

BLOOD ON THE CROSS: THE *CRUCIFIXUS DOLOROSUS* AND
VIOLENCE IN ITALIAN MEDIEVAL ART

by
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A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Baltimore, Maryland
November, 2015

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ABSTRACT

Blood on the Cross investigates contemporary perceptions of the violent imagery of *crucifixi dolorosi* in Italy. *Crucifixi dolorosi* are life-sized wood crucifixes that present the painfully stretched and contorted, often startlingly bloody body of Christ. They proliferated across Europe in the late thirteenth century, particularly in Germany's Rhine region and across Italy. Deriving from no clear artistic predecessor, the Italian *crucifixi dolorosi* have been labeled foreign, resulting in their persistent marginalization from the history of Italian medieval art.

Previous scholarship generally sought out the origins of the image type, most often cited as Cologne. My dissertation takes a different approach by investigating the previously unexplored questions of how these objects functioned and were perceived by contemporary viewers. Arguing that the *crucifixi dolorosi* were a visual means of making late-medieval theological concepts, especially scholastic concepts of vision and beauty, accessible to ordinary viewers, it studies the Italian crucifixes as objects in their own right.

My dissertation investigates the crucifixes at their points of intersection with contemporary devotional, scientific, and theological concern. Through their striking imagery, the *crucifixi dolorosi* called on beholders to regard them as loci of contact with the Divine and as instruments to aid in the devotional quest to imitate Christ. They compelled viewers to confront the limitations of visual representation and facilitated the ascent from physical to spiritual seeing. Such imagery encouraged the contemplation of Christ's sacrifice, of his deformity on the cross and his true beauty – salvation.

My study indicates the need to reevaluate the standard scholarly narrative of the history of Italian medieval art. Challenging the perception that the portrayal of wounds and suffering was characteristic of the North while the beautiful alone prevailed south of the Alps, I demonstrate that the deformed appearance of these crucifixes engaged with local devotional needs, as well as contemporary debates about the role and status of the image and the Eucharist. ***Blood on the Cross*** therefore returns the Italian *crucifixi dolorosi* to their local contexts and provides a deeper understanding of how late-medieval Italians intended their images to work.

Adviser: Herbert Kessler; Second Reader: Felipe Pereda.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My first acknowledgment belongs to my adviser, Herbert Kessler, who always saw in me the potential to do better. He continuously pushed me beyond what I thought were my absolute limits to produce the best work I could, and so whatever quality and depth this work possesses is in large order thanks to him. Felipe Pereda also deserves my deep gratitude for the hours he spent talking through ideas with me, as well as reading and commenting on my work. Nino Zchomelidse was especially instructive in helping me present my project in its most convincing and captivating light. I am most grateful to the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, which supported my year of research and writing in Rome; without that time abroad to use the collections of such libraries as the Bibliotheca Hertziana and to visit and examine a number of my crucifixes in person, this dissertation would not be even half what it is. I also thank the Department of the History of Art and the Singleton Center at Johns Hopkins for their generous financial support for both research travel and writing.

I have been incredibly lucky to have strong role models and mentors along the way, and two, Jane Carroll and Anne Derbes, stand out for their unwavering support both of this project and of my growth as a scholar. I also count my blessings for the amazing colleagues who have not only contributed to my intellectual growth, but have also been dear friends. Shana O'Connell, Marsha Libina, and Erin Lebbin – the original cohort – have been by my side from the beginning, through every high and every low. Often over burgers and beers, Chiara Valle offered invaluable encouragement, reading countless pages and talking through many versions of the ideas I finally put down on the pages that

follow. Christopher Nygren, Andrea Olsen, and Ruth Noyes also deserve thanks for taking me under their wings early on and showing me the ropes.

Beyond the History of Art department, I absolutely must thank Don Juedes, who has not only been a fantastic and resourceful librarian, but has also always made me smile. I am hugely grateful to Julie Reiser for running such a formative and supportive dissertation-writing workshop. Thanks to that workshop, I gained insights and ideas from such kind and generous people as Jennifer Watson Wester, Christopher Brinker, and Amy Sheeran. Heather Stein, too, read many pages, as well as offered deep and loyal friendship. A year in Rome would not have been nearly as productive or fun without Marco Ruffini, Tracy Cosgriff, John Lansdowne, Kelli Wood, and Will Bryant.

Good friends are hard to come by, but somehow I have been favored with many. Lili Knorr deserves so much of my gratitude, for her love and incalculable minutes on the phone. Cole Jones always raised my spirits with good wine and good cheer. For keeping me on my feet for all these long years, I thank Ann Irvine, Heather Parker, Amelia Martin, Lizzy Bonagura, and Elizabeth Ranson, and for always making home a happy place to come back to, Sarah Smith, Arjun Khosla, Dan Shea, and Emily Smith.

My family deserves more thanks than there are words to write. They have given me love and support, as well as the strength to see a difficult project through to its end. As my grandmother always said, their money has always been on me, and for that I am eternally grateful. I have been blessed with not only one wonderful family; in Rome I was gifted with a second who love me like their own. To Lidia and Raffy, grazie mille per tutto – voi sarete sempre mia famiglia.

My final acknowledgment belongs to my greatest, most wonderful husband, Andrew. If I tried to write down everything he deserves my thanks for, that alone would fill this volume and I would never get around to the *crucifixa dolorosi*.

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INTRODUCTION

On the southern wall of the Cappella di San Tommaso in Orvieto's church of San Domenico,¹ a fourteenth-century fresco of Christ crucified between Mary and John survives within a niche (figure 1). The painting is what one might expect given its date and location: contained within an ornamental frame painted around the edges of the niche, the scene shows Christ hanging from a simple Latin cross mounted atop a small hillock, at the bottom of which is Adam's skull. Christ hangs almost peacefully, his head falling forward, his curly golden hair cascading gently over his shoulders, his transparent loincloth delicately swathed around his hips and thighs. The streams of blood from his hands and feet and the spurts of blood and water from his side are meager and delicate. Although they stand on the same ground as the cross they flank, Mary and John are depicted proportionally larger than Christ. The two holy figures appear not to be perturbed, each gazing out to engage the viewer before them. John raises his right hand in speech, subtly pointing his lowered left hand towards Christ, while Mary's right hand is raised to gesture towards her son (specifically towards his side wound). Furthermore, two saints, now both partially effaced, flank the scene on the niche's side walls; from what remains of these figures, it seems that one looks directly towards the viewer and the other gestures towards the scene. This was an image intended for the quiet contemplation of

¹ Before much of the church of San Domenico was dismantled in 1934, the chapel stood directly to the south of the main sanctuary (to the right, when facing the high altar). Today, the chapel is one of four side chapels of the nave, which was the church's original transept. For the church and its dismantling, see Renato Bonelli, "La Chiesa di San Domenico in Orvieto," *Palladio* 7, no. 5-6 (1943); David M. Gillerman, "S. Domenico in Orvieto: the date of construction," in *Quaderni dell'istituto di storia dell'architettura: Saggi in onore di Renato Bonelli* (Rome: Multigrafica Editrice, 1992); Raffaele Davanzo, "La chiesa di San Domenico in Orvieto," in *Arnolfo di Cambio: una rinascita nell'Umbria medievale*, ed. Vittoria Garibaldi and Bruno Toscano (Milan: Silvana, 2005).

Christ's death on the cross, all its supporting figures directing the viewer's attention toward the Savior.

It is startling, then, to discover that a *crucifixus dolorosus* adorns the altar of the same chapel (figure 2). Like the crucifixes examined in this dissertation, the San Domenico sculpture presents Christ as battered and bleeding profusely as he hangs dying from the cross, which is forked, painted green, and carved with small knobs to suggest branches – an allusion to the Tree of Life. Just under life-size, the corpus is slightly smaller than some other examples, but its imagery still commands the viewer's attention. Christ appears gaunt, his individuated ribs protrude from beneath his skin, which pulls tightly across his torso. His muscular stomach is cut in half by a wide fold of skin; the lines connecting his chest, shoulder, and arm are harsh and linear, emphasizing the strain on his muscles and indicating his struggle to breathe. Bleeding flagellation wounds cover his entire body, and the wound in his side yawns open, spilling both torrents of blood and individual drops. Christ's bloodied face is incised with deep wrinkles; even his hair is soaked in so much blood that red streaks are visible among his twisting chestnut locks. The sculpture shares none of the fresco's fineness or quietness; instead, its effect is emotional, even overwhelming.

The juxtaposition of the two images in such a small space is jarring. While the fresco is original to the chapel, there is no record of where in the church the *crucifixus dolorosus* stood before the eighteenth century.² The altar on which the crucifix now stands, its geometric superstructure, and the wood base inscribed with the words “*bene*

² The crucifix was noted in a 1753 document to have stood at the end of the right arm of the transept, above the remains of Beata Vanna, a Dominican tertiary who died in the early fourteenth century. See Elvio Lunghi, *La Passione degli Umbri: Crocifissi di legno in Valle Umbra tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Fogolino: Edizioni Orfini Numeister, 2000), 63, note 17.

scripsisti de me Thoma” are all later additions.³ It seems likely that the fresco’s painter was aware of the sculpture, however, since Christ’s eyes are painted still ajar, his mouth is open enough to expose his teeth, his forehead is deeply furrowed, other wrinkles cut into his face on either side of his nose, and his toes are splayed in pain.⁴ This suggests that the two images of the Crucified did coexist in the fourteenth-century church. But whether or not they would have been visible to the medieval viewer in the same glance, the modern collocation of the two images acutely calls attention to their differences.

The general model for the painted version of Christ’s death was ubiquitous in late-medieval Italy, and most of the painted crucifixes, whether in fresco or on panel, were even more staid than that on the wall in San Domenico. The long Italian tradition of depicting Christ on the cross avoided much of the violence of the Passion, first showing Christ triumphant over death, then depicting him peaceful after his death.⁵ But despite the existence of such established imagery, the last decades of the thirteenth century and the first few of the fourteenth witnessed the wide dissemination of the *crucifixus dolorosus* across the Italian peninsula. The vivid depictions of Christ’s suffering in these crucifixes

³ The inscription places the crucifix within the context of Thomas Aquinas’s miraculous encounter during which a crucifix spoke to him, stating that he had written the office of Corpus Christi well. This legend was recounted by Guglielmo di Tocco (d. 1323) in the *Acta Sanctorum* to have occurred in the church of San Nicola in Naples (*Martii*, vol. 1, 671), but was tied to Orvieto and the miracle of Bolsena by 1337. In that year the story was depicted on the reliquary fashioned to hold the blood-stained corporal, and only several years later it was painted in one of the vaults of the Cappella del Corporale in the Orvieto Duomo. In the fresco, Aquinas is shown kneeling before a carved crucifix mounted atop an altar, but the sculpture is portrayed as neither life-sized nor violently-rendered. Although Orvieto was heavily invested in this legend for the legitimacy it bestowed upon their host miracle, there is no evidence that would clarify when this miracle became associated with the *crucifixus dolorosus* in San Domenico. Aquinas had spent several years at the convent in the 1260s, establishing the Dominican *studio generale* for the Roman province, and so it is not surprising that he and his miracles were of great importance to the city’s Dominicans.

⁴ Some of these details can be found on other contemporary painted crosses, such as Pietro Lorenzetti’s *croce dipinta* in Cortona’s Museo discesano di Cortona. This example also portrays Christ’s eyes and mouth both just slightly open, but Lorenzetti included neither the pained facial expression of the Orvieto fresco nor its rigidly splayed toes. These traits seem to be unique and suggest that the painter borrowed from another source – the church’s *crucifixus dolorosus*.

⁵ For a thorough study on the development of the Italian medieval *croce dipinta*, see Evelyn Sandberg-Vavalà, *La croce dipinta italiana e l'iconografia della passione* (Verona: Casa Editrice Apollo, 1929).

were strikingly different from both the paintings and sculptures that preceded them and, in many ways, those that followed after them as well. While the number of extant examples is not overwhelming – only twenty-four survive according to Géza de Francovich's 1938 study – it is remarkable that these are spread widely across Italy, from Genoa to Lucera, Sardinia to Sicily, and that they belong to Franciscan and Dominican convents, as well as to the cathedrals of several cities.⁶ In this dissertation I consider several questions that scholars have not previously posed in connection with these crucifixes: Why did these crucifixes appear in Italy at this time, particularly when a tradition of beautiful, painted crucifixes was already firmly established? How were such violent representations meant to function within the space of a church? How did medieval beholders approach and understand them?

Previous scholarship on the *crucifixi dolorosi* has been intent on answering very different questions. Deriving from the German nationalistic art history of the early twentieth century, which saw the crucifixes as a perfect expression of the "German spirit," scholarly approaches have proceeded from the assumption that the violent, even ugly imagery originated in Germany and then spread throughout Europe.⁷ Although some scholars have argued in favor of a Spanish provenance (thus still contending with the same questions of origin and paths of dissemination), none have so much as considered the possibility that the crucifixes in Italy in fact belong there.⁸ Most examples have been

⁶ "L'origine e la diffusione del crocifisso gotico doloroso," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 2 (1938).

⁷ See Chapter 1 for a more in-depth discussion of the historiography.

⁸ Most notably in favor of Spanish origins for the *crucifixi dolorosi*, see Anna Maria Maetzke, *Arte nell'Aretino: seconda mostra di restauri dal 1975 al 1979. Dipinti e sculture restaurati dal XIII al XVIII secolo. Arezzo, San Francesco: 30 novembre 1979 – 13 gennaio 1980* (Firenze: Editrice Edam, 1980); Angela Franco Mata, "L'influence germanique sur le Crucifix douloureux espagnol du XIVe siècle," in *Figur und Raum: mittelalterliche Holzbildwerke im historischen und kunstgeographischen Kontext*, ed. Jan von Bonsdorff Uwe Albrecht, Annette Henning (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1994).

attributed to the “German school” of the fourteenth century, allowing scholars, in essence, to write them off as “alien” and, therefore, not part of the Italian medieval tradition. Deeming the *crucifigi dolorosi* mere foreign imports, even studies focusing on Italian examples have cared little to understand these sculptures within their local contexts and, instead, have worked almost exclusively to illustrate their close connections with German models.

On the one hand, the strong conviction that such imagery is not Italian is understandable, given how incongruous violence and blood are in the artistic context of the late Duecento and early Trecento. However, by continuing to focus on Cologne as a point of origin and the “German-ness” of these crucifixes, scholars have overlooked the significant evidence that points to the integral connections these crucifixes have to the devotional and theological context of late-medieval Italy. In fact, there is no documentary evidence that suggests that medieval Italians perceived them as foreign or that they found them troubling. Although one might object that there is little documentary evidence of these crucifixes in the medieval period at all, a contemporary case in London suggests that we might expect such evidence to exist if the crucifixes were negatively received.⁹

The comparative visual analyses and attempts at chronology that have persisted for nearly

⁹ The London Annals record for the year 1305 that: “Eodem anno, XVII^o kalendas Maii, quaedam crux horribilis ducta fuit ad capellam de Conwehop, et in crastino, die qui dicebatur bonus dies Veneris, adorabatur a multis; propter quae Galfridus de Wycoumbe, rector illius ecclesiae, incurrit multis malis ad instantiam canonicorum Sancti Pauli. Eodem anno, kalendis Maii, praedicta crux ducta fuit apud canonicos Sanctae Trinitatis Londoniis, nocturno tempore.” In “Annales Londonienses,” in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. William Stubbs (London: Longman & Co. and Trübner & Co., 1882), 136. The bishop of London, Ralph Baldock, also wrote about the image, complaining that the *yconiam crucifigi*, carved by the German Thydemann and placed in the parish church of St. Mildred’s in Poultry, lacked a crossbeam and was therefore a false image of the True Cross. Ralph Baldock, “Pro yconia crucifigi erronee sculpta, August 2, 1306,” in *Registrum Radulphi Baldock, Gilverti Segrabe, Ricardi Newport, et Stephani Grabesend: Episcoporum Londoniensium, AD MCCCIV--MCCCXXVIII*, ed. R.C. Fowler B.A. (London: Issued for the Canterbury and York Society, 1911), 19. Paul Binski discusses this episode in depth in his essay “The Crucifixion and the Censorship of Art around 1300,” in *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson (New York: Routledge, 2001), 342-365.

a century have had the effect of marginalizing the Italian *crucifixi dolorosi* and have made it impossible to engage truly with these sculptures as part of the time and place in which they existed. Scholars have therefore failed to appreciate, or perhaps have even willingly chosen to ignore, the significant role of violent imagery in fulfilling new needs created by changes in Italian medieval perceptions and expectations of religious images.

In this dissertation, I assert that the Italian *crucifixi dolorosi* are, in fact, part of the medieval Italian art-historical tradition and that they deserve to be examined as objects in their own context, and not merely as evidence of spreading German influence in the Gothic period. Rather than as a northern intrusion we must begin to conceive of violent imagery as a means of communicating important and complex ideas to various groups of viewers representing different levels of understanding. I contend that these crucifixes, with their extreme emphasis on Christ's suffering, engaged with and responded to contemporary devotional, scientific, and theological concerns. By means of their twisted compositions and violent visual details, the *crucifixi dolorosi* offered a striking and interactive representation of "what happened" when Christ was crucified on Calvary. They also tested the limits of visual representation by underscoring the importance of corporeal vision to spiritual growth as well as by insisting upon its shortcomings, thus challenging viewers to move beyond bodily sight and to activate their spiritual eyes. These carved and polychromed sculptures, I argue, were considered important instruments within contemporary devotional practices, able to guide their viewers through a process of contemplating the suffering Christ and to assimilate viewers to their Savior. It is my contention that the new and violent imagery of the *crucifixi*

dolorosi was adopted across Italy in response to changes in theological and devotional contexts, redefined in large part by scholastic theologians.

In carrying out this project, I have confronted two major challenges. The first is that of defining the boundaries of the category of objects to be included. As I explain further in my first chapter, the Latin term *crucifixus dolorosus* is, in fact, a modern invention, and the category it is intended to delimit is at best porous, or, at worst, contrived and ill-defined. Furthermore, it is impossible to make a formal list of all the *crucifigi dolorosi* in Italy, in part because there are surely others that exist but have not been made known to art historians (most likely because they have not yet undergone restoration or been placed in museum exhibits), and, more significantly, because many of the objects are sufficiently ambiguous as to defy any attempt at drawing precise boundaries. Even so, I maintain that the crucifixes that are designated by this term should be grouped together, if only loosely, because there is a sufficient number of unique characteristics to make the use of the term both appropriate and productive; these include twisting compositions, deep nail wounds in the hands and feet that result in folds of skin bunched up above the nail head, flagellation wounds, bloody sweat, a gaping side wound, and open eyes and mouth.

The term may be used unproblematically for the crucifixes that display all of these characteristics, and there are a number that do so; but what about those that borrow some characteristics but omit others? How should Giovanni di Balduccio's ca. 1320 crucifix now in Florence's Museo del Opera del Duomo be described (figure 3)? It does portray an outpouring of blood from the five crucifixion wounds, and Giovanni did

fashion Christ's eyes and mouth to both appear open in his sunken head. But the skin is smooth, the corpus untwisted and unbroken – is this a *crucifixus dolorosus*? I contend that it is not, but that its maker was influenced by the more violently-rendered crucifixes. In fact, he would have had an example at hand in the nearby Santa Maria Novella, and could have easily borrowed certain of its more shocking elements for his own creation. Even this one example brings to light the difficulty delimiting the category. It also illustrates that the *crucifixi dolorosi* were not as isolated as art historical scholarship has asserted. The violent imagery may not have been adopted wholesale or popularly copied in its entirety, but various details and characteristics did find their way into other images.

I discuss the issue of inclusion in (or exclusion from) the category '*crucifixus dolorosus*' in Chapter 1. Here, however, I would like to explain my choice of particular crucifixes for inclusion in this dissertation. While de Francovich, author of the first significant study of the crucifixes as a pan-European phenomenon, listed twenty-four examples in Italy, those who followed have given various lists of their own: Monika von Alemann-Schwarz numbered only fourteen and, most recently, Godehard Hoffmann offered a count of seventeen.¹⁰ I myself have found an additional two that appear on none of these lists, in SS. Ognissanti, Florence (figure 4), and S. Lorenzo in Damaso, Rome (figure 5), and I presume there are more to be found. Yet, I have only given serious consideration to seven crucifixes in the chapters that follow: in Santa Maria Novella, Florence (figure 6); San Domenico, Chioggia (figure 7); Sant'Onofrio, Fabriano (figure 8); Santa Margherita, Cortona (figure 9); San Domenico, Orvieto (figure 2); San

¹⁰ Monika von Alemann-Schwarz, "Crucifixus dolorosus: Beiträge zur Polychromie und Ikonographie der rheinischen Gabelkruzifixe" (Dissertation, Bonn, 1976); Godehard Hoffmann, *Das Gabelkreuz in St. Maria im Kaptiol zu Köln und das Phänomen der Crucifixi dolorosi in Europa* (Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 2006).

Francesco, Oristano (figure 10); and the cathedral in Palermo (figure 11). In large part, this particular list is the result of what I have been able to access, personally examine, and photograph. Although I also gained access to San Giorgio degli Innocenti (previously ‘dei Teutonici’) in Pisa, the church has been closed, its electricity cut off, and its crucifix placed behind glass in a niche over the main altar. The space is so dark and the reflection from the glass so strong that it was nearly impossible to see the details of the sculpture or obtain good photographs for study. I therefore chose not to use it as a major example in this project. Although, to some extent, I focused on these seven objects for reasons that were circumstantial, they in fact most embodied characteristics that enabled me to investigate deeply the broader questions and problems that these crucifixes raise. Four are treated in greater depth than the others: the crucifixes in Oristano, Chioggia, Cortona, and Orvieto. The first two display most clearly the manipulations and optical refinements employed by sculptors to engage a moving viewer. They enabled me to examine perceptions and the value of the affective image, and to probe the relationship between image and prototype in late medieval Italy. Because it was written about by Franciscan friar Giunta Bevegnati in his circa 1308 *Legenda de vita et miraculis Beatae Margaritae de Cortona*, the crucifix in Cortona provided the opportunity to consider the means by which complex scientific and intellectual ideas were made accessible to lay audiences, as well as the role that material images played in the dissemination of such ideas.¹¹ Finally, the Orvieto crucifix was of particular interest to my study because of the heightened importance of the Eucharist in the context for which it was fashioned. Because both the crucifix and the Eucharist were, in their own ways, images of Christ’s Passion, the two

¹¹ *Legenda de vita et miraculis Beatae Margaritae de Cortona*, ed. Fortunato Iozzelli OFM (Grottaferrata (Rome): Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1997).

have always been linked, but in Orvieto, which boasts the relics of a host miracle and where Thomas Aquinas composed the Office for the Feast of Corpus Christi, the connection between them is accentuated even more strongly. Therefore this last crucifix afforded the opportunity to investigate the relationships between the Eucharist and both the crucifix as image type and, more specifically, the violently-rendered *crucifixus dolorosus*.

Furthermore, the seven included crucifixes represent a larger group defined by shared characteristics, particularly in the degree to which they are simultaneously similar to and different from each other. A notable heterogeneity characterizes the Italian *crucifixi dolorosi*, of size, for example, or number of bleeding wounds presented, and this is not the case for their German counterparts. Despite such differences, however, the Italian crucifixes exhibit important similarities (see Chapter 1 for further discussion), demonstrating that no matter how varied their imagery, these crucifixes were intended to engage with the same late-medieval concerns in similar ways.

A second, and perhaps more significant challenge for this study has been the near complete lack of contemporary documentary evidence that mentions these crucifixes; there is little that remains, or maybe little that was ever written, that dates to before the early modern period. Only one fourteenth-century text references a *crucifixus dolorosus*: Giunta's *Legenda*. In the *vita*'s opening lines, Giunta describes the crucifix, now in the sanctuary of Santa Margherita atop Cortona, as sitting above an altar next to the high altar in the city's church of San Francesco.¹² The only other documentary evidence is found in

¹² "Dum semel, devote in oratione coram ymagine Christi que nunc est in altari dictorum fratrum, diceretur sibi, 'Quid vis, paupercula?'" *ibid.*, I.8-10.

the Necrology of Santa Maria Novella.¹³ In an entry for 29 January 1361 describing the death and mourning of the local blessed Beata Villana, we read that the crucifix, still in the church, was hung above her tomb, located along the east wall near the crossing.¹⁴ The few other texts that offer information about these crucifixes all date to later centuries; thus inferences about the sculptures' original contexts must be drawn either from later or from more general contemporary evidence. Furthermore, the lack of documentary evidence makes it difficult to reconstruct the responses of early viewers with certainty. Light can be shed on their creators' likely intentions, however, by examining the changing attitudes towards images recorded in scholastic theory.

Saints Bonaventure and Aquinas dominated the theological and philosophical stage in the second half of the thirteenth century. Their innovative writings significantly shaped religious thought and, as I argue in this dissertation, artistic production, both in their own generation and for generations after. The works of these Italian theologians were immensely influential throughout Italy, and Aquinas was even in residence in Orvieto, Naples, and Rome during formative years of his career. Although neither theologian ever mentioned a *crucifixus dolorosus*, each grappled extensively with the same issues I suggest are highly significant for our understanding of the crucifixes: image theory and vision, aesthetics, and the Eucharist. Their explications of these issues reveal a deep ambivalence towards images that, in fact, characterized the period as a whole. Both theologians struggled to maintain the proper separation of image and prototype while

¹³ Stefano Orlandi, "*Necrologio*" di S. Maria Novella. *Testo integrale dall'inizio (MCCXXXV) al MDIV corredato di note biografiche tratte da documenti coevi con presentazione del P. Innocenzo Taurisano*, 2 vols. (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1955).

¹⁴ Ibid., I, 552. Orlandi expands upon this entry in volume II, 239.

simultaneously acknowledging the desire, or even need, for viewers to connect immediately with their holy figures through images.

Their manifold and complex discussions on the Eucharist substantially influenced image production as well. While their writings on this topic shared with their discussions of images an intense concern for the divine presence in the material world, Bonaventure and Aquinas also explored in great detail the relationship between what was available to the bodily senses and what must be apprehended by the intellect or spiritual eye. As understood in the Eucharist, such a relationship characterized the visible species, or accidents, of the Eucharistic elements and Christ's invisible but real presence, but its implication for images was immense: if the perceptible species of the bread and the wine could hide the true body and blood of Christ, then the visible image could likewise conceal (and, in turn, reveal) divine truths. Of course a *crucifixus dolorosus* was not the Eucharist – it was neither sacramental nor a holy container for Christ's real presence. However, through its violent imagery, such a crucifix was able to instruct its viewers to look beyond what could be seen and, in doing so, make the invisible accessible and knowable.

Bonaventure's and Aquinas's ambivalence about the role and status of images and their insistence on both the distinction and the connection between visible exterior and invisible but true interior offer a framework through which we can deepen our understanding of the Italian *crucifigi dolorosi*. Whether in direct response to these theologians' works or (more likely) to the changing conceptions of religious images that resulted from those works, the sculptures presuppose a firm stance in favor of material images – that images had powerful, even transformative effects on their beholders; that

they could both offer the presence of their prototype and deny it; and that they were able to engage both corporeal and spiritual seeing in their viewers, revealing divine truths in the process.

While Chapter 1 thoroughly examines the historiography and criticizes previous approaches to the study of the *crucifixa dolorosi*, it lays the groundwork for the more theoretical chapters that follow. Chapter 2, entitled “Christ and the Crucifix, Inherence and Illusion,” investigates the relationship between physical image and heavenly prototype as understood by both laity and theologians in the late thirteenth century. In this chapter, I use phenomenological and visual analysis, supported by the existing evidence of two crucifixes’ original locations, to examine how such a crucifix would have been animated by moving viewers, thereby creating an immersive experience. I demonstrate, however, that exaggerations and unrealistic details present on each of the *crucifixa dolorosi* would then break the fiction of that experience and force viewers to confront the limits of physical vision. The simultaneous insistence on and denial of a connection between wood crucifix and Christ in heaven is echoed in both Bonaventure’s and Aquinas’ writings, indicating a pervasive ambivalence towards images in the late medieval period.

Chapter 3, “Seeing is Becoming: The Violent Crucifix and Transformative Vision,” focuses on the Cortona *crucifixus dolorosus* which played an important role in Giunta’s *vita* of Margherita, especially in the narrative of one mystical ecstasy in which the saint was transformed into the Crucified’s likeness while she contemplated the sculpture. I argue that Giunta relied on contemporary optical science and Franciscan devotional ideals in order to characterize the crucifix as an aid in *imitatio Christi* and

thereby defend the use of images in devotional practices. This compelling case study demonstrates how the crucifixes' violent imagery could serve a pedagogical function, making complex ideas about salvation accessible to the laity who served as Giunta's audience and who were the Cortona crucifix's primary beholders.

In the final chapter, entitled "Beyond Blood: the *Crucifixus Dolorosus* and Christ's True Beauty," I argue that the *crucifigi dolorosi* guided viewers to look beyond what was physically visible and so to use their spiritual eyes to apprehend what could not be seen. I introduce Bonaventure and Aquinas on Christ's beauty and on the Eucharist in order to elucidate how such outwardly ugly objects could reveal the true, innate beauty of their prototype, Christ, who in the moment depicted was also seen to be deformed. To help their viewers move beyond the exterior, I argue, the crucifixes present several specific types of visual details – for example, Christ's bleeding wounds – as signs and signposts, either signifying in their own right or pointing beyond themselves to something neither present nor even capable of being seen. Such details were indicators of an invisible interior wherein truth resides and from which truth can be revealed. The distinction between interior and exterior, to which the crucifixes' imagery calls attention, connects these sculptures to the Eucharist. The consecrated host and chalice constitute a complex parallel in which physical accidents differ profoundly from true substance. By teaching viewers to see physically on one level and spiritually on another, the crucifixes trained their beholders to approach such exterior appearances as the bread and wine as veils concealing very different, and invisible, inner truths.

My chapters' arguments rely heavily on theological writings and intellectually complex ideas. One objection that could be raised, then, is that such arguments necessitate assuming that the medieval makers of the *crucifixi dolorosi*, as well as their viewers (at multiple levels of sophistication), had a basic (if not greater) command of many complex theological and philosophical concepts. It is therefore important to consider questions of how widely diffused scholastic theologies were among religious and lay viewers and whether these viewers would have had the knowledge necessary to use the crucifixes effectively in the manner I suggest. The intellectual concepts I introduce were all developed within medieval European university centers, particularly those in Paris and Oxford. However, while those ideas were certainly circulating among the intellectual elite at these sites, can we assume that such information reached local populations in Italy? Could a viewer in Orvieto have known enough to differentiate a deformed exterior appearance from a true inner beauty? Did viewers in Cortona know that a process of vision was responsible for the potency of the *crucifixus dolorosus* within their devotional practices? It seems more than likely that local mendicants in and around these centers, if not educated laity as well, would have been well versed in such ideas, at the very least on a basic level. As Dominique Raynaud shows through statistical network analysis in his recent *Optics and the Rise of Perspective*, nearly all knowledge transmitted through medieval European university networks reached central Italy.¹⁵ This was not true in reverse – although Italian centers, especially Pisa, Siena, Florence, Bologna, Perugia, Assisi, and Todi, had the easiest access to innovations from all across Europe, knowledge was confined there and accumulated. For Raynaud, this point is important because it

¹⁵ *Optics and the Rise of Perspective: A Study in Network Knowledge Diffusion* (Oxford: The Bardwell Press, 2014).

offers an explanation for why linear perspective developed in central Italy before other European centers.¹⁶ For the purpose of this dissertation, however, Raynaud's analysis suggests that the major innovations in theological and philosophical thought would have almost certainly found their way to the *studia* of local Italian mendicant houses where they would have been disseminated to both clerical and lay congregations through lectures and other formal educational methods, sermons, and artwork.¹⁷

If the Italian *crucifixi dolorosi* were important responses to the new theological and philosophical program being fashioned by the Scholastics in the late Middle Ages, many became the objects of significant veneration at the center of intense local cults in later centuries. In numerous instances, these crucifixes were credited with working miracles; they were ascribed legends, which in certain cases lent them the authority of Nicodemus, alleged to be their maker. In a concluding section, I suggest that the long afterlives of such crucifixes attest to their value as devotional objects already in the late medieval period. They were not the exceptional objects or isolated instances of "foreign" imagery, the ugliness of which was immediately rejected in favor of the Italian traditions' beautiful images, which the current narrative would suggest. In fact, the *crucifixi dolorosi* came to be influential in ways unrecognized by art historians. Thus the end of this dissertation returns to the themes of its beginning, arguing for the consideration of the *crucifixi dolorosi* within the art historical tradition of late-medieval Italy. Not only were they not mere German imports, blemishes upon an otherwise beautiful art historical

¹⁶ Ibid., 127.

¹⁷ Contemporary examples of such works of art are the luxury manuscripts written as lay guides to the Mass that Aden Kumler analyzes in *Translating Truth: Ambitious Images and Religious Knowledge in late medieval France and England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

tradition, they also made a thus far unacknowledged impact on crucifixion imagery in the centuries that followed. The crucifixes were deeply ensconced in their local contexts: they were important devotional images for their viewers and responded to contemporary shifts in religious thought. Their vivid and violent imagery asserted the power of images to transform their viewers spiritually and to reveal hidden, divine truths. We must give these sculptures and their violent imagery their place in the canon of Italian art in order to further enrich our understanding of Italian art history, of the Middle Ages and beyond.

1. THE HISTORIOGRAPHIC MAKING OF THE *CRUCIFIXUS DOLOROSUS*

The capacity of early studies to shape an entire field of academic inquiry shows itself clearly in the case of the *crucifixa dolorosi*. The questions posed by scholars in the early twentieth century have been the same questions shaping scholarship into the twenty-first century, long after the motivations for asking them had dissipated. They have limited scholars' ability to investigate other important aspects of these medieval crucifixes, and so this chapter analyzes the historiography of the *crucifixa dolorosi* to determine its limiting factors, as well as its implications for the study of these objects.

Such an analysis reveals that the category "*crucifixus dolorosus*," as well as the hierarchy of objects placed within such a category, are truly modern conceptions. Gezá de Francovich introduced the Italian "*crocifisso gotico doloroso*" in 1938, and the term was first translated into Latin more than two decades later.¹ It does not appear as such in medieval sources and thus calls into question whether people in the late Middle Ages conceived of these crucifixes as a class unto themselves and therefore in need of their own designation. Why did scholars create the category? What is gained by maintaining it, and is *crucifixus dolorosus* actually a useful term? To answer these questions, we must first examine what this Latin phrase is meant to describe – what is a *crucifixus dolorosus*?

The crucifixes grouped under this heading survive across Europe, although they are most commonly found in the Rhine region of Germany and across Italy. The grouping been based almost exclusively on visual characteristics. The sculptures depict Christ's broken, contorted body bleeding from multiple gaping wounds, with his emaciated arms

¹ "L'origine," 143-261. The term first appears in Latin in Fried Mühlberg, "Crucifixus dolorosus. Über Bedeutung und Herkunft des gotischen Gabelkruzifixes," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 22 (1960).

stretched onto the arm of the cross and his legs bent and twisted to the side. His ribcage balloons out; his stomach is sunken in. His hands and feet are pierced so forcefully by nails that the skin of each pulls back over the nail head to reveal bloody bones and muscles; a yawning wound gapes in his side, spurting out a mass of bright red blood. Christ's face is weary with pain, his forehead punctured by a thick and spiny crown of thorns, and his blood-soaked hair falls in sticky, wet curls onto his neck and over his shoulders. Some are covered in bleeding flagellation wounds and even bloody sweat, although these two characteristics are not present in every case.

The Italian examples are differentiated from the relatively homogeneous northern crucifixes of the same general type by their large size, often two meters or more, and by the heterogeneity that characterizes the Italian group. They also differ from other local crucifixes. Even though there are a number of particular details that do more than separate them from other crucifixes and that, in fact, tie them together, the category *crucifixus dolorosus* remains a problematic one. As will become clear in the following pages, scholars have worked over the last century to create such a category but have failed to define it clearly and precisely. In fact, clarity and precision were impossible given the fact that such scholars based their claims on the visual characteristics of one crucifix – the *Kapitolskruzifix* in Cologne's church of St. Maria im Kapitol (figure 13) – that were not uniformly repeated in others. De Francovich was the first to compile a “comprehensive” list of the *crucifixi dolorosi* throughout Europe, and subsequent scholars have begun with that list, adding to his count or removing items from it; they have thus arrived at significantly different lists (see Table 1). With so little agreement, how useful is the category for modern scholarship?

None of these scholars has successfully shifted their inquiry to the investigation of the objects' functions, which in fact supports the continued use of the category. Even without a strong foundation for doing so, scholars have nevertheless invested in the term and in the group of objects they intend it to describe – but why? The historiography helps answer that question.

EXPRESSING THE “TRUE GERMAN SPIRIT”: THE CRUCIFIX IN ST. MARIA IM KAPITOL

The study of *crucifigi dolorosi* began in pre-World War I Germany, within the intellectual circles of Fritz Witte, Eugen Lühgen, and, the most influential among them, Wilhelm Pinder. These scholars drew attention to the crucifix in St. Maria im Kapitol (figure 13), which they deemed the embodiment of the true German spirit. In a short 1911 essay, Witte admired the crucifix, describing it as “entirely born from realism,” a quality that was, he asserted, a German innovation in the Gothic period.² Drawing on an inscription recorded by the seventeenth-century canon Aegidius Gelenius: *anno domini MCCCIV in die b. Barbarae birg. e. mart. haec est...*, he dated the crucifix to 1304 and used this date to support the thesis that the writings of fourteenth-century mystics in Cologne, and particularly those of Johannes Tauler, Meister Eckhart, and Heinrich Suso, had been catalysts for the creation of the crucifix's graphic imagery.³ While Witte did allow for the fact that there were similarly violent and “realistic” crucifixes in Italy, which he suggested were possibly earlier and likely inspired by the religiosity of St.

² "Der große Kruzifixus in Maria im Kapitol zu Köln und sein Alter," *Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst*, no. 12 (1911): 357.

³ The inscription could be found on a plaque in the church during Aegidius' time, but is no longer extant. Ibid.

Francis, he concluded that the type did not reach its full development and greatest potential until the St. Maria im Kapitol crucifix had been fashioned.⁴

Eugen Lütghen followed with his own essay in 1915.⁵ He accepted many of Witte's conclusions and expanded them; he agreed that the violent type of carved crucifix had its earliest roots in Italy, but hailed the naturalism of what he saw as the more developed crucifixes as a sign of evolution and progress made by German artisans in the Gothic period.⁶ Wilhelm Pinder, however, engaged most with German nationalism through the study of medieval art. While he dedicated only a half a page to the crucifix in St. Maria im Kapitol, he placed it within the context of the *Andachtsbild*, to which he devoted much time and ink.⁷ Pinder felt particularly invested in this problematic art historical term, which developed largely in German scholarship around the First World War.⁸ His definition of the *Andachtsbild* stressed a strong connection between art and mysticism, claiming an almost one-to-one correspondence between what could be read in mystical writings and poetry and what could be seen in the artworks they allegedly

⁴ To this end, Witte pointed to the crucifixes in Sulmona, Castel di Sangro, and Rocca Cassale (only the first of which found its way onto de Francovich's list of *crucifigi dolorosi*) and claimed that, "Franziskus in seiner engen persönlichen Beziehung zum Gekreuzigten, die in der Compassio seiner Stigmatisation gipfelt, hat einem neuen, dem realistischen Kruzifix den Weggebahnt." Ibid.

⁵ "Die Wirkung der Mystik in der kölnen und der niederrheinischen Bildnerei gegen Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts," *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft* 8, no. 7 (1915): 223-237.

⁶ Lütghen focused on the St. Maria im Kapitol crucifix, but included a surrounding group as well – the crucifixes in St. Georg in Cologne and the parish churches of Sinzig and Kendenich. He noted that these objects marked a new pursuit of naturalism, or "Naturtreue." Ibid., 227.

⁷ *Die deutsche Plastik vom ausgehenden Mittelalter bis zum Ende der Renaissance* (Wildpark-Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion M.B.H., 1924), 96. The term *Andachtsbild* has been used in modern scholarship, mostly written by German scholars, to indicate a class of medieval images that served devotional practices. Pinder's enthusiasm for the term was intricately tied to his nationalistic view of art history; he believed the development such devotional images, which could evoke strong emotions through the use of intimate relationships and realistic, lifelike imagery, marked a triumph of German art in the Gothic period. More recently, Hans Belting's work has been one of the most significant examinations of the term and category *Andachtsbild*. See in particular *The Image and its Public in the Middle Ages: Form and Function of Early Paintings of the Passion*, trans. Mark Bartusis and Raymond Meyer (New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas, 1990).

⁸ For an excellent history of the term *Andachtsbild* and the difficulties resulting from its use, see Karl Schade, *Andachtsbild: Die Geschichte eines kunsthistorischen Begriffs* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 1996).

inspired.⁹ Pinder asserted that tactile and visible images, which arose from the depths of poetic dreams, would touch the deepest corner of a viewer's soul.¹⁰ Regarding the St.

Maria im Kapitol crucifix, he cited the mystic Heinrich Suso, who wrote:

Because I hung on the highest branch of the cross for you and for all of mankind out of endless love, because my entire figure was pitifully altered...because my godly head hung with pity and affliction, my pure color made pale. See, because my beauty died entirely, as if I were a leper and as if I had never been the beautiful wisdom at all.¹¹

Pinder thus understood the violent crucifix type to have originated in these words (and likely other similar poetry). Such descriptions were intended to make Christ's experience palpable more so than make his appearance visible; for Pinder, the sculpted image made manifest that inner experience. Pinder saw the expression in art of intense mystical and spiritual experiences as an invention of the fourteenth century, a deep and uniquely German quality that had persevered into modern times. Thus he explained contemporary German Expressionism – raw and emotional, intimate and powerful – as another and related demonstration of the German spirit.¹² Although Pinder himself did not showcase the *Kapitolskruzifix*, he, like his contemporaries, offered it as a standard for German nationalism. To him, Witte, and Lüthgen, it fully embodied the impassioned spirituality and emotional relationship with God that they believed was the quintessence of fourteenth-century Germany (then the Holy Roman Empire) and one of the greatest bequests left to the modern state.

