medieval viewers had to heighten their spirituality through the leprous body was to harness the compassion they felt for lepers' physical suffering. Most late medieval people tried to imitate Christ's compassion instead of the physical pain he suffered at the Crucifixion in order to become more spiritual.<sup>91</sup> In doing this they would imitate the compassion the Virgin Mary showed Christ after he was taken down from the Cross in scenes of the *Pieta*, such as the miniature in *The Illustrated Bartsch*. In the miniature, the Virgin Mary holds Christ close to her torso without showing fear or disgust for his bloody, broken body. Instead, she looks down at him with a tender expression on her face that indicates her compassion and love for her son. Since the spots on Christ's flesh conflated him with a leper in the minds of late medieval viewers, they could imagine reenacting the *Pieta* with the leprous body to facilitate a more intimate relationship with Christ. Saint Francis of Assisi was exceptional because he modeled both options for late medieval viewers. As the first holy stigmatic, physical suffering offered him a method of becoming more Christ-like, but his compassion for lepers imitated the maternal love the Virgin Mary held for her son. Regardless of choosing the method of pain or love, I have demonstrated that late medieval people needed lepers to perform devotional mental exercises which increased their access to Christ.

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<sup>91</sup> Mitchell, 151.

## CHAPTER IX

### EPILOGUE

After the Middle Ages, the body lost its religious significance as a pathway to Christ in favor of another familiar and accessible intermediary: nature. It became popular to admire the grandness of nature to become closer to God. Thus, nature replaced the leprous body as an intermediary to the divine, but this was not a completely new idea. One of God's traditional symbols was light: Gothic architecture, for example, is known for its stained glass windows which filter light through colored glass to heighten worshippers' connection to God. In the sixteenth century, light symbolized the divine, but throughout the nineteenth century grand vistas, like forests and mountains, functioned in this way.

In Cigoli's painting of the *Stigmata of Saint Francis* (Figure 59, 1596 Italy), for instance, Christ appears to Francis amidst golden light. Saint Francis falls to his knees and drops his book in shock when he sees the body of Christ floating above him. His head is thrown backwards with closed eyes and a slightly open mouth to express the religious ecstasy he experiences. Late medieval images of the stigmatization of Saint Francis illustrate the miracle with red lines of blood trailing from the Five Wounds of

Christ to their place on Francis' body. These images even tend to show the side wound by cutting a small circle out of the saint's robe. On the other hand, in this late sixteenth century painting, the wounds of the body are not emphasized: Francis' hands are cupped slightly to conceal his palms and his robe is not pierced to show the side wound. Instead, Cigoli focused on the ecstasy expressed on the saint's face which was caused by Christ, who is bathed in light.

Furthermore, Laurent de La Hyre's *Landscape with Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* (Figure 60, 1640-1650) shows an even heavier emphasis on nature as an expression of the divine. The landscape is a dark painting because the artist has placed viewers within the depths of a large cave where Saint Francis rests with his back against the cave's wall. As Francis finds respite near the mouth of the cave, Christ appears to him as an angel with large white wings. Christ sheds light into the dark cave with his presence. In addition to its indication of Christ's presence, the light increases the drama of the moment of stigmatization. Also, while the Five Wounds of Christ were hidden in the Cigoli painting, the bodies of both Francis and Christ are smaller in comparison to the landscape here. Their bodies are engulfed by the grand series of caves that surround them. Thus, the majesty of nature has replaced the body as an intermediary to the divine.

Christ himself seems small in comparison to the splendid mountains of Caspar David Friedrich's painting of the Crucifixion which is entitled *The Cross in the Mountains* (Figure 61, 1880). Set within an extravagant golden frame, a lofty mountain lined with pine trees is topped with a tall, skinny Cross. Christ hangs on the Cross with rays of sun emerging behind the mountain. Viewers can barely see the small body of Christ atop the Cross. Even more distance is created between viewers and Christ's body because he

faces away from them. The distance between the body of Christ and viewers encourages them to use the grand landscape of mountains and trees to connect with God instead of Christ's body. As a divine creation, nature could function as an intermediary to God because it reminded them of his power and their insignificance in comparison.

Although nature was a popular intermediary to Christ for hundreds of years, the twentieth century experienced a return to the body as a key player in people's relationship with the divine. For example, Kiki Smith chose the personal symbol of cats as an intermediary to Christ in her *Pieta* (Figure 62, 1999). The drawing shows five women lined up and seated in chairs with cats stretched out on their laps. The struggling feline bodies resemble the awkward stiff body of Christ which often tumbled from the Virgin Mary's lap in her efforts to keep him in place. In contemporary images like Smith's *Pietas*, holding the intermediary to your own body has once again become a noteworthy part of the performance of spirituality.

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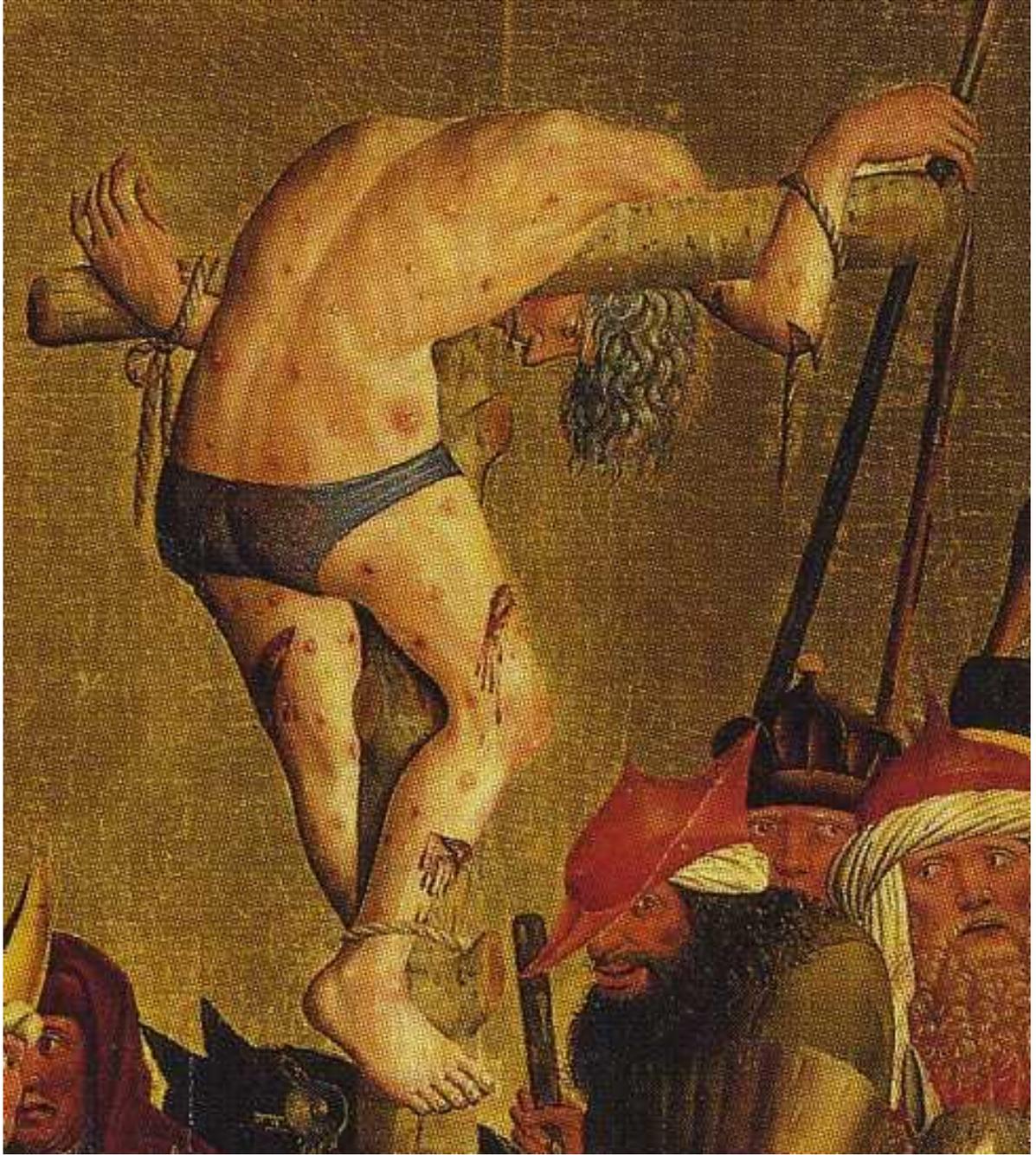
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## APPENDIX



Figure 1: “The Master of the Munich Domkreuzigung,” *Calvary*. Mid-Fifteenth Century, Upper Bavaria. Frauenkirche, Munich. Source: Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, 109.



