

Meditatio – Refashioning the Self

Intersections

Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture

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Meditatio – Refashioning the Self

Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and
Early Modern Intellectual Culture

Edited by

Karl Enenkel and Walter Melion



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INTRODUCTION: TYPES AND FUNCTIONS OF MEDITATION
IN THE TRANSITION FROM LATE MEDIEVAL TO
EARLY MODERN INTELLECTUAL CULTURE

Karl Enenkel and Walter S. Melion*

The interdisciplinary colloquium *Discourses of Meditation in Art and Literature, 1300–1700*, held at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS) in April 2009, provided the initial impetus for the papers, now much revised, that make up this issue of *Intersections*. The volume aims at examining the forms and functions, ways and means of meditation in the late medieval and early modern period, c. 1300–c. 1600. Meditation/ *meditatio* may best be described as a self-imposed *disciplinary regime*, consisting of *mental* and *physical exercises* that allowed the practitioner to engender and evaluate his self-image, and thence to emend and refashion it. In practice, meditation often consisted of internal exercises that mobilized the sensitive faculties of motion, emotion, and sense (both external and internal) and the intellectual faculties of reason, memory, and will, with a view to reforming the soul. Techniques of visualization were frequently utilized to engage the soul's mediating function as *vinculum mundi*, its pivotal position in the great chain of being between heaven and earth, temporal and spiritual experience. Indeed, it may be right to claim that meditation was a process enabling the soul to discern its lineaments, for the purpose of self-amendment, self-reformation, and self-refashioning. As will be evident from the essays here gathered, there was not one process but many, and these processes would seem to have been applied for various ends, both secular and sacred.

Meditation possesses an ancient pedigree, as Pierre Hadot has amply demonstrated in articles and monographs on the Stoic, Epicurean, and Neo-Platonic philosophies. Construed as a spiritual exercise, it plays a crucial role in what he dubs the 'panorama of Stoico-Platonic inspired philosophical therapeutics'.¹ Amongst other sources, Hadot cites Philo

* The editors are grateful to the NIAS for having generously sponsored this conference.

¹ Hadot P., *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. A.I. Davidson, trans. M. Chase

of Alexandria's *Allegorical Interpretations*, that describe meditation (*melete*) as one of the chief therapeutic exercises, and *Who Is the Heir of Divine Things*, that enumerates such complementary therapies as 'research (*zetesis*), thorough investigation (*skepsis*), reading (*anagnosis*), listening (*akroasis*), attention (*prosoche*), self-mastery (*enkrateia*), and indifference to indifferent things'.²

In the philosophical traditions studied by Hadot, meditation is the process of thought that heightens *prosoche*, the mind's attention to itself and to God, the divine *logos*: both kinds of attentiveness must be cultivated, since presence of mind makes discernible the *logos*'s presence to consciousness. Moreover, meditation operates through the application of spiritual vigilance: it assays the adept's strength of moral conviction, evaluating how and in what degree his thoughts and actions conform to the philosophy, that is, the fundamental rule of life, he claims to have embraced. For the Stoics, this *kanon* posits a fundamental distinction between the order of nature with its necessary causes and effects, and the order of human morality with its freedom to choose between good and evil; for the Epicureans, the *kanon* distinguishes between the kinds and degrees of human desire, endorsing only those desires that may be categorized neither as unnatural nor unnecessary. Meditation consists in applying these canons to ourselves, first by calling them to mind as clearly and cogently as we can, so that they become fully available, and second, by appraising our words and deeds in light of these principles, and amending our behaviour accordingly. If this procedure enlists our best resources of memory and cognition, it also requires us rhetorically to visualize examples of good and bad conduct, against which to measure our adherence to the rule of life espoused. Amongst other examples, Hadot cites the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius and *Manual* of Epictetus, both of which exhort the reader to keep such epitomes always before his eyes.³

The spiritual exercises of ancient philosophy proved fundamental to the most influential meditative programme of the sixteenth century, Ignatius of Loyola's *Exercitia spiritualia*, as Paul Rabbow has convincingly shown in *Seelenführung*, his classic study of Stoic and Epicu-

(Malden, MA – Oxford, et al.: 1995) 84; idem, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris: 1981).

² Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* 84.

³ Ibid., 131–132.

rean methods of meditation.⁴ Hadot leavens this account by adducing patristic sources equally decisive for the Ignatian reformulation of the spiritual exercise as an instrument of Christian *reformatio*. Basil of Caesarea was the theologian who installed *prosoche* as an essential component of the monastic life, in which meditative devotion serves crucially to foster the soul's watchfulness, its careful attention to spiritual matters, and shores up the monk's efforts to convert his heart into a fitting habitation of God. For Basil, meditation forms the basis for the examination of conscience, a point he argues in "In illud attende tibi ipsi", his famous sermon on *Deuteronomy* 15: 9: 'Beware lest perhaps a wicked thought steal in upon thy heart'. Basil's exegesis of this passage would seem in turn to derive from Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, in which verse 1: 7, 'If thou know not thyself, O fairest amongst women', is read as a call to scrutinize the soul's every motion of sense, feeling, and thought. Responding to Origen, Athanasius in the *Life of Anthony* explicitly equates meditative *prosoche* with the examination of conscience, on the warrant of scriptural passages such as *Proverbs* 4: 23, 'With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth out from it', and 2 *Corinthians* 13: 5, 'Try your own selves if you be in the faith; prove ye yourselves'.⁵

In her magisterial study of meditative rhetoric and imaging, *The Craft of Thought*, Mary Carruthers closely examines the full spectrum of monastic schemata that enabled the mental practice of spiritual exercises. Amongst the many popular *machinae*, one of the most effective was the Prudentian *Psychomachia*, which concludes with a paronomastic chain of images signifying the triumph of Faith and Concord in Christ their source.⁶ In a series of punning tropes on *arca* (ark), *arcana* (secrets), *arcēs* (citadels), and *arcus* (arches), Prudentius constructs a meditative itinerary leading from Noah's ark and the ark of the covenant, which enshrined divine *arcana* under the old dispensation, to the visionary *civitates* of the new, comprised by the visions of the heavenly Jerusalem in *Ezekiel* 40 and *Apocalypse* 21, and by the parabolic city on a hill in *Matthew* 5, that signifies the building of

⁴ Rabbow P., *Seelenführung. Methodik der Exerzitionen in der Antike* (Munich: 1954) 55–90.

⁵ On Origen, Basil, and Athanasius as proponents of *prosoche*, see Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 130–131, 134, and 139.

⁶ On Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, the mnemonic *catena*, and the inventive power of *paronomasia*, see Carruthers M., *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge: 1998) 143–150; esp. 149–150.

the apostolic Church. These are versions of the divine citadel through whose arched gateways enter Faith and Concord, personifications of the Christian community, there to dwell eternally.

The sequence of *paranomasiae* encodes an exegetical operation – the transformation of Old Testament types (the covenantal arks of Noah and of Moses) into New Testament antitypes (the Church of Christ and the heavenly kingdom it adumbrates). The trope of building up signifies the layered process of exegetical unfolding, that itself bears witness to the monk's part in raising the edifice of faith, wherein he strives to domicile his body and soul. As Carruthers observes, the *meditans* tracks his progress from link to link of the mnemonic chain, by utilizing 'rhetorical ornament[s] of great inventive power': *enargeia* confers clarity and vividness on the interlocked components, and *ekphrasis* refashions them pictorially into the descriptive image of a building being constructed.⁷ These sites and sights are seen to conceal divine mysteries (*arcana*) within an allegorical form – ark, arch, fortress – that encodes diverse materials and inspires further meditative concatenations.

Monastic spiritual exercises often seem infinitely generative when compared with early modern meditative schemes such as the Ignatian *Exercitia spiritualia* and their offspring, which attempt discursively to conform the *meditans* (lay or clerical) to a doctrinal norm, even while defending his right freely to engage in meditation as a private process of self-conformation to Christ.⁸ The immense success of Ignatius's exercises resulted from his ability to reconcile these ideal functions – public and private, corporate and individual – within a performative framework subdivided into measurable units, that progresses by stages from the examination of conscience to the contemplation of divine love.

⁷ Ibid., 150.

⁸ On the *Exercitia spiritualia*, the literature on which is vast, see Fabre P.-A., *Ignace de Loyola. Le lieu de l'image. Le problème de la composition de lieu dans les pratiques spirituelles et artistiques jésuites de la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle* (Paris: 1992); O'Malley J.W., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass. – London: 1993) 37–50, 127–133; Fabre P.-A., "Les Exercices spirituels sont-ils illustrables?", in Giard L. – Vaucelles L. de (eds.), *Les Jésuites à l'âge baroque 1540–1640* (Grenoble: 1996) 197–209; Ruhstorfer K., *Das Prinzip ignatianischen Denkens. Zum geschichtlichen Ort der 'Geistlichen Übungen' des Ignatius von Loyola*, Freiburger Theologische Studien 161 (Freiburg – Basel – Vienna: 1998) 112–219; Palmer M.E., *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599* (St. Louis: 1996).

Again, however, it is worth emphasizing that there were many approaches to the meditative life, even after the publication and papal ratification of the *Exercitia spiritualia* in 1548, as we want now to indicate by examining three important examples: the *Glossa ordinaria et interlinearis* and its summons deeply to meditate the parables of Christ;⁹ the *Humanae salutis monumenta* (*Monuments/Instructions of Human Salvation*) of Benito Arias Montano, one of the first scriptural emblem books, that supplies verbal and visual, poetic and pictorial instruments for meditating the history of human redemption;¹⁰ and *Le pelerin de Lorete* (*Pilgrim of Loreto*) of Louis Richeome, S.J., that adapts one of Ignatius's chief meditative devices, the composition of place, expanding it into a virtual pilgrimage to the Marian shrine of Loreto.¹¹ Whereas the *Glossa* is exegetical, and the *Monumenta* emblematic, the *Pelerin de Lorete* is heuristic, in that it inspires the reader to embark on a journey, to imagine and grapple with the problems such a voyage entails both for the body and the soul, and ultimately to secure the goal of reaching the reliquary sanctuary of Loreto, where the mystery of the Incarnation, first bodied forth in this place, becomes fully manifest to the mind, heart, and spirit.

The *Monumenta* and *Pelerin de Lorete* were designed to address a mixed audience of lay and clerical *meditantes*, ready and willing to take up the process of soul-formation. The *Glossa*, first resort of exegetes, both Reformed and Roman Catholic, became increasingly accessible to lay readers upon publication of the first printed editions by Adolph Rusch (Strassburg: 1480–1481), Anton Koberger (Nuremberg: 1487), and Johannes Petri and Johannes Froben (Basel: 1498).¹² The meditative templates on offer in these three books would have appealed

⁹ I have consulted the Venetian edition of 1588, which derives ultimately from the Basil edition of 1508: *Biblia Sacra cum glossis. Interlineari, et ordinaria, Nicolai Lyrani Postilla, ac Moralitatibus, Bergensis Additionibus, et Thoringi Replicis*, 7 vols. (Venice, Società dell'Aquila [Giovanni Varisco and Comp.]: 1588).

¹⁰ Arias Montano B., *Humanae salutis monumenta* B. Ariae Montani studio constructa et decantata (Antwerp, Christopher Plantin: 1571).

¹¹ Richeome L., *Le pelerin de Lorete. Voeu à la glorieuse Vierge Marie Mere de Dieu* (Lyon, Pierre Rigaud: 1607). I have consulted the English translation of 1629: Worsley E. (trans.), *The Pilgrim of Loreto. Performing His Vow Made to the Glorious Virgin Mary Mother of God. Conteyning Divers Devout Meditations upon the Christian and Cath. Doctrine* (Paris, n.p.: 1629), in Rogers D.M. (ed.), *English Recusant Literature* 285 (Ilkley – London: 1976).

¹² On early printed editions of the *Glossa*, see Froehlich K. – Gibson M.T., *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81*, 4 vols. (Turnhout: 1992) VII–XXI, esp. XVI–XIX.

widely, being exclusive neither to theologians nor emblematisers, nor again, to Jesuits.

Printed editions of the *Glossa ordinaria et interlinearis* incorporate four species of scriptural commentary: the so-called common glosses ascribed to Walafrid Strabo, the interlinear glosses of Anselm of Laon, the postilla of Nicholas of Lyra, and the additions of Paulus Brugensis. In the common gloss attaching to *Luke* 8: 9, 'And his disciples asked him what this parable might be', Walafrid Strabo admonishes the exegete to meditate the parables, if he wishes firmly to grasp them and fathom their innermost secrets. The reference is to the Parable of the Sower, recounted in *Matthew* 13, *Mark* 4, and *Luke* 8:

Later, the parable having been finished (as Mark says), [...] these twelve [disciples] who were with him asked him [Christ] about it. We are instructed morally by this, in as much as – if we wish to grasp the sense of divine words – we set aside all concerns about earthly commotions and enter into the house of God, that is, the secret inner chambers of Scripture, by means of prayer and meditation, declaring, "Open thou my eyes etc."¹³

This passage insists that parables, if they are to be understood, demand the reader's full attention: like the disciples, he must inspect them closely, discover their spiritual meaning, as if he were questioning Christ himself. If parabolic meditation is an interrogative exercise, its objects are the images with which Christ has clothed his meaning. Meditative vision both sees and sees through these images, making them transparent to the meaning they body forth figuratively, as the closing reference to *Psalms* 118: 18 strongly implies: 'Open thou my eyes (revela oculos meos): and I will consider the wondrous things of thy law'.

What are the specifics of this exegetical method that doubles as a meditative programme, in which parabolic images act as figurative conveyers of evangelical doctrine?

Delivered by Christ from a ship docked at Capharnaum on the Sea of Galilee, the Parable of the Sower describes a farmer who goes forth to scatter seeds: some fall onto a thoroughfare, others onto stony

¹³ *Glos. ord. Lucae*, chapt. VIII, fol. 146r, col. 2C: 'Nam mox finita parabola, [...] (ut Marcus ait) [...] interrogaverunt eum [sc. Christum] hi, qui cum eo erant duodecim, parabolam. In quo moraliter instruimur, ut si intelligentiam divinatorum verborum assequi volumus, sepositis terrenorum tumultuum curis domum Dei, id est, occulta scripturae penetralia, orando et meditando intremus, dicentes: "Revela oculos meos etc."'

ground, still others amongst thorns, and some onto good soil, whence alone they yield a thirty-, sixty-, and hundred-fold of grain. Since the apostles approached Christ soon after the fact, asking him to interpret the parable and explain why he teaches in parables here and elsewhere (*Matthew* 13: 36, *Mark* 4: 10, *Luke* 8: 9), this episode functions in the exegetical tradition as the warrant for parabolic instruction, the manner and meaning of which are authorized by Christ.

Christ expounds the parable by emphasizing that its images are figurative, not literal: the seeds are the *verbum Dei* (both the words of the Gospel and Christ as the Word), which are trampled when they fall ‘in viam’, that is, into recalcitrant hearts and minds that refuse to receive Christ; quickly sprout and then wither when they fall ‘in petrosa’, that is, into inconstant souls quick to receive but also to discard the Word; grow but are soon choked when they fall ‘in spinetum’, that is, into hearts initially receptive but then overmastered by quotidian matters and temporal concerns; and take root, flower, and fruit when they fall ‘in terram bonam’, that is, into good Christians who keep the faith, imitating Christ to the fullest extent of their abilities. The *Glossa*, especially the glosses on *Matthew* 13 and *Luke* 8, define the parable as a device used by Christ to demarcate the literalism of the Old Law, anchored in extraneous circumstances, from the figurativeness of the New, that conjoins external to internal matters, infusing mere things with spiritual meanings (‘externis interna contulit, ad quae Iudaei non intraverunt, foris in litera fixi’).¹⁴

Christ devises parables to accommodate his multifarious followers, whose varied desires and inclinations require equally diverse methods of instruction. However, he addresses them mainly to his disciples, speaking *manifeste* to the general public and *parabolice* to his closest supporters, signalling by the phrase, ‘he that hath ears to hear, let him hear’, that what he says is meant spiritually:

[“And he spoke to them many things in parables”]: He does not say ‘all’, because had he [Christ] spoken only in parables, the multitude would have gone away empty, having profited not at all; and so he rendered some things in parables – namely, what counted as mysteries and were not meant to be understood by the multitude, but fit to be known solely by the disciples. [...] Other things he said directly in their proper sense, so that the multitude could understand them.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Glos. ord. Matthaei*, chapt. XIII, fol. 44r, col. 1A.

¹⁵ *Glos. ord. Matthaei*, chapt. XIII, *De Lyra.*, fol. 44r, col. 1B: ‘[...] Non dicit omnia, quia si omnia loqueretur in parabolis, multitudo recessisset vacua sine utilitate; et ideo

The *Glossa* also construes parables as defensive, indeed offensive instruments, mustered up to divide believers from disbelievers. It makes this point emphatically, arguing that the opacity of parables was designed to forestall conversion: their ill-disposed auditors, as if struck blind, failed to recognize the truths thus veiled, and consequently, refused to believe in Christ whom they ultimately crucified. ‘God had blinded them’ (‘excaecavit oculos eorum’), as the *Glossa* avows, superimposing Christ’s trenchant reading of *Isaiah* 6: 9 – ‘Hearing, hear, and understand not: and seeing, see the vision, and know it not’, as cited in *John* 12: 40, onto his gentler paraphrase of this same prophecy in *Matthew* 13: 15, where he uses it to justify parabolic usage.¹⁶ Affrighted by the miraculous events following the Resurrection, as Matthew reports, they later realized the enormity of their transgression, regretting with a heightened compunction their initial failure to understand. On this account, the parables first averted belief, in order finally to secure and strengthen penitential faith in Christ. John’s version, on the contrary, delineates more sharply between belief and disbelief:

It is said that they were blinded, and the Lord’s intentions were hidden from them by means of parables, for this reason, that they might afterward be converted more salubriously. For having failed to comprehend the things obscurely spoken, they failed to believe in [Christ]: and so they crucified him, and then, terrified by the miracles that took place after the Resurrection, they were stung all the more by guilt at so great a crime. Whence their sin having been remitted, they [now] burn with a greater love. But John also cites this passage [i.e., *Isaiah* 6: 9] in the following way: ‘He blinded their eyes, so that they saw not’. Whereby he clearly indicates that they were made blind not so that recollecting those things and regretting their failure to understand, they might at length be converted, for this could only have transpired were they to believe. On the contrary, they were blinded, in order that they might not believe, which they deserved because of their other sins.¹⁷

aliqua parabolice loquebatur – ea scilicet quae erant secreta et non debebant sciri a turba, sed solum a discipulis – [...] alia autem loquebatur manifeste, ita quod turba poterat capere’. Cf. col. 2D (reference to Jerome): ‘secundum Hieronymum ubicumque ponitur hoc verbum designatur mysticus intellectus, quia sub verbis parabolicis alius sensus est per intellectum requirendus’.

¹⁶ *Glos. ord. Matthaei*, chapt. XIII, fol. 44v, col. 1E.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: ‘Dicitur quod ideo excaecati sunt et sententiae domini per parabolas eis occultatae sunt, ut post salubrius converterentur. Nam quia obscure dicta non intellexerunt, ideo non crediderunt in eum, et sic crucifixerunt, et sic post resurrectionem miraculis territi, maioris criminis reatu compuncti sunt. Unde accepta indulgentia ampliori flagrant dilectione. Sed Iohannes hunc locum ita dicit: Propterea non

Most importantly, the *Glossa* singles out *Matthew* 13: 16 ‘Blessed are your eyes, because they see’, as the scriptural locus for the notion of spiritual sight. Whereas the blindness of the Jews arose from their incredulity, the clarity of vision shown by the apostles resulted from their readiness to discern the latent power of divinity, while closely observing the external deeds of Christ (‘non solum facta exteriora conspiciendo, sed virtutem divinitatis latentem intelligendo’).¹⁸ As they saw spiritually, so also did they hear, or again, what their ears heard, their faith led them internally to affirm (‘non solum audiendo exterius, sed etiam per fidem assentiendo interius’).¹⁹ In turn, spiritual discernment originates in the realization that every *res* can be viewed in several ways: it has multiple *meanings*, as becomes apparent when the parable of the sower, the metaphor of stony ground in particular, is compared to the imagery of other parables. The gloss on *Matthew* 13: 5–6, ‘And other some fell upon stony ground [...] and because they had no root, they withered away’, makes this case:

Stony places need quickly to germinate, but the root remains unfixed, for the soil is shallow, that is, there is too little longing for salvation. From this exposition of the Lord we learn that no thing signifies always in the same way. For the rock stands here for hardness of heart, the earth for softness, and the sun for the heat of persecution, whereas elsewhere the sun signifies a good, as for example in ‘the righteous shine like the sun’, the foundation stone strength of faith, and the earth worldly thoughts.²⁰

The emphasis on things seen and the multiplicity of their signifieds/meanings connects to two final points. First, the circumstances in which the parable of the sower was delivered demonstrate that parables consist not only of the Lord’s words but also of his deeds (‘nota non solum verba domini, sed et facta parabolas esse’).²¹ These *facta*

poterant credere, quia iterum dixit Isaias: Excaecavit oculos eorum, ut non viderant. Ubi aperte dicit, non ideo factam excaecationem, ut ea commoniti et dolentes se non intelligere converterentur aliquando. Non enim hoc possent, nisi crederent; sed potius ideo excaecati, ut non crederent, quod aliis peccatis meruerunt’.

¹⁸ *Glos. ord. Matthaei*, chapt. XIII, *De Lyra*, fol. 44v, col. 2H.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Glos. ord. Matthaei*, chapt. XIII, fol. 44r, col. 1A–B: ‘Petrosa cito quaerunt germinare, sed non figitur radix, quia non est alta terra, id est, quia parum inest desiderii salutaris. In hac expositione domini discimus, quia res non semper in eadem significatione ponuntur. Nam petra hic pro duricia, terra pro lenitate mentis, sol pro fervore persecutionis, cum sol alibi in bono – ‘Fulgunt iusti sicut sol’ – et petra in fundamento pro fortitudine fidei, et terra pro terrenis cogitationibus’.

²¹ *Glos. ord. Matthaei*, chapt. XIII, fol. 44v, col. 1E.

are mystical signs ('signa mysticarum rerum'): beyond the scope of the multitude, they require to be seen closely by the disciples and interpreted accordingly.²² As the *Glossa* avers with reference to *Luke* 8: 5 'The sower went out to sow his seed', Christ's progress from shore to sea and action of climbing into the ship, conveyed corporeally what his parabolic sermon conveyed verbally ('idipsum situ corporis, quod processu sermonis insinuans').²³ Both the enacted image and the spoken image signify that the Son of God has entered the world to sow the Word.²⁴ Second, just as Christ expounded the parable of the sower not word for word ('secundum singula verba') but substantively, focusing on its essential meaning ('sed summam sententiae'), so in this way must all parables be interpreted figuratively, rather than literally. The parable of the cornerstone (*Psalm* 117: 22 and *Matthew* 21: 42) is adduced:

But the story told by the Lord himself was a parable, which never requires that the things said are proven to have taken place literally: [as for example] the stone anointed by Jacob is Christ; the stone rejected by the builders is the one, which has been made the head of the corner. But the former was actually performed in deed, the latter only predicted in images (resp. metaphorically, 'in figuris praedictum'). For the former was written by a narrator of past events, the latter foretold by a prophet of events to come.²⁵

In sum, the parable is made up of figurative images that must be read as such. The call to meditate the parable impels the *meditans* to discern the constituent figures encoded in the parabolic *verba* and *facta* being visualized by Christ. This operation is exegetical, for it unfolds scriptural meaning, more often than not by reference to prophetic images, such as *Isaiah* 6: 9, that Christ marshals parabolically. The signifying images of which the parable consists, redound upon the exegete who meditates them, for these images represent the Christian vocation, or better, identity, that he is enjoined to adopt.

²² Ibid.

²³ *Glos. ord. Lucae*, chapt. XIII, fol. 146r, col. 1B.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *Glos. ord. Matthaei*, chapt. XIII, fol. 44v, col. 1F–45r, col. 1A: 'Ipsius autem domini narratio parabola fuit, de qua nunquam exigitur, ut etiam ad literam facta monstrentur, quae sermone proferuntur: Christus est lapis unctus a Iacob, et lapis reprobatus ab aedificantibus, qui factus est in caput anguli. Sed illud etiam in rebus gestis factum est, hoc autem tantum in figuris praedictum; illud quippe scripsit narrator rerum praeteritarum, hoc praenuntiator tantummodo futurorum'.

Benito Arias Montano's *Humanae salutis monumenta*, promulgates a different kind of meditative programme, based in the word-and-image apparatus of the emblem and its attendant poetics. This early scriptural emblem book consists of 71 chapters, each composed of a picture, mottos, and Horatian ode, that encapsulate the history of human salvation from the fall of Adam and Eve to the Last Judgment.²⁶ The publisher, Christopher Plantin, credits the book's texts and images to Arias Montano, describing him as a skilled draftsman and inspired poet.²⁷ Abraham de Bruyn, Pieter Huys, and the Wierix brothers of Antwerp engraved the prints after modelli by Pieter van der Borcht, who was given the task of translating Arias Montano's inventions into working drawings. In his prefaces to the *Monumenta*, Plantin elucidates the relation between the images and texts: Arias Montano, we are told, has displayed his lofty erudition, his perspicuous command of doctrine, and his mastery of sweet and dignified poetic argument, which he has applied to expounding a series of meditative images.²⁸ This book, Plantin continues,

²⁶ For the two variants of the 1571 edition, see Stroomberg H. (comp.) – Stock J. van der (ed.), *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, 1450–1700: The Wierix Family, Book Illustrations*, 2 parts (Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: 2006) I, 23–31, nos. 3.1–3.43; 32–36, nos. 3b.1–3b.42. On the *Humanae salutis monumenta*, see Hänsel S., *Der spanische Humanist Benito Arias Montano (1527–1598) und die Kunst* (Münster: 1991) 68–89; Bowen K.L., “Illustrating Books with Engravings: Plantin's Working Practices Revealed”, *Print Quarterly* 20 (2003) 3–34; Bowen K.L. – Imhof D., *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, New York, et al.: 2008) 107–121; and Melion W.S., *The Meditative Art: Studies in the Northern Devotional Print, 1550–1625 [Early Modern Catholicism and the Visual Arts I]* (Philadelphia: 2009) 13–14; 43–49.

²⁷ “Christophorus Plantinus Lectori S.” [First Preface], in Arias Montano, *Humanae salutis monumenta*, unfoliated: ‘Ariae Montani publicae utilitatis studiosissimi ac de bonis literis et disciplinis optime meriti, Architecturae etiam peritissimi (cur enim nisi ingeniosissimo huic viro, tabularum, quas in hoc opere artificiose caelatas conspicias, admirabilem structuram acceptam referamus?) foecundissimum et quovis doctrinae genere refertissimum opus, id est, unam et septuaginta odas [...]’.

²⁸ “Christophorus Plantinus Lectori S.” [Second Preface], in *ibid.*, unfoliated: ‘Simulac ea, quae a nobis nuper excusa sunt, Humanae salutis monumenta, a Benedicto Aria Montano excelsi ingenii viro, non minus eleganti quam docto poemate conscripta ad multorum doctissimorum et amplissimorum hominum manus pervenerunt, non potuerunt illi summam hominis doctrinam, rerum divinarum cognitionem clarissimam et gravissimum illud argumentum admirabili carminis suavitate et dignitate tractatum summopere non admirari. Eorum enim omnium, quae vel ab ipso Adamo ad Christi D. N. postremum usque iudicium, in sacris libris ad nostram salutem necessaria habentur, seriem et summam tanta certitudine et facilitate complectitur, ut a nemine unquam tanto splendore ac doctrina atque a praestantissimo hoc viro tractatam esse mihi suis verbis sint testati’.

contains two kinds of moral instructions: the first is plainly 'architectonic', consisting of pictorial images of places, persons, and events. This kind is explained by the words of 'architects', in three modes: first by subscriptions that describe the principal argument of the *picturae* and supply straightforward didactic instruction; these sorts of texts are called *inscriptiones*. The second mode consists of *dedicationes*, which either comment on virtue and vice by referring to the contemplation of the *picturae* or indicate the authoritative significance of the persons or events represented. The last mode is represented by appended monostichs, distichs, or other short poems (epigrams) that propose certain ways in which the viewer may use the images. All three types of text should be concise and grave, full of significance and antique flavour, in marked difference from poetic, oratorical, comic, and historical styles. They should always keep up their numerical (mathematical) organisation and clear definitions, which means their architectonic organisation. Otherwise they will be shallow, boring and insignificant. Only writers who are skilled in architecture, are able to compose such texts.²⁹

The second kind of instruction is poetic and consists not of pictorial images but of verbal imagery that depicts things fit to be viewed by the reader ('non imaginibus [...], sed verbis rem omnem depingit, atque ea etiam spectanda legentium sensibus proponit et describit'), describing what pictorial artifice cannot demonstrate ('quae nullo picturae artificio effingi possunt'). This category portrays words, orations, movements of the body and soul, and all forms of intellectual activity. In the *Monumenta*, Plantin avers, both genera observe the rules of *decorum*, for both maintain the sanctity and dignity of piety and religion, applying to this end the resources of architectonic gravity and poetic elegance, along with a plenitude of meanings.³⁰ That the individual *monumenta* have observed these criteria is evident, Plantin asseverates, from the testimony of readers, who have confirmed

²⁹ Ibid.: 'Duplex in hoc libro continetur monimentorum genus: unum est plane Architectonicum, constans picturis et imaginibus locorum, personarum ac rerum gestarum. Hoc architectorum orationibus illustratur, quarum triplex in universum ratio est: aut enim summum totius depictae rei argumentum describitur, et ea doctrinae pars, quam didascaliam vocant, usurpatur; cuius generis orationes *inscriptiones* dicuntur. Quibus vel virtus vel vitium illius imaginis contemplatione annotatur aut personae vel rei gestae auctoritas indicatur, eaque per dedicationes exponi solet. Aut usus aliquis capiendus ex ipsius operis inspectione spectatori proponitur, idque plerunque disticho aut monosticho, vel alias brevi epigrammate expeditur. Totum autem hoc dicendi genus breve, grave, significantissimum atque antiquitatis plenum esse debet, neque cum poetico, aut oratorio, aut comico, aut historico stylo convenire; sed suis numeris et diffinitionibus, hoc est, architectonicis constare; alias ieiunum et frigidum, languensque futurum. Id quod nemo plene assequi imitarive feliciter potest qui architecturae artis peritus non sit'.

³⁰ Ibid.

the book's efficacy, claiming that these 'objects of pleasure' have yet moved them to feel intense sorrow at the sufferings of Christ.³¹

Plantin dwells on these criteria at such length, because the book was so novel, its genre – scriptural emblematics – virtually unprecedented. He makes clear repeatedly that the monuments require to be meditated, if they are to produce their full effects, chief amongst which is the rejuvenation of weary minds ('animis recreandis'), oppressed by too much study and labour. The pleasure to be found here goes hand in hand with a loftiness of theme designed to test even the most perspicacious reader: 'For learned men recognized that [Arias Montano's] treatment of his sacred theme, though both instructive and delightful, and needful to every sort of scholar, would not be easy to understand, on account of its exalted subject. For it wanted, as they said, a reader erudite, devout, and exceedingly attentive, and also well-versed in piety and in holy books'.³² The architectural texts, as we have seen, invite the reader to consider and contemplate the pictorial image, while the complementary poems encourage him to use his senses in meditating the verbal image ('ea etiam spectanda legentium sensibus proponit'). The engraved illustrations, on the other hand, provide clear instructions even for the uneducated ('imperitos etiam [...] luculenter edoceant'), and 'move the spirit' ('ipsumque animum moveant'). In sum, then, the *Monumenta* promulgates a new kind of meditative programme: under the sign of *otium*, it challenges but also tranquillizes the eyes, mind, and heart, settling them on texts and images that explore the theme of salvation, in ways new and old.

Louis Richeome's *Pelerin de Lorete*, as noted above, adapts the meditative form and function of the *Exercitia spiritualia*, to the narrative device of a pilgrimage to the Holy House of Loreto.³³ The journey, replete with circumstantial detail, stands for the meditative itinerary traveled by the reader of the treatise, who desires to ponder the mystery of the Incarnation by visiting its foremost relic, the house at Nazareth

³¹ Ibid. Cf. "Christophorus Plantinus Lectori S." [First Preface], in *ibid.*, unfoliated.

³² Ibid.: 'Videbant quippe homines sapientissimi, fore, ut sancti illius argumenti tractatio, eaque non solum utilis et iucunda, verum etiam omni literatorum generi plane necessaria, propter rerum quae in ea continentur, celsitudinem, non a quovis ita facile intelligeretur: Doctum enim (aiebant) pium et valde attentum beneque in sacris libris et pietate exercitatum lectorem ea desiderat'.

³³ On the *Pelerin de Lorete*, see Fabre P.-A., "Lieu de mémoire et paysage spirituel: les jardins du noviciat de Sant'Andrea del Quirinale selon la *Peinture spirituelle* de Louis Richeome", in Mosser M. – Nys P. (eds.), *Les jardins, art et lieu de mémoire* (Besançon: 1995) 135–148.

where the Virgin Annunciate consented to be the mother of God. Pictorial images serve to signpost the crucial stages of this journey, which ends with the heart's transformation into a holy house of the Lord, inhabited by the presence of Christ. Midway through Book I, in the chapter "Of Prayer, Meditation, and Contemplation", Richeome offers a full account of the ideal meditative exercise, deriving from Ignatius, that privileges three components: *mental images*, *rational order*, and the *transition from meditation to contemplation*. He defines meditation as a discursive practice that aims to apprehend some divine subject, 'noting the causes and effects, and deducing conclusions agreeable to the honour of God, and our good'.³⁴

The first meditation proper begins with a preamble, that adapts the Ignatian technique of the *compositio loci*: the votary fashions a mental image of the place inhabited by the meditative subject, in order better to grasp the subject's lineaments and operations.³⁵ Richeome makes clear that he uses the term 'subject' to signify a mystery of faith. But if the subject is spiritual, such as a virtue or a point of doctrine, we must instead represent it in the 'manner of a parable', clothing it in a representable form.³⁶ Richeome offers up 'sinne' as an example: 'as if we meditate upon sinne, we may imagine the soule shut up, and imprisoned within the body, as in an obscure and loathsome prison; and sinne, as a cruell and monstrous tyrant, a dragon, a serpent, and such as the Divell is painted, and all the holy Doctours doe some-tymes describe it'.³⁷ It is clear from all this, as Pierre-Antoine Fabre, Judy Loach, and Jeffrey Chipps Smith have observed, that Richeome's meditative programme, here as elsewhere, is anchored in images, and moreover, that such mental images are pictorial in form and effect.³⁸ Indeed, he advises those readers whose imaginative faculty proves insufficiently inventive, that they may find it useful to place before

³⁴ Worsley (trans.), *The Pilgrim of Loreto* 49.

³⁵ As described in the subsequent chapter, "How Prayer Should Be Made, and of the Partes, and Use Thereof", in *ibid.* 51.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.* 51–52.

³⁸ See Fabre, "Lieu de mémoire et paysage spirituel"; Chipps Smith J., *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton – Oxford: 2002) 50–52; Loach J., "An Apprenticeship in Seeing: Richeome's *La Peinture spirituelle*", in Dekoninck R. – Guiderdoni-Bruslé A. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *Ut pictura meditatio: The Meditative Image in Northern Art, 1500–1700* (Turnhout: forthcoming); Dekoninck R. *Ad imaginem: Status, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVII^e siècle* (Geneva: 2005) 68–75; 78–81; 119–121.

the eyes ‘some picture or image of the matter we meditate, which may serve instead of these representations, to them that cannot frame this themselves’.³⁹ The function of the first preamble, he adds, is to focus the attention by settling or restraining the imagination, which he characterizes in Augustinian terms, as a ‘flying and wandering faculty, going for the most part out of the house without leave, & carrying our thoughts sometymes before they are aware, as far from the marke, or matter, as the North is from the South’.⁴⁰

The meditative ‘body or corps’ consists of the points to be meditated: ‘one, two, three, or more: as if meditating of the Resurrection of our Saviour, we should make the first point of the tyme or houre of his rying, the second of the glory of his body, the third of the souldiers feare that kept the Sepulcher, the fourth of the apparition and testimony of the Angells, and so in other matters’.⁴¹ We might call this a joint fleshing-out and parsing-up of the image promulgated in the first preamble, and now subjected to closer scrutiny. The body of the meditation leads to what Richeome christens a ‘speach’, that is, an affective conversation between the soul and its maker, in which the votary renders thanks, offers service, begs for the pardon of sins and the grace of amendment, and rehearses what it has come to understand about the meditative subject.⁴² Finally, having discoursed upon the ‘mervailous workes of God’, his ‘will warmed by love’, his ‘soul caste [...] into the armes of [the Creator’s] holy providence’, he ascends by the grace of God from meditation to contemplation of the subject at hand.⁴³

This is an experience of heightened presence, still based in sight, but attentively intensified and thoroughly known in the act of beholding: ‘Contemplation is a regard of the eyes of the soule fastened attentively upon some obiect, as if after having meditated of the creation, she should set her eye of her understanding fast and fixed upon the greatness of God, upon the beauty of the Heavens; or having discoursed of the passion of our Saviour, she behouldeth him present, & seeth him

³⁹ Richeome, *Pilgrime of Loreto* 52.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.* Richeome visualizes the Resurrection to demonstrate how the ‘body or corps of the prayer’ is parsed: ‘as if meditating of the Resurrection of our Saviour, we should make the first point of the tyme or houre of his rying, the second of the glory of his body, the third of the souldiers feare that kept the Sepulcher, the fourth of the apparition and testimony of the Angells, and so in other matters’.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ As described in ‘Of Prayer, Meditation, and Contemplation’, in *ibid.* 49.

crucified, and without any other discourse persevereth constantly in this spectacle'.⁴⁴

This contemplative clarity circles back upon meditation, transforming it into a 'cleere knowledge', whose parts, having been meditatively (that is, discursively) parsed, are all at once sewn into a seamless whole, understood without discourse: 'Then the soule doth contemplate upon her meditation: [...] For the understanding having attentively, and with many reasons to and fro meditated the mystery, and gathered divers lights together, doth frame unto herself a cleere knowledge, wherof without further discourse, one way or other, she enjoyeth (as I may say) a vision which approacheth to the knowledge of Angels, who understand without discourse'.⁴⁵ Whereas meditation is like the reading of a book sentence by sentence, or the chewing of food piece by piece, contemplation is pleasurable not laborious, like 'casting the eyes upon a picture, discerning all at once'.⁴⁶ Given that this account hinges on the act of viewing images, it might be more accurate to compare meditation to the reading of an image in parts, starting from the setting; contemplation to the seeing of the image as a whole into which these parts are altogether subsumed.

We have been examining three paradigms of the meditative exercise, as it was conceived and practiced in early modern Europe: in the *Glossa*, meditation functions exegetically, in the *Monumenta* emblematically, in the *Pelerin* discursively and progressively as the prerequisite to contemplation. As will also be evident, meditation easily accommodated images of all kinds, both actual and virtual, pictorial and imagined. The essays gathered in this volume, written by scholars of art, history, literature, and philosophy, take up the topic of meditation, posing further questions about its forms and functions, kinds and degrees, and exploring the varieties of meaning that meditation, conceived and practiced as a mode of interpretation, brought to consciousness and made graspable. First and foremost, they ask what constitutes a meditative programme? How were such programmes put into practice? By whom were they devised, promulgated, and disseminated? Which

⁴⁴ Ibid. 49–50.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 50. As an example, Richeome cites Moses who, 'having seene the vision of the burning Bush', approached and 'discours[ed] why it consumed not'.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

features were shared in common, which were variable? Or put differently, how, when, and where were meditative exercises described and propagated, and to what ends? Did meditation operate only privately or also publicly, and to what extent was it bounded by the secular and/or sacred aspirations of its practitioners? What is the relation of religious to philosophical meditation, of spiritual exercises to literary, epistolary, or poetic introspection? What is the connection between meditation and the hermeneutic practices associated with the reading of Scripture and other sorts of text?

One of the specifics of late medieval and early modern intellectual life is the participation of new groups – humanists, artists, and vernacular writers, amongst other members of the laity – in intellectual discourse. This fact had an important impact on meditative theory and practice. The new intellectuals would take over the existing religious traditions and transform them into new and different meditative processes. Therefore, the first section of this book is devoted to these new processes, in which *meditatio* is defined in a broader, not exclusively religious sense.

Karl Enekel attempts to understand why in Latin literature between 1300 and 1600, authorial paratexts such as prefaces, letters of dedication, and letters ‘To the Reader’ spectacularly increased in frequency, number, size, and variety of contents. Enekel analyses how these paratexts guide the reader by means of ‘meditative frames’ that tell him how to use the texts properly, and how to format his thoughts in the process of reading and interpreting. Amongst the most important means authors used to safeguard proper textual meditation was the evocation of “living images” of the author, dedicatee, and related persons, along with the creation of visual images in three-dimensional space, such as landscapes, buildings, gardens and other settings, in which intellectual activities were located in the most sophisticated of ways.

Jan Papy unfolds the meditative processes developed by the ‘father of Humanism’, Francis Petrarch, especially in his monumental collection of private letters, the *Familiarium rerum libri*. Papy shows the many ways that Petrarch used his literary re-invention of the ‘private letter’: it functions variously as a medium of methodical autobiographical self-reflexion, introspection, self-investigation, spiritual transformation, cultivation of wisdom, mental self-rewriting, intellectual communication, and humanist *paraenesis* productive of *virtus*, *studia humanitatis*, love of antiquity, and friendship.

Geert Warnar considers how and why the dialogue came to be favoured as a joint instrument of moral instruction and meditative self-formation, in Dutch literary works of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, such as the *Seneka leeren* (*Teachings of Seneca*) and *Tboeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* (*The Book of the Life of Jesus Christ*). Defined by the thirteenth-century Flemish poet Jacob van Maerlant, as a textual and rhetorical conversation, the dialogue allowed authors vividly to convey the process of thoughtful reflection undertaken by the student at his master's instigation, with a view to reforming knowledge and transforming himself.

Paul Smith discusses how the process of self-reflection and meditation takes shape in the works of two of the greatest writers of French literature, Montaigne and Rousseau, both of whom worked on large and extremely influential autobiographical projects. Smith first analyses the meditative methods Montaigne developed in his *Essais*. Most interestingly, each *Essai* represents a *leçon par l'exemple*, i.e., an exemplum of a certain meditative scheme, which the author always shapes in the solitude of his library, while walking, daydreaming, and writing. Second, Smith shows in what way Montaigne's themes of *reverie*, *promenade* and *solitude* inspired Rousseau to create the new theme of the (pre)romantic solitary, ambulant, introspective *rêveur*.

Wolfgang Neuber explores the practice of writing and copying as a process of self-reflexion and meditation in early modern German family books. In doing so, he offers a close analysis of the Beck family book, arguing on this basis that such collections create a special form of intertextuality, in which the self reflects and refracts itself through the act of copying textual sources. The very definition of 'family book' depends on the fact that more than one family member contributes to it.

Four contributions focus on the theoretical discussion of religious meditation in late medieval and early modern theology. Diana Stanciu shows the crucial role meditation plays in the theology of the fifteenth-century nominalist Gabriel Biel, especially in his *Canonis missae expositio* and *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum*. For Biel, the process of meditation represents the *via regia* to spiritual perfection, the most important means to establishing the essence of human existence, the 'facere quod in se est', which – through the aid of divine grace – is achieved by the mystical union with God. Whereas for Jean Gerson, meditation is primarily a volitional and affective process, Biel underlines its intellectual and rational aspects, construing it as

the ‘sparkling of reason’ (*scintilla rationis*) that brings forth mystical union with God.

Jacob Vance closely studies the humanist mysticism of the great biblical scholar Lefèvre d’Etaples, whose conception of meditation as a ratiocinative process mediating between imagination and intellect, reconciles the spiritual thought of Hugh and Richard of Saint Victor, with Pauline doctrine, Pseudo-Dionysian theology, and Neo-Platonic theories of conversion and mystical union. In his editions of key Victorine treatises, especially the commentary on Richard of Saint Victor’s *Trinity*, Lefèvre sought to reform late medieval devotional practice: he maintains that meditation is a mode of rational argument, based in philosophy, that both produces and is produced by faith, and as such, necessarily precedes and facilitates the contemplation of Christian mysteries.

Nikolaus Staubach demonstrates the crucial importance of the act of meditation for the religious reform envisaged by the *Devotio moderna*. Leading modern devotees such as Florens Radewijns (*Tractatulus devotus*), Gerhard Zerbolt von Zutphen (*De spiritualibus ascensionibus* and *Tractatus devotus de reformatione virium anime*), Johannes Busch (*Epistola de vita et passione Domini nostri*) and Wessel Gansfort (*Scala meditationis*), composed whole programs of spiritual exercises (*exercitia spiritualia*) based on the methodical meditation of the Life of Christ and the Saints. In the writings of the modern devotees, theoretical reflection on meditation is always closely connected with religious practice, since these texts are supposed to be used as manuals that aid believers in achieving spiritual progress.

Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen compares competing accounts of meditation on the Passion of Christ, offered by Catholic and Protestant theologians in seventeenth-century England. He takes as his chief examples the converted Catholic poet Richard Crashaw and the Calvinist bishop Joseph Hall, author of the *Art of Divine Meditation* (1606). In his Passion poem *Sancta Maria Dolorum*, Crashaw widens the scope of the Catholic meditative *imitatio Christi* by presenting the acts of reading and writing as avenues to effective participation in Christ’s Passion. In his critique of Catholic meditation, on the other hand, Hall attacks the idea that humans can comprehend, let alone imitate, the suffering of Christ; he downplays the importance of Christ’s bodily pain and argues that the Passion only truly takes place in Christ’s soul.

Three contributors address issues that bear upon the Ignatian meditative tradition. Wietse de Boer analyzes two competing models of the

application of sense, the first penitential and recollective, the second verisimilar and imaginative, that came increasingly to seem incompatible, although Ignatius had himself mobilized both in the *Exercitia spiritualia*. Whereas the composition of place requires that images of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints be visualized as if present to the senses, the sensory examination of conscience appears to have fostered an altogether different operation, based in metonymic substitution, that represents sins by means of their sinful effects.

Focussing on Petrus Canisius's *Notae in evangelicas lectiones* (*Notes on the Gospel Readings*), Hilmar Pabel examines the relation between meditation and confessionalization, showing how Canisius's meditative programme, composed for the Swiss clergy, doubles as an apologetic instrument that inculcates dogma and shores up orthodoxy. The *Notae* marshals scriptural and patristic sources in defense of the faith, compelling the exercitant to appropriate their voices as if they were his own, and thereby to revitalize himself spiritually and renew his commitment to preaching.

Feike Dietz explores the Dutch redactions of one of the most popular of all Jesuit meditative programmes, Herman Hugo's emblematic *Pia Desideria* (*Pious Desires*), which circulated widely in editions printed by the Amsterdam publisher Pieter Paets. His versions adapt the original in distinctive ways, most notably by deleting Hugo's lyrical *subscriptions* and instead relying exclusively upon a melange of pictorial images, biblical mottoes, and prose commentaries, designed to support the missionary project of the *Missio Hollandica* (Dutch Mission).

Three articles concern the meditative form and function of sacred pictorial images. Barbara Baert elucidates the complex interaction between a reliquary artifact, the *Johannesschüssel*, and a reliquary icon, the *vera icon*, the visual merging of which in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries inspired para-liturgical meditation on the relation between *vox* and *verbum*, bodied forth respectively by John and by Jesus. Three case studies reveal how the artifact comes to be subsumed into the icon, in ways that give rise to exegetical meditation on *John* 3: 30, the Baptist's avowal that he must decrease, in order that Christ may increase.

Jan de Jong asks what the term 'devout' signifies when applied by Italian art theoreticians of the sixteenth century: what does it mean to affirm the power of sacred images to propagate meditation, contemplation, and allied states of religious experience? The claim that

the painting's spiritual efficacy correlates to the painter's spiritual perfection, would seem to have coexisted with the counterclaim, voiced amongst others by Vasari and Gabriele Paleotti, that one and the same painting can produce divergent effects in different beholders, depending on their spiritual state.

Walter Melion explicates the compound structure and significance of Maarten van Heemskerck's *Balaam and the Angel in a Panoramic Landscape*: consisting of two large plates, the print offers contradictory accounts of the prophet, that together constitute a meditative crux issuing from the dual exegetical tradition, in which he epitomizes both spiritual blindness and spiritual discernment. The image urges us to consider how the former condition transforms into the latter, when the eye of the spirit, once closed, becomes the eye now opened.

The editors hope that the contributions to this volume may deepen our understanding of the important intellectual exercise of *meditatio* in late medieval and early modern culture, give an idea of the various mental processes and literary forms involved, and stimulate further research into this fascinating but still too little investigated topic.

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I. MEDITATIO AND REFASHIONING THE SELF IN
LITERATURE, 1300-1600

MEDITATIVE FRAMES AS READER'S GUIDANCE IN NEO-LATIN TEXTS*

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In the late medieval and early modern period, the reception of texts was far from a simple and obvious business. Rather it was a complex and demanding process that required not only great concentration, a profound knowledge of pre-texts and co-texts, and advanced skills in the techniques of mnemonics (*memoria*), *meditatio*, and *interpretatio* (especially intertextual interpretation). The importance of this complex process for the intellectual life appears also from the special attention given to it: its goal was a deep and intense appropriation of the text, which was achieved through slow and attentive reading, both forward and backward, with a view to the careful internalization of the text; the text could also be connected to visual images, personal experiences, emotions, thoughts, pre-texts and con-texts. In this sense, the reception of texts always included *meditatio* and various combinations of *meditatio* and *interpretatio*. As one might expect, these processes of textual appropriation derive from a long medieval tradition and were developed first with respect to religious texts, above all the Bible – “the” text par excellence – and the Church Fathers. In the late medieval and early modern periods, the number of relevant texts substantially increased, and the well known methods of textual appropriation were more widely applied. It is abundantly clear that meditation was not limited to religious texts only.¹ Rather, it was practised in a

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¹ Klara Erdei, however, in her monography *Auf dem Wege zu sich selbst: Die Meditation im 16. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: 1990), regards meditation as a literary genre and limits it to religious writings. In my contribution, I conceive meditation as a complex of techniques and methods applied in the careful appropriation of texts, which may be religious but may also belong to other spheres of interest. These methods refer to the intellectual and to the emotional sides of the mind as well. In medieval theory and practice, *meditatio* is frequently distinguished from *lectio*, reading, which is conceived as the more “material” process of the reception of texts. Cf., among others, Esser R., “*Cogitatio*” und “*meditatio*”. *Ein Beitrag zur Metaphysik des Gebetes nach Anselm von Canterbury* (Würzburg: 1985), passim.

great variety of textual genres – philosophical, literary, and scholarly, amongst others.

It is just this aspect that renders this process even more demanding. It is an important feature of the period 1300–1600, that new groups began to participate in intellectual life, amongst others, humanists,² laymen,³ various specialists. This development went hand in hand with the rise of spiritual movements such as the *devotio moderna*,⁴ the founding of new religious confessions (Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, etc.)⁵ and new religious orders such as the Jesuits,⁶ the rise to prominence of new mystics such as Luis de Granada and Teresa of Avila, and the establishment of new fields of science and scholarship, such as empirical anatomy or archaeology.⁷ This led in turn to a great deal of differentiation in intellectual life. This is the reason why authors, as well as editors and publishers, considered it increasingly important to guide the process of reception, thus ensuring that the appropriation of their texts would take place in a proper manner, or at the very least in a way they might envisage.

² In this volume, cf. the contribution by Jan Papy. Already Petrarch, the “Father of Humanism”, used various methods of meditation on a daily basis. A striking literary result of this practice is Petrarch’s treatise *De otio religiosorum*, a long meditation on *Psalm 45*. For a critical edition of this work see G. Rotondi (Città del Vaticano: 1958).

³ In this volume, cf. the contributions by Geert Warnar and Wolfgang Neuber.

⁴ In this volume, cf. the contribution by Nikolaus Staubach. The special emphasis the members of the *devotio moderna* attached to meditation was already pointed out by the seminal studies by Watrigant H., “La méditation méthodique et l’école des Frères de la Vie commune”, *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 3 (1922) 134–155; idem, “La méditation méthodique et Jean Mauburnus”, *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 4 (1923) 13–29, and Goossens L.M.A., *De meditatie in de eerste tijd van de Moderne Devotie* (Haarlem-Antwerp: 1952).

⁵ In this volume, cf. the contribution by Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen. For the importance of meditation for Lutheranism cf. Sträter U., *Meditation und Kirchenreform in der lutherischen Kirche des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: 1995); Erdei, *Auf dem Wege zu sich selbst*, esp. Chapter 3.3. “Die lutheranischen Meditationen” (214–252); for Calvinism and meditation eadem, chapter 3.1 “Die kalvinistischen Meditationen” (119–158). For meditation in Anglicanism cf. Livingstone Huntley F., *Bishop Joseph Hall and Protestant Meditation in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study with the Texts of ‘The Art of divine meditation’ (1606) and ‘Occasional Meditations’ (1633)* (Binghamton N.Y.: 1981).

⁶ In this volume, cf. the contributions by Wietse de Boer, Hilmar Pabel and Walter Melion.

⁷ Cf. Enenkel K.A.E., “*Ars antiquitatis*: Erkenntnissteuerung und Wissensverwaltung in Werken zur Römischen Kulturgeschichte (ca. 1500–1750)”, in idem – Neuber W. (eds.), *Cognition and the Book. Typologies of Formal Organisation of Knowledge in the Printed Book of the Early Modern Period*, *Intersections* 4 (2004) 51–123.

It is a telling feature that in texts written between 1300 and 1600, especially in Latin literature, authorial and editorial paratexts such as prefaces, letters of dedication, dedicatory poems and letters "To the Reader" became extremely important. Compared to the preceding centuries, they spectacularly increased in frequency, number, size, variety of contents, etc. Many of these texts are puzzling, and they deserve far more attention than they have received thus far. With regard to Neo-Latin literature, hardly any larger studies on prefaces exist. We have several substantial studies dealing with other literatures, e.g. English, French and German.⁸ They are mostly focused on topological, philological or historical questions, and tend to regard prefaces and dedications as extremely topical, by which they mean 'stereotypical'. This view suffers from an overly narrow definition of 'topos'. Mostly, prefaces and dedications are just used as data-banks for all kinds of historical information. If one wants to understand the function of these texts, a more profound, open and critical analysis is badly necessary. I believe that they represent a forum of communication between the author (or the editor) and his readership, and that they play an important role in the transmission of knowledge.⁹

In this necessarily limited contribution, it is of course impossible to deal with the full spectrum of features relevant to understanding the prefaces and dedications. I cannot deal, for example, with the various processes and discourses of authorisation, constructions of authorship, discourses of knowledge management and symbolical communication, to name but a few of the elements I hope to address in my forthcoming monograph.¹⁰ In this paper I focus on a specific phenomenon, the

⁸ Knapp M.E., *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: 1961) (Yale Studies in English 149); Leiner W., *Der Widmungsbrief in der französischen Literatur (1580–1715)* (Heidelberg: 1965); Dunn K., *Pretexts of Authority. The Rhetoric of Authorship in the Renaissance Preface* (Stanford: 1994); Schramm G., *Widmung, Leser, Drama. Untersuchungen zu Form- und Funktionswandel der Buchwidmung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: 2003). In an interesting case study on Theodorus Janssonius van Almeloveen, Saskia Stegeman rightly regrets the lack of scholarly attention to dedications: "De moralitate ac utilitate dedicationum: Dedications to and by Theodorus Janssonius van Almeloveen (1657–1712)", *Lias* 22 (1995) 177.

⁹ For a detailed discussion, cf. the chapter I. 2 "Der paratextuelle Präsentations-schub" in my forthcoming book *Die Stiftung von Autorschaft in der neulateinischen Literatur (1350–1650)*.

¹⁰ Enenkel, *Die Stiftung von Autorschaft*.

guidance of the reader by means of the meditative frames construed in authorial paratexts.¹¹

From my analysis it appears that the two most important means of framing were first, the evocation of the living presence of certain persons, and second, the creation of visual images in three-dimensional space. To start with the first: In the period between 1300 to 1600, the successful transmission of knowledge depended on communication between partners conceived as persons. Neo-Latin prefaces and dedications excel in creating living images. The author appears in *propria persona* before the eyes of the reader and he engages in a vivid process of communication. A specific means of strengthening this communication is the dedication. It is a puzzling fact that the large majority of all published texts between 1300 and 1600 are dedicated to certain persons. Prefaces and dedications do not only imply the living presence of the author, but also of the dedicatee. In this way, from the very start, the reader gets involved in an intense process of communication. The reader is supposed to imagine the author and the dedicatee as personally present, and he is invited to participate in the ongoing dialogue between them.

*Petrarch's Relationship with the Dedicatee
As Meditative Frame*

How this works can best be demonstrated through the example of the dedicatory preface in Petrarch's *De vita solitaria* (1346), one of the earliest in Neo-Latin literature, which was addressed to Philippe de Cabassoles, bishop of Cavaillon.¹² Here the author presents a kind of blueprint of the humanistic life style. In this preface, both the author and the dedicatee are conceived as being personally present. Petrarch achieves this in the first place by supplying an intriguing description of their inner relationship. He characterises the attitude of the dedicatee towards the author as sincere, unconditional and intimate love. In his

¹¹ For a more extended and detailed discussion, cf. the chapter IV. 2 "Wissensvermittlung durch Verbildlichung" in my forthcoming monograph *Die Stiftung von Autorschaft*.

¹² Enenkel K.A.E., *Francesco Petrarca, De vita solitaria, Buch 1. Kritische Textausgabe und ideengeschichtlicher Kommentar* (Leiden – New York – Cologne – Copenhagen: 1990) 56–60.

relationship with the author, Philippe radiates 'a bright light of his soul as white as snow' ('sincerus et niveus candor tui pectoris').¹³ This radiating, translucent light offers a strong, ongoing invitation to the author to address the dedicatee: it excludes any form of misunderstanding, irritation or disapproval. The author presents the dedicatee as a soul mate. The author will speak freely to him, without taking into account rhetorical, social or other conventions. Petrarch emphasizes that he shares with the addressee the same opinions on the topic at hand, which means that they both favour contemplative life.

Petrarch's description of the relationship between the dedicatee and the author should not simply be read as rendering historical facts. To be sure, Philippe de Cabassoles, in comparison with Petrarch, was a totally different personality. He was an eager and ambitious church diplomat, always engaged in all kinds of missions and only very rarely present in his small bishopric.¹⁴ He was neither a contemplative man nor a scholar.

This discrepancy suggests that Petrarch's description of their relationship must have had a distinctive function. I think it is meant to establish a relationship between the author and the reader that would optimally contribute to an interpretation of the work as envisaged by Petrarch. The preface invites the reader to put aside social conventions, regard the author as a soul mate, and engage in an emotional relation with the author, to open up his heart and let him in, so to say. In doing so, the reader should contemplate with his inner eye the face of the author. In a sense, this foreshadows the later habit of the humanists of exchanging portraits, as for example Erasmus, Thomas More and Pieter Gillis did.¹⁵ Amongst others, these portraits functioned as stimuli for meditation, reading and writing. The pictorial portrait was envisaged as a means to contemplation of the friend's inner portrait, of his mind, soul, thoughts, and, of course, of his intellectual interests.

¹³ *De vita solitaria*, Proh. 1, line 3 (ed. Enenkel).

¹⁴ Cf. Enenkel, *Petrarca, De vita solitaria* 145–146. An extremely romantic, but rather misleading picture of the relationship between Philippe de Cabassoles and Petrarch was drawn by Wilkins E.H., "Philippe de Cabassoles on Petrarch", *Speculum* 35 (1960) 69–78.

¹⁵ For Metsys's portraits of Gillis and Erasmus cf., among others, Campbell L. – Mann Phillips M. – Schulte Herbrüggen H., "Quentin Metsys, Desiderius Erasmus, Pieter Gillis and Thomas More", *Burlington Magazine* 120 (1978) 716–725; Bodar A., "Amicitiae nostrae monumentum". Ein Geschenk von Erasmus und Pieter Gillis an Thomas More", *Castrum Peregrini* 194–195 (1990) 83–103.

Interestingly enough, this contemplation of the “inner portraits” of humanists has strong roots in the tradition of religious meditation and reflexion. In this tradition, the contemplation of the “inner self” never means a kind of search for psychological peculiarities or character traits, but a search for God and spiritual truth within the soul. Thus, when Petrarch proposes that his dedicatee – and of course also the reader – will discern ‘the entire face and body of my inner self’ by reading *De vita solitaria*,¹⁶ he asks him to undertake a spiritual act very similar to religious meditation.

Thus, the dedicatory preface creates a meditative frame that guides the reading, understanding and interpretation of the text. When reading the work, the reader should constantly have before his eyes the (inner) portrait of the author. He should understand the treatise as an essentially autobiographical work. Readers, who are unwilling to get acquainted with Petrarch’s intellectual pursuit and life style, are excluded from the very start. Petrarch’s mental portrait envisages an intellectual dedicated to the contemplative life, and, in a pictorial sense, portrays him as a lonely dweller in the mountainous region of Vaucluse in the Provence. Guided by Petrarch’s portrait the reader should locate the thoughts offered by *De vita solitaria* in the landscape of the Vaucluse, especially in the beautiful valley where the poet owned a small house close to the fountain that gushed forth from a steep rocky wall. Petrarch wanted his reader to imagine this landscape, and, in a sense, to be personally present there. He urges the dedicatee to interrupt his busy activities in church diplomacy for a while – by as many days as the reading of *De vita solitaria* requires – and to be with him. ‘Thus come to me, stay with me’, ‘adesto igitur’, he says.¹⁷ In this invitation, the author closely connects mental with bodily presence. This is proven by the fact that he refers to a visit of Philippe who, as he claims, had stayed for a fortnight in his house in Vaucluse.

Why a fortnight, one may ask? This detail seems odd somehow. I wonder whether one should understand it as an historical fact. I think that it functions, in the first place, as a meditative frame. It mirrors the reader’s presence, as envisaged by the author. A fortnight – this is approximately the time a careful, meditative reading of Petrarch’s treatise, some 200 pages with a large collection of exempla, would

¹⁶ *De vita solitaria*, I Proh. 12 (ed. Enenkel): ‘totam frontem serene tranquilleque mentis aspicias’.

¹⁷ Ibid.

require. Thus, 'adesto igitur' is in fact an invitation to the reader, to forget for a while his normal earthly existence and to engage in a meditative reading of *De vita solitaria*.

This meditative frame has an important effect on the reception of the work. The content of *De vita solitaria* was rather unconventional, as was Petrarch's main intellectual invention, later labelled Humanism. *De vita solitaria* is a very early blueprint of the humanistic life style.¹⁸ There was a myriad of possible misunderstandings and causes of offence involving various groups of potential readers. In the first place, the frame has the function of making the reader receptive to Petrarch's new enterprise, by establishing a close, emotional relationship with the author. If the new conceptions were closely connected with, and, in a sense, tied to Petrarch's personal life, they would become more easily digestible than general ethical instructions. Furthermore, the author's personal presence would function as an *exemplum* of the life style offered by the work. In this way, Petrarch authorizes his unconventional content and, in terms of didactics, ensures that the reader will internalize it. In other words, in the meditative frame of his preface, the author has set out the lines along which he envisaged the reception of the whole treatise.

Visual Images in Three-Dimensional Space As Meditative Frames

The second important device guiding the reader in Neo-Latin prefaces and dedications is the creation of visual images in three-dimensional space. In his preface, Petrarch refers to this method only in a rather implicit way. Via the invitation to the dedicatee to visit Petrarch, the reader is himself invited to locate the thoughts developed in *De vita solitaria* in the landscape of Vaucluse. However, in this case Petrarch does not give a description of the landscape, perhaps because he planned to do so in more detail in the second chapter of the first book. In fact, many humanists were aware of the impact a description of place exerted on their readers, and in their prefaces they frequently used this device. I will demonstrate by reference to three examples how this device functioned.

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion of its features, see Enenkel, *De vita solitaria*.

*Poggio's Meditation on the Changeability of Fortune,
and Roman Archeology*

The first is the dedicatory preface to Poggio's treatise *De varietate fortune* which was written about a century later than Petrarch's, in 1447.¹⁹ In this work, which he dedicated to pope Nicolaus V,²⁰ Poggio advises the reader not to trust fortune, and equips him with a manual of philosophical meditations which teach him how to struggle against the attacks and tricks of fortune, and how to avoid emotional and mental damage in the process. In the preface, the author creates a meditative frame in order to guarantee that the reader understands and internalizes the text properly. With this goal in mind, Poggio construes an intriguing three-dimensional space in which the reader should locate certain visual images. He invites the dedicatee and the reader to look into a kind of theatre, the 'Theatre of Fortune', 'Theatrum Fortune'.²¹ On the stage he presents living images, the images of wealthy and powerful persons who have become the victims of fortune. These are the actors who perform the tragedy of Fortune. Poggio instructs the reader to look carefully and attentively at the images, to 'inspect' them. This close inspection is meant to initiate the meditative process. The next important step is *comparatio*, comparison. The reader should compare the outlook of the living images before and after they succumb to misfortune. Then the reader should draw his conclusions: primarily, that the effects of fortune are disastrous. One should do one's very best to avoid these effects. What are the mental means and devices to achieve this goal? – These are, indeed, offered in great quantity in Poggio's treatise. Thus, it becomes clear that the construction of the three-dimensional space of the 'Theatrum fortune' is crucial for the envisaged process of meditation. The construction of the theatre is a blueprint for the reading and understanding of the text. The reader is invited to locate all the exempla he will come across in Poggio's four books, in the theatre erected in the dedicatory preface.