⁹ Pinder looked especially to the accounts of female mystics, such as Margarethe Ebner, which tell of the intense emotional, as well as physical, experiences nuns had before, and in response to, images and how these experiences allowed them an intimate relationship with the suffering Christ. *Die deutsche Plastik vom ausgehenden Mittelalter bis zum Ende der Renaissance*, 93.

¹⁰ "...aus der Tiefe dichterischen Träumens," *ibid.*, 92.

¹¹ As cited by Pinder: "Da ich am hohen Aste des Kreuzes für Dich und alle Menschen aus endloser Liebe hing, da wurde meine ganze Gestalt gar jämmerlich verkehrt..., den mein göttliches Haupt war von Jammer und Ungemach geneigt, meine reine Farbe erbleicht. Sieh, da erstarb meine Schönheit ganz und gar, als ob ich ein Aussätziger und als ob ich die schöne Weisheit nie gewesen ware." *Ibid.*, 96.

¹² "Die Schöpfung [des Andachtsbildes] gehört zu den größten Leistungen unseres Volkes." *Die Kunst der ersten Bürgerzeit: bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1937), 39.

Carrying the weight of these associations, the St. Maria im Kapitol opened up scholarly interest to other, similar crucifixes. Early studies examined them with an interest in how they broadcast the powerful and mystical “German spirit.” While this interest in the *crucifigi dolorosi* would shift its tenor, the German primacy assumed by these first scholars would remain the given assumption, to be either agreed with or contested.

The scholars of the 1910s and 20s limited their discussion to only a small number of these wood sculptures of Christ on the cross, mostly from the area near Cologne. They introduced the term *Mystikerkreuz*, which emphasized that aspect of the crucifixes that they were most interested in – their direct connection with mystical writings of the fourteenth century. As new studies were published, such other names as *Gabelkreuz*, referring to the forked cross that is common to the German examples of these crucifixes (but rare in Italian examples), and *Leidenskruzifix*, drawing attention to Christ’s immense suffering, were brought to bear on these objects.¹³

The publication of de Francovich’s study shifted the discussion entirely, far beyond the introduction of a new appellation. Educated at the University of Florence, de Francovich was not a German nationalist and he likely knew the Italian crucifixes, especially in Florence’s Santa Maria Novella. His scholarship tended to investigate Italian art at its points of intersection with art of the East (Byzantine, even Sassanian) and of Northern Europe. The *crucifigi dolorosi* were therefore a natural subject of inquiry for

¹³ Godehard Hoffmann claimed in his text that the term *Leidenskruzifix* was actually a medieval term in use by the fourteenth century; however, he cited no source. See *Das Gabelkreuz*, 15. Another term used by earlier scholars was *Pestkreuz*, suggesting that the crucifixes’ numerous flagellation wounds represented the bleeding sores and pustules symptomatic of the Black Death. More recent scholarship, however, pushes many of the discussed crucifixes as early as the last quarter of the thirteenth century, significantly before the outbreak of plague. See Mata, “L’influence germanique,” 64.

him.¹⁴ In his essay, de Francovich harshly criticized the earlier scholars, and particularly Pinder, who, in his estimation, did not give the St. Maria im Kapitol crucifix enough attention, thereby slighting its place in the larger history of medieval art; de Francovich he made clear that restoring such crucifixes to the history of medieval European art was his intention.¹⁵

This use of “*crocifisso gotico doloroso*” allowed de Francovich to expand the category beyond medieval German mysticism. De Francovich no longer focused on the Rhine region; his study also examined crucifixes in Italy, Spain, and elsewhere in Europe. The category was no longer limited to crucifixes with *Gabelkreuze*, but opened itself up to those examples, mostly Italian, which showed Christ hanging from a Latin cross as well. This was de Francovich’s design. Opposing his predecessors who stressed German primacy, he worked to render an interconnected medieval Europe whose strong mendicant networks facilitated the spread of devotional practices, encouraging sculptors to travel as well as promoting the dissemination of a new type of crucifix suitable to such new practices. De Francovich therefore focused on building a chronology and map of dissemination for these crucifixes, and this approach would come to dominate further studies of the *crucifixus dolorosus* “phenomenon.”¹⁶

¹⁴ "L'origine."

¹⁵ To this end, de Francovich argued that the St. Maria im Kapitol crucifix, which he also believed to be the first true *crocifisso gotico doloroso*, was not fashioned in a void. Instead, he saw it and the crucifixes it became the model for as part of a progression of style that began with a group clustered in Westphalia and Italy, which he referred to as the “romanico-gotico” and “italo-tedeschi” groups respectively. These include the crucifixes in the Osnabrück Diocese Museum, the church previously known as the Johanniterkommende at Lage, St. Sixtus at Haltern, and St. Lambertus at Coesfeld, and in Italy, in San Nicola in Tolentino, Sant’Onofrio in Fabriano, San Domenico in Orvieto, and the cathedral in Sulmona. Ibid., 162-179.

¹⁶ Despite his different approach, de Francovich’s model still privileged Cologne as the epicenter of the phenomenon.

The inclusion of so many more crucifixes into the group meant that the category encompassed crucifixes that were visually and perhaps functionally diverse, since they were found not only in distinct geographic regions, but also in varied religious houses – in cathedrals as well as Franciscan and Dominican churches – and were meant for audiences of both men and women, religious and lay. De Francovich paid little attention to the crucifixes' function beyond a connection to the Mendicants, who encouraged an emotive, Passion-focused devotion.¹⁷ As his interest lay in the diffusion of the type, he instead offered visual analysis for each of the many examples he included in his study so that he could demonstrate paths of influence, reconstructing which crucifixes acted as models for which others. Ironically, by including so many and such varied examples, de Francovich undermined his own categorization.

Another aspect of de Francovich's text that would have lasting effects on *crucifixi dolorosi* scholarship was his consideration of the national origins of the crucifixes' violent imagery, which, as his title illustrates, was one of his major goals. This discussion, in fact, had first emerged in the early scholarship of Witte, Lüthgen and Pinder. While the former had initially allowed for the possibility of an Italian origin, by the early 1920s, their writings insisted that these crucifixes were a thoroughly German invention.¹⁸ De Francovich, however, was the first to look closely at the visual evidence in his attempt to pinpoint where the imagery was created and how it spread. Much like that of his predecessors, the question for de Francovich was largely one of German or Italian origins.

¹⁷ "L'origine," 243. As evidence of an intimate and personal experience between a viewer and such a crucifix, de Francovich offered two visual examples that show clerics kneeling directly before crucifixes with twisted corpus and Y-shaped cross. The first is his figure 199 on page 225, which is a panel from the Benevento Cathedral pulpit (here listed as figure 18), and the second, a 1285 seal of the Dominican Order General Munio di Zamora, appears on page 243 as figure 219 (here, as figure 19).

¹⁸ See note 4. Witte, "Der große Kruzifixus," 357.

Like those before him, he argued in favor of Cologne; but unlike the others, he did not consider this to be a given. He accepted Witte's 1304 date for the *Kapitolskruzifix*, as well as its place at the beginning of what he understood to be a phenomenon of *crucifixi dolorosi*, despite his conviction that earlier crucifixes in Westphalia and Italy had been influential in its making. In doing so, he positioned the St. Maria im Kapitol crucifix as the model, whether directly or indirectly, for all other *crucifixi dolorosi*. Regarding the crucifixes in Italy (those he considered to post-date 1304), de Francovich questioned whether they had been fashioned by German sculptors or by Italian sculptors influenced by their northern peers. He sought to answer whether this influence came through direct contact with German sculptors or only by means of seeing their works, which themselves may have traveled. In most cases, he tended to give credit to Italian hands, but he always cited German influence. For example, in his visual analysis of the crucifix in the Lucera Cathedral (figure 14) he suggested that its sculptor had looked to the St. Maria im Kapitol crucifix for facial features and to the crucifix in the Allerheiligenkappelle, also in Cologne, for the loincloth (figures 13a and 15).¹⁹ De Francovich also noted that, together with those characteristics derived directly from German examples, the Lucera and other Italian crucifixes all embodied elements unfamiliar to the northern group, which he designated as Italian. Thus, these were not instances of direct copying of northern prototypes, but rather a purposive adaptation of a foreign style that had something to offer Italians.

De Francovich further complicated his map of diffusion by suggesting that some of the German crucifixes that had been models for Italian crucifixes had themselves been

¹⁹ "L'origine," 196.

fashioned by Spanish sculptors working in the Rhine region.²⁰ De Francovich thus concluded that the dissemination of the violent and bloody imagery of these crucifixes occurred through various and complex channels, facilitated and maintained by the mendicant orders.

For Monika von Alemann-Schwarz, whose 1976 Bonn dissertation was the next defining study of these crucifixes, the answer to the question of origin and dissemination was much simpler – the *crucifixus dolorosus* was a German product, adopted and adapted by Italians (her focus did not extend beyond these two countries except to the crucifix in Perpignan, France).²¹ She studied the sculptures' polychromy – the both plastic and painted elements that covered the wooden cores of each object – as a means of substantiating her claims. Although her stated purpose was to uncover what the polychromic features added to the overall significance of these crucifixes, von Alemann-Schwarz focused more on using formal analysis to identify relationships between objects, which she then used to map out a chronology and the paths by which the type spread through Germany and across the Alps into Italy. Although her approach was slightly different from de Francovich's, von Alemann-Schwarz followed the earlier scholar's method quite closely even if she often disagreed with his conclusions: she pushed nearly all of his dates later into the fourteenth century and challenged his assumptions regarding which works functioned as exemplars for which others. She particularly opposed the "romanico-gotico" and "italo-tedeschi" groups that he believed to have predated and influenced the *Kapitolskruzifix*, and instead argued that the innovation and development of the type occurred in the Rhine region and later spread to Westphalia and Italy by

²⁰ Ibid., 200ff.

²¹ "Crucifixus dolorosus."

means of both traveling German sculptors and the movement of their works to locations farther south.²²

Despite her differing opinions, von Alemann-Schwarz lauded de Francovich's term and continued to use *crucifixus dolorosus* interchangeably with the German *Leidenskruzifix*; she saw these "sorrowful crucifixes" as another expression of the *Christus patiens* type. She explained that all three terms have similar connotations, but that while the *crucifixus dolorosus* and *Leidenskruzifix* can be subsumed under the heading *Christus patiens*, the former two are not the same thing as the latter. The *crucifixi dolorosi* represented a distinctive type of *Christus patiens* in that, unlike other, often peaceful and little-bloodied images of the dead Christ, *crucifixi dolorosi* emphasized his suffering to an extreme degree.²³

Thus, while she insisted on the uniqueness of these brutally imagined crucifixes, von Alemann-Schwarz also grouped them with other, less extreme depictions of the Crucifixion. By putting both these image types under the same umbrella title *Christus patiens*, she risked glossing over the differences between them, especially those that have less to do with visual appearance (the distinctions here are more obvious) than with function, which she hardly discusses.

Until Godehard Hoffman's 2006 book, de Francovich's and von Alemann-Schwarz's contributions defined this field.²⁴ Hoffmann's study was prompted by the

²² For example, she argued that the crucifix in San Giorgio dei Teutonici, Pisa, was originally fashioned in Germany and carried to its Italian home by the German knights who founded the church. Ibid., 135.

²³ Ibid., 13.

²⁴ *Das Gabelkreuz in St. Maria im Kapitol zu Köln und das Phänomen der Crucifixi dolorosi in Europa*. Worth mentioning are also Fried Mühlberg and Peter Hilger, who also argued that the *Kapitolskruzifix* was the first of the *crucifixi dolorosi* and the ultimate model for the rest. See Mühlberg, "Crucifixus dolorosus."; Hans-Peter Hilger, *St. Maria im Kapitol zu Köln* (Neuss: Neusser Dr. u. Verl., 1985). This assumption was questioned only in 1996 by Ivana Kyzourová and Pavel Kalina in "The 'Premyslovsky' Crucifix of Jihlava. Stylistic Character and Meaning of a Crucifixus Dolorosus," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 57 (1996). Margrit

restoration of the *Kapitolskruzifix*, completed in 2001.²⁵ While he focused his attention primarily on this one object, he opened his investigation to crucifixes across Europe, as is immediately evident by the title of his book. Grouping the word *Gabelkreuz* with *crucifixus dolorosus*, he made the forked cross one instance among several that make up the larger category. He clearly aligned himself with de Francovich in his methods: in his claims of a Europe-wide phenomenon, in his use of the term *crucifixus dolorosus*, and in his very approach to the study of these objects: Like his predecessor, he also looked to explain the origins and dissemination of this type of crucifix throughout Europe and, in doing so, to recontextualize the crucifixes within medieval art history. Hoffmann followed de Francovich's formula of employing visual analysis to establish relationships between crucifixes, but by using new empirical findings from restorations that had been carried out in more recent decades, he intended to reassess the old questions and test the validity of their old answers.

The restoration of the *Kapitolskruzifix* uncovered new information that cast doubt on previously accepted suppositions. The most important of the findings was the discovery of fifty to sixty relics within the corpus' chest cavity and of a first, previously unknown, layer of polychromy beneath that which has been visible for centuries.²⁶ Aegidius Gelenius had written in his 1636 *Staurologia Coloniensis* that the crucifix had been consecrated by Bishop Heinrich on December 4, 1304.²⁷ He furthermore asserted

Lisner is also notable for her work on wood crucifixes, including those in question. See *Holzkruzifixe in Florenz und in der Toskana von der Zeit um 1300 bis zum frühen Cinquecento* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1970). A number of Italian scholars also published on these crucifixes, and these will be addressed separately in the text of this chapter since their general approach to these objects was to focus on individual crucifixes rather than to place them in the context of a continental phenomenon.

²⁵ Hoffmann made frequent use of the term *Kapitolskruzifix* throughout his text.

²⁶ Hoffmann, *Das Gabelkreuz*, 30-37.

²⁷ Gelenius certainly refers to the *Kapitolskruzifix* in his text, describing the crucifix “à planta pedis, usque ad verticem, vulneribus & sanguine cruentum repraesentat...” As to the dedication, he notes under the year

that it contained many relics within, listing thirty-two.²⁸ Although the recent scientific study of the St. Maria im Kapitol crucifix confirmed the presence of relics, it also proved Gelenius' inventory to be largely erroneous.²⁹ Since only four of the relics the canon had listed were found in the chest cavity, Hoffmann questioned the reliability of the canon's entire document. Although Hoffmann proposed a new and earlier date range for the *Kapitolskruzifix*, which reaffirmed the place of the Cologne crucifix at the beginning and in the center of a larger *crucifixus dolorosus* phenomenon, this discovery and the doubt it prompted had the unforeseen consequence of destabilizing the written history of the crucifix type.³⁰ Without the certainty of the date that anchored de Francovich's model, Hoffmann undermined the entire historiographic method.

The discovery of the original polychromy likewise called previously established relationships and chronologies into question. Now visible in a small patch on the

1304: "Hac Crux veneranda, benedicta est à venerabili Patre Domino Henrico, Rodestonensa Episcopo..." Aegidius Gelenius, *Staurologia Coloniensis: in qua De S.S. per Dioecesin Coloniensem sparsis Crucibus, repetitis ex omni Antiquitate considerationibus, disseritur* (Cologne, 1636), 37-38.

²⁸ "De Ligno S. Crucis Domini, De spinea Corona Domini, De Spongia Domini, De Lancea Domini, De Arundine Domini, De Praesepe Domini, De lacte B. Virginis, De Capillis eiusdem, De Vestimentis, eiusdem, De Sepulchro eiusdem. De SS Apostolis: De Oñibus S. Andrea, De Oñibus S. Bartholomaei, De Pileo S. Thomae. De SS. Martyribus: De S. Laurentio, De S. Stephano, De S. Quirino, De S. Hippolyto, De SS. Innocentibus, De S. Gerenoe & sociis eius, unà cum reliquiis Sanctorum sultorum, quorum nomina nouit, qui nihil ignorat." Ibid., 39-40.

²⁹ The presence of relics was confirmed by means of x-rays, and the individual relics were further studied with the insertion of an endoscope inserted into the side wound, as so not to disturb them. Many, although not all, of the relics were able to be identified; the labels that could be read included: "De lingo domini, De s(an)c(t)o Sepulch(r)o d(omi)ni, De lacte b[ea]te [Mar]ie virg(inis), De crinib(us) Ma[r]ie Magdalene, De man(n)a S(an)c(t)i Joh(ann)is ev, Luce ew(angelist)e, S(ancti) Paulini m(artyris), Laur[en]cii m(a)r(try)[i]s, Arbogasti ep(iscopi), Duoru(m) E[w]aldorum, Apollin[a]rii, Crisantii m(a)r(tyr)is, Georgi., Gorgon[ii] mar(tyris), de s(ancto) macio (Martio?), Marci..en..s (Marcr..en..s?), Marti.. m[artyris], Sabarie (Sabatie? Sabine?), De ..iobus fut..(fur..?) an EL, Cri[st]ine virg(inis), Odilie vi[r]ginis, s(an)c(t)e ..gite v(ir)ginis, ..ict.. archiep(iscop)i, vnici nci ..m., De ..sco.. sc, sa.. virg(inis), De templo sancto." Hoffmann, *Das Gabelkreuz*, 37.

³⁰ Hoffmann supported his new date range – spanning the last decades of the thirteenth century and the first quarter fourteenth century – by calling into evidence the labels on the relics within the crucifix's chest cavity. These labels, he argues, were written by several contemporary hands, which, based on paleographic study, were at work during that period. However, such a wide date range does not actually prove that the *Kapitolskruzifix* was among the earliest of the *crucifixi dolorosi*; Hoffmann's theory allows that the Cologne crucifix was possibly an early and therefore widely influential model, but also allows that it may have been fashioned much later. Ibid.

abdomen, the first layer has smaller and flatter characteristics than the second layer, and is therefore more ornamental in character (figure 13b). Like those on the second layer, the earlier flagellation wounds comprised red circles with black centers and three thin streams of blood dripping down from each. Unlike the overpainting, however, these were neither raised nor individualized. A large number of small red dots also swathed Christ's body, likely the bloody sweat that his pores released on Gethsemane; these were not repeated when the corpus was repainted a short time after its creation.³¹ Turning back to von Alemann-Schwarz' methods, Hoffmann found new visual connections between the *Kapitolskruzifix* and others in the Rhine and Italy that would lead to his assigning revised chronologies and paths of influence.³²

Despite these new lines of inquiry, Hoffmann still concluded that the St. Maria im Kapitol example was the prototype that influenced, at least indirectly, all the other *crucifixa dolorosi*. He did put more pressure on the question of origin, noting that the type had no artistic precedent in Cologne; he suggested that a foreign sculptor of unknown nationality had come to work in the Rhine region, the first of a number of traveling artisans he credited with the dissemination of the imagery.³³ While he investigated the how and where more thoroughly, Hoffmann offered little in terms of the why or what for. He questioned previous claims that these crucifixes would have been placed on the cross

³¹ Hoffmann asserted that a precise date for the second layer of paint is not possible, since systematic comparisons are lacking, but his colleague in the restoration, Hans-Wilhelm Schwanz, suggested c. 1400. Ibid., 31-35.

³² Hoffmann connects four crucifixes in the Cologne region more closely than was previously thought to the *Kapitolskruzifix*: in St. Georg in Bocholt, St. Johan Baptist in Hürth-Kendenich, St. Viktor in Xanten, and St. Maria vom Frieden in Cologne itself. He moves them closer to the turn of the fourteenth century based on what he perceives of a greater dependence on the model before its second layer of polychromy was applied. He also mentions the crucifixes in Pisa, which has similar flagellation wounds and decorative band around the hem of the loincloth as the *Kapitolskruzifix*, and in Oristano, the flagellation wounds of which also approximate the first layer of polychromy but not the second. Ibid., 31-34.

³³ Ibid., 42-45.

altars of their respective churches, citing their high value as a reason why they would not have been made accessible to the laity. But beyond that, he could only admit that the lack in evidence regarding where they were displayed and who had access to them leaves us with no certainties about their functions.³⁴ Hoffmann referred to the many different groups that owned such crucifixes but never went as far as to suggest that such heterogeneous ownership could result in varied uses for similar looking objects, particularly given that fact that the needs of each of these groups were themselves likely diverse.

ITALIAN PERSPECTIVES ON ITALIAN *CRUCIFIXI DOLOROSI*

Beginning in the late 1970s, other scholars writing in Italian began to analyze the *crucifissi dolorosi* with a distinct approach and with different goals. They were not interested in the pan-European dissemination of such crucifixes, but rather in the relationships between individual Italian examples and their (alleged) northern models. The impetus for these scholars was usually the object's restoration and/or inclusion in an exhibition.³⁵ Given de Francovich's early publication in Italian, it is surprising that his questions and methods did not seep into Italian scholarship. It would be several decades after the publication of his essay before these crucifixes became attractive objects of study for Italian scholars.

It is worthwhile to consider why these scholars were slow to investigate the *crucifissi dolorosi*. It seems that the delay in Italian-language scholarly interest depended

³⁴ We can surmise in a few Italian instances that such crucifixes would have been generally accessible. I address this in greater depth in Chapter 2.

³⁵ For example, Maetzke, *Arte nell'Aretino*; Diana E. Kaley, *Il Crocifisso Chiaramonte della Cattedrale di Palermo* (Palermo: Cattedrale di Palermo, 1993); Michele Tomasi, "Il Crocifisso di San Giorgio ai Tedeschi e la diffusione del 'Crocifisso doloroso'," in *Sacre Passioni. Scultura lignea a Pisa dal XII al XV secolo*, ed. Mariagiulia Burrelli (Milan: Federico Motta Editore S.p.A., 2000).

on the idea that the crucifixes were antithetical to the modern understanding of thirteenth-century artistic context into which they were introduced. While German scholars in the early twentieth century introduced the *Kapitolskruzifix* and other Rhine region examples as epitomizing the “German spirit,” Italian attention fell elsewhere.³⁶ The scholars did not perceive the similar crucifixes as native to Italy or as innately Italian. Paleo Bacci’s 1923 article in many ways set the standard for later Italian-language scholarship on the *crucifixi dolorosi*; written by the Pisa Soprintendente after he discovered the crucifix in San Giorgio dei Teutonici (figure 16), it is the one example of Italian scholarship on this subject that predates de Francovich and can be seen in concert with the works of German art historians in the early twentieth century.³⁷ Having read works by Lüthgen and Richard Hamann, Bacci claimed that it was not difficult to understand the German origins of the Pisa crucifix’s violent imagery.³⁸ He never questioned the assumption that this type of crucifix was innately German, and in fact he embraced the idea of northern roots. To explain the presence of a German crucifix in Tuscany, Bacci narrated a history of German knights in Pisa in the early fourteenth century who had been led by Ugucione della Faggiola in two successful campaigns, the first in 1314 against Lucca and the second in 1315 against the Guelphs in Montecatini. These knights then erected an oratory in 1315 in honor of their victory, dedicated to their patron saint, St. George, and installed the crucifix, which they had allegedly carried with them from the Rhine region.³⁹

³⁶ Onto such topics as Classicism in medieval Italian art and artistic connections between medieval Italy and the Byzantine world.

³⁷ “Un crocifisso tedesco-renano del XIV secolo in S. Giorgio de’ Teutonici di Pisa,” *Bollettino d’Arte*, no. 2-3 (1923/24).

³⁸ Eugen Lüthgen, *Gotische Plastik in den Rheinlanden* (Bonn: F. C. Cohen, 1921); Richard Hamann, *Deutsche Köpfe des Mittelalters* (Marburg an der Lahn: Verlag des Kunstgeschichtlichen Seminars, 1922).

³⁹ Bacci noted that the only documentary evidence of this crucifix in San Giorgio dei Teutonici (now degli Innocenti) dates to 1856. This nineteenth-century memorial notes that one Domenico Tosi obtained healing from the miraculous crucifix, and in thanks he provided a more splendid stucco tabernacle to house it in the

For Bacci, though, the need for this crucifix to be German lay not (or at least not only) in any assertion that the imagery was un-Italian, although he did note that the crucifix had no relationship to other contemporary sculpture in Pisa. Rather, he took his stance in defense of the German Gothic against the attacks of Emile Mâle, who was motivated by the desire to claim the Gothic for France.⁴⁰ In opposition to Mâle's claim that medieval German artists were incapable of expressing love, Bacci wrote that many medieval German works were, in fact, "works of intimate grandeur and of sentimental beauty."⁴¹ His enthusiastic acceptance of the gory crucifixion imagery in Pisa as German would resound loudly among later Italian scholars. Although several have since considered Spanish origins for the crucifix type, most have adopted Bacci's claims.⁴² They have furthermore accepted his model of studying individual crucifixes and looking to foreign examples to explain their violent imagery.

Diana Kaley's 1993 study of the Chiaramonte Crucifix in the Palermo cathedral (figure 11), is such an example; according to legend, the crucifix has been housed there since 1311.⁴³ Prompted by its restoration in the early 1990s, Kaley studied its legend, history, and restoration. Her desire to understand this particular object within a larger context of *crucifissi dolorosi* was largely limited to a comparison with the crucifix in St. Maria im Kapitol, which she introduced as having emerged from the intellectual and

apse. Even so, Bacci asserted that San Giorgio was the original home of the crucifix, from the church's erection in 1315. "Un crocifisso tedesco-renano," 349.

⁴⁰ *L'art religieux du XIIe siècle en France* (Paris: A. Colin, 1922).

⁴¹ "...opera di intima grandezza e di bellezza piena di sentimento." "Un crocifisso tedesco-renano," 348.

⁴² For example, see Remo Branca, *Il Crocifisso di Oristano* (Cagliari: Editrice Sarda Fossataro, 1971); Anna Maria Giusti, "Un dipinto inglese del Duecento in Santa Maria Novella a Firenze," *Bollettino d'Arte* 23 (1984): 65-78; Kaley, *Il Crocifisso Chiaramonte*. For the argument of Spanish origins, see Maetzke, *Arte nell'Aretino*, 23. In this catalogue entry on the crucifix in Sta Margherita in Cortona, Maetzke suggested that a Spanish provenance is likely based on the geometric traits of the face and other characteristics that can be found in various Spanish crucifixes, especially that in Perpignan, which, although in France, she attributes to a Spanish hand.

⁴³ See *Il Crocifisso Chiaramonte*, 7, 18. I also discuss this legend in great depth in the dissertation's Conclusion.

spiritual life of thirteenth-century Cologne as exemplified in the works of Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus.⁴⁴ She asserted that the Chiaramonte Crucifix was so closely related to the *Kapitolskruzifix* that the two must have had a direct relationship in which the former was modeled on the latter. She pointed to the crown of thorns, the smooth cap of the head, the rounded knees, the wrinkles around the nose, and the folds of the loincloth with the knot on the right as evidence. This close relationship, according to Kaley, was enabled by a large German presence in Italy: soldiers, pilgrims, crusaders, merchants, students, and religious men and women; the connections of the crucifix's donor, Manfredi Chiaramonte, the Conte di Modica and Siniscalco del Regno di Sicilia, with Sicily's German community were also instrumental. Yet she argued that some elements distance the crucifix in Palermo from its "prototype in Cologne," pointing to the sharper bend of the knees and the face that, despite signs of suffering, is more peaceful and serene.⁴⁵ She credited these elements to its Italian manufacture and the artisan's exposure to the artistic ambience of Italy. The restoration disclosed the sculpture's lime, poplar, and cypress woods, all indigenous south of the Alps as opposed to the chestnut most often used to carve the German crucifixes; thus she concluded that the crucifix was the work of a sculptor working in Italy (whether Italian or foreign).

A short section in Kaley's monograph entitled "Il Crocifisso gotico doloroso in Italia" does mention three other such crucifixes in Italy: those in San Domenico, Orvieto (figure 2), San Francesco, Oristano (figure 10), and the cathedral in Lucera (figure 14). Yet her discussion of these is limited to brief descriptions, only intending to show that these crucifixes share formal elements; she does not inquire beyond the influence of

⁴⁴ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 21.

German imagery on these individual Italian sculptures.⁴⁶ The introduction of comparable works seems to be more a tip of the hat to previous scholarship – Kaley, as well as other Italian scholars who have taken up the subject, consistently cite de Francovich throughout their discussions – than an entry into a broader discussion of *crucifixi dolorosi*.

Writing in 2000, Elvio Lunghi was the first to consider the grisly wood crucifixes in Italy as part of a broader and, significantly, Italian phenomenon.⁴⁷ His approach is quite different from previous Italian scholarship, and, in a way, returns to the theories of the early-twentieth-century German scholars; Lunghi attempts to connect specific crucifixes to the ecstasies of individual saints and thereby to extrapolate the crucifixes' functions based on the case studies he presents. He relates the stories of local holy figures Angela da Foligno, Giacomo da Bevagna, Vanna da Orvieto, Thomas Aquinas, Margherita di Cortona, Agnese da Montepulciano, and Fra Pacifico, drawing into the discussion the bloody crucifixes preserved in Bevagna, Orvieto, Cortona, Montepulciano, Oristano, and Florence, despite the fact that only the Cortona crucifix can be tied with any certainty to the legend he connects it to.⁴⁸ Lunghi also explores the devotional context of central Italy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in which these local holy figures and, he suggests, the *crucifixi dolorosi*, existed. He ultimately concludes that the crucifixes functioned visually as emotional cues within the devotional and paraliturgical practices of the laity encouraged by mendicant friars.

⁴⁶ Kaley's section title offers one example in which Italian scholars readily adopted de Francovich's term. Ibid., 22-24.

⁴⁷ *La Passione degli Umbri*.

⁴⁸ Vanna da Orvieto's *vita*, for example, never mentions a crucifix at all, never mind the specific *crucifixus dolorosus* in San Domenico. Thus Lunghi is making assumptions that are not necessarily untenable, but they are not securely grounded in medieval evidence. I discuss Vanna's *vita* in more depth in Chapter 3.

Lunghi was the first to have investigated the function of these crucifixes in any depth, and in that way his study stands apart from those of his predecessors, which focused almost entirely on formal qualities. His success can be credited to the limited scope of his inquiry; he considers only a few crucifixes in a limited geographical region and is able to create a more or less uniform historical context for them. Yet, there is little documentation recording the function of the crucifixes at the time of their fashioning. Lunghi supplements this lack with more than just the use of visual analysis; he also builds a context for the crucifixes by examining legends of miracles and other contemporary devotional texts. He studies the language used to describe the Passion and visions of the Passion, drawing the conclusion that images of Christ's death should match the bloodiness and suffering evident in the visions.

Despite his different approach to these objects, Lunghi still accepts de Francovich's terminology. Early in his book, he introduces "crocifisso gotico doloroso" as an iconography that originated north of the Alps, an assumption derived directly from de Francovich.⁴⁹ Although he briefly entertains the idea that the crucifix type was actually an English conception based on the fact that English painters were at work in the Upper Church of San Francesco in Assisi, he repeatedly asserts that the imagery was German.⁵⁰ It is essential for Lunghi that the imagery be foreign. Because the imagery was strange and unexpected, he argues, it was able to evoke emotional responses among contemporary viewers that were stronger than any from images they would have been

⁴⁹ Lunghi, *La Passione degli Umbri*, 13.

⁵⁰ For example see *ibid.*, 61. For his consideration of an English origin, see page 74.

already inured to.⁵¹ Thus it was not just a sense of realism or the violent imagery of these objects, but also their foreign appearance, that gave them their power.

Lunghi's reliance on earlier scholarship goes deeper than simply using de Francovich's terminology. Like the earliest German scholars, Lunghi places the *crucifigi dolorosi* in a mystical context, seeing a fundamental connection with (although not a derivation from) the spiritual teachings of Eckhart, Tauler and Suso. The scholarly insistence on the German origins of these crucifixes is thus pervasive, appearing in studies that span nearly a century and many diverse intellectual contexts. This is rather curious given the fact that the violent imagery entered into contexts to which it had no stylistic connection.⁵² If German scholars were so keen to claim the *crucifigi dolorosi* for themselves, why did Italian scholars so readily accept that claim? Why were they so invested in these crucifixes being so utterly "un-Italian"? The most convincing answer to this question, which undoubtedly enters into a study much larger than that of modern Italian conceptions of violent crucifixes, is that the anomalous imagery does not embody the beauty Italian scholars so admire in the works of such contemporary artists as Duccio and Giotto, whose works have largely defined late medieval Italy and its art.

CONCLUSION

Having examined how scholars have previously studied the so-called *crucifigi dolorosi*, I offer an evaluation of the category's continued use. De Francovich had introduced the phrase "crocifisso gotico doloroso" to extend the discussion of violent gothic wood crucifixes beyond the Rhineland. His term shifted the discussion away from any narrow connection with medieval German mysticism and modern German

⁵¹ Ibid., 78.

⁵² *Das Gabelkreuz*, 42.

nationalism that earlier designations had emphasized. Successive scholarship soon transformed “crocifisso gotico doloroso” into the Latin *crucifixus dolorosus*, achieving exactly what de Francovich had hoped for: an object type that supported the idea of an interconnected medieval Europe. As he posited, the crucifixes described by his terminology were in no way limited to the geographic area around Cologne; they appeared in Spain, Italy, France, and even Croatia and Poland. Nor were they the manifestation of an innate German spirit; predecessors and models could be found in Italy as well as in Westphalia. The use of Latin for the category descriptor also imbued this notion of a pan-European phenomenon with authority and gravity.

The category was soon established but its definition remained fluid. The objects embody a wide variety of visual characteristics, particularly in Italy, where heterogeneity among such crucifixes is the norm. De Francovich’s model of study for these crucifixes allowed for little interest in their function. His category was based entirely on visual and material characteristics, leaving us to ask: How useful is such a category if those characteristics can be so variable? Furthermore, is the creation of an independent class of objects even defensible if it is not defined by the objects’ function? When scholars must continuously debate its definition, the category’s utility is weak at best.

That said, the *crucifigi dolorosi* do share important visual characteristics with one another that bind them together, even if only loosely. Moreover, the category is strengthened by crucifixes’ shared roles and functions within their medieval contexts. What connects them visually provided them with a shared function that distinguished them from other contemporary crucifixes. Therefore, in the chapters that follow, I build on my predecessors’ careful visual analyses but extend my inquiry beyond the questions

that limited their studies. Ultimately, I maintain the category *crucifixus dolorosus*, by means of not only visual characteristics, but also (and primarily) function.

2. CHRIST AND THE CRUCIFIX, INHERENCE AND ILLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this chapter is, to a large degree, the affective image, the physical representation that convinces its viewer that it is alive. Art historians and philosophers alike have attended to this topic for a long time now, and studies about it have become quite nuanced and even scientific.¹ Various strands of this scholarly discussion will appear throughout the chapter's discussions, but here I want to clarify why the affective image is important for the study of the *crucifixi dolorosi*. Most obviously, it is because it would seem that only the rare viewer can confront one of these crucifixes even today

¹ Especially since 1989, when two highly influential works were published: David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). The idea that viewers in the Middle Ages approached their images as if actually the figure represented, or as if that figure (or his or her power) resided within, has been revisited and reasserted a number of times: Michele Bacci, *'Pro remedio animae': Immagini sacre e pratiche devozionali in Italia centrale (secoli XIII e XIV)* (Pisa: GISEM-Edizioni ETS, 2000); Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: a History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011). Freedberg's study was a point of origin as well as of contention in a 2006 collection of essays dedicated to the idea of a prototype's inherence in the image: *Presence: The Inherence of the Prototype within Images and Other Objects*, ed. Robert Maniura and Rupert Shepherd (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006). Philosophers and cognitive scientists have also become interested in the affective image. For philosophical approaches, see Gottfried Boehm, "Repräsentation - Präsentation - Präsenz: Auf den Spuren des homo pictor," in *Homo Pictor*, ed. Gottfried Boehm, *Colloquium Rauricum* (Munich: K.G. Saur Verlag, 2001); Phillipp Stoellger, "Das Bild als unbewegter Beweger zur effektiven und affektiven Dimension des Bildes als Performanz seiner ikonischen Energie," in *Movens Bild. Zwischen Evidenz und Affekt*, ed. Birgit Mersmann Gottfried Boehm, Christian Spies (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2008). Boehm, of course, was trained in both art history and philosophy. For cognitive science, refer to David Freedberg, "Empathy, Motion, and Emotion," in *Wie sich Gefühle Ausdruck verschaffen: Emotionen in Nahtsicht*, ed. Klaus Herding and Antje Krause-Wahl (Tausenstein: Verlag Dr. H. H. Driesen GmbH, 2008), 17-51; Guillemete Bolens, *The Style of Gestures: Embodiment and Cognition in Literary Narrative* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), with bibliography. Freedberg and Bolens build on recent studies in cognitive science to suggest that humans are biologically wired through mirror neurons to feel sensations in their bodies that simulate what they see in others or in representations. Other scholars question the validity of not only this theory of aesthetic response, but also the validity of the science it is based upon. See, for example Ruth Leys, "'Both of us Disgusted in My Insula': Mirror Neuron Theory and Emotional Empathy," *Nonsite*, no. 5 (2012), <http://nonsite.org/article/both-of-us-disgusted-in-my-insula-mirror-neuron-theory-and-emotional-empathy>.

without having a strong reaction to it, without feeling discomfort. Thus, it is important to consider both how these images enact power over viewers today and in the medieval period and to what end.

A consequence independent of a viewer's will or desire, the power of images, especially of sculptures, to move viewers has been labeled kinesthetic, referring to a gravitational pull or what Phillipp Stoellger calls "*ikonische Energie*."² As will quickly become apparent, *crucifigi dolorosi* have a strong "*ikonische Energie*"; they lead viewers to and around them, an effect almost certainly crafted deliberately by their makers that successively causes some details to be revealed and others hidden, resulting in animation. The crucifixes appear to move, to come to life. In close proximity, the viewer had to confront the crucifix's violent imagery, with strong effects that were both emotional and physical.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that the power of a material image is neither constant nor consistent, which is in part because the image is inextricably tied to absence and even death. Gottfried Boehm points to Alberti, who, in the fifteenth century, wrote of images as being able to make far away friends present or even the dead alive.³ This conception of material images originated in antiquity and had great currency in the Middle Ages, particularly because it formed part of the Gregorian dictum on images.⁴ In an interpolated letter to Secundinus, the author writes first that he is pleased

...because you seek with all your heart and all intentness Him, whose picture you wish to have before your eyes, so that every day, the corporeal

² "Das Bild als unbewegter Beweger," 191-193.

³ "Repräsentation - Präsentation - Präsenz," 4-5.

⁴ Specifically from the Secundinus letter, an interpolation in Gregories *Registrum Epistolarum* from the eighth century. Kessler discusses this in "Real Absense: Early Medieval Art and the Metamorphosis of Vision," in *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 121-125.

sight renders Him visible; thus, when you see the picture, you are inflamed in your soul with love for Him whose image you wish to see.⁵

The image makes its prototype visible to its desiring viewer, and the prototype gives the image the power to excite and inflame love within that viewer. However, seeing the image is not enough, for inevitably comes the recognition that the person whose image it is remains absent. This, too, was recognized by the author of the interpolation who wrote that, although it is permissible to show the invisible by means of the visible (“per visibilia invisibilia demonstramus”), the visible is not the invisible, and thus we must continue to desire that which is absent in a similar fashion to the

man who ardently desires to see another or wishes, because of love, to see his fiancée; if it happens that the person that he is seeking to see goes into a bath or church, he is prepared to follow in order to withdraw happy from that vision.⁶

The continued desire, and therefore the recognition that the subject is ultimately absent despite having been made visible, breaks the image’s illusion. The *crucifixi dolorosi* allow, even insist, that their fiction be uncovered, and thus they emphasize their status as wood sculptures. That they do so is important to their roles as devotional tools that provoke a spiritual ascent. However, breaking the fiction, as I will show, is not mutually exclusive of either presenting or insisting upon it.

As Robert Maniura and Rupert Shepherd have suggested, viewers have always seemed to be able to see images simultaneously as image and as prototype: “In fact,” they write, “it is our very ability to see two inconsistent things at once that helps account for

⁵ As cited by Kessler in *ibid.*, 121. “Imaginis eius quam nobis tibi dirigendam per Dulcidium diaconem tuum rogasti, valde nobis tua postulation placuit, quia illum in corde tota intentione quaeris, cuius imaginem prae oculis habere desideras, ut visio corporalis cotidiana reddat exsertum et, dum picturam vides, ad illum animo inardescas, cuius imaginem videre desideras.” Saint Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistularum: Libri VIII-XIV, Appendix*, ed. Dag Norberg (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), 1110, l. 168-173.

⁶ Kessler, “Real Absence,” 124. “Sic homo qui alium ardentem videre desiderat aut sponsam amando desiderat, quem videre conatur, si contingit ad balneum ire aut ad ecclesiam, praecedere festinus in via se praeparat, ut de vision hilaris recedat.” Saint Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistularum*, 1110, l. 174-177.

presence.”⁷ They insist that the awareness that an illusion is at play is essential for a viewer to experience fully the power of the image. I argue that this claim holds true for the *crucifixi dolorosi*, and that, therefore, these large and expressive representations of the crucified Christ provide an opportunity to examine the complex attitudes regarding images that were prevalent in the late-medieval period. I demonstrate that for lay viewers and theologians alike, the relationship between physical image and its absent prototype remained undefined and fluid. As for the question of whether the image revealed or contained its prototype, or merely referred to and commemorated it, the answer was never just one or the other: it was both. We find this in the writings of Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, where they each wrote of the need for the prototype to both inhere in its image and be definitively separate from it. These conflicting demands co-existed in those texts and were manifested in many contemporary artworks, including the *crucifixi dolorosi*, whose vivid and violent imagery both presented the still-living Christ and emphasized their status as image *per se*. They both provided an immersive experience and undermined it, forcing their viewers to assess critically the intense and devotionally-charged encounter they were undergoing. This chapter therefore investigates the ways in which the *crucifixi dolorosi* engaged with and satisfied the ambivalent desires and expectations that medieval viewers and theologians held for their images.