Detail of Figure 1: “The Master of the Munich Domkreuzigung,” *Calvary*. Mid-Fifteenth Century, Upper Bavaria. Frauenkirche, Munich. Source: Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, 109.



Figure 2: *Pieta*. 1400-1410, Sint-Peters-Bandenkerk te Beringen, Flanders. Source: Artstor.

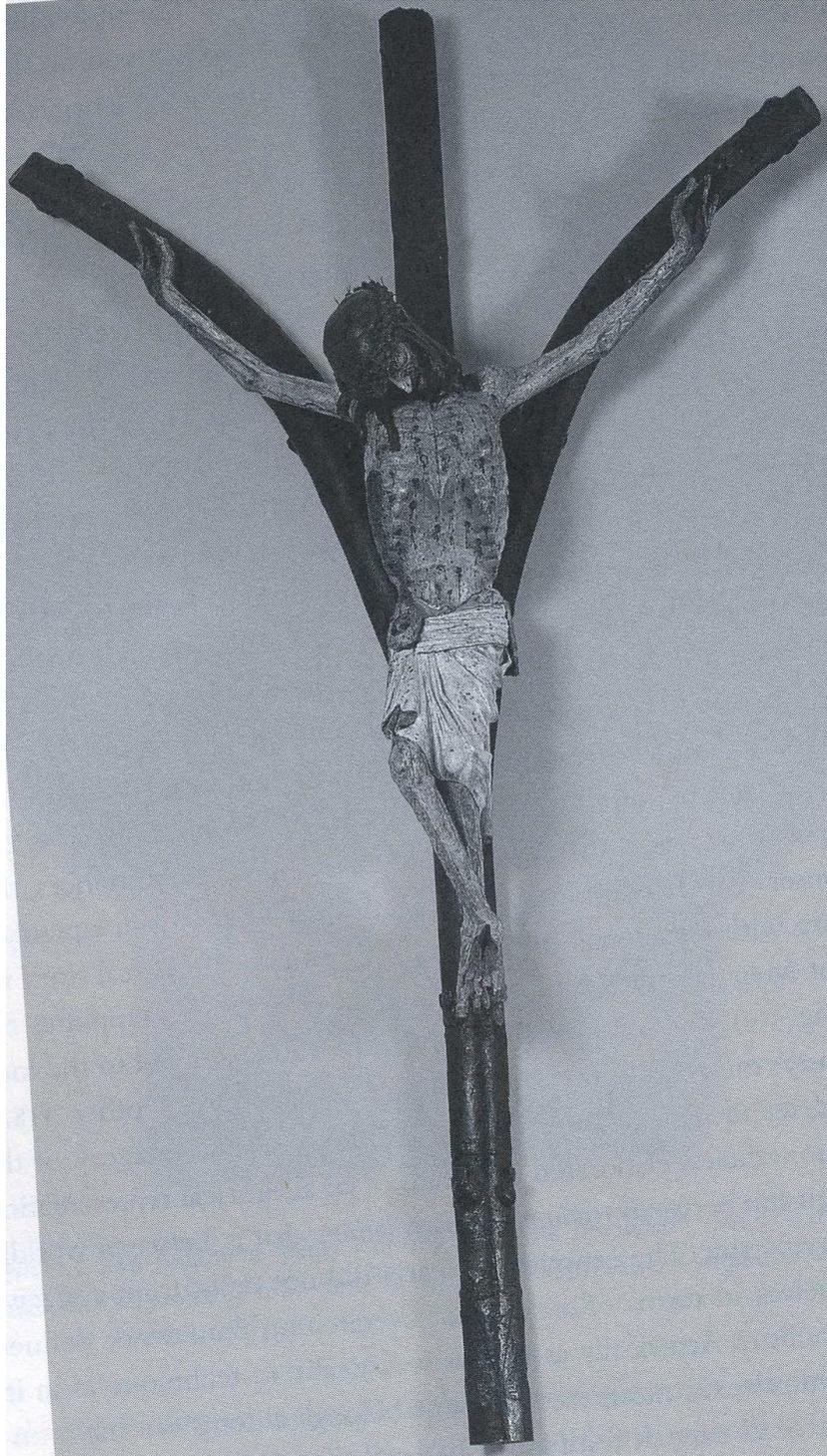


Figure 3: *Crucifixus dolorosus* (plague cross). 1304, Saint Maria im Kapitol, Cologne.  
Source: Jeffrey Hamburger and Susan Marti eds., *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, 90.

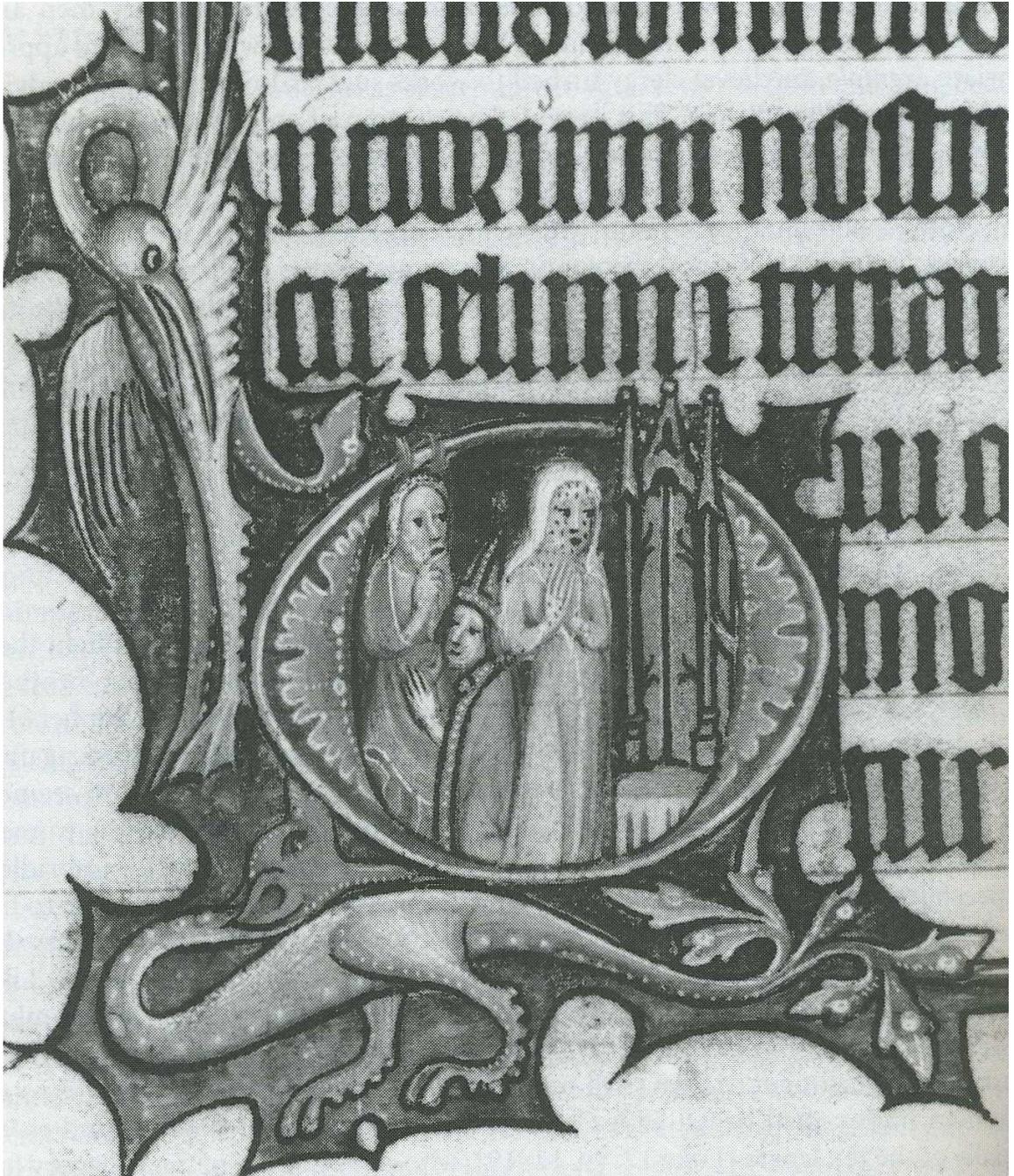


Figure 4: *Miriam Struck with Leprosy* from a Psalter. Fourteenth Century, England.  
Source: Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England*, 50.