¹⁹ Edizione critica con introduzione e commento a cura di O. Merisalo (Helsinki: 1993).

²⁰ The Letter of dedication *Ad Nicolaum Papam V* in the edition by Merisalo on pp. 89–90.

²¹ *De varietate fortune* (ed. Merisalo) 89.

Poggio's construction of a three-dimensional space is doubled by an even more impressive imagery developed in the preface of the work.²² The author Poggio puts himself before the eyes of the reader, while he rides on horseback through the ruins of ancient Rome, accompanied by his friend, the papal secretary Antonio Loschi. Seated on horseback they climb up the Capitoline hill. There they sit down in the doorway of a large temple and enjoy the impressive view over the ruins of Rome.

This view opens up a most effective meditative space. By imagining the author sitting in this three-dimensional space the reader is invited to meditate on the changeability of fortune and the vanity of all earthly things. The image of the ruins of Rome is a most striking example of this, a *leçon par l'exemple*, so to say. Poggio involves the reader in the vivid dialogue he had with his friend Loschi. He shall participate in the author's and Loschi's thoughts, he shall *re-think* them, and shape his own thoughts after the example of their living images. As Poggio and Loschi, for example, the reader shall meditate on a line in Virgil, which refers to the spectacular building activity of Emperor Augustus: 'Aurea nunc, olim silvestribus horrida dumis'.²³ 'Now there [i.e. on the Capitoline hill] are golden palaces, where once there was only thorny brushwood'. Here again, the reader is expected to engage in the meditative process of comparison: he should compare the golden palaces of Augustan Rome with the present ruins overgrown by brushwood. This living image demonstrates, if anything, the changeability of fortune. The reader is invited to build his thoughts around an inversion of Virgil's line: 'Aurea quondam, nunc squalida spinetis vepribusque referta' ('Long ago [i.e. in Antiquity] there were [i.e. on the Capitoline hill] golden palaces, where now there are only places fallen in despair, overgrown by thorny brushwood').²⁴

Interestingly enough, Poggio links the ruins with the theatre he adduced at the beginning of the preface. The ruins represent the theatre in which the reader henceforth should locate the living images, the princes and rulers who became victims of Fortune. The stage is most effective for the process of meditation, and for the proper

²² *De varietate fortune* (ed. Merisalo) 91–92.

²³ *Aeneis* VIII, 348. *De varietate fortune* (ed. Merisalo) 91, line 15.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, line 16–17.

understanding of the text, since it is not only a living, but even an emblematic image, a *Sinnbild* for the changeability of fortune.

In a telling detail, Poggio dedicates the whole first book of his treatise to the description of the ruins of Rome. One should be aware that this early archaeological description is not a *Selbstzweck*, but predominantly serves as a tool for meditation. To give an example of how this works: A most important focus of Poggio's archaeology is the identification of buildings. If anything, the problems of identification show the degree of loss and decay. More than once, the identification turns out to be difficult and questionable. Even if there are clear indications, Poggio tries to underline the decay by other arguments. For example, when Poggio identifies the old storehouse for salt, the *Salarium*, in the *Tabularium* on the Capitoline hill, by quoting the building inscription, he emphasizes the corroded state of the letters. This is, of course, keen archaeological guesswork; at the same time, however, the corroded inscription itself serves as a meditative image, an image of decay, an image of the changeability of Fortune.

Pontano's Landscapes and Neo-Latin Poetic Reflexion

A very different, but not less fascinating construction of space occurs in the dedicatory poem of the *Hendecasyllabi*,²⁵ a collection of lyric poetry composed by Giovanni Pontano, the estimable secretary of the Aragon kingdom, in 1502, and dedicated to his friend Marino Tomacelli (1429–1515), the former ambassador of the King of Naples in Florence.²⁶ As a meditative frame for his poetry, Pontano construes spas, bathing resorts, *Badelandschaften*. Interestingly, like Poggio, Pontano presents two landscapes or constructions of space. The first is situated at the shore of Lake Garda in Northern Italy, on the peninsula of Sirmio. In this landscape Pontano locates the image of a beautiful black-eyed woman who washes her long hair in the lake.²⁷ She turns

²⁵ *Hendecasyllaborum libri*, ed. L. Monti Sabia (Naples: 1978). For a recent edition of the Latin text with English translation see Giovanni Pontano, *Baiae* (Cambridge MA.: 2006) (The I Tatti Renaissance Library 22). For Pontano's biography cf. Kidwell C., *Pontano. Poet and Prime Minister* (London: 1991). For a concise survey of the collection cf. Lefevre E., "Pontanos *Hendecasyllabi* an Marino Tomacelli", in Baier Th. (ed.), *Pontano und Catull* (Tübingen: 2003) 187–201.

²⁶ On Tomacelli cf. Kidwell, *Pontano* 37.

²⁷ *Hendecasyllaborum libri* (ed. Monti Sabia) I, 69, lines 1–6.

out to be a goddess, a Muse. As the reader is supposed to surmise, the location is no coincidence. The young lady represents the poetry of the Roman lyric poet Catullus, which is characterised by the preference of a metrum of eleven syllables per line, called hendecasyllabus. In his collection of poems, Pontano himself characterised the hendecasyllabi as 'numeri Catulliani' ('the metrum of Catullus').²⁸ Sirmio was the place where the villa of Catullus once stood, as praised by him in *Carmen* 31.

Thus, via this landscape construction Pontano instructs the reader to perceive, understand and appropriate his poems in the first place by a process of *intertextual meditation*. This process requires that the reader recognizes and retrieves the Catullan subtexts; that he reproduces the contexts of the lines alluded to; that he carefully compares Pontano's poems with Catullus's with respect to content, argument and style. The result of this meditative process will be that the reader not only comes appropriately to understand the poems, but also secures deeper insights into the underlying poetical theory, the implicit *poetica*.²⁹

Interestingly, the construction of the second landscape mirrors this process of intertextual meditation. The second frame is constituted by a famous bathing resort in Southern Italy, close to Pontano's home town of Naples – the hot volcanic bathes of Baiae. Pontano literally asks Catullus's Muse to join him in the bath. This is a compelling invitation to the reader to appropriate Pontano's poetry via a comparison with Catullus's. Moreover, by a careful comparison of the landscapes the reader will attain a deeper understanding of Pontano's poetics. The author locates himself in this landscape, and he enters it in a

²⁸ *Hendecasyllaborum libri* (ed. Monti Sabia) II, 37, line 6. Cf. Stärk E., "Theatrum amantum: Pontanos Baiae und Catull", in Baier (ed.), *Pontano und Catull* (295–305) 298.

²⁹ For the intertextual relationship between Pontano and Catullus cf. Stärk "Theatrum amantum"; Schmidt E.A., "Catullisch, catullischer als Catull, uncatullisch – Zu Giovanni Pontanos Elfsilbergedichten", in Baier (ed.), *Pontano und Catull* 203–218; Ludwig W., "Catullus renatus – Anfänge und frühe Entwicklung des catullischen Stils in der neulateinischen Dichtung", in idem, *Litterae Neolatinae. Schriften zur Neulateinischen Literatur* (Munich: 1989) 162–194. For a comparison of Catullus's and Pontano's *poetica* cf. Liebermann W.-L., "Poëtische Reflexion bei Catull und Pontano", in Baier (ed.), *Pontano und Catull* 93–106, and Schmidt, "Catullisch, catullischer als Catull"; for Pontano's *poetica* in general Tateo F., "La Poetica di Giovanni Pontano", *Filologia Romanza* 6 (1959) 277–303; 337–370.

spectacular way. He describes in a vivid image how, dancing and jumping energetically, singing and playing the lyra, he enters the volcanic bath, accompanied by Catullus's girl.³⁰ In the volcanic bath, the reader discerns not only Pontano and Catullus's girl, but also other persons, such as Pietro Golino (Petrus Compater), a friend of both the dedicatee and the author, a number of bathers, young men and women, and not least, tiny beings, the *Hendecasyllabi*. Pontano, having written his poems in this metre, indeed personified them: they are cute little creatures that hang around among the bathing people, observe them from short distance, make fun of them and tickle them a bit. The tiny *Hendecasyllabi* very much resemble Cupido's or Erotae. Since the scenes in the bath are described as if seen through the eyes of the *Hendecasyllabi*, the little creatures also serve to provide the reader with eyes through which he views these scenes. In this sense, the reader is invited to join Pontano and his company in the bath, and to observe what takes place there.

As it turns out, there is quite a lot to be seen in Pontano's bath, first of all, a couple of beautiful young people who are naked and engage in lovemaking. The reader is caught up by the striking and explicitly sensual physicality of the image. Rather than persons, he discerns intertwined naked bodies. Pontano evokes and heightens these sensual visual impressions by describing the colour of the bodies (milk-white) and their movements. Young men caress the nipples of tender young girls, who reciprocate by touching with their sensitive fingers the penises of their lovers, and so on. The reciprocal character of the action is expressed by the chiasmic word order of the lines. With great curiosity, the tiny *Hendecasyllabi* observe the erotic games and, occasionally, take part in them. For example, they tickle the lovers a bit in order to excite them even more.

One might wonder what all this has to do with meditation. How do these foolish scenes go together with the highly respectable mental act of meditation? Is it at all appropriate to consider them as a meditative frame? My answer would be yes. I believe that Pontano's dedicatory spas should be understood as *Leseanleitung*, guidance to the reader of his whole collection of poems. The reader is supposed to discover Pontano's *poetica* through the intellectual process of comparison, and, more specifically, of intertextual meditation, as described

³⁰ *Hendecasyllaborum libri* (ed. Monti Sabia), lines 7–9.

above. Crucial for this intertextual meditation is careful comparison with Catullus's poetry. Its poetic structure is mainly dictated by elegiac love. Important is the poet's lovelorn condition: he is overwhelmed and tortured by his love of a cruel and truly inaccessible *domina*. Catullus's love poetry is not characterised by naked bodies or sensual erotic. Unlike Martial, Catullus was regarded by many Renaissance readers as chaste.³¹ The other aspect is the place of humour. Catullus's poetry, unlike Martial's, is not characterised by a high degree of wittiness. If it displays irony, it is more aggressive than witty. For Renaissance epigrammatic poetry, from the middle of the 15th century on, the choice of models for *imitatio* and *aemulatio* was fundamental. In many cases, this choice was conceived as a choice between Catullus and Martial.³²

In his meditative frame, Pontano takes a somewhat different stand. Although one might expect him to side with Martial, he does not. Instead, he presents Catullus (whom he invites into his bath) as his source of inspiration. He does not invite Martial. This may be explained partly by Martial's homosexuality and rudeness, partly by the choice of metre, Pontano's preference for the hendecasyllables characteristic for Catullus, the 'numeri Catulliani'.³³

In the Volcanic bath, however, Catullus's poetica is turned upside down.³⁴ Elegiac love is turned into sensual and explicit erotics; the suffering of unfulfilled love into physical pleasure.³⁵ Pontano's successful emulation is brought into visual images: he gets what was denied to Catullus. He even seduces Catullus's girl in the bath. Likewise, Pontano tries to seduce the reader; he suggests that the reader may take his booklet with him into the bath, and there allow himself to be inspired by its verses. The Hendecasyllabi themselves have undergone a

³¹ Cf. Gaisser J.H., *Catullus and his Renaissance Readers* (Oxford: 1993).

³² For the Neo-Latin epigram cf. Beer S. – Enenkel K.A.E. – Rijser D. (eds.), *The Neo-Latin Epigram. A Learned and Witty Genre* (Louvain: 2009) (Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia XXV).

³³ *Hendecasyllaborum libri* (ed. Monti Sabia) II, 37.

³⁴ Especially with this respect I consider it hard to accept the view that Pontano's poetica is just 'more Catullian than Catull'; cf. Schmidt, "Catullisch, catullischer als Catull".

³⁵ Sometimes, scholars seem to underestimate the physicality and sensuality of Pontano's *Hendecasyllabi*. Cf. for example, Lefevre's survey of the poems "Pontano's *Hendecasyllabi*".

metamorphosis into funny and joyous little beings. In Pontano's view, hendecasyllabic poetry should be a witty and playful genre.³⁶

This is demonstrated in the meditative frame of the dedication as a kind of *leçon par l'exemple*: At the end of the dedication, the author, to the surprise of the reader, excludes the dedicatee Marino Tomacelli from the bath. He says, you are too old for this, and besides, I take care for your good reputation. Please, let Pietro Golino go to the bath, he is a really horny man. Now, when the dedicatee received the collection of poems, he was indeed seventy three years old. Not a nice joke, as it seems. Pontano's wittiness, however, was a bit more demanding. His contemporary readers would have understood the joke more fully: they probably knew that the horny bath freak Pontano who entered the bath dancing and jumping, was by then some 80 years old, and that horny Golino was dead by then (ca. 1430–1502). This sheds a totally different light on Pontano's poetry: it is full of self-irony, humour and doubleness. Thus, the meditative frame invites the reader to meditate on the poems by discovering multi-layered doubling.

*Giovio's Treatise De viris et foeminis aetate
nostra florentibus (1527)*

I conclude with a brief look at the meditative frame of yet another genre, historiography. The 16th century historiographer and physician Paolo Giovio introduces his work on famous men and women of his day, *De viris et foeminis aetate nostra florentibus* (1527), with a striking dedicatory preface to the papal advisor Gian Matteo Giberti,³⁷ in which he construes, in a lengthy description of several pages, various impressive three-dimensional spaces.³⁸ Concretely, he describes

³⁶ Interestingly, some characteristic notions occur in Pontano's *Hendecasyllabi* more often than in Catullus's *Carmina*: 'cachinnus', 'chachinnulus' ('laughter') – 2 times in Catullus's *Carmina*, but 30 times in the *Hendecasyllabi*; 'iocus', 'iocari' etc. ('joke', 'to joke') – 6 times in the *Carmina*, but 16 times in the *Hendecasyllabi*; 'ludus', 'ludere' etc. ('play', 'to play') – 4 times in the *Carmina*, but 9 times in the *Hendecasyllabi*. See Schmidt, "Catullisch, catullischer als Catull" 214–215.

³⁷ For Giberti, cf. Pighi G.-B., *Gian Matteo Giberti* (Verona: 1900; repr. Verona: 1955).

³⁸ Paolo Giovio, *Dialogi et descriptiones*, ed. E. Travi – M. Penco (Rome: 1984) 147 ff., the preface on 167–172. For Giovio's biography cf. Rovelli L., *Paolo Giovio* (Como: 1928); for Giovio as a historiographer see Zimmermann T.C. Price, *Paolo Giovio. The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Princeton U.P.: 1995); on the dialogue *De viris et foeminis aetate nostra florentibus*, *ibid.* 89–105.

three different landscapes on the island of Ischia, where he had joined the court of Don Ferrante d'Avalo, count of Pescara, and his wife Vittoria Colonna.³⁹ Giovio unfolds in front of his audience, so to say, a triptychon of landscape painting, or a set of three *vedute*.⁴⁰ The first landscape shows the hills and valleys of the eastern part of the island, which can be seen from the Aragon castle, the second the quiet sea of the south-eastern part of Ischia with its spectacular shore consisting of lava rocks, and the third landscape a little crater lake to the north of the island, where nowadays Ischia Porto is situated. These landscape descriptions were neither a goal in themselves nor could they serve as a kind of tourist guide. Instead, they function as meditative frame.

In this respect, the landscapes themselves display two features that are relevant for the textual meditation the reader is expected to undertake. First, the very form of these three landscapes and the manner in which they are presented, suggest that they are conceived as *theatres*, *Schaubühnen*. They are all circular or semi-circular. The first landscape is built up by the circle of hills around the Aragon castle; the second represents a quiet bay surrounded by volcanic rocks. The third, the Crater Lake, is literally called a 'natural amphitheatre'. Second, the landscapes are filled with different hunting scenes. In the first landscape, the reader discerns the count of Pescara who, accompanied by a large hunting party, is hunting deer. The hunt itself is characterised as a theatrical performance, 'spectaculum'. In the second landscape, the rocky bay, a large fishing party on boats is to be seen, again under the leadership of Don Ferrante. In the third landscape, the crater lake, another hunting party takes place; their prey are water birds.

Their construction as theatres on the one hand enlarges their potential of visual evidence, and, on the other hand, as mnemonic places. They function as *theatres of memory*. The reader is invited to locate the historical persons described in Giovio's treatise in these landscapes. It is highly important that the *spectacula* performed in these theatres of memory are hunting scenes. Why so? Giovio's historical work is a reaction to the Sacco di Roma of 1527, in which Rome was devastated

³⁹ Ibid. chapter VII "Ischia (1527–1528)" esp. 86–94. On Giovio's relationship with Vittoria Colonna cf. Volpati C. "Vittoria Colonna e Paolo Giovio", *Roma* 11 (1933) 501–516, and Vecce C. "Paolo Giovio e Vittoria Colonna", *PSSC* 54 (1990) 67–93.

⁴⁰ Especially as a member of the Papal Court, Giovio was of course well acquainted with contemporary landscape art. Later, his „museo“ housed a number of *vedute*; cf. Della Torre S., "Le vedute del museo Gioviano", *Quaderni erbesi* 7 (1985) 39–48.

by the soldiers of Emperor Charles V.⁴¹ Giovio was on the side of the losers, as he served as a physician at the court of pope Clement VII.⁴² Zimmermann refers to Von Pastor's vivid description of the situation: 'While the Holocaust raged in stricken Rome, Giovio remained with the pope in Castel Sant'Angelo. Clement VII was a virtual prisoner. Spanish troops guarded his chamber. His days were spent in desperate negotiations over his ransom. [...] As the implacable heat of summer came on, plague broke out, and the stench of rotting corpses made it impossible to remain on the battlements when the wind blew from the city'.⁴³

In the dialogue, Giovio wants to restore, albeit in a literary work, the situation of Italy's glory days before the Sacco. The work is conceived as a consolation with respect to the recent chaos. The hunting scenes present a suitable theatre of memory because they perform "the play of control and order". They display man's control over chaotic nature.⁴⁴ Giovio probably was well aware of what he was doing. It is no coincidence that he calls the lake an 'amphitheatre'. By this he alludes to the Roman amphitheatre in which animal hunts (*venationes*) took place. These hunts featured ritual elements connected to the affirmation of the established political order, namely, the power of the Imperium Romanum under the leadership of the Emperor.⁴⁵ As with Poggio's and Pontano's dedicatory prefaces, the landscape functions as a *leçon par l'exemple* for the meditative processes the reader is expected to engage in. Thus, the dedicatory prefaces provide extremely efficient meditative frames construed in such a way as to guide the attention of the reader immediately and continually to the heart of the required meditation.

⁴¹ Chastel A., *The Sack of Rome*, trsl. B. Archer (Princeton U.P.: 1983); Hook J., *The Sack of Rome* (London: 1972).

⁴² For this aspect, cf. Capparoni P., *Paolo Giovio Archiatra di Papa Clemente VII* (Grottaferrata: 1913); Zimmermann, *Paolo Giovio*, chapter VI ("Clement VII and the Sack of Rome (1523–1527)") 60–85.

⁴³ Zimmermann, *Paolo Giovio* 86.

⁴⁴ For this aspect cf. Walker S., "Making and Breaking the Stag: The Construction of the Animal in Early Modern Hunting Treatise", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Smith P.J. (eds.), *Early Modern Zoology. The Construction of Animals in Science, Literature and the Visual Arts, Intersections 7* (2007) vol. II 317–337.

⁴⁵ Cf. Wiedemann Th., *Emperors and Gladiators* (London–New York: 1992). Similarly, the gladiatorial shows were used as transmitters of political values: for this, cf. Enenkel K.A.E., "The Propagation of *fortitudo*. Gladiatorial Combats from ca. 85 BC to the times of Trajan and their Reflection in Roman Literature", in idem – Pfeijffer I.L. (eds.), *The Manipulative Mode. Political Propaganda in Antiquity: A Collection of Case Studies* (Leiden–Boston: 2005) 275–294.

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PETRARCH'S "INNER EYE" IN THE
FAMILIARIUM LIBRI XXIV

Jan Papy

*Religion is what the individual does with his own
solitariness.*

Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*
(1926)

*Nichil quasi aliud egi nisi ut animi mei status notum
fieret amicis.*

Petrarch, *Familiars* I, 1, 33

A mythical 'auto-definition' and the life of contemplation

'Among other things I was predominantly interested in classical antiquity, because this age has always displeased me, so that, unless love for my dear ones pulled me the other way, I always wished to have been born in any other age whatever, and to forget this one, and I tried to place myself in my mind in other ages'.¹ Looking back at his wandering life of exile and scholarship, his former years of political commitment and affairs of princes, popes and statesmen, and his recurrent longing for a *vita contemplativa* – that fusion of philosophical seclusion, literary expression and religious contemplation –, Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374) surveyed his own unease, his *Weltschmerz* in his *Letter to Posterity*, a letter which he had been reworking in the last fifteen years of his life and which, typically, was never brought to a conclusion. Elusiveness, incompleteness... both, so has been observed by Nicholas Mann, mirror the poet's deep inner dissatisfaction and his inability to put the finishing touches to any work; both make Petrarch's intellectual autobiography perennially open-ended.²

¹ Enenkel K., "A Critical Edition of Petrarch's *Epistola Posteritati*", in Enenkel K. – de Jong-Crane B. – Liebrechts P. (eds.), *Modelling the Individual: Biography and Portrait in the Renaissance. With a Critical Edition of Petrarch's Letter to Posterity* (Amsterdam – Atlanta: 1998) 243–281; esp. 263.

² Mann N., *Petrarch* (Oxford – New York: 1984) 22.

For Petrarch's three major literary enterprises, the *De viris illustribus*, the *Africa* and *Rerum memorandarum libri*, yet also his *Secretum*, *Bucolicum carmen*, *De vita solitaria*, *De otio religioso*, *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, and the cycle of 366 vernacular lyrics, now usually known as the *Canzoniere*, may all betray a recourse to classical models or a literary self-consciousness of having outshined his medieval and classical predecessors,³ they have all equally been amended, revised or rewritten time and again for the humanist scholar Petrarch was ever reading and rereading, digesting and absorbing, modifying so as to progress beyond the tradition from which he had sprung.⁴

Moreover, Petrarch deliberately edited and emended his life's story, to which he referred as *fabula* more than once,⁵ for the literator Petrarch was well aware of the potential of his own story for fiction. In addition, this literary construction, based on classical models, implied the assumption of roles, the adoption of a *persona* and a specific way of life. In this respect, Petrarch's letters are among the most important witnesses to and products of this elaboration of his self.⁶

Importantly, Petrarch's humanist 'auto-definition' – he was convinced that he himself had restored values, practices and ideas from antiquity – is also a clear 'auto-affirmation' of his literary and intellectual power giving birth to a new era, a new beginning of antiquity itself.⁷ The exiled poet and humanist discovered a new image of the past including a cyclical conception of history, an imagery of initiating, and a cultivation of a heroic time of which texts were to be reconstituted and imitated, ideas and examples were to be used and propagated.⁸ This experience of a prestigious and mythical antiquity transformed the subject, constituted the ego. This antiquity mirrored

³ Bernardo A.S., "Petrarch and the Art of Literature", in Molinaro J. (ed.), *Petrarch to Pirandello: Studies in Honor of Beatrice Corrigan* (Toronto: 1973) 19–44.

⁴ Stock B., "Reading, Writing, and the Self: Petrarch and His Forerunners", *New Literary History* 16 (1995) 717–730.

⁵ See, for instance, Petrarch, *Familiars* XIX, 3; *Seniles* XII, 1; *De vita solitaria*, I, 310.

⁶ Bernardo A.S., "Letter-Splitting in Petrarch's *Familiars*", *Speculum* 33 (1958) 236–41; idem, "The Selection of Letters in Petrarch's *Familiars*", *Speculum* 35 (1960) 1–58.

⁷ Enenkel K.A.E., *Die Erfindung des Menschen: Die Autobiografik des frühneuzeitlichen Humanismus von Petrarca bis Lipsius* (Berlin – New York: 2008) 118–126.

⁸ Scaglione A., "Classical Heritage and Petrarchan Self-Consciousness in the Literary Emergence of the Interior 'I'", in Bloom H. (ed.), *Petrarch* (New York – Philadelphia: 1989) 125–137.

the very image of what Petrarch aspired to become, and this in 'une forme plus constituante que constituée' (Lacan).⁹ In antiquity Petrarch's creative genius discovered his own myth. A myth which he, so he wrote to Robert, King of Sicily, on 30 April 1341, after he had been crowned poet laureate on the Capitoline in Rome in an almost unprecedented re-enactment of the classical past in the centre of the classical world, decided to live:

Doubtless the despair [*viz.* of imitating the ancients] which holds them back motivates us, and the bridle and chains which affect them, are goads and spurs to us so that we try to become what they believe no one can become except one of the ancients.¹⁰

"To see one's experience in terms of myth is to see in the myth the possibility of the kind of allegorical meaning that was called tropological [...]; it is metamorphosing vitality into words, and thus both subscribing "to the humanistic cult of literary immortality and glory", and the acute awareness that the very origin of writing itself is suspect, yes as all *negotium* a distraction of Christian contemplation and the ascent of man.¹¹

Private letters and the complexities of the inner-self

This psychological unease with his own literary ambition and search for eternal fame, and this philosophical and religious desire to escape, to withdraw to a more tranquil life of solitude so as to achieve true liberty, self-possession, peace of mind and body for study and spiritual advancement are sensible on almost every single line of Petrarch's epistolary remains.¹² For if his first collection of familiar letters, the

⁹ Lacan J., *Écrits* (Paris: 1966) 93–100.

¹⁰ *Familiares* IV, 7: 'Sane illos desperatio sua detrahat, nos impellat, et unde illis frenum ac vincula, nobis impetus ac stimuli accesserint, ut studeamus fieri qualem illi nullum opinantur, nisi quem antiquitas illustravit'.

¹¹ Robert Durling in his introduction to *Petrarch's Lyric Poems* (Cambridge: 1976), quoted by Harold Bloom in his 'Introduction' to Bloom (ed.), *Petrarch* 1–2.

¹² Michel A., "Amour, poésie, religion à travers la correspondance de Pétrarque", in Boriaud J.-Y. – Lamargue H. (eds.), *Pétrarque épistolier. Actes des Journées d'Études Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, Toulouse, 26–27 mars 1999* (Paris: 2004) 7–26; Von Moos P., "Les solitudes de Pétrarque. Liberté intellectuelle et activisme urbain dans la crise du XIV^e siècle", *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana* 7 (1996) 23–58.

Familiarium libri XXIV, can provide a telling illustration of Petrarch's evolutionary process and intellectual development, it has to be emphasized first how this epistolary collection was conceived and how it evolved into its definitive form.¹³ Petrarch, as is well known, kept copies (the so-called *transcriptio in ordine*) of every letter sent by him (the so-called *transmissiva*) since the 1320s, and only after discovering Cicero's *Epistulae ad Atticum* in Verona in 1345,¹⁴ he embraced the idea of editing his own letters into a coherent collection. Whereas his initial idea was to divide his collection of letters, then still called the *Epystularum mearum ad diversos liber*, in twelve books, thus imitating the structure of Virgil's *Aeneid*, he came to favour a twenty-book model based on Seneca's *Letters to Lucilius* in the 1350s and finally settled, by 1360, for twenty-four books in imitation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssee*.¹⁵ In line with his ancient models, Petrarch carefully selected, ordered and prepared the 350 letters which he finally chose to transcribe in the collection of *Familiarium libri XXIV*. Some of them, especially the rhetorical set-pieces in the collection, have been written specially; others have been rewritten substantially, sometimes even more than once.¹⁶ As a consequence, the *Familiares* are to be considered as a literary composition. If Book I contains a number of fictitious letters as Giuseppe Billanovich has demonstrated,¹⁷ it was also an important programmatic opening of the collection offering a true "portrait of the artist as a young man" by the maturing artist and humanist intellectual Petrarch.¹⁸ Moreover, it has been observed by

¹³ Rossi V., "Sulla formazione delle raccolte epistolari petrarchesche", *Annali della Cattedra Petrarquesca* 3 (1932) 68–73; Wilkins E.H., *The Prose Letters of Petrarch: A Manual* (New York: 1951).

¹⁴ Billanovich G., "Petrarca e Cicerone", in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati. Volume IV: Letteratura classica e umanistica* (Città del Vaticano: 1946) 88–106; De Nolhac P., *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1907 [= Geneva: 2004]) vol. I 213–268.

¹⁵ Mann, *Petrarch* 24; Dotti U., *Vita di Petrarca* (Roma – Bari: 1987) 213–215.

¹⁶ Antognini R., "Familiarium rerum liber: tradizione materiale e autobiografia", in Barolini T. – Wayne Storey H. (eds.), *Petrarch and the Textual Origins of Interpretation* (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 205–229.

¹⁷ Billanovich G., *Petrarca letterato: I. Lo scrittoio del Petrarca* (Roma: 1947) 1–55 ("Dall' Epystularum mearum ad diversos liber ai Rerum familiarium libri XXIV"); Dotti U., "I primi sei libri delle *Familiari* del Petrarca", *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 150 (1973) 1–20; *Pétrarque, Lettres familières. Tome I: Livres I–III / Rerum Familiarium Libri I–III*. Introduction et notes de Ugo Dotti mises en français par Frank La Brasca. Traduction de André Longpré (Paris: 2002) XIII–XVIII.

¹⁸ Wolff E., "Pétrarque et le genre épistolaire. Réflexions sur *Familiares* I, 1", in Nadjo L. – Gavaille E. (eds.), *Epistulae Antiquae II. Actes du II^e Colloque International «Le genre épistolaire antique et ses prolongements européens»* (Université François-

Nicholas Mann, echoing Billanovich, that 'many of these earlier letters, ostensibly dating back to the 1330s and 1340s, make considerable use of quotations from and references to classical texts not known to Petrarch until at least a decade later'. Yes, 'attitudes and sentiments attributed to one part of his life are often the fruit of Petrarch's later reflection, rewriting and editorial intervention', envisaging to order and enhance the fragments of his experience.¹⁹

In moulding these fragments into Latin private letters, all modelled after those of Cicero, Seneca and Pliny,²⁰ Petrarch did find a form most suitable for his autobiographical ambitions. For in apparently informal letters and 'letter-essays' he can show his readers his multifaceted colourful personality without the restraints imposed by the laws of the autobiographical genre. He can talk on his inner life, his wishes and ambitions, his doubts and considerations, his dreams and nightmares, his literary successes and the envious reactions they arose, his travels and diseases, his pets and clothing, his friendships and welcome patrons, his intellectual enemies, his solitary walks and the social events he had to attend... The apparent spontaneity palpable in Cicero's letters is the one emulated by Petrarch. It is a spontaneity which is deliberately literary and which plays to the gallery, striving for fame with posterity, for sure, but also for tranquillity in the complexities of the inner-self.²¹ Or, as Petrarch, clearly dreaming of becoming a second Cicero and Seneca, put in his opening letter dedicating the entire collection to his "Socrates", viz. the Limburg musician Ludovicus Sanctus of Beringen:²²

Rabelais, Tours, 28-30 septembre 2000 (Louvain - Paris: 2002) 379-385. See also Dooren F. van, "Petarca als briefschrijver", *Nexus* 18 (1997) 88-104.

¹⁹ Mann, *Petrarch* 24.

²⁰ Bernardo A.S., *Artistic Procedures Followed by Petrarch in Making the Collection of the Familiars* (PhD Diss. Harvard University: 1949); Clough C.H., "The Cult of Antiquity: Letters and Letter Collections", in eadem (ed.), *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance: Essays in honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller* (Manchester - New York: 1976) 33-67; Enenkel, *Die Erfindung des Menschen* 70-78.

²¹ Enenkel K.A.E., "Die Grundlegung humanistischer Selbstpräsentation im Brief-Corpus: Francesco Petrarca's *Familiarium rerum libri XXIV*", in Van Houdt T. - Papy J. - Tournoy G. - Matheussen C. (eds.), *Self-Presentation and Social Identification: The Rhetoric and Pragmatics of Letter Writing in Early Modern Times* (Louvain: 2002) 367-384.

²² On Petrarch's "Socrates" (i.e. Ludovicus Sanctus or, in Dutch, Lodewijk Heyligen van Beringen) and his specific place and function in the collection of *Familiars* see Papy J., "Creating an 'Italian' Friendship: from Petrarch's Ideal Literary Critic 'Socrates' to the Historical Reader Ludovicus Sanctus of Beringen", in Enenkel K.A.E. -

In the meantime I shall continue along the path I have been following, and shall avoid any exits so long as there is light. And the sweet labor will serve for almost as a place of rest. [...] I want you to know that it is thus that I proceed armed with the advice of Maro [*i.e. Virgil*] and Horace, advice I formerly read about and often applauded but now, at last, in the final days of my life, I have learned to make mine because of the necessities of unavoidable fate. The discourse with you has been most pleasant for me and I have drawn it out eagerly and as though by design. [...] These letters, therefore, woven with multi-colored threads, if I may say so, are for you. However, if I were ever to enjoy a steady abode and the leisure of time that has always escaped me, something that begins to appear possible, I would weave in your behalf a much more noble and certainly a unified web or tapestry. I should like to be numbered among those few who can promise and furnish fame; but you shall step forth into the light through your own merits. You shall be borne on the wings of your genius and shall need none of my assistance. If indeed, among so many difficulties I should manage to enjoy a measure of success, I shall make you my Idomeneus, my Atticus and my Lucilius.²³

Babylon or Helicon?: Petrarch's «retraite spirituelle»

As in his dialogue *Secretum* (1342–1343) in which Petrarch's search for a conversion is described in detail and in which he collected 'the dispersed fragments of his soul' so as 'to be with himself as much as possible',²⁴ Petrarch's plan and purpose in the collection of *Familiars* is similar. Intending to correct the mistakes of the past and to reconstruct his life, he offers his readers a sort of 'biography of the wise man amidst the storms of life and history'.²⁵ Still more perhaps,

Papy J. (eds.), *Petrarch and his Readers in the Renaissance* (Leiden-Boston: 2006) 13–30; Welkenhuysen A., "Louis Sanctus de Beringen, ami de Pétrarque, et sa *Sententia subiecti in musica sonora* rééditée d'après le ms. Laur. Ashb. 1051", in *Sapientiae doctrina. Mélanges de théologie et de littérature médiévales offerts à Dom Hildebrand Bascour O.S.B.* (Louvain: 1980) 386–427; idem, "La peste en Avignon (1348) décrite par un témoin oculaire, Louis Sanctus de Beringen (édition critique, traduction, éléments de commentaire)", in Lievens R. – Van Mingroot E. – Verbeke W. (eds.), *Pascua mediaevalia. Studies voor Prof. J.M. De Smet* (Louvain: 1983) 452–492.

²³ Petrarch, *Familiars* I, 1,45–48. Translation taken from *Francesco Petrarch, Letters on Familiar Matters (Rerum Familiarium Libri). Vol. 1: Books I–VIII*. Translated by Aldo S. Bernardo (New York: 2005 [= New York: 1975]) 13–4.

²⁴ Petrarch, *Secretum* 258: 'Adero mihi ipse quantum potero, et sparsa animae fragmenta recolligam'. See also *Familiars* XIII, 4,7: 'ubique sunt preterquam apud semet ipsos; loquuntur sepe cum aliis, nunquam secum'.

²⁵ Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca* 214: 'Con il suo grandioso «corpus» epistolare Petrarca dipinge infatti la sua biografia ideale, la biografia – cioè – del saggio nelle tempeste della vita e della storia'.

these letters are a means to give himself – that ‘peregrinus ubique’, a wanderer or pilgrim everywhere, as Petrarch often called himself²⁶ –, a *place* from which he could draw lessons from his own history, from which he could judge his own time, a place, finally, where he could live his humanist programme while searching for *otium*, the contemplative life in solitude, be it the “transalpine Helicon” in Vaucluse while escaping from Avignon, Selvapiana in the Apennines while in Parma, or his hilltop home at Arquà.²⁷

Yet, his Latin letters do equally display a specific new fusion of both classical, Christian and medieval literary traditions. Founding an ‘Augustinian Socratism’, echoing in his lyric sonnets in *volgare* and his Latin epistolary dialogues alike, Petrarch taught himself, his readers and posterity how to get to know oneself.²⁸ Exiled from his youth from his own *patria* Florence and far removed from papal Rome, the only true centre of the world and Christendom where ancient values and virtues should be revived,²⁹ and a place which he is only visiting,

²⁶ See, for instance, Petrarch, *Familiars* I, 1,21: ‘Nempe cui usque ad hoc tempus vita pene omnis in peregrinatione transacta est’, *Familiars* XV, 4,10: ‘vagor igitur et sine fine peregrinus videor’, and *Epistole metriche* III, 19,15–16 (ed. D. Rossetti, *Poesie minori del Petrarca* [Milan: 1829–34]): ‘Nullaque iam tellus, nullus michi permanet aer, /Incolae ceu nusquam, sic sum peregrinus ubique’. For a fuller analysis, see Wilkins E.H., “Peregrinus ubique”, *Studies in Philology* 45 (1948) 445–453, reprinted in idem, *The Making of the “Canzoniere” and Other Petrarchan Studies* (Rome: 1951).

²⁷ On Petrarch’s “Helicon” in Vaucluse, see *Familiars* V, 10,3; XII, 6,1; XII, 8,1; XIII, 8,14–15; XVI, 10,1–2; XXI, 13,8. For a full analysis, see Enenkel K.A.E. *Francesco Petrarca, De vita solitaria. Buch I. Kritische Textausgabe und ideengeschichtlicher Kommentar* (Leiden – New York – Copenhagen – Cologne: 1990) 551–552. See also von Moos, “Les solitudes de Pétrarque” 34–35.

²⁸ Trinkaus Ch., *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (Notre Dame: 1995; orig. Chicago: 1970) 18–19; idem, *The Poet as Philosopher: Petrarch and the Formation of Renaissance Consciousness* (New Haven – London: 1979) 124–126; Kristeller P.O., “Augustine and the Early Renaissance”, in *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (Rome: 1956) 355–372 (esp. 361 and note 24 with further references, among others to the fundamental, yet almost forgotten study by Gerosa P.P., “L’Umanesimo agostiniano del Petrarca”, *Didaskaleion*, N.S. 3/ fasc. 2 (1925) 63–113; 3/fasc. 3 (1925) 13–29; 4/fasc. 1 (1926) 107–137; 5/fasc. 1 (1927) 69–127, 7/fasc. 1 (1929) 125–148. These subsequent fascicles have been collected and reworked into Gerosa’s *Umanesimo cristiano del Petrarca* (Turin: 1966).

²⁹ On Petrarch’s view of Rome as the centre of Christendom, see Boriaud J.-Y., “L’image de Rome dans la lettre «Familière», VI, 2”, in *Pétrarque épistolier. Actes des Journées d’Etudes Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, Toulouse, 26–27 mars 1999* (Paris: 2004) 57–66; Seidlmayer M., “Rom und Romgedanke im Mittelalter”, *Saeculum* 7 (1956) 395–412, published as well in Kytzler B. (ed.), *Rom als Idee* (Darmstadt: 1993) 158–187.

and this still to be coronated poet laureat on Easter Sunday 1341,³⁰ Petrarch found himself amidst analogous conflicts in papal Avignon: the Curia had abandoned tradition in leaving Rome and in moving to a city of immoral intrigue and greed, that New Babylon at the Rhône³¹ where, so he recounts in his *Secretum* and *De vita solitaria*, he had the feeling that he had descended hell alive³² and where, so he testifies to Don Luca da Piacenza, rector of San Stefano in Parma, he was ‘always sad and reluctant to be, even though [he] was held by rather strong ties’.³³ That is why Petrarch congratulates his Avignonesse friend, the modest Bartholomeo Carbone, appointed Bishop of Teano and Chieti, to have lived ‘far from Babylon’,³⁴ that ‘whore that had forgotten her husband’. In a letter to his intimate friend Lello di Pietro Stefano dei Tosetti, whose name Petrarch classicized into “Laelius” in memory of Scipio’s closest friend, it was precisely this ‘tumultus Babilonicus’, this ‘Babylonian confusion’ which incited Petrarch to meditate upon his fate which exiled him from his fatherland Italy, brought him to Avignon, a place he can only survive thanks to the strenuous mental exercise never to feel as he does, never to allow ugliness in his mind. Forced to live nearby ‘neighboring Babylon which is called the Roman Curia’ whereas ‘nothing is less Roman’, Petrarch can only survive ‘the noise and smoke of the ungodly city’ by ‘blocking his ears and eyes’, in enjoying the pleasing idleness and desired solitude so as to become oblivious to and unmindful of urban cares.³⁵

³⁰ Wilkins E.H., “The Coronation of Petrarch”, in idem, *The Making of the Canzoniere*, 9–69; Godi C., “La «Collatio laureationis» del Petrarca”, *Italia medioevale e umanistica* (1970) 1–7; Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca* 86–89.

³¹ See, for instance, *Familiars* XI, 6,5; XI, 9,2; XII, 8,10–11; XII, 8,b–d; XII, 10,2; XII, 11,3–6 and 8; XIII, 6,2 and 30; XIV, 4,8; XV, 7,11; XV, 8,5 and 17; XV, 11,3; XVI, 9,1; XVI, 10,1–2; XVII, 3,12; XVII, 10,7; XX, 9,2; XX, 14,27–28; XXIV, 12,32.

³² *Secretum* II, 156; *Familiars* XI, 6,5: ‘Babilon hec occidentalis, rerum pessima Ereboque simillima’; XI, 9,2: ‘priusquam illud tartareum limen vicine Babilonis ingredimur’; *Familiars* XII, 8,10: ‘michi iterum invito Babilonicus uncus iniectus est retractusque sum ad inferos, unde hec tibi nunc scribo’.

³³ *Familiars* XIV, 4,8: ‘Mirantur et stupent quod hinc [*i.e.* Avignon] abire meditor, ubi, Deo et conscientia testibus, quod ex me sepius audisti, nunquam nisi tristis et invitus fui etiam dum laqueis validioribus retinebar’.

³⁴ *Familiars* XII, 11,3: ‘nusquam te non longe melius quam Babilone victurum’.

³⁵ *Familiars* XV, 8,5 and 16–17: ‘In ipso igitur portu timens multa circumspicio, sed ante omnia vicina Babilone deterreor, quam romanam curiam dicunt; mirum, cum nichil minus quam romana, nichil illi usquam invisius Roma sit. Huius certe vicinitas ac prospectus odorque terribilis et felicitati nimis infestus est [...] Hic quanquam urbis impie vicinus fragor ac fumus impediunt, obstruam tamen aures oculosque, gratoque otio, quod iam cepi, et optata fruar solitudine. Et siquis inde huc, quod vetare nequeo,

Petrarch's spiritual exercise is, of course, connected to his views on the *vita contemplativa*. As is evident from the dialogue *Secretum* (II, 100–102), where the interlocutor Franciscus depicts the problems involved with his stay in Avignon and his confessor Augustinus recommends him the reading of Seneca's 56th letter to Lucilius on exercising one's mind against external matters, Petrarch was well acquainted with Seneca's Stoic exercise of withdrawal into one's 'inner citadel' (Hadot), of the *retraite spirituelle*.³⁶ So as to counter the detriment influence of affects and passions, of external things that are, in fact, indifferent, and to obtain a tranquillity of mind, Petrarch followed Seneca's Stoic therapies to some degree, without, however, abandoning the Christian, eremitical tradition of the *solitudo loci* which was based on the very idea, contradicting Stoic thought, that tranquillity of the mind could not be obtained everywhere but that the eyes, the direct way to one's soul, should be defended against evil, yes diabolic influences.³⁷ For this reason, Petrarch, whenever possible, chose a retreat from city life into solitude and, preferably, wanderings and meditations in a *locus amoenus*, be it in the mountains, woods or refreshing source of the Sorgue at Vaucluse.³⁸ Self-analysing the causes of his misfortunes in a letter to Francesco Nelli, prior of the church of the Holy Apostles in Florence whom he later called "Simonides" and to whom he would dedicate his *Epistolae Seniles* in 1361, Petrarch detected that it were his bodily passions and vices which make him waver and fall. It is 'to his

turbator accesserit, sentiet me in silvis urbanarum oblitum atque immemorem curarum; surdo se locutum dicit; ita nichil omnino audiam, nichil loquar extra propositi mei fines; vagabor solus et liber ut nunc facio; [...] tunc nil usquam preter Sorgiam cogitabo, inter agrestes victurus humandusque ultimoque dierum omnium, extra quidem sed, quod iam hinc turbat, prope tumultum babilonicum surrecturus'.

³⁶ On this Stoic *retraite spirituelle*, see Rabbow P., *Seelenführung. Methodik der Exerzitien in der Antike* (Munich: 1954); Hadot I., *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung* (Berlin: 1969); Hadot P., *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris: 1981); Foucault M., *Histoire de la sexualité*. Vol. III: *Le souci de soi* (Paris: 1984). See also Nussbaum M.C., *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, NJ: 1994) 353–354.

³⁷ Constable G., "Petrarch and Monasticism", in Bernardo A.S. (ed.), *Francesco Petrarca, Citizen of the World* (Padua – New York: 1980) 53–90. For a fuller analysis of Petrarch and the *solitudo loci*, see Francesco Petrarca, *De vita solitaria*. *Buch I. Kritische Textausgabe und ideengeschichtlicher Kommentar* von K.A.E. Enenkel (Leiden – New York – Copenhagen – Cologne: 1990) 420–428.

³⁸ See Petrarch, *Familiares* XIX, 3,18: 'illam [sc. *vitam solitariam*] ego, si dabitur, in sede sua, hoc est in silvis ac montibus quod sepe iam feci, alioquin, quantum possibile fuerit, ut nunc facio, ipsis in urbibus consectabor'.

body that he has declared war'.³⁹ Next to a Stoic-Augustinian therapy of his senses and his self-indulgence – many of the Stoic attitudes to be read in Petrarch's oeuvre are derived from Cicero via St Augustine⁴⁰ – it was a summer retreat in Vaucluse which was essential to Petrarch. Vaucluse being his ideal refuge, his 'transalpine Helicon',⁴¹ had inspired him to write his *De vita solitaria*; its woody mountainsides brought him to write his *Bucolicum carmen* alike:

I am spending the summer at the source of the Sorgue. What now follows you would understand without a further word from me; but if you wish me to speak, I shall briefly do so. I have declared war on my body. May He be my witness without whose assistance I would fall, for I feel that my gullet, belly, tongue, ears, and eyes often seem wicked enemies and not fitting parts of my body. Indeed I recall that many of my misfortunes occurred because of them, particularly because of my eyes, which have always led me into some trouble. I have thus closed them, so that they behold barely anything but the heavens, mountains, and springs. [...] What shall I say about my dwelling? Where I live with one dog and only two servants you would consider the home of Cato or Fabritius. [...] Nearby, divided from it by a very small bridge on the further side of the house, hangs a curved vault of native rock that now provides shelter against the summer heat. It is a place that inspires studies, and I suspect is not too dissimilar to the little hall where Cicero used to declaim his orations, except that this did not have a Sorgue flowing alongside. Under this vault, therefore, I spend my afternoons, and my mornings on the hillsides; the evenings I spend in the meadows or in my less cultivated garden at the source where my efforts have conquered nature and cleared a spot under the high cliff in the midst of the waters, narrow indeed but very inspiring, in which even a sluggish mind can rise to the noblest thoughts.⁴²

³⁹ *Familiars* XIII, 8,1: 'Corpori meo bellum indixi'. This letter has been dated in Vaucluse in June-August 1352 by Wilkins E.H., *Studies in the Life and Works of Petrarch* (Cambridge: 1955) 128, n. 59. On Francesco Nelli, see Cochin H., *Un ami de Pétrarque. Lettres de Francesco Nelli à Pétrarque* (Paris: 1892); Wilkins E.H., "A Survey of the Correspondence between Petrarch and Francesco Nelli", *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 1 (1958) 351–358.

⁴⁰ De Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, vol. I 240–241; Bobbio A., "Seneca e la formazione spirituale e culturale del Petrarca", *La bibliofilia* 43 (1941) 224–291, esp. 234–236; Quillen C.E., *Rereading the Renaissance: Petrarch, Augustine, and the Language of Humanism* (Ann Arbor: 1998) 91–98.

⁴¹ On Petrarch and his "transalpine Helicon" in Vaucluse, see *Familiars* V, 10,3; XII, 6,1; XII, 8*, a; XII, 8,1 and 11; XVI, 10,1–2.

⁴² *Familiars* XIII, 8,1–2, 12 and 14–15. Translation taken from *Francesco Petrarch, Letters on Familiar Matters (Rerum Familiarium Libri)*. Vol. 2: Books IX–XVI. Translated by Aldo S. Bernardo (New York: 2005 [= New York: 1982]) 204–206. This undated

The wandering scholar and the disordered mind

Obviously, Petrarch did not rely on his own spiritual power; a real *solitudo loci* was a necessary help for a *solitudo cordis*, a *solitudo mentis*. Likewise, Petrarch did not wholly agree with Seneca's view that travelling and changing places were no effective remedy to cure mental instability and lack of balance,⁴³ for, he himself, the *peregrinus ubique* who never settled down and 'migrated from Italy to France and from France to Italy',⁴⁴ was most convinced that travelling had positive effects on his mental condition,⁴⁵ yes that he was able to find a 'middle path between restless curiosity and extreme sluggishness'.⁴⁶ As Plato, Democritus and Pythagoras who all left their homeland in search for truth, Petrarch too wanted to 'break his fetters and rise above them, and to subordinate the pleasures of the eyes to virtue, which is pleasure of the mind'.⁴⁷ Moreover, following the ancient tradition of Horace, Cicero and Seneca, Petrarch read his Homer through moral spectacles and laid stress on Ulysses's patience, prudence and fortitude.⁴⁸ As Ulysses, he hopes to 'set aside his affections, to neglect his throne and scorne

letter has been situated in Vaucluse in the period June–August 1352 by Wilkins, *Studies in the Life and Works of Petrarch* 128, n. 59.

⁴³ See, for instance, Seneca's analysis in *On tranquillity of mind*, 2, 13–15, and his *Epistles to Lucilius*, 2, 1; 28, 1–3; 50, 1; 82, 4; 104, 7–15.

⁴⁴ *Familiars* XV, 4,1: 'Quod in silentio suspicabar audio, mirari te quid ita vagus hac illac et nusquam bona fide subsistens, nondum michi certam vite sedem delegisse videar, quod anno vix usquam integro exacto per Italiam, biennio autem ex Italia in Gallias atque ex Galliis in Italiam commigrare soleam'.

⁴⁵ *Familiars* XV, 4,2: 'Scio quidem illud Annei Seneca verum esse, "primum argumentum bene composite mentis posse consistere et secum morari"; sed nec illud ignoro, multos nunquam metas exigui ruris egressos, animo tamen et cogitationibus semper vagos et instabiles; quosdam vero in peregrinatione perpetua, gravissimos tamen viros ac constantissimos fuisse'.

⁴⁶ *Familiars* IX, 13,8: 'Ita ne curiositatem inter anxiam ultimamque segnitiem nichil est medium?'.

⁴⁷ *Familiars* IX, 13,12: 'effractus his compedibus non posse consurgere, ac virtuti, que voluptas est mentium, oculorum subicere voluptatem'.

⁴⁸ See Stanford W.B., *The Ulysses Theme. A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero*, 2nd revised edition (Oxford: 1968) 121–125, who also points out the influence of Stoic admiration for Ulysses on the later tradition (Plutarch, Apuleius, Marcus Aurelius, several Fathers of the Church and later ecclesiastical writers). On the 'moral reading' of Homer's *Odyssey*, see Rutherford R.B., "The Philosophy of the *Odyssey*", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 106 (1986) 145–162, esp. 145. For this typically humanist reading in general, see also Papy J., "The Ulysses Theme in Justus Lipsius's Correspondence", *Neulateinisches Jahrbuch: Journal of Neo-Latin Language and Literature* 2 (1999) 183–198.

his responsibilities so as to return one day to his country more learned in his old age'.⁴⁹

For who, Petrarch asks Andrea Dandolo, Doge of Venice from 1343 onwards, who possesses 'the mark of a well-ordered mind', to use Seneca's words?⁵⁰ Homer and Virgil made the perfect man, viz. Ulysses and Aeneas, travel the entire world always learning something new, beholding the mores and cities of many people, contemplating with curiosity new lands, lofty mountains, famous seas, celebrated lakes, hidden springs, noted rivers? Do our minds and souls not originate in eternal fires, thus justifying our mutability, as Seneca once stated in his *Consolation to Helvia*, with the mutability of the stars and planets? And, so Petrarch turned his thoughts into more Christian ones, are our souls not created by God and at once joined to our bodies, and do we not reflect some similarity to the place inhabited by our Creator?⁵¹ Moreover, so Petrarch concludes his analysis in a particular way, 'let others know the causes of their tranquillity; let it suffice for me to have revealed the causes of my restlessness'.⁵²

Observing and analysing his own failures and weaknesses, Petrarch is, however, certainly not in full agreement with the Stoics who taught that in order to attain tranquillity of mind all passions should be radically extirpated. Obviously he feels for the Peripatetic view, as expounded in Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* (viz. IV, 17,38–40), that souls are necessarily subject to disorders and that a certain limit (*modus*) has to be fixed beyond which disorders should not pass:

⁴⁹ *Familiars* IX, 13,25: 'calcatis affectibus, neglecto regni solio et tot pignorum spretis, inter Scyllam et Caribdim, inter nigrantes Averni vertices easque difficultates rerum ac locorum que legentis quoque animum fatigent, senescere maluit quam domi, nullam aliam ob causam quam ut aliquando senex doctior in patriam remearet'.

⁵⁰ See supra note 44.

⁵¹ *Familiars* XV, 4,13: 'Non dicam "celestem originem" animarum, quod Virgilius ait, neque, quod ait Cicero, "animum" nobis "datum ex illis sempiternis ignibus" quos "sidera et stellas" appellamus, ut similitudine quadam, quod Seneca placet, ex ignium volubilitate celestium animarum inde nascentium volubilitas excusetur; sed hoc dico, creatas simulque corporibus infusas animas a Deo esse; Dei "sedem in celo" esse, quod ait Psalmista; celi vero perpetuum motum esse, quod ipsi oculis videmus; itaque nichil miri siquam inde similitudinem traximus ubi Creator noster habitat'. References are to Virgil, *Aeneid* VI, 730; Cicero, *De republica* VI, 15,15; Seneca, *Consolation to Helvia* VI, 6–8 and David's *Psalm* 11 (10), 4 and 103 (102), 19. Petrarch often alludes to these Pythagorean, Platonic, Stoic and neo-Platonic theories; see, for instance, *Secretum* II, 69; *Familiars* II, 5,4 and XII, 5,1.

⁵² *Familiars* XV, 4,16: 'Denique alii quietis sue causas norint; michi motus mei causas attulisse sufficiat'.

But in this life of men, from among whom we must choose our friends, experience shows that there is no mind, regardless of its serenity and tranquillity, which is not sometimes moved by light concerns and shaken by upsetting human affairs. Just as an armed ship blown about the high seas is not overcome, so also for the mind the best praise is that it does not succumb. So that, though the Stoics disagree, it happens that in this life in which we know nothing to be perfect, we consider a healthy state any light and curable disease.⁵³

The poetry of crisis and the Augustinian spiritual life

To cure his disease was Petrarch's lifelong ambition and despair. Both in the *Secretum*, in Canzone 264 ('I'vo pensando, e nel penser m'assale'), in *Bucolicum Carmen X*, and in *Familiares* II, 9, he made a clear analysis of his well-known idolatrous love for Laura and his love of glory.⁵⁴ When meditating on his vain search for glory, Petrarch, once again, acknowledges that Stoic control is not his, yet that distance and balance are to be pursued:

Finally they will have learned not to serve their bodies but to control them with rules and regulations; I would not dare count myself among this number. I am nevertheless striving, and seem to be making some progress. To pass over other things, I do not deny that by nature I am very desirous of glory, but I have so shaped my mind with study that I would be happy to attain it if possible. Yet if it escapes me I would not be sorrowful, being prepared should fortune wish to have my name spread far and wide, and also prepared to remain unknown within the narrow confines of my little country abode. I desire to be Demosthenes

⁵³ *Familiares* III, 15,4–5: 'Sed in hac vita hominum, de qua nobis amicitie deligende sunt, experimento compertum est nullum animum, quantalibet serenitate tranquilum, levibus saltem interdum perturbationibus non moveri et quibusdam humanarum rerum turbinibus agitari. Ceterum, sicut armata navis, in alto fluctuabitur, non succumbet; eaque, ut navis, sic animi precipua laus erit; ita fit, quod Stoicis non placet, ut in hac vita, cui nichil scimus inesse perfectum, sanitatis locum teneat levis ac medicabilis egritudo'. Translation taken from *Francesco Petrarca, Letters on Familiar Matters (Rerum Familiarium Libri)*. Vol. 1: Books I–VIII. Translated by A.S. Bernardo (New York: 2005 [= New York: 1975]) 153–154.

⁵⁴ See, for instance, Wilkins, *The Making of the Canzoniere*, 302–304; *Francesco Petrarca, Laurea Occidens (Bucolicum Carmen X)*, testo, traduzione e commento a cura di Guido Martellotti (Roma: 1968); Rico F., *Vida u obra de Petrarca. I: Lectura del Secretum* (Chapel Hill: 1974) 5. For a general and inspiring analysis of Petrarch's 'moral poetics', see Benassi S., "La vertigine del sublime: moralità della poesia e razionalità della morale in F. Petrarca", in Rotondi Secchi Tarugi L. (ed.), *Petrarca e la cultura europea* (Milan: 1997) 181–201.

by nature but Democritus by imitation. We read that the former sought fame, the latter despised it. Meanwhile in order not to allow my talent to become feeble through neglect, I exercise my eyes in reading, my fingers in writing, and my mind in meditation.⁵⁵

As in the *Canzoniere*, the *Bucolicum Carmen* and the *Secretum*, he realised in his letters too that his love, in so far as it was for a mortal being, was mistaken, and that Laura's virtue, which resisted his advances, was for his good. As he was unable to write, he was forced to write; as his writing was therapeutic, it created the suffering alike. Love drove him to poetry; poetry created and preserved love. Words were the only possible medium for the expression of desire and only they will heal the pain caused by his desire, yet these same words will earn fame for their author, they may even reserve for him a place in posterity.⁵⁶ Here, as in many instances of crisis and reflection, Petrarch shows his consciousness of crisis – 'My wishes fluctuate and my desires are discordant and, being so, they tear me to pieces. Thus does the external part of man battle against the internal'.⁵⁷ Here, as often, he finds St Augustine who 'viewing the byways and the errors of my life, is moved to compassion especially if he recalls his own youth which the merciful Almighty brought back to the straight path from its wanderings and deviations'.⁵⁸ As he had the character Augustinus in the ficti-

⁵⁵ *Familiare* XIII, 4,24–25: 'postremo qui corpori non servire sed leges dare atque imperare didicerint. Horum ego me numeris ascribere non ausim; nitor tamen et aliquantulum profecisse video; ut sileam reliqua, glorie me natura cupidissimum non nego, sed ita animum studio formavi ut et letus illam, si assit, arripiat, et si desit, non mestus abiciat, paratus nomen, si qua fors faverit, longe lateque diffundere, paratus et intra parvi ruris angustias non cognosci; natura Demosthenes, imitatione Democritus fieri velim; ille enim, ut legimus, fame avidus fuit, iste contemptor. Interea ne situ forte marcescat ingenium, exerceo in lectione oculos, digitos in scriptura, mentem in cogitatione detineo'. Translation taken from *Francesco Petrarca, Letters on Familiar Matters (Rerum Familiarium Libri). Vol. 2: Books IX–XVI*. Translated by A.S. Bernardo (New York: 2005 [= New York: 1982]) 185.

⁵⁶ As he had tried with Laura in the *Canzoniere*, Petrarch attempted to make of Scipio a human ideal compatible with the Christian faith in his epic *Africa*, thus defending his love for Laura and his love for glory alike again. See Bernardo A.S., "Scipio vs. Laura: 'From Young Leaves to Garlands'", in *Petrarch, Scipio and the "Africa": The Birth of Humanism's Dream* (Baltimore-London: 1962), reprinted in Bloom (ed.), *Petrarch* 9–27.

⁵⁷ *Familiare* II, 9,17 (letter to Giacomo Colonna, Bishop of Lombez, dated in Avignon on 21 December, and to be situated in 1336): 'Voluntates mee fluctuant et desideria discordant et discordando me lacerant. Sic adversus interiorem hominem exterior pugnat'. On the probable date of this letter, see Foresti A., *Aneddoti della vita di Francesco Petrarca* (Padua: 1977) 48.

⁵⁸ *Familiare* II, 9,14: 'devia vite mee erroresque cernentem misereri arbitror; pre-

tious dialogue *Secretum* reproaching Franciscus for seeking to make eternal in painted form the mortal face which had already caused him sufficient misfortune,⁵⁹ it is with Augustine, even more than with Cicero, that Petrarch wishes to interpret his own life, transgressions and reading. The saint's writings had been accompanying him from his first recorded book purchase of the *City of God* in Avignon in 1325 onwards.⁶⁰ If anything, Augustine's *Confessions*, given to him by his friend the Augustinian theologian Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro⁶¹ – in later years also intellectual tutor to Boccaccio in Naples –, influenced his outlook on the world and himself. Moreover, Augustine's *Confessions*, 'the entrance to all sacred literature', so Petrarch would state in a letter of 10 June 1367,⁶² were the inspiration and latent model for the *Secretum*.⁶³ And just as Augustine had turned from temporal concerns and classical literature to the spiritual life and works of piety, so Petrarch did not miss an opportunity to emphasize that he

sertim si adolescentie sue meminit, quam vagam et aberrantem miseratus Omnipotens retraxit ad rectum iter'.

⁵⁹ *Secretum* III, 198. In fact, Petrarch's friend, the painter Simone Martini (1284–1344), had made a portrait of Laura. Petrarch devoted his *Canzoniere* 77 and 78, both to be dated in 1336, to these portraits. See also Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca* 61.

⁶⁰ De Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme* I 36; Ullman B.L., "Petrarch's Favorite Books", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 54 (1923) 21–38; Bilanovich G., "Tra Italia e Fiandre nel Trecento. Francesco Petrarca e Ludovico Santo di Beringen", in Verbeke G. – IJsewijn J. (eds.), *The Late Middle Ages and the Dawn of Humanism outside Italy. Proceedings of the International Conference Louvain May 11–13, 1970* (Louvain – The Hague: 1972) 6–18, esp. 14.

⁶¹ *Familiars* IV, 1,26: 'visum est michi Confessionum Augustini librum, caritatis tue munus, inspicere'. As late as 8 January 1374 Petrarch would testify on this beloved copy in one of his last *Seniles* (viz. XV, 7, to the Augustinian monk Fra Luigi Marsili) that 'I willingly give you the book you request [viz. a copy of St. Augustine's *Confessions*], and I would give it more willingly if it were as it was when given to me in my teens by Dionigi, that preeminent professor of sacred literature in your order, an outstanding man in every respect, and a most indulgent father to me. But, being unsettled both by nature perhaps and then because of my age, I found it charming for its subject and author and handy to carry because of its small size; so I often took it throughout Italy practically, and France, and Germany, to the point that my hands and the book seemed to be one, so inseparable had they become from endless holding'. On the importance of Petrarch's encounter with the Augustinian monk Dionigi Roberti da Borgo S. Sepolcro, see De Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, I 35–9 and II 46, 193 and 295; Luciani E., *Les Confessions de Saint Augustin dans les lettres de Pétrarque* (Paris: 1982).

⁶² *Seniles*, VIII, 6,6 (letter to Donato Albanzani, dated in Pavia on 10 June 1367): 'scito illum librum michi aditum fuisse ad omnes sacras literas'.

⁶³ Courcelle P., "Pétrarque lecteur des *Confessions*", *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale* 1 (1959) 26–43, esp. 29–30; Stock, "Reading, Writing, and the Self: Petarch and His Forerunners", 723.

too attempted a similar conversion. In a letter to his Florentine friend Francesco Nelli, for instance, Petrarch repeated that, whereas during his younger years he had been deeply involved in classical literature, captivated the style and genius of illustrious writers such as Cicero and Virgil, during his later years he wished to devote himself to sacred literature. For this Petrarch 'is more concerned with salvation than eloquence', and whereas he 'used to read books that gave pleasure, he is now reading works that are good for him'.⁶⁴ His new orators are Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Gregory, his new philosopher is Paul, his new poet the Psalmist David.⁶⁵

As is also most evident from Petrarch's *Canzoniere*,⁶⁶ this pursuit of eternal salvation is acute at two of Petrarch's most major spiritual crises: his brother Gherardo's profession in the Charterhouse of Montreux in 1342,⁶⁷ and Laura's death in 1348.⁶⁸ Well-known is Petrarch's letter on the ascent of Mont Ventoux, a Christian allegoresis, in which his and his brother's ascent come to stand for spiritual ascent to happiness.⁶⁹ More important perhaps is that, on arrival at the summit and

⁶⁴ *Familiars* XXII, 10,5–7 and 10–11.

⁶⁵ *Familiars* XXII, 10,10: 'Modo quos in verborum, quos in rerum consilio preferam'.