These ambivalences derived in the thirteenth century from the confrontation of traditional Gregorian (Western) image theory and the theories of images held by certain iconophilic Byzantine theologians, particularly the eighth-century John of Damascus. Quite a few art historians have already noted this clash, or perhaps blending, of theories,

⁷ "Introduction," in *Presence: The Inherence of the Prototype within Images and Other Objects*, ed. Robert Maniura and Rupert Shepherd (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 16.

especially in the writings of Aquinas and Bonaventure.⁸ For example, Herbert Kessler explains that Aquinas incorporated John of Damascus's *De fide orthodoxa*, translated into Latin in the twelfth century by Burgundio da Pisa and edited in the thirteenth by Robert Grosseteste, into his *Commentary on The Sentences* of Peter Lombard.⁹ Kessler argues that in addition to his tripartite defense of images, which was dependent on Gregorian image theory and, therefore, kept image distinctly separate from prototype, Aquinas integrated Byzantine ideas connecting the two into his philosophy in order to assert that viewers' prayers before images were, in fact, sent on to the holy person represented.¹⁰ This much is certainly true, but misses just how inconsistent Aquinas's understanding of this relationship between image and prototype was. His view changed from text to text, even from sentence to sentence within the same text; at times, he separated the two and at others he fused them together. That he never resolved these conflicts in his writings reflects not only the sheer complexity of the issue, but also the desire or need to leave both options in play.¹¹

⁸ To name just a few: Gerhard Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani: die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter* (Weinheim: VCH, Acta humaniora, 1990); Herbert L. Kessler, "Gregory the Great and Image Theory in Northern Europe in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolf (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); Donal Cooper, "Projecting presence: the monumental cross in the Italian church interior," in *Presence: The Inherence of the Prototype within Images and Other Objects*, ed. Robert Maniura and Rupert Shepherd (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

⁹ "Gregory the Great and Image Theory," 342-343. For the Latin translations of John of Damascus, see Irena Backus, "John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa*: Translations by Burgundio (1153/54), Grosseteste (1235/40) and Lefèvre d'Étaples (1507)," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 49 (1986).

¹⁰ "Gregory the Great and Image Theory," 342.

¹¹ Jean Wirth has published several essays on Aquinas' theories, and they are particularly helpful. See in particular "Structure et fonctions de l'image chez Saint Thomas D'Aquin," in *L'image: Fonctions et usages des images dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. Jérôme Baschet and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Cahiers du Léopard D'Or* (Paris: Le Léopard D'Or, 1996); "Soll man Bilder anbeten? Theorien zum Bilderkult bis zum Konzil von Trent," in *Bildersturm. Wahnsinn oder Gottes Wille?*, ed. Peter Jezler Cécil Dupeux, Jean Wirth (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2000). See also Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Le corps des images: essais sur la culture visuelle au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002). Neither scholar, however, emphasizes the inconsistencies within Aquinas' writings.

If the ability to see both the prototype and the physical image, the fiction and the very fact of its being a fiction, provided the faithful with an important opportunity for spiritual advancement, then the *crucifixi dolorosi* were exceptional devotional tools. Despite intending these sculptures to appear to come to life for viewers, craftsmen emphatically presented stylized and ornamental details, distortions, and exaggerations that become obvious upon close examination, thus undermining any perceived realism.¹² This “interrupted process,” to use Paroma Chatterjee’s phrase, allowed the viewer to participate in Christ’s Passion, to witness and mourn his death as if he were truly present, and then forced the same viewer to turn a critical eye to such an experience.¹³ Both parts of this process were important.¹⁴

In order to substantiate this thesis, I rely heavily on the close examination of the compositions and visual details of several *crucifixi dolorosi*. I consider not only how a modern viewer can look at and move around them, but also where they were originally displayed and how accessible they were to medieval viewers, thus grounding my analyses in the historical context. In addition to introducing thirteenth-century theological and devotional texts, I build on the recent work of Donal Cooper, Amy Knight Powell, and Paroma Chatterjee, which has introduced into the art-historical debate on the affective

¹² A number of recent studies have debated issues surrounding the enlivening of the medieval image. For example, Caroline Walker Bynum, reacting to the work of Alfred Gell, has argued that materiality rather than figuration, and especially anthropomorphism, was what underlay the animation of images. In both her 2011 *Christian Materiality* and a 2012 article, “The Sacrality of Things,” Bynum suggests that anxiety around images (due to their animation) derived from the ability of matter to change, and not from any particular visible details, three-dimensionality, naturalism, or even quality of craftsmanship. Agreeing with David Freedberg’s sentiment that an image’s efficacy and power to enliven was dependent on how it looked, I argue conversely to Bynum and assert that particular figural qualities are precisely what activated and enabled the *crucifixi dolorosi* to appear animate to their viewers. See Freedberg, *Power of Images*; Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Bynum, *Christian Materiality*; —, “The Sacrality of Things: An Inquiry into Divine Materiality in the Christian Middle Ages,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2012).

¹³ *The Living Icon in Byzantium and Italy: The Vita Image, Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 166.

¹⁴ Kessler discusses this phenomenon for the early and high Middle Ages in “Real Absence.”

image the idea that material images were not consistent in either enacting power or undermining it. While their premises and conclusions differ from one another, each illuminates the social and religious importance of the late-medieval ambivalence towards material images.

ACTIVATION BY APPROACH: ANTICIPATING THE MOVING VIEWER

Quite a few of the sculptures under consideration have been cleaned and restored in the last decades with the result that they now presumably approximate their original appearances. Many are still displayed in the churches for which they were made, although some have been moved to new locations within those churches; others have been moved to different churches, and one is now on display in a museum. There are several examples that are today displayed in ways similar to those of the Middle Ages, for example, the crucifixes in Oristano and Orvieto (figures 10 and 2). Both are mounted atop altars in side chapels, thus are fairly close to ground level and visible from the nave.

Historical sources referring to the crucifixes in Cortona and Florence (figures 9 and 6) suggest that medieval viewers would have had comparable access to these *crucifixi dolorosi* as we now do for the Oristano and Orvieto crucifixes.¹⁵ Giunta Bevegnati tells us in his *vita* of Margherita that the crucifix decorated an altar in the church proper.¹⁶ Since the small church was built with no transept and had no rood screen,

¹⁵ The *crucifixus dolorosus* in Cortona is today displayed behind glass in niche to the right of the high altar of the hilltop sanctuary of Santa Margherita, and that in Florence hangs quite high up on the right (east) wall of the nave – much higher than it would have been displayed originally.

¹⁶ See Introduction, page 19 (especially note 13).

a large crucifix over one of the church's altars would therefore have been visible from nearly all vantage points within.¹⁷

Two documents refer to the display of the *crucifixus dolorosus* in Florence's Santa Maria Novella: the church's necrology and a contract between Fra Sebastiano di Jacopo di Rosso and the stoneworker Bernardo Rossellino, signed on July 12, 1451.¹⁸ Together they make clear that the crucifix was displayed in a similarly conspicuous location in the Dominican church. The necrology, recorded by the friars from 1235 and officially compiled by Vincenzo Borghigiani in the mid-eighteenth century, records the death of the local Beata Villana on 29 January 1361.¹⁹ It further specifies that the crucifix, said to have been the object of her prayers and devotions, was displayed above her tomb at the base of the east wall just before the two steps that divided the church of the friars (*superiore*) from that of the laity (*inferiore*).²⁰ Thus, from the time of Villana's death, the image was fairly close to ground level and was located in the nave, in the space of the faithful. The contract between Fra Sebastiano, Villana's grandson, and the artist Bernardo not only confirms this location for the crucifix, but also clearly illustrates the fact that, as

¹⁷ For more about the medieval construction of San Francesco in Cortona, see Marina Docci, "S. Francesco a Cortona: rilievo, analisi sotrica e nuovi contributi," *Opus: Quaderno di storia dell'architettura e restauro* 4 (1995): 135-152; Antonio Cadei, "La chiesa di S. Francesco a Cortona," *Storia della città* 9 (1979): 16-23.

¹⁸ Florence, Archivio di Stato, arch. 102 (S. M. Novella) Filza 101, fol. 195-196, published in Stefano Orlandi, "*Necrologio*" di S. Maria Novella. *Testo integrale dall'inizio (MCCXXXV) al MDIV corredato di note biografiche tratte da documenti coevi con presentazione del P. Innocenzo Taurisano*, 2 vols., vol. II (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1955), 490-492.

¹⁹ Ibid., I, 552. For more on Beata Villana, see —, *La Beata Villana terziaria domenicana fiorentina del sec. XIV* (Florence: Edizioni "Il Rosario", 1955).

²⁰ Orlandi cites Borghigiani's compilation when he writes "La tomba della Beata doveva essere molto umile. Si trovava in basso sulla parete della Chiesa verso levante, prima di salire i due scalini che dividevano la chiesa dei frati, o superiore da quella dei fedeli, o inferiore. Sopra la tomba era l'antico Crocifisso detto della B. Villana." —, "*Necrologio*" di S. Maria Novella, II, 239. Borghigiani's volumes exist only in the archive of Santa Maria Novella, and I have been unable to gain access to it. It should be noted that the crucifix is first mentioned only in the entry on Fra Sebastiano, Villana's grandson, because he paid for a grander tomb for his grandmother. While there is no reason not to think that the crucifix was placed above the original tomb at its initial installation, the sculpture was certainly there before the mid-fifteenth century. By that point it was so intimately tied to the Beata and her tomb that special instructions were given to maintain the crucifix over the tomb at all times.

an essential element of the tomb, it needed to be constantly visible: Sebastiano specified that the crucifix was not to be moved from its position, unless the work on the new tomb temporarily required it, and even then only with the friar's permission.²¹

Even if we can establish that these crucifixes were both in locations that enabled the laity to see them, the question remains as to whether they were easily or consistently visible; perhaps they were veiled and revealed only on special occasions. As Megan Holmes demonstrates, many miraculous and venerated images in fifteenth-century Florence were generally hidden from view. When they were unveiled on special feast days or carried in procession, they were surrounded by throngs of people hoping to benefit from their healing and other miraculous powers.²² Some images contemporary with the crucifixes also indicate that curtains were used already in the thirteenth century. For example, small angels pull back marble curtains to reveal a marble effigy of the deceased Cardinal de Braye on the tomb carved by Arnolfo di Cambio in Orvieto's San Domenico (c. 1282, figure 17), and we see similar imagery on Orcagna's marble tabernacle for Bernardo Daddi's miraculous image of the Madonna and Child in Orsanmichele (c. 1355-59). A wood crucifix in the Florentine baptistery was enshrined in a tabernacle already in 1333, as recorded in a document dating from August 28 of that year: "Il Crocifisso di nuovo posto nella chiesa di S. Giovanni, s'alluoghi in detta chiesa bene e onorevolmente; e faciasi un tabernacolo sopra i beccatelli."²³

²¹ "Ancora il detto Bernardo abbia a tagliare e smurare e a mandare via i calcinacci. cassare tutto il detto lavoro netto a ogni sua spesa d'oro e d'ogn'altra cosa. excetto che io abbia solo affare alçare il crocifisso quello e quanto sarà bisogno a mia spesa. tanto ch'el detto lavorio ci si possa porre sotto." Ibid., 491.

²² *The Miraculous Image in Renaissance Florence* (New Haven: Yale Univeristy Press, 2013).

²³ As cited in Lisner, *Holzkruzifixe in Florenz und in der Toskana von der Zeit um 1300 bis zum frühen Cinquecento*, 22.

However, only one known source mentions a tabernacle for any of the *crucifixi dolorosi* examined in this study: an addition to the same contract discussed above. On January 27, 1452, after the work specified in the original contract was completed, Fra Sebastiano and the artist Bernardo agreed to add another embellishment to Villana's new tomb: two white marble jambs that would extend up from the sides of the monument and terminate in a circular arch above.²⁴ The text explicitly asserts that the arch must be tall enough to enclose the "tabernacolo del crocifisso." This tabernacle is mentioned twice in the short addendum, where it had not appeared at all in the original contract just half a year earlier. This suggests that the wood enclosure was added during that time, perhaps in order to further aggrandize the blessed woman's new marble memorial.²⁵ Before late 1451, though, the crucifix was presumably on continuous display above Villana's remains. Individual persons would have been able to approach and contemplate it, in the way Villana had during her lifetime.²⁶

Furthermore, there is also visual evidence to support the claim that the crucifixes were accessible to medieval viewers in some proximity. De Francovich reproduced two suggestive images, the first a carved panel on the Benevento Cathedral pulpit (1311) and the second a seal that secured a 1285 document issued from Bologna by the Dominican Order general, Munio di Zamora (figures 18 and 19).²⁷ The pulpit panel depicts the sculptor, identifiable by inscription, dressed in clerical garb and kneeling before a crucifix that, with its Y-shaped cross, sunken stomach, and face that recalls a *crucifixus*

²⁴ Orlandi, "*Necrologio*" di S. Maria Novella, II, 492.

²⁵ That the Santa Maria Novella crucifix would have been first "enshrined" only in the mid-fifteenth century seems in line with many of the other Florentine examples discussed by Holmes, for example, the Chiarito Crucifix, which was first enclosed within a tabernacle in 1463. *The Miraculous Image*, 93.

²⁶ Orlandi, *La Beata Villana*, 39.

²⁷ "L'origine."

dolorosus. The seal also shows a cleric (presumably Munio himself) kneeling before a crucifix, also with a Y-shaped cross and a dead or dying Christ hanging from it. Each crucifix is of comparable size to the cleric, mimicking the usual human measure of other Italian *crucifigi dolorosi*, and the worshipper's proximity suggests that such crucifixes were accessible to their viewers.

If we can assume that medieval viewers had the same kind of access to the crucifixes in Oristano and Orvieto that modern viewers have, then our own experience can, to some degree, help us understand the late-medieval experience of such a sculpture. The thirteenth-century Gothic cathedral of San Francesco was entirely reconstructed in the nineteenth century as a centrally-planned, neoclassical rotunda.²⁸ Although the current display of the crucifix is clearly not original, in many ways it approximates that of the late medieval period.²⁹ The large crucifix stands on an altar in the left side chapel and is therefore not visible to a viewer first entering the church, who must walk farther into the sacred space before it can be seen (figure 10a). A low marble parapet, open at its center, partitions the space of the chapel off from the rest of the church, and the visitor thus has to stand directly in front of the crucifix in order to enter the chapel and approach it. What a viewer sees at the chapel's threshold is a wood corpus, polychromed to appear brutally beaten, bloodied, and disfigured. The body's distortions are noticeable at this distance: Christ's feet look too big, his stretched arms too frail, his abdomen too long (figure 10b). The corpus thus appears bottom-heavy, creating and conveying a sense of weightiness pulling Christ's lifeless body down.

²⁸ Roberto Coroneo, "San Francesco," in *Architettura romanica dalla metà del mille al primo '300* (Nuoro: Ilisso Edizioni, 1993), 268.

²⁹ This assertion is speculative, but is reasonable based on evidence for the original displays of other such crucifixes (i.e. Cortona and Florence).

Entering the chapel, the beholder's awareness of the crucifix's corporeality and physical presence become increasingly acute. As he or she moves closer, the carved figure begins to change. The sharp bend in Christ's knees becomes more exaggerated than it first seemed, the awkward elongation of his abdomen disappears and assumes normal proportions. The arms no longer seem resigned to bear Christ's deadweight, but instead to struggle against it (figure 10c). The beholder no longer sees the dead Christ merely hanging from the cross; instead he or she gazes on the still-living Savior using the last reserves of his strength in order to pull himself up and fill his collapsed lungs with air. His left arm twists where it meets the shoulder, which itself seems to push forward; such details reveal Christ's last desperate attempts to compel his body up and breathe. His toes, which previously appeared rigidly extended in rigor mortis, now also suggest this struggle when seen from a closer vantage point. The most startling change to Christ's wooden corpus is revealed only when a viewer arrives at the foot of the cross and can look up squarely into Christ's face. Not visible from any other angle are Christ's open eyes; as the viewer looks up at Christ, Christ looks back (figure 10d).

Physical proximity to the vivid sculpture, together with the sense of engagement generated by visual details that seem to be momentary, reinforces the fiction that the viewer is approaching a living being who is in the process of dying. The act of moving towards the crucifix activates it, bringing Christ to life only so that he can die again, but now in the same space as the viewer, who stands in the place previously occupied by Christ's mourners. Having reached the foot of the cross, however, the viewer is now afforded the opportunity to examine the fine details of the crucifix closely that, despite the body's more naturally proportioned appearance from that perspective, are stylized,

ornamental, and exaggerated (figure 10e). For example, Christ's smooth skin is covered in tiny, regularly spaced red dots, among which appear dark red slashes and raised greyish circles; results of the flagellation, these drip both small streams and raised drops of dark blood. Christ's ribs emerge from beneath the lacerations and surface ornament. More than the anatomically correct number of ribs are sharply delimited at their inner edges, which form an unusual M-shaped ridge, and each individual bone is separated from the next by a thin, carved line that has been filled with dark brown pigment. Among others, these details call attention to the fact that the corpus was indeed manufactured and that it hangs lifeless above the viewer, made from only wood, gesso, and pigment. As overwhelming as the initial encounter with the animate Christ may have been, the image itself disrupts the perception.

That the crucifixes were intended to foster such an intense experience is demonstrable beyond the relating of a present-day viewing experience. Their makers' intentions to animate their works for medieval viewers, if only initially, are discernable in their use of twisting compositions and optical refinements. These characteristics were strategically employed so that faithful Christians would move themselves towards the foot of the cross in search of a satisfying and complete view of the crucified Savior.³⁰ The crucifixes reward a viewer's approach with the perception of greater naturalism and life, and this is nowhere as clear as in Chioggia's church of San Domenico (figure 7). More

³⁰ The medieval sculptor's awareness of audience movement has been the subject of recent studies. Describing the "kinaesthetic experience," and the "kinetics of gothic sculpture," Christopher Lakey and Jacqueline Jung assert that medieval sculptors purposively manipulated their images in expectation of a moving viewer by means of exaggerations and other optical refinements that created the perception of natural and dynamic figures from particular vantage points below. See Christopher R. Lakey, "Relief in Perspective: Italian Medieval Sculpture and the Rise of Optical Aesthetics" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010); Jacqueline E. Jung, "The Kinetics of Gothic Sculpture. Movement and Apprehension in the South Transept of Strasbourg Cathedral and the Chartreuse de Champmol in Dijon," in *Mobile Eyes. Peripatetisches Sehen in den Bildkulturen der Vormoderne*, ed. David Ganz and Stefan Neuner (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2013).

than four meters tall, the colossal crucifix towers over the high altar and it, too, appears to be transformed as a viewer moves from the church's entrance, down the nave, to the altar.³¹ Although it is unknown exactly where or how this crucifix was displayed in the medieval period,³² the direct view from afar presents an entirely distorted body: Christ's arms are too long and thin; their knobby appearance echoes the arms of the cross behind them. His head is too large for his torso, which seems narrow and small in comparison. But at the point where it meets his legs, Christ's torso suddenly appears too large, his hips too narrow and legs short and stunted. No two body parts seem to fit together.

As the viewer approaches the foot of the cross, however, his or her perception of the giant corpus changes continuously. Several meters away, the crucifix starts to assume a more naturalistic appearance (figure 7a). Christ's femurs no longer appear abnormally short; his legs seem more commensurate with the torso. The sculpture also grants the nearing viewer an increasingly more complete view of Christ's face. But the crucifix's sculptors anticipated the multiple perspectives and presented a different body and a completely different face to viewers standing on either side of the cross. Below to Christ's right, his body looks heavy, his torso and abdomen sag, and his head hangs lifelessly down towards his chest (figure 7b). His eyes are peacefully closed, his mouth hangs open just slightly; thin rivulets of blood drip down his forehead, and his side wound is prominently displayed, providing evidence of both the torture he endured and his death. From below Christ's left side, however, the image appears to tell a different story entirely. Rather than slumped and sagging, Christ's body appears now rigid,

³¹ The church of San Domenico in Chioggia was built by 1290; the current church is the result of a mid-eighteenth-century reconstruction.

³² The crucifix was moved to the high altar in 1812. De Francovich refers to a 1538 document, which records that a new chapel was built in the original church for this crucifix and that the Major Council paid three ducats for it. "L'origine," 221.

emaciated, and tense (figure 7c). The ribcage that previously seemed awkward and unnatural appears to push forward; Christ's leg muscles now are flexed in an effort to push his body up. The side wound, so prominently visible before, disappears from view as the beholder reaches just below the cross and, with it, any sure visible proof that Christ has expired (figure 7d). This vantage point also affords a full view of Christ's face, but, instead of a staid and lifeless visage, the viewer here sees suffering; only now are the eyes revealed to be open, looking wearily – even pleadingly – down at the viewer. Only from this vantage point does the mouth no longer merely hang, but instead seem to gasp for breath or call out. Only from this side does it become clear that Christ is not dead, but painfully alive. The viewer is not invited simply to observe the represented suffering, then, but is actively implicated in it by Christ's gaze. Christ's elongated and twisted neck indicates his struggle to see and speak to the viewer, to make the viewer a part of his final moments.³³ She or he thus completes the narrative, removing Christ from the isolation of the carved crucifix and placing him within an actively unfolding Crucifixion scene where she or he becomes a witness and mourner.³⁴

In a way similar to that in Oristano, the Chioggia crucifix is animated by its viewer's approach, and the same could be said for numerous other examples of *crucifissi dolorosi* throughout Italy. For the laity entering into Florence's Santa Maria Novella, the

³³ Art historians have studied this kind of unnaturally elongated neck as a means to make the faces and expressions of elevated sculptures visible to viewers on ground level. Gombrich remarked on some historical recognitions of this technique, for example, in Vasari's life of Luca della Robbia: *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), 193. More recently, significant attention has been paid to Giovanni Pisano's figure of Miriam on the façade of the Siena Duomo (c. 1290). See John Shearman, *Only Connect...Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 212; Marvin Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye: Urbanism, Art, and Power in Early Modern Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 186.

³⁴ Jules Lubbock argues that Giovanni Pisano was able to involve the moving viewer in the narratives he carved on his pulpits by using "oblique, over-the-shoulder viewpoints which help the spectator to see events through the eyes of the participants, and to identify with them." See *Storytelling in Christian Art from Giotto to Donatello* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), ch. 3 and 4, here page 139.

path to the crucifix would have been from Christ's left since he was hung on the east wall. As the viewer moved towards and around the hanging corpus, Christ's legs would have seemed alternatively to bend and extend, his ribcage to expand and collapse. Moving towards the crucifix also necessitated moving closer to the church's crossing, and the place where Christ's open eyes became visible (figure 6a) was just before the steps leading up to the church of the friars. Thus the location from which the crucifix's imagery was most striking and most engaging was itself one of the most charged places in the layperson's experience of the church, a threshold between the earthly and the sacred. Those crossing through the *tramezzo* into the sanctuary would have witnessed Christ's death as they walked past the crucifix, as the carved figure appeared to pass from life into death in the moment the viewer moved beyond it.³⁵ Object and space worked together to create a vivid experience for the faithful Christian contemplating the crucifix: his or her movements through the church transformed the image of the Crucified from a sculpted image to a living – in fact, dying – presence as well as the viewer him or herself into a mourner below the cross.

SUFFERING AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

The experience of watching, reacting to, and even participating in the Crucifixion as if the historical event were occurring was coveted by the late thirteenth century.³⁶

Already in the late-eleventh-century writings of Anselm of Canterbury, we can find

³⁵ This is particularly relevant for the friars, but laity passed through the screen at times as well. We see this in the cycle of the Life of Saint Francis at Assisi. Jacqueline Jung also discusses the porousness of the medieval rood screen, focusing on Germany, in *The Gothic Screen: Space, Sculpture, and Community in the Cathedrals of France and Germany ca. 1200-1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), especially Part 1, chapters 1 and 2.

³⁶ Such a participatory experience was certainly desired on a spiritual level. When physical images enter into the equation, the issue becomes more complicated, as Powell, for example, has argued in *Depositions: Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum* (New York: Zone Books, 2012), 46.

evidence of the desire to witness sacred events and experience the emotions that accompany them. In one of his Orations, Anselm wrote:

Why, O my soul, were you not there to be pierced by a sword of bitter sorrow when you could not bear the piercing of the side of your Savior with a lance? Why could you not bear to see the nails violate the hands and feet of your Creator? Why did you not see with horror the blood that poured out of the side of your Redeemer?³⁷

Anselm here castigated his soul for not being present at the Crucifixion and lamented the thousand years that separated him from the event. He recognized that, had he been present, painful grief and sorrow, even physical pain, would have washed over and through him as he watched Christ die on the cross. And he longed for exactly that, since true compassion – co-suffering – was the ultimate display of love for Christ. It was also a means of conforming to Christ, of becoming one with him.

Soon after Anselm's prayers and meditations began to circulate, clergy and preachers across Europe began increasingly to instruct their charges to use their memories to reconstruct sacred events before the mind's eye.³⁸ The medieval memory was understood to be a spatial place where the image of a thing experienced, a *phantasma*, could be stored and recalled, as well as reconstructed as part of a new image.³⁹ These *phantasmata* could be walked through and experienced in what we would call the imagination, and therefore emotionally experienced in the same way as a physical

³⁷ "Cur, o anima mea, te praesentem non transfixit gladius doloris acutissimi, cum ferre non posses vulnerari lancea latus tui salvatoris? Cum videre nequires violari clavis manus et pedes tui plasmatoris? Cum horreret effundi sanguinem tui redemptoris?" *Orationes sive meditationes* (Turnhout: Brepols Publisher, 2014), Oration 2, p.7. English translation from *The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm*, trans. Sister Benedicta Ward S.L.G. (New York: Penguin Books, 1973; repr., 1979), 95.

³⁸ Based on codicological and paleographic findings, it seems certain that Anselm's letters and meditations were circulating, at least within monastic circles and to several educated laypersons, already before 1084. See Richard Sharpe's recent essay, which studies not only circulation, but intentional acts of the medieval author, and Anselm in particular, to make public his writings: "Anselm as author. Publishing in the late eleventh century," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 19 (2009): especially 11-15.

³⁹ Two excellent studies on medieval memory are: Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1966; repr., 1992); Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

encounter. We can find directives to watch and experience in the writing of Abelard (d. 1142), who exhorted his wife, Heloise: “Look at him going to be crucified for your sake, carrying his own cross. Be one of the crowd, one of the women who wept and lamented over him.”⁴⁰ Abelard’s contemporary Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167) was even more specific in a letter to his sister:

Draw near to the cross with the Virgin Mother and the Virgin disciple and look at close quarters upon that face in all its pallor. What then? Will your eyes be dry as you see your most loving Lady in tears? Will you not weep as her soul is pierced by the sword of sorrow? Will there be no sob from you as you hear him say to his mother: ‘Woman behold your son,’ and to John, ‘Behold your mother’?⁴¹

Aelred used the present active imperative mood in giving his directive: *accede ad crucem*, *intuere* – approach, look. His expectation was that his sister would create a vivid enough image in her memory to be able to walk around in it, experience it. He even allowed that she might use a physical image (*imago*) of the crucified Christ and of Mary and John below in order to stimulate her meditations.⁴² Both he and Abelard demanded that their reader partake in the events of the Passion and feel the emotions of one who was truly

⁴⁰ “Intuere hunc exeuntem ad crucifigendum pro te et bajulantem sibi crucem. Esto de populo et mulieribus quae plangebant et lametabantur eum...” Peter Abelard and J.T. Muckle, “The Personal Letters Between Abelard and Héloïse,” *Mediaeval Studies* 15 (1953): 91. For the English translation, see *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Betty Radice (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 84.

⁴¹ “Cum matre virgine et discipulo virgine accede ad crucem, et perfusum pallore vultum cominus intuere. Quid ergo? Tu sine lacrymis, amantissimae donimae tuae lacrymas videbis? Tu siccis manes oculis, et eius animam pertransit gladius doloris? Tu sine singultu audies dicentem matri: mulier, ecce filius tuus, et Ioanni: ecce mater tua?” *De institutis inclusarum* (Turnhout: Brepols Publisher, 2014), l. 1178-1185. English translation: “A Rule of Life for a Recluse,” in *The Works of Aelred of Rievaulx: Treatises and Pastoral Prayer* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1971), 90.

⁴² “Sufficiat tibi in altari tuo saluatoris in cruce pendentis imago, quae passionem suam tibi repraesentet quam imiteris, expansis brachiis ad suos te invitet amplexus, in quibus delecteris, nudatis uberibus lac tibi suavitatis infundat quo consoleris. Et si hoc placet, ad commendandam tibi virginitatis excellentiam, virgo mater in sua et virgo discipulus in sua iuxta crucem cernatur imagine, ut cogites quam grata sit Christo utriusque sexus virginitas, quam in matre et prae caeteris sibi dilecto discipulo consecravat.” *De institutis inclusarum*, l. 748-756.

there.⁴³ The same strategy was quite widespread nearly two centuries later, made immensely popular by the early-fourteenth-century devotional handbook, the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*.⁴⁴ Although initially penned for an audience of Clarissan nuns, the text enjoyed great success as it was translated into many languages and disseminated across Europe for general audiences. Like the twelfth-century theologians, its author, presumably John of Caulibus, encouraged intense and detailed contemplations that produced mental images so vivid that they created what seemed to be a physical encounter. In the prologue John of Caulibus wrote:

If you wish to profit from all this, Sister, you must place yourself in the presence of whatever is related as having been said or done by the Lord Jesus, as if you were hearing it with your own ears and seeing it with your own eyes, giving it your total mental response: with care, delight, and sorrow and with all extraneous cares and concerns set aside for the time being.⁴⁵

⁴³ It is worth noting that in both cases, the relatives receiving these instructions are women. Questions of gender and devotion are current and much debated – Rachel Fulton asserts that gender is not a useful category in such studies, and Sarah McNamer argues to the contrary. According to the latter scholar, such affective devotional practices were in a way “feminizing” male supplicants. See Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 166-168; Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 3ff.

⁴⁴ For the text see John of Caulibus, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, trans. and ed. by Anne Miller OSF Francis X. Taney Sr., C. Mary Stallings-Taney (Asheville, ND: Pegasus Press, 2000); Iohannis de Caulibus, *Meditaciones Vite Christi: olim S. Bonaventuro attributae*, ed. M. Stallings-Taney, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, 153 (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1997). A recent study is Holly Flora, *The Devout Belief of the Imagination: the Paris Meditationes Vitae Christi and Female Franciscan Spirituality in Trecento Italy*, *Disciplina Monastica*, 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009). Although Flora treats the problems of dating and authorship as having been solved, these are issues that have been long debated and continue to be so. McNamer has recently suggested that it is a compilation of sorts, originally written by a Clarissan nun for a fellow sister and then redacted by a Franciscan spiritual adviser in order to make corrections and to tone down its assertions about the human Christ. The original text, consisting of the Infancy and Passion narratives, would therefore predate 1336, while the rest would have been written after that date. See *Affective Meditation*, 97, 107. I do not claim that this text had a direct influence on the creation of the *crucifixi dolorosi*, only that it was part of the same powerful devotional trend and religious atmosphere.

⁴⁵ *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, 4. “Tu autem si ex his fructum sumere cupis, ita presentem te exhibeas his que per Dominum Iesum dicta et facta narrantur ac si tuis auribus audires et oculis ea videres, toto mentis affectu diligenter, delectabiliter et morose, omnibus aliis curis et sollicitudinibus tunc omissis.” *Meditaciones*, 10, ll. 103-107.

The text is replete with active instructions not only to watch and listen, but also to join the holy figures, to suffer along side of them, to cry with them. Particularly the Passion section calls on the reader to focus her attention on every injury and injustice Christ endured and to feel each one herself. By providing detailed verbal descriptions and active and participatory cues, the *Meditationes* enabled its reader to construct each scene comprehensively in her mind's eye and guided her through an experience of it. The imaginary encounter with Christ and his suffering, as well as with the other holy figures, allowed the reader to conform herself to her Savior and reap all resulting spiritual benefits.⁴⁶

The directives to look and then feel belie the author's belief that sight could have physical effects. The act of contemplating images of Christ's suffering (physical or mental) could elicit pains in the viewer's own body, thereby engendering compassion that assimilated the viewer to Christ. This potent means of *imitatio Christi* was at work in the *crucifixa dolorosi* as well, but the sculptures should not be characterized as just another tool for intense contemplation. The experience they offered was not limited by the confines of the memory or the mind's eye; the crucifixes were tangible and corporeal, and they seemed to come to life as the viewer approached. Both beholder and object played roles in the unfolding Crucifixion, which took place in the physical space of the church, the space they shared.

This is not to say that memory played no role in the encounter with a *crucifixus dolorosus*; certainly it intensified and vivified the experience. The sculptures not only depict Christ with his eyes open, but also represent his mouth open to evoke the sounds

⁴⁶ Jeffrey Hamburger's scholarship has contributed much to this topic, with a focus on nuns in late-medieval Germany. See especially *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).

of Christ's last words from the cross. Since the visual *phantasmata* in the memory were created not only by things seen, but also things perceived by the other senses, the striking imagery could likewise call to mind sounds and words and, therefore, activate Christ's voice as much as his body.⁴⁷

Christ's last words, recorded in the Gospels, received much attention in meditational and devotional literature throughout the High and Late Middle Ages. Addressed to the good thief, "I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," (Luke 23:43), they were full of hope for all sinners who could be saved through repentance and admissions of faith.⁴⁸ Christ's words to Mary and John, "Woman, behold thy son," and "Behold thy mother," (John 19:26-27) were given much imaginative attention through the later medieval period. Fulton explains that the words shared between mother and son allowed medieval Christians to explore the intimate and deeply loving relationship shared by the two holy figures; medieval Christians could then model their own relationship with Christ on Mary's with her son.⁴⁹ In the twelfth century, a watershed moment in the development of Christocentric and Marian devotion, commentators on the Song of Songs examined the words shared between the Christ and Mary, including those spoken as Christ hung from the cross. Fulton demonstrates that it was such commentators as Rupert of Deutz (d. 1129), Philip of Harvengt (d. 1183), and

⁴⁷ An often proffered example of non-seeing senses resulting in the creation of a visual image (in memory or in real life) is that of Beata Aldobrandesca of Siena, who, after having a vision in which she was able to taste the blood of Christ that had dripped out from his pierced side, had made a painting of the Lamentation in which the Virgin kisses Christ's side wound. The visual cue provided by the Virgin's lips to her son's wound was enough to recall for Aldobrandesca the sweet taste she had experienced. See Chiara Frugoni, "Female Mystics, Visions and Iconography," in *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Daniel Bornstein and Robert Rusconi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 137; Jill Bennett, "Stigmata and sense memory: St Francis and the affective image," *Art History* 24, no. 1 (2001): 7-8.

⁴⁸ Mitchell Merback offers a discussion of Christ's words to the Good Thief and late-medieval depictions of him in scenes of the Crucifixion in *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 27 and 222ff.

⁴⁹ "Mimetic Devotion, Marian Exegesis, and the Historical Sense of the Song of Songs," *Viator* 27 (1996): 105.

William of Newburgh (d. 1200) who used the text of the Canticles to create full conversations between mother and son and who truly made manifest the grief and intense emotions Mary felt watching her son die.⁵⁰ The creatively written exchanges were vivid and highly emotional. In Rupert's commentary, Mary first exclaimed, "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he shall lie between my breasts," (Song of Songs 1:13) describing both the joy she felt at holding the infant Christ to her breast and the grief lodged there from knowing of his death.⁵¹ William of Newburgh wrote a dialogue in which Christ pleaded with his mother to look away from him as he hung on the Cross because it caused him pain to see her suffer from the sight of him: "Turn your eyes from me, because they make me flee" (Song of Songs 6:4).⁵²

The dialogue between Christ in his dying moments and Mary was thus well developed in Latin texts by the late thirteenth century, which elaborated Mary's agony as

⁵⁰ *From Judgment to Passion*, 293ff.

⁵¹ "Ecce dico uobis : fasciculus myrrhae dilectus meus mihi inter ubera mea commorabitur. Conferte istud illi dicto unius ex uobis unius ex amicis iusti simeonis : ecce inquit hic positus est in ruinam et in resurrectionem multorum in israhel et in signum cui contradicetur et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius. Dico adhuc : botrus cypri dilectus meus mihi in uineis engaddi. Si haec scitis si ista rite perpenditis profecto in me inuenientis et unde me cum compungamini et unde me cum dulciter consolemini. Nolite solam attendere horam uel diem illam in qua uidi talem dilectum ab impiis comprehensum male tractari scilicet illudi spinis coronari flagellari crucifigi felle et aceto potari lanceari mori et sepeliri. Nam tunc quidem gladius animam meam pertransiuit sed antequam sic pertransiret longum per me transitum fecit. Prophetissa namque eram et ex quo mater eius facta sum sciui eum ista passurum. Cum igitur carne mea taliter progenitum talem filium sinu meo fouerem ulnis gestarem uberibus lactarem et talem eius futuram mortem semper prae oculis haberem et prophetica immo plus quam prophetica mente praeuiderem qualem quantam quam prolixam me putatis materni doloris pertulisse passionem. Hoc est quod dico : fasciculus myrrhae dilectus meus mihi inter ubera mea commorabitur. O commoratio dulcis quidem sed plena gemitibus inenarrabilibus. Ad ubera deforis stringebatur et eisdem lactabatur uberibus simul que inter ubera intus in corde futurorum praescio semper parebat quali esset morte moriturus. Verumtamen et illud sciebam quod esset resurrecturus." *Commentaria in Canticum canticorum* (Turnhout: Brepols Publisher, 2014), lib. 1, pg. 31-32.

⁵² "Averte oculos tuos a me, quia ipsi me auolare fecerunt," as appears in *Explanatio Sacri Epithalamii in Matrem Sponsi: A commentary on the Canticle of Canticles (12th.-C)* (Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 1960), 280. In her dissertation, Fulton provides evidence that William's commentary was actively in use in the years around 1300. She notes that John Russel, a Franciscan and regent master to the Franciscans of Cambridge, preached on the Song of Songs using William's exegesis, and the *catena* that he assembled was circulated throughout England and the continent (including Italy) already in the early-fourteenth century. "The Virgin Mary and the Song of Songs in the High Middle Ages" (Columbia University, 1994), 601-602.

she stood beneath the cross. In a late-thirteenth-century poem written by the Franciscan Jacopone da Todi, Mary begged Christ not to leave her behind, but to let her die on the cross and be buried together with him because she could not bear to live without him.⁵³ Although William of Newburgh's Mary had also asked to die with her son, she did so in order to express her cooperation with God's plan for salvation.⁵⁴ Jacopone's Mary, nearly a century later, is instead hysterical with anguish, and for that reason alone begs for death. In activating Christ's voice, a viewer of a *crucifixus dolorosus* could also activate Mary's, or use the Virgin mother's words as a means of modeling his or her own response. The crucifixes' beholders could therefore fully immerse themselves in the crucifixion event, and their emotions were excited (perhaps barraged) not only by the visual stimuli before them, but also by the aural cues recalled from their memories.

Unlike the numerous contemporary painted crosses that adorned many of the same Italian churches, the *crucifixi dolorosi* did not provide their viewers with visual models of how they were to react; Giotto's *croce dipinta* in Santa Maria Novella (c. 1285, figure 20) offers one example among many that proffers the painted figures of Mary and John as models of appropriate emotional responses to seeing the dead Christ.⁵⁵ The carved crucifixes presented only the dying figure of Christ and thus compelled beholders to take the place of those models and to channel those emotional responses. Rather than

⁵³ "Figlio, questo non dire: voglio teco morire;
non me voglio partire, fin che mo m'esce 'l fiato:
c'una aiàm sepultura, figlio de mamma scura:
trovarse en affratura mate e figlio affocato!"

Laude, ed. Franco Mancini (Rome: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1974), 70.96-103.

⁵⁴ "Bibe ergo et bibam tecum libens commoriendo tibi, ut sicut olim credendo, quantum in me fuit, sancte cooperata sum sacramento incarnationis tue, ita etiam nunc compatiendo tibi, quantum in me est, devote cooperer redemptioni humane." *Explanatio Sacri Epithalamii in Matrem Sponsi*, 104-105.

⁵⁵ Giotto's crucifix is contemporary with many of the *crucifixi dolorosi* and, furthermore, hangs in the same church space as one, thus providing an appropriate example. Of course, Giotto drew on a long tradition of painted crosses that included Mary and John, whether on the apron or at the ends of cross's arms.

physically looking to Mary for visual cues, viewers would have had to go into their memories to recall her behavior, her words, and her tears as she grieved below the cross, and in that way, actually become her (or at least substitute for her). These crucifixes thus engaged both the spiritual and the bodily senses, bringing the imagination to bear on a real-world encounter.

The idea that Mary could serve as a model and a means of entrance into the crucifixion scene was already well established by the time viewers were encountering *crucifixi dolorosi*. Fulton illustrates the increasing interest of monastic commentators in the high Middle Ages in not only imitating Christ's pain, but also doing so through Mary's example.⁵⁶ Particularly through commentaries on the Song of Songs, Mary became more than just Christ's mother; she became his spouse and greatest love. At the Crucifixion, therefore, she felt the ultimate *compassio*. Rejecting the characterization of Mary as a stoical or even cheerful participant in humankind's salvation, such twelfth-century theologians as Rupert of Deutz and Bernard of Clairvaux began to present her as a grieving mother. Anselm's oration quoted above continued to ask his soul: "Why did you not share the sufferings of the most pure virgin, his worthy mother and your gentle lady?"⁵⁷

Mary provided the perfect model since, based on Simeon's prophecy in Luke 2:35 that she would suffer a sword piercing her soul, she endured a spiritual crucifixion that was equal to Christ's physical crucifixion.⁵⁸ Her pain matched his in every way through

⁵⁶ "Mimetic Devotion."; *From Judgment to Passion*.

⁵⁷ "Cur non es compassa castissimae virgini, dignissimae matri eius, benignissimae dominae tuae?" *Orationes sive meditationes*, Oration 2, p.7.