Figure 5: William of Nottingham, *Christ heals two lepers in Galilee* from a Commentary on the Gospels. After 1396, England. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Laud Misc. 165, folio 149 verso. Source: Artstor.

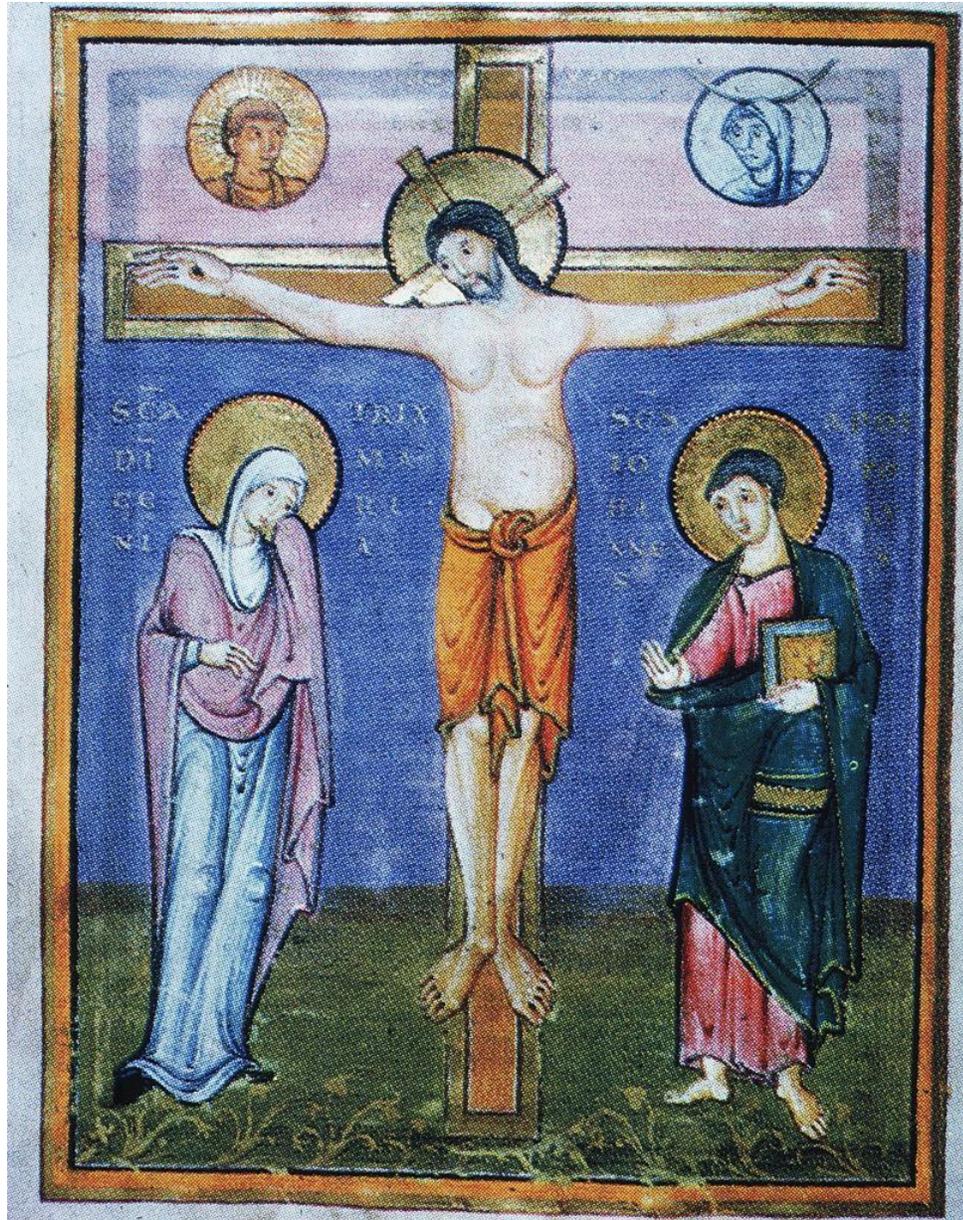


Figure 6: *Crucifixion* from the Lorsch Sacramentary. 990, France. Musée Condé, folio 4 verso. Source: Artstor.

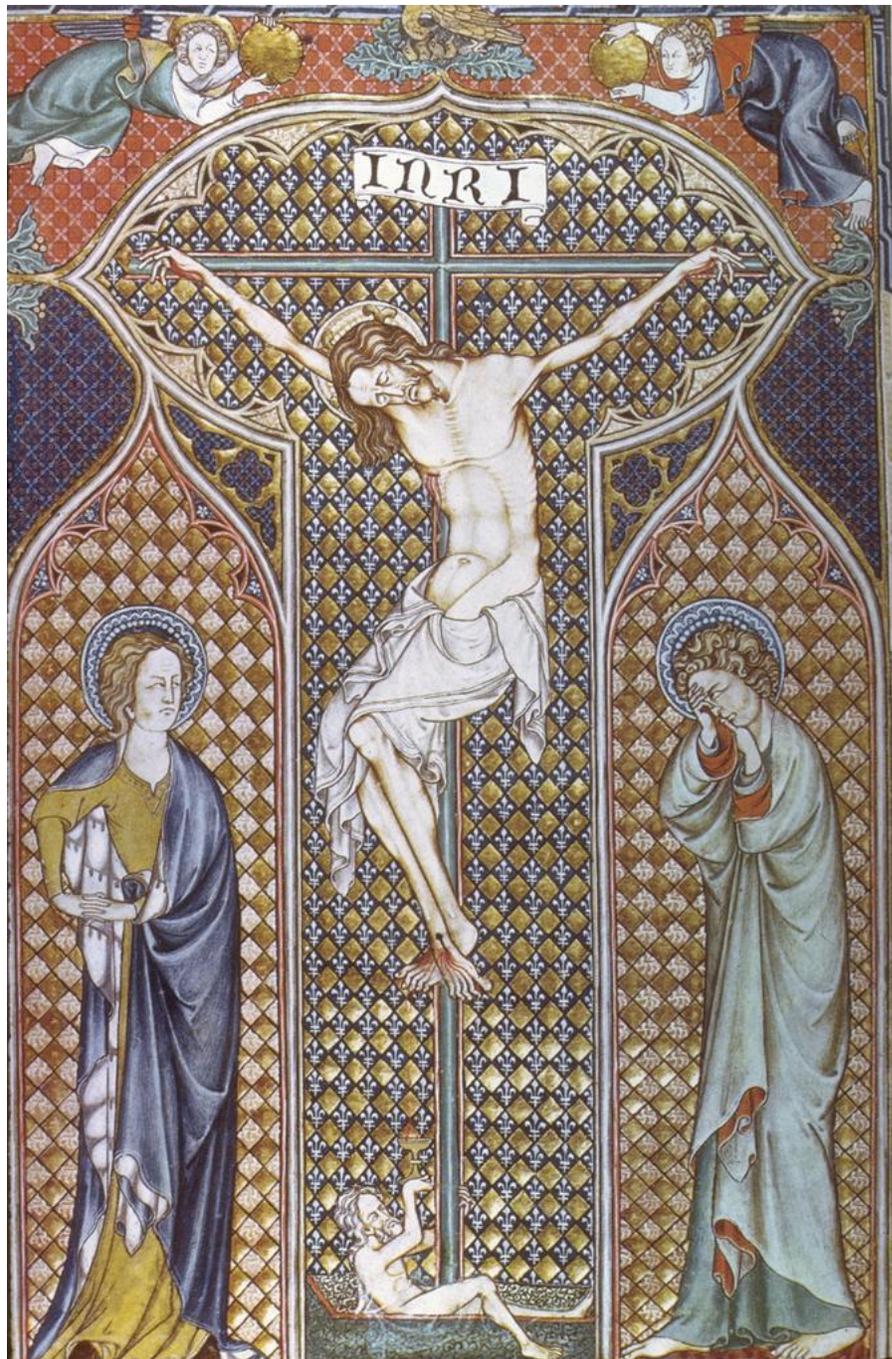


Figure 7: *Crucifixion* from the Psalter of Robert, Baron of Lisle (Arundel Psalter). 1339, England. British Library, London, Arundel MS. 83. Source: Artstor.