⁶⁶ The theme of rejection of earthly matters and the pursuit of eternal salvation is clearly present in the *Rime sparse* written after Laura's death. In *Canzoniere* 365, for instance, Petrarch deplores his obsession with worldly matters and implores God to set him on the road to eternal salvation:

'Tu che vedi i miei mali indegni et empti,
Re del cielo, invisibile, immortale,
soccorri a l'alma disviata e frale,
e l suo defetto di tua grazia adempi'.

⁶⁷ Rodney Lokaj, "Gherardo dans les *Familiars* de Pétrarque", in *Pétrarque épistolier. Actes des Journées d'Etudes Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, Toulouse, 26–27 mars 1999* (Paris: 2004) 45–56; Foresti, *Aneddoti della vita di Francesco Petarca* 141; Constable, "Petrarch and Monasticism" 53–99.

⁶⁸ As Petrarch himself wrote on the fly-leaf of his Virgil-codex, a manuscript now preserved in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, S.P. 10/27 (formerly A. 29inf.) fol. Av: 'Rumor autem infelix per literas Ludovici mei [i.e. Ludovicus Sanctus, Petrarch's "Socrates"] me Parme repperit, anno eodem mense Maio die xix° mane'. A facsimile reproduction can be found in *Francisci Petrarcae Vergilianus codex ad Publii Vergilii Maronis diem natalem bis millesimum celebrandum quam similime expressus atque in lucem editus*, ed. G. Galbiati – A. Ratti (Milan: 1930). See also De Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme* II 285–287.

⁶⁹ No letter of Petrarch evoked as many scholarly studies; we limit ourselves in pointing out the most important ones and which we have used here: Billanovich G., "Petrarca e il Ventoso", *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 9 (1966) 389–401; Durling R.M., "The Ascent of Mt. Ventoux and the Crisis of Allegory", *Italian Quarterly* 18 (1974)

after the reading of a passage in book X of Augustine's *Confessions* in which natural wonders are said to distract the mind from its focus on the self's relationship to God, Petrarch had been invited to introspection – turning his 'inner eyes within'.⁷⁰ The connection of spiritual blindness and reading is telling: Petrarch's ascent – which in fact was a descent, a fall – started out of blind *curiositas* for external things instead of the *visio Dei*.⁷¹ The (incomplete, partial) reading of Livy's description of Philip of Macedon's ascent of Mount Haemus was the motor to see the Mount Ventoux and its surroundings,⁷² yet the (complete and totalizing) reading of the passage in book X of Augustine's *Confessions* was its very opposite and completion: it moved Petrarch to introspection and spiritual vision.⁷³ Not the summit of Mount

7–28 (reprinted in Bloom [ed.], *Petrarch* 29–42); Martinelli B., *Petrarca e il Ventoso*. Presentazione di Enzo Noè Girardi (Bergamo: 1977); Robbins J., "Petrarch Reading Augustine: 'The Ascent of Mont Ventoux'", *Philological Quarterly* 64 (1985–1986) 533–553; Ascoli A.R., "Petrarch's Middle Ages: Memory, Imagination, History, and the *Ascent of Mount Ventoux*", *Stanford Italian Review* 10 (1991) 5–43; Lau V., "Allegorien des Sehens, Auslegung des geschichtlichen Seins und skeptische Narrativität: Francesco Petrarca, 'Die Besteigung des Mont Ventoux'", *Scientia poetica. Jahrbuch für Geschichte der Literatur und der Wissenschaften* 3 (1999) 1–19; Tucker G.H., "Petrarch's Curious Mountain of Virtue", in idem (ed.), *Forms of the "Medieval" in the "Renaissance": A Multidisciplinary Exploration of a Cultural Continuum* (Charlottesville: 2000) 1–25.

⁷⁰ *Familiare* IV, 1,29: 'in me ipsum interiores oculos reflexi'.

⁷¹ *Familiare* IV, 1,1: 'Altissimum regionis huius montem, quem non immerito Ventosum vocant, hodierno die, sola videndi insignem loci altitudinem cupiditate ductus, ascendi'.

⁷² *Familiare* IV, 1,2: 'Cepit impetus tandem aliquando facere quod quotidie faciebam, precipue postquam, relegendi pridie res romanas apud Livium, forte ille michi locus occurrerat ubi Philippus Macedonum rex – is qui cum populo Romano bellum gessit – Hemum montem thesalicum conscendit, e cuius vertice duo maria videri, Adriaticum et Euxinum, fame crediderat, vere ne an falso satis comperti nichil habeo, quod et mons a nostro orbe semotus et scriptorum dissensio dubiam rem facit'.

⁷³ *Familiare* IV, 1,26–29: 'Que dum mirarer singula et nunc terrenum aliquid saperem, nunc exemplo corporis animum ad altiora subveherem, visum est michi Confessionum Augustini librum, caritatis tue munus, inspicere. [...] Aperio, lecturus quicquid occurreret; quid enim nisi pium et devotum posset occurrere? Forte autem decimus illius operis liber oblatu est. Frater expectans per os meum ab Augustino aliquid audire, intentis auribus stabat. Deum testor ipsumque qui aderat, quod ubi primum dixi oculos, scriptum erat: «Et eunt homines admirari alta montium et ingentes fluctus maris et latissimos lapsus fluminum et oceani ambitum et giros siderum, et relinquunt se ipsos». Obstupui, fateor; audiendique avidum fratrem rogans ne michi molestus esset, librum clausi, iratus michimet quod nunc etiam terrestria mirarer, qui iampridem ab ipsis gentium philosophis discere debuissem «nichil preter animum esse mirabilem, cui magno nichil est magnum». Tunc vero montem satis vidisse con-

Ventoux, but Augustine became Petrarch's viewpoint.⁷⁴ The 'respicere' (in *Familiars* IV, 1, 24) became an 'inspicere' (in *Familiars* IV, 1, 26), external curiosity became reflection (in *Familiars* IV, 1, 29: 'in me ipsum interiores oculos reflexi'). If in reading Livy this "seeing" still was Petrarch's project, that very "seeing" became his problem while reading Augustine: the totalizing reading turned every project, every ascent out of the self, every desire for glory senseless and vain.⁷⁵ This self-knowledge required recollection of the self, it required Petrarch's rhetorical and literary creation of himself as a form of self-control and self-possession.

Reading and writing the Self

As readers, however, we must be wary of using Petrarch's letters that appear in the *Familiars* as 'neutral documents' that would reveal the humanist's spiritual development. Petrarch's self-proclaimed shift from classical to Christian reading matter, his philosophical and religious 'conversion' on an Augustinian model are rather to be regarded, so it has been demonstrated by Carol Everhart Quillen, as 'stylistic revision'.⁷⁶

The real break in continuity with the tradition of 'medieval exegesis',⁷⁷ so Riccardo Fubini observed, was the emphasis placed by Petrarch on the figure of the author-person. In addition, his dislike of the method of commentaries, which, instead of clarifying doctrine, ends up obscuring the immediacy of the text, challenged the very essence of

tentus, in me ipsum interiores oculos reflexi'. References are to Augustine, *Confessions* X, 8,15 and Seneca, *Epistles to Lucilius* 8,5.

⁷⁴ *Familiars* IV, 1,33: 'Quotiens, putas, illo die, rediens et in tergum versus, cacumen montis aspxi! et vix unius cubiti altitudo visa est pre altitudinis contemplationis humane'.

⁷⁵ *Familiars* IV, 1,32: 'Et sicut Antonius, his auditis, aliud non quesivit, et sicut Augustinus, his lectis, ulterius non processit, sic et michi in paucis verbis que premisi, totius lectionis terminus fuit, in silentio cogitanti quanta mortalibus consilii esset inopia, qui, nobilissima sui parte neglecta, diffundantur in plurima et inanibus spectaculis evanescent, quod intus inveniri poterat, querentes extrinsecus; admirantique nobilitatem animi nostri, nisi sponte degenerans ab originis sue primordiis aberasset, et que sibi dederat in honorem Deus, ipse in opprobrium convertisset'.

⁷⁶ Quillen, *Rereading the Renaissance* 111 and 113.

⁷⁷ In the meaning as explained by De Lubac H., *Exégèse médiévale. Les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, 4 vols. (Paris: 1959–1964).

the scholastic system.⁷⁸ Yet, the crucial point in Petrarch's thought was his dismissal of Augustinian teaching (especially as expounded in the fundamental treatise *De doctrina Christiana*), which prescribed a utilitarian submission of profane literature to the sacred texts.⁷⁹ According to Petrarch, the two fields were in fact entirely distinct: in the *Rerum memorandarum libri* his purpose was to rely on profane texts only, 'in order not to confuse together so different matters' ('ne res distantissimas importuna permixtione confunderem').⁸⁰ Finally, his gravest doubt about the relevance of the intellectualisations of verbose scholasticism, of whatever school, was inspired by the fact that they did not tangle the problem of how to lead a Christian life.⁸¹

Petrarch indeed imitated Augustine both in the poignancy of his own search for wholeness and serenity, in his use of his own experiences as a guide for his intellectual and religious friends, and in his insistence on reviving the rhetorical tradition concerned with moral philosophy. For the Petrarchan Self being built around the will, the humanist understood that, whereas Socrates, Seneca and Cicero were seeking within their intellectual and philosophical bounds to realise the concept of selfhood, it had remained for Christianity, and especially for St. Augustine to develop it.⁸²

In this respect, the convergence, yes confluence of the *Secretum*, the letter relating his ascent of Mont Ventoux, and the whole collection

⁷⁸ Fubini R., "Humanism and Scholasticism: Towards an Historical Definition", in Mazzocco A. (ed.), *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism* (Leiden – Boston: 2006) 127–136, esp. 132.

⁷⁹ Ibid., and Mazzotta G., "Humanism and the Medieval Encyclopedic Tradition", in Mazzocco (ed.), *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism* 113–124, esp. 116.

⁸⁰ Francesco Petrarca, *Rerum memorandarum libri*, ed. G. Billanovich (Florence: 1945) I, 259. See Fubini R., "Luoghi della memoria e antiscolasticismo in Petrarca: i *Rerum memorandarum libri*", in Pfisterer U. – Seidel M. (eds.), *Visuelle Topoi. Erfindung und tradiertes Wissen in den Künsten der italienischen Renaissance* (Munich: 2003) 171–181.

⁸¹ See, for instance, *Familiares* XII, 3,9–10: 'philosophiam amo; non illam loquacem scolasticam ventosam, qua ridiculum in modum literatores nostri superbiunt, sed veram et non in libris tantum sed in animis habitantem, atque in rebus positam non in verbis, cuius illud precipuum munus reor Tusculanis disputationibus insertum, quod scilicet "medetur animis, inanes sollicitudines detrahit, cupiditatibus liberat, pellit timores"'. Reference is to Cicero, *Tusculan disputations* II, 4,11. See also Petrarch's similar utterances on dialecticians in *Familiares* I, 7; *De vita solitaria* I, 3,10; *Seniles* V, 2 and XII, 2.

⁸² Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness* 18–19; idem, *The Poet as Philosopher* 124–126.

of the *Familiaries* indicate that Petrarch had found the focus of his personality and literary career. Moreover, this very convergence was the ultimate expression of the laying open of his inner self to the world, a signal *exemplum* of Christian man in thought, feeling and action.⁸³ That is how he ended his letter on the ascent of Mount Ventoux, addressing him directly to his friend, the Augustinian monk and professor of theology Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro: ‘See, therefore, beloved father, how I wish that nothing of me be hidden from your eyes, having carefully opened not only my entire life to you but even my simple thoughts’.⁸⁴

Still, tempting the Ciceronian and Augustinian narrative may be, Petrarch’s letters are no window to the humanist’s soul. Petrarch, the man who had so placed the *litteratus* at the center of his society, was, however not only the superb salesman of literature, he was a master of self-advertisement, who managed to turn his person into a true object of cult,⁸⁵ and whose internal dialogue (*sermo*) in his letters must be seen as an outer-directed dialogue, a humanist *paraenesis* propagating *virtus* and *caritas* in a psychological setting of inner conflict⁸⁶ resting on a double consciousness, a double will, of personal progress and the detrimental yet inevitable bondage to love and glory, of the restless search for an *otium litteratum*⁸⁷ and a solitary *convictus* populated by books, by friends,⁸⁸ of the indeterminacy of meaning and the salva-

⁸³ Scaglione A., “Classical Heritage and Petrarchan Self-Consciousness in the Literary Emergence of the Interior ‘I’”, in Bloom (ed.), *Petrarch* 125–137, esp. 133.

⁸⁴ *Familiaries* IV, 1,36: ‘Vide itaque, pater amantissime, quam nichil in me oculis tuis occultum velim, qui tibi nedum universam vitam meam sed cogitatus singulos tam diligenter aperio’.

⁸⁵ In *Familiaries* XXI, 11, Petrarch recounts the telling anecdote that he visited Enrico Capra who had insistently begged for the honor of having the great poet in his house in Bergamo. The visit became a street pageant and a triumph worthy of a victorious Roman general, while Petrarch, humble as ever, does not omit to mention that he moved about as graciously and discreetly as a god honored by his devotees.

⁸⁶ Baron H., “Petrarch: His Inner Struggles and the Humanist Discovery of Man’s Nature”, in Rowe J.G. – Stockdale W.H. (eds.), *Florilegium Historiale: Essays Presented to Wallace K. Ferguson* (Toronto: 1971) 19–51.

⁸⁷ *Familiaries* IX, 14, letter to Luca da Piacenza, rector of San Stefano in Parma; the letter dates from Spring 1353. See Billanovich G., *Petrarca e il primo umanesimo* (Padova: 1996) 244–250.

⁸⁸ On this *convictus* with friends aimed at by Petrarch, see, for instance, *Familiaries* VIII, 3 and XV, 3. An analysis of Petrarch and the place of friendship in his *vita solitaria* is offered in Francesco Petrarca, *De vita solitaria. Buch I. Kritische Textausgabe und ideengeschichtlicher Kommentar* von K.A.E. Enenkel (Leiden – New York – Copenhagen – Köln: 1990) 566–576. See also Eden K., “Petrarchan Hermeneutics and

tion by free will *and* by grace, of medieval contemplative ideals and humanistic individualism, of imitating examples of style, eloquence and virtue and the meditative exercise of self-knowledge.

As such, Petrarch's repeated reading and writing were not only a means of spiritual transformation or a cultivation of wisdom and self-understanding, nor was his reading itself a mere mental rewriting.⁸⁹ Nor was his life of letters a primordial symbol of the conflict within himself, his letters and meditations were also an invitation, a *paraenesis* to share his literary and moral life, his ideal of a *convictus*, a spiritual companionship, and to become the "new intellectual" devoted to literate wisdom and the intimate exchange with the friend as 'particeps studiorum'.⁹⁰ If in his collection of *Familiares* Petrarch offered an image, a view from within of this 'new man of letters' – 'Hec vita mea est', 'This is my life', he wrote to the Apostolic Protonotarius Francesco Calvo da Napoli in June 1352 while meditating amidst the roaring of the Sorgue⁹¹ – his humanist epistolary monument was also a request directed to his readers to reply this *imago vitae* with a 'life structured as investigation', as an 'investigational quest':⁹²

But in writing now to my Francesco [sc. Nelli], I am writing to myself. I wish my reader, whoever he may be, to consider me alone, and not his daughter's marriage or a night with a lady friend, not the whiles of his enemy, not his security or his home, not his land or his money. Even as he reads me, I want him to be with me; if he is pressed by affairs, let him defer his reading. When he decides to read what I write, he must lay aside the burden of his affairs and the anxieties of his home life in order to direct his attention to what is before his eyes. If these conditions do not please him, let him stay away from my useless writings. I refuse to allow him simultaneously carry on his business and study; I refuse to allow him to learn without labor what I wrote with labor.⁹³

the Rediscovery of Intimacy", in Barolini T. – Wayne Storey H. (eds.), *Petrarch and the Textual Origins of Interpretation* (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 231–244, esp. 240–241; Quillen, *Rereading the Renaissance* 114, and Dotti, *Vita di Petrarca* 450–455.

⁸⁹ Cave T., "The Mimesis of Reading in the Renaissance", in Lyons J.D. – Nichols S.G. Jr. (eds.), *Mimesis. From Mirror to Method, Augustine to Descartes* (Hanover-London: 1982) 149–165, esp. 151 and 156.

⁹⁰ See *Familiares* XXII, 7.

⁹¹ *Familiares* XIII, 4,26: 'Hec vita mea est, quam tibi litteris iudicandam credidi'.

⁹² The expressions are taken from Struever N.S., *Theory as Practice: Ethical Inquiry in the Renaissance* (Chicago-London: 1992) 5 and 23.

⁹³ *Familiares* XIII, 5,23: 'nunc Francisco meo scribens, michi scribo. Volo ego ut lector meus, quisquis sit, me unum, non filie nuptias non amice noctem non hostis insidias non vadimonium non domum aut agrum aut thesaurum suum cogitet, et

No doubt all this was a request to his readers, yet also to himself. For, in addressing the other, Petrarch addressed himself.

saltem dum legit, volo mecum sit. Si negotiis urgetur, lectionem differat; ubi ad legendum accesserit, negotiorum pondus et curam rei familiaris abiciat, inque ea que sub oculis sunt, animum intendat. Si conditio non placet, inutilibus scriptis absteineat; nolo ego pariter negotietur et studeat, nolo sine ullo labore percipiat que sine labore non scripsi'. Translation taken from *Francesco Petrarca, Letters on Familiar Matters (Rerum Familiarium Libri). Vol. 2: Books IX–XVI*. Translated by Aldo S. Bernardo (New York: 2005 [= New York: 1982]) 191. Also quoted in Eden, "Petrarchan Hermeneutics and the Rediscovery of Intimacy" 242–243.

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THE DISCOVERY OF THE DIALOGUE IN DUTCH
MEDIEVAL LITERATURE:
A DISCOURSE FOR MEDITATION AND DISPUTATION

Geert Warnar

What is more important in life: money or happiness? This is the topic of a Dutch strophic disputation between a student and his master (*disputacie tusschen enen clerc ende sinen meester*), surviving in a Brussels manuscript from 1410.¹ The student (*clericus*), who brings up the question, is convinced that money rules the world and therefore is to be preferred. In a series of stanzas he argues that money solves all problems, pays all debts, allows you to order every wine, makes you popular in all taverns, keeps you out of prison, lets you roll the dice, gets you all the women you want and buys you absolution in the end. The master attempts to change his pupil's views by showing the higher importance of happiness – the meaning of the Dutch *geluc* seems to include both intellectual and spiritual happiness, but also good fortune and prosperity.² The master fails to convince his student that happiness does not lie in material wealth, wine or women. Only when the master broaches the topic of eternal life, is the cleric willing to accept the primacy of a different kind of happiness, which is now for the first time in the poem defined more precisely as that which *ziele ende lijf bewaert*: literally, that which protects and ensures soul and body – although the expression *ziele ende lijf* in this context should be understood broadly to refer to man's spiritual and earthly existence.³

This pious conclusion may come as a disappointment to the modern reader: the streetwise student seems to have a better understanding of

¹ For this *disputacie*, see Brinkman H. – Schenkel J. (eds.), *Het handschrift-Van Hulthem: hs. Brussel, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, 15.589–623* (Hilversum: 1999) 550–555. On the Brussels context of this important manuscript, see Brinkman H., “Het wonder van Molenbeek. De herkomst van de tekstverzameling in het handschrift-Van Hulthem”, *Nederlandse Letterkunde* 5 (2000) 21–46.

² Cf. Verwijs E. – Verdam J. [e.a.], *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek*, 11 vols. (The Hague: 1885–1952) II, cols. 1301–1302.

³ Cf. Sonnemans G., *Functionele aspecten van Middelnederlandse versprologen* (Boxmeer: 1995) 256–257.

what makes the world go round than his idealistic teacher. But in spite of the boy's bravura in highlighting money's charms, he does not really challenge the authority of the master. A medieval audience would have recognized immediately that the cleric delights in all the pleasures from which he was supposed to refrain. Contemporary school texts and ecclesiastical rules tell young clerics to 'stay away from dice and malicious women [and] not to enter taverns. Whoever is attracted to these will often end up poor'. This is a Dutch translation of the *Facetus*, one of the first texts to which medieval schoolboys were exposed.⁴ Another translation of the same *sententia* brings in eternity: 'Stay away from pride and gambling, prostitutes and the tavern, if you want to be given honor in this life and eternal life in the hereafter'.⁵

Read against the backdrop of clerical education, the disputation appears to have been written with the intention of making schoolboys accept the ecclesiastical conditions for an intellectual life or a career in the Church. The term *dispitacie* in the rubric of the poem does not refer to debate or dispute in the modern sense, nor to the Latin *disputatio* as a method of academic teaching. Like other medieval Dutch dialogues that have been labeled as *dispitacie*, the text should be read in the context of the contemporary school practices of clerics, who gathered to have discussions and debates with each other or their teachers in order to increase their knowledge of various topics – or so says the *Tafel vanden kersten gelove*, a Dutch theological summa that was written by the Dominican Dirc van Delft in 1404.⁶

⁴ Suringar W.H.D. (ed.), *Die bouc van seden. Een Middelnederlandsch zedekundig leerdicht* (Leiden, 1891) vs. 203–206: 'Vlie terlinghe ende quade wijf / Leet in taverne niet dijn lijf / Diere vele hem houden an / Siet men dicken arm man'. This passage, as Suringar notes, derives from the *Facetus*: 'Hec fugias: fastum, talosque, lupamque, tabernam, Si decus et vitam tibi queris habere supernam'. On the *Facetus*' place within the spectrum of medieval school texts (including translations), see Henkel N., *Deutsche Übersetzungen lateinischer Schultexte. Ihre Verbreitung und Funktion im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Munich – Zurich: 1988).

⁵ Suringar W.H.D. (ed.), *Van zeden. Een tweede Middelnederlandsch zedekundig leerdicht, uit het Comburger handschrift* (Leiden: 1892) vs. 423–426: 'Vlie hoverde ende terlincspel / Lichte wive ende taverne snel / Wilstu dat di werde ghegheven / Hier eere ende echt teeweghe leven'.

⁶ Cf. Daniëls L.M. (ed.), *Dirc van Delfts Tafel van den kersten gelove*, 4 vols. (Antwerpen [etc.]: 1937–1939) III, 327: 'Si sullen dicwijn tsamen comen ende disputieren ende versoeken wes hem ghebreect te leren'. On the *disputatio* and its use in the vernacular and in related Dutch texts, see Kinable D.C.J., "Latijnse en Middelnederlandse 'disputaties'. Babelse tweespraak en lexicale analyse", *Queste* 15 (2008) 70–95. For the use of the term *disputatio*, see also Axters St., "Over *quaestio disputata* en *quaestio de quolibet* in de Middelnederlandse literatuur", *Ons geestelijk erf* 17 (1943) 31–70.

The dialogue or *disputatio* did not only serve didactic purposes. Its narrative or performative frame made a text more attractive and perhaps easier to digest than the *sententiae* of the *Facetus*.⁷ The dialogue offers a form of discourse that is different from the straightforward instruction to be found in the treatise, the letter, the sermon or the series of *sententiae* in school texts. The author of the *disputacie* uses the dialogue to contrast opinions, making the cleric a spokesman for those who are lured by the corrupted world, the temptations of which are all too recognizable to the audience. The manuscript heading of the poem – a disputation between a cleric and *his* master – suggests that the audience should identify with the young man, in order to arrive at the same conclusion as he: that ‘[love for] money is nothing more than greed, and no thing is more important than happiness’ (‘Tghelt en es niet dan geriche de / Boven tgeluc en es dinc negheen’).

Here the dialogue is of interest for discourses of meditation and self-reflection. The audience is invited to participate in a discussion, think over the arguments or identify with one of the parties. All the elements enhance the impact of the text with regard to introspection or self-reflection. The “performative turn in theoretical discourse” is typical for the dialogue as a genre, especially in early modern humanist literature. Medieval dialogues, by contrast, have been qualified as ‘unterschiedliche Traditionen des schriftlichen Lehrgesprächs’, primarily aimed at knowledge transfer without any real literary interest or any awareness of the dialogue as a genre.⁸ A good example is the popular twelfth-century *Elucidarium* (of which four Dutch versions are known) that covers the full (if basic) spectrum of religious and clerical knowledge, in a conversation between an omniscient master and a polite cleric who does nothing more than bring up new subjects.⁹

⁷ For the suggestion that the dialogue marks the transition from narrative to discursive texts in medieval Dutch literature, see Reynaert J., “Leken, ethiek en moralistisch-didactische literatuur. Ter inleiding”, in idem [e.a.], *Wat is wijsheid? Lekenethiek in de Middelnederlandse letterkunde* (Amsterdam: 1994) 9–36, esp. 22.

⁸ On medieval dialogues as *Lehrgespräche*, see Hemper K.W., “Die Poetik des Dialogs im Cinquecento und die neuere Dialogtheorie: zum historischen Fundament aktueller Theorie”, in idem (ed.), *Poetik des Dialogs. Aktuelle Theorie und rinascimentales Selbstverständnis* (Stuttgart: 2004) 67–96, esp. 79. Hemper’s “Vorwort” sets forth the notion of the performative turn in theoretical discourse. For a selection of medieval Latin dialogues, see Cardelle de Hartmann C., *Lateinische Dialoge 1200–1400. Literaturhistorische Studie und Repertorium* (Leiden – Boston: 2007).

⁹ On the *Elucidarium* and similar didactic dialogues, see Luff R., *Wissensvermittlung im europäischen Mittelalter. Imago mundi-Werke und ihre Prologe* (Tübingen: 1999) 20–213. On Dutch *Elucidarium* translations, as they relate to the international

Although the *disputacie tusschen enen clerc ende sinen meester* reflects the pedagogical interests that dominated the medieval dialogue, the poem clearly attempts to combine instruction and recreation. Here as elsewhere, the performative turn of theoretical discourse is essential to understanding the text. Related to the *disputacie* on money and happiness, and transmitted in the same manuscript, is a dialogue between a father and a son on the question of whether women or wine should be preferred. Starting as mockery, with the father arguing for wine because at his age one loses interest in women, the dialogue suddenly changes to a religious discussion: wine stands for the blood of Christ in the eucharist and the woman for the Virgin Mother Mary.¹⁰ A similar dialogue, with a master and his pupil replacing father and son, was printed in 1600 as a witty ('lustighe') dialogue, very pleasant to read ('seer genoeghlijck om te lesen').¹¹

This pleasurableness is the most obvious effect at which a medieval author aimed in writing *per modum dyalogi*, even if recreation never went without religious or moral instruction. Especially in the Latin tradition of medieval debate poetry, we find sudden shifts from light-hearted display of rhetorical cleverness to serious discussion.¹² Vernacular variations of the clerical poem, even when less playful, deliberately explore the performativity of the dialogue. The disputation on money and happiness is a case in point. With a master and a pupil as the main characters, the disputation is set explicitly in the medieval educational tradition, but the interaction between the protagonists differs substantially from the didactic conversations of the *Lehrgespräch*. The cleric is not simply asking questions that expand his knowledge; he must also overcome his false assumptions about what matters, thus better to understand his position in the world. The disputation – in the technical sense – turns into a genuine discussion between master and pupil, who by the end of the poem has changed his mind. The performative turn creates a context for meditation and self-reflection.

dissemination of the Latin text, see Klunder N., *Lucidarius. De Middelnederlandse Lucidarius-teksten en hun relatie tot de Europese traditie* (Amsterdam: 2005).

¹⁰ Edition in Brinkman – Schenkel, *Het handschrift-Van Hulthem 560–564*.

¹¹ Edition in Brill E.J. (ed.), *Veelderhande geneuchlijcke dichten, tafelspelen ende refereynen* (Leiden: 1899) 164–168.

¹² Cf. Reed Jr. T.L., *Middle English Debate Poetry and the Aesthetics of Irresolution* (Columbia – London: 1984) 115–118, with references to English dialogues that treat topics similar to those in the two Dutch disputations.

Following similar strategies, another fourteenth-century dialogue in Dutch (originating from Bruges) has a young man flee the temptations of city life, only to stumble upon a hermit in the woods, who immediately recognizes the mental instability of the adolescent. The young man is convinced that his love for a woman was sincere, unconditional and chaste, but the hermit shows his visitor through a series of questions, that his feelings and intentions are driven by lust, greed, envy and all the other capital sins. In the dialogue the hermit confronts the young man with his shortcomings, showing him how he fails to see himself. This dialogue explicitly aims at self-reflection: the hermit's questions urge the young man to examine his state of mind.¹³ A similar dialogue attempts to make the reader or listener contemplate his state of being, by having the (allegorical) character Reason teach Vulnerable Man, who initially fails to discern his mortal state.¹⁴

Although in all examples traditional authority is eventually acknowledged, these dialogues cannot simply be labeled as *Lehrgespräche*. Current typologies and classifications of the dialogue (both medieval and early modern) apply to standard situations that could be adapted, manipulated and turned around by individual authors to develop new discourses of edification, meditation, self reflection and self representation.¹⁵ Medieval poets were concerned with the didactic or edifying effects of the dialogue, but they did not neglect to explore its substantial diversity in form, function and content. Because of its flexibility the dialogue as a form of discourse could reconcile the didactic and meditative functions of literature. The following small *tour d'horizon* – which is no survey – attempts to demonstrate that the discovery of the dialogue in medieval Dutch literature has to do with flexibility of use rather than generic considerations.¹⁶

¹³ Carton Ch. L. (ed.), *Oudvlaemsche liederen en andere gedichten der XIV^e en XV^e eeuwen* (Gent: 1848) 489–518.

¹⁴ Heeroma K.H., “Het Exempel van Redene en de Broesche Mensche”, in *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche taal- en letterkunde* 88 (1972) 122–153.

¹⁵ See for some recent attempts to classify dialogues, acknowledging their flexibility, Cardelle de Hartmann, *Lateinische Dialoge*, 58–247, and Burke P., “The Renaissance dialogue”, *Renaissance Studies* 3 (1989) 1–12, esp. 3–4.

¹⁶ There is no systematic survey of medieval Dutch dialogues. Kinable, “Latijnse en Middelnederlandse ‘disputaties’” and Axters, “Over *quaestio disputata*” bring together most of the texts.

Medieval Dutch dialogues and meditative discourse

A first witness to the diversity of Dutch medieval dialogues is the manuscript with the disputation on money and happiness. Among the more than two hundred texts in this codex we find several types of dialogues: debates between Winter and Summer and between the body and soul of a deceased man (a translation of the *Visio Philiberti*), a courtly conversation between a cleric and a lady on the nature of love and a poets' contest in which the Dutch author Jacob van Maerlant outshines the philosophers Albertus Magnus and Henry of Ghent.¹⁷ The most interesting dialogue for the discourses of meditation (and the longest dialogue in the manuscript) is *Seneka leeren*, an adaptation of *De remediis fortuitorum*, ascribed to Seneca in the Middle Ages.¹⁸

The Dutch translator claims to have found a book written by Seneca for a friend, as a remedy against all the bad fortune men may encounter. The Dutch author has turned the original text into a dialogue: 'In this book two persons will talk to each other. That is, a son and his father. The son will complain about his discomfort and grief. The father will not cease to comfort his son with just words'.¹⁹ This cast of a father and a son appears to be an invention of the Dutch poet, although a significant number of medieval manuscripts present *De remediis fortuitorum* in the form of a dialogue. Sometimes the antagonists are persons (Seneca and Nero), but more often the text has been transformed into an inner dialogue between allegorical figures like *Sensus* and *Ratio* or *Timor* and *Securitas*.²⁰ This personification of mental faculties emphasizes the function of the text, which was to dispel fear (of death) through structured meditation, stoic in character, on a series of adversities. Introducing a father and son, the Dutch poet seems to prefer a more didactic option, which is further

¹⁷ See Brinkman – Schenkel, *Het handschrift-Van Hulthem* 1192–1212; also 811–820, 867–890 and 264–271.

¹⁸ Edition in Brinkman – Schenkel, *Het handschrift-Van Hulthem* 1059–1081. For a nineteenth century edition with a substantial introduction, that discusses the text in relation to its Latin source, see Suringar W.H.D., *Dit sijn Seneka leren, liever te noemen tweespraec tusscen enen vader ende sinen sone over alrehande swaer gheval* (Leiden: 1895).

¹⁹ Brinkman – Schenkel, *Het handschrift-Van Hulthem* 1059: 'In dit boec selen si twee / Tesamen spreken ende nemmee./ Dats een sone ende sijn vader./ Die sone sal claghen al gader / Sijn vernoy ende sijn verdriet./ Die vader en saelt laten niet /Hine sal den sone telken male /Troesten met gherechter tale'.

²⁰ Suringar, *Dit is Seneka leeren* XXIII.

emphasized by rubrics that announce the father's answers: for example, *Die vader castijt den sone*. Translated literally this is: 'The father castigates the son', but the medieval Dutch verb *castien* had a wide range of meanings related to education – to teach, to educate, to reprimand, to move someone to repent, to change someone's mind. However, the pedagogical presentation of *De remediis fortuitorum* does not diminish the meditative character of the original text.²¹ The Dutch poet starts by reflecting on the necessity of providing comfort and consolation to those who suffer. This statement is repeated in the last lines of *Seneka leeren*, that claim that the book 'can comfort every man, who puts his heart into it [= studying the text]'.²²

The use of dialogue in *Seneka leeren* does not correspond to any deliberate differentiation between the (outer) moral concern of instruction and the (inner) reflection of meditation. Another case in point is a hitherto unnoticed second Dutch translation of *De remediis fortuitorum*, this time a dialogue in prose between a series of *claghers* and the wise man. This translation is the 44th chapter of the *Tafel vain des Kristen glauben und leven* or *Tabulae fidei vitae christianae* [fig. 1]. This large compilation of religious, encyclopedic, juridical and political material survives in two fifteenth-century German copies from the Trier region, but its origins lie in the Netherlands.²³ The compilation is an extended version of the previously mentioned *Tafel vanden kerstengelove*, written in 1404 by the Dutch Dominican Dirc van Delft. The extra material in the Trier version, which contains evidence of Dirc's involvement, shows a special interest in the dialogue as a form of discourse. A chapter on the *ars moriendi* is taken from the Dutch translation

²¹ Cardelle de Hartmann, *Lateinische Dialoge* 192–193.

²² Brinkman – Schenkel, *Het handschrift-Van Hulthem* 1081: 'Want het can troesten elken man / Die sijn herte set hier an'.

²³ On the Trier version of the *Tafel*, see Warnar G., "Het dubbele paspoort van de Middelnederlandse letterkunde", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 125 (2009) 201–205, which includes references to relevant literature. For a survey of the contents of the Trier version, see Roth G., "Die *Tafel vom christlichen Glauben und Leben*. Die Westdeutsche Bearbeitung von Dircs van Delfts *Tafel van dem Kersten Ghelove*", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 130 (2001) 321–329. The Trier version of the *Tafel* has yet to be edited. The manuscripts are Berleburg, Schloßbibliothek von Sayn-Wittgenstein RT 2–2 (in private ownership) and Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek 2667. For a detailed description of the Darmstadt manuscript, see Staub K.H. – Sängler Th., *Deutsche und niederländische Handschriften mit Ausnahme der Gebetbuchhandschriften. Die Handschriften der Hessischen Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek Darmstadt*, Bd. 6 (Wiesbaden: 1991) 123–128.



Fig. 1. Opening miniature of the translation of *De remediis fortuitarum* (Bad Berleburg, Schlossbibliothek, manuscript RT 2–2, fol. 346r.)

of the famous *Horologium aeternae sapientiae* by Henry Seuse, structured as a dialogue between the disciple and eternal wisdom. A debate between the body and soul was inspired by the *Visio Philiberti*. A second cluster of dialogues starts with a conversation between God and the disconsolate sinner ('mistroostighen sondaer'), followed by its secular counterpart in the translation of *De remediis fortuitorum* and a dialogue between the inner man and the rational soul – which is an adaptation of *De arrha anima* by Hugh of Saint-Victor.²⁴

These dialogues belong to a section of the *Tafel*, that is described in the table of contents as a treatise on “the inner man and his spiritual exercises” (“van den inwendighen menschen und wy her sich sal oefenen in synre oitnudighen grond der consciencien mit ayn wisonghe heilligher lere”).²⁵ The use of dialogue is not limited to this meditative section. Dirc van Delft presents a short disputation based on the *Elucidarium*, in a chapter on the rules for students and masters, that forms part of the cluster on ecclesiastical doctrine (“vain dem staet und regiment der heilligher kirchen”).²⁶ The section on government and politics (“vain dem staet und regiment der werrelt”) opens with the legend of the silent philosopher Secundus at the court of the Roman emperor Hadrian.²⁷ Refusing to speak, Secundus only responded to the Emperor’s questions by writing down the answers on his tablet. The ensemble of 57 questions and answers makes up a short philosophical encyclopedia, treating issues such as God, man, day, the heavens, the sun, the sea, a ship, prosperity, poverty, the stars,

²⁴ Cf. Staub – Sanger, *Deutsche und niederlandische Handschriften* 126–127. In the Darmstadt manuscript fols. 169r–176r contain the *Horologium* chapter, fols. 176r–180v the *Visio Philiberti* (the conversation between God and the disconsolate sinner, chapter 48 of the Dutch *Tafel*), fols. 262r–267r the translation of *De remediis fortuitorum* and fols. 240r–246v *De arrha anima*. See for the *Visio Philiberti*, Palmer N.F., “Visio Philiberti”, in Wachinger B. e.a. (eds.), *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, Bd. 10 (Berlin: 1999) cols. 412–418, esp. col. 417. This volume appeared before the translations of *De remediis fortuitorum* and *De arrha anima* had been identified. The Latin texts can be consulted on line at http://www.intratext.com/IXT/LAT0524/_P3.HTM (*De arrha anima*) and <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00040204/images/> (*De remediis fortuitorum*).

²⁵ Daniels, *Dirc van Delfts Tafel* I, 112, which lists the subsections in the Trier-version.

²⁶ Daniels, *Dirc van Delfts Tafel* IIIa, 331–342; cf. Klunder, *Lucidarius* 240–243.

²⁷ Wachinger B., “Secundus”, in idem (eds.), *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, Bd. 11 (Berlin: 2004) cols. 1402–1408. On the origins and transmission of the Secundus legend, see Perry B.E., *Secundus the Silent Philosopher. The Greek Life of Secundus* (Ithaca: 1964).

the rain and so forth. Each topic is brought up by Hadrian in short specific questions. Secundus' answers seem to be less concerned with providing information than with foregrounding the rhetorical sophistication characteristic of the text's classical roots. In response to Hadrian's question, 'What is the sun?', Secundus writes: 'The sun is an eye of the heavens, a dispeller of the night, an orbit, an unremitting flame, a perfect glow without (sun)set, a heavenly traveler, an adornment of the firmament'.²⁸

Formally, the legend of Secundus is no dialogue, but its sequence of questions and answers is similar to that found in the *Elucidarium* and Dirc's adaptation in the *Tafel*. The nature of both texts is very different. Whereas the *Elucidarium* is purely didactic, Secundus' aphorisms offer 'philosophy in capsule form'.²⁹ More important, however, is the fact that both texts, by recourse to an authoritative voice that interacts with an attentive listener (pupil or emperor), provide forms of discourse designed to generate meditative reading.

Meditative dialogues with Lady Scripture

No matter who was responsible for the extra material in the Trier version of the *Tafel* – Dirc van Delft or an anonymous compiler – this collection of dialogues again indicates that the modern demarcation of the didactic, philosophical or meditative dialogue or distinction between the scholastic and the humanist dialogue does not apply to dialogic usage in the medieval Dutch tradition. Apparently, the interest in dialogue was a response to the flexibility of the 'performative turn in theoretical discourse'. Through the dialogue, a text could simultaneously transfer knowledge and operate as an agent of meditation. An interesting allegorical example is a Dutch dialogue in strophic verse, that features a young man who asks Scripture for help and instruction in contemplating religious truths essential to attaining the kingdom of (divine) love. In this poem, perhaps an excerpt from a larger text, Scripture is an allegorical figure representing the knowledge the young man needs in order safely to embark on a life of religious medita-

²⁸ Ms. Berleburg RT 2-2, fol. 394v: 'Dye sonne ist eyn aughe des hyemele, eyn vdrerber der nacht, eyn umganck, eyn unleselich flame, eyn ganzer schyn sonder underganck, eyn hyemelscher wandeler, zyherhey der firmamenten'.

²⁹ Cardelle de Hartmann, *Lateinische Dialoge* 61.

tion. Invited by the young man to explain the nature of the Trinity, Scripture adopts the role of his *beradere*, meaning both instructor and guide. Other pedagogical references in the poem (Scripture praising the young man for studying well, for instance) suggest the setting of a master teaching a pupil, but ultimately the dialogue prepares the reader for a life of inner devotion. While Scripture represents learning, the young man stands for inexperience or immaturity in the life of religious meditation.³⁰

The same model of an allegorical Lady Scripture as teacher and man as pupil emerges in the very popular *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* [= Book of the Life of Christ], printed for the first time in 1487 by Gerard Leeu in Gouda. Ten new editions were published before 1540.³¹ This Dutch life of Christ is based on the *Vita Christi* of the Dominican – and later Carthusian – Ludolphus of Saxony, but with substantial changes and additions, including an extra introduction that explicitly invites and urges readers to meditate on the life of Christ ('hoe salich dat is die oefeninghe ende dat overdincken des levens Jhesu'). The most prominent intervention of the anonymous Dutch editor is his rearrangement of the Latin original into a dialogue. The author introduces his text as based on the four gospels, clarified with expositions and interpretations according to the traditional meanings of Scripture (literal, moral and spiritual); in addition, he has attached meditations and prayers suitable for each chapter, 'and the text is completely drawn up in the way of a dialogue, which is a conversation between two persons: man, who is asking, and Lady Scripture, who is answering all questions'.³²

A full page woodcut accompanies the opening of the text, where *die mensche* asks *Scriptura* to clarify how and why to meditate upon the life and passion of Christ. *Scriptura* answers that one cannot come

³⁰ Pauw N. de (ed.), *Middelnederlandsche gedichten en fragmenten I* (Gent: 1897) 669–683.

³¹ Dlačačova A., "Drukken en publieksgroepen. Productie en receptie van gedrukte Middelnederlandse meditatieve Levens van Jesus (ca. 1479–1540)", *Ons geestelijk erf* 79 (2008) 321–368, esp. 330–346 and 355–361, on the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi*.

³² 'Twelck alte male naden scriften der vier evangelisten gheseyt sal worden. Daer boven mit schonen exposities ende beduydenissen verclaert, alsoe wel nader letetren ende texte, als naden moralen ende gheesteliken sinne. Ende mit schonen meditacien ende devoten ghebeden dyenende op die materie van elken capittle. Ende is altemael ghestelt by eender manyere als van een dyalogus: dat is een twisprake tusschen den mensche die daer vraghet ende vrouwe scriptura die daer op elc vraghe antwoerde ghevet'. On this passage, see Dlačačova, "Drukken en publieksgroepen" 358.



Fig. 2. Opening woodcut of *Tboeck van den leuen ons heeren Jhesu Christi* (Gouda, Gerard Leeu: 1487), fol. a3v. The Hague, Royal Library, 171 E 40.

to true meditation without first being informed about the foundation of all things, that is, the nature of God. Again, there is no distinction between the meditative purpose and the transfer of knowledge. Scriptura, depicted in front of a library, leafing through one of her books, stands for learning and literacy – more specifically, the biblical learning and literacy that are needed to engage in meditation on the life of Christ.

Introducing learning and literacy as a person and not as the endless chain of *auctoritates* anchored in the Latin source, the Dutch author opens up the text for the less experienced reader (of vernacular texts). In his use of the dialogue, the author might have been following the thirteenth-century example of Bonaventure, who had composed his widely read *Soliloquium* as a dialogue between the soul and the inner man, designed to accommodate the *simpliciores*.³³ The intermediary between Bonaventure and the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* might have been the Dutch version of the *Soliloquium*. This *Boec vanden vier oefeninghen* [= Book of Four Exercises] describes the use of the dialogue in almost exactly the same words as the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi*: ‘the text is drawn up in the way of a dialogue; this is a conversation between two [persons], namely the soul asking and man answering inwardly’.³⁴

In the *Boec vanden vier oefeninghen* the soul is instructed by the inner man on meditation and contemplation, in a series of four exercises: examination of the inner self, of the outer world, of the things below (death, judgement and hell) and of the things above, chief among which is eternal life. The Dutch text survives in more than twenty manuscripts and thirteen printed editions published before 1512. Together with the *Boeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi* the *Boec vanden vier oefeninghen* must have been one of the most popular medieval Dutch texts *per modum dyalogi*. Both texts utilize the dialogue as a form of discourse that not only manages textual information but also enhances the involvement of readers, offering models for intellectual understanding, meditation and inner formation.

³³ On the *Soliloquium*, see Cardelle de Hartmann, *Lateinische Dialoge* 393–399.

³⁴ See Mees L.J., “Het boec vanden vier inwendige oefeninghen. A widely read incunabulum and post-incunabulum”, *Quaerendo* 4 (1974) 180–213, quotation 198: ‘Ende es ghestelt inder manieren van dyalogus dat es een sprake van tween, te weten die ziele vraghende ende die mensche inwendelike antwoerde gevende’.

The dialogue in Dutch: theory and practice

Although expressions like *eender manyeren als van een dyalogus* suggest the close connection of vernacular traditions to Latin literature, the dialogue has a special place in Dutch literary production of the (late) thirteenth century onwards. The first attempt to give a working definition of the Dutch dialogue takes us back to the *Spiegel historiael* by Jacob van Maerlant. His chef d'oeuvre was the rendering in Dutch verse of the giant *Speculum historiale*, written by Vincentius of Beauvais.³⁵ This endless account of the political, intellectual and religious history of the Western world contains long series of saints' lives and other reports on their sanctity, including the early fifth-century dialogue by Severus Sulpicius on Saint Martin of Tours. Before summarizing this chapter of the *Speculum*, Maerlant explains the nature of the dialogue in a passage that has no counterpart in the *Speculum*:

[...] eenen dyalogus,
 Dats een bouc van II personen,
 Die met goeden redenen ende sconen
 Onderlinghe deelen haer wort,
 Ende deen seget ende dander antwort.³⁶

In modern English this is: 'a dialogue is a book of two persons who are engaged in a conversation with good and attractive discourse. One brings up an issue and the other responds'. This translation is not without difficulties, but at least four elements in Maerlant's definition may be clearly discerned. He is describing the dialogue as a literary genre: 'een bouc' means both 'book' and 'text'. The dialogue has a rhetorical element: 'goeden redenen ende sconen' refers to the oratorical skills in which medieval clerics were trained. The dialogue is a conversation between equals: 'onderlinghe deelen haer wort' literally means 'split up their words among each other'. Finally, for Maerlant the dialogue seems to serve the same purpose of exchanging and expanding knowl-

³⁵ Vries M. de – Verwijs E. (eds.), *Jacob van Maerlant's Spiegel historiael, met de fragmenten der later toegevoegde gedeelten, bewerkt door Philip Utenbroeke en Lodewijk van Velthem* (Leiden: 1863–1879). On Maerlant's *Spiegel historiael* as an adaptation of the *Speculum historiale*, see Van Oostrom F.P., *Maerlants wereld* (Amsterdam: 1996) 307–375, and Berendrecht P., *Proeven van bekwaamheid. Jacob van Maerlant en de omgang met zijn Latijnse bronnen* (Amsterdam: 1996) 139–206.

³⁶ Vries – Verwijs, *Jacob van Maerlant's Spiegel historiael*, Derde Partie, Boek 4, kap. 25 on Sulpicius, vs. 30–34.

edge, to which Dirc van Delft alluded when he mentioned the need for clerics to have disputations: *antwort* means ‘responds to a question’.

Maerlant’s definition, in its focus on formal characteristics that have nothing to do with the content or the intention of an author, correlates with views on the dialogue expressed in contemporary Latin texts.³⁷ The relatively early date of Maerlant’s definition lends his words a special significance, but of even greater interest are the three dialogues that demonstrate his understanding of the genre.³⁸ These dialogues in strophic verse might predate Maerlant’s definition, however tempting it is to think of these texts as an illustration of the definition. Presented consecutively, the three poems are now called the *Martijns*, after the character Martijn, resident of Utrecht, who converses with Jacob, from Damme near Bruges. It is not clear where or why they meet, but they make certain how their conversation should be read, as indicated by Jacob who proposes: “Martijn, let us discuss things in this dialogue”.³⁹

The poem that follows, perfectly fits Maerlant’s description of the dialogue: a book or literary text consisting of oratorical discourse – in this case strophic poetry. Moreover, the equality of Martijn and Jacob is particularly emphasized. The poem poses and answers ten questions, moving from topic to topic: first, the corrupted state of the world, second, the doctrine of eternal punishment, and then, redemption and salvation, nobility, poverty and wealth, and the status of women, that is, whether they are the universal cause of human sin. Jacob broaches

³⁷ Cf. Cardelle de Hartmann, *Lateinische Dialoge* 1–57, esp. 13 and 55, with references to relevant literature. It should be emphasised that in Maerlant’s definition there is no allusion to the *Lehrgespräch*, although Maerlant was very much aware of this tradition. In the same part of the *Spiegel historiael*, he discusses the life and works of Gregory the Great, including the *Dialogi* that had an enormous impact on the medieval use of dialogue. Maerlant’s explains Gregorius’ dialogues, as follows: ‘Die spreet van tweerande tale / Alse een meester ende sijn knecht: / Deen vraget ende ander berecht’. This translates: ‘It speaks in two voices, that of a master and that of his pupil. One asks and the other determines’. *Berechten* is the Dutch equivalent of *determinare*, that is, to provide the solution in *disputatio*. Cf. Claassens G.H.M., “Gregory’s *Dialogi* in Middle Dutch Literature”, in Bremmer Jr. R.H. e.a. (eds.), *Rome and the North: The Early Reception of Gregory the Great in Germanic Europe* (Louvain: 2001) 207–237.

³⁸ Edition of the three poems in Verdam J. – Leendertz Jr. P. (eds.), *Jacob van Maerlant’s Strophische Gedichten. Nieuwe bewerking der uitgave van Franck en Verdam* (Leiden: 1918) 1–45. For the most recent analysis of the Martijn-poems, see Reynaert J., “Gespreksvorm, rolverdeling en personages in de ‘Martijns’”, *Queeste* 3 (1996) 179–190.

³⁹ Verdam – Leendertz, *Jacob van Maerlant’s Strophische Gedichten* 3: ‘Laet ons, Martijn, over een / Hier af spreken onder ons tween / In dit dialoghe’.

five of these topics, Martijn the other five. This change of source is explicitly discussed, as if to stress that a dialogue must have more than one authoritative voice.

In general, the first *Martijn*-poem is simply about good and evil, but the positions taken by Jacob and Martijn show great subtlety, perhaps even hinting at the different views of the academic theologian and the *magister artium* (the poem also touches upon views expressed in the *Roman de la rose*). The text breathes the air of the clerical sphere, in which clergy gather to discuss, exchange knowledge and provide each other with food for thought.⁴⁰ The other two *Martijns* are less diverse and show a more spiritual interest. The third poem, an exposition by Jacob on the Trinity, follows the ways of the didactic dialogue. Initially, Jacob refuses to respond to Martijn's questions on the nature of the Trinity. According to Jacob, this is a matter for learned clerics. Only when Martijn persists does Jacob finally agree, then going on for more than thirty stanzas. Here we come across another aspect of the dialogue's flexibility: Maerlant uses the dialogue to establish a context in which the lay author may write about theological matters. Having been pressed, indeed importuned, Jacob reluctantly puts aside his initial resistance. He thereby shows that he is conscious of the difficulties faced by any layman who attempts to write about theological doctrine. He aims to give the impression that he would never have thought of speaking on the topic of the Trinity, had his friend not imposed upon him to do so.

Maerlant set an example with his dialogues. Already in 1299, likely while he was still alive, an anonymous poet claimed to burn with the fire the poet of the *Martijn* had first ignited. Claiming to imitate Maerlant, he composed another dialogue between Jacob and Martijn, in stanzas of nineteen verses, attempting to outdo Maerlant's thirteen per stanza. Focusing on the situation in the duchy of Brabant, this fourth *Martijn* is openly political. Even closer to Maerlant's dialogues was the fourteenth-century disputation of Rogier and Jan – the latter being Jan de Weert, the author, who addresses Rogier with the same words Maerlant uses in the opening lines of the first *Martijn*: 'Take notice, Rogier, what will happen? If the people part not from sin, how long will it continue?'⁴¹ Jan de Weert offers a mix of secular

⁴⁰ Van Oostrom, *Maerlants wereld* 65–80; cf. Reynaert, "Gespreksvorm".

⁴¹ Kausler E. von (ed.), *Altniederländische Gedichte, vom Schlusse des XIII. bis*

and sacred topics, similar to the three *Martijn*-poems, although in the disputation of Rogier and Jan the authoritative voice is definitely the author's. De Weert appears as a lay intellectual, who elaborates on difficult theological questions while treating his pupil Rogier like an ignorant schoolboy ('scolier ruut').

Of major significance here is De Weert's participation in the dialogue. Like Maerlant in his poem on the Trinity, Jan de Weert attempts to create a new form of authority, that allows him as a lay man to write and teach on clerical topics.⁴² The same goes for *Jan's teesteye* [= Jan's Testimony], written by the Antwerp town clerk Jan van Boendale. Like De Weert, he copied Maerlant's idea of having the author participate in the dialogue. Moreover, Boendale stressed the narrative frame of the dialogue, by introducing the protagonists, Jan and Wouter, who take a walk through the fields outside Antwerp on a beautiful day in Spring: "They were discussing all kinds of topics as people are wont to do when taking a walk together".⁴³

In the countryside, Jan van Boendale takes the time to show off his intellectual capacities and individual worldview. Wouter seems to represent the *communis opinio*, for he asks such questions as: 'Why are the people so deceitful and malicious, and why is this becoming worse every day?' This is very reminiscent of Maerlant, but Jan van Boendale does not agree with his friend. He starts by distinguishing between *loosheyt* and *behendicheyt* – deceit and cunning. Boendale goes on to explain that this distinction is especially relevant in matters of law. The cleverness that may lead to success in legal proceedings is only deceit in the eyes of the other party. Boendale's view here is characteristic of the dialogue as a whole. Jan is operating very cleverly: he may not wish to deceive poor Wouter, but he certainly confuses him. For instance, when Wouter states that morals are not what they used to be, Jan responds by first literally stating this is the *communis*

Anfang des XV. Jahrhunderts, Bd. 2 (Leipzig: 1866) 14: 'Waphene, Rogier, hoe saelt gaen? / Sal tfolc van zonden niet af staen, / Hoe salt danne ghedueren?'

⁴² For the broader context, see Warnar G., "Men of Letters. Medieval Dutch Literature and Learning", in Hoenen M.J.F.M. – Cesalli L. – Germann N. (eds.), *University, Council, City. Intellectual Culture on the Rhine (1300–1550)* (Turnhout: 2007), 221–246.

⁴³ Snellaert F.A. (ed.), *Nederlandsche gedichten uit de veertiende eeuw van Jan van Boendale, Hein van Aken en anderen. Naar het Oxfordsche handschrift uitgegeven* (Brussel: 1869) 141: 'Menegherande was hare tale / Die si spraken onder weghen / Ghelijc als die liede pleghen / Die te samen sijn int wandren'.

opinio, but then disagreeing: 'Wouter, I say to you that the people are now as good as they have ever been'. But Boendale means something other than what Wouter comes to believe. Upon Wouter's request for further explanation, Jan lists a series of *exempla* from the Old and New Testaments, showing that the world has been full of deceit and sin from the beginning. It started in heaven with the fall of Lucifer, went on when Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise and then continued when the first terrible murder occurred, and one brother killed the other, even though there were no more than four people on the earth.⁴⁴ Wouter may believe that the present state of things is not inferior to the situation in earlier days, but Jan's real argument is that vices and murder are as old as the world. Jan's words are an example of rhetorical shrewdness that is subtle but not deceitful.

To pick up the satirical undertone in *Jans teesteye*, it is essential to read the text as a dialogue.⁴⁵ Only then do we recognize that Boendale is showing himself to be a clever and educated author, astonished at the ridiculous Wouter's lack of education. Why, Jan asks Wouter, has he not gone to school to become a cleric. Wouter's answer brings us back to the place when we started, in that he struggles with the same problems as the cleric in the disputation with his master: 'Jan, gambling and women kicked me out of the 'clerghie', and my comrades in the tavern have made a fool of me'.⁴⁶

Here we come back to school, as in the disputation between the cleric and his master, but we should not overlook the fact that the lay author has taken over the position of the master. Next to Wouter, the cleric who failed, Jan van Boendale is posing as the educated man of letters, who need not return to work, as he prefers sitting under a tree in the shadow of the midday sun, answering questions: 'for when I am teaching someone else, I also teach myself' (*Want als ic enen andren lere, so leric mi selven mede*).⁴⁷ These words may signify that the discovery of the dialogue in medieval Dutch literature opened the way for new discourses of meditation, self-reflection and self-fashioning.

⁴⁴ Snellaert, *Nederlandsche gedichten* 141–148.

⁴⁵ On this text, see Kinable D., *Facetten van Boendale. Literair-historische verkenningen van Jans teesteye en de Lekenspiegel* (Leiden: 1997) 100–120, which omits to discuss it as a dialogue.

⁴⁶ Snellaert, *Nederlandsche gedichten* 195: 'Jan, teerlinghe ende oec amyen / Dese stieten mi uter clerghien / Ende die ghesellen in die taverne / Dese maecten mi al te sceerne'.

⁴⁷ Snellaert, *Nederlandsche gedichten* 208–209.

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FROM MEDITATION TO *REVERIE*:
MONTAIGNE AND ROUSSEAU

Paul J. Smith

At the end of his life Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote his *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, a book that remained unfinished, because it was interrupted by the author's death in 1778. In the opening chapter while explaining his 'entreprise', his project of introspection and self-description, Rousseau wrote, at the very moment the reader begins to experience a *déjà lu*: 'Je fais la même entreprise que Monta[i]gne, mais avec un but tout contraire au sien: car il n'écrivoit ses essais que pour les autres, et je n'écris mes rêveries que pour moi'.¹ This statement is not only ambiguous (in its use of the terms *même* and *contraire*), but also misleading, since Montaigne did not in fact write exclusively for others,² while Rousseau's frequent use of self-justification strongly suggests that he did not write exclusively for himself, but also for an ideal, understanding and empathic readership, situated in an undefined future – and to be addressed from 'outretombe', as Chateaubriand has it.

A comparable passage on his ambiguous relationship to Montaigne (who is simultaneously his model and antimodel) is found in one of the manuscript versions of his *Confessions*, another autobiographical work, written before his *Rêveries* and also published posthumously.

¹ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1001. All references to Rousseau are to the following edition: *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Gagnebin B. – Raymond M. (Paris 1959–1995) 5 vols.

² Montaigne writes: 'Et quand personne ne me lira, ay-je perdu mon temps, de m'estre entretenu tant d'heures oisives, à pensements si utiles et agreeables?' (*Essais*, 703). 'Even if nobody reads me, have I wasted my time when I have entertained myself during so many idle hours with thoughts so useful and agreeable?' (*Essays*, 755). I quote Montaigne's *Essais* in the most recent edition: *Les Essais*, ed. Balsamo J., Magnien M., Magnien-Simonin C. (Paris: 2007). Contrary to eighteenth-century French, which is very close to modern French, sixteenth-century French, especially Montaigne's is rather difficult for the modern reader. For the reader's convenience, I therefore give a modern English translation of Montaigne's text in the footnotes. Translation used: Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, transl. Screech M.A. (Harmondsworth: 1991).

There Montaigne is relegated to the category of the ‘faux sincères’, of which he is the main representative:

Nul ne peut écrire la vie d'un homme que lui-même. Sa manière d'être intérieure, sa véritable vie n'est connue que de lui; mais en l'écrivant il la déguise; sous le nom de sa vie, il fait son apologie; il se montre comme il veut être vu, mais point du tout comme il est. Les plus sincères sont vrais tout au plus dans ce qu'ils disent, mais ils mentent par leurs réticences, et ce qu'ils taisent change tellement ce qu'ils feignent d'avouer, qu'en ne disant qu'une partie de la vérité ils ne disent rien. Je mets Montaigne à la tête de ces faux sincères qui veulent tromper en disant vrai. Il se montre avec des défauts, mais il ne s'en donne que d'aimables; il n'y a point d'homme qui n'en ait d'odieux. Montaigne se peint ressemblant mais de profil. Qui sait si quelque balafre à la joue ou un œil crevé du coté qu'il nous a caché, n'eut pas totalement changé sa physionomie.³

To this Rousseau adds the name of the Italian philosopher and scientist Gerolamo Cardano, to whom we will return shortly:

Un homme plus vain que Montaigne mais plus sincère est Cardan. Malheureusement ce même Cardan est si fou qu'on ne peut tirer aucune instruction de ses rêveries. D'ailleurs qui voudroit aller pêcher de si rares instructions dans dix tomes in folio d'extravagances ?⁴

It is particularly illustrative of his ambiguous relationship to Montaigne that in his *Rêveries* Rousseau will reuse, in the same wording, the pictorial image of a self-portrait ‘de profil’, this time admitting, however, that he has unwillingly committed the same fault: ‘[...] quelquefois sans y songer par un mouvement involontaire j'ai caché le coté difforme en me peignant de profil’.⁵ Moreover, in the two more recent and elaborated manuscript versions of the *Confessions* the references to Montaigne (and to Cardanus) are left out.

My working hypothesis – to be refined in this article – is that, for his *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, Rousseau tends to exaggerate the difference between himself and the author of the *Essais*, in order to divert the reader's attention from the numerous resemblances, on the level both of vocabulary and content. Indeed, Rousseau really wanted to create something radically new, in which he succeeded rather paradoxically by rewriting Montaigne, just as he had done before with Augustine's *Confessiones*, and with the *Letters of Abélard and Héloïse*,

³ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1149–1150.

⁴ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1150.

⁵ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1036.

which he rewrote respectively in his *Confessions* and in his *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*. Although this coupling of the three concepts that constitute Rousseau's title, *reveries*, *walking* and *solitude*, all linked to the concept of *meditation*, is innovative, Montaigne is indeed at the very basis of it – as I hope to demonstrate.

Montaigne and meditation

Let us begin with Montaigne and his use of the concept *meditation*. In order to situate and to explain his ideas about and use of this concept, it is useful to recall some biographical data. Montaigne, born in 1533, studied law, and in 1554 came to work as a lawyer in the Parlement de Bordeaux. In 1568, his father died – which enabled him to leave the Parlement, and to retire to the castle of his father, after years of professional activity, into serene study and contemplation. This retirement was solemnly marked by a Latin inscription, which can still be read on the wall of his library:

In the year of Christ 1571, at the age of thirty-eight, on the last day of February, his birthday, Michael de Montaigne, long weary of the servitude of the court and of public employments, while still entire, retired to the bosom of the learned virgins, where in calm and freedom from all cares he will spend what little remains of his life, now more than half run out. If the fates permit, he will complete this abode, this sweet ancestral retreat; and he has consecrated it to his freedom, tranquility, and leisure.⁶

The text is interesting for the subject of this volume, because it places Montaigne's retirement in the classical framework of the *vita contemplativa*, well deserved after a *vita activa*. In his library, constructed on the third floor of his castle's tower, he surrounded himself with inscriptions – some sixty sayings in Greek and Latin – which can still be seen in the Castle [Fig. 1]. His books – a thousand or so – were placed against the circular walls; there is one table and a chair, and a great deal of space between the table and the books. The windows permitted Montaigne to connect the world of his books with the book of the outer world, *i.e.*, his courtyard below, and the beautiful panoramic

⁶ Montaigne, *Essais* 1315. I quote the English translation from Regosin R.L., "Montaigne and His Readers", in Hollier H. (ed.), *A New History of French Literature* (Cambridge MA – London: 1995) 248–252, esp. 249.



Fig. 1. Greek and Latin inscriptions on the ceiling beams of Montaigne's library.

view, which extends to the horizon. In his *Essais* he gives a lengthy description of his library, of which the following passage is especially important for our further discussion: 'Tout lieu retiré requiert un promenoir. Mes pensées dorment, si je les assis. Mon esprit ne va pas seul, comme si les jambes l'agitent'.⁷ Meditation is related to walking. This is of course a generally known experience, yet Montaigne – after Petrarch – is one of the first to reflect upon this – a reflection that was to be worked out further by Rousseau.

For Montaigne, his library is the material concretization of spiritual retirement, of philosophical solitude. In his chapter *De la solitude*, he writes: 'Ce n'est pas que le sage ne puisse par tout vivre content, voire et seul, en la foule d'un palais: mais s'il est à choisir, il en fuira [...]