⁵⁸ Otto von Simson, "Compassio and Co-redemptio in Roger van der Weyden's Descent from the Cross," *The Art Bulletin* 35, no. 1 (1953); Amy Neff, "The Pain of Compassio: Mary's Labor at the Foot of the Cross," *ibid.* 80, no. 2 (1998); Harvey E. Hamburg, "The Problem of Lo Spasimo of the virgin in Cinquecento Paintings of the Decent from the Cross," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 12, no. 4 (1981).

her empathy; whatever he suffered, she did as well. By the thirteenth century, Albertus Magnus referred to her as “adjutrix redemptionis per compassionem,” an actual partner in human salvation through her compassion, and the Franciscan Peter John Olivi labeled her “concrucifixata.”⁵⁹ Her unending love and compassion for Christ resulted in her becoming like him, conforming to him. The implication for the faithful, then, was that *imitatio Mariae* facilitated *compassio*, which led to *imitatio Christi* and becoming one with Christ.

Mary as model was particularly appropriate for an (imagined) medieval person standing before a *crucifixus dolorosus*, for he or she could physically take the place of the holy mother at the foot of the cross and thereby assume her pain. The intimate encounter with the corporeal and disfigured body on the cross not only prepared a beholder for such contemplation, but also had a physical and visceral effect, perhaps through the same compassion Mary felt as she watched her son die on Calvary.

Approaching the foot of the cross, the medieval viewers were not transported back in time physically or mentally to Calvary, but rather, the Crucifixion was transported to them in the spaces of their own churches, in their own present day. The idea that beholders were awarded a “realistic” experience, or that the “realism” of the image imbued it with a sense of life or presence needs to be questioned, however, especially since the *crucifixa dolorosi* do not mimetically approximate Christ’s appearance, or even that of any living, breathing man. The crucifixes were carved with significant distortions and disfigurations to the human form; they were painted with

⁵⁹ In his *Quaestiones Super Evangelium*, Albertus dedicated several questions to the joys and suffering of the Virgin at the Crucifixion, beginning with Question 148. See *B. Alberti Magni, Ratisbonensis Episcopi, Ordinis Praedicatorum, Opera Omnia*, ed. Auguste and Émile Borgnet, vol. 37 (Paris: Parisiis, apud Ludovicum Vivès, 1898), 219. For Peter John Olivi’s discussion on the subject, see *Quaestiones Quatuor de Domina*, ed. P. Dionysius Pacetti O.F.M. (Florence: Quaracchi, 1954), 65-68.

stylized and ornamental wounds. I need only point to a few details that demonstrate this: the colossal size of the crucifix in Chioggia, the sharp M-shaped delineation beneath Christ's over-expanded rib cage in almost every example (see figures 10b and 6a), and the strange wrinkles around Christ's nose in Palermo, which certainly add to the perception of weary suffering but make no sense anatomically (figure 11a). In Cortona, Christ's bloody sweat is represented by small red dots that cover Christ's face (figure 9a). In Orvieto, his flagellation wounds are fashioned from small black dots enclosed in red circles with three wavy red lines flowing from them (figure 2a). These carpet Christ's face, torso, and limbs with a sort of regularity that is effective, but certainly not naturalistic. The nail wounds seen on each wood corpus are always grisly, but never what we would expect to find on the hands and feet of a living man nailed to a cross (see figure 11b). By depicting folds of skin gathering above the nail head and indicating the bloody bones thereby revealed, they powerfully convey the force with which the nails were bored into Christ's hands and feet.⁶⁰

The *crucifigi dolorosi* therefore present corpora that both closely approximate the human body and significantly diverge from it. This is arguably what empowers them in the first place and imbues them with a sense of being real or realistic. Even so, the distortions and exaggerations inevitably broke the illusion of the enlivened crucifix. This was true even from the foot of the cross, where optical refinements projected relatively natural proportions. In fact, it was precisely from this vantage point that a viewer was most able to perceive the ornamental qualities of the wounds and the strange contortions

⁶⁰ James Marrow has clearly shown that beginning in the twelfth century, but particularly between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, images and narratives of Christ's Passion were made increasingly elaborate and brutal. See *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, Belgium: Van Ghemmert Publishing Company, 1979).

to Christ's corpus. Why engage the beholder in the unfolding action of the Crucifixion only to thrust him or her out of it? Why bring the viewer into a shared time and space with Christ only ultimately to deny him or her access? This process, I argue, allowed that viewer to experience sensations and then become aware of them, to feel compassion and then understand what that was. If the path to salvation involved becoming more like Christ through the imitation of his suffering, then it was important to know what such *imitatio Christi* entailed and then how to enact it.

IMAGE AND THEORY, INHERENCE AND INTERRUPTION

Thus we see how the *crucifixi dolorosi* both pull a viewer in and then push him or her away. Powell and Chatterjee have recently promoted two different approaches to this kind of experience with the medieval image and have offered two different explanations for why images function in this way.⁶¹ Powell convincingly argues that the Deposition rite for which certain sculpted crucifixes were made presented them both as Christ and as dead matter. The rite involved taking down the wood corpus from its cross on Good Friday, which followed the biblical narrative and the liturgy of Christ's Passion, and lowering it into a "tomb" where it remained hidden until Easter, when it was "resurrected" and placed back on the cross. This handling of the crucifix emphasized that it could not move itself, which was to be expected during the deposition: Christ was dead, and his lifeless body therefore required that others move it. But on Easter morning, the crucifix still could not move, and this undermined any perception that the carved image was, in fact, its prototype. Powell understands this "ritual disavowal of the image" (to use her words), not as a disruption to and reflection on the devotional experience, but rather as an

⁶¹ Powell, *Depositions*; Chatterjee, *The Living Icon*.

authorized act of iconoclasm that served to satisfy viewers' anxieties about images.

Rather than enliven the image, or insist on its animated presence, the Deposition rite

“made an annual spectacle of nothing so much as the image's lack of life.”⁶²

Chatterjee, in discussing *vita* icons in eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantium and the adaption of the form by Franciscans in thirteenth-century Italy, speaks not of iconoclasm, but rather of viewer awareness. She argues against the notion that Franciscan images were fully immersive, as has been previously claimed, and suggests instead that the interrupted process was meant to make viewers aware that presence was not constant. The early depictions of Francis, who, as the *alter Christus* and the perfect image of Christ, was himself a locus where signifier and signified could collide, juxtaposed mimetic and stylized elements. In doing so, they both pulled the beholder into the illusion and pushed him or her out of it; these painted panels forced a critical reassessment of their status as image. They interfered with a viewer's ability to participate in the depicted scenes and compelled him or her to confront the limits of representation, as well as his or her own as witness.

In examining this same phenomenon, in which an initially engaging art object then purposively ruptured its own fiction, I ascribe to it a different purpose. It is my contention that the resulting awareness of this interrupted process built spiritual strength. It allowed the beholder to become conscious of the sensations and emotions that coursed through his or her body and to corral them for use in the mindful practice of *imitatio Christi*. At least in the context of the *crucifixi dolorosi*, it was not meant to be an end in and of itself or to provide the iconoclastic satisfaction Powell purports. Of course, Powell and I are making arguments concerning different objects and different contexts (liturgical

⁶² Powell, *Depositions*, 81.

ritual versus private devotion). It is more than likely that the same process of becoming aware of an image's fiction had different effects in different settings, iconoclastic in one, devotionally productive in another. The latter was true for the medieval viewer of a *crucifixus dolorosus*. The encounter with such a vivid crucifix enabled its viewer to straddle two theoretical worlds: one in which the prototype inhered in its image and one in which the two were kept strictly separate. By being immersed in the narrative of the image, a viewer gained the necessary tools for the contemplation and imitation of the divine prototype who was, ultimately, in heaven.

While few medieval viewers would have been aware of the image theory that underlay their devotional experiences, the ambivalence towards images did appear in contemporary sermons and theological texts. The writings of Bonaventure and Aquinas reveal the confluence of Eastern and Western theoretical traditions, as well as the struggle to make sense of these traditions' points of conflict.⁶³ On the one hand, both Scholastics were deeply indebted and loyal to Gregorian theories, which asserted that images were useful in three ways⁶⁴: First, images are didactic and can therefore teach faith and sacred history to those who cannot read the same tenets and narratives in books. Second, images serve the memory and its ability to recall sacred events. And, third, they excite the emotions, which can, in turn, serve to elevate the mind and soul beyond the physical to

⁶³ Cooper has previously noted this ambivalence and theoretical confusion, particularly with regards to the writings of Thomas Aquinas. See "Projecting Presence," 49-50.

⁶⁴ These theories were founded on the statements made by the sixth-century pope in his letters to bishops Serenus of Marseilles and Secundinus, the latter of which was interpolated into the *Registrum epistularum* in the eighth-century: *Registrum Epistularum*. Several scholars write about Gregorian image theory and its relationship to iconography. See Kessler, "Gregory the Great and Image Theory," 151-171; Celia Chazelle, "Pictures, books, and the illiterate: Pope Gregory I's letters to Serenus of Marseilles," *Word & Image* 6, no. 2 (1990): 138-153; Hélène Toubert, *Un art dirigé: réforme grégorienne et iconographie* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1990); Lawrence G. Duggan, "Was Art Really the 'Book of the Illiterate'?", *Word & Image* 5, no. 3 (1989): 227-251.

the spiritual.⁶⁵ In Gregory's theory the physical image is not linked in any way to its heavenly prototype, and, in fact, the two are regarded very much as separate, unconnected entities.

On the other hand, both theologians also employed the eighth-century pronouncements of John of Damascus to further expand and substantiate their thinking.⁶⁶ The text of John's *De fide orthodoxa* helped them to defend their own (Gregorian) tripartite justifications for images and also called into question the staunch separation of image and prototype.⁶⁷ John of Damascus' text featured Gregory's own rationale, but also quotations from Basil the Great, who noted that "the image of the emperor is also called the emperor," and that "the honor given to the image is transferred to the prototype."⁶⁸ Aquinas and Bonaventure each cite the latter statement in their respective *Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, thus allowing for a closer connection between image and prototype than did Gregorian theory.

⁶⁵ "Idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi qui litteras nesciunt saltem in parietibus videndo legant, quae legere in codicibus non valent," and "Aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturae historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere. Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat picture cernentibus, quia in ipsa ignorantes vident quod sequi debeant, in ipsa legunt qui litteras nesciunt; unde praecipue gentibus pro lectione picture est. Quod magnopere a te, qui inter gentes habitas, attendi decuerat, ne, dum recto zelo incaute succenderis, ferocibus animis scandalum generares. Frangi ergo non debuit quod non ad adorandum in ecclesiis sed ad instruendas solummodo mentes fuit nescientium collocatum." These appear in Gregory's two letters to Serenus, letter 209 in book IX and letter 10 in book XI: *Registrum Epistularum*, 768 and 873-876.

⁶⁶ For more on John of Damascus and his place in the history of Byzantine image theory, particularly surrounding the iconoclastic controversy of the eight and ninth centuries, see Charles Barber, *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

⁶⁷ Aquinas's *triplex ratio* appears in his commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard: "Fuit autem triplex ratio institutionis imaginum in Ecclesia. Primo ad instructionem rudium qui eis quasi quibusdam libris edocentur. Secundo ut incarnationis mysterium et sanctorum exempla magis in memoria nostra essent, dum quotidie oculis repraesentantur. Tertio ad exercitandum devotionis affectum qui ex visis efficacius incitantur quam auditis." *In quattuor libros sententiarum*, ed. Roberto Busa S.I., vol. 1, S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag Günther Holzboog KG, 1980), Lib 3, ds9 qu1 ar2b ra3, 294. Bonaventure also places his defense of images in his own commentary on the same text: *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae: Opera Omnia*, vol. III (Florence: Quaracchi, 1887), dist. IX, art. 1, q. II, 203.

⁶⁸ John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images: Three Apologies Against Those Who Attack the Divine Images*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 36.

In his commentary, Aquinas asserted that the image of Christ was due the highest level of veneration, *latria*, which was otherwise reserved only for the divinity himself.⁶⁹ Such a claim strongly suggests that the image was tied directly to its prototype, but Aquinas insisted that the image was not actually ontologically united with the represented subject; instead, it channeled and directed a viewer's devotions to that subject.⁷⁰ One should not venerate the wood of the sculpture or painting, he asserted, but the holy figure depicted therein. However, since whatever veneration given to the image of Christ would reach Christ, the veneration given to Christ's image should be worthy of Christ.⁷¹ Aquinas rationalized his use of the Damascene here to suit Gregorian standards (however ill-fitting the match may have been), and Bonaventure attempted a similar feat. In Book Three of his own *Commentary on the Sentences*, he dedicated an entire question to grappling with the relationship between representation and represented.⁷² He opened the discussion with:

First, as John of Damascus says in his fourth book: 'The honor given to the image is passed on to the prototype': therefore, it is the same to adore the image as he of whom it is an image. Therefore, if Christ should be worshipped with the veneration of *latria*, it would seem that his image deserves the same.⁷³

⁶⁹ "Ad secundam quaestionem dicendum, quod imago potest dupliciter considerari, vel secundum quod est res quaedam, et sic nullus honor ei debetur (sicut nec alii lapidi vel ligno); vel secundum quod est imago. Et quia idem motus est in imaginem inquantum est imago, et in imaginatum; ideo unus honor debetur imagini et ei cuius est imago; et ideo cum christus adoretur latria, similiter et eius imago." *Sententiarum*, 1, Lib 3, ds9 qu1 ar2b co, 294.

⁷⁰ "Sic igitur dicendum est quod imagini Christi inquantum est res quedam, puta lignum sculptum vel pictum, nulla reverential exhibetur." *Summae theologiae tertia pars* (Turnhout: Brepols Publisher, 2014), q. 25, art. 3.

⁷¹ Jean Wirth discusses this in his in-depth and very useful explication of Western image theory. As Wirth summarizes, Aquinas states that the soul moves towards the image in two ways simultaneously, once in its capacity as thing and once in its capacity as image of something else. Therefore, since the soul moves towards the image of Christ in the same way it moves towards Christ, the image is due *latria*, even if it is not the wood or other materials of the image that should be venerated. See "Theorien zum Bilderkult," 33.

⁷² *Opera Omnia*, III, dist. IX, art. 1, q. II, 202ff.

⁷³ "Primo per Damascenum, quarto libro: 'Honor imaginis refertur ad prototypum': ergo idem est adorare imaginem et eum cuius est imago: ergo si Christus colendus est cultu latriae, videtur, quod eius imago

He thereafter continued to consider other claims that image and prototype were connected (i.e. “one speaks to the image of Christ as one speaks to Christ”), as well as the objections that such claims constituted idolatry.⁷⁴ In his conclusion, Bonaventure rejected the accusations of idolatry and affirmed that images should appear in churches and could be venerated. He began the justification of his position with his own version of the Gregorian *triplex ratio*, but also accepted *latria* for the image of Christ. Therefore, by explicitly calling on both Greek theories and Gregory the Great, Bonaventure tried to demonstrate that they need not be mutually exclusive and that, together, they could offer a deeper understanding of how images functioned as both distinct from and connected to their prototypes.

Turning to the two Scholastics’ respective discussions on either the image of the Trinity or man’s relation to God, any attempt to separate the image from its prototype is lost. *Similitudo*, or likeness, became for both an essential quality of the image and tied the image directly to its prototype. In defining *similitudo*, Bonaventure did not assert a mimetic or naturalistic capturing of a prototype’s appearance. Instead, he claimed that it was a quality shared between something and that which it resembled, the expression in the image of the prototype’s true nature or inner qualities.⁷⁵ He further defined *imago* as a special kind of likeness, an *expressa similitudo*, meaning a likeness that is clear and exact

similiter.” *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, vol. III, Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae: Opera Omnia (Florence: Quaracchi, 1887), dist. IX, art. 1, q. II, 202.

⁷⁴ “...igitur sic loquitur ad imaginem Christi, sicut ad Christam.” *Opera Omnia*, III, dist. IX, art. 1, q. II, 203.

⁷⁵ Bonaventure followed Boethius in this line of thinking: he uses nearly the exact words of his predecessor, who wrote on issues of likeness in *De topicis differentiis* (Turnhout: Brepols Publisher, 2015), 3, cap. 3, par. 14, pg. 52, l.17. Bonaventure merely moved the word “eadem” to later in the sentence when he wrote, “Similitudo est rerum differentium eadem qualitas,” in *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, vol. IV, Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae: Opera Omnia (Florence: Quaracchi, 1889), dist. VI, p. 1, art. unicus q. II, 139.

– as if pressed or squeezed out from that which is represented.⁷⁶ Image is thus defined by likeness, and likeness by partaking in the prototype, and so Bonaventure asserted: “He who sees an image of Peter consequently sees Peter too.”⁷⁷ By this Bonaventure did not imply that an image of Peter could recall the apostle into the memory or teach of his acts (as his *triplex ratio* would suggest), but rather that Peter shared some essential quality with his image and was therefore present in it. To the theologian, the image aimed not to recreate a mere physical resemblance, that is, the shape or *figura* to serve as a reminder of Peter, but to express Peter’s nature, to make visible to the eyes of the beholder what is inherently invisible and essential to the apostle’s being.

Aquinas also considered *imago* and *similitudo*, and like his Franciscan counterpart, he understood likeness to be a quality shared by both image and prototype.⁷⁸ For him, *similitudo* signified a likeness of the species, meaning that only an image whose likeness actually derived from that which it resembles could be considered an image.⁷⁹ In his descriptions of how an image is like its prototype, Aquinas used the terms *exprimere* and *procedere*. These terms mean not only to portray and appear, but also to press out of and express (*exprimere*), and to proceed from and advance (*procedere*). Aquinas conceived of

⁷⁶ Ibid., vol. II (1885), dist. XVI, art. 1, q. I, 394.

⁷⁷ Bonaventure discussed the image of Peter as part of a larger consideration of man as the image of God: “Ad intelligentiam praedictorum tria oportet in imaginis ratione praesupponere: primo enim imago attenditur secundum expressam conformitatem ad imaginatum; secundo, quod illud quod conformatur imagini, per consequens conformetur imaginato; unde qui videt imaginem Petri, per consequens videt et Petrum; tertio, quod anima secundum suas potentias conformis reddatur his ad quae convertitur, sive secundum cognitionem, sive secundum amorem.” *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, vol. I, Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae: Opera Omnia (Florence: Quaracchi, 1882), dist. III, p. II, art. 1, q. II, 83.

⁷⁸ Aquinas turned to St. Augustine’s discussion of *imago*, *similitudo*, and *aequalitas* when deciding upon his own definitions. For Augustine’s text, see *De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* (Turnhout: Brepols Publisher, 2014), questio 74.

⁷⁹ “Non tamen quaecumque similitudo sufficit ad rationem imaginis; sed similitudo quae est in specie rei, vel saltem in aliquo signo speciei.” *Summae theologiae prima pars* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010), q. 35, art. 1, corpus, l.2.

the relationship between *imago* and that which it represents as actively interrelated, the one literally issuing from the other, and the both partaking in a common nature.⁸⁰

Both theologians proffered these definitions as part of discussions about the relationships between members of the Trinity or between Man and God, and, admittedly, in these contexts a direct connection between image and prototype is easier to assert, less troublesome for Western theology. Even so, these theories were related to those on physical images, which themselves toyed with a connection between representation and that being represented; the one discussion seems to bleed into the other, noticeable especially in Bonaventure's example of Peter and Peter's image. Neither part of the Trinity, nor a father whose son shared his *similitudo*, Peter's image could only refer to a physical, material image, even if Bonaventure did not explicitly say so.

CONCLUSION

Thirteenth-century theologians needed simultaneously to differentiate the *imago* from that which it represented and to demonstrate a close relationship between the two. Like the experience of beholders before the *crucifigi dolorosi* (which could arguably be characterized by *similitudo* as defined by Aquinas and Bonaventure by means of vivid depictions of Christ's suffering) these Scholastics desired to enliven the image, to recognize its power, but simultaneously to deny it those same qualities. Certainly, this corresponds to their anxieties about images.⁸¹ But perhaps we can also understand this

⁸⁰ Henrike Haug explains this as a "Zugehörigkeit zu ein und derselben (ontologischen) Kategorie" in her essay "Materie als Prinzip und Ursache der Individuation. Ähnlichkeit und Bildnis in der Plastik des 13. Jahrhunderts," in *Similitudo: Konzepte der Ähnlichkeit in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Jeanette Kohl Martin Gaier, Alberto Saviello (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2012), 95.

⁸¹ As Bynum has long argued, the conflicting impulses both to defend the miraculous, enlivened nature of the material image and to assert that it did not, in fact, reveal the divine, but instead pointed the viewer beyond itself to its heavenly prototype derived from unease about the transformative properties of matter.

push and pull in a different light, one in which both aspects play an important, salvific role.

Like the process the *crucifixa dolorosi* interrupt, these new theological debates on images (in all senses of the word) revealed conflicting expectations of visual objects which were both powerful and widespread throughout all layers of late-medieval western society. It is important to note, though, that the borrowing and adaption of Greek image theories by such theologians as Bonaventure and Aquinas did not result in the western adoption of images that were Byzantine in nature (or even acceptable to Byzantines). While such objects as the *crucifixa dolorosi* were not to be found in Byzantium, the intermixing of Gregorian and Damascene theories in western theology does much to explain their existence and popularity in Italy: their initial immersion of the viewer in the Crucifixion event reflects a Damascene pull, while their insistence on their image-ness reflects a Gregorian push. The crucifixes both suggest Christ's presence and deny it; they both attract their viewer's devotions to themselves and guide those prayers beyond themselves, to Christ in heaven.

See *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); *Christian Materiality*.

3. SEEING IS BECOMING: THE VIOLENT CRUCIFIX AND TRANSFORMATIVE VISION

In his early-fourteenth-century *Legenda de vita et miraculis Beatae Margaritae de Cortona*, Fra Giunta Bevegnati of Cortona's San Francesco claimed the blessed woman for the city's Franciscan Order, which had lost possession of her bodily remains after her death.¹ In Giunta's text, Margherita epitomizes the virtues of penitence, poverty, charity, and extreme devotion to both the suffering Christ and the Eucharist; she is an *alter Franciscus* and embodiment of Franciscan ideals. Since the friars of San Francesco, the convent where she first entered the Order of Penitents and whose friars took responsibility for her spiritual wellbeing, could not possess her physical remains, this *vita* was intended to be an alternative means of incorporating her into the pantheon of revered Franciscans.²

As part of his effort, Giunta vividly described Margherita's many visionary experiences, including one of particular interest: while contemplating the violently-rendered crucifix that hung in the oratory of the Franciscan church, studying its gaping wounds and torrents of blood, she began to have visions of Christ's Passion (figure 9). At the moment Christ's death was made certain by Longinus' lance piercing his side, she

¹ Giunta opens his text with "Hanc legendam compilavit frater I. de mandato fratris Iohannis de Castillione, inquisitoris heretice pravitatis, qui erat confessor beate Margarite et pater." We learn both that this task was assigned to him by a brother whose notable quality is his determination as an inquisitor of heretics, and that Giunta was Margherita's confessor. *Legenda*, 1.2-4.

² The cult of Margherita succeeded immediately after her death in 1297. Although she was not canonized until 1728, the commune of Cortona began celebrating her feast day already in the early fourteenth century, drawing in large crowds from the surrounding areas. The pope officially authorized her feast for the diocese of Cortona in 1516 and extended it to the entire Franciscan Order in 1623. Giunta's *vita* should be understood within the context of the canonization process, which the Franciscans tried to begin soon after her death. See André Vauchez, "The Life and Cult of Margherita of Cortona," in *Margherita of Cortona and the Lorenzetti: Sienese Art and the Cult of a Holy Woman in Medieval Tuscany*, ed. Joanna Cannon and André Vauchez (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 28-32.

froze in the form of the crucifix, seeming to die on the cross in her own right.³ Joanna Ziegler and Carolyn Muessig have each considered this episode previously with a primary interest in the effects such a mystical performance might have on those who witnessed it as well as the change spectators would undergo as a result.⁴ I take a different approach, focusing on the relationship between Margherita and the bloodied crucifix she contemplated. I examine the episode and the *Legenda* as a whole in order to shed light on the (re)conceptualization of this *crucifixus dolorosus* as a tool to be used in the striving for union with Christ. In the pages that follow, I discuss the crucifix, now located in the hilltop Santuario di Santa Margherita in Cortona, in light of the perception of its violent imagery and the defense of image-based devotions by a Franciscan friar in the early fourteenth century.

In fashioning Margherita's experiences, Giunta turned to the contemporary optical theories of the late thirteenth-century Perspectivists, mostly Franciscan scholars who used the treatises of ancient and Islamic philosophers to theorize about the eye and the mechanics of vision. Giunta wrote Margherita's *vita* in order to promote her as a Franciscan saint and a model of a particularly Franciscan devotion – one that employed images as a means of conforming to Christ. Giunta fashioned the Cortona saint's life as an echo of Saint Francis'; evoking Francis' Stigmatization, he shaped Margherita's

³ *Legenda*, 5.82-105.

⁴ Joanna E. Ziegler, "Introduction," in *Performance and Transformation: New Approaches to Late Medieval Spirituality*, ed. Mary A. Suydam and Joanna E. Ziegler (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), xx; Carolyn Muessig, "Performance of the Passion: the Enactment of Devotion in the latter Middle Ages," in *Visualizing Medieval Performance: Perspectives, Histories, Contexts*, ed. Elina Gersman (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 132-133. The performative aspect of this episode is certainly integral. Giunta described the people and friars of Cortona who observed Margherita as moved to tears, and he quoted Christ's reassurances to her fear of having been seen: "De omnibus, que circa te et in te hodie acta sunt, non timeas neque dubites, quia te feci speculum peccatorum quantumcumque obstinatorum, ut agnoscant per te quam libenter impertior eis meam misericordiam, ut salventur." *Legenda*, 5.116-119. In fact, Giunta repeats the description "speculum peccatorum" throughout the *vita*.

experience of the crucifix into a physical transformation resulting from the intense contemplation of a specific image – the *crucifixus dolorosus* in his own oratory. The friar understood this transformation in optical terms, as becomes apparent when one examines his terminology together with clear allusions to Perspectivist writing found throughout the text. In the case of Margherita's transformation, Giunta made reference to a visible object that caused the saint to lose her physical sight (*extrinsecum visum*); failure in the process of vision was of particular interest to scholars of optics, and Giunta's reference to it supports the assertion that Margherita's experience can be explained in optical terms. Seeing the bloody image of Christ enabled a change in the form of her body. This worked by means of the *species* – loosely, the image of the object sent to the eye of the viewer – entering her eyes and altering the humors therein. Especially drawing on the theories of Roger Bacon (c. 1220-1292) and the moralizing writings of Peter of Limoges (d. 1306), Giunta presented the crucifix as an object with the power to conform its viewers spiritually and physically to the suffering Savior. By fashioning Margherita as an *alter Franciscus*, Giunta's description of Margherita's mystical metamorphosis implicitly referred to Francis' Stigmatization as similarly optically effectuated: the sight of the seraph bearing the image of Christ on the cross caused his body to physically assimilate to that image through his assumption of Christ's five wounds. Thus, Margherita was made both an accessible model of the *imitatio Christi* that Francis had perfected and a champion of the transformative, image-based devotion that he had subscribed to. The San Francesco crucifix itself was thus fashioned into a tool, the use of which would allow members of Giunta's audience to follow in the footsteps of their local *beata*.

What follows engages two bodies of scholarship: the first considers medieval vision, visuality, and sight; the second addresses female mystics and images. The two are related to one another and, at times, overlap each other, for mystical experiences often involve visions and devotional practices often engage spiritual seeing. But the first has incorporated the study of the physical eye, carnal seeing, and medieval optics while the second contends with the mind's eye and the eye of the heart (*oculis cordis*). This chapter brings together two areas that have, for one reason or another, remained largely divorced from one another.

The first body of scholarship is represented by Suzannah Biernoff, who espoused the idea that the thirteenth-century writings of optical theorists had real implications for the reception of art by medieval viewers.⁵ Departing from an earlier generation of scholars who had argued in favor of mimetic identification and emotional transformation,⁶ Biernoff argued that bodily identification could occur through processes of sight, engaging ancient and medieval presuppositions that the relationship between viewer and object is active and that it results in the assimilation of the viewer to the visible object.⁷ Her discussion is both thorough and convincing, but remains theoretical, its implications for medieval seeing untested. The case of Margherita and the Cortona *crucifixus dolorosus*, as I argue below, provides an actual case in which optical theories

⁵ *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). Her arguments were first introduced in her dissertation, "Ocular Desires: Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages" (University of Technology, Sydney, 1998).

⁶ Some significant examples include: Belting, *The Image and its Public*; Michael Camille, "Mimetic Identification and Passion Devotion in the Later Middle Ages: A Double-sided Panel by Meister Francke," in *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture*, ed. H.N.B. Ridderbos A.A. MacDonald, and R. M. Schlusemann (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

⁷ *Sight and Embodiment*, especially chapter three on "Scientific Visions" and chapter four on "The Optical Body".

influenced the perception of art, thus substantially supporting what Biernoff first suggested over a decade ago.

Exemplifying the second group, Jeffrey Hamburger's work has provided a context in which such a practical application of optical theories has meaning.⁸ His studies of the art made for and by nuns analyze the wounding gaze (and wounding love), the heart of Christ, and the violent imagery of affective piety. Although he limited his inquiry to enclosed nuns in late-medieval Germany, much of what he argues resonates beyond that particular group; and so I build on it.⁹

The chapter that follows argues that Fra Giunta's *Legenda* was intended to encourage the use of images, and particularly of the *crucifixus dolorosus*, in the devotional practices of his readers. The friar presents the intense, prolonged contemplation of the crucifix's violent imagery as a powerful means for following in Saint Francis' footsteps and conforming oneself to the image of Christ.

FRA GIUNTA AND THE *LEGENDA*

Giunta is scantily represented in documented records, and even the *Legenda* does not offer much information about his life. He had entered into Cortona's Franciscan convent by November of 1276 and served as one of Margherita's confessors until he was transferred to Siena around the year 1290.¹⁰ Despite his new assignment, Giunta frequently exchanged letters with his former charge's new spiritual adviser in Cortona

⁸ See especially *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); *The Visual and the Visionary*.

⁹ Several recent scholars have also moved to analyze medieval artworks within the context of Perspectivist Optics, for example, Frank Büttner, *Giotto und die Ursprünge der neuzeitlichen Bildauffassung: Die Malerei und die Wissenschaft vom Sehen in Italien um 1300* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2013). See also, Herbert L. Kessler, "Speculum," *Speculum* 86, no. 1 (2011): 1-41.

¹⁰ As Iozelli tells us in his introduction to his critical edition of the *Legenda*, Giunta's name first appears in a testament of November 4, 1276, with the qualification "custos fratrum minorum loci de Cortona." Giunta himself tells us in the text of the *vita* that he was in Siena during the years 1290-97. See *Legenda*, 5.

and returned to his hometown shortly before Margherita's death on February 22, 1297. Having intimate knowledge of her spiritual life from the time of her conversion, Giunta was thus charged with recording Margherita's *vita*, which he accomplished by 1308.¹¹

In writing the *Legenda*, Giunta set out to assert the Franciscans' claim to Margherita, which they feared to lose due to their loss of her bodily remains to the clergy of the secular church of San Basilio, perched on a hilltop above the city next to Margherita's former cell and run by the commune. Beyond the narrative elements documenting the events of the saint's life, the *vita* is largely defined by its ongoing dialogue between Margherita and Christ. Throughout the text, Margherita laments her unworthiness and proclaims her affection for her Savior; Christ both chastises and reassures her of his love. By means of the narrative and the mystical dialogue, Giunta explicitly wrote Margherita's life to echo that of his order's founder. Like Francis, Margherita pursued extreme poverty and charity, down to the repeated tearing of clothing off her own back in order to give to the poor who sought her out. She practiced extreme asceticism, eating little and enduring great pains and illness in her body in her attempts to conform herself to Christ and his suffering.

Although the text deals primarily with Margherita's intimate and mystical relationship with Christ, Giunta did not forgo the opportunity to advocate for image-based devotions, manifested in Francis's own devotion to the crucifix. Nor did he let slip by the chance to promote his own convent within this context; he presented to his audience its gruesome *crucifixus dolorosus*, offering the image as a powerful devotional tool that could help further their conformity to Christ. Giunta introduced the crucifix in

¹¹ This is a certain *terminus ante quem*; Cardinal Napoleone Orsini approved the *Legenda* in 1308. Ibid., 12-13.

the opening lines of his first chapter, even though this meant beginning Margherita's story with an episode that would not occur until late in her life: "Once, while devoted in prayer before an image of Christ that is today on the altar of the aforementioned friars, it was said to her, 'What do you want, poor little one?'"¹² By using the subjunctive *diceretur* to implicate that Christ spoke through the image itself, Giunta made clear that the crucifix, which was fundamental to Margherita's devotional practices and her frequent exchanges with Christ, still stood on an altar in the friars' church.¹³ This is one of only two explicit references to the crucifix in Giunta's text, but it establishes its importance for him and for the rest of the *vita*. Even though he generally used forms of the word *crux* rather than *crucifixus* throughout the text, the early reference to this *ymaginem* primed his readers and those hearing the *vita* preached to keep the physical image in mind throughout the rest of the narrative.¹⁴ This is particularly relevant in such ambiguous moments as when Christ instructs Margherita to return to the cross so that she might find him there.¹⁵

This supposition is further supported by the way in which Giunta frequently refers to the wounds and blood of Christ, characteristics vividly presented by the Cortona crucifix. The life-sized corpus hangs heavily from a branchy wooden cross, carved as the Tree of Life (figure 9). Christ's arms are pulled above and behind his head, his arm

¹² "Dum semel, devote in oratione coram ymagine Christi que nunc est in altari dictorum fratrum, diceretur sibi, 'Quid vis, paupercula?'" *ibid.*, I.8-10.

¹³ For this and other instances of miraculous, speaking crucifixes in Italy, see Katherine Jansen, "Miraculous Crucifixes in late medieval Italy," in *Signs, wonders, miracles: representations of divine power in the life of the church: papers read at the 2003 Summer Meeting and the 2004 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory, *Studies in Church History* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005).

¹⁴ We know that various Franciscans told Giunta's *vita* orally to audiences in and around Cortona. Among their number is mentioned Ubertino da Casale. Vauchez, "The Life and Cult," 21.

¹⁵ Christ instructs Margherita to go to or return to the cross on numerous occasions, using active verbs such as "vade" and "revertere", perhaps suggesting the physical crucifix rather than just mental contemplation. See Giunta Bevegnati, *Legenda*, 5.1005, 1304.

sockets are overextended, and his veins bulge. His pierced hands and his feet are rigid and tense; nails were thrust so forcefully into his feet, pierced one above the other, that the skin on top of each bunches above the nail head (figure 9b). His ribcage balloons out, his belly is distended, and his entire body is covered in circular, red, dripping flagellation wounds. Blood flows down his arms, feet, and onto the cross – watering the Tree of Life – and surges out from the hollow slit that is the side wound, coursing down his side in shades of dark and bright red (figure 9c). His head is tilted down towards his chest, his face is covered in dots of bloody sweat, and rivulets of blood drip down from where a crown of thorns once pierced his forehead (figure 9a). His eyes and mouth remain ajar indicating that this Christ, in his dying moments, still suffers. Giunta evoked similar imagery. Christ commended Margherita’s utmost devotion to the blood he shed on the cross, described as *fuso*, flowing, and *effusione*, an outpouring or profusion.¹⁶ He called her to the cross where she was to inspect his wounds *intus et extra*, even enter into them, and meditate upon the *crucis doloribus*, or sorrows of the cross.¹⁷ Such verbal imagery evokes the side wound of the *crucifixus dolorosus*, which was cut out of the wood completely and is wide enough to stick a finger into, or the grizzly foot wounds where blood pours out from underneath the heads of the nails, pushing its way out and attesting to the raw interior of the wound.

¹⁶ “Nam plus compateris sanguine meo in cruce fuso quam aliqua creatura, que vivat hodie, quia, licet multi plorent super acerbissima passione mea et sanguine mei effusione, non tamen plorant eo modo quo tu.” Ibid., 5.1119-1122.

¹⁷ “Quadam die curialissimum Deum Margarita audivit dicentem sibi: ‘Vade ad crucem et scrutare plagas meas intus et extra et discas quantum et quomodo fuerint amare.’ Cumque devote mens statim Domino obedisset, audivit quod sequitur: ‘Ego Deus qui numquam mentior, quia sum veritas, dico tibi quod per afflictions varias, antequam de seculo isto migres, intrabis in plagas meas.’ Ita post hec in meditatione crucis doloribus adeo intus vulnerabatur mente, quod nervi oculorum videbantur extrahi, et volas manuum tangere non valebat.” Ibid., 5.1004-1011.

There may be no way to verify that the crucifix now housed in the church that bears Margherita's name is the very crucifix before which she prayed. Yet it is certain that Giunta wanted his readers to believe it was. Perhaps as a means to make up for the absence of Margherita's body, the crucifix was moved shortly after her death, placed above an altar to the right of San Francesco's high altar, and labeled with the inscription *Hic Crucifixus D. Margaritae alloquutus est*.¹⁸ Documents allow us then to follow this crucifix from its (supposed) second home in San Francesco up to the newly constructed Santuario, at the head of a solemn procession on December 14, 1602. This was arranged by an appointed city official, Piero di Matteo Strozzi, who had built a stone altar in the nave of the sanctuary to the left of the main portal. He had the crucifix placed over that altar with the inscription: *Petrus Strozza Mathai Filius Anno Domini MDCII. Cortonae Praetoram gerens, hanc Aram Salvatori Crucifixo dicavit: et Imaginem istam, quae pluries B. Margaritae locuta fuit, hic suo et communi zelo transtulit*.¹⁹ The crucifix was not moved into its current niche to the right of the high altar until the church's rebuilding in the nineteenth century.²⁰ Whether or not Margherita herself was familiar with this particular image, the crucifix was quickly tied to her cult and to the very transformation I discuss in this chapter.

¹⁸ Domenico Bacci, *Il Santuario di S. Margherita in Cortona* (Arezzo: Tip. O. Beucci, 1921), 39. Bacci relied on such archival materials as the *Regestum bullarum et diplomatum ad Conventum et Ecclesiam S. Margaritae de Cortona spectantium*, the *Sommario della Storia della Chiesa e del Convento di S. Margherita di Cortona compilato e disposto per ordine cronologico dal P.re Fr. Lodovico da Pelago Letto Giubilato di Teologia e già Definitore nella Provincia Toscana dei Minori osservanti l'anno MDCCLXXXI*, and the *Antica Leggenda della vita e dei miracoli di S. Margherita di Cortona*, a loose Italian translation of Giunta's *vita* with extensive notes written in 1793.

¹⁹ *Antica leggenda della vita e de' miracoli di S. Margherita di Cortona scritta dal di lei confessore Fr. Giunta Bevegnati dell'ordine de' minori colla traduzione italiana di detta leggenda posta dicontra al testo originale latino e con annotazioni e dissertazioni diverse ad illustrazione del medesimo testo per opera di un sacerdote divoto di detta santa e socio della insigne academia etrusca di Cortona*, (Lucca: Francesco Bonsignori, 1793), 87. Also mentioned in G. Lauro, *Dell'origine della città di Cortona in Toscana e sue antichità* (Rome: L. Grignani, 1639); reprinted in the series *Historiae Urbium et Regionum Italiae Rariores*, Nuova serie, 79, (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni editore, 1981), part II, gathering F.

²⁰ Bacci, *Il Santuario di S. Margherita in Cortona*, 39.

By referring to the crucifix in his text, Giunta may have hoped to attract pilgrims and locals devoted to the saint down to his urban convent, and by presenting it as possessing the power to transform its viewers closer and closer into the image of Christ, he asserted that the sculpture carried a special status in its own right. Giunta made sure to specify, before describing Margherita's physical, if temporary, transformation into the form of the crucifix, that this event occurred in front of the physical image. The night before, the *vita* tells us, Margherita was in her cell, contemplating Christ's Passion.

Giunta wrote:

while she was tearfully and insistently asking of God that he should deign to give, as much as was possible for her strength, some of the sadness that Mary felt next to the cross, as well as some of her courtesy, she heard Christ saying to her: "In the first hour of the day, go on your own to the place of my brothers, where you will feel the wretchedness of my representation with such sharpness, bitterness, and pain as you have never felt or experienced before, neither this much or of this kind."²¹

The friar then narrated that Margherita went to the church the next morning after Christ had revealed to her that she was to go to the cross in order to be mentally crucified that day.²² Giunta specified that she was in the oratory where the wood crucifix was displayed, for it was there that the people of Cortona, her confessor among them, gathered to watch Margherita's passionate and moving experience.²³

²¹ "...dum cum lacrimis a Domino postularet instanter quod, in quantum possibile suis viribus esset, de matris dolore, quem senserat iuxta crucem, sua curialitate concedere dignaretur, audivit Christum dicentem sibi: 'In hora prima diei, more solito, vadas ad locum meorum fratrum, ubi tante acerbitatis, amaritudinis et pene dolorem mee representationis senties, qualem nec quantum unquam sensisti nec experta fuisti'." *Legenda*, 5.46-52.

²² "...quia sicut sibi fuerat revelatum a Domino debebat ad crucem die illa mentaliter crucifigi." *Ibid.*, 5.54-55.

²³ "Hoc tam novum et compassione plenum spectaculum ita Cortonenses omnes commovit, quod relictis officiis suis et artibus, homines et mulieres, infantibus et languidis in cunis et letulis decubantibus, pluribus vicibus illa die oratorium nostri loci ad honorem beati Francisci sui et nostri patris constructum, in fletu et plantu repleuerunt." *Ibid.*, 5.86-90.

Having placed Margherita in front of the *crucifixus dolorosus*, Giunta then recounted her visions and bodily metamorphosis into the likeness of the crucifix. He made clear not only that this episode occurred before the crucifix, but also that it happened *because* of it.