Figure 8: Lucas Cranach, *Crucifixion*. 1500, Germany. Source: Artstor.



Figure 9: Israhel van Meckenem, A Woodcut of *Christ as the Man of Sorrows* from an Album of Twelve Engravings of the Passion. Late Fifteenth Century, the Netherlands. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Source: Artstor.



Figure 10: *Christ Heals a Leper* from an identified work. Mid-Fourteenth Century, Venice, Italy. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Canon. Misc. 476, folio 066 recto. Source: Artstor.



Figure 11: *Baptism of Christ* from the Soane Hours. 1500, Flanders. Sir John Soane's Museum, MS. 4 folio 27 verso. Source: Artstor.



Et factus est Naaman p[ro]phet[us] in iordane & t[er]ru

Et unguem an[im]a xpi  
fuit natus crucifix  
us mortuus atq[ue]  
tumulatus. Re d[omi]n[us]

Figure 12: *Cleansing of Naaman* from the Soane Hours. 1500, Flanders. Sir John Soane's Museum, MS. 4 folio 28 recto. Source: Artstor.



Figure 13: *Naaman washing in the river Jordan* from fragments of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*. 1460-1470, Flanders. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Douce f. 4, folio 007 recto. Source: Artstor.

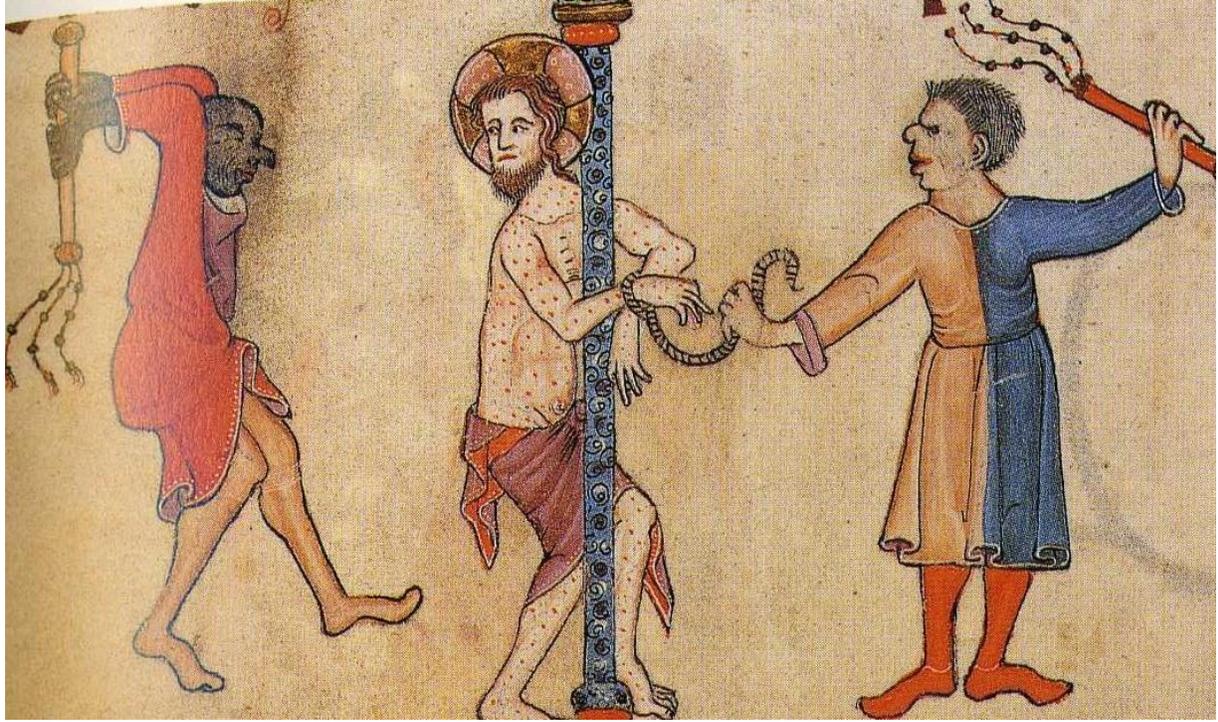


Figure 14: *Flagellation of Christ* from the *Luttrell Psalter*. Fourteenth Century, England. British Museum, London, MS. Add. 42130, folio 92 verso. Source: Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts : Signs of Otherness in Northern European art of the late Middle Ages*, image 43.



Figure 15: *Flagellation of Christ* from the *Holkham Bible*. 1325-1330, England. British Library, London, MS. Add. 47682, folio 29 verso, detail. Source: Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts : Signs of Otherness in Northern European art of the late Middle Ages*, image 34.