⁷ Montaigne, *Essais* 870. 'Every place of retreat needs an ambulatory. My thoughts doze off if I squat them down. My wit will not budge if my legs are not moving – which applies to all who study without books' (*Essays* 933). On Montaigne's physical and mental restlessness, see Starobinski J., *Montaigne en mouvement* (Paris: 1982), and Jeanneret M., "Mouvement", in Desan P. (ed.), *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne* (Paris: 2004) 694–697.

mesmes la veue'.⁸ As Montaigne, in his (feigned) modesty, does not pretend to be a 'wise man', he admits to being unable to concentrate in the company of others; his mind is quickly distracted, except when he is walking or when he is in the solitude of his library, and ideally when he is walking *in* his library. His library constitutes what he famously calls his *arrière-boutique*:

Il se faut reserver une arriereboutique, toute nostre, toute franche, en laquelle nous establissons nostre vraye liberté et principale retraicte et solitude. En cette-cy faut-il prendre nostre ordinaire entretien, de nous à nous mesmes, et si privé, que nulle accointance ou communication de chose estrangere y trouve place [...] Nous avons une ame contournable en soy mesme; elle se peut faire compagnie [...] ne craignons pas en cette solitude, nous croupier d'oisiveté ennuyeuse.⁹

Whereas the material conditions of the library seem perfect to start a life of contemplation and study, this *vita contemplativa*, devoted to calm study, turned out to be a fiasco: Montaigne fell into a state of melancholy (or mental depression, as we now would say), because he did not succeed in getting over the death of the two most beloved and influential persons in his life: his father, and his friend Etienne de La Boétie (1563). He recounts this experience in a passage that is reminiscent of his library inscription:

Dernierement que je me retiray chez moy, deliberé autant que je pourroy, ne me mesler d'autre chose, que de passer en repos, et à part, ce peu qui me reste de vie: il me sembloit ne pouvoir faire plus grande faveur à mon esprit, que de le laisser en pleine oysiveté, s'entretenir soy-mesmes, et s'arrester et rasseoir en soy. [Mais je trouve qu'il] m'enfante tant de chimeres et monstres fantasques les uns sur les autres, sans ordre, et sans propos, que pour en contempler à mon ayse l'ineptie et l'estrangeté, j'ay commencé de les mettre en rolle: esperant avec le temps, luy en faire honte à luy mesmes.¹⁰

⁸ Montaigne, *Essais* 242. 'It is not that a wise man cannot live happily anywhere nor be alone in a crowd of courtiers, but [...] if he has the choice, the wise man will avoid the very sight of them' (*Essays* 267).

⁹ Montaigne, *Essais* 245. 'We should set aside a room, just for ourselves, at the back of the shop, keeping it entirely free and establishing there our true liberty, our principal solitude and asylum. Within it our normal conversation should be of ourselves, with ourselves, so privy that no commerce or communication with the outside world should find a place here. [...] We have a soul able to turn in on herself; she can keep herself company [...] Let us not fear that in such a solitude as that we shall be crouching in painful idleness' (*Essays* 270).

¹⁰ Montaigne, *Essais* 54–55. 'Recently I retired to my estates, determined to devote myself as far as I could to spending what little life I have left quietly and privately;

In his scarce free time (he has the responsibility for the ‘domestic affairs’, which not only implied his own household, but also the peasants and the village depending directly upon the castle), he embarked on a writing project as a form of therapy – this is the beginning of his *Essais*, which he published between 1580 and 1588, and continued to rework until his death in 1592.

Montaigne uses the word *méditation* only once in his *Essais*, at the very end of his book, when he expresses his aversion to all kinds of ecstasy. The page in question – in Montaigne’s personal copy, the so-called *Exemplaire de Bordeaux*, i.e., the 1588 edition, which contains a large number of marginal annotations on his own text, published posthumously in 1595 – indicates that the subject continues to pre-occupy him until his death [Fig. 2]. The passage reads as follows (the marginal annotations have been italicized):

Je ne touche pas icy, et ne mesle point à ceste marmaille d’hommes que nous sommes, et à ceste vanité de desirs et cogitations, qui nous divertissent, ces ames venerables, eslevées par ardeur de devotion et religion, à une constante et consciencieuse meditation des choses divines, *lesquelles, preoccupans par l’effort d’une vive et vehemente esperance, l’usage de la nourriture eternelle, but final, et dernier arrest des Chrestiens desirs: seul plaisir constant, incorruptible: desdaignent de s’attendre à nos necessiteuses commoditez, fluides et ambiguës: et resignent facilement au corps le soin et l’usage, de la pasture sensuelle et temporelle.*¹¹

As is shown by Screech’s English translation of the word *méditation* – ‘anticipation’ – there is something strange about Montaigne’s rare use of the word.

it seemed to me that the greatest favour I could do for my mind was to leave it in total idleness, caring for itself, calmly thinking of itself. [But I find that] it gives birth to so many chimeras and fantastic monstrosities, one after another, without order or fitness, that, so as to contemplate at my ease their oddness and their strangeness, I began to keep a record of them, hoping in time to make my mind ashamed of itself’ (*Essays* 31).

¹¹ Montaigne, *Essais* 1165. ‘Here I am not alluding to – nor am I confounding with the scrapings of the pot that we are, and with the vain longings and ratiocinations which keep us musing – those revered souls which, through ardour of devotion and piety, are raised high to a constant and scrupulous anticipation of things divine; *souls which (enjoying by the power of a quick and rapturous hope, a foretaste of that everlasting food which is the ultimate goal, the final destination, that Christians long for) scorn to linger over our insubstantial and ambiguous pleasurable ‘necessities’ and easily assign to the body the bother and use of the temporal food of the senses*’ (*Essays* 1267).

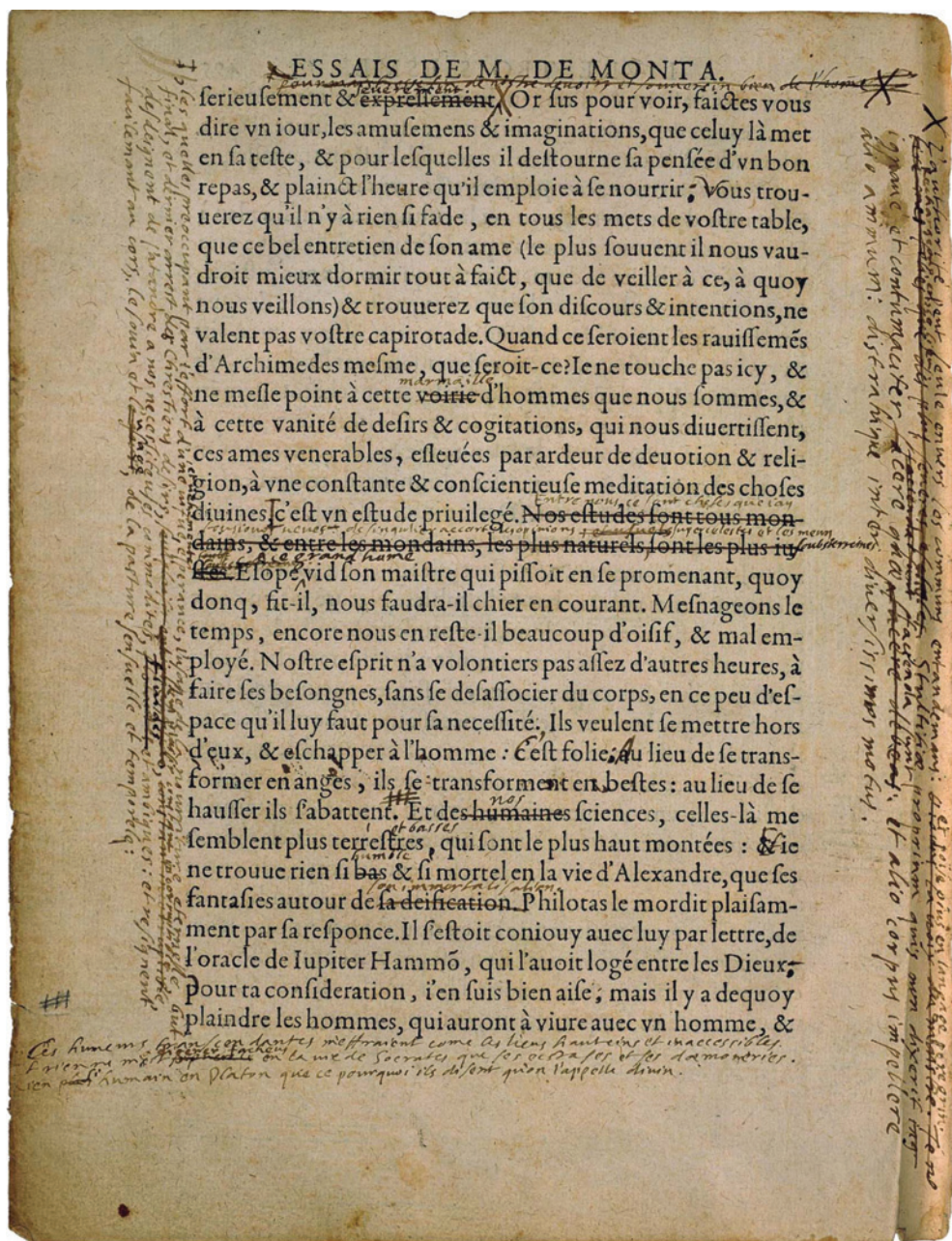


Fig. 2. Exemplaire de Bordeaux, fol. 503v. *Reproduction en quadrichromie de l'Exemplaire de Bordeaux*, ed. P. Desan (Chicago – Fasano: 2002).

What, indeed, is meditation in sixteenth-century French? The most obvious way to answer this question is to consult Cotgrave's authoritative *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611):¹²

Meditation: f. A meditation, or meditating; a deepe consideration, care full examination, studious casting, or devising of things in the mind.
 Mediter. To meditate, study, muse on; to thinke seriously, revolve studiously, consider deeply, devise carefully, ponder diligently.

Cotgrave's definitions coincide more or less with the modern use of the French word *méditation*, but they differ from modern English, where the religious connotation is most important – as is clear from a random consultation of my *Penguin English Dictionary*:

Meditation *n* act of meditating; systematic reflection on religious topics.¹³

Montaigne seems deliberately to avoid the use of the word to refer to his own reflections. Even in his chapter “Que philosopher c'est apprendre à mourir” he avoids the traditional phrase ‘*méditation sur la mort*’ (meditatio mortis), preferring to use a derived word: not *méditation* but ‘*préméditation de la mort*’, a ‘forethought’ of death, as is explained elsewhere in Cotgrave's *Dictionarie*.

As far as I can see, there is no direct and obvious explanation for the near absence of the term *méditation* in Montaigne, nor for Montaigne's singularly idiosyncratic use of it. Indeed, according to the general meaning of the word, given by Cotgrave, all of his *Essais* are examples of ‘meditation’. Yet Montaigne, is arguably trying to avoid the religious connotations of the term, not mentioned by Cotgrave, but certainly present in Montaigne's time. Indeed this kind of mystic meditation is absent from Montaigne, just as is his personal perception and practice of his relationship to God. There is a complete silence for instance on the Masses he attends in the private chapel of his castle. He has a whole chapter on the subject of praying, but the only information he gives about his personal practice is his preference for the Lord's Prayer, the *Pater noster*. Moreover, this chapter on prayer never becomes an actual prayer – as is the case in Pascal's later *Pensées*, for instance.

¹² Cotgrave R., *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: 1611). Consultable on Internet: <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/> (date of consultation: 17th April 2010).

¹³ Garmonsway G.N., *The Penguin English Dictionary* (Harmondsworth: 1969, second edition).

Another reason for not adopting the word *meditation* could be the semantic connotations of the word, surviving in modern English, and already implied by Cotgrave, of 'discipline', 'systematic exercise' and even 'method'. These connotations are in flagrant contradiction with Montaigne's craving for free thinking and writing, and his averseness to all kinds of obligation and constraint, be it classical rhetoric and dialectic, or the prevailing 'methods' of reasoning of his time, those propounded, for example, by Petrus Ramus or Jean Bodin.

For Montaigne, this spiritual freedom also has its limits: in the direct context of religious meditation, in the last pages of his *Essais* quoted before, he also speaks of other forms of spiritual detachment. On the subject of ecstasies, the moments the spirit or soul leaves the body, Montaigne is very reluctant. Indeed, he fails to understand the ecstatic *eureka* of Archimedes: 'Quand ce seroient les ravissements d'Archimedes mesme, que seroit-ce?'¹⁴ The same holds for Socrates:

Ces humeurs transcendentes m'effrayent, comme les lieux hautains et inaccessibles. Et rien ne m'est fascheux à digerer en la vie de Socrates, que ses ecstases et ses demoneries.¹⁵

He is not capable of following the examples of the great philosophers. For Montaigne, every form of bodiless rapture is suspect, and more generally, every form of meditation or spiritual exercise remains physically connected to the body. As he says elsewhere:

Les gens plus sages peuvent se forger un repos tout spiritual, ayant l'ame forte et vigoureuse: Moy qui l'ay commune, il faut que j'ayde à me soutenir par les commoditez corporelles.¹⁶

Let us now briefly consider Montaigne's use of the word *rêveries* – one of the other words figuring in Rousseau's title. For Montaigne, this word, mostly applied to his own reflections and writings, denotes, rather negatively, unpredictable, unordered and useless discourses, and therefore implies an ironic self-deprecation. This corresponds with the definition of the term given by Cotgrave:

¹⁴ Montaigne, *Essais* 1165. 'Even if they were the raptures of Archimedes, what does it matter?' (*Essays* 1267).

¹⁵ Montaigne, *Essais* 1166. 'Those humours soaring to transcendency terrify me as do great unapproachable heights; and for me nothing in the life of Socrates is so awkward to digest as his ecstasies and daemonizings' (*Essays* 1268).

¹⁶ Montaigne, *Essais* 251. 'Wiser men with a strong and vigorous soul can forge for themselves a tranquility which is wholly spiritual. Since my soul is commonplace, I must help sustain myself with the pleasures of the body' (*Essays* 276).

Resverie: f. A raving, idle talking, dotage [...] follie, vaine fancie, fond imagination.

At times, however, Montaigne seems to use this word in a more positive sense. Indeed, his sweetest reflections are called *rêveries*, which are especially difficult to transcribe, just because they are unpredictable and unexpected and mostly occur while he is doing something else:

Mais mon ame me desplaist, de ce qu'elle produit ordinairement ses plus profondes resveries, plus folles, et qui me plaisent le mieux, à l'improveu, et lors que je les cherche moins: lesquelles s'esvanouissent soudain, n'ayant sur le champ où les attacher: A cheval, à la table, au lic: Mais plus à cheval, où sont mes plus larges entretiens. [...] Outre ce, que je voyage plus souvent sans compagnie, propre à ces entretiens de suite: par où je prens tout loisir de m'entretenir moy-mesme. Il m'en advient comme de mes songes: en songeant, je les recommande à ma memoire, (car je songe volontiers que je songe) mais le lendemain, [...] plus j'ahane à le retrouver, plus je l'enfonce en l'oubliance. Aussi des discours fortuites qui me tombent en fantasia, il ne m'en reste en memoire qu'une vaine image: autant seulement qu'il m'en faut pour me faire ronger, et despiter après leur queste, inutilement.¹⁷

Montaigne seems to be one of the first to notice the importance of this difficult 'jotting down' of one's reveries. This is indeed the very basis of his writing, as he says elsewhere:

Aux fins de renger ma fantasia, à resver mesme, par quelque ordre et project, et la garder de se perdre et extravaguer au vent, il n'est que de donner corps, et mettre en registre, tant de menues pensées, qui se presentent à elle. J'escoutte à mes resveries, par ce que j'ay à les enroller.¹⁸

¹⁷ Montaigne, *Essais* 919–920. 'But what displeases me about my soul is that she usually gives birth quite unexpectedly, when I am least on the lookout for them, to her profoundest, her maddest ravings which please me most. Then they quickly vanish away because, then and there, I have nothing to jot them down on; it happens when I am on my horse or at table or in bed – especially on my horse the seat of my widest musings. [...] Moreover I most often journey without the proper company for sustained conversation, which enables me to be free to think my own thoughts. What happens is like what happens to my dreams: during them I commend them to my memory (for I often dream I am dreaming); next morning [...] the more I struggle to find it the more I bury it in forgetfulness. It is the same with those chance reflections which happen to drop into my mind: all that remains of them in my memory is a vague idea, just enough to make me gnaw irritably away, uselessly seeking for them (*Essays* 990–991).

¹⁸ Montaigne, *Essais* 704. 'With the aims of teaching my mental faculty even to rave with some order and direction and so as to stop it losing its way and wandering in the wind, I need simply to give it body and to keep detailed accounts of my petty

In the solitude of his library, walking, daydreaming, and writing (or rather dictating) converge in the creation of his *Essais*: 'Tantost je resve, tantost j'enregistre et dicte, en me promenant, mes songes que voicy.'¹⁹ This solitary and ambulant *mise en registre* directly announces Rousseau, as we shall see.

Rousseau: walking and reveries

Rousseau's *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, written at the end of his life between 1776 and 1778, is divided into ten chapters called *promenades*, Walks. The Eighth Walk and Ninth Walk were completed, but not revised by Rousseau, while the Tenth Walk was incomplete at Rousseau's death in 1778. The first publication was in 1782.

At the end of his life Rousseau was suffering from an anxiety of persecution. He felt lonesome and misunderstood, hated and persecuted, especially by his influential fellow writers and philosophers Voltaire and Diderot, and the public media. This anxiety is clearly visible, for example, in the opening lines of the book:

Me voici donc seul sur la terre, n'ayant plus de frere, de prochain, d'ami, de société que moi-même. Le plus sociable et le plus aimant des humains en a été proscrit par un accord unanime.²⁰

In the First Walk Rousseau gives an interesting description of his project, full of echoes of Montaigne. In order to find spiritual peace, he wants to transcribe the reveries he had during his walks: 'toutes les idées étrangères qui me passent par la tête en me promenant y trouveront [...] leur place'.²¹ Normally, so he says, he forgets these pleasant thoughts (just as we saw in Montaigne) – but now he forces himself to write them down:

thoughts as they occur to me' (*Essays* 755). The last sentence has not been translated by Screech: 'I listen to my reveries, because I have to register them'.

¹⁹ Montaigne, *Essais* 869–870. 'Sometimes my mind wanders off, at others I walk to and fro, noting down and dictating these whims of mine' (*Essays* 933).

²⁰ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 995.

²¹ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 999.

Les loisirs de mes promenades journalières ont souvent été remplis de contemplations charmantes dont j'ai regret d'avoir perdu le souvenir. Je fixerai par l'écriture celles qui pourront me venir encore; chaque fois que je les relirai m'en rendra la jouissance.²²

This implies that there are three moments of happiness: the moment of the reverie itself, the moment of writing it down, and the moment of reading and rereading it, in this way reconstructing the first moment of experiencing it. This triple experience of happiness is new in French literature, and not very Montaigne-like.

As a matter of fact, we do know how Rousseau managed to put into writing those fugitive, happy moments. During his walks, he wrote brief reflections on the back of a set of playing cards. Then, at home, he worked them out in a notebook, which ultimately served as a basis for his posthumously printed text.²³

In spite of these differences with Montaigne's way of writing, there are many passages on introspection in Rousseau's *Rêveries* which are indeed very Montaigne-like, for example the following sentences:

Ces feuilles ne seront proprement qu'un informe journal de mes rêveries.²⁴

Pour le faire avec succès il y faudroit proceder avec ordre et methode: mais je suis incapable de ce travail et même m'écarteroit de mon but qui est de me rendre compte des modifications de mon ame et de leurs successions.²⁵

Je me contenterai de tenir le registre des opérations sans chercher à les reduire en système.²⁶

Indeed, the adjective 'informe' is frequently used by Montaigne to characterize his 'fantaisies informes', the 'sujet informe' of his 'cogitations'.²⁷ The same holds for Rousseau's inability to proceed by 'ordre et methode', the expression 'tenir registre', and the ambition not to give a static description of the mind, but a *compte rendu* of the mind's successive 'modifications'. As Montaigne said: 'Je ne peinds pas l'estre,

²² Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 999.

²³ Both the playing cards and the notebook are now in the Bibliothèque publique et universitaire de Neuchâtel.

²⁴ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1000.

²⁵ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1000.

²⁶ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1001.

²⁷ Montaigne, *Essais* 335, 398.

je peinds le passage [...] C'est un contrerolle de divers et muables accidens, et d'imaginations irresolues'.²⁸

The most striking coincidence between both authors is the way they elaborate the archetypal theme of a near-death experience, caused by an unexpected accident. Both authors could have found this archetype in Cardano's *De vita propria*, a book that, as we saw, Rousseau had compared to Montaigne's *Essais* in one of the manuscript versions of his *Confessions*.²⁹ The physical circumstances of these accidents differ: Cardano, riding on a mule, escaped from a dog's attack, by ducking quickly, the dog passing over him without touching him; Montaigne was kicked off his horse accidentally by another rider while making a promenade on horseback, whereas Rousseau was kicked over by a huge Great Dane during one of his walks. Yet the three accidents, especially Montaigne's and Rousseau's, resemble each other in their textual presentation.³⁰ Indeed, there is an intertextual relationship in the way the accidents are described. In both cases, the reporting of these accidents is carefully prepared. But whereas Montaigne is extremely vague about the exact date, Rousseau is uncommonly precise:

Montaigne: 'Pendant nos troisiemes troubles, ou deuxiesmes (il ne me souvient pas bien de cela) m'estant allé un jour promener à une lieue de chez moi.'³¹

Rousseau: 'Le jeudi 24 Octobre 1776 je suivis après diner les boulevards jusqu'à la rue du cheminverd par laquelle je gagnai les hauteurs de Menil-montant'.³²

²⁸ Montaigne, *Essais* 845. 'I am not portraying being but becoming [...] This is a register of varied and changing occurrences, of ideas which are unresolved' (*Essays* 907–908).

²⁹ Wolff E., "Cardan, Rousseau et l'autobiographie", *Etudes Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 11 (1999) 269–276.

³⁰ From here on we will exclude Cardano from our comparative analysis, because it is uncertain whether Rousseau and Montaigne really read this author. Hugo Friedrich's comparisons between Montaigne and Cardano do not confirm any real reading of Cardano by Montaigne (Friedrich H., *Montaigne* [Paris: 1968] 234–236). And on the possible relationship between Rousseau and Cardanus, we read in the notes of the authorative Pléiade edition: 'Il n'est pas certain que Rousseau ait su plus de choses sur Cardan que n'en disait Bayle dans son *Dictionnaire*' (Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1855).

³¹ Montaigne, *Essais* 391. 'During the third of our disturbances (or was it the second, I do not remember which), I was out riding one day about one league from my home' (*Essays* 418).

³² Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1003.

This is in fact one of the two exact dates Rousseau gives in his *Rêveries*.³³

Rousseau gives a long description of his promenade in order to create a sense of narrative suspense: instead of immediately relating the accident, he begins by giving a detailed account of his botanic activities during his walk, and a detailed description of the plants he found. This is followed by a poetic description of the autumnal landscape, which is interiorized in a typically pre-romantic way: the landscape becomes a *paysage intérieur* – probably the first in French literature. Rousseau's detailed account can be read as an amplification of Montaigne's description of the pleasures of walking. Whereas Rousseau describes his delights of walking in great detail, Montaigne only gives the essential: the promenade brings him back to himself:

[...] quand je me promeine solitairement en un beau verger, si mes pensées se sont entretenues des occurrences estrangeres quelque partie du temps: quelque autre partie, je les rameine à la promenade, au verger, à la douceur de cette solitude, et à moy.³⁴

It is only then that Rousseau gives a detailed account of his accident (I have italicized the lexical correspondences between Rousseau and Montaigne):

[...] je vis *fondre sur moi un gros chien danois* [...] Je jugeai que le seul moyen que j'avois d'éviter d'être jetté par terre étoit de faire un grand saut si juste que le chien passât sous moi tandis que je serois en l'air. [...] Le Chien danois n'ayant pu retenir son élan s'étoit précipité sur mes deux jambes et me choquant *de sa masse et de sa vitesse* m'avoit tomber la tête en avant: la machoire supérieure portant tout le poids de mon corps avoit frappé sur un pavé très raboteux, et la chute avoit été d'autant plus violente qu'étant à la descente, *ma tête avoit donné plus bas que mes pieds*.³⁵

³³ The other basic date, given in the opening lines of his last Walk, is presented in the form of a brain-teaser: 'Aujourd'hui jour de paques fleuries il y a precisement cinquante ans de ma première connoissance avec Mad^e de Warens. Elle avoit 28 ans alors étant née avec le siècle. Je n'en avois pas encore dixsept [...]' (Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1098).

³⁴ Montaigne, *Essays* 1157–1158. '[...] when I am strolling alone through a beautiful orchard, although part of the time my thoughts are occupied by other things, for part of the time too I bring them back to the walk, to the orchard, to the delight of being alone there, and to me' (*Essays* 1258).

³⁵ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1004–1005.

Montaigne's description reads as follows:

Un de mes gens grand et fort, monté sur un puissant roussin [...] vint à le pousser à toute bride droict dans ma route, et *fondre* comme un colosse *sur* le petit home et petit cheval, et le foudroyer *de sa roideur et de sa pesanteur*, nous envoyant l'un et l'autre *les pieds contre-mont*.³⁶

One notes the glint of self-irony in Montaigne's 'le petit home et le petit cheval', absent from Rousseau, whose description of the accident is therefore unintentionally clownish.

After this factual account, both authors relate their near-death experience: the momentary loss of identity (expressed in repeated negative clauses), the experience of celestial happiness, a state of *bonheur*, interrupted by some detailed comments on the blood they lost, and their return to reality, less painful in the case of Rousseau, but described in much more detail:

Montaigne:

Je ne sçavoy pourtant ny d'où je venoy, ny où j'aloy, ny ne pouvois poiser et considerer ce qu'on me demandoit[...] cependant mon assiette estoit à la verité très-douce et paisible [...] c'estoit une langueur et une extreme foiblesse, sans aucune douleur.

Je rendy un plein seau de bouillons de sang pur: et plusieurs fois par le chemin, il m'en falut faire de mesme.

Quand je vins à revivre, et à reprendre mes forces [...], qui fut deux ou trois heures après, je me senty tout d'un train rengager aux douleurs, ayant les membres tous moulus et froissez de ma cheute, et en fus si mal deux ou trois nuits après, que j'en cuiday remourir encore un coup: mais d'une mort plus vivve, et me sens encore de la secousse de ceste froissure.³⁷

³⁶ Montaigne, *Essais* 391. 'One of my men, a big strong fellow, was on a powerful farm-horse [and] happened to ride it full pelt right in my tracks and came down like a colossus upon me, a little man on a little horse, striking us like a thunderbolt with all his roughness and weight, knocking us over with our legs in the air' (*Essays* 419).

³⁷ Montaigne, *Essais* 395, 391, 395–396. 'I had no idea where I was coming from nor where I was going to; nor could I weigh attentively what I was asked [...] Meanwhile my condition was truly most agreeable and peaceful [...] it was a kind of lassitude and utter weakness, without any pain. [...] I threw up a bucketful of pure clotted blood; and I had to do the same several times on the way. [...] When I began to come back again to life and regained my strength [...] which was two or three hours later, only then did I feel myself all at once linked with pain again, having all my limbs bruised and battered by my fall; and I felt so ill two or three nights later that I nearly died a second time, but of a livelier death! And I can still feel the effects of that battering' (*Essays* 422–423, 419, 423).

Rousseau:

Cette première sensation fut un moment délicieux [...] je n'avois nulle notion distincte de mon individu, [...] je ne savois ni qui j'étois ni où j'étois; je ne sentois ni mal, ni crainte ni inquietude. [...] je sentois dans tout mon être un calme ravissant [...] sans sentir ni douleur ni blessure quoique je crachasse toujours beaucoup de sang.³⁸

Voici ce que je sentis et trouvai le lendemain. J'avois la lèvre supérieure fendue en dedans jusqu'au nés; en dehors la peau l'avoit mieux garantie et empêchoit la totale separation, quatre dents enfoncées à la machoire supérieure, toute la partie du visage qui la couvre extrêmement enflée et meurtrie, le pouce droit foulé et très gros, le pouce gauche grièvement blessé, le bras gauche foulé, le genou gauche aussi très enflé et qu'une contusion forte et douloureuse empêchoit totalement de plier.³⁹

Apart from these evident lexical resemblances, the main difference between both near-death experiences seems to be that for Rousseau this experience is presented as a kind of rebirth ('Je naissois dans cet instant à la vie'),⁴⁰ the beginning of a new episode in his life, whereas for Montaigne it is a foretaste of death, and therefore an argument in favour of the *premeditation* of death: 'Ce conte d'un événement si léger, est assez vain, n'estoit l'instruction que j'en ay tirée pour moy: car à la verité pour s'apriveriser à la mort, je trouve qu'il n'y a que de s'en avoisiner'.⁴¹ At the same time, Montaigne, in the later parts of his book and in later versions of his *Essais*, rejects the utility of the *meditatio mortis*, to replace it by a *meditatio vitae*: enjoy your life when it is still possible to do so. In this way, Rousseau, at the end of his life, appears to be once again very close to Montaigne.

All these coincidences make it possible for us to reinterpret other resemblances, already noticed by Rousseau scholars,⁴² for instance the following Heracliteian sentences about the universal state of flux that affects both observer and observed:

³⁸ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1005–1006.

³⁹ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1006.

⁴⁰ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1005.

⁴¹ Montaigne, *Essais* 396. 'This account of so unimportant an event is pointless enough but for the instruction I drew for it for my own purposes: for in truth, to inure yourself to death all you have to do is to draw nigh to it' (*Essays* 424).

⁴² For a very useful oversight, see Fleuret C., "Montaigne", in Trousson R. – Eigeldinger F.S. (eds.), *Dictionnaire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris: 1996) 602–605.

Tout est dans un flux continuel sur la terre: rien n'y garde une forme constante et arrêtée, et nos affections qui s'attachent aux choses extérieures passent et changent necessairement comme elles.⁴³

[...] Tout est sur la terre dans un flux continuel qui ne permet à rien d'y prendre une forme constante. Tout change autour de nous. Nous changeons nous-mêmes et nul ne peut s'assurer qu'il aimera demain ce qu'il aime aujourd'hui.⁴⁴

Although this is traditional matter, one hears the echoes of Montaigne:

Finalement, il n'y a aucune constante existence, ny de nostre estre, ny de celui des objects: Et nous, et nostre jugement, et toutes choses mortelles, vont coulant et roulant sans cesse: Ainsin il ne se peut establir rien de certain de l'un à l'autre, et le jugeant, et le jugé, estant en continuelle mutation et branle. [...] toutes choses sont en fluxion, muance et variation perpetuelle.⁴⁵

There is also their common preference for Plutarch, their common use of the topos *Life is a dream*, and another topos I mentioned before, namely that the really wise man is able to find happiness everywhere, even in prison.

Cette espèce de rêverie peut se goûter par tout où l'on peut être tranquille, et j'ai souvent pensé qu'à la Bastille et même dans un cachot où nul objet n'eut frappé ma vue, j'aurois encor pu rêver agreablement.⁴⁶

In view of his ambiguous intertextual relationship with Montaigne, we can even ask ourselves why Rousseau's *Rêveries* contain so many botanical details, and even a whole reflection on the usefulness of botany. Is this merely a sincere expression of Rousseau's botanical delights, or is it a way to distinguish himself from other philosophers who dislike and even look down on botany? This last category implies also Montaigne, who repeatedly exhibits, in a rather polemical manner, his total ignorance on the matter of botany and gardening.⁴⁷ It

⁴³ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1046.

⁴⁴ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1085.

⁴⁵ Montaigne, *Essais* 639. 'We ourselves, our faculty of judgement and all mortal things are flowing and rolling ceaselessly: nothing certain can be established about one from the other, since both judged and judging are ever shifting and changing. [...] all things are in a state of never-ending inconstancy, change and flux' (*Essays* 680).

⁴⁶ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1036.

⁴⁷ '[...] je laisse de sçavoir les instrumens du labourage, ses saisons, son ordre, comment on fait mes vins, comme on ente, et de sçavoir le nom et la forme des herbes et des fruits, et l'apprest des viandes, dequoy je vis' (Montaigne, *Essais* 996). 'I cannot

also seems to be the case that Montaigne did so in order to distinguish himself mockingly from those philosophers who did show an interest in botany and gardening, like Lipsius.⁴⁸

Concluding remarks

I hope to have demonstrated that Montaigne inspired Rousseau to the thematic linking of *reverie*, *promenade* and *solitude*. This connection between the three terms enabled Rousseau to create a new theme, soon to be adopted by a host of (pre)romantic writers, all solitary, ambulant, introspective *rêveurs*: Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Hugo and Baudelaire, to name only the most famous. Returning to the topic of this volume, one can state that for both authors, the term *reverie* is more apt to qualify their writings than the term *meditation*. Let us finish with an interesting difference that Rousseau makes between the two concepts:

J'ai pensé quelquefois assez profondément; mais rarement avec plaisir, presque toujours contre mon gré et comme par force: la rêverie me delasse et m'amuse, la reflexion me fatigue et m'attriste; penser fut toujours pour moi une occupation pénible et sans charme. Quelquefois mes rêveries finissent par la méditation, mais plus souvent mes méditations finissent par la rêverie, et durant ces égaremens mon ame erre et plâne dans l'univers sur les ailes de l'imagination dans des extases qui passent toute autre jouissance.⁴⁹

This explicitness in defining the difference between rational meditation and irrational reverie⁵⁰ might form the basis for a new, pre-romantic sensibility, and should therefore be investigated more fully in Rousseau's earlier works, and their sources.⁵¹

be bothered to learn the names of the tools used in husbandry, nor about its seasons and succession of tasks, nor how my wines are made, how grafting is done, the names of plants and fruits and the ways of preparing them for the table' (*Essays* 1077).

⁴⁸ See my "Montaigne, Juste Lipse et l'art du voyage", *The Romanic Review* 94 (2003) 73–91, esp. 79.

⁴⁹ Rousseau, *Œuvres* I, 1061–1062.

⁵⁰ Rousseau's notion of reverie has been studied in numerous publications, but without major references to Montaigne. See, for instance, the following recent studies: Crogiez M., *Solitude et méditation. Etudes sur les Rêveries de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris: 1997); Coz M. – Jacob F. (eds.), *Rêveries sans fin. Autour des Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (Orléans: 1997); O'Neal J.C. (ed.), *The Nature of Rousseau's Rêveries: Physical, Human, Aesthetic* (Oxford: 2008).

⁵¹ For this the following study is of great help: Morrissey R.J., *La rêverie jusqu'à Rousseau. Recherches sur un topos littéraire* (Lexington, Kentucky: 1984).

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EXSCRIBO ERGO SUM.
SELF-REFLEXION AND MEDITATION IN EARLY MODERN
GERMAN FAMILY BOOKS*

Wolfgang Neuber

Copying and self-reflexion

The self emerges from figures, from bookkeeping. Or so the scarce research on family books would sometimes have it:¹ Family books and their autobiographical writing evolve from the merchants' practice of bookkeeping. Who keeps book, who keeps an account, may feel tempted to give an account of himself, call himself to account or even hold himself accountable. Dealing with figures and narrating converge etymologically in Italian, in French, in German and in English and thus give a strong indication that calculating or doing business and reflecting the self are closely related. And indeed, the earliest specimens of the genre "family book" – if a genre it is – can be found in Italy around the middle of the 14th century. These "libri di ricordanze" are often a mixture of bookkeeping and memories and could be continued by the merchants' sons or successors.

So it seems quite clear what a family book is. The term, however, is a purely functional one. It is not derived from the texts contained in such manuscripts but was assigned to them by their authors because of the books' function.² This function was to preserve names, dates

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¹ Cf. Becker F., *Geschichte und Systemtheorie: exemplarische Fallstudien* (Frankfurt: 2004) 122–126. Clearly, this concept goes back to Max Weber and the 19th century, cf. Weber M., *Zur Geschichte der Handelsgesellschaften im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: 1889; repr. Amsterdam: 1970) 134. – The most comprehensive contribution on the topic of family books is Studt B. (ed.), *Haus- und Familienbücher in der städtischen Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne – Weimar – Vienna: 2007).

² Cf. Weidenbusch W., *Das Italienische in der Lombardei in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Schriftliche und mündliche Varietäten im Alltag* (Tübingen: 2002) 126.

and events in order to pass them on to future members of the family because they would find them useful. As a rule, the head of the family would start a family book for the private use of later generations, a father would write in order to teach his sons and in rarer cases a mother would do so, sometimes implicating her daughters as addressees. This of course means that family books were never meant to go to print. They were supposed to run in the family and tell the offsprings who they were and what claims to life they could make.

The introductory matters of such family books do often explicitly give an indication of both their private nature and the intention to preserve something useful for the progeny. I will give you three examples. Nicolaus Paulus Helfrich wrote in Nuremberg on January 1st, 1676:

Daß die Alten vielmahls nicht allein anderer, sondern auch Jhres aigenen Lebenslauff und herkommens außführlichen aufs Papier bracht und beschrieben hinderlassen haben, Jst zu keinem andern endt geschehen, dan daß das Jenige so von ihnen Rumwürdiges verhandelt worden, Jhren Nachkommen Zum Bejspiel und nachfolg ihrer Tugenden, alß in einen Spiegel fürgebildet und dargestellt, waß Jhnen aber übel angestanden, solches vermietten und unterlassen würde. Zu gleichmässiger und keiner andern Jntention habe ich mir fürgesetzt, diß Gegenwertige Buch von meiner lieben vorfahren ankunfft und leben in der müglichen kürze, mit aigener handt Schrifftlich Zuverfassen.³

That the ancient have often comprehensively noted down and left behind not alone the course of life and descent of others but also their own was done to no other end than to depict and represent as in a mirror their feats so that their offsprings find an example and can follow their virtue but avoid and refrain from all that which was for them inappropriate. With the equal and no other intention have I taken it upon me to pen this present book about the advent and lives of my dear ancestors in all possible brevity in my own hand in writing.

A couple of years earlier, the parson Peter IX Füßli from Zurich wrote on the 5th of February, 1662, just a few weeks before his 30th birthday:

Allhie sind zusammen getragen die Sachen der Füeßlj. Wer diß Buch mit der Zeit in die händ bekommt, wölle das fleißig bewahren, vnd auch mitheilen denen vom Geschläch, die es begehrend. Solte es kommen in ein frömbde hand, so bieten Jch hoch daß es blybe vnversehrt, vnd den

³ Nicolaus Paulus Helfrich and others, [*Family book*], Bavarian State Archive, Nürnberger Handschriften Nr. 280, fol. 7r.

Füßlj wider werde Zugestelt. Gott wölle dich hierüber segnen, thust du aber diß nit, so kan man dir nit vil gutes wünschen.⁴

Here are put together the things of the Füßli. Who in the course of time gets this book into his hands shall preserve it diligently and communicate it to those of the kin who desire it. Should it fall into foreign hands I ask that it remain unscathed and be returned to the Füßli. God shall bless you hereupon but if you will not do so, one cannot wish you much good.

Some decades before Füßli, in a manuscript he called *Oeconomica*, 'teachings about the house', Füßli's in-law Johann Heinrich Waser wrote

Von der Zyt an syner Geburt in a°. 1600. bis vff den 30. Julij / a°. 1633. Sonderlich aber Von Synem ersten Hußwesen: Hyraht mit Fr. Anna Füßlj; Kinderen: Verstürungen ihres / vnd synes Guts: Synen Ständen in diser Zyt; vnd Verrichtungen: Von dem Ablyben etlich der Synigen: Krankheiten: Testament: Badenfehrten.

Darby ist ein Verzeichnus von allen Kinderen / so er: Syne Ehewybere: vnd Kinder; aldiewyln sy in syner Hußhaltung gewesen; vß H. Tauff gehebt habend.

Allein zusammen geschriben zu synem / vnd der Synigen privat-Nachrichtung, gebruch, vnd nit wyter.⁵

From the time of his birth in the year 1600 up to July 30th, 1633, but especially about his first household, wedding with Anna Füßli, children, taxation of her and his properties, his estates at the time and accomplishments, about the demise of a number of his kin, illnesses, testaments, travels to baths.

Withal is a schedule of all children to whom he, his wives and children as long as they were in his household have stood sponsor.

Solely compiled for the private information and use by himself and his kin and no further.

All three texts quoted are quite prohibitive as to the intended readership. Only the latter example, however, gives a somewhat more comprehensive notion of what may have been accumulated to make a family book. So if you look at a wider range of specimens, what texts, apart from reckoning and family matters, can be expected from a family book? The answer is, almost anything. In terms of the media involved one finds primarily texts in handwriting, but also drawings,

⁴ Peter IX Füßli and others, [*Family book*], Central Library Zurich, MS A 61, fol. 1r.

⁵ Johann Heinrich Waser, *Oeconomica*, Central Library Zurich, Ms J 429, title page.

watercolour illustrations, printed maps and woodcuts as well as etchings that were cut out somewhere else and pasted onto the pages. In writing, formulae concerning human and veterinary medicine would have found their way into family books as well as cooking recipes, agricultural guidelines, calendars, astrological matters, observations regarding the temperaments, news, sermons, moral examples, poems, songs, novellas and even whole novels, travel accounts, memories, autobiographical writings. Many family books, especially those by socially higher-ranking authors focus on the origin of the clan, on the coats of arms of the various branches of the family and their agnates, in-laws and affiliates – here with special regard to godparenthood –, on documents and legal matters concerning the aristocratic status of the kin and the description of tournaments which they were therefore entitled to attend. Of overall importance, of course, is a painstaking rendering of the dates of birth, wedding and death of family members.

Considering this large variety of images and texts that would have been entered into family books, it is quite clear that neither can their origin be any longer ascribed to the context of bookkeeping exclusively nor is it easily possible to speak of a genre unless functionally. Both aspects have to be considered further. Firstly, function. I have only given examples from the 17th century, but what they also say in the context of the passages quoted can be taken as a main aspect for a general working definition of family book: The book is to be continued. As Füsli puts it: ‘Was hie angefangen ist, wöllind die nachkommende fleißig fortsetzen’ (‘What has been begun here, the progeny shall diligently continue’). Helfrich has the same thing in mind when he says that he writes ‘der gänzlichen Hoffnung, mein Erben und Nachkommen, denen Zu guten, ich gegenwertig Buch Zusammen getragen, werden solches ferner continuiren’, which is: ‘I write in the outright hope that my heirs and progeny, to whose benefit I have compiled this present book, will continue it further’.

In other words: It is a family book’s central function to be continued over and by generations to come. Making this a definition of genre helps indeed to narrow the corpus of manuscripts that might come into consideration and to delimit the theoretical scope of the term “family book” without abandoning its functional aspect, but indeed stressing it. If someone had in mind to start a family book by writing a family history or chronicle but no one did in fact continue it, then the character of such a manuscript would make it a family book by

intention but not in fact and function. Authorial intention does not suffice to make a text something the recipients might not have seen in the same way. Mere family histories, chronicles, autobiographies with references to ancestry – all those texts if they have just one author can be excluded from the material. It takes more than one contributor to make a family book.

If one conceives of the functional genre in this way the aspect of self-reflection also becomes more powerful and convincing. It is one thing to construe an intended readership i.e., progeny, it is one thing to be a text's addressee who may read it or may indeed not read it at all; but it is a different matter altogether to accept the role of addressee by enrolling in a book started by some ancestor and by continuing it as a second, third or even fourth author. In this case, enrolment and second authorship have to be seen as active participation by answering to an extant text, as self-reflection by means of intertextuality. It seems to me that this is a strong point for an approach to family books in the field of philology and literary studies as opposed to one informed by social history.

This takes me to the second aspect I have mentioned before, the question of the origin of family books and their link to bookkeeping. Of course it is undeniably true that there is some connection, as well with regard to the semantic field of the word 'account' as also historically. Many family books, especially if not exclusively, older ones touch on monetary matters. There are, however, other semantic fields that I would like to stress instead i.e., enrolment and intertextuality, both being acts of dialogue. Focusing on these, I am going to demonstrate that the emergence of the self and self-reflection are indeed informed not by numbers and figures but by texts.

The family book I will refer to comes from the first decades of the German tradition. It has four contributors. Konrad Beck, a citizen of the small town of Mengen in Baden-Württemberg, probably a physician, was born on October 16th, 1437, and died on July 22nd, 1512. His son of his first marriage, Hans Beck, born on the 10th of May, 1482, continued briefly. After his presumably early death his half-brother, Marcus Beck, took over. He was born on April 26th, 1491, in Mengen and died on the 20th of March, 1553. Marcus was a high-ranking court official in Vienna and had been ennobled by king Ferdinand. After his death, his son, Hieronymus Beck, continued to extend the family book. Hieronymus lived from October 8th, 1525, until November

28th, 1596; was a nobleman and a member of the imperial court in Vienna, serving the Hapsburgs like his father.

The family chronicle in its present shape covers 102 years continuously. It starts with an entry on the year 1469, when Konrad Beck records his first wedding, and only breaks off in 1571, with Hieronymus noting down the wedding of one of his nephews. The manuscript suffered a loss of pages at the end of the binding, so there is a strong probability that actually Hieronymus went much further in time.

Konrad Beck starts his autobiographical notes when he starts a family by getting married in 1469. He then concentrates on the births of his children, the death of his first wife and some relatives, his getting remarried. But being a pious man, he also tells about his pilgrimages and his endowment of a whole chapel and altar to the main church of Mengen, St Mary's. There are also remarks about important political events, about extraordinary constellations as well as weather anomalies and their effect on living costs. Prices and piety sit comfortably together in Konrad Beck's view of the world:

Item Anno domini 1483° Am sybenden tag apprilis bin ich Cunrat beck zu mengen vssgeritten gen jherusalem vff das hailig land vnd mit der hilff gotz An sant gallen anbet des selben jaars wyder haim gen mengen kommen vnd galt ain mas win ij dn vnd ain malter Rogken j lib vnd fesen j lib viij ß h.⁶

Also, anno domini 1483 on the 7th day of April I, Konrad Beck, rode out from Mengen towards Jerusalem to the Holy Land and with the help of god I came back home to Mengen on the eve of St Gall the same year and one measure of wine counted 2 pence and 1 mortar of rye 1 pound and spelt 1 pound 8 shillings.

Most probably Konrad was not a merchant, but prices and piety go well together as they are both essentials of everyday life. So here the figures of bookkeeping reverberate in the rendering of a man's life.

Figures do, however, almost completely vanish from the scene as the authority of writing is passed on to Konrad's son, Hans. Hans turns Konrad's autobiographical notes into a family chronicle and a family book by continuing the manuscript. He gives the birthdates of his three children and notes down the death of his father. After

⁶ Konrad Beck and others, [*Family book*], Klosterneuburg (Austria), monastic library of the Canons Regular of St Augustine, Cod. 747, fol. 127v.

Hans's obviously premature death the manuscript is passed on to his half-brother Marcus. He in turn recapitulates his birth and education and then focuses on family events as well as his career and the important political events of the time. In most of those he was personally involved by profession e.g., the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1529, when Marcus was appointed the city's 'Proviandmeister', chief of provisions. Eventually, after his death his son Hieronymus continues in the same vein. He gives figures only in the context of his selling off his house in the city and buying a dominion outside Vienna.

The content of the family chronicle, however, is of no further importance here. Instead of elaborating on it, I will sketch what the manuscript contains in its entirety. All in all, the book has the following structure:

1. A list of the children of Ferdinand I., Roman King, fol. 1v–2v
2. Medical formulae, fol. 3r–3v
3. A medical formula against the plague, fol. 4r
4. Medical formulae, fol. 4r–v
5. A recipe for treating sour beer, fol. 4v, bottom of page
6. A calender of the bishopric of Konstanz, fol. 5r–18v
7. Astronomical and astrological notes, fol. 18v–20v
8. An astrological treatise on the properties of the months and the seasons, fol. 21r–24va
9. A poem on the symbolism of colours, fol. 24vb
10. A medical formula against the plague, fol. 24vb
11. Rules for letting blood, fol. 25r–26va
12. On sleep, fol. 26vb–27va
13. Dietetic rules in German verse, fol. 27va–28ra
14. Dietetic rules, fol. 28rb–29va
15. Dietetic rules according to the months and the signs of the zodiac in German verse and the properties of the zodiac, fol. 29vb–32va
16. A benediction against wolves in German verse, fol. 32r, bottom of page
17. An ascetical text on Lent fast, fol. 32vb
18. An astrological treatise on the zodiac, fol. 33r–35v
19. Medication and dietetics according to the months, fol. 36r–v
20. Medical instructions on the use of baths, fol. 37r–va
21. Medical formulae against the plague, fol. 37va–b
22. Thüring von Ringoltingen's novel *Melusine*, fol. 38r–92vb

23. Boccaccio's novella *Griseldis* in Petrarch's version, in the German translation by Heinrich Steinhöwel, fol. 92vb–99va
24. Vacat fol. 99vb–100v
25. A book of sortition, fol. 101r–126r
26. A water benediction, fol. 102ra, bottom of page
27. The chronicle of the Beck family, fol. 92v, 126v–128v, 142r–153v
28. A sermon on the sacrament of matrimony, fol. 129r–133v
29. An ascetical treatise on Christian living, fol. 133v–134r
30. Vacat, fol. 134v
31. A treatise on the planets, fol. 135r–140r
32. A treatise on the stars, fol. 140r–v
33. A treatise on the temperaments, fol. 140v–142r

With the exception of numbers 1, 5, 16 and the family chronicle's parts, which were written by his sons and his grandson, the whole manuscript is in the hand of Konrad Beck. The chronicle itself is not written in one piece, but both fills some empty space between the older texts and frames them. So why is it in this book? Surely, Konrad who went on several pilgrimages to France, Rome and the Holy Land – extremely pricey endeavours – and who even managed to make the endowment of a chapel and an altar to the main church of Mengen would have had the money to buy another empty book had he chosen to do so. This is not a mere assumption but something that can be proved.

When Konrad went on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1483, he wrote a “Pilgerbuch”, a travel account⁷. For this, he bought Italian paper⁸ on location. Due to the much smaller format (20.2 × 14 cm) than the one he used for his other manuscript (30 × 21 cm) he could not have both manuscripts bound together and he had no wish to do so anyway, as I will show. We do not know how the “Pilgerbuch” was preserved from the beginning, but it was his grandson, Hieronymus Beck, who com-

⁷ Konrad Beck, [*Book on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, 1483*], Kalocsa (Hungary), Cathedral Library, Ms. 384; for a description a of the manuscript cf. Vizkelety A., *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der altdeutschen Handschriften in ungarischen Bibliotheken*, vol. II (Wiesbaden: 1973) 216–217. An edition is also available, cf. Beck Konrád *zarándokkönyve a XV. századból*. Ismerteti és kiadja Szegzárdi József [Konrad Beck, *Pilgerbuch aus dem 15. Jahrhundert*. Described and ed. by József Szegzárdi.] (Budapest: 1916).

⁸ As can be seen from the watermarks, the paper dates from 1480–1482 and comes from either Italy or maybe Rhodes; cf. Vizkelety. My edition of both the family book and the pilgrimage is forthcoming.

missioned the binding as we find it today. In an addition he made to the small volume he wrote: 'Hieronymus Beck a Leopoldsdorf Marci filius aui suy Itinerarium sua manu scriptum in librum hunc conligare fecit' ('Hieronymus Beck of Leopoldsdorf, the son of Markus, had his grandfather's travel account, written in his own hand, bound up in this book'). The front cover is hollowed out on the inner side and a sheet of selenite, which at the time was often used for reliquaries, seals the cavity. Within this cavity there is a fold of paper with an inscription reading 'Cunrat becken bart von Jherusalem anno 1483' 'Konrad Beck's beard from Jerusalem anno 1483'). As Hieronymus stated, it was him who had the beard repositied there ('illiusque Barbam huc repositit'). There is no indication as to why Konrad would have wished to preserve his beard (was it a vow?) but there is an explanation why he wanted a seperate manuscript about his pilgrimage. At the end of his additional text to the volume, Hieronymus wrote:

*Illustris generosus et magnificus vir Dominus Joannes Truchses de Waldburg Junior deuota peregrinatione 1483. XII. July Hierosolimam uenit, et secum habuit Conradum Beck de mengen Joannis filium, Petrum coquum de Waldse et Vlricum pictorem familiares et famulos suos.*⁹

The illustrious, noble and magnificent man Lord Johannes Truchses of Waldburg the Younger went on a pious pilgrimage to Jerusalem on July 12th, 1483, and he had with him Konrad Beck from Mengen the son of Johannes, Peter Koch from Waldsee and Ulrich Maler his intimates and servants.

The double plural of 'familiares' and 'famulos' suggests that all three men named here are referred to by both terms. Both 'familiaris' and 'famulus' are derived from the Latin word 'familia', meaning 'household' and comprising relatives and servants. If in Hieronymus's and certainly Konrad's perspective Konrad was a member of a nobleman's household in whose service he went to Jerusalem, he would have been in no position to enter the full account of the journey into his own manuscript (although he mentioned it briefly, see quote above). An aristocrat defined the pilgrimage party; his household ('familia') was the social group Konrad functionally belonged to for the time of the travel.

When Konrad, however, was writing on his own behalf and in his own authority he could put all kinds of texts into one book. So, in the case of his small manuscript library, he decided to use its empty

⁹ Quoted after Vizkelety 217.

page-space to note down what he had done on his own accord. He decided to fill the remaining pages of his book of texts, which he had collected from elsewhere, with his text on his life, thus creating a special form of intertextuality.

Konrad's life opens with his first wedding, which tellingly enough is given after the book of sortition and before the sermon on the sacrament of matrimony. In this space the rest of Konrad's lifetime and Hans's short entries are also to be found, making intertexts in the most literal sense of the word. The chronicle resumes with Marcus's and Hieronymus's records after the treatise on temperaments. There is, however, one more specific feature of this manuscript that is of the utmost importance. I am referring to the emergence of Konrad's self in the book, which occurs in another place and a context other than that of the family chronicle.

At the end of the *Melusine* novel, on fol. 92v, filling the space of the whole column b, Konrad enters a couple of remarks which I here present in their entirety. Closing a gap between two other texts and mediating between them, the passage in itself is a genuine intertext. He first rhymes: 'Hie hat dis buch ain end ξ Gott vns sinen göttlichen ξ frid vnd genad send' ('here this book ends, god send us his divine peace and grace'). He then switches to Latin, dating the text: 'Anno domini M^occcc^olxvij^o ξ jn vigilia epiphanye Hora ξ vesperarum per me Cunra- ξ dum beckum tunc temporis jn mengen' ('in the year 1467 on the eve of epiphany at night by me Konrad Beck at the time in Mengen'). So, for the first time there is a grammatical 'I', a rudimentary self. It depends, however, on a preposition ('per me') and still lacks a verb as the sentence is an ellipsis; it is, strictly speaking, not doing anything, it is a mere presence, a function of the copy-text.

But then, reverting to German, Konrad says: 'Jtem jn dem jar vff sant gallen ξ tag 67^o wird ich cunratt ξ beck dreyszig jar alt' ('also, this year on the day of St Gall, I, Konrad Beck, will be thirty years old'). Saying this, Konrad ascertains his self by separating it from the scribal function indicated in the sentence before; he exclusively talks about himself. Subsequently, he affirms this newly-gained self by tying it on to the Supreme Being, adding the liturgical formulae 'Te deum laudamus ξ Deo gracias' ('God we praise Thee, Thanks be God'). Finally, he announces another piece of text: 'Dis hernachgescriben ist ξ ain epistel francisci petrach. ξ von grosser stättigkait ainer ξ frawen grissel gehaissen' ('that written hereafter is an epistle by Francis Petrarch, on

great steadiness of a woman called Griseldis'). On the next page follows the text of Petrarch's *Griseldis*.¹⁰

So this passage is an intertext.¹¹ It bridges the gap between two texts that were not Konrad's own.¹² The novel *Melusine* tells the founding history of the French noble house of Lusignan, and the novella *Griseldis* is an exemplum exposing the moral strength of a woman whose husband puts her virtue to a series of rather nasty tests. Both texts deal with family business, and no mistake.¹³ In the narrow space between these texts and two years before Konrad took up documenting his own life when he started a family, there is his self. It is reflected intertextually in the foreign texts and emerges in the act of copying these texts into what was to grow into a family book. It may seem as quite conventional that a scribe should give his name at the end of a fair copy he has just accomplished, especially when the text is in the vernacular and the *explicit* is in Latin. In 1467, writing was still a feature of erudition. But quite uninvited by scribal conventions there is suddenly Konrad Beck, speaking German again, giving his age and birthday, saying 'I, Konrad Beck'.

¹⁰ Its *explicit* on fol. 99va reads: 'Anno 1478 ward dis geschriben von cunratt becken' ('anno 1478 this was written by Konrad Beck'). It seems plausible that the *incipit* of the *Griseldis* as quoted above ('Dis hernachgeschriben ist ξ ain epistel francisci petrach. ξ von grosser stättigkait ainer ξ frawen grissel gehaissen') was added eleven years later than the passage that precedes it (where Konrad's self emerges); the *incipit* is set off from the preceding passage by a much larger space than that between the other lines.

¹¹ There is one more instance in the manuscript where a short note mediates between two texts: on fol. 26va it says 'Hie nach merck das regiment von dem schlauffe' ('here-after note the rules on sleep'). Neither this sentence nor the *incipit* of the *Griseldis* (cf. note 10) do have a grammatical 'I' and they certainly do not constitute a self; I should like to regard them as texts of transition instead of intertexts.

¹² When Konrad copied the *Melusine*, it had not yet gone to print (first edition: Basle 1474); cf. Thüring von Ringoltingen, *Melusine* (1456). Nach dem Erstdruck Basel: Richel, um 1473/74 ed. by André Schnyder in Verbindung mit Ursula Rautenberg, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: 2006). When he added the *Griseldis* in 1478, it was already available in print (first edition Augsburg: 1471); cf. Hess U., *Heinrich Steinhöwels 'Griseldis'. Studien zur Text- und Überlieferungsgeschichte einer frühhumanistischen Prosanovelle* (Munich: 1975).

¹³ Tellingly enough, the *Melusine* manuscript (1478) preserved at St Gallen Canton Library, VaDSlg Ms. 454, contains family matters by the copyist Hans Wissach from St Gallen; cf. Scherer G., *Verzeichniss der Manuscripte und Incunabeln der Vadianischen Bibliothek in St. Gallen* (St. Gallen: 1864; repr. Hildesheim – New York: 1976) 130.

The self emerges from text, not from figures; it is generated by texts and reflects itself in the act of copying. *Exscribo ergo sum*, I copy, therefore I am. Thus, the self emerges not autonomously but in an attempt to affiliate with something beyond itself. In so doing the self enrolls in and becomes part of, discourses that come from elsewhere, in Konrad's case the discourses of genealogy and family responsibilities. This, however, gives rise to an independent self by starting an inter-textual dialogue. It is only from here, from the evolvment if Konrad's self that he launched out into noting down his life. Copying others means interaction; it may tell you who you are. Copying others' texts may give rise to the self.

Meditation as a practice of writing

Meditation is not confined to or defined by religious matters.¹⁴ Not even the most outstanding theologians of the Middle Ages would have seen it that way. As e.g. Hugh of St Victor wrote: '*Meditatio est assidua et sagax retractatio cogitationis, aliquid, vel involutum explicare nitens, vel scrutans, penetrare occultum*' (meditation is the assiduous and sagacious revision of cogitation; [it seeks] to explain something splendid which is hard to understand and, searching, to penetrate the hidden).¹⁵ Here, Hugo obviously sees 'cogitatio' as transient, as something that must be revised by meditation. Consequently, in another text he defines the term by an attribute and an object in order to make it compatible to meditation:

*Meditatio est cogitatio frequens cum consilio, quae causam et originem, modum et utilitatem uniuscuiusque rei prudenter investigat. meditatio principium sumit a lectione [...]. [...] tria sunt genera meditationis. unum constat in circumspectione morum [...].*¹⁶

Meditation is frequent thinking with an intention, which investigates the cause and origin, the mode and usefulness of every matter in an astute

¹⁴ On the matter of meditation a vast number of studies has been published. Out of the numerous books I can only quote some examples: Martz L.L., *The Poetry of Meditation* (Yale: 1976); Erdei K., *Auf dem Wege zu sich selbst. Die Meditation im 16. Jahrhundert. Eine funktionsanalytische Gattungsbeschreibung* (Wiesbaden: 1990); Kurz, G. (ed.), *Meditation und Erinnerung in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen: 2000).

¹⁵ Hugh of St Victor, *In Ecclesiasten homiliae XIX 1*, in *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 175, col. 116D–117A.

¹⁶ Hugh of St Victor, *Didascalicon III 10*, in *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 176, col. 772.

way. Meditation sets out from reading [...]. [...] There are three kinds of meditation. One consists in the survey of customs [...].

To put it in a nutshell: to Hugo, meditation is systematic thinking, it starts from reading and it can be applied to secular matters. – Looking for a definition of ‘meditation’ that takes Konrad and his offsprings’ time into consideration, a glance at Johann Heinrich Zedler’s encyclopaedia¹⁷ is useful as it provides a kind of “summa” of early modern knowledge. The entry on meditation¹⁸ to be found there is much in the same vein as Hugo’s definition, not restricting meditation to religious practice. Meditation ‘ist die Bemühung der gesunden Vernunft, da man die Wahrheit zu erkennen sucht. [...] Die Meditation ist nichts anders, als eine practische Logick [...]’ (‘meditation is the effort of healthy reason when one seeks to uncover the truth. [...] Meditation is but a practical logic [...]').¹⁹ As meditation is equated with logic, it is only consequent that Zedler’s encyclopaedia links the term up to an article on “Methode (Meditations-)”.²⁰ Here it says: ‘Methode (Meditations-) *Methodus inventionis, Methodus meditandi*, wird diejenige Ordnung genennet, nach welcher man die Wahrheiten beydes erfindet als beurtheilet [...]’ (‘meditational method is called that order according to which truths are both found and judged [...]').²¹

Both Hugo’s definition and the one given in Zedler’s encyclopaedia focus on two facts: meditation is an effort of the mind to uncover hidden things or truths and it is not confined to religious practices or matters. Meditation in itself, therefore, is not a discourse if a discourse requires two things: an authorised speaking-instance and a specific semantic field pertaining to the subject and creating it at the same time. Meditation does not have a semantic field of its own – at least not in the Middle Ages or in early modern times²² – but it is applicable to anything. Meditation does not have a substance but instead, it is a process of investigating.

¹⁷ *Grosses vollständiges Universal Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste*. 68 vols. (Leipzig, Johann Heinrich Zedler: 1732–1754).

¹⁸ “Meditation”, *ibid.*, vol. 20, cols. 132–136.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, col. 132.

²⁰ “Methode (Meditations-)”, *ibid.*, cols. 1298–1301.

²¹ *Ibid.*, col. 1298.

²² When meditation is conceived of in terms of psychology, which is only possible after its invention in the 18th century, it does develop a semantic field of its own and may in this respect be called a discourse.

Can the results found in this short enquiry be applied to Konrad and the family book he and his progeny created? I do think so. According to Hugo of St Victor, the starting point of meditation is 'lectio', reading, something every scribe, copyist or author has to do as well, and when it comes to a survey of customs, noting down one's life – as Konrad and his offsprings did – is certainly compatible with Hugo's definition. It may be more than coincidental that also in the concepts of the 'devotio moderna', which was in full swing at Konrad's times, copying and making excerpts are seen as acts of spiritual preparation.²³

But what about the central point of the definitions I have quoted, i.e. the regulated uncovering of truths? All early modern family books represent social networks in writing. They do so by establishing a writer's "I" as a part of a specific social community. They objectify this "I", i.e. they distinguish a person as being different from any other member of that community by representing his or her social interaction within the community. For the respective author, the truth to be found in the act of writing a family book is defining one's social standing and in so doing creating a self²⁴ – a self, it has to be stressed, that depends on its social ties and is in no position to establish itself autonomously.

Representing one's family and its tradition in writing was an important thing in early modern times since everyone's position in life strictly depended on their social affiliations. When it comes to family books, meditation is a practice of writing. It is a regulated (writing periodically and according to the rules of genre) and progressing act (the advancement through a lifetime, the advancement of one's social affiliations and position). Writing a family book equals a 'circumspectio morum' (Hugo), a survey of customs or ambience (as the Latin term 'mos' can also be translated). The result of this meditation – as it deals with matters other than religion – is not gnosis but the rising awareness of the self.

The grammatical value of 'rising' suggests a process and indeed it takes time for a self to evolve. In Konrad Beck's case, an "I" was triggered by his copying into his collection of texts a novel about the origin of a family. This novel, *Melusine* is followed in the manuscript by

²³ Cf. the paper by Nikolaus Staubach in this volume. It is not known, however, if Konrad Beck had any affiliations with or inclinations towards the *Devotio moderna*.

²⁴ For the reader – by the writer's intention a member of the family – the same thing holds true. A family book would equally uncover his or her position in life and provide social and maybe moral guidance.

the copy of a novella, *Griseldis*, which deals with the moral standing of a woman put to test by her husband. The two texts are the only ones pertaining to family matters. But the rest of Konrad's collection is a reflexion of his professional personality as a physician, and in their combination both thematic fields (professional *persona* and family) prompted Konrad the copyist to evolve into Konrad the chronicler of his life. His sons and his grandson subsequently copied not Konrad's texts but his meditational approach in establishing their lives in writing. Thus, even copying may give rise to the self.

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II. RELIGIOUS MEDITATION IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN THEOLOGY

ACCOMPLISHING ONE'S ESSENCE: THE ROLE OF MEDITATION IN THE THEOLOGY OF GABRIEL BIEL

Diana Stanciu

As a late and partial synthesiser of the 'devotio moderna' mysticism,¹ Gabriel Biel² definitely ascribes a certain role to meditation especially in his *Canonis missae expositio* (1488), but also in his *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* (1501). Generally, he identifies it either simply as 'meditatio' or under different other names, such as 'cogitatio' (reflection), 'ruminatio' (chewing, thinking over), 'masticatio' (chewing), 'in mentem reductio' (restoring in the mind) or 're-cogitatio' (recollection, reflection).³ Even if he does not give it a specific definition, Biel considers meditation as well as prayer and contemplation spiritual exercises performed under the aid of divine grace and proving their efficacy through the inner change of the human being towards a complete union with God.⁴ In this, he follows Gerson's idea that meditation is a kind of concentration or re-collection of one's own spiritual capacities ('colligat se in unum mens nostra')⁵ through memory and especially through the memory of Christ's passion ('rememorando meditari') in order to free oneself from the

¹ More on the *devotio moderna* and mysticism in Metz D., *Gabriel Biel und die Mystik* (Stuttgart: 2001) 49–50.