MARGHERITA'S TRANSFORMATION

On the night that Margherita begged Christ to grant her Mary's sorrows beneath the cross, Christ determined that she would undergo not *imitatio Mariae*, but rather the pains of his *representationis*, his image. Mary's sorrows, themselves the spiritual and emotional equivalent to Christ's pains on the cross, would have been an appropriate means of *imitatio Christi* for Margherita, since she often prayed and meditated at the foot of the crucifix in San Francesco. Furthermore, the Cortona saint would experience exactly such sorrows elsewhere in the *vita*. Yet on this occasion, Christ denied her wish, promising instead that she would endure the pains and suffering visualized on his physical image.²⁴

His promise was fulfilled the next morning, in the oratory of the Franciscan church. Here, having heard Mass, Margherita contemplated the bitterness of Christ's Passion.²⁵ She then began to have visions, first of the Betrayal and then each successive moment of the Passion. As Giunta emphasized, she omitted nothing from the heart-wrenching series of events.²⁶ Using seeing verbs such as *videbat* and *contemplabatur*, Giunta described the series of visions as if unfolding right in front of Margherita, as if seen with her physical eyes. She heard the crowd shouting on Calvary and even Christ

²⁴ Just lines later, Giunta wrote: "Tunc illi anime, quam doloris gladius pertransibat, fuit ostensa mater Virgo..." *ibid.*, 5.70-71.

²⁵ Literally, "felle passionis potata," having swallowed the bile of the Passion. *Ibid.*, 5.57.

²⁶ "...nil de serie passionis reliquit." *Ibid.*, 5.85-86.

speaking from the cross. These visions, or full sensory experiences, were so present for her that she cried out and fainted, feeling in her own body echoes of Christ's pain.²⁷

Having somewhat recovered, Margherita then exclaimed that she could see the blind Longinus, with spear in hand, being led to the cross to pierce Christ's side. When the miraculous blood that poured out from the newly-opened side wound splashed upon the centurion's eyes, his blindness was cured, and it was at this moment that the Cortona saint's body began to transform:

In fact, they saw Margherita placed not next to the cross, but as if on the cross, killed with cruel suffering. Such amazing signs of pain were made evident in her that we believed her to be fixed deep within the moment of death. For, because of pain too great and severe, she was grating her teeth, she was twisting as a worm and was discolored to the likeness of ashes, she lost her pulse, lost her speech, she was totally frozen and in such a way her throat was made hoarse, so that it was scarcely possible to understand any sense in what she was speaking. For at the moment of the ninth hour she lost her sense and external vision, since neither was she aware of the crowd of weeping people, nor was she aware of the presence and voice of the women helping and holding her.²⁸

At the hour of Christ's death, her head lowered onto her chest and her limbs became motionless, leaving her frozen in the form of the crucifix.²⁹ Despite several differences between Giunta's descriptions of the crucified Christ and of Margherita, the friar made clear that she appeared to those around her, himself included, as though she had truly been crucified. While Christ's face is described as *lividum*, discolored with bruises, and

²⁷ "...ita in dolore cum vociferatione defecit, quod omnes qui asistebant, crediderunt firmiter eam mori." Ibid., 5.69-70.

²⁸ "Videbant namque non iuxta crucem, set quasi in cruce positam Margaritam diris confectam doloribus. In qua tam mira patuerunt signa doloris, ut in mortis articulo crederemus eam penitus constitutam. Pre nimio enim vehementique dolore stridebat dentibus, torquebatur ut vermis et discolorabatur ad instar cineris, perdebat pulsum, ammictebat loquelam, glaciabatur totaliter et ita sunt facte rauce fauces eius, ut vix posset intelligi cum redibat ad sensum. Adeo enim usque in horam nonam sensum et extrinsecum visum perdidit, quod nec concursus flentis perpendit populi, nec assistentium dominarum eamque tenentium facies vocemque cognovit." Ibid., 5.90-100.

²⁹ Giunta wrote, "Nimirum ubi morientis Domini et saluatoris hora, scilicet nona, pervenit et quod, inclinato capite, sacer ille spiritus emicatur; suum adeo capud reclinavit obliquatum in pectore, ut omnes eam mortuam crederemus, amissis partier omnium membrorum motibus atque sensu." Ibid., 5.102-105.

while, having been flagellated without mercy, he bleeds from copious wounds that cover his wooden corpus, she is described as *discolorabatur ad instar cineris* – discolored to the likeness of ashes. Although Margherita shed no blood, the color was drained from her skin, suggesting a loss of blood as if poured out from invisible wounds. The saint was left with no pulse, no color, no vision, no sense, and thus with as much life in her body as in the wood of the crucifix hanging before her – she arguably appeared even less life-like than the sculpture. Frozen with arms splayed, body twisted, and head hung upon her chest, her body doubled its carved form.

TRANSFORMATION BY VISION: PERSPECTIVIST OPTICS

In narrating this event, Giunta had in mind contemporary writings on optics, particularly those by Roger Bacon, as well as the moralizing treatise on the eye and vision recently written by Peter of Limoges. Bacon wrote his *De multiplicatione specierum* and part five of his *Opus Majus*, the *Perspectiva*, in the early 1260s,³⁰ in which he developed his own theory about the role of *species* in the process of sight, synthesizing

³⁰ Roger Bacon and David C. Lindberg, *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature: A Critical Edition, with English Translation, Introduction and Notes of "De multiplicatione specierum" and "De speculis comburentibus"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); *Roger Bacon and the Origins of 'Perspectiva' in the Middle Ages: A Critical Edition and English Translation of Bacon's 'Perspectiva' with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). Bacon fell into bad graces with his Franciscan superiors, making it difficult to disseminate his texts, at least under his own name. 39 manuscript copies of the *Perspectiva* survive, including fragments, and 24 of *De multiplicatione specierum*. Yet, as David Lindberg, who thoroughly studied these manuscripts, observed, these surviving manuscripts were working copies used at the university, thus lectured upon and read and notated by students. The influence of these works is also evident in the subsequent works of Witelo (d. after 1281) and John Pecham (d. 1292), both of whom likely had access to Bacon's writings while in residence at the papal court itself. Pecham may have had direct access to the earlier scholar directly, as per *ibid.*, xcv-xcvii. Bacon's works were further disseminated, both to religious and lay populations, by means of the moralizing work of Peter of Limoges, to be discussed later in this chapter. Peter relied heavily on Bacon, as well as directly on Alhazen, to create a preacher's manual that discussed the scientific theories of the Perspectivists while making them suitable for the pulpit by means of moralizing and spiritual lessons. See *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, trans. Richard Newhauser (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012).

previous scholarship wherever possible.³¹ His theories were not merely derivative, however; Bacon was able to develop ideas that had remained inchoate in earlier writings. He was furthermore (and innovatively) concerned with both the geometrical and anatomical aspects of vision and brought all of his theories within the context of Christian theology.

Defining the species as “the first effect of any naturally-acting thing,” Bacon asserted that it is this material product of an external object (the agent) that, by acting on the medium adjacent to it (air, for example), enters into the eye and leads to the perception of that object by the viewer (the recipient).³² An incomplete but otherwise identical version of its agent, the species is able to assimilate the viewer to that agent by leaving an impression in the eye’s *anterior glacialis*, or crystalline humor.³³ Unlike an

³¹ Bacon’s synthesis is seen most readily in his argument that both intromissive and extramissive vision are necessary for sight and perception. For a clear and succinct recapitulation of the previous theories of vision Bacon was drawing on – Plato and Aristotle, Euclid, Grosseteste, Al-Kindi, Avicenna and Alhazen to name some of the most important – see David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); most recently, A. Mark Smith “revamps” Lindberg’s classic study (his term), incorporating newly published texts, as well as new interpretations of those already known to Lindberg. See *From Sight to Light: The Passage from Ancient to Modern Optics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

³² “...ad designandum primum effectum cuiuslibet agentis naturaliter.” *Roger Bacon’s Philosophy of Nature*, 2. (I.1.28-29) A. Mark Smith offers a derivation and definition of the term species: “*Species*, from *spec* (cf. *perspectiva* and such terms as ‘introspect’ and ‘speculate’), translates the Greek εἶδος, derived from εἶδω ‘to see,’ perfect from οἶδα, ‘to know’ (‘idea’ is from the same root). Hence both terms literally denote ‘what a thing looks like,’ yet both underlie terms denoting intellectual acts. In view of its equivocal nature, it is no wonder the *species*, even when intended as purely intelligible, was taken as a sort of pictorial representation in the mind.” See “Getting the Big Picture in Perspectivist Optics,” *Isis* 72, no. 4 (1981): 574, note 24.

³³ “...quia agens intendit assimilare sibi patiens...Ergo species communicat cum suo agente in natura et diffinitione.” *Roger Bacon’s Philosophy of Nature*, 7, 11. (I.1.83, 139-40). Dallas Denery succinctly describes Bacon’s meaning: “Bacon, in other words, does not argue for a mere correspondence, not even for a resemblance, between the visible object and what is perceived. Rather, he argues for their identity.” “Peter of Limoges, Perspectivist Optics and the Displacement of Vision,” in *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World: Optics, Theology and Religious Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 95-96.

impression made by a seal in wax, this impression is more than just a change in surface form; it is a change made internally to the very nature of the eye.³⁴

Bacon thus presented the crystalline humor, which he designated as the eye's pupil, as one of the most essential parts of the eye's anatomy in the process of seeing. In the *Perspectiva*, he offered a significant description of this humor, explaining that it must be moist in order to receive the species' impressions, somewhat transparent so that light and color can enter and pass through on their journey to the optic nerves, and somewhat thick, so that the impressions can be retained long enough for the visual power to perceive them. He continues: it "must be somewhat dense, so that it may undergo a kind of pain on account of the species; for we see that strong lights and colors narrow [the aperture of] the eye and injure it and induce pain."³⁵ Seeing always causes pain, although it is imperceptible when the impressions of the species are moderate. Very bright light, on the other hand, not only causes pain, it also injures sight, concealing other visible objects.³⁶ Through this description of the species and its functions, it is clear that Bacon understands vision to be assimilative, wounding, and overpowering, a conception that would prove fundamental to Giunta's understanding of Margherita's mystical experience.

We begin to see how Bacon's optics influenced Giunta's thinking in Christ's announcement to Margherita that she would feel the sorrows of his representation, pain as

³⁴ In his *De multiplicatione specierum*, Bacon clarifies his use of "impression" (*impressionis*), asserting that it is not like the impression of a seal upon wax. This impression results only in a change in form to the surface of the wax, whereas the effect of a species upon the recipient occurs internally. Furthermore, through the species we can perceive the agent of which it is the first effect (since their natures are the same), but we cannot perceive the matrix through the image left in the wax. Impression, according to Bacon, can only be used in the broader sense, "according to which it commonly designates every alteration of a recipient by the action of an agent." ("...prout signat communiter omnem transmutationem patientis per actionem agentis") *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature*, 46-47. (1.3.40-41).

³⁵ "Et oportet ut sit aliquantulum spissus quatenus patiatur a speciebus passionem que est de genere doloris; videmus enim quod fortes luces et colores angustant visum et ledunt et dolorem inferunt." *Perspectiva*, 52-53. (I.4.2.58-60).

³⁶ "Nam lux multum excellens occultat visivilia cetera, et etiam ledit et gravat visum et debilitate actionem videndi." *Ibid.*, 61-63. (I.5.1.32-34).

she had never known. Giunta tied together the act of looking at a physical object with the painful experience of transformation. Bacon had described the species itself as a “passion”: “It is called ‘passion’ because the medium and sense, in receiving species, undergo a transmutation in their substance; however, this transmutation is toward perfection and well-being.”³⁷ Margherita, having contemplated the violence of the San Francesco crucifix, received its species, causing her to undergo her own passion – a painful transmutation that brought her closer to the perfection of Christ.

Noticeably, neither the friars nor the Cortonesi present in the church experienced any sort of similar transmutation. How could the species from a visible object cause an effect in one woman so different from that in all the others around her? Bacon explains that the first effect of any agent (the species) will always be the same. However, successive effects, that is, the effects the species have on various recipients, will differ depending on the nature of that recipient.³⁸ Margherita’s nature differed from others’ natures. Through her deep devotion to Christ and his Passion, to the Eucharist, the poor and the sick, and through her extreme asceticism and physical sufferings, Margherita had achieved a higher level of spirituality; her visions confirmed this. As Bacon himself had clarified in the *Perspectiva*, spiritual seeing was granted by the Divine only to those deemed worthy of it.³⁹ Margherita’s elevated nature, together with divine sanction, thus primed her for the extreme effect the species of the crucifix would have within her. These

³⁷ “Vocatur autem passio quia medium et sensus in recipiendo speciem patiuntur transmutationem in sua substantia, que transmutatio tamen est in perfectionem et salutem...” *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature*, 6-7. (1.1.67-69).

³⁸ “Tertio sciendum est quod agens naturaliter facit eundem effectum primum, ut speciem, in quodcumque agat, ita quod uniformiter agit a parte sua... Et quia sic est quod agens naturale agit a parte sua uno modo, et omne agens quod est agens naturaliter et per modum nature, ideo cum calidum diversas operationes facit in frigidum et in tactum, hoc erit propter diversitatem recipientium, sicut sol per eandem virtutem dissolvit ceram et constringit lutum.” *Ibid.*, 18-19. (1.1.273-275, 296-300).

³⁹ He states that divine illumination, granted by divine grace, is required for spiritual seeing. *Perspectiva*, 326-327. (III.3.2.79-81).

species altered more than just the humors of her eyes; they altered her entire body, causing her, in her entirety, to become more like their agent, the crucifix.

Bacon's writings thus explain the mechanisms of Margherita's transformation as Giunta presents them. But beyond these texts, which he may or may not have had direct access to, Giunta was almost certainly also influenced by the *Tractatus moralis de oculo* of Peter of Limoges. Margherita's biographer may very well have read this moralizing treatise himself, but in any case, would have certainly been made aware of its content through preached sermons.⁴⁰ Written as a preacher's manual circa 1280, the *Tractatus* expounds upon the moral and spiritual implications of perspectivist theories, particular those of Bacon and Alhazen; Peter's text made such theories suitable for the pulpit and accessible to a much wider audience that included laity.⁴¹ It now offers a contemporary basis for drawing parallels between optical theories concerning the physical eye and the corresponding workings of the spiritual eye.

Building on Bacon's assertion that the recipient is assimilated to the visible object by the action of the species, Peter of Limoges contends that the spiritual senses are conformed to the true nature of the agent and that this is made possible by the parallel structures of the physical and spiritual eyes; he understands the two levels of seeing as interconnected. The pupil of the physical eye (the *anterior glacialis*) is protected by seven "guardians": three coverings, three fluids, and a spider web-like netting. The

⁴⁰ We cannot know if Giunta had a copy of the *Tractatus* in front of him when composing the *Legenda*, but it seems more than likely that he would have been aware of its content. Not only was the text being widely disseminated through the university's *pecia* system by the 1280s, but it was also being copied throughout Europe, especially to be included within collections of *exempla*. See Peter of Limoges, *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, xxii-xxx; Richard Newhauser, "Nature's Moral Eye: Peter of Limoges' *Tractatus moralis de oculo*," in *Man and Nature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Susan J. Ridyard and Robert G. Benson, *Sewanee Mediaeval Studies* (Sewanee, TN: University of the South Press, 1995), 133.

⁴¹ *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, xxix. As Denery asserts, the treatise is about more than just the spiritual implications of perspectivist optics: as a preachers' manual, Peter's text transformed optical theories into lessons on salvation. "Peter of Limoges," 78.

spiritual pupil, which Peter (following Bacon) defines as the soul, is protected by the seven virtues – spiritual sight is impossible without them.⁴² Both pupils retain the visual power, and both are identified as the locus where transformation toward the likeness of the agent takes place.

Drawing on Alhazen's theory of the afterimage, in which light enters a dark room through an opening and an observer who first looks at the opening and then away will continue to see its illuminated form,⁴³ Peter asserts that:

the opening which all of us should pay attention to and look at frequently is Christ's side pierced on the cross. For this reason, Revelation 1 reads, 'Every eye will see him; they, too, who pierced him,' and Zechariah 12: 'They will look at him, whom they have pierced'. He said 'they have pierced' in the plural, for all of us have pierced Christ, or rather we have crucified him, since Christ was crucified for everyone. Let each and every person enter the house of his conscience and consider Christ's wounds with the eyes of his mind, so that in his own small measure he might conform himself to the suffering Christ.⁴⁴

Peter thus instructs his audience to focus their eyes upon the pierced side and other wounds of Christ so that they might be further assimilated to their Savior.⁴⁵ He implies that viewers ought to turn both their physical and spiritual gazes to this image, moving from the external world to one of the internal senses, of the mind's eye. In doing so, the viewer would, "in his own small measure," be made more like the suffering Christ.

The mechanisms of Margherita's transformation now become even clearer.

Margherita focused first her carnal eyes and then her spiritual eyes on Christ's bloody

⁴² *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, 7.

⁴³ Alhazen's theory is found in his *De aspectibus*, Book 1, chapter 1, [4.4]. See *Alhacen's Theory of Visual Perception. A Critical Edition, with English Translation and Commentary, of the First Three Books of Alhacen's De Aspectibus, the Medieval Latin Version of Ibn al'Haytham's Kitab al-Manazir*, trans. and ed. by A. Mark Smith, vol. 2, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 91, Parts 4-5 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 343.

⁴⁴ *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, 60.

⁴⁵ In his assessment of Peter of Limoges' *Tractatus*, Denery notes that a model of external vision prevails even in Peter's discussion of spiritual vision. Therefore, the physical eyes still play a role, and the same processes of sight operate, even within mental contemplation and vision. "Peter of Limoges," 110.

wounds. She experienced both a physical transformation and a spiritual ecstasy, during which she witnessed Christ's Passion and her body replicated the form of his *representationis*. In her "own small measure," she conformed herself to the suffering Christ by means of his image. As previously noted, her own small measure was both qualitatively and quantitatively different from that of most others. While Bacon explained that the species of the same agent causes different effects in recipients based on their disparate natures, Peter expounds upon this, suggesting that one's measure of assimilation depends on both one's ability to see and one's will.

Spiritual vision requires more than the protection of the spiritual pupil by the seven virtues. Peter writes:

The celestial physician said to the angel, 'Anoint your eyes with a salve so that you can see.' By the salve, which cleanses and rinses the eyes, are signified contrition and remorse for sins and one's own efforts in carrying out good deeds: a human being cooperates with them in order to receive vision with his spiritual eyes.⁴⁶

He makes further reference to the story of Tobias, who was able to cure his father's blindness with fish-gall: to Peter, the bitterness of the gall represents the bitterness of recognizing and mourning one's own sins, which can heal spiritual sight. Margherita was able to strengthen her spiritual vision in a similar manner: throughout her *vita*, Giunta emphasized both her contrition for past sins and the virtues she had cultivated since. He often compared her to the Magdalene, telling his readers of the copious tears she shed for her sins as well as for Christ's suffering, and he also highlighted her many virtues, such as peace-making, poverty and charity.⁴⁷ Margherita thus felt bitterness like that from gall

⁴⁶ *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, 15.

⁴⁷ For an example of Giunta marking Margherita as a new Magdalene, see *Legenda*, 2.4-9. For her virtues and compassion, see *ibid.*, 2.65-78.

and protected her spiritual pupil with virtues; her spiritual sight was as clear as could be achieved in this life.⁴⁸

Peter moreover insists that an essential aspect of sight is the will or intention of the viewer. In his eleventh chapter, he explains that, despite the multiplication of species to the eye, vision can only occur if the viewer chooses to focus upon a given agent; the viewer will only see that which his soul has fixed its attention. Like Bacon, Peter believed that extramission was required in addition to intromission for vision to occur and that the eye sent forth its own rays by an intentional act of the viewer. By his reasoning, “spiritual vision requires not only that the soul receive powers and grace from without, that is to say from God, but that it cooperate with them internally through its own power.”⁴⁹ Margherita’s soul desired Christ above all else and sought him out. She was therefore well prepared both to see his physical image and to receive the divine light that illuminated her spiritual visions of his Passion. Her pupils protected, her eyes cleansed with contrition and good deeds, and her will directed towards the suffering Christ, she was able to conform herself to him to a degree greater than the others with more imperfect vision.

Peter follows his prescription to contemplate Christ’s wounds with:

⁴⁸ As Bacon first suggested and Peter explained in greater depth, vision in this life is imperfect (perfect vision is seeing the divine): “we can describe three types of vision among human beings: The first is perfect, which will exist in the state of glory after the final resurrection. The second is the soul separated from the body and contemplating the divine essence in the highest heaven until the resurrection, and this vision is weaker than the first. The third is in this life, which is the weakest of all, and it has to take place through reflection, just as the vision by which something is seen in a mirror also has to take place through the intermediary of reflected lines. For this reason, it is also called a mirror-like vision by the apostle Paul. ‘Now,’ he says, ‘we see through a mirror and dimly, but at the time of glory, face to face,’ and after the resurrection we will see with full directness, but before that only at an oblique angle to that directness or fullness, because the soul will not be filled by the directness or fullness of vision before it has been united with its body.” *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, 12.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

It is written in the *Book on Mixing Elements* that if a murderer looks at the man he has killed, or if he appears in the man's presence, blood will immediately flow out of the murdered man's wounds. If this is true, it can be inferred that if we killed Christ (since he was killed for us), then whoever is not affected by his blood as if it had recently flowed from his wounds is not looking correctly at him.⁵⁰

Again Peter proffers Christ's freshly bleeding wounds as objects for the gaze, arguing that a viewer should react viscerally to seeing their Savior's blood, hot and red, pouring, streaming, and trickling out from raw wounds. This is significant when we consider Margherita and the crucifix she often contemplated, which clearly satisfies Peter's directives: the side wound is a deep slit that spews a mass of tangible and individuated drops of red blood, which continue to stream down the side of the corpus (figure 9c). Christ's body is carpeted with large and circular wounds that spill rivulets of hot blood. His hands and feet each bear horrifying wounds from the nails that were driven into them (figure 9b), his face is covered in small bloody drops of sweat, and his forehead is marked by blood dripping down from beneath the now-lost crown of thorns (figure 9a). Margherita considered these bloody outpourings with both her carnal and mind's eyes, causing her to sense in her own body the pain they signified and facilitating her assimilation to the image of Christ on the cross.

It is noteworthy that the side wound was Peter's primary focus. This is the image that leaves an imprint or afterimage not only in the eyes, but also in the souls of beholders, for it is the most powerful means of conforming to Christ. Such thinking was in accordance with his contemporaries, most famously, St. Bonaventure, who was the Minister General of the Franciscan Order when Peter composed his *Tractatus*. In his *De Perfectione vitae ad Sorores*, written specifically for nuns, Bonaventure writes:

⁵⁰ Ibid., 60.

Draw near, O handmaid, with loving steps to Jesus wounded for you, to Jesus nailed to the gibbet of the Cross. Gaze with the blessed Apostle St Thomas, not merely on the print of the nails in Christ's hands; be not satisfied with putting your fingers in the holes made by the nails in his hands; neither let it be sufficient to put your hand into the wounds in his side; but enter entirely by the door in his side and go straight up to the very heart of Jesus. There burning for love of Christ crucified, be transformed into Christ. Fastened to the Cross by the nails of fear of God, transfixed by the lance of love of your inmost heart, pierced through by the sword of compassion, seek for nothing else except in dying with Christ on the cross.⁵¹

The Seraphic Doctor here asserts that his reader should not be satisfied with merely touching Christ's wounds, by putting her finger inside of them as the apostle Thomas had done; rather she should want to enter into them entirely. The pierced side of Christ was considered a door, an entryway, and the direct path to his heart; it was in his heart that transformation of the devoted could occur.⁵² Bonaventure therefore also believed that intensely focused meditation not merely on the suffering of Christ, but particularly on his side wound, would allow the meditator to conform himself – or herself as is the case here – to Christ.

Giunta likewise emphasized such reasoning. In the *Legenda*, Christ called Margherita's attention to his pierced side, instructing her to crawl inside of it in order to

⁵¹ As cited by Bennett, "Stigmata and sense memory," 10-11. "Accede ergo tu, o famula, pedibus affectionum tuarum ad Iesum vulneratum, ad Iesum spinis coronatum, ad Iesum patibulo crucis affixum, et cum beato Thoma Apostolo non solum intueri in *manibus eius fixuram clavorum*, non solum mitte *digitum tuum in locum clavorum*, non solum mitte *manum tuam in latus eius*, sed totaliter per ostium lateris ingredi usque ad cor ipsius Iesu, ibique ardentissimo Crucifixi amore in Christum transformata, clavis divini timoris confixa, lancea praecordialis delectionis transfixa, gladio intimae compassionis transverberata, nihil aliud quaeras, nihil aliud desideres, in nullo alio velis consolari, quam ut cum Christo tu possis in cruce mori." Saint Bonaventure, *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae: Opera Omnia*, vol. VIII (Florence: Quaracchi, 1898), 120.

⁵² Jeffrey Hamburger discusses images of Christ's heart, in which the heart is a place for the soul to nest and the place where the soul's assimilation to Christ occurs. The wounds of Christ (particularly the side wound) become the doors that lead to Christ's heart, and having passed through them, the soul can find union with Christ. Hamburger also connects both bodily and spiritual vision, and the wounding vision of the Song of Songs, to the assimilation to Christ in his heart; his analysis is very much on a contemplative and mystical level, and he does not address optics or the physical process by which vision is transformative. See *Nuns as Artists*, especially chapters 3 and 4.

find his heart.⁵³ This was where lay her comfort and salvation; from here she would suck milk and be taken up to the heavens.⁵⁴ The belief that the side wound and, by extension, the heart, is the site of and impetus for transformation is further reinforced in Giunta's account by the fact that Margherita only began to change her form once she had seen Christ's side opened by the blind centurion, Longinus. Margherita lost her vision at the very moment that his was restored by Christ's miraculous blood.⁵⁵ Both experienced metamorphosis at the same moment: his from blind to seeing, hers from seeing to blind; his from what ejected out from Christ's pierced side, hers from her contemplative journey into it. Together they were granted miraculous vision: whereas Longinus' brought him to the realization that "truly this man was the Son of God," (Mt. 27:54, Mk. 15:39), Margherita's was transformative of her whole body. In the words of Bonaventure, she went "straight up to the very heart of Jesus," where, "burning for love of Christ crucified," she was "transformed into Christ," or, on this occasion, into an image of Christ.

Margherita's loss of vision was not merely a poetic chiasmus of Longinus' miraculous cure; it is perhaps the most significant clue that Giunta was operating within the framework of contemporary optics. To be sure, the friar offered other references to Perspectivist ideas, the most striking of which appears in Book Five, the same book in which he narrated Margherita's metamorphosis: in the midst of a long complaint to

⁵³ On one occasion, Christ asks Margherita, "Cur intrare vis cor meum et non intras in vulnus lateris mei?" *Legenda*, 5.1189-90.

⁵⁴ One example where Margherita was told to take milk from Christ's side: "...quia lactanda eras ad vulnus mei lateris." *Ibid.*, 5.792. In the following book, Christ opened his side wound for her, revealing his heart and carrying her up to the heavens: "...subito patuit laterale vulnus amantis Iesu et in caverna illa cor sui est intuita salvatoris. In quo excessu amplexus Dominum crucifixum, sursum ab eo ferebatur in celum et audivit eum dicentem sibi: 'Filia, de istis vulneribus trahes illa, que nequeunt predicatorum referre...'" *Ibid.*, 6.456-60. For more on Christ's side wound as source of nourishment, see Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, especially Part IV, "Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother".

⁵⁵ "...videt anima mea Longinum cecum ad crucem duci et lanceam poni in manibus eius et illuminatur modo pretioso sanguine Dei mei." *Legenda*, 5.82-84.

Margherita regarding the many people who continue to crucify him daily, Christ proclaimed that those who harm clerics, in fact harm the “pupil of his eye.”⁵⁶ This phrase, *pupillam oculi*, echoes Zechariah 2:8 and several other biblical passages, but especially Psalm 17:8 in which David says to the Lord, “Preserve me, oh Lord, as the pupil of your eye.”⁵⁷ Both Bacon and Peter refer to this passage in their own texts. For Bacon, this passage becomes essential to his defense and justification of the science of optics. He begins with the declaration that “this science has inexpressible utility with respect to divine wisdom.”⁵⁸ Among other reasons, this is because:

in divine scripture, nothing is dealt with as frequently as matters pertaining to the eye and vision, as is evident to anybody who reads it; and therefore nothing is more essential to [a grasp of] the literal and spiritual sense than the certitude supplied by this science...For example, when it is said, “Preserve me, oh Lord, as the pupil of your eye,” it is impossible to know God’s meaning in this phrase unless we first consider how the preservation of the pupil is achieved, to the point where God would consider it worthy to preserve us in a like manner.⁵⁹

Bacon therefore points to this as an example where optical science is a tool necessary to unlock the secrets and wisdom embedded within scripture – for we cannot understand David’s reference without it. Only through the study of this science could we know that seven things fulfill this task: humors, tunics, a web, and “the continuous influence of spirits and powers received from the fullness of [the visual power’s] source.”⁶⁰ As Bacon

⁵⁶ “Qui sunt illi qui alapas et coaphos michi dare non cessant? Illi qui hoc tempore in religiosos et clericos manus iniiciunt violenter: qui enim tangit eos iniuriose, etiam sidigni sint, tangit pupillam oculi mei.” Ibid., 5.470-73.

⁵⁷ Zech. 2:8: “For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘He sent me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.’”

⁵⁸ “Volo nunc in fine innuere quomodo hec scientia habet ineffabilem utilitatem respectu sapientie divine.” *Perspectiva*, 320-321. (III.3.1.6-7)

⁵⁹ “Nam in scriptura Dei, nichil tantum multiplicatur sicut ea que pertinent ad oculum et visionem, ut manifestum est perlegenti; et ideo nichil magis necessarium est sensui litterali et spirituali sicut huius scientie certitudo...Cum enim dicitur, ‘Custodi nos, Domine, ut pupillam oculi’, impossibile est scire sensum Dei in hoc verbo nisi primo consideret homo quomodo pupille custodia perficitur, quatenus ad eius similitudinem Deus nos custodire dignetur.” Ibid., 322-323. (III.3.1.15-25).

⁶⁰ “...continuum influentiam spirituum et virtutum recipiens a fontali plenitudine.” Ibid. (III.3.1.33-34).

explains, David wished for the spiritual equivalent of this physical design, for the spiritual pupil is the soul, and the preservation of the soul likewise requires seven things: “virtue, gifts, bliss, spiritual sensitivity, fruits, and revelation according to modes of ecstasy, and also continuous influence of the spiritual gift of grace from the fullness of the Crucified One.”⁶¹ The virtues are also seven. Bacon lists them here, and they would also be the principal subject of the first chapter of Peter’s *Tractatus*. After having himself made reference to David’s plea for protection akin to the pupil of God’s eye as part of his discussion of the anatomy of the eye, Peter turns to Psalm 37:11, citing the verse, “My strength has abandoned me; and the light of my eyes – it, too, is not with me.” He then comments that “it is no wonder if someone has been abandoned by his virtue has lost the light of his eyes.”⁶²

Giunta’s designation of clerics as the pupil of Christ’s eye ties in to this very discussion and supports the claim that he was attuned to the ideas of the Perspectivists. Furthermore, Margherita’s biographer frequently referred to her as a light in the world that could give sight to the blind and reveal the truth.⁶³ Although this was not an idea explicitly tied to optics, it aligns with Bacon’s (and others’) assertion that light is the most important requirement for vision, and that it was by means of vision that a person learns about the world around him.⁶⁴

Yet it is the passage in which Giunta relayed Margherita’s loss of vision that most strikingly alludes to perspectivist science, for here he included two unique elements that

⁶¹ “...virtus, donum, beatitudo, sensus spiritualis, fructus, et revelatio secundum modos raptus, et insuper continua influentia karismatum gratie a plenitudine crucifixi.” Ibid. (III.3.1.38-41).

⁶² *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, 7.

⁶³ For example, *Legenda*, 4.201. Also, 5.369, 1102-1103; 7.551.

⁶⁴ Bacon claims that, beyond a visible object and its species, light is the first and most important requirement for vision. *Perspectiva*, 108-109. (I.8.1.9-11). It is by means of vision, he insists at the very opening of the treatise, that we experience both the world around us and the heavens above. Ibid., 2-3. (I.1.1.21-22).

call for a reader's attention: Giunta first mentioned the physical crucifix (Christ's *representationem*) and then made explicit reference to Margherita's loss of her external vision (*extrinsecum visum*). The only other mention of the sculpted image appears at the opening of the *vita* (as discussed above). Furthermore, upon receiving the Eucharist or in the course of intense meditation upon Christ's Passion, Margherita at times lost her voice or her senses in general, but never once in these other instances did Giunta ever specify her external vision.⁶⁵ Thus, he purposively tied vision to a visible object, specifying the loss of her physical, and not spiritual, sight. The failure of vision was a topic Bacon explored throughout his writings on optics. Most relevant to Margherita's case is his assertion that a brighter, stronger light occludes a dimmer, weaker one. Bacon mentions this several times through the *Perspectiva*, first in the context of the ways in which light acts on sight. "Very bright light," he claims, "conceals other visible things, and it also injures and overpowers sight and weakens the action of sight."⁶⁶ In the physical sense, excessive brightness can therefore cause the eye to be unable to see external visible things (*visibilium exteriorem*).⁶⁷ Not only were the illuminated colors coming from the bloody crucifix to her eyes bright and powerful – they were vivid and intense, the imagery shocking – but they also carried within in it the image of Christ on the cross. The sight of the physical crucifix, illuminated by divine light, caused Margherita to have visions of the Passion; divine light is more brilliant and overpowering than any natural light that would have illuminated the interior of San Francesco's oratory, and thus her physical sight was overwhelmed by the sacred image before her.

⁶⁵ An early moment in the *vita* tells us that Margherita would often contemplate Christ's Passion, and the anguish resulting from this would cause her to often lose her senses and her voice. *Legenda*, 2.18-23.

⁶⁶ See note 36.

⁶⁷ *Perspectiva*, 168-169. (II.1.2.131-135)

Peter corroborates Bacon's assertion on more than one occasion. He mentions St. Paul several times, who was first blinded by divine will and then his vision was restored to him. Peter refers to Acts 9, quoting, "Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him, and when he opened his eyes, he saw nothing."⁶⁸ But in Paul's time of blindness, Peter notes that the apostle "was enlightened internally," that is, his spiritual vision was heightened.⁶⁹ Like Paul's temporary blindness, Margherita's was part of a visionary experience that brought her closer to Christ. Although not born up to heaven, Margherita was conformed to the Savior by temporarily becoming the image of his image. After visions and her physical assimilation to Christ on the cross, she was revived – as if from the dead – feeling great joy due to her spiritual journey.⁷⁰ Yet the restoration of her sight allowed her to see the crowd that had gathered around her and seen her performance. This filled Margherita with anxiety.⁷¹ Giunta described Christ's reassurances to her that her visions and metamorphosis occurred before an audience for a purpose: Margherita was a *speculum peccatorum*, a mirror for the sinners around her.

This narrative evokes Peter of Limoges' stories on divine vision, or divine light, that first blinds and then heals. His several references to Paul certainly fit within this

⁶⁸ *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, 153.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 72. Peter reasserts this point, that physical blindness can result in spiritual illumination, in chapter 10. In narrating the story of Audomar, the bishop of Thérouanne, he claims, "For it often happens that when the light of the corporeal eyes is lost, that of the spiritual eyes is rejuvenated," *ibid.*, 112.

⁷⁰ "Vespere autem facto, quasi de morte resurgens, cum nova mentis letitia faciem sursum erexit, oculis elevatis letanter in celum, et tamquam miris novisque dotata muneribus, gratias cepit reddere copiosas bonorum omnium largitori." Giunta Bevegnati, *Legenda*, 5.109-112.

⁷¹ Other mystics who "performed" the Passion also felt anxiety at being observed. As Carolyn Muessig discusses, Gertude van der Oosten (d. 1358), a beguine of Delft and stigmatic, feared that the well-known bleeding wounds of her stigmata would cause her to feel pride and thus ruin her soul. She later realized that she was given the stigmata in order to play a role, one in which she could bring those who saw her to higher levels of faith and devotion. Muessig goes on to assert that such performances (the stigmata included) had no meaning without an audience: "All these women were induced to perform the Passion by contemplating upon Christ crucified. And in turn these women were understood as living icons of Christ crucified beckoning their onlookers to move from exterior witness of the Passion to an interior understanding of Christ's mercy, thereby strengthening faith." See "Performance of the Passion," 133-134.

framework, but even more striking is the story he tells of a certain cleric who lost and regained the use of his physical eyes as a result of visions of the Virgin Mary. This cleric was most devoted to the Virgin and prayed that she might consider him worthy enough to appear before. After much prayer, an angel came to this cleric, announcing that Mary would reveal herself to him at a specified time on a specified day. But the angel then warned the cleric, “But you must know that after your eyes have seen her beauty and splendor that exceeds all others, it is extraordinarily improper and shameful for them to see anything worldly and transitory.”⁷² Although he felt such great love in that moment that blindness did not frighten him, the cleric later feared that the loss of his vision would cause him to become destitute and miserable, and therefore he devised a plan: when the Virgin appeared to him, he would cover one eye so that only the eye that saw her would become blind. When the Virgin finally appeared to him, the cleric indeed covered one eye. He was left feeling regretful, wishing that he had seen the Mother of God more completely, and therefore he cried, “Alas, I’m miserable, why did I shut one eye? Why didn’t I open both? Oh, if only I’d been all eyes so that I could’ve seen her more completely!”⁷³ After he begged the Virgin to return – he wished to see her again despite the fact that he knew he would lose his vision completely – she answered the prayers of the cleric and appeared before him a second time. Instead of putting out his second, still-

⁷² Peter of Limoges, *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, 181.

⁷³ The passage continues: “And he begged the Blessed Virgin for a long time to reveal herself to him once again so that he could look at her entirely, at least with his remaining eye, wishing to be deprived of both eyes in order to gaze upon her once more. Then the angel was sent to him again and said, ‘My Lady, whose messenger I am, sends word to you: “Friend, why do you seek more? Do you want to be deprived of your remaining eye by seeing me once again?”’ He said to the angel, ‘By all means, sir, even if I had a thousand eyes, I would choose to lose them for all time so that I could see her completely.’ The angel said to him, ‘And she who is most merciful sends word to you that you’ll see her again, and you won’t lose your remaining eye at all, but rather you’ll actually recover the lost one.’ And this is what happened not much later, for once again the gentlest Virgin appeared and revealed herself to him to be seen and contemplated and she restored his lost eye to him.” Ibid., 182.

seeing, eye, however, the Virgin restored sight to his blinded eye. Although Peter concludes from this that the Virgin's beauty must be glorious and delightful to see with one's eyes, such a story carries larger implications for the functioning of both carnal and spiritual sight.⁷⁴ The glory of divine illumination, here the sight of the Virgin Mary, overpowers the physical eye, leaving it unable to see the weaker light of this world (which is no longer noble enough to be seen with the same eye that had seen the divine, according to this tale). Yet the story also emphasizes that great devotion to and desire for Mary, or in Margherita's case, the crucified Christ, is rewarded with the restitution of sight.

It is thus likely that Giunta was not only aware of perspectivist optics, but also that he was making use of the science in his conception of Margherita's mystical experience. This applied on a physical level, in which the species of the bloodied crucifix traveled to the saint's eyes and caused her to transmute into its own likeness, as well as on a spiritual level, where intense meditation upon Christ's wounds resulted in the further assimilation of her soul to Christ. In framing the episode in such terms, Giunta asserted to his readers (and listeners) that the violently-rendered crucifix in his own convent had the ability to facilitate *imitatio Christi* and to help them conform to Christ as well.

THE FRANCISCAN DEVOTIONS OF AN *ALTER FRANCISCUS*

A large part of Giunta's task in writing the *Legenda* was to assert Margherita's "Franciscan-ness," and thus to place her within the growing pantheon of Franciscan luminaries. To do so, Giunta explicitly likens Margherita to Francis throughout his text. In the *Legenda*'s opening lines, Christ refers to her as *paupercula*, little poor one, which

⁷⁴ Peter writes: "From this we can judge how great the glorious Virgin's beauty is and how delightful it is to see her with one's eyes." Ibid.

is a feminized version of the epithet often used in reference to Francis in hagiographical texts.⁷⁵ Throughout Christ's dialogues with Margherita, Giunta glorified the Order's founder: Christ asserted that Francis sits with him in heaven, that he is not only the foremost intercessor for Margherita, but also a most powerful role model, whose example she should follow above all. Giunta's Margherita emulated the order's founder in every way – in renouncing her former life of sin and performing public penance; in her extreme asceticism and sleeping on a hard earthen bed with a stone pillow beneath her head; in tending to the sick and giving alms to the poor, even the clothes off her own back when she had nothing else to give; in her devotion to the Eucharist; most importantly, in her deep love for the suffering Christ of the Passion, for his wounds, and his blood. In fact, Giunta saw Margherita as such an embodiment of Franciscan ideals that, in the text of the *vita*, Christ informed her that she was the light of the third order of the three founded by Francis, that of the penitents.⁷⁶ In this way, her biographer placed her in a direct lineage with saints Francis and Clare, who are the lights of the first and second orders respectively.

Given Margherita's continuous and faithful mirroring of Francis's example, Giunta's readers would have been primed to understand Margherita's transformation before the image of Christ on the cross as an echo of the Stigmatization. This episode, which, by means of making manifest his perfect imitation of Christ won Francis the title of *alter Christus*, was well known through its narration in Bonaventure's life of St.

⁷⁵ Christ asks Margherita, "Quid vis, paupercula?" *Legenda*, 1.10. The appellation "pauperculus" is first applied directly to Francis in the *Life of Saint Francis*, written in the first half of the thirteenth century by the Franciscan Julian of Speyer: "Progressus igitur a monasterio supradicto pauperculus Iesu Christi, veniens que in civitatem cui nomen Eugubium..." *Vita sancti Francisci* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2015), cap. 2, par. 11, l. 6

⁷⁶ "...quia tu es tertia lux in ordine dilecti mei Francisci concessa: nam in ordine fratrum minorum ipse est prima lux, in ordine monialium beata Clara secunda, et tu in ordine penitentium tertia." Giunta Bevegnati, *Legenda*, 10.287-90.