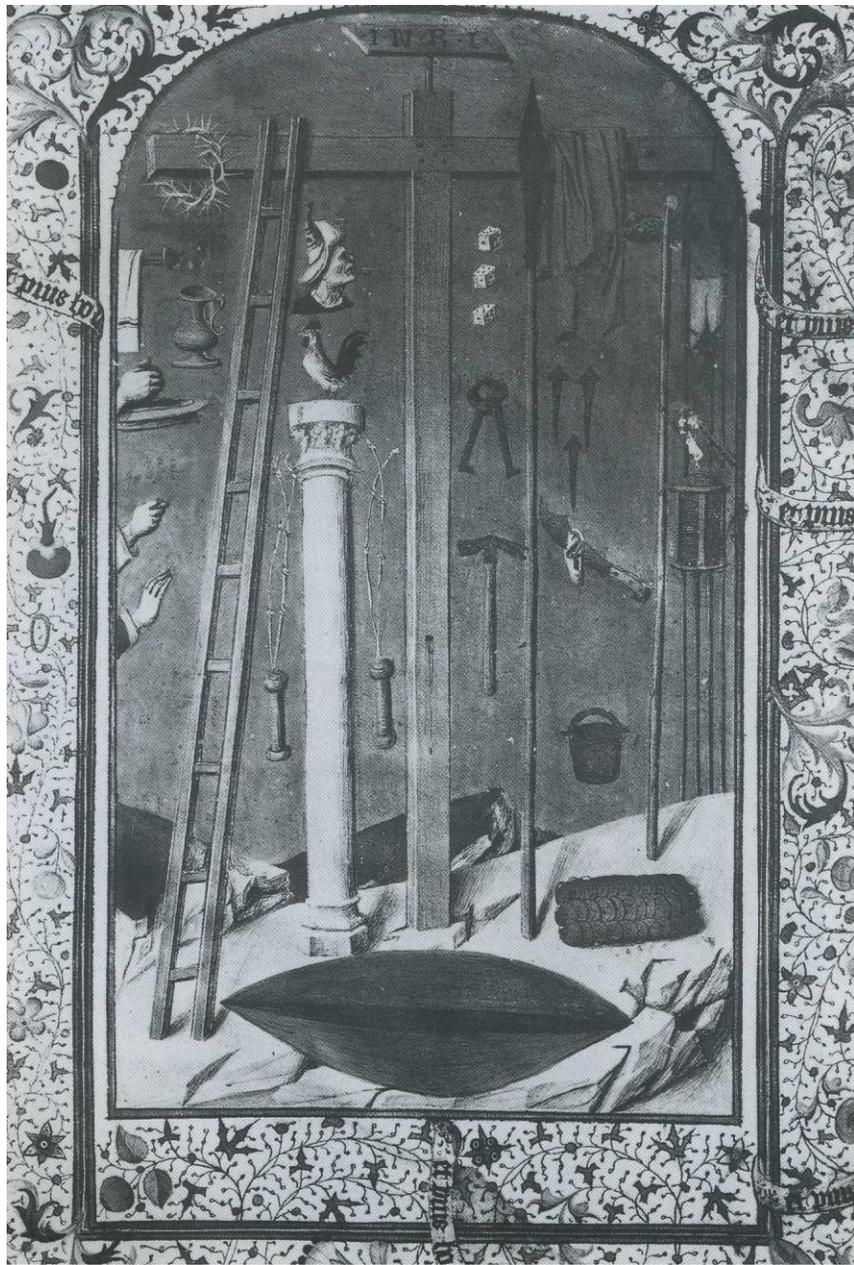


Figure 16: *Arma Christi* from the Hours of Maréchal de Boucicaut. Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André, MS 2 fol. 242. Source: A.A. MacDonald, et al., *The Broken Body : Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture*, plate 8.



Figure 17: *Arma Christi*. 1320, Paris. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 574, folio 140 verso. Source : A.A. MacDonald, et al., *The Broken Body : Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture*, 221.



Figure 18: *Christ as the Man of Sorrows* from the *Illustrated Bartsch*, volume 163. Before 1500, Germany. Paris (BN) and Munich (UB), single leaf woodcut. Source: Artstor.



Figure 19: *Christ as the Man of Sorrows*. Chicago, Art Institute, woodcut, 47.731.  
Source: A.A. MacDonald, et al., *The Broken Body : Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture*, 201.



Figure 20: *The Charter of Christ*. Fifteenth Century, England. British Library, London, Add. 37049, folio 25 recto. Source: James M. Bradburne, ed., *Blood: Art, Power, Politics, and Pathology*, 98.



Figure 21: *The Wounds of Christ with the Symbols of the Passion*. 1490. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Source: A.A. MacDonald, et al., *The Broken Body : Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture*, plate 1.

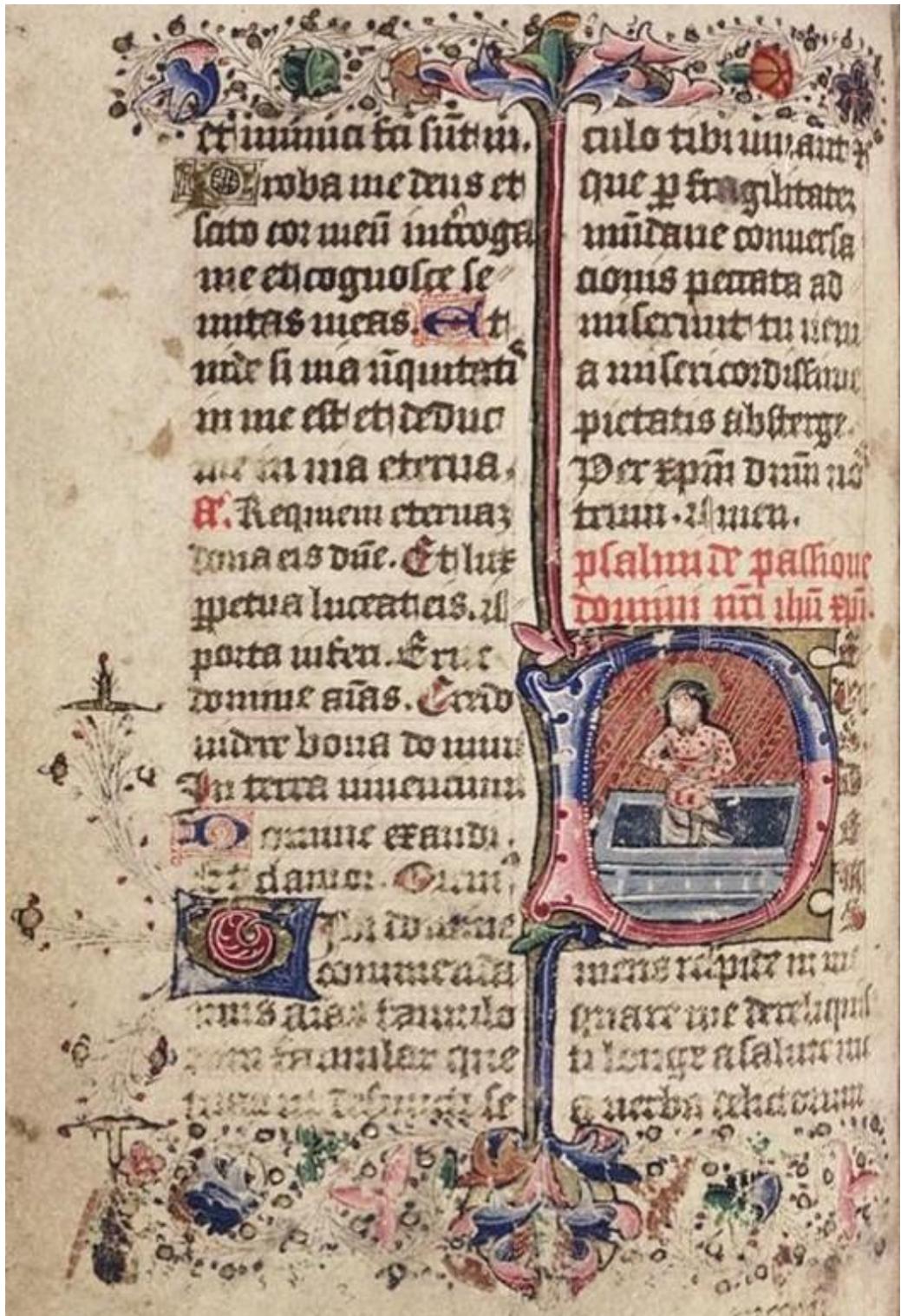


Figure 22: Christ as the Man of Sorrows standing in a tomb from a Book of Hours containing Passion Psalms. 1450-1475, England. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Bodl. 850, folio 065 verso. Source: Artstor.



Figure 23: *Christ as the Man of Sorrows* from a fresco on the fifth North column of the church of San Francesco. Early Fourteenth Century, Lodi, Italy. Source: Artstor.