² On Biel's life and writings in general, see Ernst W., *Gott und Mensch am Vorabend der Reformation: Eine Untersuchung zur Moralphilosophie und Theologie bei Gabriel Biel*, Erfurter Theologische Studien 28 (Leipzig: 1972), esp. 5–56. See also Oberman H.A., *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, MA: 1963) 9–30, and the secondary literature mentioned in Van Geest P., "The Interiorisation of the Spirituality of the Modern Devotion by Gabriel Biel (+ 1495). Preconditions and Outlines", *Augustiniana* 51 (2001) 183–223.

³ Biel G., *Canonis Missae Expositio*, eds. H.A. Oberman and W.J. Courtenay, 4 vols. (Wiesbaden: 1963–1967) 86 I 25–58 (IV 130–131); 86 S 6–12 (IV 140).

⁴ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 57 A 15–23 (II 392); Biel G., *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum*, eds. W. Werbeck and U. Hofmann, 4 vols. (Tübingen: 1973–1984) IV d. 16, q. 2, D 1–16 (IV, 2 361); cf. Metz, *Gabriel Biel* 112, 115, 117.

⁵ Gerson, J. "De modo orandi", in *Oeuvres complètes*, trad. and ed. P. Glorieux, 12 vols. (Paris and Tournai: 1960–1974) vol. II 174; more on Gerson's influence on Biel in this sense in Van Geest P., "Gabriel Biel, Brother of the Common Life and Alter Augustinus? Aim and Meaning of his *Tractatus de vita communi clericorum*", *Augustiniana* 58 (2008) 305–357; esp. 302–304.

externals and ascend to God ('elevatio').⁶ However, while this process is for Gerson rather a volitional, affective⁷ one ('de meditatione cordis'), the heart being for him the centre of conscience, for Biel it is rather the intellective functions of the soul that are at work. His 'synderesis' (or 'apex mentis' – the apex of the mind)⁸ seems to be a possible place of mystic contact with God and that is achieved through reason ('synderesis' is also defined as the 'scintilla rationis' – the sparkle of reason), by means of a certain structuring of the mind,⁹ which is actually triggered by meditation. But that should be placed in a wider context of Biel's thought, pointing out the possible connections or fractures between his Nominalist stand,¹⁰ where 'synderesis' is directed towards salvation, being also the human basis for an ethical life for humans doing what pertains to their essence ('facere quod in se est'),¹¹ and his mystic elements, where 'synderesis' is the place ('locus') for the soul's unmediated contact with God.¹² Thus, meditation could be the bridge between these two strands of thought in Biel or it may differ according to its use in each of them. The preliminary assumption of the present article is that, under the influence of William Ockham, meditation can be in fact identified with the 'facere quod in se est' (doing what pertains to one's essence) at the intellectual level towards accomplishing one's essence at a mystic or, generally, spiritual level. The ultimate goal would be to prove that, in this respect, meditation

⁶ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 50 M 1–2 (II 281).

⁷ See also Van Geest P., "Aquinas or Augustine? On the sources of Gabriel Biel's *Canonis Missae Expositio*", *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity* 11 (2007) 73–95; esp. 89–92.

⁸ More in general on the concept of *synderesis* in Renz O., *Die Synteresis nach dem hl. Thomas von Aquin*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* 10,1/2 (Münster: 1911).

⁹ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 39, q. u., F 14–15 (II, 661).

¹⁰ On the connections or rather fractures between the *via moderna* and the *devotio moderna* in Gabriel Biel, see Van Geest, "Aquinas or Augustine" 73–95 and idem, "Das Niemandsland zwischen *Via moderna* und *Devotio moderna*. Der Status quaestionis der Gabriel-Biel-Forschung", *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis / Dutch Review of Church History* 80 (2000) 157–192. On the *via moderna*, see also Farthing J.L., *Thomas Aquinas and Gabriel Biel: Interpretations of St. Thomas Aquinas in German Nominalism on the Eve of the Reformation*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 9 (Durham – London: 1988) 1–9.

¹¹ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 27, q. u., K 1–9 (II, 517).

¹² Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 3, q. 10, A 14–15 (I, 255); H 4–6 (I, 258).

was indeed important in Biel's theology in spite of not being clearly defined by him and of not being much taken into account in present scholarship.

Nominalism, 'devotio moderna' and mysticism – Gabriel Biel's views on meditation rather neglected in the existing scholarly discussion

Biel's mysticism is not much mentioned in the secondary literature.¹³ And even less is imparted on his view regarding meditation. It is briefly mentioned by Oberman,¹⁴ who is interested nonetheless primarily in Biel's Nominalist views and, within this context, concentrates on the interplay between divine grace and human capacities without a specific emphasis on meditation. More is to be found in the work of Metz,¹⁵ but again meditation is just briefly mentioned among other possible aspects of mysticism in Biel. Even less is to be found in other important studies on Biel such as that of Picascia,¹⁶ which concentrates again on the relationship between Biel and Nominalism with specific attention paid to the influence of Ockham, or those of Van Geest,¹⁷ focused on the relationship between the 'via moderna' and the 'devotio moderna' or on Biel's sources.

Biel's work being so much connected in the scholarly discussion with Nominalism on one side and with the 'devotio moderna' on the other side, this apparent lack of interest in Biel's views on mysticism in general and on meditation in particular may be partly attributed to the common presupposition that Nominalism¹⁸ and mysticism must be mutually exclusive.¹⁹ At least that was the hypothesis of many scholars who identified Nominalism with empiricism and mysticism with

¹³ Exceptions are Vogelsang, Damerau, Oberman and Metz. For a short, but detailed presentation of their views, see Metz, *Gabriel Biel* 32–35.

¹⁴ Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*.

¹⁵ Metz, *Gabriel Biel*.

¹⁶ Picascia M.L., *Un occamista quattrocentesco: Gabriel Biel*, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Pavia 23 (Florence: 1979).

¹⁷ Van Geest, "The Interiorisation of the Spirituality"; idem, "Aquinas or Augustine?"; idem, "Das Niemandsland".

¹⁸ More on Nominalism in Vignaux P., *Nominalisme au XIV^e siècle*, Conférence Albert-le-Grand 1948 (Montreal – Paris: 1948).

¹⁹ See more explanations on that in Ozmet, Courtenay and Grosse, quoted in Metz, *Gabriel Biel* 35–37. Cf. also Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 323–361.

idealism.²⁰ Especially in the first half of the twentieth century, mysticism was still being discussed according to the position of Thomas Aquinas,²¹ in terms of the intuitive knowledge of transcendental reality.²² Consequently, the goal of mysticism or generally of contemplative life was considered to be the vision of God understood as the ultimate truth.²³ Since the Nominalists insisted that the intuitive knowledge of God was strictly the prerogative of the blessed ('beati'),²⁴ the only exceptions being Christ and Paul, such a definition of mysticism excluded indeed any assumption of a Nominalist type of mysticism. The Nominalists defined the 'comprehensor' (the one who knows or understands) (or 'beatus' – blessed) and the 'viator' (the wayfarer) in contrast to each other. The 'comprehensor' was Christ, who always had the intuitive knowledge ('notitia intuitiva') of God, while the 'viator' was the one who was neither blessed nor damned and did not have such a knowledge.²⁵ For instance, regarding the proposition 'God is three and one', the 'viator' would not be capable of knowing it intuitively and would have simply to believe it while the 'comprehensor' would have the intuitive knowledge, which is evident and experimental, of this proposition.²⁶ Thus, if one defines mysticism as intuitive knowledge of transcendental reality, a Nominalist mysticism is indeed a contradiction in terms.

However, there are scholars referring to a difference between speculative and affective mysticism²⁷ that would not render Nominalism and mysticism as mutually exclusive anymore. The work of Jean Gerson is most often and with enough reasons cited in this respect.²⁸ For instance, Gerson insists that the highest truth attainable by the 'viator' is the knowledge of what God revealed to the humans, the knowledge

²⁰ For instance, Seeberg, cited in Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 327.

²¹ More on Biel and Aquinas in Van Geest, "Aquinas or Augustine" 76–86.

²² Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 328.

²³ Aquinas T., *Summa theologiae*, ed. P. Caramello (text of the Leonina edition) (Turin: 1952–1956) IIaIIae q. 180 art. 3 ad 1.

²⁴ On the relationship between Biel's theology and his logic, see Schrama M., *Gabriel Biel en zijn leer over de allerheiligste driegvuldigheid volgens het eerste boek van zijn Collectorium* (Munich: 1981) 22–50.

²⁵ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* Pr., q. 1, A 10–16 (I, 8–9); cf. also Picascia, *Un occamista quattrocentesco* 43–59.

²⁶ Cf. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 77.

²⁷ Cf. Metz, *Gabriel Biel* 79; Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 330–331.

²⁸ For more on Gerson's mysticism, see Combes A., *La théologie mystique de Gerson: profil de son évolution*, *Spiritualitas* 1–2 (1963–1965).

of the faithful, resting on the authority of the Church and of the Holy Scripture,²⁹ and that at the point where human reason finds its limitations, the soul is united with God in love, not through the conformity of the intellect, but through the conformity of the will with God.³⁰ Thus, if one accepts Gerson's description of mysticism as an outreach of the soul to a union with God through the desire of love,³¹ which resides not in the intellective but in the affective power of the soul and has not the 'verum' (truth) but the 'bonum' (good) as its object, one can speak of an affective type of mysticism which in Nominalist circles may have replaced speculative mysticism.³²

Such explanations do not help much in the case of Gabriel Biel though. His mysticism, if one can speak of that at all, is not at all 'affective' or at least not only 'affective', but 'intellective' as well and the ambiguity caused by that seems quite difficult to solve. Moreover, for Biel, Gerson was indeed a great systematic and mystical authority whom he honoured and quoted, not only from his university lectern in Tübingen, but also from his pulpit at the Cathedral of Mainz, and Gerson's mysticism is often an important source for him. But scholars also suggest that Gerson's own relationship with Nominalism was rather complex and contradictory sometimes: either, driven by his mystical insights, Gerson broke away from the Nominalism of his teacher d'Ailly or, deceived by his Nominalist concepts, he rejected mysticism as such.³³ Then, Gerson's late mysticism was hardly compatible with the philosophy of Ockham.³⁴ On the other side, Gerson criticized the followers of Scotus for deserting Bonaventure and here he was a true disciple of d'Ailly and Ockham.³⁵

²⁹ Gerson, "De simplificatione cordis" in *Oeuvres complètes* vol. III 461 D.

³⁰ Gerson, "De mystica theologia speculativa" Cons. 39 O, in *Oeuvres complètes* vol. III 393 C.

³¹ Gerson, "De mystica theologia speculativa" Cons. 28 E, in *Oeuvres complètes* vol. III 384 B.

³² Cf. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 331; more on Gerson's Nominalism and the influence of Ockham on Biel in Metz, *Gabriel Biel* 32–35; see also Boehner P., "The Realistic Conceptualism of William Ockham", in *Collected Articles on Ockham*, ed. E. Buytaert, Franciscan Institute Publications, Philosophy 12, gen. ed. Allan B. Wolter (New York – Louvain: 1958) 156–174.

³³ For details on that, see Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 332–334.

³⁴ Cf. André Combes, *Essai sur la critique de Ruysbroeck par Gerson* 3.1 (Paris, 1959) 316–317.

³⁵ Cf. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 334.

In any case, the common opinion is that Biel did not write any treatise on mystical theology³⁶ and that his mysticism is not identical with the one encountered in Gerson even if he was indeed influenced by it. Overall, there seems to be no mystical theology as such in Biel, but rather mystical elements in his theology. And the most that many scholars assert about these mystical elements is that Biel somehow ‘democratized mysticism’³⁷ when he implied that every Christian in a state of grace is in a state of perfection. However, that does not prevent him from emphasizing the special union granted in this life to the spiritually accomplished. And since the image that humans can have of God is far from perfect and, apart from the beatific vision or some special revelation, there are only two options for the ‘viator’ to have adequate knowledge of God: by faith and by contemplation. These two options correspond to two forms of God’s presence: the first, to God’s presence in others since God has made himself known by revelation and inspiration to some, on whose authority the others count; the second, to God’s presence in the effects of his own acts of creation. This second option excels insofar as one senses more clearly the presence of God’s grace and insofar as one learns better how to perceive God through his creatures.³⁸

Thus, the Nominalist ‘epistemology of the viator’ suggests that while the viator can have experimental, intuitive and indirect, abstract knowledge of the world in which he lives,³⁹ his natural knowledge of God is certainly deficient.⁴⁰ Since the intuitive knowledge of God is only possible for the ‘comprehensor’ and not for the ‘viator’, the importance of God’s revelation is certainly emphasised. However, Biel seems to have transcended the contrasts between Nominalism and mysticism and between empiricism and idealism with the help of Aristotle and especially with the help of his concepts of formal and efficient cause applied when rendering different views on meditation. Here Biel seems to have

³⁶ See Picascia, *Un occamista quattrocentesco* 21–37 on ‘the three ways of theology’ in Gabriel Biel, in which theology as ‘science’, starting from the scriptural fundamentals, with a sapiential approach, mixes with the respect for tradition and for the *auctoritates* and also with mystical elements leading to the *cognitio Dei* and approximation of the mystical union with God.

³⁷ Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 340–346.

³⁸ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 23, q. 1, G 12–14 (II 468).

³⁹ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* Pr., q. 1, K 29–30 (I 20).

⁴⁰ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* Pr., q. 1, K 32–33 (I 21).

been able to put the old Scholastic⁴¹ tradition at work, but one may still wonder whether meditation as he understands it has any relevance at all in the given context, whether it may contribute to the knowledge of the divine at all or whether that is indeed a legitimate question to be asked regarding Biel's work. Nevertheless, for the moment there are still a few more operational distinctions to be made.

*Operational distinctions which are relevant for Biel's views
on meditation*

Biel differentiates between the higher and the lower part of the intellectual soul, the higher part being concerned with incomprehensible eternal objects and the lower part with temporal objects, about which judgments have to be made.⁴² When one understands the higher part in the strict sense, its field of operation is limited to eternal objects. But understood in a larger sense, it refers to all considerations and judgments regarding temporal objects made according to eternal law. The lower part deals with created objects according to natural law. The human rational soul is thus the meeting-ground of eternal law and of natural law, which are to be distinguished, not as two different, unrelated, arbitrary sets of law, but according to their different fields of operation. Under such conditions, when properly disposed and prepared (eventually through meditation), the human rational soul can have access to eternal objects and even be united with God.

However, despite Biel's assumption of the simplicity and unity of the soul, some operational distinctions play an important part in his understanding of humans, of their existence and of their relationship with the divine. For instance, in his *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum*, Biel explains that, conventionally, one can identify the heart ('cor') with the will, which leads all the other parts of the human being as the heart sends an influx to the whole body, the mind ('mens') with the intellect, which means cognition ('cognitio') and memory ('memoria'), the soul ('anima') with the sensitive part ('vis sensitiva'),

⁴¹ On Biel as one of the last Scholastics, see Van Geest, "Gabriel Biel, Brother of the Common Life" 323.

⁴² Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 24, q. u., A 9–14 (II 472); cf. Augustine, *De trinitate* XII, 2,3.

which gives life, according to the common view upon what life means, and the fortitude (or strength) with the motility ('vis motiva').⁴³

The mind, the heart and the soul in meditation – the context of the Eucharist and of the 'lectio divina'

In spite of these distinctions, in some parts of his work, Biel seems to maintain a certain ambiguity regarding the concepts of mind ('mens'), soul ('anima') and heart ('cor') and that certainly has a bearing on his views on meditation. Therefore, when 'mind' is used in the sense of 'rational thinking', meditation may seem to mean just the action of thinking ('cogitatio'), of exercising human reason due to the humans' own effort even if this effort is also elicited by divine grace. Since meditation can be triggered by the memory of Christ's passion during the Mass⁴⁴ and also by the wonders of creation, reason is again exalted and cognition emphasised alongside faith and no 'affective path' is yet specified.⁴⁵ Meditation can also start from the reading, understanding and interiorizing of the sacred Scriptures since they help human mind intentionally and completely tend towards God, out of an act of both the intellect and this time also of the will,⁴⁶ the 'affective path' being now already at work. Thus, continuing the tradition of the 'lectio divina', Biel insists that the Scriptures have to be not only read, but thought upon, their meaning weighed and carefully considered ('legi', 'exponi', 'masticari', 'investigari', 'doctrinaliter disputari') in order to be better understood and thus rendered efficacious particularly for

⁴³ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* III d. 27, q.u., H 20–26 (III 491): 'Potest tamen convenientius per cor intelligi voluntas, quae aliis omnibus imperat, sicut cor omnibus membris vitae influxum communicat; per mentem intellectus, ubi est cognitio et memoria, unde mentis dicitur nomen; per animam vis sensitiva, nam vivificat, et in sensibilibus primo vita (secundum vulgi vitae acceptionem) apparet, unde ab anima 'animal' dicitur, quod nomen est adaequatum omnium sensitivam potentiam habentium; per fortitudinem seu virtutem vis motiva corporalium membrorum ad opera exsequenda'.

⁴⁴ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 50 M 1–2 (II 281): 'in elevatione et ostensione huius vivifici sacramenti rememorando meditari'; cf. also 50 M 7–8 (II 281): 'Meditetur insuper in sacramenti elevatione Christi in crucis patibulo igno minosam elevationem qua inter iniquos et latrones suspensus'.

⁴⁵ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 53 Y 13–15 (II 334): 'Ps. 110.4: Fecit Dominus memoriam mirabilium suorum, per quae sursum tollitur ratio ad meditandum summam ac immensam dei potentiam per fidem et cognitionem'.

⁴⁶ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 49 G 27–30 (II 256).

stronger devotion ('ad maiorem devotionem') and generally for virtuous and meritorious life ('virtuosae et meritoriae') the will of the reader being also important in this sense.⁴⁷

In general, as already suggested by some of the terms mentioned above, the meaning of meditation is rather complex in the work of Gabriel Biel. Especially when associated with the Eucharist, meditation is by far much more than just dissociative, rational thinking. Beyond the generalization and abstractization processes implied by the 'cogitatio', the mind is sometimes even identified with the entire soul and meditation is rather a kind of 'gathering of the mind' in the sense of liberating it from the multitude of worldly interests.⁴⁸ One meditates in order to extract one's mind from the realm of the inferior ('ab inferioribus abstrahatur') in order to reach the superior, the divine ('ut superioribus et divinis iungi possit').⁴⁹ Consequently, assiduous meditation, using the aid of memory,⁵⁰ would help the person understand how vain and unstable the world is, how worthy of contempt and not of being strived for.⁵¹ As a result, when illuminated by the 'bread of comprehension' ('pane intelligentiae illuminatis') of the word of God heard, read, inspired, meditated upon or contemplated upon during the Eucharist,⁵² one can be finally oriented towards one's own essence. That can ultimately lead to the elevation of the mind ('elevatio mentis in deum')⁵³ and to the participation in the divine ('divinos fecit et participes divinitatis')⁵⁴ since God responds to every act rationally disposed towards him ('omni actu in deum rationabiliter ordinato deus colitur').⁵⁵ In view of such elevation of the mind towards God, meditation and prayer have the special power of restoring, of repairing the mind ('specialis refectio mentis')⁵⁶ while the Eucharist has the power of restoring the whole human spirit ('refectio spiritualis').⁵⁷

⁴⁷ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 15 E 23–27 (I 124).

⁴⁸ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 86 A 39–54 (IV 120).

⁴⁹ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 66 M 24–24 (III 89).

⁵⁰ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 19 K 1–5 (I 170–171) citing Alexander of Hales.

⁵¹ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 67 G 21–23 (III 102–103).

⁵² Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 71 G 1–4 (III 179) and 71 I 34–36 (III 182).

⁵³ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 47 G 9–18 (II 216).

⁵⁴ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 35 X 22–24 (II 36).

⁵⁵ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 49 F 23 (II 255).

⁵⁶ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 62 K 28–29 (III 31), quoting Hugh of St. Victor, *De modo orandi*, chapter 1, PL 176, 979 B. Also to be found in Aquinas, cf. Van Geest, "Aquinas or Augustine" 86.

⁵⁷ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 52 E 1–3 (II 302).

Elsewhere Biel states though that meditation is important also for the preparation of the heart ('praeparatio cordis') and not only of the mind or soul, and not only for the participation in the sacrament, but also for a spiritual participation ('spiritualis participatio') in the divine.⁵⁸ The ultimate goal of such a process would be then not only devotion and gratitude towards the divine and the attainment of virtue but utterly union with God, deification through communion. In such a context, the heart should be interpreted generally as an equivalent of human spirit and not just of the will.⁵⁹ The same idea appears when Biel refers to the priest inclining when uttering the consecrating words and when he insists that the priest adores Christ in the host first and foremost from the heart.⁶⁰ Again, when referring once more to meditation as a careful consideration ('masticare') of the chanted verse of the Scripture during the Mass, Biel maintains⁶¹ that the voice enters the ear and the truth enters the heart⁶² in order to prove that mental prayer is more efficient than the vocal one.⁶³ Here the word 'mens' (mind) is not used at all and it is clear that the transformation ('mutatio') towards deification occurs in the heart (again with the general meaning of spirit here). However, further on, Biel explains again that deification can happen only after the effort of the mind in meditation in which reason acts upon emotion in order to sublimate it. The priest presents the host, bows, sees the host with the 'inner eyes of faith' ('oculos fidei interiores') and remembers the passion and the mystery of human redemption. At the same time he meditates at all these in order to gather his own scattered thoughts and emotions ('devote se recolligit'). Only after this meditation he is able to evoke the unction of the Holy Spirit ('sancti spiritus unctio docuerit meditando').⁶⁴

Furthermore, to make things even more ambiguous, as already noted above, at some point Biel starts identifying the mind with the

⁵⁸ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 81 R 33–37 (IV 43).

⁵⁹ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 49 G 36–37 (II 256), discussing *Glossa ordinaria* 5, 199A: '[...] super verbo in spiritu et veritate. Non in templo, non in hoc monte, sed interius in intimo cordis templo et in veritate cognitionis'.

⁶⁰ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 50 N 22–24 (II 283): 'Christum in sacramento devotissime adoret non vocali sono sed corde attento'.

⁶¹ Quoting Augustine, *Confessiones* X, 33.

⁶² Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 62 B 22–26 (III 21): 'voces influebant in aures et veritas eliquebatur in cor eius'.

⁶³ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 62 D 3 (III 24): 'maioris efficacie est mentalis oratio sola quam vocalis adiuncta'; cf. Metz, *Gabriel Biel* 99 stating that the same idea is to be found in Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologiae*, p. IV, q. 90, m. 2, a. 6, fol. 358v.

⁶⁴ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 82 N 1–10 (IV 61).

soul, not just to the rational operations pertaining to it. Under such conditions, meditation seems to acquire a special mystic value under the aid of grace and that happens especially when the connection between meditation and the Eucharist is clearly explained towards uniting the believers with Christ and the whole Church and finally towards sanctifying them.⁶⁵ According to Biel, as the water combines with wine so are the members united with the head in the mystic body of Christ and then mortality itself is absorbed.⁶⁶ And this time only the words 'anima' (soul) and 'mens' (mind) are used and not the word 'cor' (with the sense of spirit).⁶⁷ That can be explained indeed by the complementary idea that the wine as the blood of Christ transforms the mind first⁶⁸ in order (again) to gather it together or to impede it from dispersing into vain desires ('vana desideria') and transitory honours ('caducos honores').⁶⁹ Moreover, only the rational creature, who is the temple of God ('templum Dei') is inhabited by the divine and that is why rationality is here emphasized.⁷⁰ But the ambiguity is not dispelled even if Biel refers here clearly again to a preliminary step for the spiritual union, which will be achieved only after the soul ('anima') is restored to its initial integrity through the sacrament of bread and wine and through meditation so that it can 'see God face to face'.⁷¹ The idea to be retained here though is exactly that meditation represents rather a 'preliminary' stage.

What one should not forget though is the use of the term heart ('cor') itself with the meaning of soul that creates further ambiguities in the work of Biel. Meditation is thus sometimes performed with the 'heart' (here meaning again the spirit and not the will), and sometimes with the 'soul' (here meaning the rational soul). As already mentioned, it sometimes performs a spiritual and even mystical function and sometimes rather a moral and edifying one. Such an ambiguity

⁶⁵ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 81 R 33–37 (IV 43): 'sacramentum illud nos sanctificando unit Christo nobis et ecclesiae, propter quod communio dicitur'.

⁶⁶ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 35 Q 3–12 (II 31), again Alexander of Hales cited; cf. also 35 Q 18–23 (II 31) where Augustine is cited.

⁶⁷ Generally the heart is 'inhabited' by the divine ('habitare per fidem Christum in cordibus nostris'), Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 15 B 4–7 (I 120), cf. Eph. 3.14–21.

⁶⁸ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 83 E 17–22 (IV 68): 'inebriat mentem sanguis ille potatus'.

⁶⁹ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 83 E 17–22 (IV 68).

⁷⁰ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 22 C 15–18 (I 197).

⁷¹ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 83 E 39–44 (IV 69): 'animam perfecta refectione preciosissimi cibi et potus [...] clare facie ad faciem et videre et frui merear in eternum'.

is supported also by the listing of meditation among the spiritual exercises ('spiritualia exercitia') together with contemplation and the study of theology. They are all considered among the prayer exercises ('oratio') and complementary to the manifestations of fasting ('ieiunium'), referring to body discipline, and the manifestations of charity ('eleemosyna') necessary for supplication ('satisfactio').⁷² But the ambiguity is also created here by the interplay already briefly mentioned between the affective and the intellectual in humans pursuing spiritual union with God. For instance, Biel quotes Mt. 5:23–24 to insist that the Eucharist and the meditation on Eucharist must be generated by a special emotional state of mind ('habere affectum amorosum').⁷³ The same idea is reiterated a few lines further on, where communion as a 'medicine against everyday defect of humankind', i.e. the fallen human condition, should be received also in a special emotional state of mind ('ex divini amoris fervore') which is this time generated itself by meditation.⁷⁴ The same idea appears when Hugh of St. Victor is quoted regarding the elevation of the mind in God through meditation and prayer which have the goal of inducing pious and humble feeling ('affectum').⁷⁵ Furthermore, exercising one's will and strength while meditating on divine mercy and the final judgment creates the right feeling in the heart or meditation is drawn into the heart ('possit trahi in affectum cordis'), that can then elevate the mind.⁷⁶

The ambiguity regarding the concepts of mind, soul and heart is maintained when Biel insists that during the Mass the sacrifice is actually double: the outer one, of the host, and the inner one, of our own heart, which is actually our will.⁷⁷ So, the heart is again not the spirit here for Biel, but the will. One may wonder whether he contradicts here what he says in a different passage: that the sacrifice of the Mass is offered in spirit.⁷⁸ Under such circumstances, the whole discussion about the intellectual and the affective regarding particularly medita-

⁷² Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 57 A 15–23 (II 392); cf. Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* IV d. 16, q. 2, D 1–16 (IV,2 361).

⁷³ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 12 H 10–11 (I 99).

⁷⁴ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 12 H 15–16 (I 99).

⁷⁵ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 62 K 28–29 (III 31), quoting Hugh of St. Victor, *De modo orandi*, chapter 1, PL 176, 979 B.

⁷⁶ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 62 M 1–7 (III 32).

⁷⁷ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 85 D 13–15 (IV 99): 'interius [...] invisibile sacrificium cor nostrum, id est voluntas nostra'; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, book X.

⁷⁸ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 16 B 13–18 (I 130).

tion and generally spiritual transformation can be again reconsidered. The heart (with the sense of will here) represents itself the affective part, as stated at first, and it must be in accordance with divine love through inner sacrifice ('coherere illi voluntate et amore est sacrificium interius et invisibile') while the soul represents the intellective one. And they have to be elevated together towards the union with God so that the outer and inner sacrifice coincide.⁷⁹ Thus, completely different sources for Biel such as Aquinas⁸⁰ and Gerson⁸¹ come together now in order to explain the importance and the different types of sacrifice: for the remission of sin according to the rites in Lev. 4, for maintaining humans in a state of grace through the peace-making host ('hostia pacifica') and for the total union of human spirit with God through the holocaust or Christ sacrificed on the altar of the Cross ('Christus in ara crucis immolatus').⁸² And the means by which the holocaust induces this perfect union between God and humans is the union not only between intellect and God through meditation but also between will (the heart) and God ('ad cordis cum Deo unionem').⁸³ The latter can be performed only through love and the subordination of one's will to divine love ('subiungit huius amoris effectum et vives').⁸⁴

Synderesis, the mind, the heart and the soul

The matter is even more complicated by Biel's use of the concept of 'synderesis'. Bonaventure taught that the 'synderesis' was located in the will and the conscience in the intellect, and that therefore the conscience was moved by the 'synderesis'.⁸⁵ According to Aquinas, however, the 'synderesis' was a habit ('habitus') belonging only to the intellect. Scotus⁸⁶ followed Aquinas in this respect and identified the

⁷⁹ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 85 D 30–35 (IV 99).

⁸⁰ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III q. 22., a. 2.

⁸¹ Gerson, "Super Matthaeum" p. 2 in *Oeuvres complètes* vol. IV 413 C.

⁸² Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 85 E (IV 99–101).

⁸³ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 85 K 1–10 (IV 104–105).

⁸⁴ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 86 B 9–13; 15–21 (IV 121), quoting Hugh of St. Victor, *De anima*, I, 4, chapter 6.

⁸⁵ Potts, *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: 1980) 42–43; see also Langston D.C., *Conscience and Other Virtues: From Bonaventure to MacIntyre* (University Park, PA: 2001) 25; 39; 54.

⁸⁶ On Scotus and *synderesis* cf. Langston, *Conscience and Other Virtues* 53–71.

‘synderesis’ with the practical reason.⁸⁷ Biel feels though that the ‘synderesis’ cannot be a habit, as it is an inalienable possession of human beings, while neither an act nor a habit has to be always present in them. He agrees with Aquinas and Scotus in that the synderesis cannot refer to a disposition of the will. Otherwise, the ‘synderesis’, which inclines necessarily to the right action, would interfere with the freedom of the will. And against this background one can understand what turns out to be the final result of Biel’s anthropological considerations: knowledge is the origin and fundament of all virtue.⁸⁸ And even more than that, it seems to be also the origin and fundament of any mystical experience. Knowledge and meditation prepare the mind and only then the contrition (‘contritio’)⁸⁹ comes to the heart (or to the will)⁹⁰ towards union with God.

Biel’s ‘synderesis’ or ‘scintilla conscientiae’ (sparkle of conscience) relates then rather to the intellect than to the will. It is an important aspect of Biel’s anthropology and stands for man’s natural inclination to do good and refrain from evil.⁹¹ Then, as a Nominalist, Biel considers that ‘synderesis’ is directed to the ordained ‘via salutis’ (the way of salvation) and is the anthropological basis for ethical activity of those who do what pertains to their essence (‘facere quod in se est’) in order to reach the state of grace. However, as a mystic, Biel also sees ‘synderesis’ as directed beyond the ‘via salutis’ and as being the ‘locus’ (place) for God’s unmediated birth in the soul.⁹² Ceasing to oppose God and, on the contrary, moving towards him is the main attribute of ‘synderesis’ or ‘scintilla rationis’ (sparkle of reason), which brings back the mind to its source and stops the movement away from its superior law and its delight in sin.⁹³ But that is also the part played by meditation and that is extremely relevant since Biel’s ‘synderesis’

⁸⁷ Potts, *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy* 45–50.

⁸⁸ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II 39 q. 1 art. 3 dub. 2: ‘cognitio est radix et fundamentum omnium virtutum’, quoted in Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 65–66.

⁸⁹ More on that in Van Geest, “Aquinas or Augustine” 77.

⁹⁰ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* IV d. 16, q. 1, E 8–9 (IV,2 351): ‘Contritio est in corde, id est voluntate, nullo sensu corporali sensibilis’.

⁹¹ Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 65; Potts, *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy* 2–3; 9–11.

⁹² Cf. Metz, *Gabriel Biel* 114.

⁹³ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 39, Summarium Textus 5–22 (II 654): ‘quae semper malum odit et delectatur in bonis, alia est a motu mentis, quo mens relicta superiori lege se subiicit peccatis oblectata in eis’.

clearly pertains to the intellect and not to the will (the affective part).⁹⁴ The remaining question is still the part played by the heart or will in all this inner transformation of the human being and the meaning of its temporary identification with the spirit.

Meditation as preparation for prayer, the Eucharist and the union with God

Coming back to the idea that meditation is just a preliminary stage in the pursuit of spiritual union with God, a possible, but not complete explanation to all this ambiguity could be given by a passage in which Biel refers to meditation as preparation for prayer. Prayer is actually the stage when emotion is indeed involved ('oraret affectibus piis plena') while only memory or re-collection are involved in meditation.⁹⁵ Thus, meditation as preparation for prayer seems, as also shown above and again in line with the rules of the 'lectio divina', just a preliminary stage of the spiritual elevation and it consists of self-knowledge (or rather self-acknowledgement) or self-gathering through the five 'prae-meditanda': to think of the one who prays, of how or why one prays, of the people one prays for, of what one asks for in one's prayer and of which words one uses for that.⁹⁶ And all that happens before the actual union, giving also clear hints of moral edification and not only of mystic union.

But one should not forget here that meditation and prayer are discussed by Biel especially in connection to the Eucharist and that in the Eucharist the body of Christ is glorious body ('corpus gloriosum'), impassible and immortal⁹⁷ and that it is rather a spiritual incorporation of Christ and participation in his mystic body through charity⁹⁸ that Biel refers to, beyond the moral edification triggered by prayer. As the bread is converted into its essence and becomes the body of

⁹⁴ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 39, q. u., F 14-15 (II, 661): 'synderesis, quae est scintilla rationis, pertinet ad partem intellectivam hominis'.

⁹⁵ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 62 Q 1-7 (III 37).

⁹⁶ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 62 Q 1-7 (III 37).

⁹⁷ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 45 ZZ 1-6 (II 193).

⁹⁸ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* IV d. 9, q. 1, C 1-16 (IV,1 323): 'manducare spiritualiter est Christo incorporari: quo modo manducant quicumque in Christum credunt ac per caritatem ei uniuntur et per hoc corpori suo mystico incorporantur'.

Christ ('*conversio panis in Christi carnem*'), so the soul of the believer is converted itself in Christ, who descends ('*illapsus*') into the soul and converts it ('*conversio animae in Christum*') into its divine essence.⁹⁹ Even the capital sins can be cured in such a way while starting with persistent meditation. If gluttony, luxury and avarice are especially sins of the body and anger, sloth and envy especially sins of the soul, pride ('*superbia*') is especially a sin of the spirit¹⁰⁰ and it is here that meditation on the sacrifice and humility of Christ has a special beneficent influence towards the purification of the heart ('*cordis purificatio*').¹⁰¹ But with this idea, Biel comes full circle back into the ambiguity created by the interchangeable use of mind (or rather '*synderesis*') and soul and heart as the '*locus*' (place) for meditation and by the use of the word heart ('*cor*') sometimes with the meaning of will or affective element in general and other times with the meaning of human spirit as a whole and of the word mind ('*mens*') sometimes with the meaning of intellect and other times with the meaning of soul as a whole.

However, if meditation can be considered indeed a preliminary stage for prayer, it does not necessarily stop when prayer starts and that may resolve this ambiguity to a certain extent. The chronological order is not at all at stake here. Biel makes it clear that meditation actually continues during the moistening of the host, which is actually the moment of union with Christ perceived somehow as divine inhabitation ('*inhabitatio*')¹⁰² following divine descent ('*illapsus*').¹⁰³ As Biel insists, it is improper to say that the rational creature is the image of the Trinity, but the entire Trinity can indeed come ('*invenire*') in the soul of all rational creature¹⁰⁴ since the substance of the soul, consisting of memory, intelligence and will, was not lost through the original sin, but just its efficacy of operating well.¹⁰⁵ This divine descent or progress in time ('*processio temporalis*') happens again in the mind

⁹⁹ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 86 A 39–54 (IV 120).

¹⁰⁰ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 86 I 11–20 (IV 129–130).

¹⁰¹ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 86 I 26–58 (IV 130–131).

¹⁰² More on that in Metz, *Gabriel Biel* 303–314.

¹⁰³ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 82 N 33–38 (IV 61–62): '*Veni in animam servi tui, deus meus et dominus meus, meque tibi incorporare digneris*'.

¹⁰⁴ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 3, q. 10, A 14–15 (I 255).

¹⁰⁵ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 3, q. 10, H 4–6 (I, 258): '*substantia animae, quae est memoria, intelligentia et voluntas [...] non perdidit homo imaginem Dei, licet per peccatum bene perdidit efficaciam bene operandi ex impedimentis quae incurrit*'.

(‘illabatur menti creatae’)¹⁰⁶ to assist this rational part of humans (‘assistere menti rationali’)¹⁰⁷ and it takes two forms: the descent of the divine gifts (‘per sua dona’) and the descent of the divine substance itself (‘per substantiam suae personae’).¹⁰⁸ Thus, the sacrament has a double nature itself: it enters the body, the soul and the heart both substantially and efficaciously. While as substance the sacrament is not actually nutriment, but God himself who inhabits the human being, according to its rational essence, as efficacy, the sacrament enters the body both as nutrient and as efficacious unction towards inner transformation. Similarly, God enters the soul (or the mind) as substance and ‘corpus Christi’ enters itself the soul as efficacious restoration of the soul both sacramentally and spiritually under the assistance of divine grace.¹⁰⁹ The soul and the heart are consequently elevated into God both through knowledge and through love.¹¹⁰ But the mind has to be prepared for that through meditation.

*The formal value of meditation towards structuring the mind
for the union with God*

And this seems to be finally the key provided to all the ambiguity Biel creates regarding the ‘locus’ (place) of meditation and the relevance of different parts or faculties or levels of human soul or spirit for the union with God. The descent of the divine gifts is compared to the Aristotelian formal cause since the mind itself can know and love God formally while the descent of the divine substance itself is compared with the efficient cause since it is only the divine that can efficiently cause human mind to know and love God.¹¹¹ And such a

¹⁰⁶ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 1, C 2–5 (I 396).

¹⁰⁷ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 1, C 19–23 (I 396).

¹⁰⁸ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 1, C 2–5 (I 396).

¹⁰⁹ On the sacrament as a *sine qua non* condition for the receipt of sanctifying grace, see Anatriello P., *La Dottrina di Gabriele Biel sull’Eucaristia* (Milano: 1936) 14–23.

¹¹⁰ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 84 A 31–45 (IV 78): ‘faciens animam sic rapi supra se in deum per cognitionem et amorem’.

¹¹¹ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 1, C 19–23 (I 396): ‘in dono formaliter inhaeret ei quibus mens ipsa formaliter Deum cognoscit et amat’; ‘in se vero effective, cum nostrum diligere et cognoscere ipse efficit’.

difference can help now better explain the difference between substance and accident, between mind and heart, between intellect and will (or the affective part). Biel's explanation runs as follows: it is not only one divine person without the other, but the whole Trinity that descends into the rational being and sanctifies it¹¹² and the entire process seems to be one of return of the rational being into its source in order to be restored both at the intellectual and at the volitional level.¹¹³ However, if efficiently the whole Trinity descends into the whole creature (mind and heart together) in order to sanctify it, this return/restoration ('reductio ad Deum') is formally accomplished as follows: the Son ('Verbum') illuminates the intellect since he proceeds through the mode of the intellect¹¹⁴ and the Holy Spirit acts upon the will since it proceeds through the affective mode.¹¹⁵

Therefore, the divine progress in time ('processio temporalis') can be considered a gift out of divine liberality ('liberalis donatio') which cannot be counted among the natural gifts of humans, but as a gift of the sanctifying grace ('gratia gratum faciens') which is actually divine love ('caritas').¹¹⁶ 'Caritas' is in fact discussed elsewhere as 'cara unitas', a special theological virtue which unites humans with God.¹¹⁷ However, for this unity to be achieved, the mind has to be prepared through meditation. And the ambiguity 'mens-anima-cor' can be meant to suggest that meditation has a formal value, of structuring the mind through one's own efforts, and that it helps, as a condition 'sine qua non', the divine efficient cause to transform the mind towards deification. And only then and together with meditation the Holy Spirit can work through love upon the will in order to correct the affective

¹¹² Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 1, D 1–6 (I 396): 'To. 14: non illabitur una persona sine alia, sed simul omnes tres mentem rationalem sanctificando inhabitant'.

¹¹³ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 1, D 1–6 (I 396): 'reducitur autem rationalis creatura ad Deum per actiones intellectus et voluntatis'.

¹¹⁴ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 1, D 8–10 (I 397): 'quia tamen dona, quae pertinent ad illuminationem intellectus, appropriantur Filio, qui ad intra procedit per modum intellectus, unde et Verbum est Patris'.

¹¹⁵ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 1, D 13–14 (I 397): 'dona voluntatis, quibus rectificatur affectus, appropriantur Spiritui Sancto procedenti per modum amoris'.

¹¹⁶ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 1, D 22–31 (I 397): 'non enim in donis naturalibus tantum [...] sed in dono gratum faciente, quod est caritas'.

¹¹⁷ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* III d. 27, q.u., M 27–31 (III 497).

part represented by the heart¹¹⁸ which is transformed and ‘spiritualised’ through the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit. It is important to note here once more that all this mystical approach uses Aristotelian concepts.¹¹⁹

Meditation as doing what pertains to one’s essence (or preparation for grace) – the influence of William Ockham

Additionally, Biel suggests that meditation is not only induced by divine inhabitation. It can also trigger this inhabitation itself through the aid of divine grace.¹²⁰ The influence of Ockham¹²¹ is quite obvious here: out of his liberality and not out of his justice, God accepts the effort of humans to do what pertains to their essence (*‘quod in se est’*),¹²² which is here to meditate, when he ascribes the first grace (*‘prima gratia’*) or congruous grace (*‘de congruo’*) because this is a sign that the human soul ceases to oppose and starts moving towards God.¹²³ It is not clear whether Biel goes as far as to refer here to any merit of the humans in meditation. He always insists elsewhere that it is not only meditation that prepares the heart for union with God, but also the gift of grace and the inhabitation of the divine.¹²⁴ Sometimes he even states clearly that advancement in meditation is not due to the merit of the creature, but to divine goodness.¹²⁵ However, he also discusses Ockham’s difference between condign merit (*‘de condigno’*)

¹¹⁸ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II, d. 26, q. u., A 26–37 (II, 497): ‘Rom. 5: Caritas diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum, qui datus est nobis.’

¹¹⁹ Maybe that contributed to the view that Biel, when compared with Gerson, pursues a rather ‘rationalist’ approach. Cf. Van Geest, “Aquinas or Augustine” 89–92.

¹²⁰ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 65 F 9–11 (III 75): ‘Castas siquidem mentes per gratiam inhabitat [...] quibus unitur illapsu sanctificativo’.

¹²¹ More on Ockham’s influence on Biel in Van Geest, “Gabriel Biel, Brother of the Common Life” 276, 323. See also Ernst, *Gott und Mensch* 56–120.

¹²² For more on the Nominalist views on the doctrine of doing what pertains to one’s own essence (*facere quod in se est*), see Van Geest, “Aquinas or Augustine” 76; for more literature on the matter, see *ibid.*, n. 11.

¹²³ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 27, q. u., K 1–9 (II 517): ‘remotione obicis et bono motu meretur gratiam de congruo’.

¹²⁴ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 2, B 22–24 (I 400): ‘quo anima ornatur et in Dei sponsam adoptatur’.

¹²⁵ Biel, *Canonis Missae Expositio* 49 G 7–8 (II 255): ‘non ex prevenientibus creaturae meritis, sed intrinseca ac naturali bonitate sua’, quoting Boetius, *De consolatione philosophiae* 3, met. 9, CSEL 67, 63.

and congruous merit ('de congruo'):¹²⁶ while a merit 'de condigno' is due to an act of the will, which is retributed by divine justice,¹²⁷ a merit 'de congruo' is accepted by God out of his liberality, not as a debt or retribution.¹²⁸

And even if Ockham openly stated that grace cannot succeed merit since human intellect and will cannot be naturally inclined to good, and even if he accused Pelagius of the error of considering that creatures can control salvation, that everyone has the natural power to avoid sin, Ockham himself seems to have made sometimes the same error. He did suggest that, in case humans do what pertains to their essence ('quod in se est'), since God is both just and good, it is fitting ('decet') that God should crown human good deeds with divine grace. This is actually called by him congruous merit ('de congruo') and it stems indeed from divine liberality rather than from divine justice. Only after being justified, when already in the state of grace and able to perform actions which are meritorious according to the standard of justice, one is said to have condign merit ('de condigno'). So, Ockham admitted that one may congruously merit special graces for oneself and for others, including the sanctifying grace of justification, although he cannot merit them condignly.¹²⁹ By that he actually held, against Augustine's views, that there are in fact good works that people in a state of sin can perform so that God might confer on them the grace by which eternal life is merited. And in spite of his attempt to criticise Pelagius by applying a distinction foreign to Pelagius' lifetime, between 'condign' and 'congruous' merit, the idea that some works may dispose sinners for grace is actually one of Ockham's closest approaches to Pelagianism. The phrase 'quod in se est' suggests that there can be some preparation for grace on humans' side and one may wonder whether Biel's insistence on the importance of meditation for the union with god does not suggest itself the same idea of a preparation for grace.

¹²⁶ On the influence of Ockham on Biel's doctrine of grace and on their possible Pelagian / Semipelagian tendencies, see Van Geest, "Aquinas or Augustine" 76–79.

¹²⁷ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 27, q. u, C 3–7 (II 510): 'Meritum condigni sive de condigno est actus a voluntate elicited ad praemium alicui secundum debitum iustitiae retribuendum'.

¹²⁸ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 27, q. u, D 1–6 (II 512): 'Meritum de congruo est actus libere elicited, acceptatus ad aliquid retribuendum non ex debito iustitiae, sed ex sola acceptantis liberalitate'.

¹²⁹ Ockham W., "Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum ordinatio", in *Opera philosophica et theologica* vol. IV, ed. G.I. Etzkorn and F.E. Kelley (New York: 1979) 1.41, questio unica, 599, 604.

In this sense, it is also worth mentioning that Biel makes sure to clearly indicate how he wants the phrase 'ex puris naturalibus' (out of pure nature) to be understood.¹³⁰ The most fundamental aspect is that 'purity' means for Biel the status of being free from infused grace. The term is applicable therefore to the status of Adam before the establishment of original justice in paradise. But it also describes the status of being between the states of 'in culpa' (under sin) and 'in gratia' (under grace), the extremes that mark the life of the 'viator', and it is rather in this sense that it is generally used by Biel. The stage of 'ex puris naturalibus' is an imaginary one because 'de potentia ordinata' (according to divine ordained power) humans are always either 'in culpa' or 'in gratia', not as an ontological necessity, but as the result of a particular decision of God. And only 'de potentia absoluta' (according to divine absolute power) it would be possible at some point for humans to be declared guiltless and to be united with God without the help of infused grace.¹³¹

The question would be then which would be the intellectual and moral powers of the humans in this imaginary state of 'pure' nature and what relevance that has for Biel's views on meditation. As already explained, Biel insists that the intellect (or rather the 'synderesis') knows by nature the difference between good and evil, and what is more, judges that good deeds have to be performed out of an innate love of virtue.¹³² Similarly, the will is able to conform to this judgment and elicit a morally good act, thus providing by doing what pertains to its essence ('quod in se est') a proper disposition for the reception of grace. Moreover, humans in this 'pure' state are able to avoid falling into another mortal sin. However, though humans in this state can perform the acts God requires 'quoad substantiam actus' (regarding the substance of the action), they cannot properly obey the will of God 'quoad intentionem legislatoris' (regarding the intention of the legislator), as in that case they have to be performed in the state of grace, which by definition is impossible for those 'in puris naturalibus'.¹³³ Thus, as suggested above, it is not the substance of the human soul which was corrupted by the Fall, but its operation. And that 'correct'

¹³⁰ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 28, q. 1, art. 1, note 2.

¹³¹ Cf. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 47–48.

¹³² Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 28, q. u., I 3–7 (II 538).

¹³³ Cf. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 48.

operation can be restored only by the aid of divine grace. But this idea is as close to Pelagianism as one can be.

Thus, there is indeed something that humans can do in order to prepare their mind and heart for receiving the aid of grace and that is to meditate since meditation 'gathers the mind' and directs it, through 'synderesis', towards its source and essence. In this sense, meditation is a manifestation of human free will and even liberty and it is 'facere quod in se est' (doing what pertains to one's essence). And also in this sense meditation prepares the mind and finally the heart for the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit. If the mind is not directed towards its essence, the gift of grace and of the Holy Spirit cannot be received. It will just knock at the door, but it will not be allowed inside. And it will be given just to those who do not draw their hand back.¹³⁴ However, even if a sinner may be certain of God's mercy in granting his grace to those who do what pertains to their essence, he has no certainty that he does in fact do what pertains to his essence.¹³⁵ The standard required is love of God for God's sake, that is, an undefiled love 'super omnia'. And it is this last condition in particular which makes it practically impossible to know with certainty that one has really reached the stage of the 'facere quod in se est'.¹³⁶ Otherwise, the abhorrence of sin and the love of God for God's sake would be sufficient preparation for the infusion of sanctifying grace, the 'gratia gratum faciens'.¹³⁷

In this respect, Biel's assessment of the extent of man's spiritual powers varies considerably. On the one hand he describes man's situation after the fall as one of utter depravity and misery; man's lost innocence is compared to a ship, wrecked beyond repair, even beyond sacramental repair. On the other hand, he describes the weight and impact of the 'fomes peccati' (the tinder of sin) as matched by another natural instinct, a witness to man's state of pure nature.¹³⁸ The most important consequence is that what was traditionally a freely chosen

¹³⁴ *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* I d. 14, q. 2, B 13–18 (I 400): 'Stat enim ad ostium et pulsat. Si quis aperit, ingreditur, et numquam manum suam subtrahit. Sic ergo hominem acceptando per gratiam et in actione meritoria modo singulari eum iuvando dicitur se homini dare'.

¹³⁵ Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 133.

¹³⁶ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 27, q. u., P 11–15 (II 525–526).

¹³⁷ Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 135–136.

¹³⁸ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* IV d. 14, q. 2, P 1–4; 11–14.

exercise of the just, with contemplation as its highest level, has now become with Biel an effort necessary on the part of every sinner for his salvation, with contrition¹³⁹ as its highest level. This contrition is understood as the absolute love for God, unadulterated by egoism and while the road leading to this act of deep and honest penitence is marked by the stages of 'lectio', 'meditatio' and 'oratio', which in other systems follow contrition, the act of contrition itself is described in terms closely resembling those traditionally used for the mystical union with God. In this context, Biel's most common form of argumentation runs as follows: to be saved, one has to fulfill the law, that is, to love God with all his heart. Man is able to produce this love before the infusion of sanctifying grace, the 'gratia gratum faciens'. This way, if he does what pertains to his essence ('facere quod in se est'), he will receive immediately at the moment that he reaches the point of love for God above everything else this gift of sanctifying grace and will be united with God.

Under such conditions, meditation as 'facere quod in se est' has indeed in Biel's work the value of triggering the accomplishment of the entire human essence. In fact, how can humans yet unaided by grace reach that high point of love? First by preparing their mind through meditation. Then, meditation fills the will with love for God who sacrificed himself for the world ('contritio'), and fills the will also with fear for the God who knows everything and will return to judge the world ('attritio'). While meditation on the righteous divine punishment curbs the disobedience of the will, the divine self-sacrifice excites the will towards a proper disposition for the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit. As noted before, however, the unmerited sacrifice of God proves to be an act of the past which has merely a psychological relevance in the present, and thus functions as an inspiring example for the sinner to break with his own power the bonds of sin and pride.

¹³⁹ For an explanation of this term, cf. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*, esp. the Nominalist glossary and particularly p. 464: *contritio* (contrition) is repentance for sins out of loving respect (*timor filialis*) for God. Fundamentally differing from attrition in that it excludes possessive love (*amor concupiscentiae*) and is rooted in love of friendship (see *amor amicitiae*). True contrition includes sacramental confession, at least in intention (*confessio in voto*) (IV Sent. d. 16 q. 1 art. 2). Cf. also Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* 460: *attritio* (attrition) is repentance for sins out of fear (*timor servilis*) of punishment by God. In contrast to the Thomistic or Scotistic interpretation, attrition for the Nominalists is not a part of contrition nor can it be transformed into contrition (IV Sent. dist. 16 q. 1 art. 3 dub. 1).

And, as shown already, it is not only Christ that inhabits the mind as intellect but also the Holy Spirit that inhabits the heart as uncreated grace or 'gratia gratum faciens'¹⁴⁰ and actually the whole Trinity which inhabits the mind and the heart as a consequence of assiduous meditation.¹⁴¹ And the true sacrament is actually the assistance of God offered to the soul of the one who 'gathers one's mind' in meditation during the Eucharist.¹⁴²

Conclusion

Thus, the initial assumption of this study that, in Biel, meditation can be in fact identified with the 'facere quod in se est' (doing what pertains to one's essence) at the intellectual level towards a complete accomplishment of one's essence at a mystic or, in general, spiritual level seems to have been correct. And by that, meditation seems indeed to play an important part in Biel's theology in spite of the ambiguities created by terminology and by Biel's effort of synthesis between the ideas of the 'via moderna' and especially of Ockham and of those of the 'devotio moderna' and especially of Gerson. In spite of the scattered elements to be found here and there, mysticism is indeed not to be neglected in Biel's work even if he seems to have rather an intellectual approach to mysticism rather than an affective one, as Gerson had. He seems, in fact, to add this intellectual approach to Gerson's affective path and to try to establish a certain concordance between them. The bridge between them is his concept of 'synderesis', directed both towards salvation and towards an ethical life for humans doing what pertains to their essence ('facere quod in se est'), but also towards a mystical union with God as the place ('locus') for the soul's unmediated contact with God again for humans doing what pertains to their essence ('facere quod in se est'), which means this time to meditate. And meditation,

¹⁴⁰ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 26, q. u., F 1–2 (II 504): 'gratum faciens gratia ab infusa caritate est realiter indistincta'.

¹⁴¹ Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II d. 26, q. u., A 26–37 (II 497): 'Immo tota Trinitas illabitur menti humanae, secundum illud Ioh. 14: Ad eum veniemus et mansionem apud eum faciemus; Filius loquitur de se et Patre'.

¹⁴² Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* IV d. 1, q. 1, C 27–32 (IV/1, 9): 'assistendo eidem ad producendum gratiam in anima meditantis, talis actus interior esset vere sacramentum'.

through its ambiguous intellectual/affective aspects seems to actualize the potential of the 'synedersis' towards this union. Thus, meditation prepares the mind and only then the contrition ('contritio') comes to the heart (or to the will) towards the union with God. The descent of the divine gifts is compared to the Aristotelian formal cause since the mind itself can know and love God formally under the aid of the Son ('Verbum') acting upon the intellect while the descent of the divine substance itself is compared with the efficient cause since it is only the divine that can efficiently cause human mind to know and love God under the aid of the Holy Spirit acting upon the will. Biel even accepts a certain interplay between divine inhabitation through the aid of divine grace and meditation as a preparation for prayer and furthermore as an accomplishment of human essence while doing what pertains to that essence ('facere quod in se est') towards union with God also through the aid of divine grace. And here one can clearly notice the influence of Ockham and of his views on congruous ('de congruo') and condign ('de condigno') grace or even merit.

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TWELFTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURY RENAISSANCE
DISCOURSES ON MEDITATION AND CONTEMPLATION.
LEFEVRE D'ETAPLES' COMMENTARIES ON RICHARD OF
SAINT VICTOR'S *TRINITY*

Jacob Vance

Lefèvre d'Étaples' (1450–1536) humanist editions of Aristotle's works marked a new period in the history of French Aristotelian philosophy. That subject has now been well studied. The interest that he and his circle of humanist reformers took in systematically editing and commenting twelfth century monastic works on meditation and contemplation, however, has been less well studied. Lefèvre and his associates began editing twelfth-century monastic works as part of their effort to reinvigorate French monasticism and spiritual life, over and against a perceived degeneration in late medieval devotional practices. This editorial and commentatorial activity coincided with Lefèvre's departure from the University of Paris and arrival at the monastery at Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where he had been summoned by its abbot, Guillaume Briçonnet, who would become Bishop of Meaux in 1516. Lefèvre had just made his third trip to Italy in 1508, where he sought to further learn about Italian humanist innovations in the editing and commenting of ancient and medieval texts. Having left the liberal arts college where he taught at the University of Paris, the Collège Cardinal Lemoine, Lefèvre and his circle began implementing monastic reforms at Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where he had settled in 1507.

Between the years 1506 and 1517, Lefèvre and his associates edited and commented monastic mystical works dating from the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹ They took particular interest in editing twelfth-century spiritual works: among other texts, they published seven treatises by Hugh of Saint-Victor (1096?–1141) in 1506; a Cistercian edition of Bernard of Clairvaux's (1090–1153) writings in

¹ Lefèvre published his five-fold Psalter, the *Quincuplex Psalterium*, in 1509; in 1510 he traveled to the Rhineland, where he stayed with the Brothers of the Common Life and discovered a number of mystical works that he published on returning to France. In 1512, he published the first commentary on all of Saint Paul's Epistles.

1508; Richard of Saint Victor's (d. 1173) *Trinity* and selections from his other works in 1510 and 1517. Josse Clichtove wrote in his preface to a 1506 edition of Hugh of Saint Victor's works that Victorine theology offered particularly important insights into biblical hermeneutics. We know, then, that Lefèvre and his circle valued Victorine thought for its methods of explaining how Old Testament narratives can be interpreted as foreshadowing the New Testament. But from their commentaries, particularly on Richard of Saint Victor's work titled the *Trinity*, we also see that they valued Victorine spiritual thought for the way it integrates of logical discourse into meditative and contemplative practice.²

Meditation and the Limits of Rational Inquiry

Both Hugh of Saint Victor and Lefèvre d'Étaples consider meditation to be a simultaneously cognitive and spiritual activity. Logical (aristotelico-boethian) dialectical discourse serves, in this view, as an important although limited instrument for spiritual apprehension. For both authors, rational thought and meditation serve to elucidate Scriptural mysteries. The long list of logical works that Lefèvre edited alongside medieval mystical texts makes it clear enough: for Lefèvre and his associates, dialectic was a fundamental tool for spiritual life. Like Anselm and Hugh of Saint Victor before him, Richard of Saint Victor (Hugh's disciple) also considers meditation a form rational inquiry and investigation. However, each of these authors also draws on Pseudo-Dionysian theories of divine emanation because it allowed them to situate, or resituate logical discourse within a mystical, Neo-

² Cf. Rice E.-F., *Prefatory Epistles* (New York: 1978). Rice provides the list of Victorine works that Lefèvre and Clichtove either edited or commented. Notably, in 1506, Clichtove published eight works by Hugh of Saint-Victor: 1. *De institutione novitiorum* (= *De institutione novitiorum liber*); 2. *De operibus trium dierum* (= *Eruditionis didascalicae libri septem*, Book VII); 3. *De arra animae* (= *Soliloquium de arrha animae*); 4. *In laudem charitatis* (= *De laude charitatis*); 5. *De modo orandi* (= *De modo orandi*); 6. *Duplex expositio orationis dominice* (a) *De oratione Dominica secundum Matthaeum et de septem petitionibus in ea contentis* (= *Allegoriae in Novum Testamentum libros novem complectentes*), Book II, chapter 2 (falsely attributed to Richard of Saint Victor) (b) *Expositio secunda* = *Allegoriae*, II, chapters 3–14; 7. *De quinque septenis* (= *De quinque septenis seu septenariis opusculum*, chaps. 1–4; 8. *De septem donis Spiritus Sancti* (= *De quinque septenis*), chapter 5. See also Rice E.-F., "Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and the Medieval Christian Mystics", in *Florilegium Historiale. Essays Presented to Wallace K. Ferguson* (Toronto: 1971) 405–410.

Platonic framework. Generally speaking, in their spirituality, the various modes of human understanding and spiritual exercise represent different hierarchical degrees of accession to divine intelligibility, which they conceived of as a divine light that permeates all creation, remaining identical to itself despite its dissemination through the world of created multiplicity. Pseudo-Dionysian theology enabled Victorine and Fabrist spiritual thinkers alike to articulate the relation between meditation and contemplation, and to attribute a central place to logical reasoning in Christian life.

As is well known, in Pseudo-Dionysian theology, all forms of knowledge derive from a single source in divine illumination. This divine light remains identical to itself as a transcendent truth that inheres within all the various forms of knowledge and created life. While contemplative illumination provides the most immediate experience of that divine light, the latter is also nonetheless manifest in the other modes of human cognition and spiritual practice in this spiritual model. For Victorine spiritual thought, this implies that the ratiocinative element involved in meditative practice is itself a manifestation of divine intelligibility. Cognition and meditation may be hierarchically inferior to contemplative wisdom, but they are nonetheless, each in its own right, also manifestations of divine intelligibility.³ In both Victorine and Fabrist spiritual thought, there is a paradoxical relationship between meditation and contemplation: while logical discourse and meditation serve as propaedeutics to contemplative experience, they nonetheless manifest, albeit in obscure ways, eternal truths as well. As a consequence, these spiritual thinkers theorize meditation as preceding contemplation, but also assert the ontological priority of contemplative experience over its manifestation in discursive thought – that is, in meditative and logical practices.

This tension results perhaps from a rather basic postulate of Christian doctrine: that divine Wisdom works in mysterious ways and can inhabit the human soul at any moment regardless of its degree of progress in the ordering of Christian spiritual exercises. Logic and meditative practices are modes of inquiry into Christian mysteries, but as forms of intelligibility, they themselves participate in, and are made possible by, the same divine light that makes all forms of human

³ On Pseudo-Dionysius and Victorine theology, see Rorem P., *Hugh of Saint Victor* (Oxford: 2009) 167–176, and bibliography.

knowledge possible. Though human ratiocination cannot surpass the hierarchical boundaries that circumscribe its modes of discursive knowing, contemplative truths do nevertheless manifest themselves in and through human reason. Divine wisdom makes all forms of understanding, including rationality, possible. Divine illumination is the meta-logical condition for all forms of dialectical inquiry, whose task it is to question its own grounds of possibility. Because intellection is conceived on analogy with divine charity for thinkers of the twelfth- and sixteenth-century renaissances, they considered that it emanates from, and returns to a single self-same source in the Divinity.

Both Victorine and Fabrist thinkers considered cognition and meditation to be, in and of themselves, limited because they are, in their views, incapable of placing their own conditions of possibility into question. Yet their task is to attempt to do so. The human soul's rational and meditative capacities presuppose powers of comprehension that they cannot, on their own discursive grounds, account for, but that they must nonetheless strive to attain. This problem derives from basic aspects of ancient Christian apologetic arguments against Christianity's Pagan and Jewish detractors: while the Gentiles and Jews may have temporally preceded the advent of Christianity, the latter ultimately succeeded the former, in the sense that its truths are and always have been ontologically prior to theirs. Such was the central argumentative strategy that Christians devised in their defense. This fundamental apologetic postulate is perhaps nowhere more clearly than in Saint Augustine's *City of God*: the Gentiles and the Jews had received partial dispensations of Christian wisdom, but had mistaken God's identity, and could thus not properly seek or address him in prayer. Needless to say, the structure of this argument had profound ramifications for literary theory and spiritual psychology throughout the West during the Middle Ages and the early modern period, through Montaigne and Pascal and beyond.

For Victorine and Fabrist spiritual thinkers alike, meditation serves to investigate obscure matters whose meaning are fully disclosed in contemplation. Meditation's value lies in large part in its capacity to lead the soul towards the contemplative experience of Christian mysteries that have already been disclosed, in this view, in the New Testament, but whose significance remains opaque. Logical discourse itself serves in meditative and devotional practice as an instrumental means for achieving these contemplative ends. But meditation also necessarily presupposes them those ends; contemplative truths are both the point of origin and the point of destination that initiates and fulfills

the act of meditating, taken as a soteriological process of discovering the dispensations revealed in the New Testament. In the dedicatory epistle that prefaces his edition of Richard of Saint Victor's *Trinity*, Lefèvre d'Étaples makes this paradox central, writing that, because Richard's discourse

[...] seeks God in all creatures, He is discovered before all questioning and yet remains unknown after being discovered. What wonder if he is sought in reason and indeed in a rational manner that is appropriate to us, yet having been discovered rationally, remains unknown? [...] God is sought rationally, and reason remains within its own ends and limits. Richard represents ineffable things through rational means, as sight sees invisible things through visible ones. But sight does not truly attain invisible things, just as reason does not manifest ineffable things themselves by speaking and reasoning. Yet reason does nonetheless does manifest them, in and through reason.⁴

The relation between meditation and contemplation is, then, paradoxical in the way that all Christian apologetic argumentation has always been. This paradox has a mitigated place in the treatises where Hugh of Saint Victor addresses the nature of meditation, but becomes fully apparent in Richard of Saint Victor's works as well as in Lefèvre's commentaries, which I discuss further below.