Francis and its depiction in numerous frescoes and panel paintings across Tuscany and Umbria.⁷⁷ Bonaventure characterizes Francis's Stigmatization in terms of images and assimilation. He designates Francis's vision atop Mount La Verna as a seraph bearing the image of a crucified man (*effigies hominis crucifixi*), which imprinted into his body the likeness of that image (*signorum impressit effigiem*).⁷⁸ The biographer summarizes the experience by describing the saint as having been transformed into Christ's image (*in eandem imagine transformavit amantem*).⁷⁹ He even places the transmuted Francis in direct association with paintings and sculptures made by craftsmen: the image of Christ that Francis bore was depicted not on tablets of either stone or wood, made by human hands; rather, his body was engraved by the finger of the living God himself.⁸⁰

Bonaventure thus describes the Stigmatization as an act of artistic production: the image of Christ, through an image of Christ, was engraved into Francis's body by God the artist, using his finger as his burin.

In a 2006 essay, Hans Belting took up the issue of Francis's body as image.⁸¹

Although he primarily argues against the notion that the saint's body became an image in and of itself and asserts instead that it was translated into an artistic medium that was able to carry the image of the Crucified, Belting does refer to Francis's transformation as a *Bildwerdung*, becoming an image, stating that Francis was himself a viewer of the image

⁷⁷ *Legenda maior sancti Francisci* (Turnhout: Brepols Publisher, 2013). Dieter von der Nahmer argues in his recent publication that establishing the perception of Francis as a new Christ was the intention of those writing about him after his death (i.e. the *Legend atrium Sociorum*), but not of the saint himself. He rather saw himself as following Christ, not becoming (like) him; von der Nahmer argues that this is supported by the fact that Francis hid his wounds from others. See *Der Heilige und sein Tod: Sterben im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2013), 186.

⁷⁸ *Legenda maior sancti Francisci*. (13. 3. 5-6, 18).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* (13. 5. 1).

⁸⁰ "se cum ferens crucifixi effigiem non in tabulis lapideis vel ligneis manu figuratam artificis sed in carnis membris descriptam digito dei vivi." *Ibid.* (13.5.3-4).

⁸¹ "Franziskus. Der Körper als Bild," in *Bild und Körper im Mittelalter*, ed. Raphaële Preisinger Kristin Marek, Marius Rimele, Katrin Kärcher (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006).

whose image he became.⁸² Either the true image of Christ was imprinted within and made visible through the medium that was Francis' body (thus making him a living icon, as Belting offered), or Francis himself became the image of Christ, or at least an image of Christ's image.

Margherita's visionary experience, too, can be explained as a *Bildwerdung*. Contemplating the grisly image of Christ suffering on the cross, Margherita lost all her vital signs – the color in her cheeks drained, her pulse disappeared, she could not speak or see or move; she was frozen in the form of the crucifix before her. This transformation was, in a sense, a temporary loss of life that turned her into a sculpture akin to the one whose likeness she assumed. It was, however, as different from Francis' metamorphosis as it actually recalled it. While Margherita became the frozen image of a physical and lifeless image of Christ, Francis was transformed by an image in a vision into a living likeness of it or of its prototype, the crucified Christ himself. To some degree this difference can be attributed to gender. Expectations for the use of images by men and women in devotional practices differed: while women and novices were permitted to rely on images to focus their prayers and meditation, it was held that experienced friars should bypass the physical image and achieve an imageless devotion. Of course the issue was not that simple, and there were different opinions on the matter in circulation.⁸³

Images were important to Margherita and Francis alike in their devotional practices, and this is emphasized throughout Francis' *vita*.⁸⁴ When praying before a crucifix in the dilapidated church of San Damiano, Francis heard the crucifix speak to

⁸² "Franziskus ist seinerseits Betrachter, aber ein solcher, der zum Bild dessen geworden ist, den er betrachtet," *ibid.*, 24.

⁸³ Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, especially Chapter 4, 197-232. 197-232.

⁸⁴ Rosalind Brooke, *The Image of St. Francis: Responses to Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 160.

him, instructing him to rebuild the church.⁸⁵ Another time he commanded his fellow friars to stop and pray before any crucifix they come across in their travels. More than just textual references, though, contemporary works of art also emphasize the significant role of devotional images, and one has to look no farther than the Franciscan mother church in Assisi to confirm this. Not only are the walls and windows filled with painted images, but a number of those painted scenes show the use of images in both devotional and liturgical (and paraliturgical) contexts. The Life of St Francis cycle pictures his prayers before the San Damiano crucifix (figure 21), as well as the use of large panel paintings of Christ on the cross, of the Virgin and Child, and of the Archangel Michael suspended from the top of the rood screen so that a lay congregation could gaze upon them during the Mass or a preacher might refer to them during a sermon (figure 22).

Although no physical image is mentioned in Bonaventure's narration of the Stigmatization, by the time Giunta was writing the *Legenda*, at least one renowned artist had included a painted cross in a painting of the scene. On the Louvre panel, Giotto painted the arm of a contemporary painted cross, just visible within the opening of the chapel to the bottom right of the scene (figures 23 and 23a).⁸⁶ Although what is pictured before Francis's eyes is clearly the six-winged seraph bearing the image of the crucified Christ (although without the actual cross), the inclusion of the painted crucifix below may

⁸⁵ For the speaking crucifix of San Damiano ("imaginem crucifixi"), see Saint Bonaventure, *Legenda maior sancti Francisci*, 2.1.4-11.

⁸⁶ Most scholars have dated Giotto's panel to 1295-1300. In his most recent publication on Giotto, Frank Büttner relies on Michael Victor Schwarz's new chronology, which puts the fashioning of this panel in late 1307-early 1308. *Giotto und die Ursprünge der neuzeitlichen Bildauffassung*, 86. According to Vasari, this panel was hung in Pisa's church of San Francesco, on a pillar next to the high altar. See Giorgio Vasari, Julia Conway Bondanella, and Peter Bondanella, *The Lives of the Artists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 20. Although we have no record of Giunta's having traveled to Pisa, it is not impossible that he could have seen this panel or other representations of the Stigmatization closer to home that included the image of the painted cross in the chapel. Even if Giunta never saw such a painting, however, the contemporaneous appearance of Giotto's panel and Giunta's insistence on the active role of the physical image of Christ in Margherita's mystical experience in his *Legenda* is evidence of a broader current in Tuscan Franciscan circles.

imply that previous meditation on the *croce dipinta* had led to the physical transformation we witness as the central scene. Giotto's inclusion of the crucifix arm, in any case, certainly makes a statement about the importance for contemplation of images of the suffering Christ.

Images, however, did more than just intensify devotions to the point of activating spiritual seeing. Both Giunta's allusion to the Stigmatization and Giotto's painting of the scene suggest that it was the sight of a physical image with bodily eyes that caused Francis to receive Christ's five wounds in his own body; they suggest that his experience was engineered through the mechanisms of vision. In the Louvre panel painting, Giotto depicted Francis in the by-then-typical manner, on bended knee, with his hands raised as if in surprise. While the artist left no question that Francis and the visionary image of Christ each return the other's gaze, he also made no attempt to visualize the species traveling to Francis's eyes. Instead, as one would expect from a painting of the Stigmatization, the golden, light-filled rays connect the wounds on the crucified corpus to their corresponding places on Francis' body. Unlike earlier depictions of the scene, however, here right hand connects with right hand, left with left, the respective rays crossing in the golden air between the two figures. This closely aligns with Bacon's description of the species' journey from its object into the recipient: as the species multiply through the eye and towards the *sensus communis* in the brain, they must cross each other in the optic nerves, so that the species entering the right eye crosses to the left ventricle in the brain, and that of the left eye to the right ventricle, but only after the two nerves intersect at the common nerve (figure 24).⁸⁷ Discussing Giotto's practical application of optical theories to his craft, Frank Büttner, suggests that here we are seeing

⁸⁷ *Perspectiva*, 22-27. (I.2.1).

a “*multiplicatio stigmatum*” rather than a “*multiplicatio specierum*,” that the artist reappropriated perspectivist ideas about the multiplication of species in order to make visible Francis’s Stigmatization.⁸⁸ Hans Belting puts forward another suggestion: clearly Francis’s hands, feet, and revealed side are not his eyes, where the species both alters and wounds, but perhaps here we are to understand Francis’s entire body as a giant eye.⁸⁹ Like Margherita, Francis had a nature elevated above those of others and therefore the species sent into his eyes had the miraculous effect of perfectly assimilating his body to their agent, the image of Christ. Thus Francis, too, was transformed into the image of an image.

In this discussion, I have thus far asserted that Giunta conceived of Margherita’s transformation as the result of vision and that he fashioned her life to closely reflect that of St. Francis so that she might be unequivocally seen as a Franciscan saint. Further clarification is now needed regarding the referent of Margherita’s assimilation. If the Cortona saint was imitating Francis in his imitation of Christ, whose likeness did she assume when she became frozen in the shape of the crucifix?

Margherita’s devotion to Christ’s Passion and to the crucifix itself was in emulation of Francis, but this does not negate the fact that she truly loved Christ deeply and felt a genuine need to please him. Her imitation of Francis was, in fact, also an *imitatio Christi*, since Francis had worked to model his own life on Christ’s and was then made an *alter Christus* as a result of his perfection in that endeavor. Therefore behind

⁸⁸ Giotto und die Ursprünge der neuzeitlichen Bildauffassung, 87.

⁸⁹ “Franziskus,” 36. This would not be the first time that Francis’s body was referred to as embodying a single sensory organ. In Thomas Celano’s *First Life of St Francis*, Francis was said to have preached so much and so passionately that he “made a tongue of his whole body.” See Brooke, *The Image of St. Francis*, 47. Klaus Krüger offers another explanation for the rays in his 1992 volume; he suggests that the rays demonstrated the physical impressing of Christ’s wounds into Francis’s body, thus emphasizing the actual and miraculous nature of the event. *Der frühe Bildkult des Franziskus in Italien: Gestalt- und Funktionswandel des Tafelbildes im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1992), 177-178.

Francis as model stood Christ as the ultimate exemplar.⁹⁰ Within this framework, where saints were reflections of Christ and were strung together across time and existence, not only could an immediate exemplar (a saint) mirror the ultimate exemplar (Christ), but so too could an image. In his analysis of Henry Suso's *Exemplar*, Jeffrey Hamburger relays a story told by Suso: on a visit to the cathedral of Constance, Suso's mother meditated upon a sculptural Deposition group. Studying this image allowed her to contemplate Christ's great suffering, which caused her to feel in her own body the sorrows of the Virgin and resulted in her falling gravely ill. She remained sick in her bed until Good Friday, when, at the hour of None, she died. In much the same way Giunta constructed Margherita's story, Suso aligned his mother's mystical experience and death with the suffering and expiration of Christ, filtered first through Mary's grief.⁹¹ As it is a parallel construction, we can therefore understand Margherita's imitation of Francis as a filter for her imitation of Christ. Her story is much like that of Suso's mother, whose contemplation of an image caused an intense conformity to the Virgin and then to Christ.

The crucifix itself is also an important part of this equation. If, as I argue, Giunta did understand vision to be the cause of Margherita's transformation, then it was to the wretched and bloodied crucifix in the oratory of San Francesco that the saint assimilated.⁹² Her dedication to the image of Christ crucified may have been Francis-like, but it was certainly the image of Christ that hung before her and sent transformative

⁹⁰ This model was true for all saints, whose lives were understood as reflections of Christ's own. Hamburger examines one instance of this layering of exemplars in an essay on Henry Suso's *Exemplar*. "Medieval Self-fashioning: Authorship, Authority, and Autobiography in Suso's *Exemplar*," in *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 233-278.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁹² To some extent, this raises the question of divine presence in the sculpted object, which would have the effect of conflating image and prototype. The significance of such a conflation is that in assimilating to the image of Christ's image, Margherita would simultaneously assimilate to the likeness of Christ himself. See Chapter 2 for a deeper discussion on the relationship between material image and prototype.

species into her eyes causing her to conform to its likeness. The pain she felt during this experience, the shape her body assumed, the timing of events – all of these echo Christ's death on the cross, and not Francis' receiving of the Stigmata.

THE “FRANCISCAN-NESS” OF IMAGES IN DEVOTIONS

Margherita's conforming to the crucifix created the echo of Francis' experience that Giunta needed in order to advance image-based devotion as an essential, and at its core, Franciscan means of pursuing *imitatio Christi*. Defining the role images played in devotional practices – for lay and religious, men and women – was a contentious issue, and daily practice often differed from written opinions. While many championed an imageless devotion, particularly for male religious, some, particularly in the mendicant orders, saw the benefit of using images.⁹³ That physical sight is necessary to move to a higher, spiritual sight is fundamentally a perspectivist stance, made clear in Bacon's justification of the science of optics, where he claims that it is through vision that divine secrets and works can be revealed.

Giunta positioned himself squarely on the side of image use by making explicit that Margherita's meditations took place before a crucifix, as well as that it was the sight of that crucifix that caused her transformation. Not only did he encourage his readers to pray before images of the suffering Christ and, by extension, other devotional images, but he also pointed them specifically to the crucifix in his own church by claiming for it the power to assimilate its viewers to the likeness of Christ. Perhaps even more important, though, by alluding to Francis's devotion to the crucifix and his Stigmatization

⁹³ Again, see Chapter 2, in which I discuss the ambivalence that characterized late-medieval stances on devotional images.

throughout Margherita's *vita*, Giunta forcefully asserted that image-based devotions were intrinsically Franciscan, exemplified by the order's founder himself.

The fact that that other hagiographers and theologians did not necessarily agree with Giunta becomes apparent in the case of the Beata Vanna of Orvieto, a tertiary of the Dominican order. Vanna's biographer, most likely her spiritual adviser, wrote her *vita* some twenty years after her 1306 death.⁹⁴ Vanna's life, as constructed by the author of her *Legenda*, in many ways echoes Margherita's. Vanna was known for her charitable actions and her intense devotion to the Eucharist, and she focused much of her energy on contemplating Christ's Passion.⁹⁵ In writing this *vita*, the author seems more interested in providing his readers with a model of sanctity and of exemplary human behavior than in historical accuracy; he shaped Vanna as a model to be both venerated and imitated. In Book Five of his *Legenda*,⁹⁶ he described one of Vanna's visionary experiences that closely echoed Margherita's: in contemplation of Christ's cruel suffering, "her spirit became absorbed in the bitterness of the passion, losing the use of her own senses, her body extended in the way of the cross, rigid and pale and insensible."⁹⁷ The author further specified that she froze so thoroughly, with one foot placed over the other, that her limbs would have broken or shattered before they could have been moved.⁹⁸ Like

⁹⁴ Vanna died on 23 July 1306, as her death is recorded in communal documents, but the date of her *vita* is less certain. A note was written by a fifteenth-century hand on the back cover of one early copy of the *vita*, which originated in the convent of San Domenico in Orvieto. The note offers: "Hanc legendam compilavit venerabilis pater frater Iacobus Scalza Urbevetanus de parochial Sancti Martini," and then inscribes 1323 as the date for the completion of the text. Emore Paoli and Luigi G. G. Ricci, *La Legenda di Vanna da Orvieto* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto medioevo, 1996), 6.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 5.20.

⁹⁶ Whether coincidental or not, it is worth noting that the ordering of topics and numbering of chapters largely correspond in both saints' lives. In both cases, the fifth book is dedicated to the woman's devotion to the Passion.

⁹⁷ "...spiritu in amaritudine passionis absorto, sensuum proprio usu carens, corpus in modum crucis extensum, rigidum et pallidum et insensibile..." Paoli and Ricci, *La Legenda di Vanna da Orvieto*, 5.20.

⁹⁸ "Pes vero alteri pedi superpositus et alia membra extensa tanta immobilitate fixa manebant, quod membra singula potuissent incidi vel frangi potius quam moveri." Ibid., 5.22.

Margherita, she was seen by a crowd within her own church, San Domenico in Orvieto, and this later filled her with anxiety; like the Cortona saint, Vanna remained frozen in the shape of the crucifix until “the beginning of the night” – alluding to the hour of Christ’s own death.⁹⁹ Despite the close parallels between the stories of the two women’s mystical transformations, they differ significantly in one important way: Vanna’s biographer made no attempt to place her in front of an image (physical or otherwise), in fact he never even mentions sight. He emphasizes her loss of senses generally, using the words *sensuum* and *insensibile*, but offers no reference, like Giunta’s, to the *extrinsecum visum*. This omission is even more striking if we consider that the church of San Domenico, where Vanna contemplated Christ’s Passion, also houses a battered and bloodied carved *crucifixus dolorosus* (figure 2). Whereas there is no way definitely to place Vanna in front of this image, it is certainly possible that the sculpture was present in San Domenico already when Vanna’s biographer was writing his *Legenda*.¹⁰⁰

Vanna’s biographer chose not to mention the expressive and gory crucifix in his church when he described Vanna’s visionary experience, despite the fact that he, and maybe even Vanna as well, could have seen it daily, even prayed before it. Instead, he described Vanna’s transformation as entirely independent of any images, thus touting imageless devotions. He conceived of Vanna’s experience in a manner quite different from the way in which Giunta conceived of Margherita’s. Instead of a metamorphosis resulting from the process of vision, Vanna’s was caused by her love-fueled contemplations; this was more commonly found in contemporary reports of mystical

⁹⁹ “...et sic cum Christo in cruce confixa usque ad noctic initium permanebat.” Ibid., 5.23.

¹⁰⁰ De Francovich dates this crucifix to c. 1285-95. “L’origine,” 179.

experiences.¹⁰¹ As Bonaventure himself famously asserted, “The power of love transforms the lover into the image of the beloved.”¹⁰²

CONCLUSION

Giunta’s constructing of Margherita’s mystical experience within a framework of optical science was extraordinary. He described an alternate route by which his charge assimilated to her suffering Savior without negating the usual path through the love of Christ, for Margherita certainly burned with such love. And at the center of his construction lay the powerful, disfigured, and bloodied crucifix that then hung in the oratory of his church. He showed his readers that this physical image of Christ on the cross was central to Margherita’s daily devotions, that her astonishing bodily transformation occurred before it, and that it was to the crucifix’s likeness that she assimilated. More than situate the crucifix within Margherita’s already-burgeoning cult, an act that would itself draw pilgrims and local devotees to the saint into San Francesco, Giunta presented the image as a tool that could help his readers in their pursuit of *imitatio Christi*. He intended to shape its successive reception by highlighting not only its arresting imagery, but also its devotional cachet. Perhaps drawing on the theories of Roger Bacon and the moralizing expositions of Peter of Limoges, Giunta encouraged his readers to tap into the crucifix’s power through a process that began with physical seeing. Like Margherita, they, too, could effect their own assimilation to the crucified Christ through contemplation of the representation’s violent imagery. The evocation of

¹⁰¹ As Hamburger points out here, the love of Christ that would lead to the soul’s assimilation to him was often characterized as the wounding gaze of Song of Songs 4:9, “Thou hast wounded my heart, sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes.” Hamburger further explains that the single eye represented contemplative love; it stood for a process of interior sight that utilized Augustine’s *oculis cordis*. See *Nuns as Artists*, especially 128ff.

¹⁰² *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae: Opera Omnia*, vol. IX (Florence: Quaracchi, 1901), 695.

Francis's life in Giunta's descriptions further asserted the potency of the *crucifixus dolorosus*: Francis had also undergone a transformation before a crucifix, in his case into the perfect image of Christ. Giunta's narrative thus extols the importance of the physical image, and particularly of his own violently-rendered image, in Franciscan devotional practices. He fashioned Margherita into a role model whose devotion to and imitation of Christ was more accessible, more achievable, than Francis' example, and offered her own devotional tool – the bloody crucifix of San Francesco – as the means to follow in her footsteps.

4. BEYOND BLOOD: THE *CRUCIFIXUS DOLOROSUS* AND CHRIST'S TRUE BEAUTY

INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters, I have explored the ways in which the twisted bodies and bleeding wounds of the *crucifixa dolorosi* provided viewers with opportunities to consider critically the act of seeing, suggesting that corporeal sight played an instrumental role in the devotional and spiritual effectiveness of the violent crucifixes. In this chapter, I argue that no matter how great the spiritual benefits of physical sight, the *crucifixa dolorosi* demanded more than just physical gazing from their viewers. Although there was much to gain from the viewer's bodily eyes grasping the carved and polychromed displays of the extreme violence Christ endured during his Passion, such vision was and could only be a preliminary step toward true understanding and spiritual betterment. The viewer needed to move beyond the limits of corporeal vision to "see" the truth, which was not itself physically visible but remained hidden within or beyond the perceptible exterior, and was often at odds with what could be seen. Christ was known to be "the most beautiful among the sons of men," (Ps. 44:3), but he appeared on the cross with "no beauty that we should desire him...despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows," (Is. 53:2-3). He was the Son of God, co-eternal in his divinity, but had died a brutal, human death. Just as Christ appeared different from what he was (and is), his sculpted image also embodied paradoxes. How could a medieval beholder find Christ's beauty in the battered and bloodied wood corpus? How could he or she see past the vivid depiction of Christ's dying moments to the deeper but invisible truth of his divinity? I contend that even though the imagery of these crucifixes denies bodily eyes any perception of such

hidden truths, it simultaneously invites viewers to “look” beyond, under, or within such a sculpture’s external shell in order to “see,” or, more accurately, to *know* them.¹

In the pages that follow, I argue that the crucifixes’ violent visual details, rather than simply enabling corporeal seeing to bring about spiritual growth, actually facilitate a dedicated viewer’s movement from bodily to spiritual vision. I elucidate how these crucifixes’ effusive displays of blood pouring out from gaping wounds and, conversely, their unexpectedly subtle and gentle details trigger in that viewer an awareness of a hidden interior truth to be sought out. To search for what was not visible was to call into question what was; in the case of the *crucifixi dolorosi*, this meant confronting Christ’s manifest deformity and looking for his true beauty.

As Erich Auerbach and Hans Robert Jauss have argued, low or ugly things could be vehicles for expressing the high or beautiful in the Middle Ages. For Auerbach, the concept is epitomized by the *sermo humilis*, a text written in the low style that nevertheless expresses lofty concepts. Based on his study of scripture and Augustine’s writings, Auerbach asserts that “the lowly, or humble, style is the only medium in which such sublime mysteries [of scripture] can be brought within reach of men.”² Jauss, who also makes use of mostly written sources (medieval romance novels and poetry), discusses the *humilitas passionis*, that is, how Christ’s passion broke the antique

¹ The idea of seeing and seeing beyond has been explored by several scholars in recent years, for example, essays in such volumes as *The Mind’s Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey H. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché (Princeton, NJ: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University in association with Princeton University Press, 2006); *Looking Beyond: Visions, Dreams, and Insights in Medieval Art and History*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, NJ: Index of Christian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, in association with Princeton University Press, 2010).

² “Sermo Humilis,” in *Literary Language and its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, *Bollingen Series* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 51.

conventions that tightly bound the good to beauty and the evil to ugliness.³ He argues that through Christ's deformity on the cross it became possible for an ugly exterior to conceal a beautiful interior that only true believers could see. Furthermore, according to Jauss, ugliness came to signify the promise of a beautiful, eternal future.⁴ The premise that the ugly may reveal the beautiful forms the starting point for my inquiry; however, I complicate Jauss' argument in particular by calling into question what it means to suggest that true believers were able to "see" Christ's beauty even in his ugliness. I explore the specific means by which the *crucifigi dolorosi* make hidden truths manifest and divine mysteries accessible to their viewers. Assuming a heterogeneous audience for these crucifixes, I not only argue that they do so, but also show how they do it on various levels, from simply making manifest the nature of Christ's sacrifice by showing him broken and dying on the cross to abstracting the truth of his beauty and, ultimately, the beauty of his sacrifice. In this way, the crucifixes prove themselves to be complex and polyvalent works, appropriate for both the laity and the clergy.

This chapter is composed of two main sections that together demonstrate how the violent visual details of the *crucifigi dolorosi* are able to reveal divine truths. The first examines Christ's paradoxical disfigurement on the cross. Delving into medieval conceptions of beauty, and particularly of Christ's beauty, it engages with and builds on

³ "Die klassische und die christliche Rechtfertigung des Hässlichen in mittelalterlicher Literatur," in *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste*, ed. Hans Robert Jauss (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1968), 143-168.

⁴ Paul Michel takes a different approach to the intricate connection of ugliness and beauty in the Middle Ages in *'Formosa deformitas'. Bewältigungsformen des Häßlichen in mittelalterlicher Literatur*, Studien zur Germanistik, Anglistik und Komparatistik, 57 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1976). He asks how medieval thinkers "deal with the ugly," and "reinterpret the ugly as the beautiful," (3) and, ultimately suggesting that ugliness was antithetical to the medieval world view, he concludes that its conversion to the beautiful was effectively the neutralizing of that which was alien and uncomfortable (346).

an expansive literature on medieval aesthetics.⁵ The works of especially Umberto Eco and Mary Carruthers provide an essential foundation for my own discussion. Eco, like his predecessor de Bruyne, generally approaches medieval beauty as an anagogical and fundamentally theological concept. Carruthers builds a new framework for examining medieval concepts of beauty, conceiving of the term as one based in rhetoric and persuasion; in contrast to Eco and de Bruyne, she is singularly concerned with how medieval writers considered beauty as it pertained to physical objects and the world around them, not as an abstract concept. This chapter, like Carruthers' recent book, is interested in beauty only insofar as it can help explain specific imagery of specific objects; in a way, it also conceives of beauty as a concept of persuasion. However, in a manner more akin to the earlier studies, I aim in this chapter to understand how non-sensible beauty can be perceived by means of the sensible, that is to say, how a physical and not beautiful object can make manifest divine beauty. Therefore I examine the writings of Bonaventure and Aquinas, whose approaches to the issue of Christ's beauty mark a shift in how Christ's beauty was understood, from a quality that needed to be seen and sensually appreciated to one that was hidden within and, at least during his Passion, only intellectually apprehensible. Taken in combination with each of their image theories, their stances on Christ's beauty make clear that an image of Christ must partake in his beauty through a sequence of participation.

⁵ Edgar De Bruyne, *The Esthetics of the Middle Ages*, trans. Eileen B. Hennessy (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1969); Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Hugh Bredin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988); Rosario Assunto, *Die Theorie des Schönen im Mittelalter* (Cologne: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1963); Mariateresa Fumagalli Beonio Brocchieri, *L'estetica medievale*, Lessico dell'estetica, 14 (Bologna: Il mulino, 2002); Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). The early writings on medieval aesthetics, especially De Bruyne, but Assunto as well, understands the theory of beauty as anagogical, and therefore art is beautiful only insofar as it participates in a higher (divine) beauty and refers beyond itself to that divinity.

The crucifixes prompt their viewers to look beyond their carved deformity in search for invisible truths that hide not inside the sculptures themselves, but rather inside of Christ. Their striking imagery therefore echoes the contemporary concern about inside and outside, knowable and perceivable, that underlies the late-medieval interrogations of the Eucharist. The chapter's second section therefore examines the theological debates on the nature of the Eucharist and the particulars of its transformation by consecration. As theologians questioned the relationship between what could be seen in its elements and what was substantially present, they were able to better define the relationship between what was visible and what was true. The definition, although never formally concretized in this period, carries immense implications for the ritual and the expectations around the Eucharist, as well as for the creation and perceptions of contemporary devotional images. Since Christ's true body and blood are concealed beneath the (visible) accidents of the bread and wine, such divine truths as Christ's true beauty can be similarly concealed by an image of his deformity. The *crucifigi dolorosi*, as this part of the chapter suggests, honed their viewers' abilities to engage in a spiritual, or even sacramental, mode of seeing, that is, to use the intellect, or spiritual eye, to see the truth that the physical eyes cannot.⁶ Perhaps by means of intense visual contemplation leading to spiritual rather than sacramental communion, the crucifixes' viewers could reap spiritual benefits, even if such benefits could not match or fully substitute for those received through physical ingestion of the consecrated host.

THE BEAUTY IN/OF CHRIST'S BLOOD

⁶ This concept of a sacramental mode of seeing echoes Aden Kumler's suggestion in *Translating Truth*, 105.

Theologians in the late thirteenth century probed Christ's deformed appearance on the cross, but, unlike their predecessors in earlier periods, they no longer looked to excuse or justify it.⁷ Instead, they were concerned with locating beauty within the deformity. Bonaventure's mystical writings are especially important in this context because they draw innovative connections among concepts that had previously been kept separate, their relationships left undeveloped. Bonaventure fashions around the effusive amounts of blood Christ shed in his passion a tightly-linked triad embracing the concepts of deformity, beauty, and salvation. By making the ties between these entities explicit, he changes what it means to speak of Christ's "beauty" on the cross, effectively internalizing beauty and hiding it from view.

When describing Jesus raised up on the cross in his *Lignum Vitae*, the Seraphic Doctor calls upon his own soul to look (*vide*) at him who is simultaneously "blessed by God above all" and "completely submerged in the waters of suffering, from the bottom of his feet to the crown of his head."⁸ Christ, crowned by thorns and stripped of his clothes, appears leprous from the bruises and wounds inflicted upon him.⁹ Despite his disfigured appearance, however, Bonaventure recognizes Christ as beautiful:

Then the most beautiful among the sons of man, his eyes darkening and his cheeks becoming pale, appeared deformed for the sons of man, having been made a holocaust of the sweetest scent in the sight of the glorious father so that he might avert his anger from us.¹⁰

⁷ For sermons and tracts on this subject from earlier in the thirteenth century and even earlier, see Sara Lipton, "'The Sweet Lean of His Head': Writing about Looking at the Crucifix in the High Middle Ages," *Speculum* 80, no. 4 (2005).

⁸ "Vide nunc, anima mea, quomodo is qui est super omnia benedictus Deus, ab imo pedis usque ad verticem totus in aquas passionis demergitur..." *Opera Omnia*, VIII, 78.

⁹ "Coronatus etenim spinis, sub crucis onere dorsum curvare iubetur et suam ipsius portare ignominiam, et ad locum deductus supplicii, veste nudatur, ut, ex flagellorum ictibus per dorsum et latera carnis patefactis livoribus atque scissuris, videretur quasi leprosus." Ibid.

¹⁰ "Tunc formosus prae filiis hominum, caligantibus oculis et pallentibus genis, pro filiis hominum deformis apparuit, factus holocaustum suavissimi odoris in conspectu paternae gloriae, ut averteret iram suam a nobis." Ibid., 79.

Bonaventure thus characterizes Christ's beauty as an essential attribute, unchanged by his clouded eyes, his ashen skin, and his deformed appearance. Bonaventure describes Christ's ugliness as enacted for the sake of humanity, his death as a burnt offering that smells sweet, *suavissimi odoris*, in the sight of the Lord.¹¹ His appearance does not match his essence just as he gives off a sweet smell and not the expected putrid odor of burnt flesh.

In his *Vitis mystica*, Bonaventure again mentions Christ's battered appearance, calling on his readers to pay careful attention. He urges them to study how their Savior was broken, deformed, destroyed.¹² "Where in such a crushed body can you find beauty?" he exclaims, only to counter that behind Christ's repulsive, external appearance, his internal beauty and glory remained.¹³ Those who relied on their bodily eyes alone, he continues, saw only a man on the cross who possessed neither beauty nor comeliness (Is. 53:2) and was despised in his deformity. Working within an Augustinian tradition, Bonaventure makes seeing Christ's beauty a test of faith in which only those who love Christ and who recognize that "from this deformity of our Redeemer flowed the price of

¹¹ Mary Carruthers discusses *suavis*, sweet, in her recent book, noting that while "sweet" is not considered within the theoretical category of beauty, it was a sensation that could lead to evaluation and persuasion, much in the same way as beauty: *The Experience of Beauty*, 89, 100. Also noteworthy is the crossing of the senses in this context, that God sees a sweet scent, rather than smells it. Although an in depth study of the senses in the Scholastic period is beyond the scope of this study, aesthetic theories of that period would suggest that beauty is something seen rather than smelled. Thomas Aquinas specifically wrote that "we call those things beautiful which are pleasing when they are seen." ("Pulchrum autem respicit vim cognoscitivam, pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent.") *Summae theologiae prima pars*, q.5, a.4, responsio ad argumentum 1, l.6.

¹² "Attendite vestrum manu fortem, quomodo contritus est; desiderabilem vestrum, quam miserabiliter deformatus est; pacificum vestrum, quomodo in bello peremptus est." *Opera Omnia*, VIII, 171.

¹³ "Ubi in corpore tam contrite decorum invenies? [...] Sed in dedecore extrinseco decorum simul et decus retinebat intrinsecus." Ibid.

our glory” can discern his true internal beauty.¹⁴ Importantly, the theologian uses the word *decor* here to signify salvation; it is the same word he uses frequently in reference to beauty, particularly Christ’s beauty. By reusing *decor* in this way, Bonaventure effectively redefines glory as beauty, salvation as beautiful.

Augustine discusses the appearance of Christ on the cross on several occasions. In his Exposition of Psalm 44, the Church Father emphasized that Christ assumed ugliness on account of his mercy:

Behold the bridegroom comes forth for us: let us love him. But if we find any ugliness in him, let us not love him. See how he found much filth and still loved us, but if we find any trace of ugliness in him, we should not love him. It is true that he himself put on the flesh so that it could be said of him, *we saw him and he had neither beauty nor comeliness*. But if you consider the mercy that made him so, he is beautiful even in deformity.¹⁵

Augustine here exclaims not only that one should love Christ despite his deformity, but also that one should find beauty in that deformity, since it was taken on for the love of humanity. In a sermon on the Old Testament, he connected Christ’s deformity with salvation and beauty even more strongly, thus establishing the reasoning that

Bonaventure would expound upon centuries later. Augustine wrote:

Christ made himself deformed on account of your faith; however he remains beautiful. He will be seen as the most beautiful among the sons of man after pilgrimage. However, in which way will he be seen by the faithful? And we saw him, and he had neither beauty nor comeliness, but his face was abject and his body deformed, this is his virtue, despised and deformed, a man covered in wounds and conscious of bearing infirmities. The deformity of Christ shapes you. For if he had not wished to be made deformed, you would not have recovered the form which you lost.

¹⁴ “Quia hunc speciosum forma prae filiis hominum viderunt homines in cruce, qui tantum exteriora intuentur, et videntur eum non habentem speciem neque decorem, sed facies eius quasi despecta et quasi deformis positio eius; de hac tamen deformitate Redemptoris nostri manavit pretium decoris nostri...” *ibid.*

¹⁵ “Ecce ipse sponsus procedat nobis: amemus illum; aut si invenerimus in eo aliquid foedi, non amemus. Ecce ipse invenit multa foeda, et amavit nos: si aliquid foedi invenerimus in eo, non amemus. Quia et hoc ipsum quod carnem indutus est, ut de illo etiam diceretur. *Vidimus eum, et non habebat speciem neque decorem*; si consideres misericordiam qua factus est, et ibi pulcher est.” In *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, CCSL, 38 (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols, 1961), 495.

Therefore, he hung deformed on the cross, but his deformity was our beauty.¹⁶

Although Augustine does not go so far as to equate beauty and salvation, he places them both in opposition to Christ's deformity and identifies that deformity as the cause of each.

Bonaventure follows Augustine's example, referring to Isaiah 53:2 in describing the appearance of Christ on the cross and insisting that Christ's disfiguration resulted in human salvation.¹⁷ However, from his mystical perspective, Bonaventure builds further upon this formula. He asserts not that Christ's deformity itself realized salvation, but that an aspect of (or even metonymy for) it – blood – was salvation's efficient cause. In the *Vitis mystica*, Bonaventure specifies that the price of salvation (and therefore of beauty), *pretium decoris nostri*, flowed out – *manavit* – from the deformity of the Redeemer.¹⁸

Throughout the *opusculum*, the theologian uses the verb *manare* to refer to Christ's blood, leading to the perhaps obvious but nonetheless important conclusion that he understands Christ's blood itself to be the price for salvation. In fact, he makes this point clearly later in the same treatise: "For the redemption of the servant, you poured out not a part, but all of your blood from large and myriad openings."¹⁹

By connecting *deformitas* with *decor* and *manare*, Bonaventure thus creates a chain in which Christ's beauty and blood and the redemption of humankind are all inextricably tied up in one another. His innovative way of treating these concepts moves

¹⁶ "Propter fidem tuam factus est deformis Christus, manet autem speciosus Christus. *Speciosus forma prae filiis hominum*, videbitur post peregrinationem. Modo autem fide qualis videtur? *Et vidimus eum, et non habebat speciem neque decorem, sed vultus eius abiectus, et deformis positio eius*, hoc est virtus eius, *despectus et deformis positio eius, homo in plaga positus, et sciens ferre infirmitates*. Deformitas Christi te format. Ille enim si deformis esse nolisset, tu formam quam perdidisti non recepisses. Pendebat ergo in cruce deformis, sed deformitas illius pulchritudo nostra erat." *Sermones de Vetere Testamento I-L*, CCSL, 41 (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols, 1961), 27.6, 364-365.

¹⁷ *Opera Omnia*, VIII, 169, 171.

¹⁸ See note 14.

¹⁹ "Pro redimendo servo non ex parte, sed totum sanguinem ex multis et largis foraminibus effudisti." *Opera Omnia*, VIII, 173.

each of them, by contrast with Christ's ugliness, which was strictly physical, to the interior. All three become *intrinsecus*, located within, and are each able to pour out, *manare*. Each is invisible but can be revealed, imperceptible but able to be known. For Bonaventure, all three can be apprehended through the love and imitation of Christ. The faithful who deform their own external bodies together with the deformed Christ, or perhaps allow themselves to suffer in this world, will also be reformed internally with the beautiful Christ.²⁰

We find this characterization of beauty as something inside and knowable (rather than perceivable) explicated even further and more systematically by Aquinas, whose concern for distinguishing between external appearance and internal truth is evident throughout his corpus. In the first part of his *Summa Theologica*, he characterizes the members of the Trinity, assigning eternity to the Father, beauty to Christ, and use to the Holy Spirit.²¹ "Species, however," he writes, "or beauty, has similitude with the characteristics of the son."²² *Species*, which he equates with *pulchritudo*, is thus an attribute of Christ that is essential to his being, not dependent on his (temporary, human) physical appearance at any given point in time. Yet elsewhere in the *Summa*, in qualifying his identification of the beautiful with the good, Aquinas states that "those things are called beautiful which are pleasing when they are seen."²³ How can both be true, especially in the moments in which Christ hung deformed on the cross? Unlike the good, which he relates to appetite and desire, Aquinas assigns the beautiful to knowledge,

²⁰ "Deformemur igitur et nos in corpore exterius cum deformato Iesu, ut reformemur interius cum formoso Iesu." Ibid., 171.

²¹ "Secundum igitur primam considerationem, qua consideratur absolute Deus secundum esse suum, sic sumitur appropriatio Hilarii, secundum quam aeternitas appropriatur patri, species filio, usus spiritui sancto." *Summae theologiae prima pars*, q.39, a.8, corpus, l.11.

²² "Species autem, sive pulchritudo, habet similitudinem cum propriis filii." Ibid., 1.39, a.8, corpus, l.19.

²³ "...pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent." Ibid., q.5, a.4, responsio ad argumentum 1, l.6.

to the *vis cognoscitiva*. It is a quality available to the intellect rather than the senses, even though it must be mediated by the senses since beauty is based in form.²⁴ It is the act of apprehension, of abstraction by the intellect, which allows beauty to create pleasure in those who see it.²⁵ In claiming that “those things are beautiful which are pleasing when they are seen,” Aquinas is not referring to what Umberto Eco has characterized as “psychological empathy,” nor is he stating even that beautiful things are pleasing to the eyes.²⁶ Rather, he is pointing to a system in which sensible stimulation is then abstracted and analyzed by the intellect. Thus things perceived can lead to knowledge of beauty.

If beauty, as defined by scholastic theologians, was not something perceivable, but rather something knowable, perhaps the task of the craftsman no longer demanded, as it had in earlier times, that he fashion an image of the Crucified that made manifest the beauty that was concealed by deformity. Instead, craftsmen were empowered to indicate such beauty through signs and visual cues that would allow viewers to apprehend it even though they could not see it. While the painters of contemporary *croci dipinte* continued to produce softer and more delicate portrayals of Christ on the cross, I argue that the makers of the *crucifigi dolorosi* took up the challenge to provide signs and signposts that would make Christ’s beauty accessible to the intellect and distinctively not to the senses. The *crucifigi dolorosi* were, as integral wholes, ugly; they manifested Isaiah’s man of sorrows to a degree not previously witnessed in medieval art. They evoked, as I have illustrated, strong and impassioned responses, a quality which on one level, Aquinas

²⁴ “And since knowing comes from likeness, while likeness has to do with form, beauty properly pertains to the rule of formal causes.” (“Et quia cognitio fit per assimilationem, similitudo autem respicit formam, pulchrum proprie pertinet ad rationem causae formalis.” Ibid., q.5, a.4, responsio ad argumentum 1, l.10-11.)

²⁵ Umberto Eco defines *apprehensio* as “a kind of seeing or looking which is mediated by the senses but is of an intellectually cognitive order, and which is both disinterested and yet produces a certain kind of pleasure.” *Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, 57-58. See also Wirth, “Structure et fonctions de l’image,” 48-49.

²⁶ *Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, 200.

argues, actually disqualifies them from being beautiful.²⁷ Their makers were able to signal beauty through overwhelming depictions of blood and smaller, subtler details that rewarded the intent gaze of a viewer with small flashes of visible beauty.

Simply looking at such a crucifix is enough to convince a viewer of its ugly, and at times horrifying, appearance. Their craftsmen carved Christ's wounds deeply, opening up a gash in his side and boring holes through his hands and feet so forcefully as to displace folds of skin above the nail heads. From these wounds, and in some cases from flagellation wounds and pores all over Christ's body as well, blood appears to flow. The craftsmen painted and also molded blood that looks as if it courses out from within the wood corpora in great torrents as well as in individuated drops. The blood of the crucifix in San Domenico in Orvieto, which seems at times to stream, sometimes to spurt, and sometimes to gush, provides a specific example. Flagellation wounds, characterized by a dark center within a bright red circle and three red rivulets dripping down, cover Christ's entire body – his chest, his feet, his cheeks and even eyelids (figure 2b). A wide stream of bright red flows down his side, having poured out from a yawning, semicircular wound, which also continues to pour out a tangible mass of individuated blood drops (figure 2a). Although neither Christ's left hand nor his right arm survives, the remaining left arm shows a similar cascade of blood smeared down his arm, past his elbow and trailing off in a narrow dribble that falls just short of his armpit (figure 2c). From the nail wound in Christ's feet, blood trickles over his toes onto the green cross, where it both spatters and streams in three S-shaped curves (figure 2d).