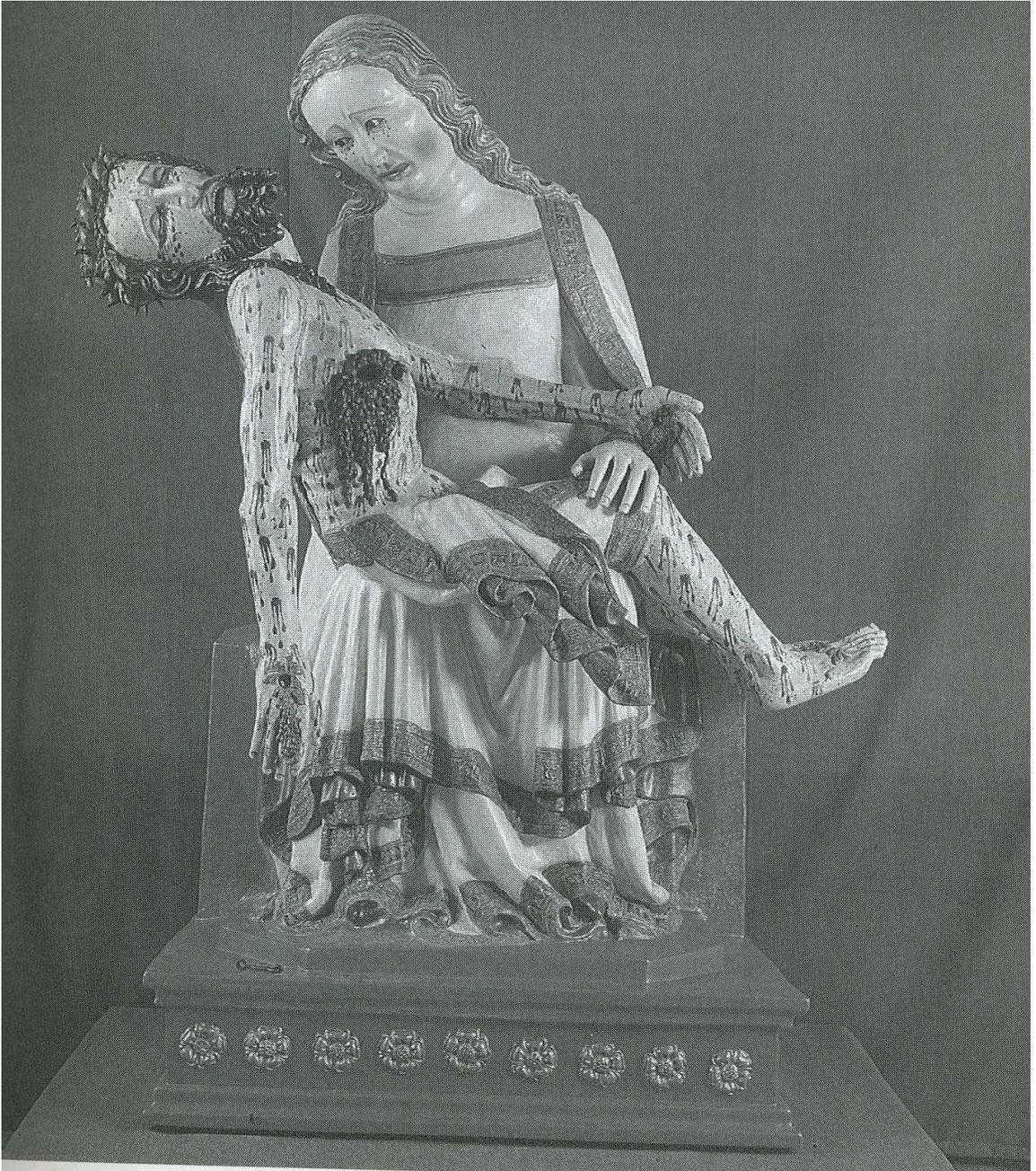


Figure 24: *The Fritzlar Pietà*. 1350, Germany. Westfälisches Landemuseum, Münster, Germany. Source: Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, plate 15.

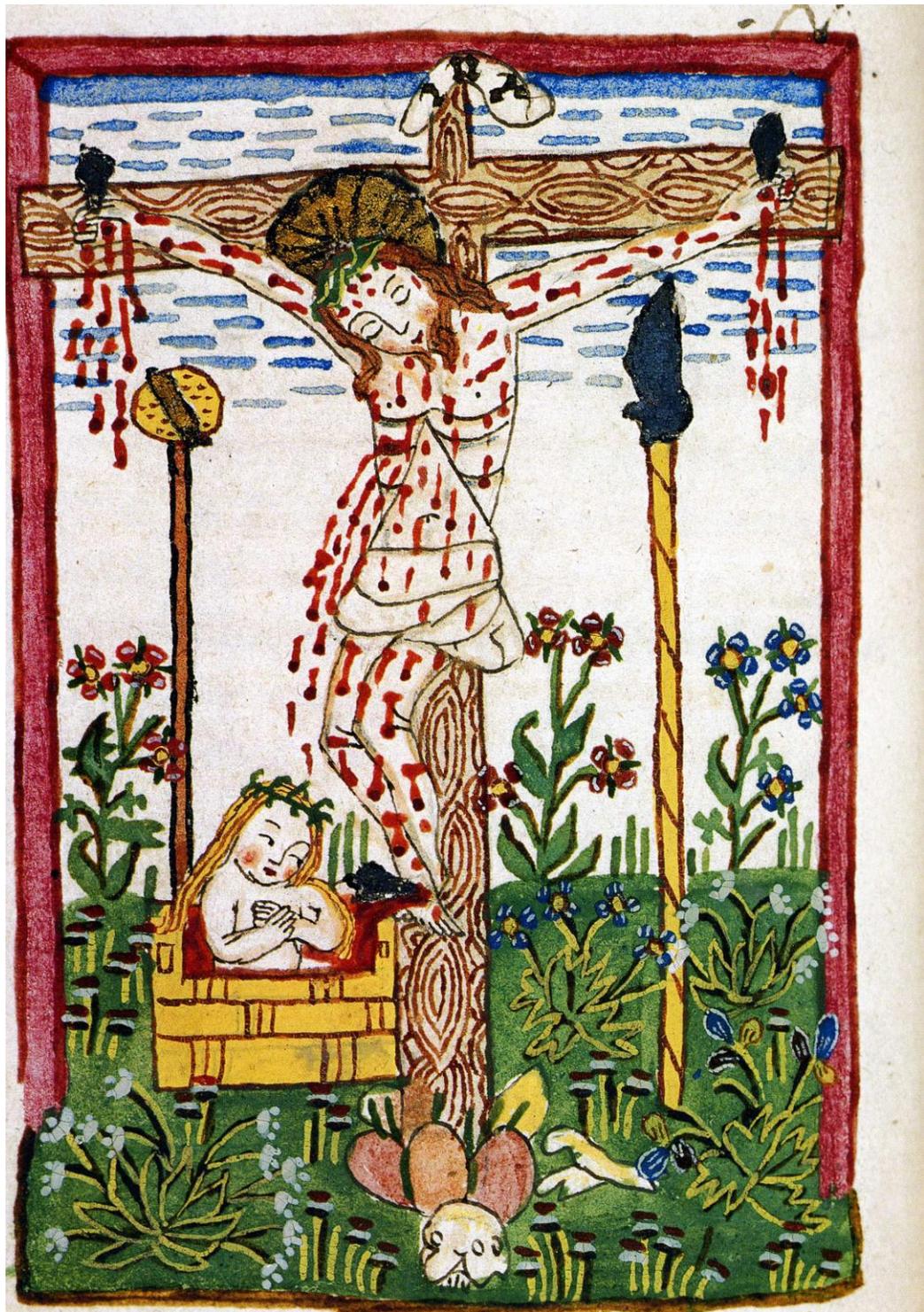


Figure 25: *Crucified Christ with Female Figure Bathing in His Blood*. Early Sixteenth Century, Strasbourg, France. Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Inv. Ms. St. Peter, pap. 4, folio 30 verso. Source: James M. Bradburne, ed., *Blood: Art, Power, Politics, and Pathology*, 64.



Figure 26: Meister Francke, *Man of Sorrows*. Leipzig, Museum der bildenden künste.  
Source : A.A. MacDonald, ed., *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture*, plate 1.



Figure 27: Quirizio da Murano, *The Savior*. 1460-1470. Source : Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, plate 25.



Figure 28: *Catherine of Siena Flagellating Herself* from *Der geistliche Rosgart* (A Spiritual Rose Garden), a German translation of Raymond of Capua's life of Saint Catherine of Siena. Early Fifteenth Century, Upper Rhine or Alsace. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, MS. All. 34, folio 4 verso. Source: Jeffrey Hamburger and Susan Marti, eds. *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, 180.