Victorine Meditation and Contemplation

In his *Didascalicon*, Hugh writes that *lectio* should precede *contemplatio*, by which he signifies both meditation and contemplation.⁵ Meditation

⁴ '[...] quia in omni creatura quaeritur deus ante questionem inventus et ignotus post inventionem: quid mirum si in ratione rationali quidem modo qui secundum nos est quaeritur inventus autem rationaliter manet ignotus? [...] quaeritur deus rationaliter et ratio intra suos fines terminosque conquiescit. Et ineffabilium effingit sermones per rationalia ut visus invisibilium per visibilia. Verum quam visus videndo invisibilia non manifestat, tam ratio loquendo et ratiocinando ineffabilia non manifestat, rationaliter tamen manifestat'. Lefèvre d'Étaples, *Egregii patris et clari theologi Ricardi quondam devoti coenobitae sancti victoria iuxta muros parisienses de superdivina Trinitate theologicum opus hexade librorum distinctum et Capitulum xv decadibus. Adiunctus est commentarius artificio analytico: metaphysicam et humani sensus transcendentem apicem, sed rationali modo complectens intelligentiam, quod opus ad dei trini honorem & piarum mentium exercitationem* (Paris: 1510) 1. Hereafter *Superdivina Trinitate*; Latin translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

⁵ For Hugh of Saint Victor, *lectio* differs from meditation because the latter involves the use of personal judgement, *consilium*, and is free from the stringent rules involved in reading. Cf. Hugh of Saint Victor, *Didascalicon. A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, trans. J. Taylor (New York: 1961) III, 1.

for Hugh is an intermediary spiritual exercise between the practice of *lectio* and the attainment of *contemplatio*. Both reading and meditation serve as spiritual propaedeutics for the attainment of divine science and wisdom.⁶ They allow one to investigate Scriptural obscurity and, through such investigation, enable the faithful to apply the lessons that are learned, through reading, to their own lives.⁷ The fault line that runs between meditation's temporal priority over contemplation on the one hand, and contemplation's ontological priority over meditation on the other, is more clearly evident in Richard of Saint Victor's writings on spiritual exercise. For Richard, meditation and contemplation differ in that the former bears on morals and habit, while the latter bears on things invisible.⁸ In his *Benjamin Minor*, Richard asks

What does it mean that Benjamin descends into Egypt except that the mind's consideration is called back from contemplation of eternal things to contemplating temporal things, and the rays of understanding are brought down from the light of eternity, from the peak of heaven, as it were, to the darkness of mutable things, and in such a confusion of alternating things they carefully weigh the reason of divine judgments and penetrate them in great part? And what does it mean that Joseph and Benjamin come together and join in kisses except that meditation and contemplation often run to meet each other with the witness of reason? For as much as it pertains to general consideration, just as the grace of contemplation is understood by Benjamin, so the grace of meditation is understood by Joseph.⁹

⁶ Cf. Hugo de Sancto Victore, *De contemplatione et eius speciebus*, trans. R. Baron, *Monumenta Christiana Selecta* 2 (Tournai: 1954) 98 n. 4.

⁷ Cf. Art. "Méditation", *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique* 10 (Paris: 1988) 906–934.

⁸ For Richard, the comprehension of invisibles (*invisibilia*) is a pure form of intelligence (*intelligentia pura*), whereas meditation is a form of true prudence (*prudencia vera*). Pure intelligence understands invisibles without any representations of the imagination, while true prudence designates action without relation to the order of the bodily. True prudence leads one to seek and acquire, to multiply and conserve true goods (*vera bona*), not transitory ones. Cf. Richard of St. Victor, "Benjamin Minor", *Patrologia Latina* 196 (Paris: 1880) cols. 62c–64a.

⁹ Richard of St. Victor, *The Twelve Patriarchs*, trans. Grover A. Zinn, *The Twelve Patriarchs; The Mystical Ark; Book Three of the Trinity* (New York: 1979) 147. Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin Minor*, in *Patrologia Latina* 196, col. 62c: 'Quid est Benjamin in Benjamin in Aegyptum descendere, nisi ab aeternorum contemplatione, ad temporalia contemplanda, intuitum mentis revocare, et ab aeternitatis luce, quasi de vertice coeli, usque ad mutabilitatis tenebras, intelligentiae radios deponere, et in tanta alternantium rerum confusione, divinorum iudiciorum rationem perpendere, et ex magna parte penetrare? Et qui est quod Joseph et Benjamin conveniunt, et oscula iungunt, nisi quod meditatio et contemplatio saepe invicem sibi cum rationis attestazione

Meditation, Richard writes, ‘surges’ into contemplation (‘in contemplationem surgit’), while on the other hand, contemplation descends (‘descendit’) to meditation:

In the death of Rachel contemplation ascends above reason; in the entry of Benjamin into Egypt contemplation descends to the imagination; in the affectionate kissing of Benjamin and Joseph human reason gives applause to divine showing.¹⁰

Contemplation rises above reason (‘supra rationem ascendit’) but the truths which it apprehends are not other than the revelations that are mysteriously present in all acts of rational understanding and meditation, just as the allegorical mysteries of scripture are present in Old Testament narratives, but are only perceived obscurely due to the limitations of human understanding. The soul’s surging motion from meditation to contemplation unites reason and contemplation; rational meditative activity raises the soul to supra-rational contemplative wisdom, crossing the boundary between profane and sacred orders of being. However, this motion can occur at any point in the propaedeutics of spiritual exercise – whether at the level of the artistic (i.e., of reading), cognitive or meditative practice.¹¹ Meditation surges forth into contemplation but – despite the fact that contemplation ceases, so to speak, in meditation – contemplative truths can equally descend to meditative practices according to Victorine spiritual thought.

Richard of Saint Victor also explains the differences between cognition, meditation and contemplation from the point of view of the objects on which they bear. Richard suggests that *meditatio* and *contemplatio* bear on the same matter but according to three different modes of knowing:

However, so that we may be able to comprehend more fitly and distinguish more correctly those things which must be said about contemplation, we first ought to inquire by determining and defining what it is in

occurrunt? Nam quantum ad generalem considerationem pertinet, sicut per Benjamin gratia contemplationis, sic per Joseph intelligi valet gratia meditationis’.

¹⁰ Richard St. Victor, *The Twelve Patriarchs*, 147. Cf. idem, *Benjamin Minor*, in *Patrologia Latina* 196, col. 64a: ‘In morte Rachel contemplatio supra rationem ascendit, in introitu Benjamin in Aegyptum, contemplatio usque ad imaginationem descendit, in deosulatione Benjamin et Joseph, divinae revelatione humana ratio applaudit [...]’.

¹¹ Cf. also Richard of St. Victor, “The Twelve Patriarchs” 93 ff. and Baron R. *Science et Sagesse chez Hughes de Saint-Victor* (Paris: 1957) 192 ff.

itself and how it differs from thinking and meditation. It ought to be known that we regard one and the same object in one way by means of thinking, we examine it in another way by means of meditation and we marvel at it in another way by means of contemplation. These three differ very much from each other in mode, even though at some times they come together with respect to an object, since concerning one and the same object, thinking proceeds in one way, meditation in another way, and contemplation in a quite different way. By means of inconstant and slow feet, thinking wanders here and there in all directions without any regard for arriving. Meditation presses forward with great activity of soul, often through arduous and rough places, to the end of the way it is going. Contemplation, in free flight, circles around with marvelous quickness wherever impulse moves it. Thinking crawls; meditation marches and often runs; contemplation flies around everywhere and when it wishes suspends itself in the heights. Thinking is without labor and fruit; in meditation there is labor with fruit; contemplation continues without labor but with fruit. In thinking there is wandering; in meditation, investigation; in contemplation, wonder. Thinking is from imagination; meditation, from reason; contemplation, from understanding. Behold these three: imagination, reason, understanding. Understanding occupies the highest place; imagination, the lowest; reason, the middle.¹²

The first modality, *cogitatio*, proceeds slowly ('lento pede'), wandering without regard for its arrival at any given destination, yet still approaches ('serpit') that destination in a gradual manner. The second modality, *meditatio*, makes its way towards the destination with effort, arduousness and trouble, but nonetheless proceeds at a measured pace. Finally, contemplation moves about ('circumfertur') in

¹² Richard of St. Victor, *The Mystical Ark*, 155; idem, *Benjamin Major*, in *Patrologia Latina* 196, cols. 66d–67c: 'Ut autem ea quae de contemplatione dicenda sunt possimus commodius capere, rectiusque diiudicare, debemus prius quid ipsa sit determinando vel diffiniendo quaerere, et quomodo differat a cogitatione vel meditatione. Sciendum itaque quod unam eademque materiam aliter per cogitationem intuemur, aliter per meditationem rimamur, atque aliter per contemplationem miramur. Multum a se invicem haec tria in modo differunt, quamvis quandoque in materia conveniant. De una siquidem eademque materia, aliter cogitatio, aliter meditatio, longeque aliter agit contemplatio. Cogitatio per devia quaeque lento pede, sine respectu perventionis, passim huc illucque vagatur. Meditatio per ardua saepe et aspera ad directionis finem cum magna animi industria nititur. Contemplatio libero volatu quocunque eam fert impetus mira agilitate circumfertur. Cogitatio serpit, meditatio incedit et ut multum currit. Contemplatio autem omnia circumvolat, et cum voluerit se in summis librat. Cogitatio est sine labore et fructu. In meditatione est labor cum fructu. Contemplatio permanet sine labore cum fructu. In cogitatione evagatio, in meditatione investigatio, in contemplatione admiratio. Ex imaginatione cogitatio, ex ratione meditatio, ex intelligentia contemplatio. Ecce tria ista, imaginatio, ratio, intelligentia. Intelligentia obtinet supremum locum, imaginatio infimum, ratio medium'.

free flight ('libero volatu') with agility ('agilitate'). Contemplation flies about freely to the highest points of human capacity.

For Richard of Saint Victor, then, meditation occupies a place between cognition and contemplation: it is a middle way between the lowest and the highest 'places' (*loci*). In this view, as the soul progresses, each form of lower knowledge becomes subsumed into the next highest. The highest place, contemplation, paradoxically defies the very notion of enclosed place; it is a ray that expands itself widely, illuminating all things for the soul to behold. This light metaphorically represents the divine unity underlying all parts of the cosmos; creation is unified by a single, divine emanation of intelligible life within a hierarchically and symbolically structured universe. Contemplation employs not reason but intelligence as it comprehends the immensity of all things; it is the soul's highest point ('acies animi'), capable of perspicacious ('perspicax') and vivacious penetration into subtle matters. This highest capacity is also described as a dilation ('dilatatio') of the soul, in which the latter passes from the lowest levels of sensory experience to the highest, most acuous knowledge of sacred mysteries, enraptured ('rapitur') as it moves with its characteristic agility towards the perception and admiration of eternal Christian truths.¹³

This point of tension – between the sequential ordering of spiritual exercises, and the spontaneous actions of divine grace – becomes further pronounced in Richard of Saint Victor's views on the place of logical discourse in spiritual exercise. How can the laborious activity of meditation on worldly and moral matters be commensurable with the investigation of heavenly truths? How can those truths be attained if their location is not known beforehand? How can they be known beforehand if human *ratiocinatio* must be sublimated by the intellect in order to attain them?

In his work entitled *De exterminatione mali et promotione boni* Richard's response to this group of questions lies partly in his idea that the limits and boundaries between *meditatio* and *contemplatio* must be properly maintained. Basing himself on *Romans* 11, Richard writes that *ratiocinatio* can help search and investigate ('investigare') the created world and thereby discover 'invisibilia dei' through a form of supra-rational apprehension. For Richard, meditation is a form of *praemeditatio*, of premeditation, of heavenly truths that is achieved

¹³ Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin Major* in *Patrologia Latina* 196, cols. 66d–67c.

through ardent study. He elucidates the association between rational, meditative searching and premeditation through a comparison to geographical exploration: rational investigation is a process of entering into unknown and obscure regions of knowledge with sagacious scrutiny ('sagaci perscrutatione'). This exploration brings about foreknowledge of the destination towards which meditation directs itself.¹⁴ As a spiritual exercise that draws on cognition, therefore, meditation prepares the soul for contemplative illumination by scouting unknown regions of sacred truth. As a form of premeditation, meditative activity precedes and leads to contemplation, but meditation also presupposes the knowledge that is dispensed in contemplative experience. This knowledge, Richard writes, is stored in memory, where there inheres a desire for ascent towards heaven. This memory becomes 'inflamed' with the 'tenacious desire' for ascent towards contemplative illumination. The knowledge that contemplation brings about is thus both the beginning and the end of the process of meditation. Meditation, Richard further writes, pertains to those things that can be attained through investigation, while contemplation attains things exceeding human reason ('supra rationem').¹⁵ The soul cannot direct itself towards those 'eternal goods' unless it has a previous knowledge of them. Reason can premeditate ('praemeditatur') those goods and, in so doing, learn or recollect their identity before ascending towards them. The soul requires a desire to be lifted ('sublevari') toward those goods, but ardent study must also complement this desire. Yet this study must be properly directed. Through the combined desire for divine things that inheres in memory on the one hand, and what Richard calls sagacious scrutiny on the other, the soul gains foreknowledge ('praenosceret') of those goods, which allows it to move towards them. Meditation directs the soul towards this end as it scrutinizes what remain occult matters ('prescrutari occulta') from the point of view of rational, discursive understanding.¹⁶ These occult matters manifest themselves in different ways to these different functions of the soul,

¹⁴ Richard of St. Victor, *De exterminatione mali et promotione boni*, in *Patrologia Latina* 196, cols. 1098b–1099a.

¹⁵ Richard of St. Victor, *De exterminatione mali et promotione boni*, in *Patrologia Latina* 196, cols. 1102–1104.

¹⁶ Richard of St. Victor, *De exterminatione mali et promotione boni*, in *Patrologia Latina* 196, cols. 1102–1104.

stirring its desire for reascent, through admiration, towards contemplation of divine order.

Ratio fidei

Discursive reason's role in the search for Christian mysteries is made clear in Richard of Saint Victor's *Trinity*, which has been recognized as one the most complex, most important and most original of all Victorine spiritual works.¹⁷ Written in the 1160's, Richard's *Trinity* belongs to the Augustinian and Anselmian tradition of reason seeking faith, or *ratio fidei*. It seeks to show, by means of an Anselmian logical method, the dynamic relation between the three persons of the Trinity, in order to provide believers with a deeper understanding of the sacred mystery, such that they may become more personal, but also more defensible against their detractors. The *Trinity* exhorts its readers to develop the same philosophical rigor as pagan philosophers had; those philosophers, Richard asserts, knew God but failed to recognize his true identity:

Thus let us move ourselves to perfection and, by means of all possible steps toward progress, let us hasten from faith to cognition. Let us hurry, in the measure we are able, to understand what we believe. Let us think how much the philosophers of this world were diligent in learning of this kind, or how far they progressed. May it shame us to reveal ourselves inferior to them in this matter. For in the Apostle's testimony, what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them, and though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him. Therefore they knew Him. What are we doing, we who from our earliest childhood have received the tradition of true faith? The love of truth should truly be greater in us than the love of vanity was able to be in them. We should be more capable, we who faith guides, hope draws, and charity impells.¹⁸

¹⁷ Cf. McGinn, Bernard. "The Growth of Mysticism", in *The Presence of God* (New York: 1994) vol. II 396 ff.

¹⁸ Richard of St. Victor, *Super divina Trinitate* 3v: 'Feramus itaque ad perfectionem et quibus ad profectum gradibus possumus properemus. De fide ad cognitionem satagamus in quatum possumus ut intelligamus quod credimus. Cogitemus quantum in huius cognitione studuerunt vel quousque profecerunt mundi huius philosophi. Et pudeat nos in hac partem inferiores illis inveniri. Quod enim notum est dei manifestum est illis teste apostolo. Quia cum cognovissent deum non sicut deum glorificaverunt. Cognoverunt ergo. Quid ergo nos facimus qui ab ipsis cum cunabulis verae fidei traditionem accepimus? Amplius aliquid debet in nobis amor veritatis quam in

Christians know God through their faith, in Richard's view, but have yet to develop a Christian philosophical discipline. Richard's project is very much an extension of Anselm's vision, aiming to comprehend by reason what we hold from faith. Unlike other Victorine works in which Lefèvre took interest, the *Trinity* seeks not to elucidate the connection between literal and allegorical narrative so much as to reconcile philosophical, logical reasoning with theology inquiry.

Lefèvre d'Étapes attributed particular importance to Richard's *Trinity*; it was the one Victorine text that he and Josse Clichtove chose to comment as well as edit. Although Richard's *Trinity* itself bears almost no Pseudo-Dionysian traits, Lefèvre relies heavily on the latter's mystical philosophy in commenting the Richard's text.¹⁹ In his commentaries on the *Trinity*'s prologue and on the first four chapters – where Richard establishes the general theological framework for his treatise, and presents his proofs for the existence of God – Lefèvre's explains his views on the role of rational philosophy, taken as a form of critical inquiry into Christian truths.

Richard establishes a relation between reason and faith in the *Trinity*'s prologue by drawing on Saint Paul's affirmation that 'the just shall live by faith' – the importance of which, both for the early Catholic reform and the Reformation alike, cannot be overstated.²⁰ Richard draws a tripartite order of mystical ascent towards contemplative illu-

illis potuit amor vanitatis. Amplius aliquid nos in his posse oportebit quos fides dirigit spes trahit charitas impellit'.

¹⁹ Lefèvre was probably familiar with Thomas Gallus's commentaries on Pseudo-Dionysius and was probably familiar with Gallus's assimilation of Victorine theology to Pseudo-Dionysian thought. Jean Pierre Massaut suggests that Lefèvre d'Étapes and Josse Clichtove used Gallus' commentaries on Pseudo-Dionysius in writing their own. Cf. Massaut J.-P., *Josse Clichtove, l'humanisme et la réforme du clergé*, 2 vols., Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège 183 (Paris: 1968). Like Gallus, Lefèvre accentuates the Neo-Platonic aspects in Richard of Saint Victor's *De Trinitate*. The problem of Pseudo-Dionysius' influence on Richard of Saint Victor's *Trinity* has been a point of debate. For discussion and bibliography on this, see Chatillon J., "Richard de Saint-Victor", in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique* 13 (Paris: 1988) 593–654. On Thomas of Gallus's Pseudo-Dionysian interpretations of Richard's scholastic philosophical works, cf. Javelet R., "Thomas Gallus et Richard de Saint-Victor Mystiques", *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 29 (1962) 206–293; Robert J., "Thomas Gallus et Richard de Saint-Victor mystiques", *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 30 (1963) 88–121; Roques R., *Structures théologiques: de la gnose à Richard de Saint-Victor. Essais et analyses critiques*, Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études 72 (Paris: 1962).

²⁰ 'Iustus ex fide vivit', *Romans* 1: 17. Richard of St. Victor, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 3r.

mination: the ascent begins with faith in God's existence, proceeds through hope and charity, and is then fulfilled by rational investigation. 'Let us always strive', he writes, 'to the extent that it is permitted or possible, to comprehend by reason that which we hold from faith'.²¹ In his *Prologue*, Richard describes this ascent by establishing a set of logical dependencies between hope, faith and charity. Hope depends on faith because the belief in God's existence makes it possible to hope for His rewards. Likewise, charity depends on hope, because Christians hope to receive rewards from charitable exchanges.²²

Charity is an important key to the way Richard relates rational philosophy as a *modus ratiocinandi* to Christian faith. Citing *John* 14. 21, he asserts that divine charity 'manifests' itself and becomes the object of *contemplatio* and *cognitio*.²³ Rational investigation exercises the spirit and leads the soul to journey through three heavens: first, through the immortal or human heaven; second, through the incorruptible or angelic heaven; third, through the eternal or divine heaven. Faith in the existence of eternal truths is the starting point for the soul's ascent, but is ultimately insufficient and must be supplemented by the rational pursuit and contemplation of those truths. God manifested Himself to pagan philosophers but, Richard writes citing *Romans* 1.19, they mistook the nature of God's identity.²⁴ Richard thus exhorts Christians to engage in rational philosophy as a way of understanding the things they believe in. When based on the proper tenets of faith, rational inquiry leads to the divine illumination that consummates faith. Such logical inquiry is an ascetic exercise that, metaphorically speaking,

²¹ Richard of St. Victor, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 3v: 'Nitamur semper in quantum fas est vel fieri potest comprehendere ratione: quod tenemus ex fide'.

²² Lefèvre d'Étaples, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 3r: 'For where there is no faith, there can be no hope. It is necessary, to approach God, to believe that he exists and that he rewards those seeking him. Otherwise what hope shall there be? Where there is no hope, there can be no charity. For who would love someone from whom he hoped not good? Through faith therefore we are moved moved to hope. And through hope, we progress toward charity'. 'Nam ubi non est fides: non potest esse spes. Oportet enim accedentem ad deum credere quia est: et qui inquiringibus se remunerator sit. Alioquinque spes esse poterit? Ubi autem non est spes: charitas esse non potest. Quis enim amet: de quo nil boni speret? Per fidem igitur promovemus ad spem. Et per spem: proficimus ad charitatem'.

²³ Richard of St. Victor, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 3v: 'Ex dilectione itaque manifestatio et ex manifestatione contemplatio et ex contemplatione cognitio'.

²⁴ Richard of St. Victor, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 3r.

allows the faithful to fix the soul's intellectual gaze on the illuminating rays of eternal truth.²⁵

The importance that Lefèvre attributes to rational philosophy in his commentary on the *Trinity* leads him to develop the most important epistemological reflections in all his commentaries. These epistemological reflections emerge where he elucidates the relation between rational discursivity, meditative practice and contemplative experience. In his commentary on Richard's *Prologue*, Lefèvre writes that faith's certitudes are always latently operative within the soul's rational activity. Lefèvre very carefully examines two terms that Saint Paul uses to describe faith in his *Epistle to the Hebrews* 11, 1. He notes that for the Apostle 'faith is the substance (*hypostasis*) of things hoped for, the evidence (*elenkos*) of things not seen' ('est autem fides sperandorum substantia rerum argumentum non parentum'). He analyzes Paul's Greek terminology and, following the Vulgate translation, renders the Greek term *hypostatis* as 'substance' ('substantia'). He also renders the Greek term *elenkos* as 'argument'.²⁶ Lefèvre thus assimilates biblical terminology to philosophical reasoning in commenting Richard's text.

Lefèvre further seizes on the philosophical meanings of Pauline terms by focusing on the terms *substantia* and *argumentum* as keys to understanding the relation between faith and philosophical reasoning. These terms allow him to dileniate between different levels of epistemological priority; he assigns a central value to faith not only for Christian life, but across various fields of human inquiry as well. Lefèvre's investment in logic as tool for monastic, contemplative mysticism orients the kind of commentatorial reading that he performs on Saint Paul's central statements on justification by faith. The word 'substance', for Lefèvre, signifies that faith is the 'basis' or 'foundation' ('fundamentum') of the invisible and eternal goods we hope for. Because it is a 'basis' or 'foundation', faith both prepares and provides stability and support ('fulcimentum'). It is likely that, by using the word 'basis' or 'foundation', Lefèvre has two precedents in mind: on

²⁵ Richard of St. Victor, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 4v.

²⁶ Lefèvre d'Étaples, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 5r. Cf. art. "Elegkos", in Liddell H.G. – Scott R. (eds.), *A Greek-English lexicon*, (Oxford: 1996): 'Argument of disproof or refutation. (Arist. Rh. 1410a22, cf. 1396b26, cf. Apr. 66b11; elenkou agnoia, ignoratio elenchi d. SE 168a18) [...] cross-examining, testing, scrutiny, esp. for purposes of refutation: ouk ekei elegkon does not admit of disproof'. Also transliterated by the Latin *enlenchus*, 'critical enquiry'.

the one hand, Thomas Aquinas' reflections on faith as 'the substance ('fundamentum') of things hoped for' and, on the other hand, Pseudo-Dionysius' assertion, in chapter 7 of the *Divine Names*, that divine faith is the permanent foundation that puts believers in possession of the truth. That said, Lefèvre follows Richard's text quite closely without explicitly importing other theological models into his commentary here. He places far more emphasis on Saint Paul's letters and terminology than one finds in Richard's *Trinity*, emphasizing the Pauline elements in Richard's text as he articulates the view faith is the foundation on which hope depends, and towards which reasoning should be directed.²⁷

Lefèvre's arguments concerning reason are apologetic in nature: they negate but also maintain discursive reasoning as a value. Faith in his view precedes reason, but reason is also necessary for preparing the fulfillment of that faith. Reason has a propaedeutic soteriological role because, in his view, it already latently contains or manifests the divine source of intelligibility towards which it moves. Put quite simply, rational knowledge elaborates on revealed truths that have already been disclosed, but that remain obscure. This idea is evident in the way Lefèvre's inflects Richard's use of the term faith to signify the 'argument' of invisible and eternal things. Drawing extensively on categories of logical anteriority and posteriority, Lefèvre asserts that, if one defines the term 'argument' as a deliberation that produces faith ('argumentum est ratio fidem faciens' – 'reason producing faith'), then Paul's words show that faith is also an effect of reason.²⁸ In this sense, faith is for Lefèvre an argument because it produces assent ('assen-sum') and credibility in invisible things by means of rational argumentation. Reason prepares for belief in the things that cannot be known through experience, but that are initially known through faith. Lefèvre writes,

[...] faith is the evidence, that is the argument of invisible things, that is of eternal things. Which things (he says) are not seen: they are eternal.

²⁷ Cf. d'Aquin T., *Somme théologique. La foi.*, trans. R. Bernard, vol. I (Paris: 1963) 143 qu. 4. 1. Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Divine Names", in *The Complete Works*, trans. C. Luibhéid and P. Rorem (New York: 1987) VII 857B–869B.

²⁸ On the medieval uses of this Ciceronian phrase 'argumentum est oratio rei dubiae faciens fidem [...]'; cf. Jacquin A.-M., "Les rationes necessariae de saint Anselme", *Mélanges Mandonnet* 2,14 (1930) 67–78; Jolivet J., *Arts du langage et théologie chez Abélard*, ed. Étienne Gilson, *Études de Philosophie Médiévale* 57 (Paris: 1969).

Therefore if reason is the evidence and argument producing faith, these words of the most blessed Saint Paul show without any doubt that faith is reason producing faith, that is, assent and credulity in invisible things. Faith is therefore the foundation of hope in invisible things and reason accomplishing credulity and assent in those things [...]. In this way, therefore, you may understand this whole definition: divine faith is the foundation of hope in seeing eternal goods and reason bringing forth assent and credulity in invisible and eternal things. [...] Faith is therefore among theologians what the intellection of first principles is among philosophers.²⁹

Lefèvre thus compounds a philosophical definition of the word ‘argument’ with Saint Paul’s understanding of faith as the argument for things invisible. He seeks to thereby establish a juncture between reason, as a form of critical inquiry, with contemplative illumination. In this way, we can see that Richard’s *Trinity* allows Lefèvre to reappropriate logical science from the manner in which it was then used in the University of Paris. By situating discourse and rational philosophy (‘scientia’) in general within a devotional paradigm, fusing it Pauline faith and monastic conceptions of spiritual exercise, he draws logic into an ascetic domain.

Lefèvre’s commentaries introduce speculations on spiritual psychology that further inflect Richard’s *Trinity*. The idea that discursive reasoning participates in the same divine ‘light’ of intellection as the soul’s highest spiritual faculties has particular importance in Lefèvre’s commentaries. Whereas Richard only briefly presents experience, reason, and faith as three modes of human apprehension, Lefèvre replaces Richard’s scheme with those of sense, imagination, and intellect.³⁰ Reason, he asserts, occupies a median position between imagination and intellect. The soul’s faculties exist as a set of hierarchically ordered analogies: sense relates to imagination, in the same manner that imagination relates to reason, and reason to faith. Faith occupies

²⁹ Lefèvre d’Etaples, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 5r: ‘Sed et fides est elenchus id est argumentum rerum invisibilium hoc est eternarum. Quae (ait) non videntur: eterna sunt. Quo si enlenchus et argumentum est ratio fidem faciens: his verbis beatissimi Pauli innuitur proculdubio/fides esse ratio fidem id est assensum et credulitatem faciens invisibilium rerum. Est igitur fides fundamentum spei invisibilium rerum et ratio credulitatem assensumque illarum efficiens. [...] Sic igitur totam hanc diffinitionem intelligere potes: divina fides est fundamentum spei adispicendorum eternorum bonorum et ratio assensum credulitatemque pariens invisibilium eternarumque rerum. [...] Fides igitur apud theologos: quod intellectus principiorum apud philosophos’.

³⁰ Lefèvre d’Etaples, *Super divina Trinitate* fols. 7r–8v. On this, see Rice E.-F., “Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples and the Medieval Christian Mystics”.

the summit of this proportional chain of intelligences, and is the most powerful faculty the soul possesses.³¹ Each faculty also corresponds to a different temporal category: sense bears on the present; imagination bears on the present and the past; reason bears on the present, past and future; faith bears on what is eternal. But Lefèvre's most significant modification in Richard's thought occurs when he identifies 'faith' with 'intellect'. This allows him to construct a continuum, not only between faith and intellect, but between faith and all of the soul's lower faculties as well. Moreover, this displacement allow Lefèvre to argue that Christian mysteries are disclosed to the soul through a series of analogies, in proportion to their various capacities; it constitutes a theory of accommodation within the domain of spiritual psychology, because it reconciles the absolute principles of Christian faith, with contingent ones. That is, the divine light of intelligibility is present to the soul's varying faculties in the measure that they are able to receive it, each according to its analogy of reception. Lefèvre demarcates the soul's different functions both by maintaining them as analogically distinct, and also more importantly, by uniting them. Faith communicates its truths to reason via the intellect, and from the intellect to its lower faculties. What Lefèvre calls the 'notions' (*notio fidei*) of the intellect become the 'ideas' of reason and discursive thought.³² Faith, he writes, is the light that radiates from the divine mind and illuminates the human intellect with the *prima veritas*. This illumination is an act of divine charity brought by the Holy Spirit, which infuses and transforms the intellect by offering the latter an intuition of the divine Word.³³ Faith is thus the necessary introduction, or *proloquium*, to the study of divine things, because without it, one's rational search for the understanding of divine truths could not be fulfilled. Without the intuitions of faith, human inquiry would become misdirected; one must know God through faith before searching him out through reason. Reason is guided by its infusion of divine intelligibility and is perpetually searching for the very conditions of its own possibility, as it must but ultimately can never completely do in and of itself.

³¹ Lefèvre d'Étaples, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 8r.

³² Lefèvre d'Étaples, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 8r.

³³ *Ibidem*: 'The human intellect is infused by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God' ('Humanus intellectus: illius infusor per verbum dei spiritus sanctus').

The Necessary Reasons of Faith

In the *Trinity's* fourth chapter of Book I, Richard states that the purpose and method of his rational investigation is to provide believers not with probable but with necessary reasons ('necessarias rationes') and proofs ('documenta') for believing in the mysteries of faith. By using the term 'necessary reasons', Richard appeals to the idea of first truths, both in logical and ontological senses of the term. His purpose here is once again to provide Christians with the means to refute arguments that deny the elements of Christian faith on rational grounds. The appeal to first truths is, in other words, essentially apologetic.³⁴ The first truths or necessary reasons imply that, both Scripture and any conclusions that are deduced from it, must necessarily be considered true, so long as no opposing or more necessary arguments can be found. Necessary reasons are defined as being 'grounded in the truth' because no higher degrees of truth exist above them. They are what Lefèvre had called, in his earlier dialogues on the *Metaphysics*, 'maximal' propositions. Truth in this view is a value that is always attributed to the most necessary reason that can be presented, and if a rational argument can be corroborated by Scripture, then it is considered absolutely necessary.

This use of necessary reasons as a logical instrument for discovering first truths is, for Lefèvre, a path that leads from rational exercise to the contemplation of sacred truths. In chapter four of the *Trinity*, Richard presents the first and most fundamental necessary reason in his treatise:

Thus in this work our intention shall be, as much as God shall permit, to bring not only probable reasons, but also necessary reasons to the things that we believe, and to establish proofs for the truth of faith with developments and explanations. [...] All things that began in time, for the good pleasure of the Creator, can either be or not be: whence, and by that same fact, their being is not comprehended by reasoning, so much as by experience. In truth things which are eternal are in no way not able to be; just as as they have never not existed, so they shall never not exist; moreover, they are always what they are, neither anything other, nor are

³⁴ On necessary reasons, see Jolivet, *Arts du langage et théologie chez Abélard* and Jacquin, "Les rationes necessariae de saint Anselme" 67–78.

they able to be otherwise. It seems however altogether impossible that everything necessary be without a necessary reason.³⁵

Experience informs us that everything in time can either be or not be: as we witness the generation and corruption of temporal beings, we see that they can either exist or not exist. Because they can either be or not be, Richard defines their being as possible rather than necessary. On the other hand, rational thought demands that eternal realities be necessary because they are necessarily existent: they have always existed, and will always exist. They are always the same and not other, and they can be no other than they are, thus they are necessary. The human soul, on the other hand, is condemned to being always other than itself, and this is the condition of its search for unity through contemplation, as well as its limitations in so doing.

In his commentary on chapter 4, Lefèvre develops a significantly different kind of proof for the existence of a divine eternal being. Lefèvre attributes an ontological value to the idea that there exist different degrees of truth: existing beings have different degrees of perfection (degrees of goodness and of truth, for example), and the very existence of these degrees must imply, in his view, the existence of an absolute basis of measure:

If the mind forms necessary reasons about contingent things such as number and quantity, how much more it was born to form necessary reasons about eternal and necessary things. But in our minds, one necessary thing is always more or less necessary than another. That man is an animal is necessary, but that God exists is more necessary. The former is necessary concerning things subjected by contingency, while the latter is equally necessary concerning contingent matters and notions of faith. It is not therefore merely necessary from the point of view of our mind: it is perfectly and absolutely necessary. For it is of this kind: it is neither more nor less. Our understanding of necessity is derivative. For

³⁵ Richard of St. Victor, *Super divina Trinitate* fols. 8v–9r: ‘Erit itaque intentionis nostrae in hoc opere ad ea quae credimus, in quantum Dominus dederit: non modo probabiles/ verum etiam necessarias rationes adducere/ et fidei nostrae documenta/ veritatis enodatione et explanatione condire. [...] Omnia quae coeperunt esse ex tempore pro beneplacito conditoris: possibile est esse/ possibile est non esse. Unde et eo ipso eorum esse non tam ratiocinando colligitur quam experiendo probatur. Quae vero aeterna sunt: omnino non esse non possunt. Sicut nunquam non fuerunt: sic certe nunquam non erunt. Immo semper sunt quod sunt: nec aliud nec aliter esse possunt. Videtur autem omnino impossibile omne necessarium esse: necessaria ratione carere’.

it is multiple and variable. Unity, however, precedes all things that exist in multiplicity.³⁶

This absolute measure must moreover be good and true in itself; it cannot and does not derive its status from any relation to any other entity. Lefèvre does not provide elaborate proofs for the existence of this absolute measure here; that man is an animal, he simply writes, is a necessary reason about a contingent, inferior being; that God exists, he continues, is not only more necessary, it is indeed a notion that is perfectly and absolutely necessary. Although the necessary reasons of the human mind always admit degrees of truth, there is one notion that is perfectly and absolutely necessary, and that is God's existence, which is the absolute measure of being.

What is necessary for the human mind, Lefèvre writes, must be defined as 'posterior' in the sense of being varied and multiple. What is posterior and multiple, however, is necessarily preceded by unity. As unity precedes multiplicity, there must exist one necessary reason that is perfectly and absolutely necessary and prior to all other necessary reasons. This one absolutely necessary reason, Lefèvre writes, is the Word contained by the divine mind, through which it knows itself perfectly. *Unum solum necessarium*: the phrase, presented here in logical form, would become the rallying cry for the humanist Evangelical movement under Lefèvre's spiritual guidance, but anchored in the obvious reference to *Luke* 10:42 and Mary Magdalen, whose example teaches that the contemplation of the Word alone is needed for Christian life. Here, however, Lefèvre compares the manner in which the divine mind contains the one necessary reason to a unique central ray in which multiple other rays coincide and draw their origin:

Do you see the sun containing a unique, internal ray in itself as if it were the center of innumerable rays radiating outside of itself? For which reason if it were to know itself, it would know itself in the most perfect

³⁶ Lefèvre d'Étaples, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 9r–9v: 'Si mens de rebus contingentibus ut numeris ut magnitudinibus necessarias format rationes: quantomagis de necessariis aeternisque rebus nata est necessarias formare. Attamen necessarium mentis nostrae alterum altero magis est. Ut hominem animal esse necessarium: sed deum esse magis necessarium. Quandoquidem primum de re subiecta contingente necessarium est: et secundum re pariter et notione necessarium. Non est igitur mentis nostrae necessarium: ipsum perfecte et absolute necessarium. Nam quod huiusmodi est: neque magis neque minus est. Nostrum item necessarium posterius est. Nam multiplex est et varium. Multitudine autem omnem unitas praecedat. Quare unum solum est perfecte et absolute necessarium'.

manner. However if it were to know innumerable rays radiating outside itself, it would not be known except in finite and imperfect alterity. That one internal and unique ray of the sun is thus the highest reason of the divine mind. Because it is in the divine mind, all other necessary reasons are in that mind as well. And the rays radiating outside are the necessary reasons of our mind. This therefore is the first mind, like the center of all necessary things. [...] It is not obscure: if the ray of the sun were received in a mirror, it would cause an image of the sun. However, all rational and intellectual nature is a mirror of divine light. For which reason the natural mind is the image of the divine, radiating mind. Its reasons are necessary: they are the first rays of reason. Therefore our necessary reasons are dependent. Inasmuch as the divine mind shines into things, they are, and they are necessary.³⁷

This central ray is a metaphor for the one necessary reason as it is contained in the divine mind, and as the absolute measure of all other necessary reasons. Lefèvre borrows this image of the center, in which the innumerable rays coincide before radiating outward, from chapter 5 of the *Divine Names*, where Pseudo-Dionysius uses the image of a point that pre-contains and unifies all the rays that emanate out from it, to illustrate how the one transcendent God pre-contains, unifies, and maintains all intelligences in an ordered hierarchy. In Pseudo-Dionysian theology, the causal principles of all beings are contained by divine virtues like rays synthetically contained in a point. The image illustrates how the One flows from its essence, creating a hierarchically ordered procession of virtues, or ‘super-essential rays’ which contain the causative principles of all beings. The human soul is able to know these principles (*paradeigmata*), which are also called hypothetical reasons (*hypothetikoi logoi*), on the basis of the multiplicity of created beings that derive from them. The ‘ray’ of divine light thus communicates itself to the human mind through creation. Lefèvre associated the idea of necessary reasons with Pseudo-Dionysius’ idea of ‘principles’ and ‘hypothetical reasons’ on the basis of certain terminological

³⁷ Lefèvre d’Étaples, *Super divina Trinitate* fol. 9v: ‘Vides ne solem unicum in se intimum radium quamsi centrum innumerorum radiorum extra se fusorum continente? Quo si se cognosceret: perfectissime cognosceret. Innumeris autem extra se fuis: non nisi alterate finite et imperfecte cognoscitur. Est igitur ille unicus et intimus solis radius: ut illa summe necessaria mentis divinae ratio. Quae qui est in mente: et omnia alia necessaria in mente sunt. Et radii extra fusi: sunt ut mentis nostrae necessaria. Hae itaque prima est ut monium necessariorum centrum [...] . Et rationes eius necessariae: radii primae rationis sunt. Igitur hae rationes nostrae necessariae: dependentes. Quae quamdiu divina mens infulgeret rebus: et sunt et necessariae sunt’.

coincidences: the Latin term *ratio* corresponds both to Pseudo-Dionysius' use of the term *Logos* to describe God as the transcendent cause, and also to his use of the term *logoi* to describe the creative principles synthetically contained in God.

While Lefèvre's commentaries analyzes contemplative faith to the almost complete subordination of meditation, then, the Anselmian relation between meditation and rational inquiry remains central. Lefèvre mentions meditation in his commentary only in passing, as a study of contingents. He moreover pejoratively associates meditation with *phantasia*, and *phantasia* with idolatrous heresy. However, Lefèvre's commentaries on the *Trinity* attempt to redefine meditative practice, as a late medieval devotional model practice, by returning to twelfth-century meditative methods. Although Lefèvre refers scornfully to academic logicians, condemning their use of logical discourse as funguses offending the trees of human and divine knowledge, he uses Richard's twelfth-century treatise to return to early medieval models of meditative models that integrate logical discourse in subordinate but nonetheless central ways. Lefèvre's commentaries attempt to rehabilitate logic as a vital instrument for inquiring into the nature of faith, as did the thinkers of the twelfth-century Renaissance. It is notable that Lefèvre's commentary on Richard makes frequent references to two other fundamentally important commentaries that he wrote, on Pseudo-Dionysius and Saint John of Damascus. In each of these commentaries, Lefèvre frequently refers to matters of orthodoxy and heresy; each commentary has a deep investment in apologetic argumentation, and situates logical reasoning and contemplative experience at the center of its argumentation, in a complex and uneasy synthesis. Each of these three commentaries regularly refers to the other two, indicating that these three authors serve as fundamental philosophical points of reference for Lefèvre's educational, philosophical and monastic reforms.

The lasting importance of Richard's *Trinity* for Lefèvre's spiritual thought may be illustrated by the way that he refers back to it in 1512 in his centrally important commentaries on Saint Paul's Epistles. There, in his commentary on Paul's description of faith as 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' in *Hebrews* 11.1, Lefèvre refers back to his commentary on Richard's *Trinity* as he develops a number of different philological considerations. Three considerations in particular stand out prominently from the others for my purposes here. First, Lefèvre transliterates the Greek term *elenkos*,

and he draws on the scholastic definition of ‘argument’ as a *ratio* producing faith in doubtful matters. He also reemphasizes the idea that faith is the substance of things hoped for, and that it is the basis of hope for eternal goods. Second, Lefèvre further argues that Paul’s use of the term ‘argument’ refers to reason preparing ‘credulitas’, taken once again in a positive sense as referring to legitimate belief and assent. Third, Lefèvre writes that faith is an argument and a reason; it is itself the intelligibility of super worldly (‘supramundandarum’) and eternal things. Reason produces assent in uncertain matters (‘ratio rei dubiae faciens fidem/idem est assensum’), but also contributes to the very intelligibility of the eternal things of God through its undoubting assent (*indubitatus assensus*) to Scripture.³⁸ Thus, although Lefèvre’s commentary largely leaves meditation aside, due to its associations with the late medieval popular devotional practices, which he sought to reform, he nonetheless retains its value, giving it a place of honor in Christian life by restoring its associations with logical and ratiocinative modes of inquiry, on the example of twelfth-century Victorine spiritual thought.

Lefèvre’s interest in Richard’s *Trinity*, then, lies in the central place that it attributes to logic in spiritual life. Having left the University of Paris, Lefèvre was clearly disillusioned with academic uses of Aristotelian and Boethian logic, and his move to the monastery at Saint-Germain-des-Prés coincided with his rehabilitation of Victorine philosophical spirituality. Lefèvre’s editions and commentaries on medieval monastic works, and on the *Trinity* in particular, allowed him to recover early medieval uses of logic, over and against sixteenth-century academic philosophical practices. Lefèvre’s commentaries rearticulate a number of central elements in Victorine spirituality: the enabling yet limited place of logical reasoning as an instrument for understanding Christian mysteries; the value of logic as a manifestation of divine intelligibility; the apologetic advantages of appropriating philosophical discourse into Christian life; the synthesis between logic and meditation as both cognitive and spiritual practices.

In reviving Richard of Saint Victor’s work, Lefèvre rearticulates a fundamental apologetic question: how can we neatly separate the

³⁸ Lefèvre d’Étaples, J.L., *S. Pauli Epistolae xiv ex Vulgata, adiecta intelligentia ex graeco cum commentariis* (Paris, Henri Estienne: 1512; reprint, Faksimilie-Neudruck der Ausgabe, Stuttgart: 1978) fol. 253r.

soul's ascent towards contemplative experience, through ratiocative meditative practice, from its redescendent into cognition? This problem stems in part from the view that both meditation and contemplation are different stages in a single continuum of ascent and that both are made possible by divine grace, which obeys its own temporality, or atemporality, rather than a strict sequential ordering of ascetic practices. Grace reveals contemplative truths to the soul, which become manifest within the parameters of meditation and cognition as the soul 'descends' from its heights. In Lefèvre, however, there is a distinct concern for explaining the exact manner in which ratiocination presupposes the presence of those contemplative truths, whereas in Richard the problem is present but not in the forefront of attention.

Lefèvre's approach to this problem furthermore differs in several important respects. Lefèvre interprets the *Trinity* through exegetical interpretations of Saint Paul's letters and Pseudo-Dionysian theology that are not themselves present in the *Trinity*. Lefèvre shows that he is preoccupied with establishing exact correspondences between Paul's terminology and that of the Neo-Platonic tradition's explanation for the wordly imminence of the divine. Lefèvre explains the way reason 'manifests' the first truths of faith by referring to the authority not of Richard of Saint Victor, but of Pseudo-Dionysius and Nicholas of Cusa, on whose epistemology Lefèvre draws. Lefèvre displaces Richard's tripartite epistemological structure (experience, reason, faith), and reformulates it as a relation between sense, imagination, and intellect. This epistemological scheme, as Eugene Rice has showed, derives from Cusa's philosophy, and it allows Lefèvre to bridge meditative and rational inquiry with the truths of faith. Lefèvre, I have showed, establishes a direct connection between meditative reasoning and what he calls 'notions of faith'. The latter are the first and necessary reasons of faith, and should, in his view, guide all rational inquiry. Lefèvre's interpretations of Richards text therefore attempt to situate Victorine logic into a close filiation with Pauline apologetic thought, and also with Neo-Platonic perspectives on the place of logic in theology. In so doing, Lefèvre does not follow Richard's text closely, so much as he attempts to legitimate it and, in so doing, transform it: by using Pauline and Pseudo-Dionysian theology to interpret Richard's work, Lefèvre changes the way Richard formulates the apologetic necessity of asserting that faith precedes reason and constitutes its ground of possibility.

Lefèvre's commentaries raise a number of questions about the study of mystical discourse in the early Renaissance. How can we characterize Lefèvre's discourse in general, given that it is itself a composite of many different discourses stemming out of ancient Greek philosophy, medieval Spanish mysticism, as well as Germanic (Rhineland) influences, to name only a few? Lefèvre's own works do not form a coherent corpus of philosophical doctrines – his place as a commentator, particularly at the beginning of the Renaissance – led him to explore a vast array of different religious and philosophical models before becoming a predominantly Evangelical thinker. Yet he considered the various religious texts on which he worked to have a philosophical and historical unity. For he mistakenly interpreted the Neo-Platonic traits that these different traditions bear in common as signs of their ultimate origins in Christian spirituality; Lefèvre believed these Neo-Platonic traits to have derived from Pauline and Evangelical texts, which he took to be the authority for all forms of mystical experience. For Lefèvre, all mystical experiences relate to a single Christian truth, whether the subjects of those experiences were aware of it or not. As Alain de Libera and Frédéric Nef have argued in their critique of De Certeau's views on mystical discourse, modern ethnocentric accounts of mysticism tend to marginalize the Neo-Platonic tradition, and Pseudo-Dionysian theology in particular, as a common denominator that can help write the history of mysticism. De Libera and Nef argue that because Neo-Platonism is in large part concerned with theories of conversion and mystical union, and presents interpretive difficulties concerning the temporal structure of conversion, these problems of temporality have consequently also been marginalized by such ethnocentric histories of mysticism. Moreover, they argue that Neo-Platonic theories of mystical conversion describe a loss of subjectivity in the experience of union, relating to experience and affect, rather than to discursive acts that can be attributed to subjects of language.³⁹

Lefèvre's commentaries do not help clarify these problems; rather, they crystalize them because of their composite, heterogeneous nature.

³⁹ De Libera A. – Nef F., "Le discours mystique: Problèmes d'histoire et de méthode", *Littoral* 9 (1983) 79–102.

They do not respect modern conceptions of authorship, nor of national, cultural or religious boundaries in space or time. They are profoundly apologetic, seeking to argue that other religious traditions and institutions are heretical, yet they themselves are written from a position of heresy with respect to the Roman Catholic Church. They are concerned with the way rational discursive practices can 'manifest' experiences that go beyond narrative – historiographical or literary – and they question the grounds of rationalism with philosophical and religious categories of thought. Lefèvre's works – based on historical errors as they may be, and often relegated to an 'early humanist' tradition that bears little relation to the 'early modernist' tradition as twentieth-century scholarship has constructed it – invite us to reconsider the place of humanist mysticism in the history of early modern spirituality in particular, and the history of Western spirituality in general.

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DIE MEDITATION IM SPIRITUELLEN REFORMPROGRAMM DER DEVOTIO MODERNA

Nikolaus Staubach

‘Beatus vir qui [...] in lege Domini [...] meditabitur die ac nocte’ – ‘Glücklichselig der Mann, der das Gesetz des Herrn betrachtet Tag und Nacht’: Mit den Eingangsworten des ersten Psalms und anderen ähnlichlautenden Stellen hat die lateinische Bibel die Begriffe *meditari* und *meditatio* in eine enge Verbindung zu dem geschriebenen Gotteswort als ihrem Objekt gebracht.¹ Dadurch erhielten sie im kirchlich-mönastischen Bereich eine geradezu technische Bedeutung als Bezeichnungen für das intensive Aneignen und Verinnerlichen der Heiligen Schrift, ein Vorgang, der zudem vielfach mit Metaphern der Speisenaufnahme wie „Kauen“ und „Wiederkäuen“ (*masticare, ruminare* bzw. *-ari*), Schmecken (*sapere*) und Verdauen (*digerere; in ventre recondere* u. ä.) veranschaulicht wurde. Aufgrund ihres Textbezugs ist die Meditation die notwendige Ergänzung zur *lectio divina* und wird daher gewöhnlich als Teil eines drei- oder mehrstufigen geistlichen Übungsprogramms angeführt, das mit der Lektüre beginnt.² So schreibt Wilhelm von St. Thierry: ‘Amorem Dei [...] lectio lactat, meditatio pascit, oratio confortat et illuminat’.³

¹ Cf. z.B. *Deut.* 6,6–7: ‘Eruntque verba haec quae ego praecipio tibi in corde tuo, [...] et mediteris in eis sedens in domo tua et ambulans in itinere, dormiens atque consurgens’; *Jos.* 1,8: ‘Non recedat volumen legis huius ab ore tuo, sed mediteris in eo diebus ac noctibus’; *Ps.* 77,174: ‘lex tua meditatio mea est’; *Ps.* 118,24 und 99: ‘testimonia tua meditatio mea est’.

² Cf. Leclercq J., *Wissenschaft und Gottverlangen. Zur Mönchstheologie des Mittelalters* (Düsseldorf: 1963; frz. Originalausgabe 1957) 24ff., 84ff. u. ö.; idem, *Études sur le vocabulaire monastique du moyen âge* (Rom: 1961) 134ff. u. ö.; idem, „Exercices spirituels I“, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique* 4 (1961) 1902–1908; von Severus E. – Solignac A. – Goossens M. – Sauvage M., „Méditation I-II“, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique* 10 (1980) 906–927.

³ Wilhelm von Saint-Thierry, *Un traité de la vie solitaire. Epistola ad Fratres de Monte-Dei*, ed. M.-M. Davy (Paris: 1940) Kap. 72, S. 120–121: ‘Die Gottesliebe wird durch Lektüre gesäugt, durch Meditation gespeist, durch Gebet gestärkt und erleuchtet’. Die *Scala claustralium* des Kartäusers Guigo II. besteht aus den Stufen *lectio, meditatio, oratio* und *contemplatio*: Guigo II., *Lettre sur la vie contemplative (L'échelle de moines)*, ed. E. Colledge – J. Walsh, *Sources chrétiennes* 163 (Paris: 1970) 82ff.

Hugo von St. Victor ergänzt die Skala von *lectio*, *meditatio* und *oratio* noch um die Stufen *operatio* und *contemplatio*.⁴ Neben ihrer asketischen Funktion (*ad correctionem morum*)⁵ weist Hugo der *meditatio* jedoch auch einen Platz im wissenschaftlichen Studienkonzept zu, wo sie die durch Lektüre erworbene Gelehrsamkeit vollendet. *Meditatio* ist hier nicht erbauliche Übung, sondern intellektuelle Anstrengung:

Duo sunt quae ingenium exercent: lectio et meditatio. [...] Meditatio est cogitatio frequens cum consilio, quae causam et originem, modum et utilitatem uniuscuiusque rei prudenter investigat. [...] Principium ergo doctrinae est in lectione, consummatio in meditatione.⁶

Als Gegenstandsbereiche dieser forschenden *meditatio* nennt Hugo die Schöpfung, die Schrift als Gottes Gesetz und die Sitten der Menschen.⁷ Damit bleibt auch sein umfassendes Wissenschaftsprogramm im theologischen Rahmen.

Zu Beginn seiner Ecclesiastes-Homilien erläutert Hugo diesen wissenschaftlichen *meditatio*-Begriff, indem er ihn als Mittelglied von den beiden anderen Erkenntnismodi der *cogitatio* und der *contemplatio* abgrenzt: Gedanken sind unstete und spontan aus den Sinnen oder dem Gedächtnis dem Geist sich präsentierende Eindrücke, während die Kontemplation eine freie, ungestörte, klare und umfassende Wahrheitsschau bedeutet. *Meditatio* aber ist die konzentrierte, angestrenzte und mühevollere Suche nach der Lösung eines bestimmten schwierigen Problems:

Meditatio est assidua et sagax retractatio cogitationis, aliquid vel involutum explicare nitens vel scrutans penetrare occultum. [...] Meditatio semper circa unum aliquid rimandum occupatur. [...] Meditatio itaque

⁴ Hugo von St. Victor, *Didascalicon*, ed. Ch.H. Buttmer (Washington, D. C.: 1939) V, 9, S. 109–108.

⁵ Ebd. V, 7, S. 105.

⁶ Ebd. III, 7 und 10, S. 57 und 59: 'Zwei Dinge sind es, die den Geist üben: Lektüre und Meditation. [...] Meditation ist häufiges und planmäßiges Nachdenken, das Grund und Ursprung, Art und Nutzen einer jeden Sache klug erforscht. [...] Der Anfang der Wissenschaft besteht also in der Lektüre, ihre Vollendung in der Meditation'.

⁷ Hugo von St. Victor, *Opera omnia*, 3 Bde. (Rouen, Ioannes Berthelin: 1648) Bd. II, 284 (= *Patrologia Latina* 176, 993): 'Tria sunt genera meditationum, unum in creaturis, unum in scripturis, unum in moribus'. ('Es gibt drei Arten der Meditation, eine über die Geschöpfe, eine über die Schriften, eine über die Sitten'). Cf. idem, *Didascalicon* III, 10, S. 60.

est quaedam vis mentis curiosa et sagax nitens obscura investigare et perplexa evolvere.⁸

Bei aller Hochschätzung der theoretischen Wissenschaft spricht Hugo doch dem auf tugendhaftes Handeln gerichteten geistlichen Übungsprogramm größere Bedeutung zu. Denn gegenüber dem bloßen Wissenserwerb (*scientia*) verdient die sittliche Besserung (*instructio morum*) zweifellos den Vorzug. Am Beispiel der *lectio divina*, die für beide Studienwege die Grundlage bildet, legt er ihren Unterschied dar:

Geminus est divinae lectionis fructus, quia mentem vel scientia erudit vel moribus ornat. [...] Quamvis expediat magis iustum esse quam sapientem, scio tamen plures in studio sacri eloquii scientiam quaerere quam virtutem. [...] Qui virtutum notitiam et formam vivendi in sacro quaerit eloquio, hos libros magis legere debet, qui huius mundi contemptum suadent et animum ad amorem conditoris sui accendunt rectumque vivendi tramitem docent qualiterque virtutes acquiri et vitia declinari possint ostendunt. [...] Sciat etiam ad propositum suum non conducere, ut inani raptus desiderio scientiae obscuras et profundae intelligentiae scripturas exquirat, in quibus magis occupetur quam aedificetur animus [...]. Christiano philosopho lectio exhortatio debet esse, non occupatio.⁹

Für das Selbstverständnis und die spirituelle Orientierung jener religiösen Reformbewegung des Spätmittelalters, die schon von ihren Mitgliedern als *Devotio moderna* bezeichnet worden ist, hatten die

⁸ Hugo von St. Victor, *Opera omnia* Bd. I, 76 (= *Patrologia Latina* 175, Sp. 116–117): ‘Meditation ist die unablässige und scharfsinnige Überprüfung des Nachdenkens, die entweder Kompliziertes erklären oder Verborgenes ergründen will. [...] Sie ist stets mit der Erforschung einer Sache beschäftigt. [...] Sie ist eine Kraft des Geistes, wißbegierig und scharfsinnig, die sich darum bemüht, Dunkles aufzudecken und Schwieriges darzulegen’. Ähnlich Richard von St. Victor, *De contemplatione* Kap. 4, in Aris M.-A., *Contemplatio. Philosophische Studien zum Traktat Benjamin Maior des Richard von St. Victor* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1996) [9]f.

⁹ Hugo von St. Victor, *Didascalicon* V, 6–7, S. 104ff.: ‘Zweifach ist die Frucht geistlicher Lektüre, indem sie den Geist entweder durch Wissen unterrichtet oder durch Moral bessert. [...] Zwar ist es besser, gerecht zu sein als weise, doch weiß ich, daß mehr Leser beim Studium der Hl. Schrift nach Wissen suchen als nach Tugend. [...] Wer in der Hl. Schrift nach Tugenderkenntnis und Lebenslehren sucht, muß vor allem jene Bücher lesen, die Weltverachtung empfehlen, den Geist mit der Liebe zum Schöpfer entzünden, den rechten Lebensweg lehren und zeigen, wie man Tugenden erwerben und Laster meiden kann. [...] Er wisse auch, daß es seinem Vorsatz nicht zuträglich ist, in eitler Wißbegierde dunkle und unergründliche Schriften zu studieren, die den Geist mehr belasten als erbauen. [...] Für einen christlichen Philosophen muß die Lektüre Ermahnung sein, nicht bloße Beschäftigung’.

Mahnworte Hugos geradezu richtungweisende Bedeutung.¹⁰ Denn die *Conversio* Geert Grotés, des charismatischen Stifters der Bewegung, war begleitet von einem bewußten Wechsel seines Studien- und Lektüreprogramms: Nicht mehr die Fachwissenschaften oder gar die verbotenen *magicae artes* sollten fortan seine Beschäftigung bilden, sondern die Betrachtung des Lebens Jesu und der Heiligen. Die schriftlich niedergelegten Vorsätze für seine künftige Lebensführung – *conclusa et proposita* – sind das erste Beispiel einer Methodik der Selbstanalyse und Persönlichkeitsreform, die nach seinem Vorbild in der *Devotio moderna* Schule gemacht hat und durchaus als ‘modern’ auch im heutigen Sinne gelten kann.¹¹

Allerdings waren Inhalte und Ziele des devoten Reformprogramms keineswegs originell. Vielmehr wollte man dezidiert die *devotio antiqua* erneuern, das frühkirchliche Ideal christlichen Lebens, wie es die in den Schriften des Johannes Cassianus bezeugte Askese der Wüstenväter repräsentierte. Cassian hat daher die Devoten noch weit stärker beeinflusst als selbst Hugo von St. Victor. So verdankte man ihm die Überzeugung, daß alle körperlichen und geistlichen Übungen der *vita religiosa* auf die Reinigung des Herzens auszurichten seien, also nicht zum Selbstzweck und Wert an sich gemacht werden dürften. *Puritas cordis* als unmittelbare Voraussetzung der Gottesliebe und Gotteschau wurde damit zum absolut dominanten Postulat für die religiöse Lebenspraxis.¹²

Ihr Optimismus im Hinblick auf die sittliche Perfektibilität des Menschen hat die Schüler und Anhänger Geert Grotés dazu ermutigt, durch die Entwicklung individueller und kollektiver Übungstechniken, die der Umformung der Persönlichkeit im Sinne der *puritas cordis* dienen sollten, eine christliche Erneuerung der Gesellschaft und eine

¹⁰ Cf. Staubach N., „L’influence victorine sur la dévotion moderne“, in *Colloque international pour le neuvième centenaire de la fondation de Saint-Victor*, ed. D. Poirel (im Druck).

¹¹ Thomas von Kempen, *Dialogus noviciorum*, in idem, *Opera omnia*, ed. M.J. Pohl, 7 Bde. (Freiburg i. Br.: 1902–1922) Bd. VII, 87–107. Cf. dazu Staubach N., „Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit im Bereich der *Devotio moderna*“, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 25 (1991) 418–461, bes. 428–434; Klausmann Th., *Consuetudo consuetudine vincitur. Die Hausordnungen der Brüder vom gemeinsamen Leben im Bildungs- und Sozialisationsprogramm der *Devotio moderna**, Tradition – Reform – Innovation 4 (Frankfurt a. M. u.a.: 2003) 23–94.

¹² Cf. Johannes Cassianus, *Conlationes*, ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 13 (Wien: 1886) I, 5–8, S. 11ff.

‘Kirchenreform von unten’ in Angriff zu nehmen.¹³ Zwar fehlten in diesen Trainingsprogrammen nicht die Elemente körperlicher Askese, doch überwogen bei weitem die *exercitia spiritualia*. Daß dabei das starre Dreierschema von *lectio*, *meditatio* und *oratio* aufgelöst und in komplexe und flexible, anthropologisch und psychologisch begründete Verhaltensmodelle integriert wurde, ist für den freien Umgang der Devoten mit der monastischen Tradition charakteristisch und markiert ihren Epochenstatus zwischen Rezeption und Innovation, Mittelalter und Neuzeit.

Die in der *Devotio moderna* gebräuchlichen und empfohlenen geistlichen Übungen sind in einer Vielzahl von Texten unterschiedlicher Gattungen faßbar. Ihre Überlieferungsdichte und das durch Mischtypen angereicherte Formenspektrum erklären sich aus der Tatsache, daß für die Devoten bereits das Schreiben selbst einen wichtigen Bestandteil des spirituellen Erneuerungsprozesses bildete. So sollte man sich die zur Lektüre bestimmten normativen und erbaulichen Texte durch Exzerpieren aneignen und in Florilegien oder ‘Rapiaria’ für den eigenen Gebrauch adaptieren. Der Verschiedenheit individueller Dispositionen und Bedürfnisse konnte auch mit der Aufzeichnung privater Übungspläne und mit Notizen über den persönlichen Entwicklungsstand Rechnung getragen werden.¹⁴

Die ersten Versuche einer systematischen Zusammenfassung dessen, was man als ‘devote Reformprogramm’ bezeichnen könnte, unternahm Florens Radewijns, einer der engsten Vertrauten Geert Grotes und der eigentliche Verwalter seines Erbes. Der nach seinem programmatischen Eingangszitat aus Cassians erster *Collatio* benannte Libellus *Omnes, inquit, artes* ist eine kapitelweise geordnete Stellensammlung aus Bibel, Patristik und der asketisch-monastischen Literatur des

¹³ Cf. Staubach N. (ed.), *Kirchenreform von unten. Gerhard Zerbolt von Zutphen und die Brüder vom gemeinsamen Leben*, Tradition – Reform – Innovation 6 (Frankfurt a.M. u. a.: 2004).

¹⁴ Cf. Goossens L.A.M., *De meditatie in de eerste tijd van de Moderne Devotie* (Haarlem – Antwerpen: 1952); Staubach N., „Text als Prozeß. Zur Pragmatik des Schreibens und Lesens in der *Devotio moderna*“, in Meier Ch. u. a. (ed.), *Pragmatische Dimensionen mittelalterlicher Schriftkultur*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 79 (München: 2002) 251–276; idem, „*Diversa raptim undique collecta*: Das Rapiarium im geistlichen Reformprogramm der *Devotio moderna*“, in Elm K. (ed.), *Literarische Formen des Mittelalters: Florilegien – Kollektionen – Kompilationen*, Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien 15 (Wiesbaden: 2000) 115–147.

Mittelalters.¹⁵ In seinem ersten Teil behandelt dieses Rapiarium den Kampf gegen die Hauptsünden und die Einübung der Tugenden, während der zweite Teil Meditationstexte über das Leben und Leiden Jesu sowie über die Themen Tod, Gericht, Höllenstrafen, himmlische Freuden, Gewissenserforschung und Dankbarkeit für die göttlichen Wohltaten bereitstellt. Für den lehrhaften ersten Teil schöpft Radewijns vornehmlich und großzügig aus Cassian, doch hat er einzelne Kapitel, etwa über Lektüre, Gebet und Handarbeit, auch selbständiger komponiert. Der Meditationszyklus zum Leben Jesu dagegen folgt eng dem Aufbau von Bonaventuras *Lignum vitae*,¹⁶ und auch die Betrachtungen der letzten Dinge sind mit Anleihen aus *De triplici via*¹⁷ diesem Autor verpflichtet. Insgesamt bietet die heterogene Materialkompilation abgesehen von ihrer Gliederungssystematik und vereinzelt Querverweisen keine Anhaltspunkte für ihre praktische Nutzung, etwa als Kollationshandbuch.¹⁸ Zwar läßt sich die große Bedeutung, die der Meditationspraxis eingeräumt wird, schon am Aufbau der Schrift und den Proportionen ihrer Teile ablesen, doch bleibt offen, wie sie in das religiöse Leben der devoten Gemeinschaften integriert ist.