Although such a representation may evoke a reaction in the corporeal senses, it is not the sensuousness of the polychromed blood that can be understood as beautiful,

²⁷ Ibid., 186.

according to Aquinas' theory. Rather, only its intellectually apprehensible aspects can, the blood then functioning as both sign, signifying beauty directly, and signpost, pointing beyond to an interior and invisible beauty. The gesso, paint, and other such materials as wood chips or canvas used to fashion the blood that poured out of sculpted wounds resulted in vivid and convincing representations of Christ's bleeding body.²⁸ Such bright polychromy provided an accessible substitution for Christ's real blood, which obviously and necessarily remained absent. As both Bonaventure and Aquinas asserted, the historical, true blood of Christ could not exist on earth other than in the Eucharist. Had Christ's blood been superfluous to his being, having separated from his divinity, it might have then been left behind when he rose in glory, but in that case it could not have been a worthy price for salvation.²⁹ And had it not risen with him into Heaven and been glorified along with the rest of his hypostatic body, the wine on the altar could not transubstantiate into it when consecrated.³⁰ The Eucharist, however, despite containing the body and blood of Christ, was not regularly available to most of the laity.³¹ After the Fourth

²⁸ By "convincing" I suggest not that a viewer was "fooled" into thinking the wood corpus of a *crucifixus dolorosus* was a real body or that the red polychromy was real blood. Rather, I mean that it was immediately clear to a viewer that such polychromy represented blood and that it met the viewer's expectations of what blood must look like.

²⁹ Aquinas made this argument in his *Questione quodlibetales*, as discussed by Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 102, especially note 86.

³⁰ "Dicendum, quod absque dubio resurgit; cum vinum convertatur in Sacramento altaris in sanguinem, qui effusus est in remissionem peccatorum, et iste est sanguis habens speciem sanguinis. Unde non video, quomodo vere sanguis non resurrexerit in Christo; et si hoc, pari ratione et in quolibet alio. Et praeterea, numquid venae remanebunt vacuae?" Saint Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, IV, d.44, p.1, a.1, q.1. Even though theologians equated wine with blood, and they opposed this pairing to that of host and body, blood and wine were not always aligned, for example in the case of miracle hosts, where it was the bread that turned into blood and not the wine. Bynum discusses this in *Wonderful Blood*, 98.

³¹ The mechanisms by which Christ's body and blood occupy the elements of the Eucharist were hotly debated in the thirteenth century, as discussed in Gary Macy, "Reception of the Eucharist According to the Theologians: A Case of Diversity in the 13th and 14th Centuries," in *Treasures from the Storehouse: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999). Although the issue continued to be argued in the fourteenth century, it seems that after the condemnation of Aristotle in 1277, the Thomist position of transubstantiation overwhelmingly became the dominant position. See Stephen E. Lahey, "Late Medieval Eucharistic Theology," in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages*, ed. Gary Macy Ian Levy, Kristen van Ausdall (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 225. Miri Rubin discusses the availability

Lateran Council, laypersons were expected to take communion only once a year, and, although sight of the consecrated wafer came to be an important means of more frequent spiritual benefit, the real substance within the host was not available to the senses. The mouth could not taste the blood or body of Christ nor could the eyes see them.³²

Conversely, the blood-like red polychromy of the *crucifixi dolorosi* was emphatically and forcefully presented to corporeal sight. Through its similar appearance to blood (in form and not substance) and its visibility, it could stand in for Christ's absent blood and assume, in the eyes of medieval beholders, the significances and references made by the true substance.

While Christ's blood is equated with beauty due to its saving power by such theologians as Bonaventure, it has also been historically associated with beauty on a level we would consider more purely aesthetic. In her 2010 essay, "Blut im Flakon," Gia Toussaint considers several eleventh- and twelfth-century reliquaries of the Holy Blood, constructed of red textile and crystal vial, in the treasuries of German churches (figure 25).³³ These reliquaries, whose elements originated in an eastern (Byzantine and/or Islamic) context and were therefore exotic in western Europe, offer an example, in some ways very similar to the *crucifixi dolorosi*, of an object in which blood is considered

of the host and chalice to the laity in the Middle Ages in *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 147-155.

³² Tobias Frese discusses Aquinas' discussion and definition of Christ's presence in the consecrated host, offering a clear explanation of the difference and relationship between the visible species and Christ's invisible substance. *Aktual- und Realpräsenz: Das eucharistische Christusbild von der Spätantike bis ins Mittelalter* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2013), chapter VI, especially 254-256. Even in miraculous cases when those present at a Mass saw the Christ child or raw flesh in place of a host, theologians argued that such beholders still did not see the true substance of the Eucharist. What they saw was then, in fact, twice removed from that true substance, which remained hidden behind the bread that had been changed into an image of Christ by God himself. The change in the accidents did not effect the substance within. See Gary Macy, "Medieval Theology of the Eucharist and the Chapel of the Miracle Corporal," *Vivens Homo* 18, no. 1 (2007).

³³ "Blut im Flakon. Orientalische Flaschen zur Präsentation des Blutes Christi im Mittelalter," in *Blut. Die Kraft des ganz besonderen Saftes in Medizin, Literatur, Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Dominik Groß Christine Knust (Kassel: Kassel University Press, 2010).

beautiful by association and in which earthly materials come to stand in place of sacred blood. The textiles, believed to have soaked up drops of Christ's blood, are contained within rock crystal vials, through which their red color is visible. In their original contexts, the translucent flasks had contained perfumed oils or salves (beauty products), and they only became reliquaries when they arrived in the West, some as early as the eleventh century.³⁴ How such crystals were produced was unknown in the West, and this lent them a magnificence and ability to attest to the authenticity of the relic within them that went beyond their aesthetic value. They were therefore powerful containers and frames for viewing the textiles, which, though handsome in their own right, were not clearly visible as fabric through the crystal. Rather they could be perceived only as a red substance, since their color alone, and not their form or texture, was distinguishable.³⁵ Believed to have absorbed drops of the Holy Blood, the red fabrics themselves came to be important substitutes for that liquid, which was indistinguishable within the vials. Here again, we can see Christ's blood tied to beauty and an inner truth made visible.

The vivid red polychromy of the *crucifigi dolorosi* did not have the same aesthetic effect as textiles inside crystal vials. The gesso and paint lacked the delicacy and fineness of silk and rock crystal, and it was often painted crudely as spatter or surging streams or shaped into bulging or sticky drops (crude, however, is not the same as simplistic; the rough or primitive appearance of the blood on the crucifixes corresponded to complex intellectual ideas). Also unlike the relics, the blood of the crucifixes was not contained, but shown to be spewing out from Christ's many wounds. Blood that was inside the body may have been beautiful, as Carruthers noted in her analysis of the terms *pulcher* and

³⁴ Ibid., 193.

³⁵ Ibid., 195.

venustas, but blood that had left the body, having been shed, was not.³⁶ The beauty of blood, in this sense, was tied directly to its life-giving power. As was confirmed by common sense and scripture alike, blood is the source of life only so long as it flows within the veins.³⁷ When it leaves the veins and spills out of the body, the body dies. The profusion of blood that appears to pour out of a *crucifixus dolorosus*'s numerous wounds does in fact signify the life force leaving Christ's deformed body; the assault of red on the eyes of a beholder was meant to shock, both asserting the fact of Christ's death and emphasizing the ugliness he assumed.

Christ's blood, however, was different from normal, human blood, and his death, though a true human death, was not truly death. The representation of his blood being shed must therefore be given different consideration. Scholastic theologians reference Leviticus 17:11 –*anima carnis in sanguine est*, the life of the flesh is in the blood – in discussing Christ's blood.³⁸ In his *Summa*, Aquinas writes, "However, the price of our redemption, which Christ himself paid, is the blood of Christ, indeed his corporeal life that is in the blood."³⁹ In debating whether it was Christ's death symbolized by his loss of blood or the blood itself that was the price of salvation, Aquinas argues in favor of the latter. However, he manages to reconcile the two positions by asserting that they are effectively the same – Christ's life force was in his blood, and the shedding of that blood

³⁶ Carruthers shows how beauty was tied to blood through Isidore of Seville's etymology, in which he linked *venustas* with *venis*: "Venustus, pulcher, a venis, id est sanguine." *Etym.* 10.277. She argues, however, that such referenced healthy blood inside the body, for example, the blush, and not spilt blood. Blood that spills outside the body causes ugliness. *The Experience of Beauty*, 181-183.

³⁷ (Lev. 17:11, Deut. 12:23) – These verses were furthermore often referred to by medieval theologians when discussing the salvific power of Christ's blood. See Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 157; Beate Fricke, "Zur Genealogie von Blutspuren. Blut als Metapher der Transformation auf dem Feldbacher Altar (ca. 1450)," *L'homme: europäische Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 21, no. 2 (2010): 11.

³⁸ See Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 162.

³⁹ "Pretium autem redemptionis nostrae est sanguis Christi, vel vita eius corporalis quae est in sanguine, quam ipse Christus exsolvit." *Summae theologiae tertia pars*, q.48, a.5, corpus, l.5.

was his death. Christ's death could not have been brought about without his blood being spilled, and his blood could not have poured out (to such a degree) without resulting in his death. The idea that blood was the seat of life was central to late-medieval debates like this one. Bringing Leviticus to bear on Christ's death, however, changed the scriptural relationship that existed among body, blood, and life. For Christ's blood continued to live outside of his body and after his death, and this is made manifest in contemporary theological tractates and artworks.⁴⁰

In two recent articles, Beate Fricke discusses the ways in which Trecento painters experimented in their portrayals of blood, using lighter and darker shades of red both to create spatial illusions and to differentiate blood already shed from that continuing to spill from Christ's dead body (for example, figure 3a).⁴¹ Makers of the *crucifigi dolorosi* also presented blood that continued to live after pouring out from Christ's wounds and to show multiple moments of bloodshed, blood spilling on top of blood already spilled. On the Orvieto crucifix, only the few sticky drops that cling to the lips of the side wound suggest that any blood has begun to congeal and die outside the body, even as fresh new blood continues to pour out.⁴² Alternatively, on the Oristano crucifix, a darker pigment was finished with a lacquer, as if the blood spilling from the side wound was still wet (figure 10f). By fashioning Christ's blood in these ways, the craftsmen were able to suggest simultaneously Christ dying on earth and living in glory. As life-giving blood was beautiful, the red polychromy of the *crucifigi dolorosi* signified beauty. More than

⁴⁰ Bynum offers several examples of devotional texts that emphasized the living quality of Christ's blood, for example a sermon delivered by Dominican preacher Conrad of Esslingen in the early fourteenth century. See *Wonderful Blood*, 169.

⁴¹ "A Liquid History: Blood and Animation in Late Medieval Art," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 63/64 (2013): 62-63; "Zur Genealogie von Blutspuren," 19-23.

⁴² For living versus dead blood (i.e. blood versus gore, or *sanguis* versus *cruor*), see Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 165; Fricke, "Zur Genealogie von Blutspuren," 13.

that, it pointed to the beauty that was essential to Christ's being (*species*), here hidden behind deformity. The blood thus called attention to the existence of an inside and evoked the idea that what was concealed within could be revealed.

Although depictions of Christ's open wounds and flowing blood were the *crucifigi dolorosi*'s primary and most striking means of signaling Christ's beauty, the inclusion of delicate and subtle details also acted to remind viewers that his inner beauty existed there for them to find. Such details were beautiful in the sensual meaning of the word; they are pleasing to physical sight in their specific appearance rather than to the intellect as abstractions. The craftsmen who fashioned the Orvieto crucifix took special care to carve Christ's blood-soaked curls as softly framing his face and falling gently over his shoulders onto his chest (see figure 2b). The lines and angles that frame these locks of hair are, in stark contrast, harsh and disrupted by protruding ribs and overstretched joints. Though shorter, Christ's curled strands on the Florence crucifix have a similar effect (figure 6a). So, too, on the Palermo crucifix, where each individually carved lock begins to twist only below the level of Christ's chin, culminating in a perfect, effortless curl (figure 11c). The contrast with Christ's deeply indented ribs and sternum is startling. In Chioggia, Christ's hair is ornately carved into thick, lush curls that almost bounce as they fall down onto Christ's chest (figure 7e). They appear as if pushed back, tucked behind Christ's raised left ear in order to keep his face clear and fully visible. His beard is also intricately carved into individualized curls that seem out of place, too dainty for the rest of his battered body. In Cortona we find the remnants of graceful curls that flow over Christ's right shoulder (figure 9c). They appear like waves, and their graceful, stream-like quality is repeated but perverted in the horrific gush of blood that pours out

from the side wound just below. In a number of other examples, it is impossible to know how Christ's hair was carved because the strands were broken off in the course of time, for instance, on the crucifix now in Sant'Onofrio in Fabriano (figure 8a). Given how the hair has broken off it is likely that it was also carved in individual curling locks, whose effect would have clashed with the bony knobs of Christ's shoulders and collar bones, stretched muscles, and jutting ribcage.

Other unique details can be found in individual cases that similarly offer quick flashes of sensible beauty amidst ugly suffering. The loincloth of the Chioggia crucifix is adorned with painted embroidery, filled with red rectangles and blue circles all framed within a gold border and filled with golden interlace (figure 7f). These decorative details are especially fine here, on the hem of a cloth swathed around the waist of a deformed sculpture of the deformed Crucified. For only the persistent viewer, the subtle details provide a reward for sustained contemplation. Such delicacy and richness, accessible to the sight of the bodily eyes, provide a taste of Christ's true beauty; they motivate the faithful viewer to look beyond the disfiguration carved on the wooden corpora and find the inner beauty they conceal.

In arguing that a *crucifixus dolorosus*'s exterior appearance was intended to guide a viewer to inner truths, I may seem to equate such a wood corpus with Christ himself. Although I never fully identify the one with the other, I certainly connect them, and it is important to question whether such an elision of image and prototype is possible: does the opposition of external deformity and internal beauty that is true for Christ hold true for his image as well? Or otherwise stated, can an image made by human hands reveal

divine mysteries that are concealed not within their own carved figures but rather within the absent body of their heavenly prototype?

It is my contention that the *crucifigi dolorosi* do just that, not only through signaling and signification, but also through an ontological connection with Christ. I argued in my second chapter that the crucifixes, as images of Christ, share in his essential nature through likeness (*similitudo*). To recall briefly that argument here: *Similitudo*, according to Aquinas, “is a type of unity, for oneness in quality causes likeness.”⁴³ Aquinas defines the likeness of an image as a function of the species, thus indicating a derivation of image from prototype, a participation of the representation in that which it represents.⁴⁴ Bonaventure characterizes the image in much the same way in his claim that “he who sees an image of Peter consequently sees Peter too.”⁴⁵ Even if such a carved crucifix cannot be claimed to be an *imago* in the way the Christ is the *imago* of God, its quality of *similitudo* and participation in Christ’s suffering and beauty makes it more than a *simulacrum*, which suggests an outer likeness only, something that is similar, but not the same. Assaf Pinkus’s distinctions are useful here, defining the *simulacrum* as “a distorted representation, an image without an inner resemblance, without a true model, lacking the crucial dependence upon the original and passing through neither the idea nor the ideal.”⁴⁶ Based on his readings of late-medieval texts – treatises by Aquinas and Peter of Tarentasia (the future Innocent V, d. 1276), the *Roman de la Rose* (ca. 1270), and thirteenth-century tractates on optics and vision – he asserts that the *simulacrum* is an

⁴³ “Respondeo dicendum quod similitudo quaedam unitas est, unum enim in qualitate similitudinem causat, ut dicitur in V *Metaphys.*” *Summae theologiae prima pars*, q.93, a.9, corpus, l.1.

⁴⁴ “Non tamen quaecumque similitudo sufficit ad rationem imaginis; sed similitudo quae est in specie rei.” *Ibid.*, q.35, a.1, corpus, l.2.

⁴⁵ “...unde qui videt imaginem Petri, per consequens videt et Petrum,” *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, I, d.3, p.2, a.1, q.2.

⁴⁶ *Sculpting Simulacra in Medieval Germany, 1250-1380* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 2.

actual presence in its own right, but not the presence of the prototype – a *res* rather than *imago*, an external rather than internal resemblance.⁴⁷ The *simulacrum* can take the place of the prototype, but is not the truth of that prototype; it signifies only itself. We must weigh Pinkus’s argument in regard to the crucifixes here in question, for on some level, it holds true for them as well: the physical materials of wood, gesso, hemp, canvas, and paint are not the same as the flesh, blood, and divinity of Christ. The physical similitude the crucifix claims is based on a presumed and conventional likeness, not a factual or historical one, and through its striking imagery and seeming animation, it calls attention to its own presence in the physical space of the church. But unlike the *simulacrum*, the *crucifixus dolorosus* does share in the idea of its prototype, the crucified Christ. It may not share in the whole of Christ’s nature, but it “passes through” his suffering, making visible and tangible the effects of Christ’s passion.⁴⁸ The crucifix thus participates in this essential idea of its prototype, and is therefore worthy of more than a characterization as *simulacrum*.

The fact of participation allows for further consideration of whether a *crucifixus dolorosus*’s external deformity can conceal, and reveal, an internal beauty that is invisible. In his *Commentary on the Divine Names*, Aquinas writes, “The beautiful and beauty are distinguished with respect to participation and participants. Thus, we call something

⁴⁷ Ibid., especially 7-13.

⁴⁸ I argue, therefore, that the *crucifixi dolorosi* also go beyond what Hugh of St Victor describes as a *simulacrum naturae* in his Commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* of the Pseudo-Dionysius. The *simulacrum naturae*, in opposition to the *simulacrum gratiae*, offers only an emulation of the Word (Christ), and therefore his form and not his essence, while the *simulacrum gratiae* is identical in form and essence. Hugh does assert that the *simulacrum naturae*, despite its difference from its prototype, can anagogically lead its viewer’s mind to knowing God by means of symbols and signs. See *ibid.*, 6.

‘beautiful’ because it is a participant in beauty.”⁴⁹ In Thomas’s aesthetics, then, much as in his image theories, beauty is a characteristic dependent on participation. He continues:

Beauty, however, is a participation in the First Cause, which makes all things beautiful. So that the beauty of creatures is simply a likeness of the divine beauty in which they participate.⁵⁰

Beauty is a quality belonging to God, and that which is beautiful necessarily derives from him. As Aquinas elaborates, beauty on earth results from similitude to and participation in the divine. These two terms – likeness and participation – are here paired again, the one occurring again in the context of the other. With regard to the *crucifixi dolorosi*, a complex chain is formed on that basis: Christ is both the perfect image of God (thus completely like and fully participating in him), and the quality of *Species*, beauty, is ascribed specifically to him as the second person of the Trinity. He therefore both participates in beauty and is, in and of himself, beautiful. Through *similitudo*, a *crucifixus dolorosus* is derived from its prototype, Christ, and thus shares in his nature; in that way the sculpture twice participates in beauty – the beauty in which Christ first participates in and the beauty which Christ is, *pulchritudo* and *species*.

The *crucifixi dolorosi* must, therefore, be beautiful, despite their deformed external appearances. Like Christ’s, such a sculpture’s true beauty remains hidden behind a veneer of pain and suffering; that very appearance allows a viewer to know that such beauty exists, as explained by Augustine and Bonaventure. Unlike Christ’s beauty, however, the sculpture’s lies in its ability to reveal a beauty that is not its own. Such details as the carved Christ’s delicate curls or luxurious borders on his loincloth remind a

⁴⁹ “Pulchrum et pulchritudo distinguuntur secundum participans et participatum, ita quod pulchrum dicitur hoc quod participat pulchritudinem.” *In Dionysii de divinis nominibus* (Turnhout: Brepols Publisher, 2015), ch. 4, lectio 5, l. 42-43.

⁵⁰ “Pulchritudo autem participatio primae causae quae omnia pulchra facit: pulchritudo enim creaturae nihil est aliud quam similitudo divinitiae pulchritudinis in rebus partecipata.” *Ibid.*, ch. 4, lectio 5, l.43-44.

viewer that there is a greater beauty to be found. The crucifix's violent display of opened and bleeding wounds does indicate an interior, but rather than referring to the hollow interior of its wooden shell, the imagery points to the inner truth of its prototype.

The great effort dedicated by both Bonaventure and Aquinas to distinguishing between Christ's visible exterior and his imperceptible interior demonstrates the importance of such a task during the Scholastic Period. While these theologians' theories were both innovative and influential, going beyond Christ's bodily limits to arrive inside him was a broad contemporary concern. It was not only Christ's heart that was the specific focus of such desires; divine truths were held within Christ, and all the wounds he sustained in his Passion offered admission and a means to discover those truths. In his *Moral Treatise on the Eye*, Peter of Limoges wrote of entry into Christ through his wounds: "For the nail (*clavus*) which pierced him has become a key (*clavis*) for me to open the lock so that I can see the Lord's will."⁵¹ Here Peter's metaphor offers another important link between the physical, material exterior presented by the *crucifixa dolorosi* and the divine, salvific interior of Christ. For the nail as key, an etymological elision for Peter, becomes a visible reality in the imagery of such crucifixes, where, in each case, three nails have been powerfully forced into Christ's hands and feet. The large pieces of iron not only pierce the hands and feet, but wrench them open. The nails appear to work together with the ruthlessness of gravity to push the skin of Christ's palms and the tops of his feet into gory bunches above not only gaping holes, but also bloody bones and muscles. We can see this particularly forcefully in the hands and feet of the *crucifixus dolorosus* in Fabriano (figure 8b), but it is a characteristic shared by all such crucifixes. What should remain inside Christ's body, hidden behind the external surface of his skin,

⁵¹ *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, 61.

has thus been revealed; the nails have thus become keys, unlocking and opening the door that conceals what lies within.

TO SEE WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN

Thus we find that the physical form of the crucifix is separated from, while still connected to, the substance it reveals, much as the accidents of the bread and wine of the Eucharist are differentiated from but tied to the substance of Christ's body and blood.⁵² Also akin to the Eucharist's hidden true presence, that of the *crucifixus dolorosus* is only apprehensible by means of the intellect.⁵³ Theologians agreed on this, for example, Alexander of Hales who deliberated on the implications of the separation of substance from accidents, of which only the latter are available to the bodily eyes. Explaining that animals cannot receive the body of Christ, Alexander writes, "Since it is said that the body of Christ under the sacrament does not pertain to the senses but to the intellect, the beast only receives of the senses, that is the species of the bread, and not on the level of the intellect, that is the body of Christ."⁵⁴ He describes the body of Christ in the Eucharist

⁵² By means of the theory of concomitance, which was developed by John Grammaticus circa 1080, the entirety of Christ, that is, both his blood and his body, were present in both elements of the Eucharist, even though the host was associated primarily with Christ's body and the chalice with his blood. See Elizabeth Saxon, *The Eucharist in Romanesque France: Iconography and Theology* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006), 33. Concomitance would enable the Church to remove the chalice from lay communion, which in turns seems to have spurred a "veritable frenzy for the blood of Christ, the *sanguinis Christi*." Mitchell B. Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom: Violence, Memory, and Visual Culture at the Host-Miracle Shrines of Germany and Austria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 74. See also Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*.

⁵³ As Tobias Frese discusses in his recent volume, the nature of the Eucharistic debate changed in the scholastic period. The focus of theological inquiry moved away from questioning the Eucharist's relationship to Christ's sacrifice and towards defining the nature of the change that occurred by means of consecration. The resulting debate was complex and disagreement was the norm. See *Aktual- und Realpräsenz*, 256ff. Part of understanding the nature of Eucharistic transformation entailed defining Eucharistic reception – was the body of Christ always received by one who ingested a consecrated wafer? The context in which Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure write about the intellectual apprehension of Eucharistic truth (which follows) is that of the nature of reception.

⁵⁴ "Quia ergo corpus Christi sub sacramento non dicit tantum quod ad sensum pertinent, sed quod ad rationem, quod sensus est a brutis sumitur, scilicet species panis; quod in ordine ad rationem est non

as *cibus animae*, or food of the soul, which can only be truly apprehended and ingested by the intellect and not the body.⁵⁵ Alexander characterizes the visible accidents of the bread and wine as signs of the hidden body of Christ, and the latter as the subject of the former.⁵⁶

Thus, Alexander of Hales endows the accidents of the consecrated host with semiotic value, and, importantly, he insists that only the intellect can recognize the sign and apprehend the reality it points to. He draws the conclusion that no harm could come to the body of Christ (and no benefit could be imbued) if the recipient did not have a rational intellect and did not understand the Eucharist as a specific sign. Bonaventure continues and expands upon this line of thinking in his own *Commentary on the Sentences*, asserting that true reception only occurred when the recipient understood first that the wafer was food, second that the wafer was a sign, and third that it (that is, the bread) was a sign specifically of the body of Christ.⁵⁷ Only a person who intended to receive the body of Christ, therefore, could in fact do so, and then only by means of the intellect, which alone could apprehend the sign.

Although Aquinas, who stayed more firmly loyal to Aristotelian metaphysics, disagreed with Alexander of Hale's and Bonaventure's assertions that the disposition of the recipient determined whether or not the body of Christ would be received with a

sumitur, scilicet corpus Christi." *Glossa in quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, vol. IV, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, 15 (Florence: Quaracchi, 1957), d.13, q.8.

⁵⁵ Ibid., d.10, q.7, g.

⁵⁶ "Respondemus ad primum quod in esse sacramenti est ratio signi et causae: signi ex eo quod est visibile; ratio causae ex corpore Christi invisibili sub sacramento." Ibid., d.10, q.5, d.

⁵⁷ Macy, "Reception of the Eucharist," 40. Saint Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, IV, d.9, a.1, q.3, conclusio.

consecrated host,⁵⁸ he, like them, insisted that it was the intellect alone that could apprehend the true substance of the Eucharist:

And therefore, properly speaking, the body of Christ according to the mode of being it has in the sacrament is perceptible neither by the sense nor by the imagination, but only by the intellect, which is called the spiritual eye.⁵⁹

Here and elsewhere in his discussions of the Eucharist, Aquinas insists on the inability of the bodily senses to perceive the body and blood of Christ. In his *Lauda, syon*, Aquinas is clear on this fact, asserting that the flesh and blood of Christ are, in fact, present in the Eucharistic elements, once consecrated, but they are hidden from the senses. He writes:

Under different species,
Only signs and not the things,
Extraordinary things lay hidden.

Food stands in for his flesh, drink for his blood,
All of Christ remains, however,
Under both species.⁶⁰

Aquinas insists that even though all that can be seen and tasted is bread and wine, Christ is present within. Furthermore, all of Christ, his body and his blood, is present under the

⁵⁸ Aquinas held that once the consecration occurred, the Eucharistic elements were transformed substantially into the body and blood of Christ and could not revert, nor could accidents separate from substance, until another substantial change occurred, for example, digestion. As Gary Macy describes it, "The necessary metaphysical connection between the accidents of the bread and wine and the substance of the Body and Blood overrode the theological understanding of the Eucharist as a true sign." "Theology of the Eucharist in the High Middle Ages," in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages*, ed. Ian Levy, Gary Macy, and Kristen van Ausdall (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 389.

⁵⁹ "Et ideo, proprie loquendo, corpus Christi, secundum modum essendi quem habet in hoc sacramento, neque sensu neque imaginatione perceptibile est, sed solo intellectu, qui dicitur oculus spiritualis." *Summae theologiae tertia pars*, q.76, a.7, corpus, l.19-22.

⁶⁰ "Sub diversis speciebus,
Signis tantum et non rebus,
Latent res eximiae.
Caro cibus, sanguis potus,
Manet tamen Christus totus
Sub utraque specie."

Frederick Brittain, *The Medieval Latin and Romance Lyric to A.D. 1300*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 223.

accidents of both elements. Later in the *Summa Theologica*, he considers miracles that occur during the consecration rite, particularly reports of the host appearing as bloody flesh or as the Christ child.⁶¹ As Aquinas argues, such miraculous manifestations are not actually what they appear to be, that is, the historic flesh of Christ. Christ's sacramental presence is one of substance and not quantity, and therefore his physical body cannot be present on the altar (even though his sacramental body is). Aquinas concedes that such a miraculous appearance, despite actually being twice removed from the true substance of Christ's body and blood, could, in fact, make the Eucharistic truth accessible. Unlike the deceptions of magicians, he writes, such species (flesh or the Christ child) are formed in the eye by God so that the truth – that the true body of Christ was present under the sacrament – can be made manifest.⁶² Although corporeal vision is unable to see Christ's true presence, it can perceive other (here, miraculous) sights that make that presence known. Bodily seeing can, in other words, enable the intellectual apprehension of invisible truths, which, according to Aquinas, is seeing with the spiritual eye. Again we see that corporeal vision can play an important role in spiritual growth and benefit, here leading to spiritual seeing.

This sentiment seems to bear not just on miraculous Eucharistic visions, but also on physical art objects. Diverse material images have the ability to reveal, but not necessarily make visible, sacred truths, such as several elite manuscripts contemporary to the *crucifixi dolorosi* – elite in their exquisite making and their aristocratic audience.

Kumler discusses these volumes, on the pages of which are Mass tracts and other texts

⁶¹ *Summae theologiae tertia pars*, q.76, a.8.

⁶² “Nec tamen hoc pertinet ad aliquam deceptionem, sicut accidit in magorum praestigiis, quia talis species divinitus formatur in oculo ad aliquam veritatem figurandam, ad hoc scilicet quod manifestetur vere corpus Christi esse sub hoc sacramento; sicut etiam Christus absque deceptione apparuit discipulis euntibus in Emmaus.” Ibid., q.76, a.8, corpus, l.10-15.

that enable laity to follow the rites of the Mass.⁶³ The illuminations such manuscripts contained within, she argues, go far beyond merely illustrating the texts they accompany; instead they “translate” the Eucharistic truths they comment on, making them accessible to their viewers and, in this way, training their viewers to see in what she describes as a “sacramental mode of vision.”⁶⁴ Such images instruct viewers in the truths that hide behind the “accidents” of the rites of the Mass, thereby enabling viewers to know what they are seeing when witnessing the consecration and elevation of the host, to see only bread and wine, but experience sacramental presence.⁶⁵

The *crucifixi dolorosi* function in much the same manner, although through their own, visually cruder but just as intellectually compelling, devices. Particularly when such a crucifix stood above the altar and became visibly aligned with the elevated host as its physical backdrop, its relationship to sacramental truth was highlighted: the crucifix revealed, through similitude, what could not be seen in the host, namely, the body and blood of Christ.⁶⁶ The connection that linked crucifix to Eucharist and each, in turn, to Christ was layered. Both crucifix and Eucharist were images of Christ’s crucifixion, although neither actually replicated the historic event. Aquinas stated this clearly in his *Summa*, asserting that although the sacrament is often referred to as Christ’s sacrifice, this is only because “it is an image that is representative of Christ’s passion,” and it is usual “to call images by the name of that which they are images of.”⁶⁷ Yet the

⁶³ *Translating Truth*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁶⁶ Frese describes beautifully the elevation of the host over a crucifix-topped altar, noting that the elevation caused the host to overlap the altar image, thus replacing the visible form of the body of Christ with its invisible presence. *Aktual- und Realpräsenz*, 267.

⁶⁷ “Primo quidem quia, sicut Augustinus dicit, ad Simplicianum, solent imagines earum rerum nominibus appellari quarum imagines sunt, intuentes tabulam aut parietem pictum, dicimus, ille Cicero est, ille Sallustius. Celebratio autem huius sacramenti, sicut supra dictum est, imago est quaedam repraesentativa

consecrated host was not an image in the same way the crucifix was; it did not visualize Christ's death on the cross, which the *crucifixa dolorosi* did in a particularly graphic way. Rather, the host was an image in the sense that the rite of consecration called to mind Christ's passion, but it lacked physical likeness. The crucifix, conversely, functioned by means of *similitudo*, participating in Christ's nature and making visible his truth without being that truth, while the host pointed to one truth (Christ's passion) *and* was substantially another truth, which the crucifix could not be: the real, sacramental presence of Christ.

The *crucifixa dolorosi* played an important role by visually manifesting what could not be seen, thus helping especially laity understand the rite of the Mass and Eucharistic truth. There was certainly doubt regarding both transubstantiation and the resulting sacramental presence of Christ that circulated at roughly the same time that the crucifixes were being fashioned across Italy. Simultaneously, stories of Jewish host desecrations were evolving and being disseminated throughout the peninsula, as well as throughout Europe more broadly. Such narratives, in which one or several Jewish men assault a consecrated wafer and the wafer then bleeds in response, were meant to offer convincing proof that the Eucharist truly was Christ's body.⁶⁸ The most influential of these narratives dates to Paris in 1290, but such accounts also had a powerful presence in Italy contemporaneously. The 1292 expulsion of the Jews from the Kingdom of Sicily ensued from a tale of Jewish ritual murder of a Christian boy, a narrative closely related

passionis Christi, quae est vera immolatio." *Summae theologiae tertia pars*, q.83, a.1, corpus, l. 1-3. See also Frese, *Aktual- und Realpräsenz*, 255-256.

⁶⁸ Miri Rubin wrote extensively on this topic, culminating in her book *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). More recently, Mitchell Merback takes up the topic from an art historical stand point, examining these legends and narratives in order to understand the art and space within the chapels founded upon or legitimated by the memory of a host desecration. See *Pilgrimage and Pogrom*.

to that of host desecration. In Florence on 9 November 1304 (the feast of the Holy Savior and the *passio ymaginis*), Giordano da Rivalto preached a version of the Paris desecration along with stories of other host miracles.⁶⁹ While Giordano's sermon is especially vitriolic in its representation of the offending Jews (and of Jews in general), these narratives were structured so that the non-believing Jews – the Other – became a safe place to project doubts regarding the Eucharist. With many such tales ending with the conversion of large numbers of Jews, they worked to quell uncertainties and provide substantive proof of transubstantiation.

The desecrated, miraculous hosts offered both body and blood: the assault was aimed at Christ's sacramental body, but what remained to be venerated was his blood – seemingly his historic and not sacramental blood. Occurring outside the rites of the Mass, this blood of Christ was not mediated by a priest in the way Eucharistic blood was; its miraculous appearance, as Merback makes clear, asserted its sacrificial identity, its still-living quality.⁷⁰ The *crucifixi dolorosi* make visible both this historical quality of Christ's blood, representing the very blood he shed in his dying moments, and its characterization as sacrificial, still-living. These qualities are emphasized through fashioning polychromy as bright red or still wet-looking blood that streams and gushes rather than congeals (blood and not gore). The emphatic display of Christ's suffering makes explicit the extent

⁶⁹ Rubin discusses this sermon, *Gentile Tales*, 27. For the feast of the *passio ymaginis*, see Michele Bacci, "The Berardenga Antependium and the Passio Ymaginis Office," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 61 (1998); —, "Quel bello miracolo onde si fa la festa del santo Salvatore: studio sulle metamorfosi di una leggenda," in *Santa Croce e Santo Volto: Contributi allo studio dell'origine e della fortuna del culto del Salvatore (secoli IX-XV)*, ed. Gabriella Rossetti (Pisa: Gisem, 2002). In the latter essay, Bacci uses the same Giordano sermon, highlighting, however, the Dominican's narrative of the painted panel in Beirut, a work of Nicodemus, that bled after having been pierced with a lance by a group of Jews. Closely related to the host desecration narratives are those that derive from the legend of the Beirut icon, in which Jews reenact the tortures of Christ's passion on an image rather than a host. As Carols Forcén illustrates, the legend came to encompass sculpted crucifixes as well, as can be seen on the retablo in San Salvador de Felanitx in Mallorca. Carlos Espí Forcén, *Recrucificando a Cristo: Los judíos de la 'Passio Imaginis' en la isla de Mallorca* (Palma, Mallorca: Objeto Perdido Ediciones, 2009).

⁷⁰ *Pilgrimage and Pogrom*, 95.

of his sacrifice, and the blood that pours out of his wounds is thus presented as the price of humankind's salvation.

In this respect, the crucifixes make Christ's presence more visceral and immediately present for viewers than does the mediated, sacramental presence in the consecrated wafer. However, like the miraculous hosts, they also insist upon the truth of transubstantiation by presenting an external appearance that one must press beyond to reach an invisible internal truth. It is not a coincidence that in the Paris host desecration account, the bleeding host, having been stabbed, tormented, and thrown into boiling liquid, is transformed into a crucifix that then hovers over the cauldron. A crucifix offers a visible complement the Eucharist's imperceptible truth, and the violent imagery of the *crucifixi dolorosi* does this even more so.

But as much as the crucifixes function within the boundaries of orthodoxy, they also challenge its limits. In offering the representation of Christ's historic blood, his saving blood, to the viewer, they make directly available – at least visually – what was otherwise controlled and mediated by the Church.⁷¹ From the early twelfth century, as Saxon points out, some theologians, particularly at the cathedral school of Laon and at the monastery of St. Victor began to explore just how necessary physical reception truly was.⁷² Anselm of Laon wrote that the salvific effect of the Eucharist derived from a spiritual rather than physical union with Christ. Hugh of St. Victor suggested that “faith and love were sufficient to ensure the vital spiritual union,” even if physical reception

⁷¹ Other images would continue to push the boundaries of Eucharistic control, including those of the Mass of Saint Gregory that show (a vision of) Christ standing on the altar with streams of blood pouring out as the *fons pietatis*. Merback discusses these images briefly in *ibid.*

⁷² *The Eucharist in Romanesque France*, 39-43.

was ultimately most desirable.⁷³ In the thirteenth century, Bonaventure also suggests that spiritual communion offers real spiritual benefits akin to sacramental reception:

A third [form of reception] springs from the symbol itself. Since the sacrament has two signifiers [the Body and Blood of Christ, and a life of faith and love], one of which is able to be received without the other. Thus, just as baptism is twofold, of course, baptism of water and baptism by desire, so too there are two ways of eating. And this [spiritual communion] is the highest and complete since one signifier is able to be received without the other.”⁷⁴

Certainly, Bonaventure does not suggest that spiritual communion can or should replace sacramental communion. While the latter offers reception in *sacramentum*, that is the species, and in *sacramentum et res*, or the Body and Blood of Christ, the former offers reception of the *res* alone, that is, as a union of faith and love.⁷⁵ That union can be achieved through visual contemplation of an image such as a *crucifixus dolorosus*, which not only emphasizes Christ’s suffering, thus inspiring compassion in a viewer, but also makes available his body and blood. This availability stands in stark contrast to the Eucharist, which was, in any case, not often offered to the laity. The sculptures offer Christ to their viewers only by means of sight, and even then once removed as a representation of their absent prototype. But ocular communion, although not considered sacramental, could inspire a viewer to the love and faith that were the hoped for result of Christ’s true presence in the sacrament.⁷⁶

⁷³ As translated from Hugh’s *De sacramentis* by Saxon. Ibid., 40.

⁷⁴ “Tertio oritur ab *ipso Sacramento*: quia duplicem habet rem, quarum una potest recipi sine altera; ita sicut duplex est baptismus, scilicet fluminis et fluminis a duplici re, sic etiam duplex modus manducandi. – Et hoc ultimum est et completum, quia una res potest sumi sine altera.” *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, IV, d.9, a.1, q.1, conclusio. English translation from Macy, “Medieval Theology of the Eucharist,” 76.

⁷⁵ —, “Medieval Theology of the Eucharist,” 73-75.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 73.

Such discussions were at times dangerously close to heresy, however, particularly because such communion, achieved through contemplation, faith, and love, bypassed the ecclesiastical hierarchy altogether. Already in response to the writings coming out of Laon and Paris in the twelfth century, such theologians as Peter Lombard were emphasizing the necessity of sacramental reception together with spiritual communion in effecting salvation.⁷⁷ Even in the fifteenth century, Nicolas of Cusa argued that priestly mediation was absolutely necessary for communion and, therefore, salvation.⁷⁸ If such arguments were still necessary three centuries after they were first made, it suggests that the limits of orthodoxy continued to be tested, perhaps by images like the *crucifixi dolorosi*. By making visible Christ's sacrifice and deformed appearance, and by guiding a viewer beyond it to Christ's beauty and a greater love for his or her Savior, such a crucifix provided a means of spiritual communion. It offered viewers what the Eucharist could not – quotidian access to the body and blood of Christ and the resulting spiritual benefits, even if those benefits could neither match nor replace the benefits gained from sacramental reception.

CONCLUSION: FROM EUCHARIST TO CRUCIFIX

Connecting the *crucifixus dolorosus* to the Eucharist, and therefore examining it through the framework of visible exterior versus hidden inner truth, leads back to the beginning of this dissertation, to Orvieto's church of San Domenico. Aquinas was in residence there in the mid-1260s in order to establish a *studium* for local friars, and the church and the Dominicans were intimately tied to the city's exceptional devotion to the

⁷⁷ Saxon, *The Eucharist in Romanesque France*, 43-44.

⁷⁸ See Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom*, 79.

Eucharist. The miracle of the bleeding host in Bolsena and Orvieto's resulting possession of the blood-stained corporal are said to have occurred in 1264, the same year in which Pope Urban IV established the universal celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi.⁷⁹ The Orvietan accounts of the miracle furthermore claim that it was because of the city's new sacred possession that Urban commissioned Aquinas, still in Orvieto, to write a liturgical office for the feast.⁸⁰ In the city's cathedral, a large chapel dedicated to the corporal was built and decorated in the middle of the fourteenth century. Its walls are adorned with frescoes that narrate the events of the Bolsena miracle (including the miracle in which a crucifix spoke to Aquinas, complimenting his office of the Corpus Christi) and other biblical events that emphasize Christ's true presence in the Eucharist.⁸¹ Above and around the chapel's altar, and therefore forming the fresco cycle's visual focus, is a large narrative scene of the Crucifixion (figure 26). While the two thieves flank the tabernacle that houses the relic, Christ on his own cross appears on the wall directly above it. The apex of the tabernacle overlaps Christ's legs, connecting him to the blood-stained corporal and the altar below. The consecrated host would therefore have appeared in a direct line with the two visualizations of its hidden truth – the remnants of blood spilled from a miraculous host (that is, species granted to the eye by God to make known Christ's substantial presence without actually being his blood) and the image of Christ's sacrifice (which is referenced by the host, but not repeated in it).