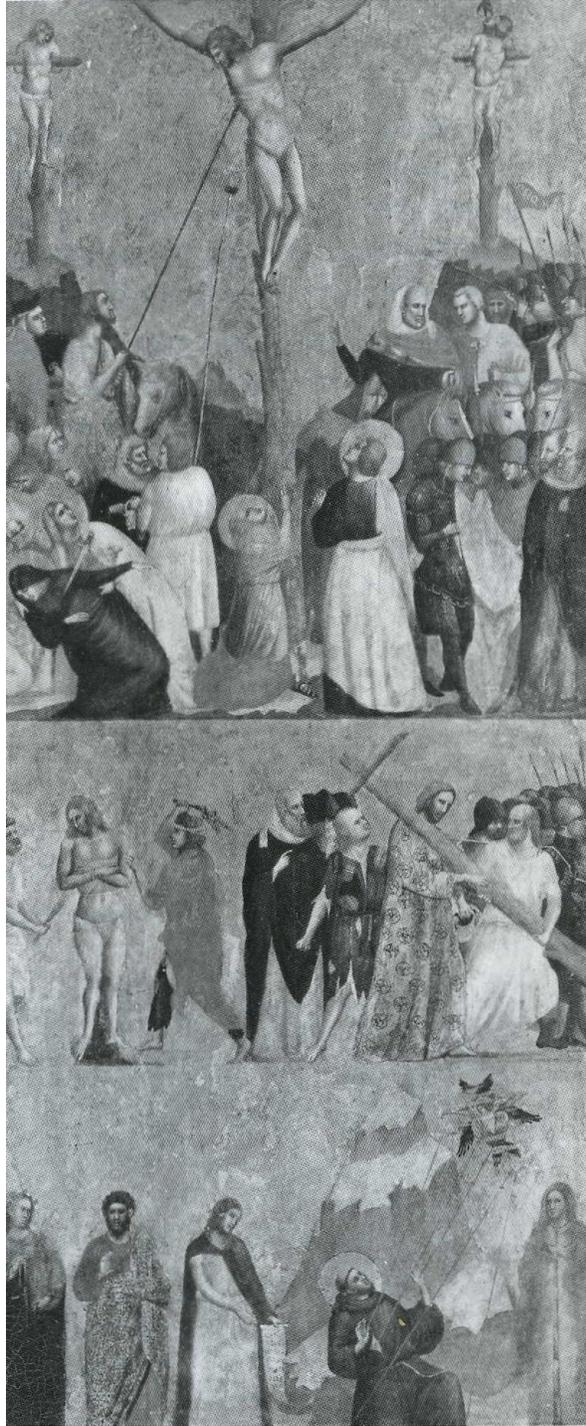


Figure 29: Rimini School, *Crucifixion, Flagellation, the Carrying of the Cross, and the Stigmatization of Saint Francis*, right wing of a diptych. Fourteenth Century, Germany. Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Source: Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, 227.



Figure 30: *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* from a Franciscan Breviary. Mid-Fourteenth Century, Paris. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Douce 245, folio 457 recto. Source: Artstor.



Figure 31: *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* from a Franciscan Breviary. Mid-Fourteenth Century, Paris. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Douce 245, folio 557 recto. Source: Artstor.

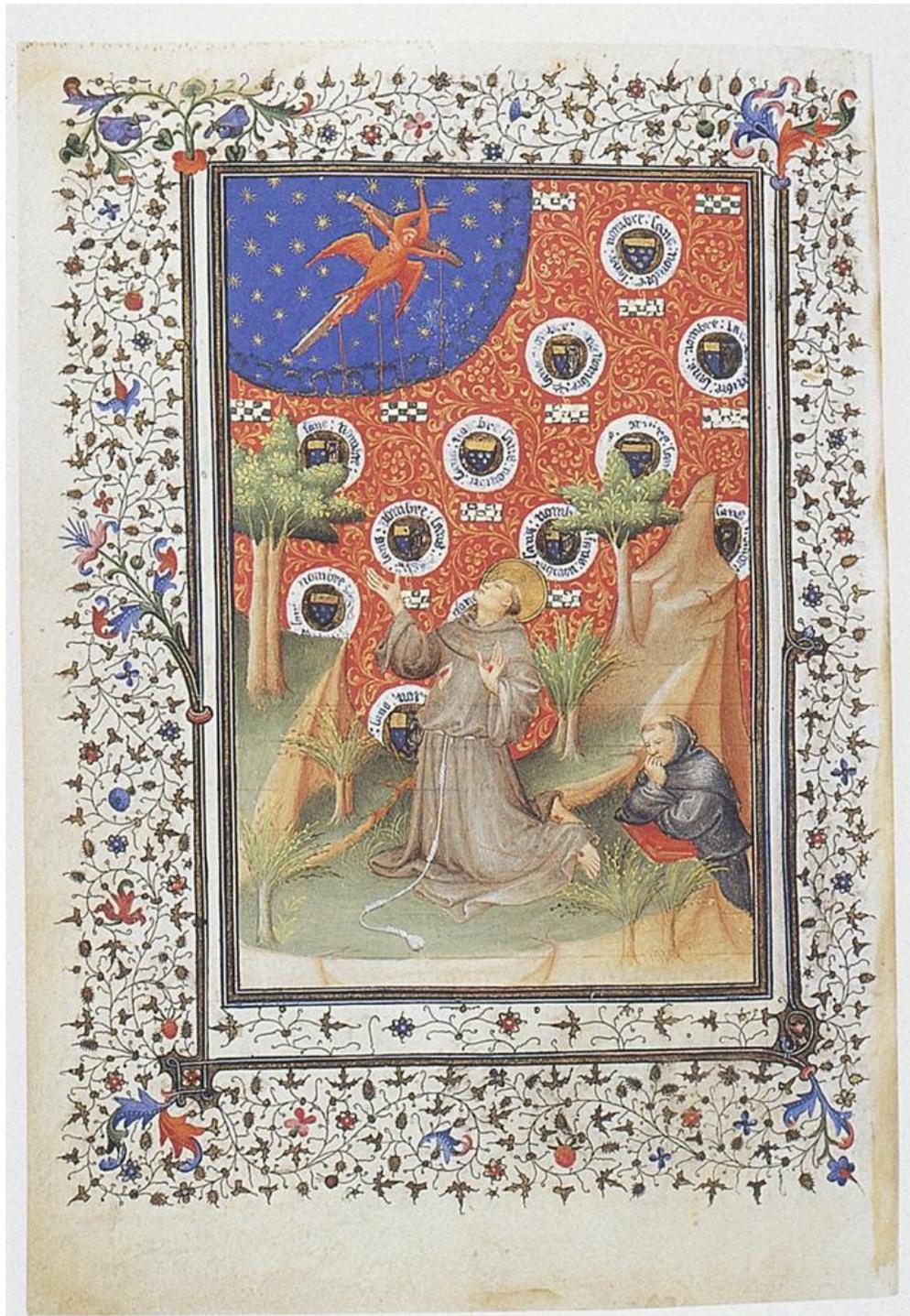


Figure 32: *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* from the Suffrages of a Book of Hours. 1410-1415, France. Musée Jacquemart-André, MS. 2, folio 37 verso. Source: Artstor.



Figure 33: *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* from a Book of Hours. 1440, Nantes, France. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Add. A. 1805, folio 064 verso.

Source: Artstor.



Figure 34: "Master of the David Scenes in the Grimani Breviary," *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata from a Seraph* from a Book of Hours. Beginning Sixteenth Century, Flanders. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Douce 112, folio 161 recto. Source: Artstor.



Figure 35: "Master of the David Scenes in the Grimani Breviary," *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata from a Seraph* from a Book of Hours. Beginning Sixteenth Century, Flanders. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Douce 256, folio 182 verso. Source: Artstor.



Figure 36: Giovanni di Paolo, *Saint Catherine of Siena Receiving the Stigmata*. Fifteenth Century, Italy. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, #22. Source: Artstor.



Figure 37: *Christ Washing the Feet of His Disciples* from the *Spiegel Der Menschlichen Behältnisse* (Mirror of Human Salvation) series of *The Illustrated Bartsch*. 1477, Germany. Source: Artstor.



Figure 38: Bonaventura Berlinghieri, *Saint Francis and Scenes from His Life*, detail of *the Saint with the Lepers and His Appearance at Arles* from an altar in Santa Croce, Florence, Italy. Source: Artstor.



Detail of Figure 38: Bonaventura Berlinghieri, *Saint Francis and Scenes from His Life*, detail of the *Saint with the Lepers and His Appearance at Arles* from an altar in Santa Croce. Florence, Italy. Source: Artstor



Figure 39: *Saint Vincent Tortured, Stuttgart Passional*. Early Twelfth Century, Stuttgart Württembergische Landesbibliothek. Source: Madeleine H. Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages*, 102.



Figure 40: *The Virgin Mary and Crucified Christ in a stained glass window*. Fifteenth Century, Church of the Holy Trinity, Long Melford, Suffolk, England. Source: Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England*, 143.