Die zweite Schrift des Florens Radewijns, sein sogenannter *Tractatulus devotus*, gibt auf diese Frage konkrete und präzise Antworten.¹⁹ Trotz ihrer ungleichmäßigen Ausführung macht sie einen geschlosseneren Eindruck, weil die Zitate nicht unvermittelt nebeneinander stehen, sondern zu einem argumentativen Text verbunden sind. Auch tritt Radewijns hier mit höherem literarischem Anspruch auf, indem er Bonaventuras Traktat 'Vom dreifachen Weg' als Dispositionsschema adaptiert. Allerdings sind gerade diese Ambitionen dem Werk nicht durchweg förderlich gewesen. Denn die subtile Mystik des Doctor seraphicus paßt nicht recht zu den einfacheren Anliegen und Bedürfnissen der Devoten.²⁰ Bonaventura führt aus, wie die drei 'hier-

¹⁵ Florens Radewijns, *Het libellus 'Omnes, inquit, artes', een rapiarium van Florentius Radewijns*, ed. M.Th.S. van Woerkum, 3 Bde. (Dissertation Löwen: 1950).

¹⁶ Bonaventura da Bagnoregio, *Opera omnia*, ed. A.C. Peltier, Bd. 12 (Paris: 1868) 67–84.

¹⁷ Ebd. 22–37 (hier unter dem Titel 'Incendium amoris').

¹⁸ Cf. Florens Radewijns, *Het libellus 'Omnes, inquit, artes'* Bd. I, 76–84: 'Het Libellus als Collatieboek'.

¹⁹ Florens Radewijns, *Petit manuel pour le dévot moderne/ Tractatulus devotus*, ed. Fr. J. Legrand, *Sous la règle de Saint Augustin* 6 (Turnhout: 1999).

²⁰ Einer ihrer späten Nachfahren hat in meiner alten Bonaventura-Ausgabe (*Opera omnia*, ed. A.C. Peltier, Bd. XII (Paris: 1868), aus dem Besitz des Redemptoristen-Klosters Roermond) am Ende des Traktats *Incendium amoris* (= *De triplici via*) handschriftlich und anonym folgenden Leseindruck festgehalten: 'Tout cet ascétisme est

archischen Akte' *purgatio*, *illuminatio* und *perfectio* in jedem der drei Übungsmodi *meditatio*, *oratio* und *contemplatio* zu vollziehen sind, und läßt die so eröffneten Einzelwege sich jeweils mehrfach weiter verzweigen. Da Radewijns wohl selbst einsah, daß dieses labyrinthische System seinem Zweck nicht entsprach, folgte er Bonaventura nur auf dem meditativen Reinigungsweg und skizzierte anschließend die *via illuminativa* lediglich in Form einer stichwortartigen Übersicht. Denn offenbar ging es ihm in erster Linie um den Nutzen und rechten Gebrauch der Meditation.

In den Einleitungskapiteln des *Tractatulus devotus* faßt Radewijns in Anlehnung an David von Augsburg und Cassian den Zweck seiner Schrift zusammen: Sie soll als kurzer Leitfaden für die geistlichen Übungen dienen, die zum Ziel des menschlichen Lebens, zur Herzensreinheit und Gottes- und Nächstenliebe führen. Diese Übungen umfassen die traditionelle Dreieheit von *lectio*, *oratio* und *meditatio*.²¹ Lektüre und Gebet behandelt Radewijns in zwei Kapiteln, die aus der früheren Schrift übernommen werden.²² Im weiteren widmet er sich dann vornehmlich den Techniken und Gegenständen der Meditation, wobei ihm Bonaventura als Stichwortgeber dient.²³

Nach Bonaventura soll die *purgatio secundum viam meditationis* in einer dreifachen Übung des *stimulus conscientiae* erfolgen, die mit den Worten *exasperare*, *exacuere* und *dirigere* umschrieben wird. Das 'Aufrauen des Gewissensstachels' geschieht durch die *recordatio peccatorum*, das 'Schärfen' durch die *circumspectio sui* und das 'Ausrichten' durch die *consideratio boni*. Jede dieser drei Übungen ist wiederum dreigeteilt, so daß sich neun Gegenstandsbereiche der Betrachtung ergeben. Bei der *recordatio peccatorum* zum Beispiel sind dies *negligentia*, *concupiscentia* und *nequitia*. Radewijns hat sich soweit wie möglich dieser recht gekünstelten Gliederung unterworfen und sie mit konkreten Aufgaben gefüllt.

bien subtil et bien compliqué. Les divisions et les subdivisions ne répondent-elles pas à des artifices de logique, beaucoup plus qu'à des observations expérimentales? Voilà ce que la scolastique a fait de la spiritualité: une matière à déductions dialectiques. La spiritualité de l'imitation est plus simple. Elle est empirique et non idéale'.

²¹ Cf. Florens Radewijns, *Tractatulus devotus* Kap. 1–6, S. 62–74 mit den Quellen nachweisen im Apparat.

²² Ebd. Kap. 7–8, S. 74–82; cf. idem, *Het libellus 'Omnes, inquit, artes'* Buch 1, Kap. 20–21, Bd. II, 46–49.

²³ Cf. Bonaventura, *Opera omnia* Bd. XII, 23–27: *Incendium amoris* (= *De triplici via*) Kap. 1.

Die *recordatio peccatorum* konzentriert Radewijns auf die Betrachtung der *negligentia*. Dazu gehört es, sich täglich über die Vernachlässigung der religiösen Pflichten Rechenschaft zu geben und Besserungsvorsätze zu fassen, die auch schriftlich fixiert werden müssen, damit man sie sich immer wieder vergegenwärtigen kann. Eine wöchentliche Gewissensprüfung kommt ergänzend hinzu, und schließlich soll man von Zeit zu Zeit mit der Hilfe eines geistlichen Beraters eine Gesamtanalyse sowohl des eigenen Zustands wie auch des Verhaltens gegenüber der Gemeinschaft vornehmen. In diesem Zusammenhang fordert Radewijns zudem, die täglichen Übungen zu den geeigneten Stunden und nach einem festen Zeitplan zu verrichten.²⁴

Unter der *circumspectio sui*, die zur 'Schärfung des Gewissensstachels' dient, hat Bonaventura die Betrachtung der eigenen Todesstunde, des Erlöserblutes Christi und des Gerichts subsumiert. Radewijns präzisiert diese Hinweise, indem er die betreffenden Meditationen den Abend- und Morgenstunden zuweist und zudem Themenlisten mit den zu betrachtenden Teilaspekten – *generales modi cogitandi* – zusammenstellt.²⁵

Die dritte Übungseinheit der *via purgativa*, die 'Ausrichtung des Gewissensstachels', besteht in der *consideratio boni* und umfaßt nach Bonaventura *strenuitas contra negligentiam*, *severitas contra concupiscentiam* und *benignitas contra nequitiam*. Hier kehren also auf höherem Niveau jene Kategorien von Fehlverhalten wieder, die schon Gegenstand der *recordatio peccatorum* waren. Radewijns macht sich keine Mühe, die verborgene Logik dieses Systems zu ergründen. Da er die *negligentia* bereits behandelt hat, erwähnt er sie hier nur kurz und heftet sich nun an die Begriffe *concupiscentia* und *nequitia*, um eine ausgedehnte Laster- und Tugendlehre zu entfalten, die auf die Verhältnisse der devoten Gemeinschaften zugeschnitten ist. Dabei verliert er allerdings das Meditationsthema vorübergehend aus den Augen. Nachdem er Handarbeit und Pflichterfüllung im Amt als *remedia concupiscentie* herausgestellt hat, behandelt er im einzelnen den Kampf gegen *loquacitas*, *gula*, *luxuria*, *curiositas*, *avaricia*, *vana gloria* und *superbia*. Eine zweite Lastergruppe ordnet er dem Stichwort *nequitia* zu: *ira*, *invidia*, *tristitia* und *accidia*.²⁶ Diesen gemeinschaftsfeindlichen

²⁴ Florens Radewijns, *Tractatulus devotus*, Kap. 11–12, S. 84–88.

²⁵ Ebd., Kap. 13–19, S. 90–102.

²⁶ Ebd., Kap. 20–36, S. 104–134.

Kräften stellt er als Tugend der *benignitas* die Nächstenliebe (*unio et caritas mutua*) entgegen, die sich nicht nur in freundlichem Umgang miteinander, sondern auch in brüderlicher Ermahnung und Zurechtweisung äußert.²⁷

Es ist verständlich, daß Florens Radewijns am Ende dieses Durchgangs die anschließende *via illuminativa* nur noch der Vollständigkeit halber mit einem dünnen Begriffsgerüst wiedergibt²⁸ und den dritten Weg *ad igniculum sapientiae* ganz ausgelassen hat. Allerdings war sein Vorrat an Meditationsstoffen noch nicht erschöpft. So beschloß er, seiner Schrift eine Serie von Passionsbetrachtungen anzufügen, die er den Wochentagen von Montag bis Samstag zuordnete. Auch hierfür gab es ein Vorbild in Bonaventuras Drei-Wege-Traktat. Der dritte Übungsmodus – nach Meditation und Gebet – die *contemplatio*, teilt sich erwartungsgemäß wiederum in drei Wege, von denen nun aber jeder sieben Stufen hat. Der mittlere unter ihnen, die *via illuminativa*, führt über die Imitatio Christi, und an seinen Stationen konnte Radewijns sich orientieren.²⁹

Die beiden Schriften des Florens Radewijns sind bei aller Unvollkommenheit eindrucksvolle Zeugnisse für das Bemühen, eine über Jahrhunderte entstandene geistliche Überlieferung gezielt und selektiv zu rezipieren und für eine Erneuerung des religiösen Lebens zu nutzen. Insofern können sie selbst als Produkte jener Meditationspraxis gelten, deren Regeln und Inhalte sie zum Thema machen. Bestimmt für den internen Gebrauch der von Radewijns geleiteten Brüdergemeinschaft in Deventer, des 'Herr-Florens-Hauses', war ihre Verbreitung gering. Der *Tractatulus devotus* ist in einer einzigen Handschrift überliefert, die im letzten Weltkrieg verbrannte.³⁰ Von dem Rapiarium 'Omnes, inquit, artes' kannte man bislang nur zwei Textzeugen, und erst vor kurzem konnten wir einen weiteren ausfindig machen.³¹

²⁷ Ebd., Kap. 37–49, S. 134–154.

²⁸ Ebd., Kap. 50, S. 154–158.

²⁹ Ebd. Kap. 51–57, S. 158–170. Cf. Bonaventura, *Opera omnia* Bd. XII 31–37: *Incendium amoris* (= *De triplici via*) Kap. 3.

³⁰ Cf. Mertens Th., „Introduction“, in Florens Radewijns, *Tractatulus devotus* 29–33.

³¹ Zu den Handschriften Wolfenbüttel, HAB 68.15 Aug 8°, und Deventer, Athenaeum-Bibliothek 61 (1718), cf. van Woerkum in Florens Radewijns, *Het libellus 'Omnes, inquit, artes'* Bd. I, 50–73. Eine abweichende Fassung des Rapiariums hat Theo Klausmann in der Handschrift Nürnberg, Germ. Nationalmuseum 22937 (1408) fol. 35v–135v entdeckt; ihre Analyse wird von uns vorbereitet. Cf. Hilg H., *Die*

Dennoch blieben die Schriften nicht wirkungslos. Vielmehr verarbeitete der Radewijns-Schüler Gerhard Zerbolt von Zutphen ihre Materialien und Konzeptionen in zwei Traktaten, die geradezu sensationell erfolgreich wurden und weit über die Kreise der *Devotio moderna* hinaus Aufnahme fanden.³²

Ausschlaggebend für den Rezeptionserfolg dieser beiden Werke waren sicherlich ihre glücklichere Disposition, eine reichere und lebendigere sprachliche Darbietung und vor allem die umfassendere heilsgeschichtlich-anthropologische Dimensionierung, die sich bereits in ihren Titeln *De reformatione virium anime*³³ und *De spiritualibus ascensionibus*³⁴ ankündigt. Zwar stimmen die Traktate inhaltlich weitgehend überein, doch sind sie nach unterschiedlichen Strukturmodellen organisiert und arrangiert, die verglichen mit Bonaventuras Drei-Wege-Schema eingängiger und flexibler wirken.

In *De reformatione* bildet der augustinische Ternar der Seelenkräfte *intellectus*, *memoria* und *voluntas* das Gliederungsprinzip des als 'Wiederherstellung' (*reformatio*) konzipierten Läuterungsprojekts.³⁵ Vorausgesetzt ist dabei ein Depravationsprozeß, der mit dem Sündenfall Adams begann und sich in den fehlerhaften Neigungen und Handlungen jedes einzelnen Menschen individuell ausgeprägt hat. Den Gegensatz zwischen der einstigen Vollkommenheit der menschlichen Natur und ihrer aktuellen psychisch-moralischen Korruption zu ermessen und eine kritische Analyse des eigenen Zustands vorzunehmen ist daher unerläßliche Vorbedingung für die Reform. Zerbolt behandelt sie in den Kapiteln 3–12. Die systematische Darstellung der Reform selbst macht dann den Hauptteil seiner Schrift aus (Kap. 13–Ende). Dabei ordnet Zerbolt den einzelnen Seelenkräften die ihm jeweils besonders

Handschriften des Germanischen Nationalmuseums Nürnberg, Bd. 2: *Die lateinischen mittelalterlichen Handschriften*, Teil 2 (Wiesbaden: 1986) 15–18.

³² Die Abhängigkeit war schon den Zeitgenossen bewußt; cf. Rudolf Dier van Muiden, *Scriptum de Magistro Gherardo Grote, Domino Florencio et multis aliis devotis fratribus*, in G. Dumbar, *Analecta seu vetera aliquot scripta inedita* Bd. I (Deventer, Johannes van Wyk: 1719) 1–113; 50–51.

³³ Gerhard Zerbolt von Zutphen, *Manuel de la réforme intérieure/ Tractatus devotus de reformatione virium anime*, ed. Fr. J. Legrand, *Sous la règle de Saint Augustin* 8 (Turnhout: 2001).

³⁴ Gerhard Zerbolt von Zutphen, *La montée du cœur/ De spiritualibus ascensionibus*, *Sous la règle de Saint Augustin* 11 (Turnhout: 2006).

³⁵ Cf. Schmaus M., *Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des hl. Augustinus*, *Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie* 11 (Münster: 1927) 264–281.

passend erscheinenden Techniken und Hilfsmittel geistlicher Übung zu, so der *reformatio intellectus* die persönliche Erfahrung im Tugendstreben (*experientia*), Lektüre (*lectio*) und belehrenden Austausch, der *reformatio memoriae* die Meditation mit ihren verschiedenen Themen und Stoffbereichen (Sünden, Tod, Gericht, Hölle, Himmel, Wohltaten Gottes, Leben und Leiden Jesu) und der *reformatio voluntatis* neben dem Empfang des Bußsakraments die Pflichten der *vita activa* (Handarbeit, Leitungsaufgaben und Dienste) und die Strategien des Kampfes gegen die Hauptlaster. Nur das Gebet, die dritte Komponente des etablierten Übungsprogramms *lectio – meditatio – oratio*, läßt sich nicht einer Seelenkraft allein zuweisen. Zerbolt behandelt es daher in einem Übergangskapitel zwischen *memoria* und *voluntas* (Kap. 35), weil es aus der *lectio* und *meditatio* hervorgeht und ein wirksames Mittel gegen Sünde und Versuchung darstellt.

Der Nachteil dieser Werkdisposition liegt darin, daß hier kein Schritt für Schritt zu absolvierendes Curriculum geboten wird, sondern die anthropologisch begründete Systematisierung des Arsenal geistlicher Reformtechniken. Offenbar hat Zerbolt dies auch selbst gesehen und deshalb mit seiner zweiten Schrift den Übungsstoff in eine dynamische Folge sukzessiv zu bewältigender Trainingseinheiten überführt. Der Psalmvers, mit dem er diese Schrift eröffnet, liefert das Bild, das dann zu ihrem Leitthema wird: ‘Beatus vir cuius est auxilium abs te, ascensiones in corde disposuit’ – ‘Selig der Mann, der von dir Hilfe hat, er errichtet Stiegen in seinem Herzen’ (*Ps.* 83,6–7). Die Stufenmetaphorik, das Motiv des Auf- und Abstiegs als Strukturprinzip für ein Askese-Programm zu benutzen war überaus naheliegend und durch Werke in der Tradition der ‘Scala paradisi’ des Johannes Climacus seit langem eingebürgert. Doch läßt sich für das Nebeneinander der beiden konkurrierenden Werkkonzeptionen Zerbolts – der systematischen in *De reformatione* und der prozeßhaft-performativen in *De ascensionibus* – noch eine andere Anregung vermuten: die längst als seine wichtigste Quelle nachgewiesenen *Libri tres de exterioris et interioris hominis compositione* des David von Augsburg. Dort werden nämlich in zwei aufeinanderfolgenden Kapiteln des zweiten Buchs die beiden triadischen Ordnungskategorien der Gradation des Aufstiegs und der Distinktion der Seelenkräfte unvermittelt zusammengestellt:

Capitulum IV – Tres sunt status religiosorum: incipientium, proficientium et perfectorum [...]. Capitulum V – Anima habet tres potentias, quibus capax est Dei: rationem, memoriam et voluntatem.³⁶

Die beiden logisch inkommensurablen Ternare *incipientes – proficientes – perfecti* und *ratio – memoria – voluntas*, die er bei David von Augsburg in direkter Juxtaposition vorfand, haben Zerbolt zweifellos dazu inspiriert, sein geistliches Handbuch in zwei Versionen auszuführen. Während *De reformatione* sich an den drei Seelenkräften orientiert, folgt *De ascensionibus* dem Modell der drei *status religiosorum*. Zunächst behandelt Zerbolt hier jenen dreifachen *descensus*, der zu dem desolaten Zustand des Menschen geführt hat: den Sündenfall der Stammeltern, die fortschreitende Hingabe an die Güter und Verlockungen der Welt, die sich als *impuritas cordis* manifestiert und den *homo carnalis* und *secularis* kennzeichnet, und schließlich die völlige Entfremdung von Gott durch die *peccata mortalia* (Kap. 3–5). Entsprechend dem dreifachen Abstieg hat der Mensch seine Umkehr durch eine dreifache Selbstanalyse vorzubereiten, die allerdings in geänderter Reihenfolge vorzunehmen ist: zunächst die Erforschung der gravierenden aktuellen Sünden mithilfe der geeigneten Meditationspunkte ('*memoria peccatorum*'), danach eine umfassende Untersuchung der durch die Erbsünde bedingten sittlichen Defizienz und ihrer individuellen Ausprägung in der eigenen moralischen Persönlichkeit ('*de toto statu suo interiori et exteriori*') und fortan eine tägliche akribische Rechenschaftslegung, die den sündhaften und unlauteren Neigungen und Gewohnheiten entgegenwirken soll (Kap. 6–8).

Der Aufstiegsprozeß, der die Wiederherstellung der ursprünglichen Integrität, soweit möglich, zum Ziel hat, korrespondiert dagegen genau spiegelbildlich mit den drei Stufen des Niedergangs: Angefangen bei der letzten über die mittlere bis zur ersten Stufe soll die Depravation des Menschen aufgehoben und kompensiert werden. Der erste Aufstieg soll durch die sakramentale Buße die Sündenschuld tilgen und umfaßt die Stufen *contritio*, *confessio* und *satisfactio* (Kap. 12–14). Da diese Etappe von den Religiösen, an die Zerbolt sich wendet, längst zurückgelegt ist, wird sie recht summarisch und nur der Vollständig-

³⁶ David von Augsburg, *De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione [...] libri tres*, ed. PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae (Quaracchi: 1899) 84–85: 'Kapitel 4 – Es gibt für die Ordensleute drei Stufen: die der Anfänger, der Fortgeschrittenen und der Vollen deten. [...] Kapitel 5 – Die Seele hat drei Kräfte, mit denen sie für Gott empfänglich ist: Vernunft, Gedächtnis und Wille'.

keit halber behandelt. Von zentraler Bedeutung ist dagegen die zweite *ascensio*. Sie soll den Menschen zur Herzensreinheit und zur liebenden Gottesnähe führen. Dies geschieht in den drei Stufen der Furcht, der Hoffnung und der Liebe (*timor – spes – caritas*), die der Status-Gradation von *incipientes*, *proficientes* und *perfecti* entsprechen (Kap. 15–42). Jeder dieser drei Stufen ordnet Zerbolt wieder die jeweils angemessenen Meditationsstoffe zu: Tod, Gericht und Höllenstrafen erwecken Furcht, das Himmelreich und die Wohltaten Gottes Hoffnung und das Leben und Leiden Jesu Liebe. Zugleich bedeutet dieser Aufstieg die Erhebung über die eigennützigen Motive Strafe und Belohnung hinaus zur Vereinigung mit Gott als dem um seiner selbst willen geliebten Gut.³⁷ Etwas gezwungen wirkt es allerdings, wenn Zerbolt eine Verbindung zu der Dreiheit der theologischen Tugenden *fides*, *spes* und *caritas* herzustellen versucht, indem er die Furcht zur ‘ersten Frucht des Glaubens’ erklärt.³⁸

Die dritte *ascensio* gilt den Folgen des Sündenfalls (Kap. 47–63). Zerbolt wiederholt hier die bereits in *De reformatione* entwickelten Strategien zur Bekämpfung der *vicia capitalia*. Auch dabei setzt er eine Dreigliederung von *incipientes*, *proficientes* und *perfecti* voraus, die aber nicht im einzelnen durchgeführt wird.³⁹ Da der Aufstieg zur Gottesliebe und Gottesschau das unüberbietbare Ziel des menschlichen Läuterungsweges darstellt, ist diese dritte *ascensio* gegenüber der

³⁷ Gerhard Zerbolt, *De spiritualibus ascensionibus* Kap. 27, S. 208: ‘incipit quodammodo homo unus spiritus cum Deo fieri et extra seipsum transgredi et ipsam veritatem intueri et ad unionem et adhesionem habitari’ (‘Der Mensch fängt an, in gewisser Weise ein Geist mit Gott zu werden, über sich hinauszusteigen, die Wahrheit selbst anzuschauen und der Vereinigung und Verbindung mit Gott fähig zu werden’).

³⁸ Ebd. Kap. 21, S. 176: ‘Est igitur primus gradus secunde ascensionis, qua tenditur ad cordis puritatem, fides vel timor qui est eius effectus’ (‘Der zweite Aufstieg, der zur Herzensreinheit führt, hat also als erste Stufe den Glauben oder die Furcht, die die Frucht des Glaubens ist’). Cf. Gerrits G.H., *Inter timorem et spem. A study of the theological thought of Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen*, Studies in medieval and Reformation thought 37 (Leiden: 1986) 167–168.

³⁹ Gerhard Zerbolt, *De spiritualibus ascensionibus* Kap. 55, S. 326/328: ‘Igitur contra quodlibet vicium tres potes distinguere gradus, quorum primus est incipiencium et pertinet ad primum gradum ascensionis ad cordis puritatem, qui est in timore, secundus est proficiencium et pertinet ad secundum gradum secunde ascensionis, qui in spe agitur, tercius gradus est perfectorum et pertinet ad ultimum gradum ascensionis ad puritatem’ (‘So kannst du also im Kampf gegen jedes Laster drei Stufen unterscheiden: Die erste ist die der Anfänger und gehört zu der ersten Stufe des Aufstiegs zur Herzensreinheit, die in der Furcht besteht, die zweite ist die der Fortgeschrittenen und gehört zur zweiten Stufe jenes zweiten Aufstiegs, die in der Hoffnung beschriftet wird, die dritte Stufe ist die der Vollkommenen und gehört zur letzten Stufe des Aufstiegs zur Reinheit’).

zweiten eigentlich keine Steigerung, sondern eher eine flankierende Maßnahme: *non altior sed collateralis*.⁴⁰ Zerbolt motiviert ihre Bedeutung mit den Hindernissen und Gefahren, die den Menschen auf dem Weg zur *perfectio* beeinträchtigen. Zudem versucht er die logische Diskrepanz zwischen der zweiten und dritten *ascensio* dadurch zu überbrücken, daß er an der Gelenkstelle die Kapitel über die Aufstiegshilfen *lectio*, *meditatio* und *oratio* einfügt, die in Anlehnung an Hugo von St. Victor gleichfalls mit dem Ternar der Vollkommenheitsstufen assoziiert werden (Kap. 43–46).⁴¹ Unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Werkdisposition ist dies jedoch eine ähnliche Notlösung wie das Einschleiben des *oratio*-Kapitels in *De reformatione*: Die grundlegenden Übungstechniken Lektüre, Meditation und Gebet lassen sich weder dort noch hier glatt in das Gesamtkonzept integrieren.

Im Schlußteil seiner Schrift konstruiert Zerbolt eine Doppelreihe von jeweils drei *descensiones spirituales*, die wie eine Analogie zur Abstiegsbewegung am Anfang wirken, aber hier durchaus positiv verstanden werden (Kap. 64–70). Gemeint ist die Pflicht des geistlichen Menschen, sich von den Höhen seiner Askese und Kontemplation bisweilen herabzulassen, um demütig zu bleiben und sich dem Dienst am Nächsten zu widmen. Im Hinblick auf die eigene Person gilt es herabzusteigen durch die Wahl einfacherer geistlicher Übungen, die einem bereits überwundenen *status* zugeordnet sind, durch Freundlichkeit und Kondeszendenz im äußeren Verhalten und durch manuelle Arbeit. Andern gegenüber muß man sich erniedri-

⁴⁰ Ebd. Kap. 48, S. 302.

⁴¹ Ebd. Kap. 43, S. 276: 'Lectio autem magis pertinet ad primum ascensionis gradum qui in timore perficitur. Nam lectio secundum Hugonem ad incipientes pertinet qui utique in primo gradu a timore concipiunt et parturiunt spiritum salutis. Meditatio magis spectat ad secundum gradum, id est ad proficientes, qui iam lectionibus instructi sciunt secum in corde deambulare. Oratio vero quamvis ad omnes spectat ascensus, precipue tamen et proprie ipsis congruit qui in tercio ascensionis gradu incipiunt Deo adherere. Est enim oratio hominis Deo adherentis affectio et familiaris quaedam et pia allocutio' ('Die Lektüre gehört mehr zur ersten Stufe des Aufstiegs, die in der Furcht beschränkt wird. Denn nach Hugo gehört die Lektüre zu den Anfängern, die ja auf der ersten Stufe aus der Furcht den Geist des Heils empfangen und gebären. Die Meditation betrifft mehr die zweite Stufe, d. h. die Fortgeschrittenen, die schon durch Lektüre belehrt wissen, wie sie im Herzen voranzuschreiten haben. Das Gebet aber bezieht sich zwar auf alle Stufen, paßt aber besonders und im engeren Sinne zu denen, die auf der dritten Stufe des Aufstiegs Gott anzuhafte beginnen. Denn das Gebet ist das Gefühl des Gott anhaftenden Menschen und eine vertraute und fromme Zwiesprache mit ihm'). Cf. Hugo von St. Victor, *Didascalicon* V, 9, S. 109. Zu Zerbolts Theorie der *lectio* und ihren Quellen s. auch Staubach, „Text als Prozeß“ 256–257.

gen durch freiwilligen Gehorsam, Hilfeleistung in Rat und Tat sowie durch die Übernahme seelsorgerischer Verantwortung, wenn man zu einem geistlichen Amt berufen wird. Mit dem Strukturprinzip der Schrift, das den 'Aufstieg' als einen Prozeß des Fortschritts und der Zurückgewinnung verlorener Werte voraussetzt, ist dieser *descensio*-Teil nur schwer vereinbar. Denn ein so verstandener Fortschritt wäre eigentlich nicht ohne moralischen Wertverlust reversibel. Dennoch haben die *descensiones spirituales* eine wichtige Funktion in Zerbolts psychagogischem Konzept. Einerseits wird hiermit das geistliche Übungsprogramm von einer allzu starren Abfolgeregel gelöst und den Bedürfnissen des Adepten gemäß disponibel gemacht. Wichtiger noch ist ein anderer Aspekt: Das ganz auf die Vervollkommnung des Individuums abgestellte Programm erhält durch die Einbeziehung der Verantwortung für den Mitmenschen eine soziale Dimension, wie sie dem Selbstverständnis der devoten Lebensform als *vita communis* entspricht. *Ascensio* und *descensio* in diesem Sinne meinen also etwa dasselbe, was der Mystiker Ruusbroec mit dem Begriffspaar 'Einkehr' und 'Auskehr' bezeichnet hat.⁴²

Die Meditation ist in den Traktaten Gerhard Zerbolts vielfach präsent. So inseriert er Sequenzen von Betrachtungspunkten zu den gängigen Themen ('generales modi ad formandum meditationes') als praktische Beispiele in die systematische Darstellung des Reformprozesses. Daneben macht er diese Übungspraxis aber auch zum Gegenstand grundsätzlicher Überlegungen. Ihre Funktion besteht zunächst darin, das Gedächtnis so zu beschäftigen, daß dem ständigen Andrang nutzloser und schädlicher Gedanken kein Raum bleibt: 'memoriam cum labore ab evagacione illicita refrenare et divinis vel utilibus cogitationibus [...] occupare'.⁴³ Ist doch der Geist eine Mühle, die das mahlt, was man ihr einfüllt; wenn sie nichts erhält, zerreibt sie sich selbst mit leerem und müßigem Zeug: 'Siquidem, ut aiunt sancti, anima tua est sicut mola; quidquid ei imponitur molit, si nil imponitur, se consumit et vanis et ociosis implicatur'.⁴⁴

⁴² Fraling B., *Mystik und Geschichte. Das 'ghemeyne leven' in der Lehre des Jan van Ruusbroec* (Regensburg: 1974) bes. 47 ff., 178 ff.; Baere G. de, „Het 'ghemeine leven' bij Ruusbroec en Geert Grote“, in *Ons geestelijk erf* 59 (1985) 172–183.

⁴³ Gerhard Zerbolt, *Tractatus devotus de reformatione virium anime* Kap. 18, S. 150: 'das Gedächtnis energisch an unerlaubter Ausschweifung hindern und mit frommen oder nützlichen Gedanken beschäftigen'.

⁴⁴ Idem, *De spiritualibus ascensionibus* Kap. 45, S. 284: 'Denn deine Seele ist wie ein Mühlstein, sagen die Heiligen, der alles mahlt, was man ihm einfüllt; wird nichts

Positiv gewendet lautet Zerbolts Definition: 'Meditacio vero dicitur qua ea que legisti vel audisti studiosa ruminacione in corde tuo pertractas et per ea affectum tuum circa aliquod certum inflammas vel illuminas intellectum'.⁴⁵ Auch gibt er Empfehlungen hinsichtlich der zur Meditation geeigneten Stoffe und Zeiten.⁴⁶ Da jedoch der gesamte Tagesablauf der Devoten, vom Einschlafen bis zum Erwachen, ob bei der Mahlzeit oder der Handarbeit, unter dem Postulat der Selbstreflexion und Selbstmotivation, der Andacht und des Gebets stand, gab es im Grunde für sie keinen meditationsfreien Bereich. Um diesem totalen Disziplinierungsanspruch gerecht zu werden, war es aber notwendig, das Leben bis ins Detail zu regeln. So ist es kein Zufall, daß die Devoten ein Aristoteles-Zitat ganz besonders schätzten: 'Sapientis est vitam ordinare'.⁴⁷

Zerbolts Traktate haben das spirituelle Reformanliegen der devoten Bewegung in ein kohärentes und theologisch fundiertes Programm gefaßt, das rasch kanonische Geltung erlangte. Dennoch konnten sie allein dem Bedürfnis nach Organisation des täglichen Lebens in der Gemeinschaft nicht genügen. Dazu bedurfte es detaillierter Pläne und Vorschriften, die das Reformprogramm durch Umsetzung in die Praxis erst anwendbar machten. Solche normativen Texte sind in nicht geringer Zahl überliefert. Neben den Hausordnungen der Semireligiosen und klösterlichen *Consuetudines* gehören dazu persönliche Vorsätze (*proposita*), die den Neigungen des einzelnen entsprechende *exercitia spiritualia* festlegen und als Ergänzung und Adaptation der

eingefüllt, so zerreibt sie sich selbst mit leerem und müßigem Zeug'. Das Mühlstein-
gleichnis ähnlich bereits bei Johannes Cassianus, *Conlationes* I, 18, S. 27.

⁴⁵ Gerhard Zerbolt, *De spiritualibus ascensionibus* Kap. 45, S. 284: 'Meditation nennt man es, wenn du das, was du gelesen oder gehört hast, durch eifriges Wiederkäuen in deinem Herzen behandelst und dadurch dein Gemüt für etwas erregst oder deinen Geist erleuchtest'.

⁴⁶ Idem, *Tractatus devotus de reformacione virium anime* Kap. 19, S. 152/154; idem, *De spiritualibus ascensionibus* Kap. 45, S. 286/288.

⁴⁷ Thomas von Kempen, *Libellus spiritualis exercitii* Kap. 1, in idem, *Opera* Bd. 2, S. 331–332: 'Solent boni religiosi habere devota exercitia [...]. Vigilant circa cogitationes suas, et quibus affectionibus moventur animadvertunt atque contra evagationem cordis frequenti oratione ac sacrae lectionis meditatione se muniunt. [...] Sapientis est ordinare vitam suam et debitum actibus suis imponere finem' ('Gute Ordensleute haben ihre frommen Übungen [...]. Sie wachen über ihre Gedanken, achten darauf, durch welche Gefühle sie bewegt werden, und wappnen sich durch häufiges Gebet und Meditation über die Hl. Schrift gegen die Zerstreuung des Herzens. [...] Es ist Sache des Weisen, sein Leben zu ordnen und seinem Handeln das rechte Ziel zu setzen'). Ähnlich Florens Radewijns: 'Disce [...] vitam tuam ordinare' (wie unten n. 50). Cf. Staubach, „Diversa raptim undique collecta“ 127.

kollektiven Verhaltensregeln dienen sollten. Die Meditationspraxis nimmt in diesen privaten Aufzeichnungen einen breiten Raum ein, da sie nicht nur von autoritativen Vorgaben, sondern ebenso auch von individuellen Wahlentscheidungen bestimmt ist.⁴⁸

Frühe Beispiele für diese Gattung devoter Gebrauchsschriftlichkeit stammen wiederum von Florens Radewijns. So schickte er dem Windesheimer Chorherrn Heinrich Balveren auf dessen Bitte einige Empfehlungen für das geistliche Leben, die im wesentlichen darauf hinauslaufen, jede Verrichtung des Tages mit frommen Gedanken und Erwägungen zu begleiten.⁴⁹ Wenn aber die Meditation zur kontinuierlichen Übung werden sollte, war es notwendig, ihre Bindung an die *lectio* zu lockern. Daher rät Radewijns, besonders geeignete Texte wie das pseudo-bernhardische *Speculum monachorum* auswendig zu lernen, um es jederzeit aus dem Gedächtnis abrufen zu können:

In operibus tuis [...] vilitatem tuam cogita, aut de morte aut de pena aut de iudicio [...]. Et in huiusmodi cogitationibus exerce te ad amorem Dei et proximi vel ad extirpandum vitia vel acquirendum virtutes. [...] Disce semel aut bis in die tibi preesse et vitam tuam ordinare, mores componere et te ipsum accusare et condemnare, nec impunitum dimittere. Consulo tibi quod habeas circa te Speculum monachorum aut Speculum Bernardi, secundum quod omnes actus tuos potes ordinare; quem librum etiam discas exterius, quod in omnibus operibus tuis leviter occurrat quomodo debeas te habere aut in quo te male habuisti. [...] Item omnes actus tuos preveni premeditatione et oratione brevi [...]. Item mane et post prandium statue ante oculos tuos tuas malas consuetudines et vitia tua principaliora et virtutes ad quas niteris. [...] Ante prandium cogitabis de passione Domini. Post prandium de morte, de iudicio, de penis inferni. Post cenam de viciis et peccatis.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Cf. Klausmann, *Consuetudo consuetudine vincitur*.

⁴⁹ Ediert als Anhang in Florens Radewijns, *Tractatus devotus* 173–182.

⁵⁰ Ebd. 178–182: ‘Bei deinen Werken [...] denke an deine Nichtigkeit oder den Tod oder die Sündenstrafen oder das Gericht [...]. Und mit solchen Gedanken übe dich zur Gottes- und Nächstenliebe oder zur Lasterbekämpfung und zum Tugenderwerb. [...] Lerne es, einmal oder zweimal am Tag über dich zu richten und dein Leben zu ordnen, dein Verhalten zu disziplinieren und dich selbst anzuklagen, zu verurteilen und nicht straflos davonkommen zu lassen. Ich rate dir, daß du das Speculum monachorum oder Speculum Bernardi bei dir hast, um danach alle deine Handlungen auszurichten; lerne dies Buch auch auswendig, damit die bei allen Verrichtungen gleich vor Augen steht, wie du dich zu verhalten hast oder worin du gefehlt hast. [...] Bereite auch alle Handlungen durch Überlegung und ein kurzes Gebet vor [...]. Stell dir auch morgens und nach der Mittagsmahlzeit deine schlechten Gewohnheiten vor Augen und deine Hauptlaster und die Tugenden, nach denen du strebst. [...] Vor

Während sein Brief an Heinrich Balveren von den Devoten so geschätzt worden ist, daß er in historiographische Werke Aufnahme fand und sogar in die Volkssprache übersetzt wurde,⁵¹ hat sich das eigene Exer-
citurium des Florens Radewijns nur durch einen glücklichen Zufall erhalten und blieb bis vor kurzem unerkannt. Es handelt sich um einen lapidar formulierten Zeitplan für die täglich zu absolvierenden geistlichen Übungen, der zahlreiche Verweise auf einschlägige Passagen in den Schriften des Autors und in Zerbolts Traktat *De spiritualibus ascensionibus* enthält. Ursprünglich in der ersten Person Singular abgefaßt, ist der Übungsplan durch einen späteren Bearbeiter auf die zweite Person umstilisiert worden, wohl in der Absicht, ihn für andere Benutzer ansprechender zu machen. Theo Klausmann ist es gelungen, das anonym aufgezeichnete Exer-
citurium Radewijns zuzuordnen und es zudem als eine Art Vorstufe der Statuten des Herr-Florens-Hauses zu erweisen. Damit wird der unscheinbare Text, der aus dem Fraterhaus in Deventer zu den Kölner Kreuzherren gelangte (und jetzt möglicherweise zusammen mit anderen Schätzen des Historischen Archivs verloren ist), zu einem exemplarischen Zeugnis für den interaktiven Prozeß pragmatischer Schriftlichkeit bei den modernen Devoten.⁵²

Es charakterisiert die *Devotio moderna* als Textgemeinschaft, daß die zur Formierung des religiösen Lebens essentiellen Grundsätze, Anweisungen und Techniken verschriftlicht, ausgetauscht, adaptiert und in neue Gattungszusammenhänge transponiert werden können. Gerade aus dem Bereich der Meditationsübungen lassen sich hier zahlreiche weitere Beispiele anführen. So hat ein unbekannter Kompilator ein 'Parvum et simplex exercitium [...] ex consuetudine humilis patris domini Florencii et aliorum devotorum' zusammengestellt.⁵³ Und Zerbolts Traktat 'Vom geistlichen Aufstieg' hat nicht nur Radewijns, sondern auch anderen Devoten als Meditationsgrundlage gedient, indem die dort referierten Materien auf Wochenpläne verteilt oder exzerpiert wurden.⁵⁴

der Mahlzeit sollst du an das Leiden des Herrn denken, danach an den Tod, an das Gericht, an die Strafen der Hölle, nach dem Abendbrot an die Laster und Sünden'.

⁵¹ Cf. ebd. 22–23.

⁵² Klausmann, *Consuetudo consuetudine vincitur* 156–159 und Anhang 4, S. 367.

⁵³ Ebd. 89–93, 159–160.

⁵⁴ Ebd. 156–158. In den *Consuetudines* des Fraterhauses zu Wesel werden beide Traktate Zerbolts für die Meditation empfohlen; s. Klausmann, *Consuetudo consuetudine vincitur*. 34 und 409. Auch die Windesheimer benutzten *De spiritualibus ascensionibus* als Meditationsanleitung: Johannes Busch, *Chronicon Windeshemense und*

Ein besonders originelles Exercitium ist in einer Handschrift des Trierer Priesterseminars überliefert.⁵⁵ Sein Urheber beruft sich auf die Autorität Geert Grotes und kombiniert die Verhaltensregeln mit wörtlichen Aussprüchen des Meisters. Der Text ist in vier einzelne *exercitia* gegliedert: Das erste zählt die Meditationsthemen auf, die den Tageszeiten, den Wochentagen und den Zeiten des Kirchenjahres zuzuordnen sind, das zweite regelt die Gedanken und Gebete vor und bei allen Verrichtungen des Tages, das dritte schreibt Demutsübungen vor und das vierte bezieht sich auf das Verhalten innerhalb der Gemeinschaft. Ziel dieses Übungsprogramms ist offenkundig – wie auch im Exercitium für Heinrich Balveren – die totale Okkupation des Bewußtseins durch devote Materien, die absolute Beherrschung der Gedanken und die mentale Vorbereitung, begleitende Kontrolle und nachträgliche Bewertung aller Worte und Handlungen. So wirkt es überaus passend, daß der Traktat eröffnet wird mit einer Ermahnung zur Konzentration auf ‘gute Gedanken’ als die Quelle aller Tugenden:

Magister Gerardus Groet dixit: Exerce te, quantum potes, in bonis cogitacionibus, ut per gratiam Dei acquiras tibi usum cogitandi bona, sicut consuetus es cogitare vana et inutilia, quia sicut amor amore vincitur, sic consuetudo consuetudine superatur.

Magister Gerardus Groet sagte: Übe dich, soviel du kannst, in guten Gedanken, auf daß du durch Gottes Gnade die Gewohnheit erwirbst Gutes zu denken, so wie du bislang gewohnt bist, Nichtiges und Unnützes zu denken. Denn wie Liebe durch Liebe besiegt wird, so wird Gewohnheit durch Gewohnheit überwunden.⁵⁶

Grote hat sich hier an eine unter Augustins Namen verbreitete Predigt des Caesarius von Arles angelehnt, deren Thema gleichfalls die Einübung in gute Gedanken ist: ‘Vielleicht sagt jemand: „Die schlechten und schändlichen Gedanken haben in meinem Herzen eine solche Gewöhnung bewirkt (‘consuetudinem fecerunt’), daß ich sie auf keine Weise wieder vertreiben kann.“ Dabei ist es doch allen bekannt, daß

Liber de reformatione monasteriorum, ed. K. Grube, Geschichtsquellen der Provinz Sachsen 19 (Halle/S.: 1886) 195–196 (über Johannes Scutken) und 244. Cf. auch Dijk R.Th.M. van, „Die Wochenpläne in einer unbekanntenen Handschrift von ‘De spiritualibus ascensionibus’ des Gerhard Zerbolt von Zutphen“, in J. Helmroth – H. Müller (ed.), *Studien zum 15. Jahrhundert. Festschrift für Erich Meuthen* (München: 1994) 445–455; idem, „Tijdordening in de devote overweging“, in P. Bange (ed.), *Geloof, moraal en intellect in de Middeleeuwen*, *Middeleeuwse Studies* 10 (Nijmegen: 1995) 139–159.

⁵⁵ Klausmann, *Consuetudo consuetudine vincitur* 81–89 und Anhang 1, S. 335–338.

⁵⁶ Ebd. 335.

Liebe durch Liebe besiegt wird (quia amor amore vincitur); beginnen wir also damit, gute Gedanken zu lieben, und alsbald wird Gott uns von den schlechten befreien'.⁵⁷ 'Amor amore vincitur' – diese erbauliche Umdeutung eines frivolen Ratschlags aus Ovids *Remedia amoris*⁵⁸ wird also von Grote nicht nur wörtlich übernommen, sondern auch noch um die Analogiebildung 'consuetudo consuetudine superatur' erweitert, die das Prinzip asketisch-habitueller Selbsterziehung auf eine prägnante Formel bringt und zugleich an die verschriftlichten Lebensgewohnheiten klösterlicher Gemeinschaften, die monastischen *Consuetudines*, erinnert.⁵⁹

Einflußreicher als die 'privaten' *Exercitia* war die *Epistola de vita et passione Domini nostri*, eine Meditationsanleitung, die der Windesheimer Chronist Johannes Busch aus der Volkssprache ins Lateinische übersetzt hat.⁶⁰ Wie Busch berichtet, haben nicht nur der Windesheimer Prior Johannes Vos van Heusden († 1424) und viele andere Devote, sondern auch er selbst ihre geistlichen Übungen nach dem dort empfohlenen Muster gestaltet. Als besonderen Vorzug der Schrift stellt er heraus, daß der angebotene Meditationsstoff jedem Benutzer erlaubt, eine seiner persönlichen Verfassung und Stimmung entsprechende Auswahl zu treffen.⁶¹ Es handelt sich dabei um drei verschiedene Betrachtungszyklen, deren Punkte auf die einzelnen Tage der Woche verteilt sind: erstens das Leben Jesu mit besonders brei-

⁵⁷ Caesarius von Arles, *Sermones* I, ed. G. Morin, Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 103 (Turnhout: 1953) Sermo 45, S. 201: 'Sed forte dicit aliquis: Ita consuetudinem fecerunt malae et turpes cogitationes in corde meo, ut eas a me nulla possim ratione repellere. Omnibus enim notum est quia amor amore vincitur; incipiamus bonas cogitationes diligere, et statim nos Deus ab illis quae malae sunt dignabitur liberare'.

⁵⁸ Als wirksamstes Heilmittel gegen eine unglückliche Liebe empfiehlt Ovid ein neues Liebesverhältnis, v. 462: 'Successore novo vincitur omnis amor'.

⁵⁹ Cf. Staubach, „Text als Prozeß“ 263–264; idem, „Eine unendliche Geschichte? Der Streit um die Autorschaft der 'Imitatio Christi'“, in N. Staubach – U. Bodemann (ed.), *Aus dem Winkel in die Welt. Die Bücher des Thomas von Kempen und ihre Schicksale*, Tradition – Reform – Innovation 11 (Frankfurt a.M. u. a.: 2006) 9–35; 32–34.

⁶⁰ Johannes Busch, *Chronicon Windeshemense* 226–244; Separatedition: *Epistola de vita et passione Domini nostri*, ed. M. Hedlund, *Kerkhistorische Bijdragen* 5 (Leiden: 1975). Cf. dazu Lesser B., *Johannes Busch: Chronist der Devotio moderna. Werkstruktur, Überlieferung, Rezeption*, Tradition – Reform – Innovation 10 (Frankfurt a. M. u. a.: 2005) 182–208. Volkssprachiger Text: 'Epistola de vita et passione Domini nostri' und 'Regula Augustini' in *mittelniederdeutschen Fassungen: Diözesanarchiv Trier, Ms. 45*, ed. L. Hedberg, *Lunder germanistische Forschungen* 29 (Lund: 1954).

⁶¹ Johannes Busch, *Chronicon Windeshemense* 32.

ter Berücksichtigung seiner Kindheit und Jugend, zweitens Leiden, Tod, Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt des Herrn sowie die Herabkunft des Heiligen Geistes und drittens die Engel und Heiligen nach ihrer Rangordnung und *in generali*. Wie der Kranke, dem man verschiedene Speisen anbietet, weil er nicht alles verträgt, soll ein jeder in diesem Programm täglich das finden, was ihm zusagt und bekömmlich ist: ‘Sic tria tibi fercula omni die apponuntur ut infirmis est consuetudo; si unum digerere non potueris, tunc secundum aut tertium degusta, quatenus innutritus non remaneas a vero anime tue cibo’.⁶²

Begleitet wird der Meditationsplan mit Ratschlägen für die rechte mentale Einstellung zu den geistlichen Übungen. Regelmäßige Gewissensprüfung und die Erfahrung der eigenen Unvollkommenheit eröffnen ein so unmittelbar-existenzielles Verständnis der Heiligen Schrift, als sei man selbst ihr Autor oder exklusiver Adressat: ‘Cum ita te interior exercueris et cognoveris, tunc tota sacra pagina ita tibi deserviet, ac si tu eam posuisses aut quod de te solo ipsa fuisset conscripta’.⁶³ Die erste und wichtigste Regel aber lautet, den Anfechtungen und Ablenkungen des Tages durch gedankliche Selbstdisziplinierung zu widerstehen und das Bewußtsein mit guten Vorstellungen zu beschäftigen:

Primum ergo desidero et instanter te exoro, quatenus de nocte aut de mane, cum primum surrexeris, omnes inutiles cogitationes et sompnia tua seponas et Dominum Deum ante mentis oculos assumes, [...] ut cor tuum primum cum Deo sit occupatum et in bonis meditationibus assidue permaneat.⁶⁴

Wie schon das Grote-Dictum und andere Exercitia zeigt auch diese Ermahnung, daß die Begriffe *cogitatio* und *meditatio*, die Hugo von

⁶² *Epistola de vita et passione Domini nostri* 93; cf. Johannes Busch, *Chronicon Windeshemense* 230: ‘So werden dir alle Tage drei Gerichte aufgetragen, wie es mit den Kranken Brauch ist; wenn du eins nicht verträgst, so versuche das zweite oder das dritte, damit du nicht hungrig ohne die wahre Seelenspeise bleibst’.

⁶³ *Epistola de vita et passione Domini nostri* 108; cf. Johannes Busch, *Chronicon Windeshemense* 242: ‘Wenn du dich auf diese Weise im Innern übst und erkennst, dann wird dir die ganze Hl. Schrift so entgegenkommen, als hättest du selbst sie geschrieben oder als wäre sie nur für dich allein verfaßt’. Busch hat diese Grundsätze auch bei der eigenen geistlichen Übungspraxis befolgt: ebd. 397–398; cf. Staubach, „Text als Prozeß“ 267–274.

⁶⁴ *Epistola de vita et passione Domini nostri* 92; cf. Johannes Busch, *Chronicon Windeshemense* 229: ‘Als erstes wünsche ich und bitte dich inständig, daß du zur Nacht oder des Morgens, sobald du aufgestanden bist, alle unnützen Gedanken und Träume abtust und dir Gott den Herrn vor das geistige Auge stellst, auf daß dein Herz von Anfang an mit Gott beschäftigt ist und dauernd in guten Meditationen verweilt’.

St. Victor noch deutlich unterschieden hatte, von den Devoten immer häufiger synonym gebraucht wurden. Denn ihr spirituelles Reformprogramm beschränkte die Introspektion und Christus-Imitatio nicht auf bestimmte Übungstechniken, -stoffe und -zeiten, sondern beanspruchte alle Seelenkräfte kontinuierlich und umfassend. In diesem Sinne hat übrigens auch der Kartäuser Dionysius († 1471) *cognitio*, *meditatio* und *consideratio* als vergleichbare Aktivitäten des *intellectus* verstanden und für das geistliche Leben eine Synthese von *intellectus* und *voluntas* gefordert:

Intellectus et voluntas sibi invicem sunt connexa atque se mutuo in agendo perficiunt. Nam et actio intellectus, puta cognitio, meditatio seu consideratio sine affectione informis est, nuda, inefficax. Voluntas quoque de se caeca perhibetur et indigens dirigi intellectu, qui est veluti oculus voluntatis.⁶⁵

Der Autor, der die Meditation am konsequentesten auf die Analyse und Kontrolle der Gedanken gegründet hat, ist Wessel Gansfort († 1489).⁶⁶ Ohne selbst Mitglied einer devoten Gemeinschaft zu sein, stand er in freundschaftlichem Kontakt mit dem Windesheimer Chorherrenstift Agnietenberg bei Zwolle, der Klosterheimat des Thomas von Kempen († 1471). Der berühmte Autor der *Imitatio Christi* war allerdings schon mehr als ein Jahrzehnt tot, als Wessel dort den jungen Johannes Mauburnus (Mombaer) aus Brüssel kennenlernte und von seinen Bemühungen erfuhr, die devoten Exercitia zu systematisieren und ihren Vollzug durch mnemotechnische Verse und Figuren zu erleichtern. Auf Bitten der Chorherren verfaßte Wessel Gansfort dann selbst ein umfangreiches Meditationshandbuch, von dem Mauburnus wiederum so beeindruckt war, daß er es für sein berühmtes *Rosetum exercitiorum spiritualium et sacrarum meditationum* adaptiert hat. Wessel Gansfort und Johannes Mauburnus teilen sich somit das

⁶⁵ Dionysius Cartusianus, *Opera minora* Bd. IX (Tournai: 1912) 71: 'Geist und Wille sind miteinander verbunden und vervollkommen sich in wechselseitiger Wirkung. Denn die Tätigkeit des Geistes, nämlich Erkenntnis, Meditation oder Betrachtung, ist ohne Gefühlsregung formlos, nackt und unwirksam. Auch der Wille ist für sich allein blind und bedarf der Lenkung durch den Geist, der gleichsam das Auge des Willens darstellt'.

⁶⁶ Cf. Akkerman F. – Vanderjagt A. (ed.), *Wessel Gansfort (1419–1489) and Northern Humanism*, Brill's studies in intellectual history 40 (Leiden u. a.: 1993); Snyder L.D., *Wessel Gansfort and the Art of Meditation* (Diss. Cambridge, Mass.: 1966); *Moderne Devotie, figuren en facetten. Tentoonstelling [...] Geert Grote 1384–1984*, Catalogus (Nijmegen: 1984) Nr. 126, S. 335–339.

Verdienst, die Meditationspraxis der *Devotio moderna* in einer Weise perfektioniert zu haben, daß man sie als Vorbild für die ignatianischen Exerzitien betrachten konnte.⁶⁷

Wessel Gansforts als *Scala meditationis* bekanntes Werk wird in der *Editio princeps* von 1614 treffend *Tractatus de cohibendis cogitationibus et de modo constituendarum meditationum* genannt.⁶⁸ Den Grund für die Flut und Konfusion nichtiger und haltloser Gedanken, die das Innere des Menschen wie ein Seesturm umhertreiben und der Gefahr des Scheiterns aussetzen, erkennt der Autor in der Fehlleitung des Herzens, das statt der Gottesliebe von anderen Wünschen und Neigungen erfüllt ist:

Certissimum enim est, si fido amore Deum nostrum diligeremus, non tam vago fluctuantium cogitationum aestu cor nostrum iactaretur. Ubi enim thesaurus tuus, illic et cor tuum est. [...] Quales sunt meditationes nostrae, talis est amor noster, ut si amor nullus, erunt cogitationes vagae, et si vagae cogitationes, liquet amorem nullum esse.⁶⁹

Im Umkehrschluß bedeutet dies, daß sich nur durch die Ausrichtung der Gedanken auf ihr eigentliches Ziel der *amor Dei* entwickeln kann. Denn durch Gedankentätigkeit lassen sich Gefühle generieren, wie Wessel an einem eigenen psychologisch subtil analysierten Erlebnis veranschaulicht. Auf einer Rheinfahrt von Köln nach Heidelberg sei er einst zwischen Andernach und Bacharach durch die munteren Geschichten und Scherze der Mitreisenden aus seiner trüben Stimmung gerissen und aufgeheitert worden, schon bald jedoch nach dem Abbrechen dieser Unterhaltung wieder in Trübsal versunken. Er habe dann intensiv nach dem Grund seines Gemütswandels geforscht

⁶⁷ Cf. Debongnie P., *Jean Mombaer de Bruxelles, abbé de Livry. Ses écrits et ses réformes* (Louvain – Toulouse: 1927) 20–21, 206–226; idem, „Exercices spirituels III“, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique* 4 (1961) 1923–1933; Watrigant H., „La méditation méthodique et l'école des Frères de la Vie commune“, *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 3 (1922) 134–155; idem, „La méditation méthodique et Jean Mauburnus“, *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 4 (1923) 13–29; Smits van Wanberghe M., „Origine et développement des exercices spirituels avant Saint Ignace“, *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 33 (1957) 264–272; *Moderne Devotie, figuren en facetten* Nr. 77, S. 217–221; Nr. 128, S. 343–348.

⁶⁸ Wessel Gansfort, *Opera* (Groningen, Johannes Sassius: 1614) 193.

⁶⁹ Ebd. 204: 'Es ist ganz sicher, daß unser Herz nicht von den in so unsteter Flut treibenden Gedanken hin- und hergeworfen würde, wenn wir unserm Gott mit fester Liebe anhängen. Denn wo dein Schatz ist, da ist auch dein Herz. [...] Wie unsere Meditationen sind, so ist unsere Liebe – wenn es keine Liebe gibt, sind die Gedanken unstet, und wenn die Gedanken unstet sind, ist klar, daß es keine Liebe gibt'.

und schließlich allein aus diesem Nachdenken die heitere Zuversicht gewonnen, seine Gefühle beherrschen und lenken zu können: ‘Grandis ex uno hoc facultas aperitur sapienti, ut noverit ad quascunque velut [vult?] salutare affectiones consequendas habere apud se recondita seminaria’.⁷⁰

Demgemäß ist Gansforts *Scala meditationis* ein elaboriertes Programm zur Erzeugung und Steuerung von Gedanken, das mit der Frage beginnt: ‘Quid est quod cogito?’⁷¹ Er lobt nicht nur die Beschäftigung der Pythagoräer mit der Mathematik als ein geeignetes Mittel zur Disziplinierung des Geistes, sondern empfiehlt auch die Techniken der Stoffsuche und -bearbeitung, die die Rhetorik entwickelt hat, die *loci rhetoricales*. Daß auf diese Weise die Meditation zum Gegenstand der *ratiocinatio* gemacht wird, verteidigt er ausdrücklich als legitim. So überrascht es nicht, daß er schließlich die *cogitatio* der *meditatio* nicht nur gleichgestellt, sondern sogar übergeordnet hat.⁷² Wenn die *Devotio moderna*, wie man oft sagt, durch einen gewissen Antiintellektualismus gekennzeichnet war, so kann Wessel Gansfort, der Repräsentant des ‘Northern Humanism’ und der Vorreformation, in der Tat nur mit Einschränkungen dieser Bewegung zugerechnet werden.

⁷⁰ Ebd. 217: ‘Dem Weisen eröffnet sich allein daraus schon eine große Möglichkeit, daß er weiß, bei sich über ein Mittel zu verfügen, um alle heilsamen Affekte erzeugen zu können’.

⁷¹ Ebd. 292.

⁷² Ebd. 286: ‘Sunt ergo meditatio, consideratio, electio, dijudicatio non adeo a ratiocinatione distantes, quin foecunde et fructuose possint ratiocinatione tractari. Ex meditatione ergo in cogitationem collectio est velut ex vago in determinatum’ (‘Meditation, Betrachtung, Erwägung, Urteil sind nicht so sehr verschieden von logischer Analyse, daß sie nicht mit Nutzen und Erfolg durch sie untersucht werden könnten. Vom Meditieren zum Denken ist ein Schritt wie vom Ungefähren zum Bestimmten’).

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LOVE TRICKS AND FLEA-BITINGS:
MEDITATION, IMAGINATION AND THE PAIN OF CHRIST
IN JOSEPH HALL AND RICHARD CRASHAW

Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen

In *The Body in Pain*, one of the most brilliant and influential late twentieth-century philosophical studies of the nature of pain, Elaine Scarry argues that it is impossible to share in other people's pain:

when one speaks about 'one's own physical pain' and about 'another person's physical pain', one might almost appear to be speaking about two wholly distinct orders of events. [F]or the person in pain, so incontestably and unnegotiably present is it that 'having pain' may come to be thought of as the most vibrant example of what it is 'to have certainty', while for the other person it is so elusive that 'hearing about pain' may exist as the primary model of what it is 'to have doubt'. Thus pain comes unsharably into our midst as at once that which cannot be denied and that which cannot be confirmed.¹

On Scarry's analysis, it is the very essence of pain to resist compassion in its literal sense of 'suffering with' because truly comprehending the pain of others – physically, emotionally and intellectually – is fundamentally impossible. Her insights would seem to be confirmed by experience: seeing a relative, spouse or friend in great pain may cause not only a sense of being powerless to alleviate their suffering but also a troubling awareness of the loneliness that comes with pain. Pain, as an interior bodily sensation, refuses to open itself up to others. Yet in spite of its seeming universality, Scarry's reading of pain is characteristic of late twentieth-century western cultural conceptions of pain. Contemporary western society is preoccupied with the attempt to control pain, and has developed an unprecedented, if still limited, ability to alleviate it. It has also increasingly relegated intense pain to the secluded world of the modern hospital ward and pain clinic, hidden from public awareness. Partly as a result of these developments,

¹ Scarry E., *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: 1985) 4.

witnessing and responding affectively to the pain of others as an act in its own right has not only lost much of its cultural centrality, but has also come to be seen as a philosophical impossibility.

That Scarry's understanding of pain is historically and culturally conditioned also becomes clear if we turn to the very different ways in which early modern culture conceived of physical suffering. For early moderns, part of the essence of pain was precisely that it could be shared, that it had the power to engender compassion and create in others a desire to suffer with those in pain. This understanding of pain was especially dominant in religious culture: early modern Catholicism revolved to a significant extent around human responsiveness to, and compassion with the suffering Christ. Catholic culture saw the Passion not only as a spectacle to behold, but also as the moment at which Christ opened himself up most urgently to human participation.

Yet the idea that humans can and should take part in the Passion of Christ was also the subject of intense debate, and part of the religious controversies of the early modern era hinged on the theological meaning of physical suffering. This was an issue that occupied many early modern religious writers so strongly because it entailed, in condensed form, a number of fundamental theological and spiritual questions that were at the heart of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations: what is the nature of spiritual experience? How can humans engage with the divine? How should the relation between the human and the divine be defined? What is the role of the human body within this relation? Conversely, these issues were bound up with the question of whether it is possible to share in the suffering of others.

The issue of human participation in the Passion was of particular relevance for the early modern tradition of spiritual meditation, since especially Catholic meditative works and meditation handbooks were much preoccupied with the sufferings of Christ. Indeed, in these works, contemplating the Passion formed a kind of meditative benchmark, an activity that combined various key aspects of religious meditation as Catholic culture conceived of it: a prolonged and intense pondering of a biblical event that generates both an intellectual and an affective response, and elucidates the possible doctrinal or spiritual meanings and significance of the event. This process ultimately fosters the spiritual growth of the meditator. At the same time, Catholic meditative conceptions of the Passion clashed with some of the fundamental assumptions of early modern Protestantism. The Protestant emphasis on God's otherness – on the gap between sinful humans

and the divine – made the notion that humans can truly comprehend, and even share in, the pains of Christ problematic if not blasphemous. Much the same is true for the Catholic stress on the physical dimension of spiritual experience. Yet the intense affective response to the Passion celebrated in Catholic works also exerted a powerful attraction on Protestant writers. The emotional engagement with the Passion of Christ mobilized aspects of spiritual and ritual experience that Protestantism could not simply discard. The first part of this essay examines this tension in theological and meditative works of the English Protestant divine Joseph Hall (1574–1656). Hall's work provides a useful entry point into the debates outlined here since it is so clearly torn between two opposing doctrinal positions to which it seems at times almost equally loyal.

The early modern debate about human engagement with the Passion, especially in relation to meditation, also turns on the question of the nature and power of the imagination. Catholic meditative discourse not only places the imagination at the centre of any contemplation of the Passion, but also accords it tremendous efficacy: imaginative empathy with the suffering Christ can take on such intensity that it effectively blends with its object: the meditator *becomes* Christ in his pain, achieves precisely what Scarry holds to be impossible. As we will see, in presenting the Passion as essentially unfathomable, Hall's Protestant critique of Catholic meditation targets precisely this idea. For him, the powers of the imagination are inadequate when faced with the mystery of Christ's suffering – even though, as we will see, he is not consistent on this point.

Yet if Protestant discourse saw the Passion as too radically other to be grasped by the human imagination, there is also a notable and related paradox built into the Catholic meditative tradition. In presenting the imagination as the royal road to an actual, even physical union with Christ, early modern Catholic meditative discourse effectively creates an indefinite deferral of that union. When does imagination become reality – when does imaginative empathy turn into identity with Christ? In Catholic discourse, too, therefore, the imagination is ultimately insufficient, and can never serve as a goal in itself. It eventually has to be transfigured into a 'true' yet *not* directly physical imitation of Christ, yet this transformation can only remain beyond reach. The second part of this essay will argue that the poet and converted Catholic Richard Crashaw (1612–1649) intuits a solution to this very problem in his "Sancta Maria Dolorum or the Mother of Sorrows", a

paraphrase of the famous “Stabat mater” attributed to the thirteenth-century Franciscan friar Jacopone da Todi (1228–1306).² Crashaw clearly draws on Catholic meditative discourse, yet he understands meditative *imitatio Christi* not only as an act of the empathetic imagination, but also (and by consequence) as a *linguistic* and poetic act. In this way, his poem creates the imaginative union with the suffering Christ in the very act of expressing the desire for it. If sharing in Christ’s pain is poetic in nature, imagination and reality coincide if this engagement occurs in poetry, as an act of the poetic imagination. The need to move *beyond* the imagination is in this way obviated.

By reading the work of Joseph Hall and Richard Crashaw in relation to discourses of meditation, and as responses to the Catholic meditative tradition, I hope to shed light on some of the different and conflicting early modern conceptions of the ways in which humans can engage with the Passion of Christ. The debate about this issue also suggests that the modern notion of pain as a form of ultimate isolation and loneliness can be traced in part to the early modern Protestant rejection of suffering as *imitatio Christi*.