⁷⁹ For the history of the feast, see Rubin, *Corpus Christi*. For the dating of the Bolsena miracle, see Dominique Nicole Suhr, "Corpus Christi and the Cappella del Corporale at Orvieto" (Ph.D, University of Virginia, 2000), 28-36. According to the evidence she presents, it seems likely that the date of 1264 was established in 1338, in conjunction with the fashioning of the enamel reliquary that still contains the corporal.

⁸⁰ —, "Corpus Christi," 30.

⁸¹ See Macy, "Medieval Theology of the Eucharist," 59.

Although Orvieto's *crucifixus dolorosus* (see figure 2) was and is displayed in the city's Dominican convent, and not in the Duomo, it should be understood as having been introduced into this same context. In this period, Orvieto's Dominicans often held the bishop's seat, and the venerable memory and local importance of Thomas Aquinas further tied the friar's church to the city's cathedral. Beyond its religious significance, the conspicuous veneration of the Eucharist in San Domenico would have served the purpose of highlighting the friars' importance in the city. Thus it is particularly appropriate that this Orvietan church would have housed a *crucifixus dolorosus*. Whether or not the crucifix stood atop an altar in the fourteenth-century church remains unknown, but, perhaps even more than any other *crucifixus dolorosus*, this one was intricately tied to the Eucharist and presence of Christ through its function in its sacramentally charged context.

Juxtaposed today to the painted crucifixion scene (figure 1) in the chapel just to the right of the high altar, the sculpture may originally have stood on the other side of the church's rood screen. Had that been the case, it would have been readily visible to the laity, as well as to the friars who also had regular access to the space of the nave. Unlike the fresco, which depicted Christ as physically beautiful and unblemished even as he hung from the cross, the sculpture offered a more explicit "translation" of Eucharistic truth (to borrow Kumler's terminology). Functioning on several levels, it offered the laity a visual manifestation of "what happened" when Christ was crucified, which the Eucharist represented but did not make visible. The *crucifixus dolorosus* then challenged those viewers to look beyond this literal truth, which was not beautiful, to find the abstracted one, which was beautiful, but not visible. The friars, conversely, would have been better equipped to use the crucifix at its most intellectual level, using the visual

details discussed above to find hidden internal truths. As when they viewed the Eucharist, they would have understood the meaning of the sign, enabling them to reap the greatest rewards such a process of looking had to offer. This process, of moving from the literal to the abstracted, the visible to the invisible, was one of discovery, revealing that beyond its manifest ugliness, Christ's sacrifice itself was beautiful. Contemplation of this crucifix therefore brought to light the limits of visual representation. The crucifix's violent imagery made manifest that the benefits of physical sight are only so much and so many; use of the intellect, that is the spiritual eye, is necessary to spiritually bore into Christ, beyond his visible flesh, or its representation, and into his wounds and heart where his divinity and love were to be revealed. The polychromed deformity of the sculpture was able thereby to guide viewers deeper into their faith and closer to God.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has now arrived at a more concrete answer to the question of why the *crucifixi dolorosi* appeared in Italy in the decades around 1300, despite a long tradition of painted crucifixes like the frescoed Crucifixion in the niche in Orvieto's San Domenico (figure 1) that presented a much more peaceful and sensuous Christ on the cross. The painted crucifixes offer a higher theology: they focus on Christ's divinity by indicating his triumph over death, even in his moment of expiration, and make clearly visible the beauty that was, historically, imperceptible. Like the *crucifixi dolorosi*, these painted crucifixes could function on various levels in different ways depending on the ability and need of the viewer. On the one hand, they might have simplified the theology of the simultaneously deformed and beautiful Christ by making his divinity as visible as was possible in a man-made image, particularly in a representation of the moment when that divinity was most hidden. On the other hand, their explicit manifestation of Christ's beauty may have allowed for an easier entrance into the contemplation of heavenly truths. The Orvieto fresco, in addition to being set apart within a niche, was also flanked by four holy figures who each guide a viewer's attention directly to Christ, either with a hand gesture or by means of their own focused gaze. Together with the fresco's location in a chapel directly adjacent to the main sanctuary, this fact suggests that the image was intended for quiet contemplation, largely by the convent's friars.

Despite this deeply rooted iconographic tradition, the life-sized, carved, and polychromed *crucifixi dolorosi* appeared in churches across the Italian peninsula. Unlike the San Domenico fresco, these crucifixes were not recessed into the wall, but rather pushed forward into the viewer's space, asserting their own presence within the church.

As I argued in my second chapter, their composition and imagery both engaged with viewers' movements to bring the sculptures to life, to make them interactive. These were powerful images that aggressively grabbed beholders' attention. But even more than that, they were fashioned with a complete disregard for making the image of the crucified Christ palatable to viewers. Completely unlike the sermons presented by Lipton, which attempt to draw attention to Christ's physical beauty, these images disclose no concern that viewers be able to see Christ's true beauty and therefore love him; those responsible for the sculptures' making could not have been worried that such imagery would evoke revulsion within viewers.¹

I attribute this change in imagery to a parallel, scholastically-influenced shift in how ugliness was approached and understood. Beauty was no longer merely a physical attribute, pleasing to the physical senses, but was something essential, inherent. It was also not necessarily manifest, but rather a truth hidden within. Such a characterization of beauty was made possible by theologians' deliberations on the nature of the Eucharist, the visible appearance of which diverged from its invisible substance, Christ's body and blood. Viewing the consecrated host required use of the intellect, or the spiritual eye, to move beyond the visible accidents or sign, to the true substance, or the sign's significance. In a parallel manner, seeking out true beauty required one to look beyond what could be seen. The makers of the *crucifigi dolorosi* thus took up the challenge to make Christ's beauty knowable, but not seeable. They provided beholders with visual clues that both signified beauty and pointed beyond themselves to something else that was beautiful, allowing what was ugly, particularly the vivid portrayal of Christ's blood, to guide beholders to Christ's true beauty and the divine truths that remained hidden within.

¹ "Sweet Lean of His Head," 1172-1208.

Thus the *crucifixi dolorosi* existed not outside the religious and artistic traditions of late-medieval Italy, but rather as very much a part of them. In response to the changing conceptions about the role of images instigated by contemporary theological and philosophical debates, these crucifixes offered evidence that images could be powerful agents for spiritual growth in those who contemplated them. The violent imagery engaged viewers in an experience of the Crucifixion and also forced an acknowledgement of the limitations of visual representation. The bloody and contorted visual details helped their viewers to assimilate to the image of the suffering Christ and, by facilitating the switch from corporeal to spiritual seeing, made invisible truths accessible to sight. Rather than existing as alien images, these images truly were engaged with their local populations and with the ideas of the time.

If there is little direct documentary evidence that would provide undisputable proof of the value of these crucifixes during the late Middle Ages, the fact that so many later came to be the centers of significant local cults helps to substantiate this thesis. Some were woven into the stories of local saints or holy figures, and others were attributed to the hand of Nicodemus, a Pharisee turned disciple of Christ who saw Christ's face in life and then witnessed it in death. Besides Giunta's reference to the *crucifixus dolorosus* in his *vita* of Margherita of Cortona, all documentary evidence of such crucifixes dates to the early modern period.² The contract between Santa Maria Novella's Fra Sebastiano and the artist Bernardo that mentions the Florentine convent's crucifix dates to the mid-fifteenth century.³ However, the legends that still define so

² See Chapter 3. *Legenda*.

³ For more on this contract, see Chapter 2. Printed in Orlandi, "*Necrologio*" di S. Maria Novella, II, 491.

many of these sculptures are recorded even later, beginning in the mid-sixteenth century. From that time, through the seventeenth and even into the eighteenth centuries, accounts of some of the Italian *crucifixi dolorosi* continued to be recorded, illustrating the importance of the crucifixes in their local contexts.

The crucifix in the cathedral of Palermo offers an illuminating case, allowing us to trace the development of its legend from 1558 into the eighteenth century (figure 11). Over the course of these two centuries, the legend changes and grows increasingly detailed until an entire history dating back to the death of Christ has been fashioned. Each subsequent author writing on the crucifix refers back to those who had written before, often reusing particular phrasing or even entire passages from the earlier texts. It is, therefore, not only the crucifix itself that becomes intimately grafted into a venerated history, but also the act of writing about the crucifix that is given an elevated status, connecting individual authors to the celebrity of the sculpture.

The first mention of the Palermo crucifix appears in Tommaso Fazello's 1558 history of Sicily, in which he already described it as an "image gloriosissima," and an "oggetto di grandissima venerazione."⁴ He noted that it was located by this date in the chapel of the Holy Crucifix, "placed there by the dedication of Manfredi Chiaramonte, who was the Count of Modica."⁵ Seventy years later, Rocco Pirro called the crucifix a "celeberrimus simulacrum" of Christ, which had once been in the church of S. Nicolà alla Kalsa and was then carried through the city to the cathedral by the bishop in a solemn

⁴ *Storia di Sicilia*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Palermo: Regione siciliana, Assessorato dei beni culturali e ambientali e della pubblica istruzione, 1992), 378.

⁵ "...lì collocata per dedica da Manfredi Chiaramonte una volta conte di Modica..." *ibid.*

procession.⁶ By 1669, the legend had acquired substantial new layers when Vincenzo Auria, a notable doctor of both canon and civil law, documented that the crucifix was in fact made by Nicodemus, who “represented from life the form of Christ crucified.”⁷ Auria immediately tells us that the “Principe de’ Giudei” had not only seen Christ’s face during his lifetime, since Nicodemus was ultimately Christ’s student, but also that he (Nicodemus) was present at Christ’s death. The Pharisee was instructed by God to make a statue of Christ, “somigliantissima all’Originale dei Primogenito di Dio,” that is, incredibly similar to the model of the Son of God.⁸ We learn that Nicodemus first carved the body of the crucifix, but he had trouble fashioning the face in a realistic and naturalistic enough manner. Leaving the task for the following morning, he awoke from sleep to find that the sculpture’s head had been completed, perfectly, by the hand of an angel.⁹ Auria recognizes that his city’s crucifix was not the only or the first to claim Nicodemus’ authorship; he lists Lucca, Beirut, Burgos, and Matosinhos, stating that the Pharisee had, in fact, carved more than one image of the crucifix and acknowledging the differences between them.¹⁰

Auria furthermore connects the Chiaramonte crucifix to another important Palermitan legend, which accounts for the arrival of several of the city’s most prized relics and images from the east. Although previous accounts of this legend had never included the crucifix among the list of items, Auria adds it for the first time, highlighting

⁶ *Notitiae Siciliensium Ecclesiarum Philippo IIII. Hispaniarum et Siciliae regi Catholico dictae* (Palermo: Ioannis Baptistae Maringhi, 1630), 155.

⁷ “...rappresentata al vivo la forma di Christo Crocifisso,” *Il vero ed original ritratto di Christo Signor nostro in Croce, Narratione Historica dell’Origine del santissimo crocifisso, della Maggiore, e Metropolitana Chiesa di Palermo*, 3rd ed. (Palermo: Domenico Cortese, 1704), 5. Although the edition accessible dates to 1704, this is a later reprint (the third edition) from the original first publication of 1669.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰ “E che S. Nicodemo habbia fatto non una sola, ma più Imagini del Crocifisso.” *Ibid.*, 48-51.

the importance of this crucifix to Auria himself and the people of Palermo more broadly speaking. The crucifix thus becomes even more firmly lodged in the city's history and identity, both civic and religious.

Auria then continues: upon its arrival in Palermo, the crucifix was placed in the Chiaramonte family chapel in the church of San Nicolò alla Kalsa; it stayed there until 1311 when Manfredi Chiaramonte donated it to the cathedral in order to make it more conspicuous and grant it greater esteem.¹¹ Since then, this “vera figura di Christo” worked miracles, protecting Palermo and her citizens from “every evil,” and “every enemy.”¹² It was processed through the city on multiple occasions, causing the cathedral to tremble as it exited through her doors and even causing one of the church bells’ clappers to fall into a crowd below without injuring anyone. For all these reasons, Auria reports, the crucifix was granted its own feast day on the third of May, and sumptuous celebrations occurred even more regularly – every Friday – in the chapel of the Holy Crucifix. Even when formal celebrations were not occurring, “the people came daily to kneel and adore it and thank it, soaking the ground with their tears and repenting for their sins.”¹³

Beginning with Auria, each successive author increasingly emphasizes the crucifix’s similitude to its prototype. Auria asserted that Nicodemus had carved the sculpture from life, resulting in an image “a lui molto simile,” very much like him (Christ).¹⁴ Francisco Carrera, writing ten years later, then makes the extraordinary claim that this *simulacrum* was so similar to the likeness of Christ that it could replace him, and

¹¹ Ibid., 17.

¹² “...alla cui potenza cede ogni malore, e si rende vinto ogni nemico oltraggio.” Ibid., 10.

¹³ “La Gente giornalmente genuflessa l’adora e la ringratia, bagnando il suolo di pretiose lagrime, pentita de suoi falli.” Ibid., 17.

¹⁴ Ibid., 6.

that even Praxiteles, the master of painting illusions, would be fooled by it.¹⁵ So as not to deceive those who look at it into thinking that the carved crucifix was actually Christ himself, Carrera continues, the sculpture ought to speak to them and indicate that it is, in fact, an image, but it cannot, precisely because it is only an image.¹⁶ Christ's large corpus, measuring six feet tall (183cm), is certainly vivid and lifelike, but it would be difficult to argue that it was depicted naturalistically. The portrayal of individual ribs protruding from Christ's torso, forming an M-shape over his abdomen, just to name one characteristic, is powerful and evocative, but hardly anatomically correct. So how can we explain these authors' claims?

To some extent, the word *simulacrum* holds the key. Carrera's description, in which the sculpture exudes presence (of some sort) and could stand in place of its prototype, sounds very much like Pinkus' description of a *simulacrum* in the late Middle Ages, a *res* that reflects back upon its viewers their own expectations, and not an *imago*.¹⁷ Yet Carrera follows this description with an account of the miracles the crucifix worked: three times protecting the city from plague and more than once causing an absolutely dry sky to bring forth rain.¹⁸ Other authors produce detailed narratives of each of the crucifix's miracles, thus attributing to it not only presence, but also the ability to protect and save those who venerate it. Although it was only an image, God chose to work through it, selecting it as a point of contact between humans and the divine. The crucifix was therefore not merely a thing of its own, a sculpture that could stand in for but not be,

¹⁵ "Praxitelem suum, Nicodemum, deciperet hoc simulacrum. Nisi enim, Christo iam sepulto, artificii excusum fuisset manu, ab Cruce tum primum di(u/v)elli, mox condi tumulo potuisset. Tam Christo, archetypo suo, concolor videtur ac simile; ut haereant ambigui spectantium obtutus, si cum illo conferatur." *Pantheon Siculum, sive sanctorum siculorum elogia* (Genoa: Marci Antonii Ferri, 1679), 99.

¹⁶ "Ne oculos piè luderet, vocem ederet, qua se imaginem indicaret, at cùm Numen iam extinctum referat, vocem non habet." Ibid.

¹⁷ *Sculpting Simulacra*.

¹⁸ "Ter ab urbe pestiferam luem abegit: nec semel e sterili caelo pluuiam effudit." *Pantheon Siculum*, 99.

or even connect to, the absent Christ. The crucifix was a likeness, a “vera somiglianza,” that enabled the divine to act in the human world. In a parallel (albeit in other ways very different) relationship, the crucifix (image) was to Christ (prototype) as Christ (image) was to God (prototype): the image of the divine prototype could both be seen on earth and save and protect those who believed in its power.

Unlike the thirteenth-century significance of *similitudo*, however, the likeness implied by Auria, Carrera, and others is one of mimesis rather than concept or ontology. The *crucifixus dolorosus* was considered an important image of Christ because it closely approximated his physical appearance, a quality made possible and a claim justified because Nicodemus was said to have seen him in life, with his corporeal eyes. As Auria describes it, his eyes having seen Christ, his hand knew what to do.¹⁹ To represent Christ as he appeared on the cross required not a true understanding of his suffering or of his beauty and divinity, but rather an eyewitness encounter.

The medieval *crucifigi dolorosi* not only played an integral role in individual Italian communities (some well into the modern period), they also inspired, or at least prepared the way for, other images. There are numerous examples of *Pietà* sculptures from fourteenth-century Italy still extant, both *in situ* and in museums. These often adopt such details from the *crucifigi dolorosi* as Christ’s eyes remaining open, his side wound wide and continuing to spill blood, his body rigid, bony, and angular. One such example is on display in Cortona’s cathedral (figure 27). In the fifteenth century, there is an unremarked upon proliferation of sculpted crucifixes that are, like their predecessors,

¹⁹ “...che quanto havea l’Occhio suo ben visto, havea pure saputo ben raffigurar la mano.” *Il vero ed original ritratto*, 6.

more violent in their rendition of Christ's death than are contemporary paintings of the same subject. A crucifix in San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice (figure 12), attributed to Brunelleschi, clearly makes use of details from the violently-rendered medieval examples: for example a twisting composition, a protruding ribcage, folds of skin bunched over the nail head on Christ's feet, and open eyes and mouth that encourage interaction with the viewer. Other life-sized, carved crucifixes also appear throughout central Italy in the fifteenth century, many thought to be the work of "Giovanni Tedesco," a German master named Johannes.²⁰ Whether or not a single German master was responsible for these many carved crucifixes, whether it was several foreign sculptors, or, as could similarly be the case for the medieval *crucifigi dolorosi*, whether Italian sculptors were at work, these crucifixes embody, to some degree, many of the qualities their medieval counterparts had displayed. For example, the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria displays a crucifix dating to circa 1460, which was incorporated into Perugino's Monteripido altarpiece for the Franciscan convent of Monteripido in Perugia in 1502 (figure 28).²¹ The crucifix hangs on a three-dimensional Latin cross that is affixed to a painted panel that depicts a placid crucifixion scene with Mary, John, the Magdalene, and St. Francis flanking the cross and two angels collecting blood from Christ's pierced hands in golden chalices.²² Compared to the rosy and peaceful figures

²⁰ These fifteenth-century "German" sculptures remain extant especially throughout Umbria. Elvio Lunghi connects them to the movement of the Observant Franciscans. See *La Passione degli Umbri*, 155ff.

²¹ In the sixteenth century, we find a trend of attaching carved crucifixes to painted scenes of the Crucifixion. The sculptures tend to be older and already established in the church space before being incorporated into a multi-media altarpiece. Most were carved in the fifteenth century, but some are even older, dating to the fourteenth or even thirteenth century, for example, Giovanni Pisano's crucifix in Pistoia's church of Sant'Andrea. For an extensive discussion on the conjoining of diverse media in early modern devotional art, see Iris Wenderholm, *Bild und Berührung: Skulptur und Malerei auf dem Altar der italienischen Frührenaissance* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2006).

²² The panel is, in fact, double sided, and the reverse depicts a scene of the Coronation of the Virgin, also by Perugino.

surrounding him, Christ appears pale and rigid. His veins, now blue from having been drained of their blood, are visible over his entire body, and bright red blood gushes out from his five crucifixion wounds. His ribs are visible beneath the skin of his torso, his eyes and mouth remain open, and the skin on the top of his foot bunches above the nail head. Christ's delicate curls likewise fall in stark contrast over his white, over-extended shoulders. Like Brunelleschi's crucifix, this one displays a much higher degree of naturalism than did the medieval crucifixes. Christ's body is carved much more corpulently, outfitted with significant musculature, especially in the legs. The corpus is also much straighter, not dramatically twisted like many of the *crucifixi dolorosi*.

These differences are a marker of a different time, with different concerns and values, different needs and desires, but the relationship between such crucifixes as that attributed to Giovanni Tedesco and the earlier *crucifixi dolorosi* is clear to see. Although later generations did not choose to reproduce the level of violence embodied by the medieval crucifixes' imagery, they either found value in adapting some of its details or were simply accustomed to their presence in images of the crucified Christ. It is likely that both factors were at play. The *crucifixi dolorosi*, then, played an essential but previously unrecognized role in Italian devotional imagery and devotional practices, both in the late Middle Ages and well into the early modern period. Their powerful, even visceral imagery impacted their contemporary viewers as much as it left its mark on the art of centuries to come.

APPENDIX: CATALOGUE OF ITALIAN CRUCIFIXI DOLOROSI

1. CHIOGGIA, SAN DOMENICO

This colossal crucifix has been variously dated to ca. 1350-60 (de Francovich) or ca. 1300-20 (von Alemann-Schwarz). Hoffmann, who also discusses it, offers no date. The crucifix measures 450 cm from highest point of the cross to its base, and the corpus measures 330 cm. It is made from polychromed wood, the corpus carved from poplar and the cross from spruce. The crucifix was most recently restored in 2003-2005 by the Soprintendenza of Venice (#6081)

Bibliography: De Francovich, 220-223; von Alemann-Schwarz, 395-396; Hoffmann, 123.

2. CORTONA, SANTA MARGHERITA

The crucifix in Cortona has been given dates from the late thirteenth century (Maetzke) to the end of the fourteenth century (de Francovich, who gives the range 1370-90).

Hoffmann dates it to ca. 1300. It was originally carved for Cortona's church of San Francesco, but was moved to its current home in Santa Margherita in the early seventeenth century. Its cross measures 259 x 175 cm and its corpus 147 x 117 cm. Also made from polychromed wood, the corpus comprises variously pieces of wood (type not identified) roughly nailed together. The seams were covered over with canvas and then polychromy, so they are not visible. The hair is made from wood, as is the blood spurting from the side wound; all other blood was fashioned from painted stucco. The folds of skin over the nail heads were built in canvas and then painted over. The cross was carved from poplar, except the top terminal, which was a later addition and carved from cypress. The crucifix was restored in 1979 by Barbara Schleicher, and the report was published in Maetzke.

Bibliography: Domenico Bacci; de Francovich, 212; Maetzke; Hoffmann, 115-116.

3. FABRIANO, SANT'ONOFRIO

The Fabriano crucifix was moved to its current location in Sant'Onofrio, according to de Francovich, after the church for which it was carved, San Francesco, was demolished. It has been dated variously to the late-thirteenth to early-fourteenth century (de Francovich), to ca. 1320-30 (von Alemann-Schwarz), and, most recently, to the early fourteenth century (Casciaro). It measures 212 cm tall. According to de Francovich, the crucifix was highly significant to the local *beato* Francesco Venimbeni (d. 1322), but I have found no evidence of this. Hoffmann notes that the crucifix recently underwent restoration.

Bibliography: de Francovich, 175-177; von Alemann-Schwarz, 392-393; Hoffmann, 110-111; Casciaro.

4. FLORENCE, SANTA MARIA NOVELLA

The crucifix in Santa Maria Novella was dated by de Francovich to ca. 1320-40, and both Lisner and Giusti accept this date range. Von Alemann-Schwarz suggests ca. 1330-40, while Hoffmann pushes the date earlier to ca. 1300-20. Giusti asserts that the cross was not made for the corpus, but was fashioned earlier, ca. 1270-80. The cross measures 167 x 114 cm and is made from cedar wood. The hair on the corpus was fashioned from polychromed hemp; other materials were not recorded. The Opificio delle Pietre Dure restored the crucifix in 1979-80.

Bibliography: de Francovich, 208-209; von Alemann-Schwarz, 386-387; Giusti; Hoffmann, 108-110.

5. ORISTANO, SAN FRANCESCO

The “Crocifisso di Nicodemo” is thought to have been brought to Oristano by the Franciscans, possibly from Pisa as Hoffmann suggested. De Francovich dated it to ca. 1320-30, which von Alemann-Schwarz accepted. Branca offered mid-fourteenth century, while Hoffmann suggested before 1320, Lunghi ca. 1300, and Sari late-fourteenth or early-fifteenth century. The cross measures approximately 290 cm tall, the corpus 196 x 195 cm. The wood used was pearwood, carved in various pieces that were fixed together. The crucifix was restored in 1955 by the Istituto Centrale di Restauro in Rome.

Bibliography: de Francovich, 206-208; von Alemann-Schwarz, 385-386; Branca; Sari; Hoffmann, 107-108.

6. ORVIETO, SAN DOMENICO

The crucifix in Orvieto’s San Domenico was dated by de Francovich to ca. 1285-95, von Alemann-Schwarz to ca. 1330-40, and Lunghi to the late thirteenth century. The crucifix measures under life-sized, and Lunghi asserts that its forked cross is original.

Bibliography: de Francovich, 178-179, 197-199; von Alemann-Schwarz, 392; Hoffmann 122.

7. PALERMO, CATHEDRAL

The crucifix in Palermo’s Cathedral, known as the Crocifisso Chiaramonte, has been dated variously to before 1311 (de Francovich), ca. 1330-40 (von Alemann-Schwarz), and before 1306 (Kaley). Measured from the tip of its hands to the bottom of its feet, the corpus measures 215 cm tall, and 158 cm across. The corpus was carved from limewood, except the back panel, which was carved from poplar, and the arms, carved from cypress. Cord was used to fashion the crown of thorns, hemp for the hair, canvas for the details of the face and for streams of blood, and woodchips for the larger drops of blood; all of these materials were covered by polychromy. These materials were all discovered and recorded by the 1990-93 restoration, which was published in Kaley (pages 29-30).

Bibliography: de Francovich, 197-198; von Alemann-Schwarz, 391; Hoffmann, 121-122; Kaley.

8. PISA, SAN GIORGIO DEGLI INNOCENTI (PREVIOUSLY, ‘DEI TEUTONICI’)

This crucifix was discovered by Paleo Bacci in 1922, in a tabernacle in the apse of the church; he dated it to the first half of the fourteenth century. De Francovich then dated it to ca. 1315, von Alemann-Schwarz to after 1315; Hoffmann accepted de Francovich's dating, and Carletti and Ciometti place it in the early fourteenth century as well. The corpus measures 180 cm tall, and the cross 210 cm tall. The sculpture was carved from poplar; gesso and glue were used for much of the blood, and hemp and glue for much of the hair. It was restored prior to being placed in a 2000 exhibit in Pisa, published in the volume, *Sacre Passioni*.

Bibliography: Paleo Bacci, de Francovich, 181; von Alemann-Schwarz 388-389; Hoffmann, 96-98; Tomasi; Carletti and Ciometti.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

De Francovich		von Alleman-Schwarz		Hoffmann	
Andria, Cathedral	c. 1280-1300				
Bolzano, S. Nicolò	c. 1330-50				
Certaldo, S. Andrea	c. 1340-50				
Chioggia, S. Domenico	c. 1350-60	Chioggia, S. Domenico	c. 1300-1320	Chioggia, S. Domenico	gives no date
Cortona, S. Margherita	c. 1370-90			Cortona, S. Margherita	c. 1300
Fabriano, S. Onofrio	c. 1300	Fabriano, S. Onofrio	c. 1320-30	Fabriano, S. Onofrio	gives no date
Florence, S. Maria Novella	c. 1330-40	Florence, S. Maria Novella	c. 1330-40	Florence, S. Maria Novella	c. 1300-20
Lucera, Cathedral	c. 1335-45	Lucera, Cathedral	c. 1345-55	Lucera, Cathedral	c. 1300-25
Montedivole, ex-chiesa del crocifisso	early 14th c				
Montepulciano, S. Agnese	c. 1350-70				
Naples, S. Chiara	c. 1310-20				
Naples, S. Maria a Piazza	c. 1250-75				
Oristano, S. Francesco	c. 1320-30	Oristano, S. Francesco	c. 1320-30	Oristano, S. Francesco	before 1320
Orvieto, S. Domenico	c. 1285-95	Orvieto, S. Domenico	c. 1330-40	Orvieto, S. Domenico	gives no date
Palermo, Cathedral	before 1311	Palermo, Cathedral	c. 1330-40	Palermo, Cathedral	gives no date
Pisa, R. Conventorio di S. Anna	c. 1300				
Pisa, S. Giorgio dei Teutonici	1315	Pisa, S. Giorgio dei Teutonici	after 1315	Pisa, S. Giorgio dei Teutonici	c. 1315
S. Gimignano, S. Pietro	c. 1350-75	S. Gimignano, S. Pietro	c. 1360	S. Gimignano, S. Pietro	after 1300
S. Miniato al Tedesco, Santuario S. Mini	c. 1350-60	San Miniato al Tedesco	c. 1330-1360	S. Miniato al Tedesco	gives no date
Siena, S. Domenico	c. 1340-50				
Split, Cathedral	c. 1280-90	Split, Cathedral (St. Dujé)	c. 1310-20	Split, Cathedral (St. Dujé)	before 1310
Sulmona, Cathedral	c. 1350	Sulmona, Cathedral	c. 1350	Sulmona, Cathedral	several decades before 1350
Tolentino, S. Nicola	c. 1290-1300	Tolentino, S. Nicola	c. 1320-30	Tolentino, Cathedral	gives no date
Venice, S. Giovanni Nuovo	early 14th c			Venice, S. Giovanni Nuovo	before 1300
		Genoa, Museo Palazzo Bianco	c. 1350-75	Genoa, Museo Palazzo Bianco	after 1300
				Montelupo, S. Giovanni	gives no date

Table 1. List of *crucifigi dolorosi* included by de Francovich, von Alemann-Schwarz and Hoffmann



Figure 1. Fresco of the Crucifixion between Mary, John, and two Saints, first quarter of the 14th century, San Domenico, Orvieto



Figure 2. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, end of the 13th century, San Domenico, Orvieto



Figure 2a. Detail of figure 2



Figure 2b. Detail of figure 2



Figure 2c. Detail of figure 2



Figure 2d. Detail of figure 2

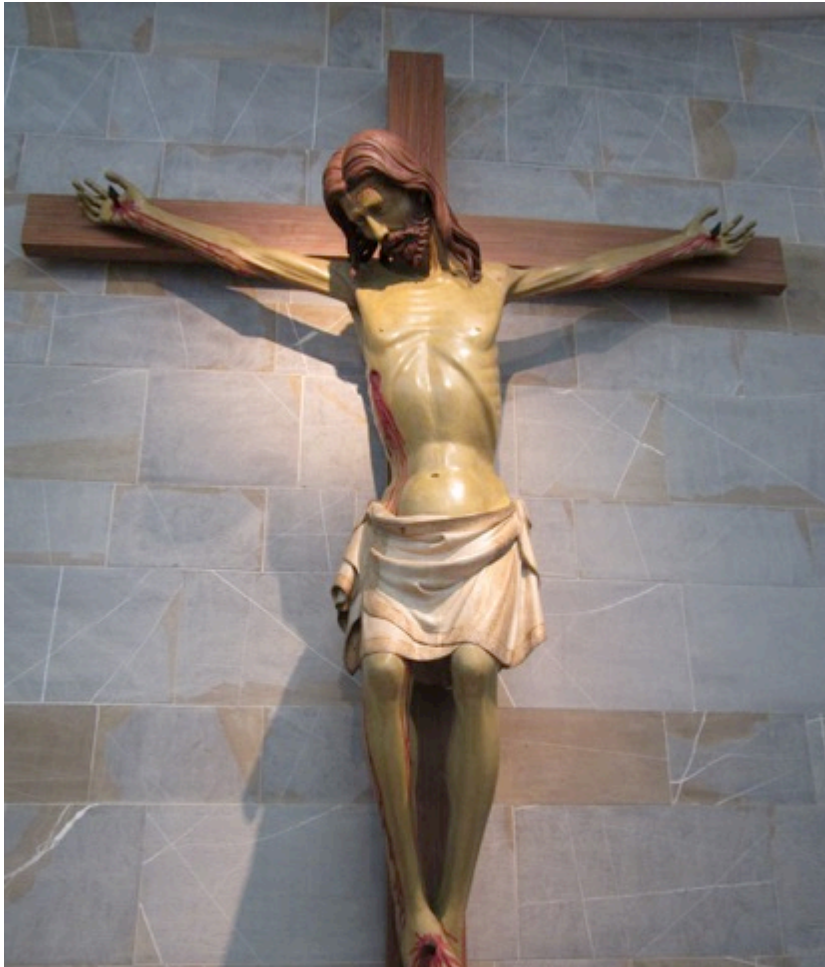


Figure 3. Giovanni di Balduccio, *Wood Crucifix*, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, c. 1320-30



Figure 3b. Detail of figure 3



Figure 4. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, fourteenth century, attributed to “German School”; SS Ognissanti, Florence



Figure 5. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, fourteenth century, San Lorenzo in Damaso, Rome



Figure 6. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, early 14th century



Figure 6a. Detail of figure 6



Figure 7. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, early fourteenth century, San Domenico, Chioggia



Figure 7a. View of figure 7 from below to the right



Figure 7b. View of figure 7 from below to the left



Figure 7c. Detail of figure 7



Figure 7d. Detail of figure 7



Figure 7e. Detail of figure 7



Figure 7f. Detail of figure 7



Figure 8. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, early 14th century, Sant'Onofrio (Santa Scala), Fabriano



Figure 8a. Detail of figure 8



Figure 8b. Detail of figure 8



Figure 9. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, c. 1280, Santuario di Santa Margherita, Cortona



Figure 9a. Detail of figure 9



Figure 9b. Detail of figure 9



Figure 9c. Detail of figure 9



Figure 10. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, early fourteenth century, San Francesco, Oristano



Figure 10a. View of figure 10 from outside chapel



Figure 10b. Frontal view of figure 10



Figure 10c. View of figure 10 from below right



Figure 10d. Detail of figure 10



Figure 10e. Detail of figure 10



Figure 10f. Detail of figure 10



Figure 11. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, early fourteenth century, Cathedral, Palermo



Figure 11a. Detail of figure 11

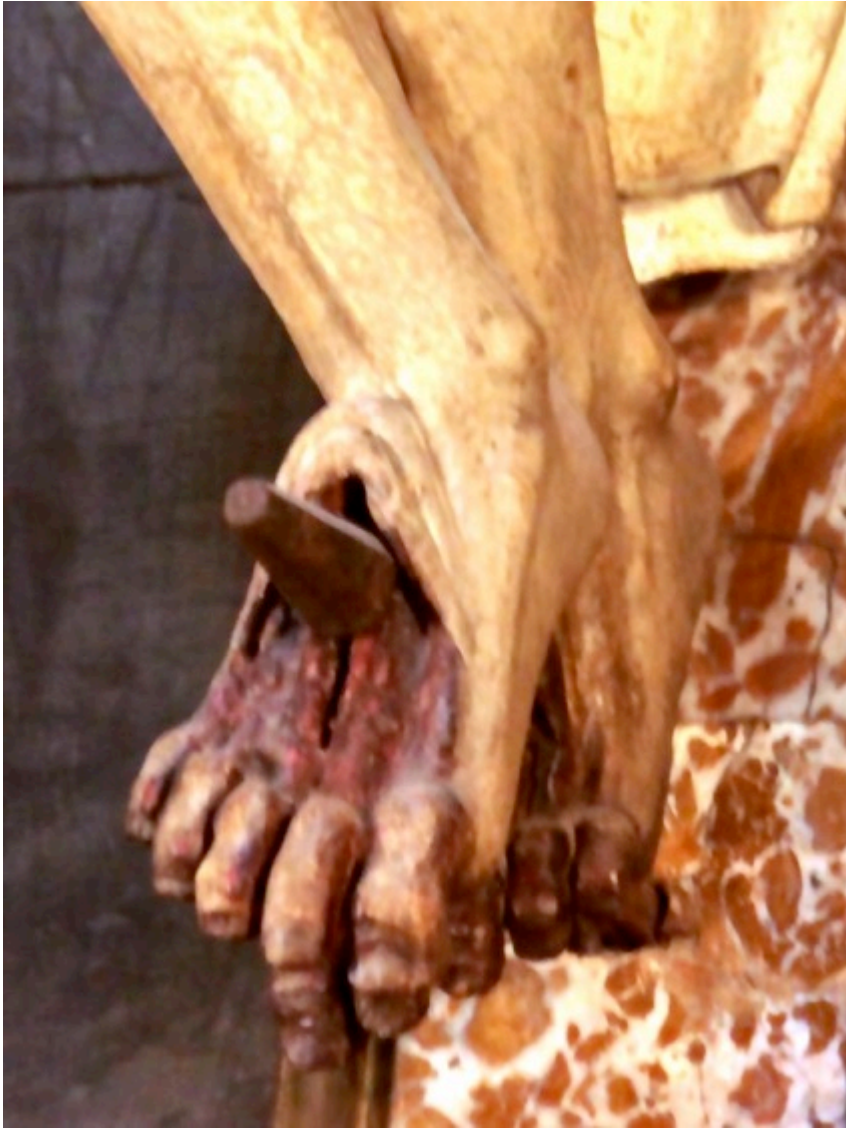


Figure 11c. Detail of figure 11



Figure 11d. Detail of figure 11



Figure 12. Brunelleschi (attrib.), *Crucifix*, second half of the fifteenth century, San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice



Figure 13. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, ca. 1304 (or late thirteenth – first quarter of the fourteenth century), St. Maria im Kapitol, Cologne



Figures 13a (above) and 13b (below). Details of figure 13



Figure 14. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, fourteenth century, Cathedral, Lucera



Figure 15. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, early fourteenth century, Allerheiligenkappelle, Cologne



Figure 16. *Crucifixus dolorosus*, detail, early fourteenth century, San Giorgio degli Innocenti (previously, dei Teutonici), Pisa



Figure 17. Arnolfo di Cambio, Tomb of Cardinal de Braye, c. 1282, San Domenico, Orvieto



Figure 18. Pulpit (detail), 1311, Cathedral, Benevento



Figure 19. Seal of Dominican Order General Munio di Zamora, c. 1285



Figure 20. Giotto, *Croce dipinta*, c. 1285, Santa Maria Novella, Florence



Figure 21. Saint Francis Praying before the Crucifix in San Damiano, c. 1295, Upper Church, Basilica of San Francesco, Assisi



Figure 22. The Funeral of Saint Francis, c. 1295, Upper Church, Basilica of San Francesco, Assisi



Figure 23. Giotto, *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, c. 1300, Musée du Louvre, Paris



Figure 23a. Detail of figure 23

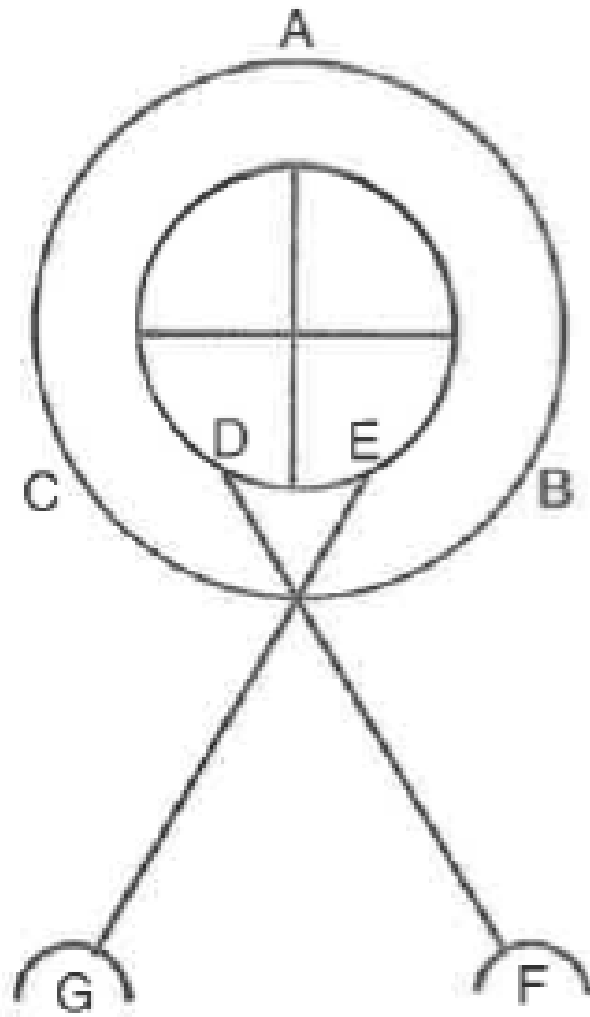


Figure 24. Diagram from Bacon's *Perspectiva*, depicting the species traveling through the optic nerves, which cross before entering the brain.



Figure 25. Fatimid crystal reliquary of the Holy Blood, 10th century, Quedlinburg Domschatz



Figure 26. Ugolino di Prete Ilario, Domenico di Meo, and Giovanni di Buccio Leonardelli, Fresco of the Crucifixion, 1357-1363, Cappella del Corporale, Cathedral, Orvieto



Figure 27. *Pietà*, fourteenth century, Concattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta, Cortona



Figure 28. Perugino, *Monteripido Altarpiece*, 1502, with Giovanni Tedesco (attrib.), *crucifix*, c. 1460, Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia

CURRICULUM VITAE

Meredith Devorah Raucher was born on 7 January 1984 in New York, New York. She graduated *cum laude* from Dartmouth College in January 2006 with a degree in Art History, in which department she earned highest honors. She was awarded her M.A. in the History of Art from The Johns Hopkins University in 2008. During the summers of 2008 and 2009, she attended the German School at Middlebury College. As a graduate student in the Department of the History of Art at Johns Hopkins, Meredith received several travel grants, including the Sadie and Louis Roth Fellowship and the Singleton Fellowship. She was awarded a Cazel Fellowship for dissertation writing in 2013 and the Hall Teaching Fellowship for the spring semester in 2014, during which she taught “Constantinople from Founding to Fall: Art of the Byzantine Empire.” She also taught at Hood College (2010) and the George Washington University (2012). Meredith spent the academic year 2014-2015 in residence in Rome, Italy as a fellow of the Gerda Henkel Stiftung. This dissertation was defended in the Department of the History of Art at the Johns Hopkins University on 10 November 2015.