Figure 41: *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* from *The Illustrated Bartsch*. 1500, Germany. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 16501.1432-2. Source: Artstor.



Figure 42: *Dominican Nun Embraces the Blood-Covered Christ*. Late Fifteenth Century, France. Source: Jeffrey Hamburger and Susan Marti, eds., *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, 182.



Figure 43: *Raising of Lazarus* from a Book of Hours. 1507, Florence. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Douce 9, folio 182 verso. Source: Artstor.



Detail of Figure 43: *Raising of Lazarus* from a Book of Hours. 1507, Florence. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Douce 9, folio 182 verso. Source: Artstor.



Figure 44: *Satan in Chains, Harrowing of Hell, Resurrection, and Three Marys* from a copy of the *Life of Christ and the Saints*. 1325-1350. Piermont Morgan Library, MS. 360 folio 11. Source: Artstor.

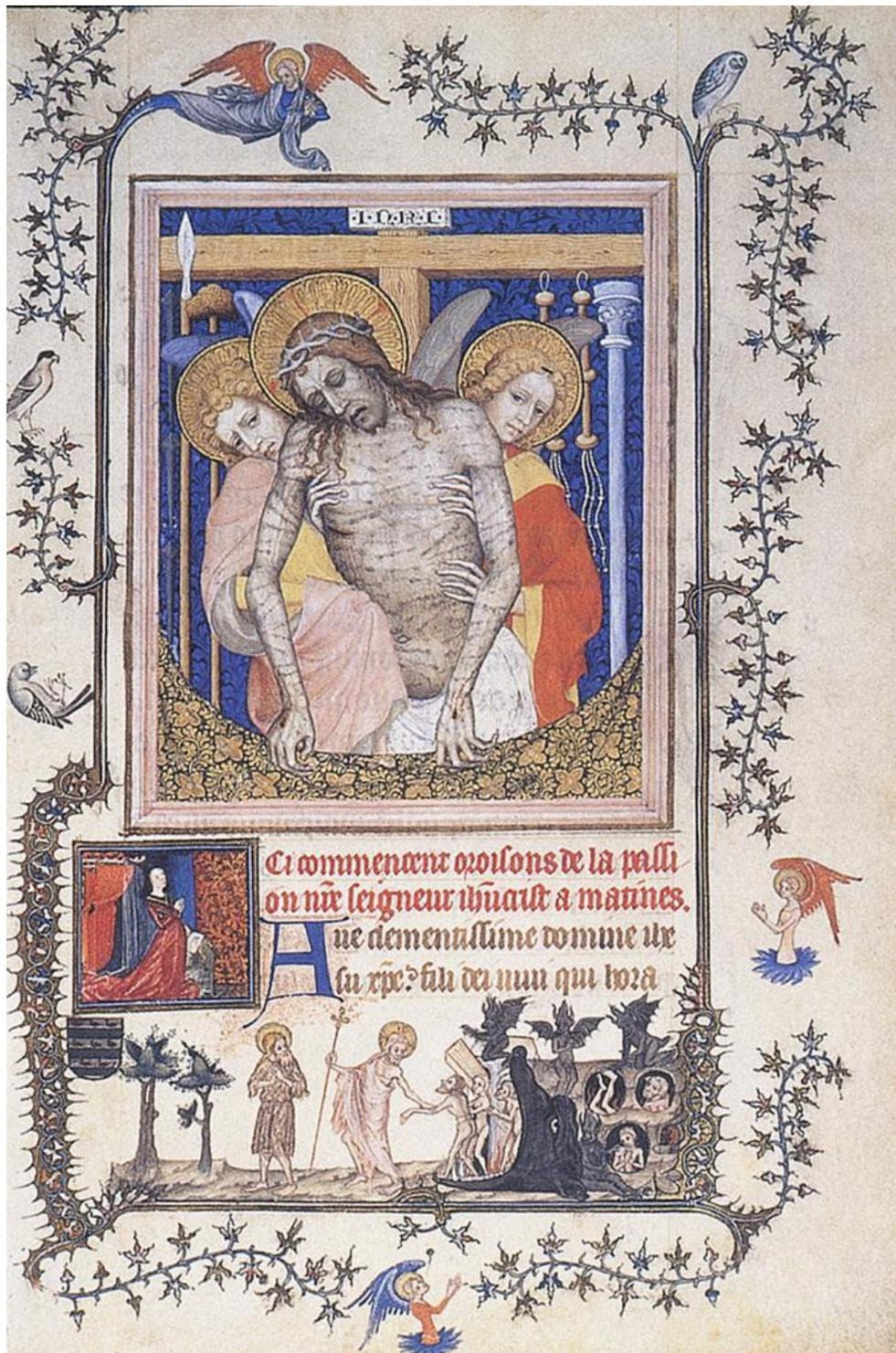


Figure 45: Étienne Lannelier (?), *Man of Sorrows* from the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame*. Late Fourteenth Century through Mid Fifteenth Century, Flanders. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, France, MS. Nouv. Acq. Lat. 3093, folio 155. Source : Artstor.



Figure 46: *Dance of Death* from a Book of Hours. Late Fifteenth Century, Paris, France. Princeton University Library, Princeton, folio 97 recto. Source: Artstor.



Figure 47: *Christ Carrying the Cross* from an unidentified work. Mid Fourteenth Century, Venice, Italy. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Canon 476, folio 082 recto. Source: Artstor.



Figure 48: *Saint Veronica with Her Veil with Image of Christ Healing Emperor Vespasian*. 1510, Brussels. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1975.1.1914.  
Source: Artstor.



Figure 49: Bonaventura Berlinghieri, *Saint Francis and Scenes from his Life*. 1235, Chiesa di San Francesco, Pescia, Italy. Source: Artstor.



Figure 50: Baccio Baldini, *Saint Anthony of Padua with Thirteen Scenes from his Life*. 1460-1480. Rome BCT. Source: Artstor.



Detail of Figure 50: Baccio Baldini, *Saint Anthony of Padua with Thirteen Scenes from his Life*. 1460-1480. Rome BCT. Source: Artstor.



Figure 51: *Crucifixion, Deposition from the Cross, Entombment, and Resurrection* from the Barlow Psalter. 1321-1341, Peterborough, England. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Barlow 22, folio 013 verso. Source: Artstor.



Figure 52: *Deposition* from the *Holkham Bible*. 1325-1330, England. British Library, London, MS. Add. 17682, folio 33 recto. Source: Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts : Signs of Otherness in Northern European art of the late Middle Ages*, image III.94.



Figure 53: Master of the Rohan Hours Workshop, *Deposition from the Cross and Pietà* from the Arsenal-Princeton Hours. 1415, Paris, France. Princeton University Library, Princeton, Garrett 48, folio 49 recto. Source: Artstor.



Figure 54: Rogier van der Weyden, *Deposition*. 1436, Netherlands. Museo del Prado, Madrid. Source: Artstor.



Figure 55: Rogier van der Weyden, *Pieta*, center panel of the *Triptych of the Virgin*. 1445, Netherlands. Capilla Real de Granada, Spain. Source: Artstor.



Figure 56: *Pieta* from the *Illustrated Bartsch*. 1500, Germany. Hamburg (MKG). Source: Artstor.



Figure 57: *Pieta* from a Book of Hours of the Life of Saint Margaret. Beginning Fifteenth Century, Normandy, France. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Rawl. Liturgy. e. 12, folio 193 verso. Source: Artstor.



Figure 58: *Pieta* from a Book of Hours. 1409. Ushaw College, MS. 10, folio 57. Source: Artstor.



Figure 59: Cigoli, *Stigmata of Saint Francis*. 1596. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.  
Source: Artstor.



Figure 60: Laurent de La Hyre, *Landscape with Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata*. 1640-1650. Musée du Louvre, Paris, France, inv. RF 1996-15. Source: Artstor.



Figure 61: Caspar David Fredrich, *The Cross in the Mountains*. 1880. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 45-05-01/53. Source: Artstor.



Figure 62: Kiki Smith, *Pieta*. 1999. Source: Artstor.