Joseph Hall and Meditation

Joseph Hall, bishop of Exeter and later of Norwich, satirist, and an astonishingly prolific religious writer, was one of the creators of a seventeenth-century Protestant English tradition of religious meditation. In a book-length study of Hall’s work, Richard McCabe points out that until the first decade of the seventeenth century, meditation had been a predominantly Catholic discipline, with all of the meditation handbooks available in English translated from mostly Spanish sources, often smuggled into England from the continent by Jesuit priests.³ It

² The full title of the poem is “Sancta Maria Dolorum or the Mother of Sorrows. A Patheticall descant upon the devout Plainsong of Stabat Mater Dolorosa”. The longest version appeared in Crashaw’s *Carmen Deo Nostro* (Paris, Peter Targa: 1652), in which the Latin main title and the explanatory subtitle were added, as well as two new stanzas.

³ McCabe R., *Joseph Hall: A Study in Satire and Meditation* (Oxford: 1982). For another overview of Hall’s work, see Frank Livingstone Huntley’s useful introduction to his *Bishop Joseph Hall and Protestant Meditation in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study with the Texts of ‘The art of divine meditation’ (1606) and ‘Occasional meditations’ (1633)* (Binghamton, NY: 1981). McCabe, following an argument broached in Barbara Lewalski’s *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric*,

was part of Hall's achievement to wed the concepts and techniques of Catholic meditative traditions to a Calvinist sensibility (McCabe aptly describes him as an 'episcopalian Calvinist'),⁴ an approach codified, for example, in his well known *Art of Divine Meditation* (1606).

In the *Art of Divine Meditation* Hall states his aim of taking meditation out of the monk's cell and making its principles available to everyone. Indeed, Hall has a degree of contempt for meditation in a monastic context. This is partly because monks have 'mewd & mured themselves up from the world', and partly because what Hall sees as the 'continuall meditation' of monastic life takes insufficient account of 'Humane frailty': the human ability to concentrate on spiritual matters is at best intermittent.⁵ This Reformed sense of human inadequacy also informs Hall's understanding of the *content* of meditation. Meditation offers no mystical ecstasy, no unity with, or even immediate knowledge of, the divine.⁶ According to Hall, 'we see God [...] only in his works and in his words', always operating at one remove from the sacred. It takes a concerted effort to decipher God's works and words, to see *through* physical reality – using what Hall, in *The Remedy of Prophanenesse* (1637), terms 'the spirituall eye', as opposed to the limited perception of 'the carnall eye'.⁷ As McCabe notes, Hall also related the practice of meditation 'closely to the doctrines of saving faith and divine grace', stressing that succesful meditative devotion can be a sign of election – of God's 'powerfull, and glorious influence' on the elected sinner.⁸

The question is whether Hall's attempt to blend Calvinist theology and Catholic meditation was succesful. To a significant extent, the two traditions imposed highly different and conflicting demands on Hall, and he seems to have found a balance between them only in his theoretical and methodological accounts of meditation in the *Art of Divine Meditation*, but also, for example, in the much later *Remedy of*

overstates the extent to which English translations of Catholic meditative works were censored or adapted to Protestant tastes (145–146). What is remarkable about early modern English translations of the work of Luis of Granada, for example, is how little they differed from their sources, even when the publication of his work had been taken over by Protestant publishers.

⁴ McCabe, *Joseph Hall* 10.

⁵ Joseph Hall, *The Arte of Divine Meditation* (London, Humfrey Lownes: 1606) 41–42; 41; 40.

⁶ McCabe, *Joseph Hall* 151.

⁷ Joseph Hall, *The Remedy of Prophanenesse* (London, Thomas Harper: 1637) 48.

⁸ Hall, *Remedy of Prophaneness* 79.

Prophanenesse (1637). In Hall's multi-volume meditative work *Contemplations on Principall Passages of the Holy Storie* (1612–1634), by contrast, the tensions between the two spiritual discourses on which he drew come to the surface, and produce at times a radical incoherence, his contemplations divided between competing theological trajectories that remain locked in opposition. In his meditative *practice* (as opposed to his theoretical model), Hall appears unable to escape from some of the intensely Catholic dimensions of early modern meditative traditions.

This becomes especially clear if we consider Hall's engagement with the Passion of Christ, an issue that Hall had to confront in his attempt to appropriate meditation for a Calvinist sensibility. The human obligation to identify with and take part in the Passion is one of the most important topoi of early modern Catholic meditation discourses. A characteristic example is the *Libro de la oración y meditación* (1554), a meditation manual by the Spanish Dominican theologian and devotional writer Luis de Granada (1505–1588), frequently reprinted and translated during the early modern period. This manual for prayer and meditation frequently exhorts the reader to identify profoundly with Christ, especially by meditating intently on the physical details of his suffering. In this way, the meditant makes Christ's pain into his own, as appears from the following quotation, from the first English translation by the Jesuit Richard Hopkins (1582), in which the reader is exhorted to move himself 'unto compassion':

thinke uppon this, not as though it were past, but as a thing present, not as though it were another mans paine, but as though it were thine owne, imagining thy selfe to bee in the place of him that suffereth, and thinking with thy selfe what a terrible paine it would be unto thee, if in so sensible and tender a part as the head is, men should fasten a number of thornes, yea and those so sharpe, that they should pierce into thy skull. But what speake I of many Thornes, whereas, were it but the pricke of a pin, thou couldst very hardly abide the paine thereof. And therefore thou mayst heereby conjecture, what most greevous paines that most tender and delicate head of our sweete Saviour felt at that time, by the meanes of that great and strange torment.⁹

⁹ Luis de Granada, *Of prayer and meditation contayning foureteene meditations, for the seauen dayes of the weeke, both for mornings and euenings: treating of the principall matters and holy mysteries of our faith*, tr. Richard Hopkins (London, Edward White: 1611) 486.

In a similar vein, but going one step further than Granada, the Jesuit writer Luis de la Puente urges his reader to become one both with the suffering Mary and Christ: 'Beseech [Christ and Mary] to devide their paines with thee in such sort, that thou maist be crucified with them by a true imitation'.¹⁰ Both Granada and de la Puente assume that human pain can be a form of sacred compassion – that there is a form of spiritual traffic between human pain and divine pain. For de la Puente, moreover, the powers of the imagination can be harnessed in such a way that the divide between pain-sufferer and onlooker ceases to exist. Such meditation on the Passion entails a significant move away, of course, from the ritual, physical reenactments carried out, for example, by late medieval lay confraternities. In Counter-Reformation meditative discourse, the identification with Christ consists primarily in an act of the imagination, rather than in concrete bodily actions. Yet for De la Puente, as for many Catholic meditative writers, the point of meditation is also that, once it is succesful, meditation is essentially indistinguishable from such acts: its ultimate goal is a 'true' union with Christ in his suffering that has the intensity and palpability of physical suffering.

Early modern Protestant theology regarded these notions with profound suspicion. Protestant reformers attacked the idea that sinful humans can take part in the sufferings of the divine Christ. In the *Institutes of Christian Religion*, furthermore, John Calvin maintained that Christ's bodily pains were of limited importance: much more relevant was the spiritual agony which he underwent. For Calvin, Christ's death would have been 'to no effect, yf he had suffred only a corporall death: but it behoved also that he shoulde feele the rigour of Gods vengeance' (2.xvi.10; fol. 99). In other words, Calvin posits a clear distinction between the two different kinds of pain, mental and bodily, that Christ underwent, and locates the essence of the Passion in Christ's emotional suffering.¹¹ Protestant discourse, especially in its Reformed versions, was also suspicious of the idea that the body, via pain or otherwise, could

¹⁰ Luis de la Puente, *Meditations upon the Mysteries of our Holie Faith, with the Practise of Mental Prayer touchingthe same*, tr. John Heigham, 2 vols. (St. Omer, C. Boscard: 1619) vol. II 264.

¹¹ I discuss Calvin's comments on the Passion in more detail in 'Partakers of Pain: Religious Meanings of Pain in Early Modern England', in Dijkhuizen J.-F. van – Enenkel K.A.E. (eds.), *The Sense of Suffering: Constructions of Physical Pain in Early Modern Culture* (Leiden–Boston: 2009; Intersections. Yearbook of Early Modern Studies) 189–221.

form a locus of spiritual experience, and saw religion as first and foremost a matter for the inner life. Moreover, in Protestant conceptions, the Passion eludes precisely the affective response that forms a central imperative in the Catholic meditative tradition.

The Depth of this Suffering: Hall's Passion Sermon

Joseph Hall confronts the issues outlined here head-on in his *Passion sermon*, preached at St Paul's on Good Friday 1609. In this sermon Hall examines both the nature of Christ's suffering and the question of how humans should relate to it: to what extent, and in what way, can human beings participate in the Passion? In what sense can Christ's suffering be said to re-occur today? Is there a fundamental gap between human and divine pain? In doing so, Hall attempts to formulate a Calvinist approach to the Passion that retains an emphasis on Christ's self-sacrifice while also distancing the events of the Passion from the experience of the contemporary Christian (as opposed to the insistence, in Catholic manuals, on their continuing actuality and presence). It is important to note that Hall characterizes his sermon twice as a 'meditation', while, in a gesture characteristic of meditative discourse, he also begins by appealing to the audience's imagination: 'Imagine therefore, that you saw Christ Jesus, in this day of his passion'.¹² His sermon serves both as a collective meditation on the sufferings of Christ and as a commentary on such meditation – as an attempt to redefine the nature of meditation on the Passion.

While Hall acknowledges the theological centrality of the Passion, and insists that 'every day [...] must be the Good-friday of a Christian' (2), he criticizes the Catholic preoccupation with the suffering Christ on the first page of the preface to the reader: 'The Church of Rome, so fixes her selfe (in her adoration) upon the Crosse of Christ, as if shee forgat his glory' (sig. A4). It is also telling that Hall should centre his exegesis of the Passion around *John* 19:20, the moment of Christ's final words and death, with '[Christ's] sufferings ended, our salvation wrought' (4). In this way, he preempts a discussion of the physical details of the Passion itself, focusing rather on its soteriological effects. In taking his theological cue from Christ's dying words ('it

¹² Joseph Hall, *The Passion sermon preached at Paules Crosse* (London, W. S[tansby]: 1609) 1, 49, 3.

is finished'), Hall also emphasizes the extent to which the Passion is a past event, unique and complete in itself, and not open to human reenactment or direct emotional response.¹³ In a thoroughly Calvinist comment on *Col.* 1:24, a well known chestnut in early modern theological thinking on the meaning of suffering, Hall posits a clear historical caesura between the suffering of Christ and that of contemporary Christians. For Hall, Paul's much-discussed claim that he 'rejoice[s] in [his] sufferings for you, and fill[s] up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in [his] flesh' does not suggest an identity, or even an analogy, between the 'afflictions' of Paul and Christ: 'These are the (ὕστερήματα) afterings of Christs sufferings: in himselfe it is *finished*; in his members it is not, till the world be *finished*. We must toile, & grone, and bleed; that we may raigne; if he had not done so, It had not beene *finished*' (56). The sufferings of Christians in 1609 may be distant reverberations – or 'afterings' – of Christ's self-sacrifice but share no essential characteristics with it.

Catholic meditation manuals of the period operate on the assumptions that Christ's pain can be fully shared (or 'truly imitated', to adapt De la Puente's formulation) by humans, and that the essence of the Passion consists in Christ's physical pain. Indeed, it is partly because Christ's anguish is so physically graphic and outwardly visible that it lends itself so well to sustained meditation, and it is for this reason that it is open to human participation, and to an affective response on the part of the Christian contemplating the Passion. It is precisely these assumptions which Hall questions in his *Passion Sermon*. He does so by locating the essence of Christ's suffering in his mental pain, and by downplaying, like Calvin, the significance of his bodily anguish. Moreover, Hall characterizes this inner pain as utterly unrelated to the body, and as invisible to the eye and therefore ultimately inaccessible and unknowable. Christ's bodily wounds reveal onely the 'outside of his sufferings', and are mere 'love-tricks to what his soule endured', while 'the inner part or soule of this paine, which was unseene, is as farre beyond these outward and sensible, as the soule is beyond the body' (35–36). This leads Hall to deny the possibility of genuinely witnessing, and therefore of truly sharing in, the Passion, and even of truly grasping its full significance:

¹³ The words 'It is finished' are not found in the three synoptic Gospels, but only at *John* 19.30. The synoptic Gospels state only that Christ 'cried with a loud voice' (*Matt.* 27.50; *Mark* 15.37; *Luke* 23.46).

We cannot conceive so much as the hainousnes and desert of one of those sinnes, which thou barest: wee can no more see thy paine, then we could undergoe it; onely this wee see, that what the infinite sins, of almost infinite men, committed against an infinite Majesty, deserved in infinite continuance; all this thou in the short time of thy passion hast sustained. We may behold and see; but all the glorious spirites in Heaven, cannot looke into the depth of this suffering (36).

In other words, Christ's pain resists meditation because it is an inner, transcendent pain. Hall denies the physical and visual nature of Christ's suffering, in this way eliminating the possibility of the highly visual contemplation that is at the heart of the early modern meditation manual. Christ's pain is inward and psychological, and, far from being revealed, he is therefore *hidden* in his suffering.¹⁴ In this light it is also worth noting that Hall turns repeatedly to the conventional Christian notion that Christ's pain is inflicted (and continues to be inflicted) by human sin. He explicitly aligns his audience and readers with Christ's executioners: 'Cry *Hosanna* as long as thou wilt; thou art a *Pilate*, a Jew, a *Judas*, an Executioner of the Lord of life' (54). This serves as another way of blocking the human identification with Christ: our principal role at the scene of the Passion is that of torturer, not of tortured saviour.¹⁵ Indeed, Hall explicitly denies the usefulness of compassion with Christ – described by him as 'a weak & idle pittie of our glorious Saviour' – because our emotional response should focus on our own sins: *Yee daughters of Ierusalem, weepe not for me; but weepe for your selves: for our sins, that have done this*' (50). Compassion is the exclusive prerogative of Christ himself, who co-suffers with 'mother, Disciples, friends', and with the 'future temptations of his children' and 'desolations of his Church' (40–41). For Hall, this compassion captures the essence of Christ's mental agony because it is *self-generated* rather than inflicted by others, and even much more

¹⁴ There is a clear analogy with the Lutheran idea of the "hidden God" on the cross. For a detailed exegesis of this notion, see McGrath A.E., *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford: 1985).

¹⁵ It is worth noting that in *The Balme of Gilead* (1646), a work of Christian consolation modelled closely on Petrarch's *De remediis* Hall invites the afflicted to meditate on the physical details of Christ's suffering, yet while in Catholic traditions this serves to foster a union with Christ, Hall stresses precisely the gap between human and divine pain: 'Hear his strong cries, consider the shame, the pain, the curse of the Cross which he underwent for thy sake: Say, whether thy sufferings can be comparable to his' (Joseph Hall, *The balme of Gilead* [London, Thomas Newcomb: 1650] 333).

agonizing than any externally caused pain: 'No thornes, no nailes, fetcht bloud from him, with so much paine as his own thoughts' (39).

I Feel thy Lashes: Hall's Contemplations on the New Testament

In the chapters on Christ's Passion in the *Contemplations on Principall Passages of the Holy Storie* Hall turns out to be unable to put the theological vision of his *Passion Sermon* into meditative practice. Hall follows the canonical meditative procedure of teasing out the possible meanings of a range of scriptural details, in this case by means of sustained close reading. This approach does not serve in the first instance to construct a coherent theological argument, but rather generates a kind of local scriptural knowledge. Indeed, a degree of fragmentation is inherent in the meditative form. Each musing on the various scriptural passages, doctrinal concepts or visual tableaux that serve as objects of meditation has the potential to take on a life of its own, to become a semantic unit in its own right, without being integrated into an overarching argument. As Richard McCabe notes, 'Hall's [Bible] commentary is written as a series of "contemplations" designed to open up new avenues of thought rather than answer specific questions'.¹⁶ It is also partly for this reason that the meditative form is open to the frictions between the theological sensibilities that Hall attempted to reconcile in his forging of an English Protestant style of meditation. That is to say, meditative discourse has the potential to reveal these contradictions because it is not obliged ultimately to subsume them into an unequivocal theological stance.

In line with the Catholic meditative tradition on which he drew, Hall offers extensive and detailed, highly visual descriptions of Christ's physical agony. In a passage that could have been culled from Luis de Granada or Luis de la Puente, he meditates on the effects of gravity on the body of the crucified Christ:

[H]ow are thy joynts and sinews torn, and stretched till they crack again, by this torturing distension? how doth thine own weight torment thee, whilst thy whole body rests thine upon this forced and dolorous hold, till thy nailed feet bear their part in a no-less-afflictive supportation? How

¹⁶ McCabe, *Joseph Hall* 228–229.

did the rough iron pierce thy Soul, whilst, passing through those tender and sensible parts, it carried thy flesh before it, and as it were rivetted it to that shameful Tree?¹⁷

Although, unlike his Catholic counterparts, Hall does not present a mystical union with the suffering Christ as a meditative aim, he does register his inability to follow his own advice in the *Passion Sermon* and concentrate primarily on the *effects* of the Passion: 'I know not whether I do more suffer in thy pain, or joy in the issue of thy Suffering' (462). The intensity of Christ's pain draws the focus of attention away from its soteriological end result or 'issue'. At various points, Hall also reiterates, if in a somewhat qualified manner, the idea that the meditant is present at the scene of the Passion, and even co-suffers with Christ:

Oh the torment of the Cross! Methinks I see and feel how, having fastned the transverse to the body of that fatal Tree, and laid it upon the ground, they racked and strained thy tender and sacred Lims. (462)

Woe is me, dear Saviour; I feel thy lashes; I shrink under thy painfull whippings; thy nakedness covers me with shame and confusion. [...] How can I be enough sensible of my own stripes? these blows are mine; both my sins have given them, and they give remedies to my sins (452).

'Methinks' in the first passage tempers Hall's claim to share in Christ's pain, while the second passage blends the perspectives of sufferer and inflicter of pain, emphasizing in this way that sinful humans are Christ's principal torturers, an idea also voiced in Hall's *Passion Sermon*. Yet these moments of profound emotional, even somatic identification with Christ sit uneasily with Hall's 'official' Calvinist position that the Passion precisely *eludes* such identification, and that its essence resides in Christ's inner agony.

This tension becomes manifest when Hall suddenly belittles both the intensity and the theological significance of Christ's bodily agony. Christ's severer pain, he claims, was felt in the soul, inaccessible by the meditative gaze:

But, alas! what flea-bitings were these in comparison of those inward torments which thy Soul felt in the sense and apprehension of thy Father's wrath for the sins of the whole world, which now lay heavy upon thee for

¹⁷ Joseph Hall, *Contemplations upon the Remarkable Passages in the Life of the Holy Jesus* (1634; London, E. Fleisher: 1679) 463. In the Calvary woodcuts from his Catholic period, the German painter and printmaker Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) goes to similar lengths to visualize gravity as an agent of pain during crucifixion. For Hall's debt to Catholic meditations on the Passion, see also McCabe, *Joseph Hall* 229–230.

satisfaction? [...] Oh what pangs were these, dear *Jesu*, that drew from thee this complaint? Thou well knewest nothing could be more cordiall to thine enemies, then to hear this sad language from thee: they could see but the outside of thy sufferings; never could they have conceived so deep an anguish of thy Soul if thy own lips had not expressed it (467).

Hall goes on to reproduce an argument from his *Passion Sermon*, claiming that 'our narrow Souls are not capable of the conceit of [Christ's] pain and horror' (468), and now reads a fixation on bodily anguish as misguided, blind to the real significance of the Passion. This significance is not only located in Christ's *inner* pain but also in his ultimate victory over death: 'Our weakness could hitherto see nothing here but pain and ignominy; now my better-inlightned eyes see in this elevation of thine both honour and happiness' (471). Indeed, Hall aligns the Christian who meditates primarily on Christ's physical pain with the executioners, whose perception is also limited to externals: 'Foolish executioners! ye look up at that crucified Body, as if it were altogether in your power and mercy; nothing appears to you but impotence and death' (472).

It is possible to detect a theological argument in Hall's shifting meditations on the Passion. On one level, his initial intense preoccupation with physical suffering forms a temporary stage in a meditative development, and ultimately gives way to a 'better-inlightned' awareness of Christ's soul pain, and of its soteriological power. The superior vision of 'the spirituall eye', as Hall puts it in *The Remedy of Prophaneness*, replaces the limited perception of 'the carnall eye'. Yet the question is whether Hall's eventual protestations are sufficient to dispel his earlier emphasis on being 'transported with the sense of [Christ's] Sufferings' (468). Not only does he linger at great length over the bodily pains whose relevance he subsequently dismisses, but they also continue to draw his attention after he has brushed them aside. Indeed, Hall's commentary on the Passion ends with a passage on the role of Mary, in which he casts her as a compassionate witness who shares in the crucifixion precisely by *seeing* Christ's physical agony. The passage marks a return to the very attitude which Hall seemed to reject only a few pages earlier:

O thou Blessed Virgin, the Holy Mother of our Lord, how many swords pierced thy Soul, whilst standing close by his Cross thou sawest thy dear Son and Saviour thus indignly used, thus stripped, thus stretched, thus nailed, thus bleeding, thus dying, thus pierced? [...] and lying all these together, with the miserable infirmities of his Passion, how wert thou crucified with him? (475).

Ultimately, then, Hall seems unable to choose between a meditative preoccupation with the visible, physical Passion on the one hand, and

a belief in the primacy of Christ's mental suffering on the other, and between emotional identification with Christ on the one hand, and an emphasis on the otherness of his pain on the other. His *Contemplations on Principall Passages of the Holy Storie* does not register or comment on the theological tensions enacted in its meditative form: incompatible sensibilities coexist, their incongruity neither acknowledged nor resolved.

In pausing at such length over the role of Mary during the Passion, and in stressing the extent to which she suffers with Christ, Hall reiterates a central convention of the Catholic meditative tradition, without any obvious attempt to adapt it to a Calvinist outlook. In Catholic works of meditation, Mary serves as a crucial entry point into the Passion by acting as mediator between Christ and the meditant. In the second part of this essay, I will analyze how Richard Crashaw seizes precisely on the role of Mary to reformulate the contemplation of the Passion as a simultaneously imaginative and poetic act.

Discursing Wounds: Richard Crashaw

In Catholic meditation manuals, Mary serves both as a participant in and as an exemplary meditant on the Passion. Mary's part in the Passion is presented as equivalent to that of Christ – her suffering is seen as equally intense. In this way, human participation is made into an essential, inherent part of the Passion (there is a stark contrast here with Hall's emphasis on the otherness of the Passion), while Mary also instructs the aspiring meditant in the nature of this participation. A characteristic example is Luis de la Puente's *Meditations upon the Mysteries of our Holie Faith*, also quoted earlier in this essay, in which contemplation of the Passion occurs via the figure of Mary:

consider the dolour that the most Blessed Virgin endured, at this her first beholding of her Sonne, for the eyes of our Lord Jesus, and of his Mother encountering one another, became both of them eclipsed and dazed by the force of sorrowe; the mother remayned spiritually crucified with the sight of the Sonne, and the Sonne was tormented a new by beholding his mother, each of them holding their peace for very greefe and paine, the hart of the one employed in feeling, the torments of the other, sorrowing much more for them, then for their owne. Putt then thy selfe (ô my soule) betweene those two crucified, and lift upp thine eyes to behold the Sonne crucified with great nailes of yron: then cast them downe to looke upon the mother, crucified with the sharpe stings

of dolour and compassion. Beseech them both to devide their paines with thee in such sort, that thou maist be crucified with them by a true imitation (vol. II 264).

It is initially Mary who, in her grief and compassion at seeing her suffering son, is crucified with Christ. This spiritual crucifixion is more than a metaphor: Mary's grief, like that of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, is so intense that it takes on a physical manifestation. In this way she establishes a community of suffering with Christ. It is this sharing in Christ's pain which the meditant is urged to imitate: De la Puente envisages meditation as a domino effect of pity.

In his Passion poem "Sancta Maria Dolorum" Richard Crashaw seizes on this aspect of Catholic meditative discourse.¹⁸ The famous late medieval "Stabat mater" which Crashaw's poem paraphrases and adapts already contained many of the topoi that would also come to dominate early modern meditative understandings of the Passion. Mary serves both as co-sufferer with Christ (again primarily through her compassion with him) and as object of the speaker's compassion. The spectacle of the suffering Mary, moreover, activates the speaker's wish to share in the pains of Christ. She serves in this way as mediator between Christ and speaker:

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
 Crucifixi fige plagas
 Cordi meo valide.
 Tui nati vulnerati,
 Tam dignati pro me pati,
 Poenas mecum divide.¹⁹

This is also the principal wish of the speaker in Crashaw's poem, who longs to undergo his 'portion' of the 'greifes' of the Passion. In the sixth

¹⁸ Crashaw's debt to the early modern meditation tradition was established by Louis L. Martz in his well known *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven – London: 1954). For the importance in the poem of Mary as co-redemptor, see also Cunnar E.R., "Crashaw's "Sancta Maria Dolorum": Controversy and Coherence", in Roberts J.R. (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Life and Art of Richard Crashaw* (Columbia: 1990) 99–126.

¹⁹ "Sequentia de septem doloribus beatae virginis", in *Stabat mater: Hymn of the Sorrow of Mary*, tr. and ed. A. Coles (New York: 1866) 28. 'Holy Mother, may you do this: drive the wounds of the crucified forcefully into my heart. Share with me the pains of your wounded son, who deigned to suffer so much for me'. The translation presented here is my own; I have also consulted the English translations at Hans van der Velden, *The Stabat Mater: A Musical Journey* <<http://www.stabatmater.info/english.html>>, accessed 12 October 2009.

stanza he asks Mary – whom he explicitly likens to Christ by addressing her as the ‘Great Queen of griefes’ – to ‘teach those wounds to bleed / In me’, while in the penultimate stanza he longs to ‘become one crucifix’ with Mary and Christ.²⁰ As in De la Puente, human participation in the Passion takes place via, and is facilitated by, Mary. Mary literally sees her own pain in Christ, and she becomes a kind of receptacle in which Christ’s pains are gathered. In this way, the poem presents Mary’s compassion with Christ as the true locus of the Passion:

Her’s, & the whole world’s joyes,
 Hanging all torn she sees; and in his woes
 And Paines, her Pangs & throes.
 Each wound of His, from every Part,
 All, more at home in her one heart (56–57).

Christ and Mary are also described as *communicating* through suffering. Their community is forged through their own suffering, and through the suffering they inflict on each other through their mutual compassion: ‘His Nailes write swords in her, which soon her heart / Payes back, with more then their own smart’ (57). It is this collective of pain into which the speaker wishes to be absorbed. Mary’s pain is simultaneously bodily and emotional: her compassion with Christ is so forceful that it blends with Christ’s bodily agony, rendering their respective ‘weeping’ and ‘bleeding’ synonymous with each other: ‘Her eyes bleed Teares, his wounds weep Blood’ (57). In this way, the poem also presents compassion as a simultaneously – and indistinguishably – mental and somatic form of communication between sufferer and co-sufferer. The positions of sufferer and co-sufferer, moreover, flow into each other, with Christ and Mary alternating between both roles.

In the lines quoted in the previous two paragraphs the parallel between Christ and Mary is created on a level of syntax and poetic form. Christ’s ‘woes’ rhyme with Mary’s ‘throes’, his ‘Paines’ and her ‘Pangs’ alliterate, and there is a chiasmus in ‘woes – paines – pangs – throes’. In ‘Her eyes bleed Teares, his wounds weep Blood’, moreover, there is not only an exact syntactic correspondence between the two halves of the line, but also again a chiasmus in ‘bleed – tears – weep – blood’, and assonance, consonance and alliteration in ‘bleed – weep’, ‘bleed – blood’ and ‘wounds – weep’. The poem draws a similar syn-

²⁰ Crashaw Richard, *Carmen Deo Nostro, Te Decet Hymnus Sacred Poems* (Paris, Peter Targa: 1652) 58.

tactic parallel between the piercing of Mary's heart as a result of compassion on the one hand and the piercing of Christ's hands on the other: 'Come wounds! come darts! Nail'd hands! & peirced hearts!' (58). These formal effects not only reinforce the idea that Christ's suffering is a mirror image of that of Mary, but also suggest that they are present in each other – they literally intermingle in their agony.

That "Sancta Maria Dolorum" should enact Mary's compassion with Christ in its formal patterns gains in significance if we consider the predominance in the poem of imagery relating to language, speech and writing. This linguistic imagery is specific to Crashaw's poem, moreover, and does not occur in the Latin "Stabat mater" on which it is modeled. Christ's 'Nailes' are described as 'writ[ing] swords' in his mother (and I think we are justified in reading this as a tacit play on 'words'), while Christ and Mary '*Discourse* alternate wounds to one another' (57, my italics). It is worth pausing over the unusual syntactic role of 'discourse' in this line as a ditransitive verb. Through Crashaw's use of 'discourse', physical wounds turn into a form of language in two ways: both as the content and as the medium of the communication between Christ and Mary.²¹ They speak both *through* and *about* their wounds and, in doing so, inflict wounds on one another: suffering becomes its own speech act. In other words, Crashaw presents language not only as a way of speaking about suffering, but also as a medium for the literal transmission of suffering. This is underlined in the tenth stanza of the poem, in which the speaker addresses Mary as follows:

By all those stings
Of love, sweet bitter things,
Which these torn hands transcrib'd on thy true heart
O teach mine too the art
To study him (60) [.]

Again, suffering serves as the conduit of its own transmission: Christ writes suffering on Mary's heart with hands that themselves bear the marks of suffering.

In the line 'Discourse alternate wounds to one another', it is difficult to make a clear distinction between tenor and vehicle: do Christ

²¹ For 'discourse' as transitive verb, see *OED*, s.v. "discourse", 5: "To go through in speech; to treat of in speech or writing; to talk over, discuss; to talk of, converse about; to tell, narrate, relate". The *OED* does not list any usage of 'discourse' with an indirect object, let alone as a ditransitive verb.

and Mary speak through their wounds, or does the imagery grant language the power to wound? Both 'wounds' and 'discourse' seem to serve simultaneously as the literal and metaphorical term: a transfer of attributes occurs in both directions. This suggests that the linguistic imagery in the poem has a dual and paradoxical effect. On the one hand, by turning physical suffering into a kind of language, it renders suffering communicable. On the other hand, it invests language with the intensity and reality of physical pain, and with pain's unique ability to serve as a means of emotional traffic. If, as I suggested above, Catholic meditative discourse locates the essence of Christ's pain in its communicability, the equation between 'wounds' and 'discourse' also endows language with the communicative power of pain. This becomes especially clear in the poem's emphasis on writing. If Christ 'writes' and 'transcribes' his pain on Mary, this is also what the speaker in the poem longs to imitate. Human engagement with the Passion – the 'true imitation' of Christ's suffering to which the early modern Catholic meditation manual incites its reader – here synonymous with reading and 'copying', in the sense of 'transcribing', a book:

O teach those wounds to bleed
 In me; me, so to read
 This book of loves, thus writ
 In lines of death, my life may copy it
 With loyall cares (58).

It is relevant that these linguistic metaphors occur in a poem. Indeed, the phrase 'lines of death' invites us to think of the book of the Passion as a volume of poetry, and I want to argue that in 'Sancta Maria Dolorum' poetry itself, as a kind of transcribed pain, becomes a form of *imitatio Christi*, a medium for the 'copying' of Christ's suffering, and for the transmission of his pain. In the closing lines of the penultimate stanza of the poem, the meaning of 'we' has silently shifted to include Christ as well as Mary and the speaker, and it is in this way suggested that the poem has succeeded in fulfilling the latter's desire:

O teach mine too the art
 To study him so, till we mix
 Wounds; and become one crucifix (60).²²

²² It is worth noting that the enjambment at 'mix/ wounds' suggests that the shared suffering creates an all-encompassing union between Christ, Mary and speaker: 'till we mix'.

The various parallels between language, suffering and compassion drawn in the poem, then, serve as a metapoetic commentary on the function of poetry in relation to the Passion, while the poem may also be said to enact the copying to which its speaker aspires through the formal patterns discussed above. If, as I have argued, the parallel between Christ and Mary is produced on a syntactic and formal level, we are invited to read the poem as a realization of the desire for union with Christ which it voices. This is an important aspect of Crashaw's creative engagement with meditative discourse in "Sancta Maria Dolorum". He takes the notion that Christ's pain is eminently communicable through meditation and applies it to poetry – poetry takes the *place* of meditation. Seen in this light, it is also fitting that the poem should draw attention to what may be termed the material, physical dimension of language through its references to writing, and through its recurrent figures of sound, as icons of the mutual compassion between Christ and Mary. Since the latter can only come to life in a performance of the poem, a vocal rendition becomes a way of realizing the union with the suffering Christ which the poem strives towards. The poem locates the potential of poetry to serve as *imitatio Christi* to a large extent in its physical dimension: the concrete, bodily acts of writing and oral utterance.

There is a noteworthy contrast between Crashaw's notion of reading the book of the Passion on the one hand and the role of reading in Joseph Hall's *Passion Sermon* on the other. For Hall, the doctrinal significance of the Passion manifests itself in scriptural details, for example in his painstaking exegesis of Christ's final words on the cross. This serves in part as a distancing device: the details of the gospel text point to the uniqueness and completeness of the Passion, now closed to human participation. A similar argument can be made for Hall's repeated insistence that the Passion is foretold in detail in the First Testament. Reading the Bible reveals the gap between the suffering Christ and the early modern Christian. In Crashaw, by contrast, writing and reading serve as a central image of human participation in the Passion. While Crashaw presents writing as a form of *imitatio Christi*, he also understands Christ's pain as a book to be read. In Crashaw, partaking of the Passion is a form of reading; in Hall reading takes the form of the biblical exegesis that renders the Passion inaccessible to humans.

Earlier in this article I pointed to the understanding of *imitatio Christi* in early modern Catholic meditative discourse. Meditation

handbooks urge their readers to identify with the Passion through their imagination, while also inciting them to strive for a 'true', actual union with the suffering Christ. By placing such stress on the role of the imagination, the early modern meditation manual paints itself into a corner: the participation in the Passion exists only in the imagination, not in concrete physical reenactment, but should at the same time be *more* than imagination. The double bind which this creates for the meditant is captured in Luis de la Puente's notion of 'true imitation' as the goal of meditation on the Passion. At what point does an 'imitation' become 'true', and cease to be an imitation, and how is the meditant to know this? He seems to be locked in the intense imagining to which he is incited, and the wished-for unity with Christ remains forever beyond reach. In this sense, the early modern meditation manual seems to turn in upon itself and end up reproducing indefinitely the desire which it seeks to fulfill. The gap between human being and suffering Christ can never be closed.

This paradox does not go unnoticed by early modern writers on meditation (although de la Puente does not comment on it). Ignatius of Loyola, in the *Spiritual Exercises* (1548), acknowledges the provisional, imaginary nature of meditation on the Passion:

[I]magine those things, *as if* they were present, and even now did passe before thyne eyes: seeing and beholding with the eyes of thy soule the infant Jesus weeping and crying in the cradle or manger. And *as it were* beare the strokes of whips, and knocking of the nailes, whereby thou shalt both pray with more facility, sweetness, attention, and devotion.²³

In a similar vein, an early seventeenth-century English translation of the twelfth-century *Tractatus de interiori domo*, attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, questions the imagination's ability to attain the meditative goal of comprehending Christ: 'Oh how can my meditations attaine to the length of thy admirable love? how can my cogitations measure the breadth of thy clemency? how should my deepest imaginations dive into the depth of thy mercy?'²⁴

²³ Ignatius of Loyola, *A manuell of devout meditations and exercises instructing how to pray mentally*, tr. H. More (Saint-Omer, English College Press: 1618) 129, my italics.

²⁴ Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *Saint Bernard his meditations: or Sighes, sobbes, and teares, upon our Saviours passion in memoriall of his death*, tr. W.P., Mr. of Arts (London, E[lizabeth] A[lldde]: 1631) 332.

A possible solution to this problem is to be found in Luis de la Puente's conception, in the *Meditations upon the Mysteries of our Holie Faith*, of meditation as non-linguistic. He claims that contemplation entails a shedding of language, an apprehension of its object in its extraverbal essence. Meditation draws on extralinguistic, 'interiour faculties', and is understood by de la Puente to be equivalent to *sensory perception*:

contemplation is a simple beholding of the truth without varietie of discourse [...]. [F]or as the exterior faculties doe very briefly without the windings of discourses perceive their objects, and are delighted, and pleased in them: so in this contemplation, the interiour senses of the soule (which are her owne interiour faculties with the variety of their actes) without new discourses, presupposing those which have been donne at other times, perceive these verities, and collect from thence, mervailous affections of devotion.²⁵

For de la Puente, the meditative soul is a sentient being that engages with the objects of contemplation in the same way as the bodily senses receive data from the external world, and in this manner circumvents the indirections of language, and of the 'cogitations' in which St. Bernard of Clairvaux is caught. He works this idea out in detail in an entire section on the role of the 'interiour senses' (385) in meditation. The meditant 'smell[s] with the interiour smelling the most sweete odour, and celestiall fragrancy that issueth from [the] childe Jesus' (388), while his 'interiour taste' savours 'the sweetnesse of that blessed childe' (389). On this view, contemplative imagination also becomes a bodily – if inward – act. In this way, de la Puente evades, and perhaps pre-empts, the problem outlined above: if the contemplation is physical and sensory in nature, it is always already a 'true imitation'. The meditative imagination is by definition at one with its object (having literally internalized it in the act of tasting), and meditation on the Passion takes on the nature of a physical reenactment.

As we have seen, Crashaw, by contrast, construes meditative participation in the Passion as linguistic in nature. In doing so, he clearly departs from the Catholic meditative discourses on which he drew (in which meditation is also intensely *visual* rather than linguistic). Yet if De la Puente sees contemplation as physical, Crashaw, too, presents this linguistic partaking as intensely bodily: Christ and Mary speak in

²⁵ De la Puente, *Meditations upon the Mysteries of our Holie Faith* 385–386.

wounds. Although they are divided by their views on the role of language in meditation, therefore, both Crashaw and De la Puente share an important emphasis on the physical dimension of meditative *imitatio Christi*. Yet in placing so much weight on language, Crashaw creates a precise correspondence between what may be termed his philosophical conception of the Passion on the one hand and his chosen literary form on the other. As a verbal artefact, his poetry produces the imitation of Christ to which its speaker aspires: message and medium coincide. In doing so, it creates for itself a degree of meditative efficacy to which the meditation manual can only gesture.

Conclusion

For early moderns one of the primary questions posed by the Passion of Christ was whether it was possible to take part in his suffering. As we have seen, Catholic discourse locates the essence of Christ's pain in its power to elicit an affective response from humans. In the early modern Catholic meditative tradition, this response is a form of emotional and imaginative identification with Christ's pain in which the dividing line between Christ and meditant is elided. I have analysed how two early modern English devotional writers engage with this notion, and, by extension, with the meditative tradition with which it was associated. In his Calvinist critique of Catholic meditation, Joseph Hall attacks precisely the idea that humans can even comprehend, let alone imitate, the suffering of Christ, and downplays the importance of Christ's bodily pain: Christ's inner life is the true locus of the Passion. At the same time, the identification with Christ exerts a powerful pull on Hall's meditative practice, and he is unable to reject it altogether. In his Passion poem "Sancta Maria Dolorum", Richard Crashaw affirms some of the core assumptions of meditative discourse but also presents the acts of reading and writing – and, by extension, the domain of poetry – as avenues to meditative participation in the Passion. In widening the scope of meditative practice in this manner, he also creates an imaginative solution to the basic problem, built into the meditative tradition, of becoming one with Christ through the empathetic imagination. In "Sancta Maria Dolorum", *imitatio Christi* is effected through the performative dimension of language, through the unique medium of the poetic imagination.

The early modern debate which this article has investigated ultimately revolves around two questions: how can humans engage with the divine? how can they relate to the suffering of others? In the texts which I have discussed, these questions coincide. What Richard Crashaw has in common with the meditative works on which he drew, and what sets him apart from Joseph Hall, is the unquestioned assumption that Christ's pain is eminently sharable, and that the Passion is to be understood primarily as an exhortation to identify with and share in divine suffering. In seeing Christ as hidden in his unfathomable suffering, by contrast, early modern Calvinism contributed to a modern understanding of pain as a form of ultimate isolation: Christ suffers alone, and in ways that cannot be grasped by humans. It is this cultural legacy that also informs Elaine Scarry's classic account in *The Body in Pain*. The early modern tradition of *imitatio Christi* alerts us to an alternative conception of pain as something that can not only be shared but also expressed and communicated through language. Far from entailing a 'shattering of language', Christ's pain in Crashaw's "Sancta Maria Dolorum" is itself an ultimate language, a form of communication written directly on the heart.²⁶

²⁶ Scarry, *Body in Pain* 5.

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III. *EXERCITIA SPIRITUALIA*:
MEDITATION AND THE JESUITS

INVISIBLE CONTEMPLATION:
A PARADOX IN THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*

Wietse de Boer

In one of his *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, written in the year before his death in 1985, Italo Calvino celebrated the capacity of the human imagination to create mental images. While he lamented the visual overload of contemporary culture, the Italian writer stressed the importance of the underlying mental faculty in the making of film as well as poetry. Here Calvino cited Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, and their reliance on an almost cinematographic visualization of scenes and actions – as, for example, in the episodes of the passion of Christ. The process differed from most modern fiction, Calvino noted, in that the parameters of this imaginative act were given: the early-modern Catholic Church defined both its scriptural or doctrinal starting point and its spiritual goal. But in-between there was 'a field of infinite possibilities in the application of the individual imagination, in how one depicts characters, places, and scenes in motion'.¹

Calvino belonged to a generation of authors and critics whose work helped generate a wave of interest in what came to be called visual culture.² This interest, subsequently expanded to include other forms of sense perception, has also led to a renewed scholarly attention for Jesuit spirituality and for the artistic, theatrical, and literary endeavors associated with it. 'Ignatius was first and foremost a sensualist', Jeffrey Chipps Smith noted in his book *Sensuous Worship*. Jesuit spirituality, Giovanna Zanlonghi affirmed, aimed for a 'journey of "sanctification

¹ Calvino I., *Lezioni americane* (Milan: 1988) 83–86; I cite from the English trans., by P. Creagh, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1988) 83–86 (quote at 86).

² See the programmatic essay by Mitchell W.J.T., "What is Visual Culture?", in Lavin I. (ed.), *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Views from the Outside: A Centennial Commemoration of Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968)* (Princeton, N.J.: 1995) 207–217; and his more recent "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture", *Journal of Visual Culture* 1 (2002) 165–181.

of the senses” available to all’.³ These statements form the underpinnings of sophisticated studies on Baroque art and architecture in Germany, and on Jesuit theater in early modern Lombardy, respectively. The early modern Jesuits – thus Smith summarized the basic, and well-known, tenet – assisted and intensified their spiritual practice with a frequent recourse to the senses. Practitioners of the *Spiritual Exercises* called on the organs of perception to shore up their memory and activate their imagination. While all senses served, vision was front and center: the recall of any scene started with the visual act of *compositio loci* before moving on to the other senses. But there was more. Controlled by reason, an early interpreter like Gerónimo Nadal suggested, the senses could be taken to a much higher level to serve in mystical contemplation. Here they lost their physical moorings to achieve the spiritual perception of religious truths. Hence Smith’s conclusion: ‘From Ignatius and Nadal onward, the Jesuits accepted the use of the external senses, particularly when purified of all corrupting stimuli, as a means for engaging the spiritual senses’.⁴

Yet this statement, however unexceptionable as an ideal synthesis, conceals a complex reality. For one thing, the foundational texts displayed considerable ambiguity about the scope of the practice. As scholars have noted, there were at least two different (albeit not mutually exclusive) lines of thought in this matter, evident in Ignatius’s own writings as well as the interpretations of his companions. The first considered the application of the senses to be intended as a simple means to engage the mind. It was a basic tool to activate the devotional process, accessible even to the least practiced; thus it could be seen as a starting point for beginners. The second viewed the sensual imagination as an advanced step toward, or even a part of, the contemplative experience. Many scholars have speculated about the implications of this contrast.

³ Smith J.C., *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton, N.J. – Oxford: 2002) 35: ‘Ignatius was first and foremost a sensualist, in that he clearly recognized that one should utilize all of one’s capabilities when attempting to understand God. This included the five senses’. Zanolighi G., *Teatri di formazione. Actio, parola e immagine nella scena gesuitica del Sei-Settecento a Milano* (Milan: 2002) 70: ‘Nell’apparato la via morale della perfezione si presentava come esperienza che perfeziona ma non supera i limiti della natura umana: dal basso, attraverso la vita attiva, l’impegno quotidiano nella costruzione dell’“habitus” sradica le cattive abitudini, modera gli affetti, fa ascendere all’apice, additando un percorso di ‘santificazione dei sensi’ possibile a tutti’.

⁴ Smith, *Sensuous Worship* 39.

Some have distinguished meditation, understood as a discursive practice based on the engagement of reason and will, from contemplation, seen as a 'simple intuition of the truth already possessed' (Joseph De Guibert). For others, this distinction overlaps that between asceticism (in the sense of an organized complex of human endeavors) and mystical experience (seen as an infusion of divine grace), or between the imaginative senses (appropriate for a propaedeutic form of devotion) and the spiritual senses (befitting higher forms of contemplation). Yet there is a widespread recognition that any systematic effort to sort out these differences was alien to the earliest Jesuit sources. Of course, this has not kept later exegetes from developing extrapolations based on medieval scholastic theology, neo-thomist conceptualizations, or appropriations for the purposes of modern theology.⁵

To give but one example of particular relevance here, the great Jesuit scholar of comparative mysticism Joseph Maréchal considered sense application as 'a form of transition between meditation and contemplation'.⁶ This characterization led him further to posit an intermediate step between the imaginative and the spiritual forms of perception, namely metaphorical sensation. The latter was a 'symbolic transferral' (*transposition symbolique*) that consisted in directing 'the entire *attitude*' of physical sensation towards a non-sensory, spiritual object. This metaphorical operation, so fundamental to human language, served two goals here: to reinforce a religious concept with the affective charge of a material symbol; and to lend a remote, abstract

⁵ I have benefited from the historiographical discussions (without following the theological conclusions) of Edean P., "The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses", *The Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990) 391–418 (see 393 for the quote from De Guibert); and Sudbrack J., "Die 'Anwendung der Sinne' als Angelpunkt der Exercitien", in Sievernich M. – Switek G. (eds.), *Ignatianisch. Eigenart und Methode der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg – Basel – Vienna: 1990) 96–119. Classic studies considered by me include Maréchal J., "Un essai de méditation orientée vers la contemplation. La méthode d'application des sens" dans les Exercices de Saint Ignace", *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1937–1938) II 365–382; idem, "Application des sens", in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* (Paris: 1937) I 810–828; Ruiz M., "Aplicación de sentido", *Manresa* 18 (1946) 257–268; Calveras J., "Los cinco sentidos de la imaginación en los Ejercicios de San Ignacio", *Manresa* 20 (1948) 47–70; 125–130; Marxer F., *Die inneren geistlichen Sinne. Ein Beitrag zur Deutung ignatianischer Mystik* (Freiburg: 1964); Rahner H., *Ignatius the Theologian*, trans. M. Barry (New York: 1968) 181–213; esp. 190–192.

⁶ Maréchal, "Application des sens" 810; for the following discussion I have drawn on the analysis and context offered in Edean, "The Ignatian Prayer" 393–397.

object a real ‘sense of presence’.⁷ Thus sense perception, by way of metaphorical transposition, opened the door to representation.⁸

Maréchal’s interpretation may help explain the profound interest in the *Exercices* among twentieth-century writers and critics; they included, aside from Calvino, also Georges Bataille⁹ and Roland Barthes.¹⁰ It remains a fruitful starting point for a discussion of sense application in Jesuit spirituality. Yet its thesis about metaphor has yet to be tested historically. As we attempt to do so, it is important to avoid the systematic urge. Rather than reconciling complexities and ambiguities in the historical record, it is worth seeing them as potential evidence of tensions in early Jesuit spirituality – not merely of interpretive or analytical difficulties, but of problems in devotional practice itself. The recourse to metaphor may turn out to be more selective and precisely motivated than Maréchal’s model suggests.

Contemplation and Metaphor

Again, Calvino may serve as a guide. As he discussed the concept of *compositio loci*, Calvino noted that Ignatius distinguished between

⁷ Maréchal, “Application des sens” 826–827. The significance of ‘presence’ is a recurring theme in Maréchal’s comparative studies on mysticism, including one (first published in 1920) on the *Exercices*: “Un essai de méditation” II 374–377. For him, the mere imaginary, aesthetic reconstitution of a scene remained superficial if it was not motivated by a ‘superior norm’ of love and completed by a sense of presence.

⁸ On the medieval conception of presence and representation, relevant for Jesuit meditation as much as for material forms of representation, see Ginzburg C., “Représentation: Le mot, l’idée, la chose”, *Annales ESC* 46 (1991) 1219–1234.

⁹ Bataille’s interest derived from his search for a non-confessional form of meditation resting on an ‘art dramatique utilisant la sensation, non discursive’. In the Ignatian method he appreciated precisely the dramatic effort to overcome the limitations of discourse – particularly the absence it induced – through the practitioners’ immersion in the scene they represented for themselves (Bataille G., *La Somme Athéologique. Tome 1, L’expérience intérieure* [1943; rev. ed. 1954], in Idem, *Œuvres complètes* [Paris: 1973] V 26; and 22–29, for context). Bataille may have been familiar with Maréchal’s work, especially the 1937 entry in the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*. Likewise, Calvino’s reflections were possibly inspired by his acquaintance, during his Parisian years, with Bataille’s circle (see Cappello S., *Les années parisiennes d’Italo Calvino (1964–1980). Sous le signe de Raymond Queneau* [Paris: 2007]).

¹⁰ See Barthes R., *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* (Paris: 1971) 43–80; trans. R. Miller (New York: 1976) 38–75. Barthes’s analysis, while focused on the discursive and communicative strategies of Ignatius’s text, notes the importance – even the ‘impérialisme radical’ – of the image: ‘les vues, les représentations, les allégories, les mystères (ou anecdotes évangéliques), suscités continûment par les sens imaginaires, sont les unités constitutives de la méditation’ (ibid. 71; trans. 66). In this he sees evidence of a victory, albeit a suspect one, of vision over hearing and the other senses.

‘visible’ meditation (*‘contemplación o meditación visible’*) and an ‘invisible’ variant (*‘la invisible’*). An example of the first was the person of Christ, ‘who is visible’ (*‘el qual es visible’*), and a physical space (*‘el lugar corpóreo’*) like a temple or mountain.¹¹ In contrast, the ‘invisible contemplation’ was appropriate, for example, for the meditation of sins. Here, Calvino observed, the visualization seems to be ‘of a metaphorical sort’: the sinner imagines his soul to be ‘imprisoned in the corruptible body’.¹² Pierre-Antoine Fabre, in his thought-provoking study of visual representation in early Jesuit culture, goes a step further. For him, visual contemplation focused on a physical space to create a stage for sacred bodies. Invisible contemplation, in contrast, ‘for example that of sins, hence of profane bodies’, took the reverse order: it started with figures of speech (*figures*, such as the imprisoned soul) and then placed them within a physical setting. This last contemplation, Fabre goes on to say, ‘is invisible only because it produces the image of a reality immediately present while aiming to reject it; [the contemplation] wants to destroy it’. This was motivated by the purgative goal of the meditation on sin. Hence, for Fabre, ‘a tension toward invisibility: I want not to have to see anymore’.¹³ In fact, Ignatius inserted his explanation at the start of the First Week

¹¹ *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Exercitia spiritualia*, ed. I. Calveras – C. De Dalmases, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 1, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* 100 (Rome: 1969) 184–187, par. 47: ‘El primer preámbulo es composición viendo el lugar. Aquí es de notar, que en / la contemplación o meditación visible, así como contemplar a Xpo nuestro Señor, el qual es visible, la composición será ver con la vista de la ymaginación el lugar corpóreo, donde se halla la cosa que quiero contemplar. Digo el lugar corpóreo, así como vn templo o monte, donde se halla Jesu Xpo o nuestra Señora, según lo que quiero contemplar. En la invisible, como es aquí de los pecados, la composición será ver con la vista ymaginativa y considerar mi ánima ser encarcerada en este cuerpo corruptible, y todo el compuesto en este valle como desterrado, entre brutos animales. Digo todo el compuesto de anima y cuerpo’. Here, and in the rest of this contribution, I have based the English version of cited passages on the translation by Mottola A., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Garden City, New York: 1964), noting occasional revisions on my part.

¹² Calvino, *Lezioni americane* 84.

¹³ Fabre P.-A., *Ignace de Loyola: Le lieu de l’image. Le problème de la composition de lieu dans les pratiques spirituelles et artistiques jésuites de la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle* (Paris: 1992) 32. The critical passage reads as follows: ‘Cette contemplation n’est invisible que parce qu’elle produit l’image d’une réalité immédiatement présente dans le projet de son rejet; elle veut l’anéantir. Il y a tension vers l’invisibilité: je veux ne plus avoir à voir’. As he goes on to explain the purgative function of the process, Fabre again returns to the *visible* aspect of the projection of sin: ‘Mais cet effort se donne à voir, dans le miroir inversé de l’image, comme accès au visible, projection purgative d’images du péché, par lesquelles le péché lui-même se trouve soustrait à sa consommation’. Fabre relies for his interpretation on Fessard G., *Dialectique des Exercices spirituels*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1956) vol. I 45–51.

of the *Exercises*, a phase whose main goal was penitential. Therefore Fabre is right to point to the expurgation of sin as a critical issue, indeed the key to our problem. (To this we will return shortly.) Yet his textual interpretation is not quite convincing: Ignatius simply does not speak of a visual representation conjured up with the sole purpose of immediately destroying it. Rather, he calls the representation itself 'invisible'. Invisible in what sense?

A closer reading of Ignatius's explanation may be helpful. The 'visible' contemplation of Christ (or Mary) is direct, unmediated, literal. Christ is 'visible'; he is simply 'the thing I wish to contemplate', located within the 'physical place' where he 'happens to be'. The 'invisible' contemplation on sins is far more complex. Its object (i.e., sins) is not represented, at least not in any direct or literal way. Rather, the contemplation pictures the fate of the sinful soul, imprisoned in the body and exiled to the valley where wild animals reside. Here the representation, as Calvino understood, is metaphorical. Its function seems to be twofold. On one level, it seeks to visualize invisible objects by means of metaphorical substitutions based on similarity: the soul is compared to a prisoner and an exile; its state of damnation to a valley; and, perhaps, its sins to wild animals. The device offers a way out of the obvious difficulty of representing abstract concepts.¹⁴ Yet this does not suffice to explain the meditation on sin proposed by Ignatius. This meditation, as we have seen, focuses not on the sins themselves but on their consequences for the sinner. On a second level, then, we can postulate a metonymical operation consisting in the *displacement* of the attention from sins to their outcome; the procedure resembles the classical figure of speech called *effectus pro causa*.¹⁵ In order better

¹⁴ Of course, this difficulty remained, if we are to believe Fabiano Quadrantini. In his critique of the 1591 *Directorium* (on which see more below), Quadrantini noted the need to clarify, especially for the uneducated, 'how one is to represent the place if the object being observed is an incorporeal thing' ('quo pacto sit effingendus locus, si speculationi subsit res incorporea'). As examples he gave the contemplation on humility, obedience, charity, and chastity (*Notata P. Fabiani Quadrantini in Directorium Exercitiorum [intra aa. 1591-1593]*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 759, par. 11). To satisfy a similar need, his fellow Jesuit Antonio Valentino aided the novices under his care by feverishly elaborating on the scant indications offered by Ignatius. Thus he turned the meditation on sin into a tremendous scene akin to a Last Judgment (*Meditationes et exercitia spiritualia P. Antonii Valentino* (1579), in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 211-212, par. 15).

¹⁵ Lausberg H., *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric. A Foundation for Literary Study* [orig. in German, 1960], trans. M.T. Bliss - A. Jansen - D.E. Orton (Leiden: 1998) 258-259.

to understand the rationale of this operation, I will supplement the textual analysis of the *Exercises* with a study of its genesis and of the development of the spiritual techniques it proposes.

Sense Application and Confession

Of course, this approach is hardly new. Scholars of the *Spiritual Exercises* have long hunted for the sources that inspired Ignatius's techniques. Among the direct sources, frequent reference is made to classics of the *Devotio moderna* to which Ignatius was (or may have been) exposed during his conversion experience, particularly the *Imitatio Christi*, the *Vita Christi* of the German Carthusian Ludolph of Saxony, Gerard Zerbolt's *De spiritualibus ascensionibus*, Jacopo da Voragine's *Golden Legend*, as well as Abbot García Cisneros's spiritual manual, or *Ejercitatorio*, for the monks of Monserrat.¹⁶ Ludolph's *Vita Christi*, in particular, has seemed to suggest a clear influence on, if not the origin of, the Ignatian application of the senses:

If you want to benefit from these [meditations], set aside all cares and worries. With all the feeling of your heart – with diligence, joy, and fastidiousness – make yourself present to everything that the Lord Jesus said and did, as if you were hearing it with your ears and seeing it with your eyes, for these [sensations] are most sweet to those who reflect on them, and even more to those who taste them, with devotion. Thus, although many of these things are narrated in the past tense, you should meditate on them as if they happened in the present: for the sweetness you will taste will no doubt be the greater for it.¹⁷

¹⁶ See the discussions in O'Malley J.W., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1993) 46, and Calveras I. – De Dalmases C., "Introductio generalis", in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 34–52. On Cisneros's influence, see Albareda A.M., "Intorno alla scuola di orazione metodica stabilita a Monserrato dall'Abate Garsias Jiménez de Cisneros (1493–1510)", *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 25 (1956) 254–316, and O'Reilly T., "The Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola and the *Ejercitatorio de la Vida Spiritual*", *Studia Monastica* 16 (1974) 301–323 (repr. in Idem, *From Ignatius Loyola to John of the Cross. Spirituality and Literature in Sixteenth-Century Spain* [Aldershot, Hants.: 1995]).

¹⁷ Ludolfus de Saxonia, "Vita Christi, Prooemium", in Böhmer H., *Studien zur Geschichte der Gesellschaft Jesu*, vol. I (Bonn: 1914), Texte 56–71 (quote at 66); a Spanish version is cited in Calveras I. – De Dalmases C., "Introductio generalis", in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 41, n. 20. The partial translation in Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian* 193, is rather imprecise.

One may find a similar emphasis on sense experience in Zerbolt's *Ascensiones*, for instance:

Then turn your mental eye towards the Last Judgment, so that its bitter recollection may render all sweetness bitter. Thus consider the fear, the clamor, and the astonishment when the Archangel's trumpet sounds, when lightning strikes with terrible splendor, when thunder roars, when, to terrify sinners, the sun is obscured and the moon stops shining.¹⁸

Thus, despite obvious technical differences, the German *devotio moderna* has appeared to be the vein from which Ignatius mined his *applicatio sensuum*. But since the technique can be traced further back to high-medieval mystical writers such as Bonaventure and Meister Eckhart, and from there to church fathers like Augustine and Origen, many interpreters (including early Jesuits like Polanco) have placed Ignatius within a long theological-mystical tradition.¹⁹

Yet there is another historical hinterland that (as far as I know) has not received the attention it deserves, at least not in the context that concerns us – the application of the senses. That hinterland is the long tradition of penitential practice. As we have seen, the question of invisible representation was brought up during the First Week, whose focus (as scholars have long agreed) is penitential and purgative. Hence the question: what influence did the medieval tradition of confession have on this section and, more generally, on the genesis and structure of the *Exercises*? In a careful study of 1948, the Spanish Ignatius scholar José Calveras attempted to answer just that question.²⁰ His findings were twofold. First, there is significant biographical evidence to suggest that Ignatius's practice of confession during his conversion, and possibly the reading of a confessional manual, is closely connected with the first notes for the *Exercises*. Second, and even more important, a meticulous comparison with early sixteenth-century confessors' manuals led Calveras to conclude that important terminological and structural

¹⁸ Zerbolt de Zutphen G., *La montée du cœur. De spiritualibus ascensionibus*, ed. F.J. Legrand (Turnhout: 2006) 166: 'Deinde, oculum mentalem verte ad extremum iudicium, ut ex eius memoria amarissima amarescant omnia dulcia. Cogita igitur, quantus timor, quantus clamor quantaque fiet ammiratio, cum tuba archangelica sonuerit, cum fulgura terribiliter splendescent, tonitrua mugient, cum ad terrendum peccatores, sol obscurabitur et luna non dabit lumen suum'; for another example, see the meditation on Christ, *ibid.* 202: 'affectu quodam dulci et desiderio cordiali licet quodammodo carnali'.

¹⁹ Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian* 198–203.

²⁰ Calveras J., "Los 'confesionales' y los Ejercicios de san Ignacio", *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 17 (1948) 51–101.

features of the *Exercises* derived directly from these (or very similar) sources. The examinations of conscience required in the First Week are not only geared toward confession, but they parallel confession in the way the attainment of contrition, shame, and pardon are described. Mnemonic techniques prescribed in confessionals to aid in the recall and organization of sins return in the *Exercises*: sins are organized according to place, time, persons, and occupations; it is asked whether they occurred in fact, in speech, or in thought. Later in the *Exercises*, in discussing the 'three modes of prayer', Ignatius again used categories central to the process of confession. The first of these features the commandments (both the Decalogue and the commandments of the Church), the capital sins, the powers of the soul (memory, reason, and will), as well as the five senses. What relation, if any, did the latter category have with the Jesuit *applicatio sensuum*? A closer examination of the late-medieval tools of confession is in order.

The review of sins in confession had long rested on one fundamental category, that of the seven capital sins, which were (in the terminology of Johan Huizinga) among the fundamental 'forms of thought' of medieval culture. Their significance has been studied and confirmed by scholars from M.W. Bloomfield to Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio; and thanks to the studies of Mary Carruthers and Lina Bolzoni we now know much about their important mnemotechnic functions.²¹ Within the practice of confession, then, the capital sins served as a conceptual grid that allowed penitents systematically to remember, recall, organize, and confess certain actions. It was not only a tool of abstraction but also one of interpretation. It served to reduce the complexity of human experience to the notions that mattered for the penitential process: it helped to identify sins.

Through the earlier Middle Ages, the capital sins ruled supreme. But starting in the thirteenth century, they gradually lost their monopoly. As confession became an ever more sophisticated art, other classification systems were introduced. The most important was no doubt the

²¹ Bloomfield M.W., *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, With Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing, Mich.: 1952); Casagrande C. – Vecchio S., *I sette vizi capitali. Storia dei peccati nel Medioevo* (Turin: 2000); Carruthers M.J., *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge – New York: 1990); Bolzoni L., *La stanza della memoria. Modelli letterari e iconografici nell'età della stampa* (Turin: 1995; trans. J. Parzen, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* [Toronto: 2001]).

Ten Commandments, but there were others as well: the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the works of mercy, the occupational sins (those, that is, tied to social status), and also those of the five senses. This development obviously complicated the practice of confession, since a tool invented to simplify and organize the full range of human behaviors now faced multiple competitors, which, instead of replacing it, came to co-exist with it in a way that was anything but systematic.²² Some historians have nevertheless detected broad trends. Thus John Bossy, in a well-known thesis, has suggested that the late-medieval offensive of the Ten Commandments reflected broad changes in late-medieval and early-modern religion. For him, the capital sins represented a perspective, and a hierarchy of values, that privileged the social aspects of behavior, and thus of sin: it was the perspective of traditional Christianity. The system of the Commandments, in contrast, turned the attention from the horizontal relations of community life toward vertical power relations: it focused on the individual in his or her relations to higher powers, whether divine or secular. This system was more in tune with societies in the process of confessionalization. As Bossy suggested (seconded, more circumspectly, by Casagrande and Vecchio), the result was an increasingly individual and psychological emphasis in Catholic morality, and a penitential practice focused more and more on sexuality.²³ Where does this leave the category of the five senses?

In confessors' manuals, the senses were never to be allotted the same kind of attention as the capital sins or the Ten Commandments, but from the fifteenth century they became a constant presence. The manuals prompted a systematic review of the sins of vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch – usually in that order – and often gave brief examples. It is these examples that provide valuable clues about the immediate concerns. They offer modest but significant support for Bossy's thesis. In the earlier, fifteenth-century texts, the behaviors range from the personal to the social. Antoninus of Florence, for example, in his classic *Confessionale* "*Omnis mortalium cura*", notes in connection to

²² Casagrande – Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali* 207–220; see also Casagrande C., "La moltiplicazione dei peccati. I cataloghi dei peccati nella letteratura pastorale dei secoli XIII–XV", in *La peste nera: dati di una realtà ed elementi di una interpretazione. Atti del XXX Convegno storico internazionale, Todi 10–13 ottobre 1993* (Spoleto: 1994) 253–284.

²³ Bossy J., "Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments", in Leites E. (ed.), *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge – Paris: 1988) 87–116; Casagrande – Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali* 218–219.

vision: 'With this sense you fail by seeing things that are vain or that feed the eye and make it enjoy these things, or when you hate to see ugly things, poor people, or people who are despised for the love of God [...]'. And in connection to hearing: 'With this sense you fail by gladly hearing someone speak ill of another person [...]'. And in connection to smell: 'With this sense you fail by delighting in pleasant scents, or by your disgust for poor or lowly people [...]'.²⁴

Starting in the early sixteenth century, however, confessionals began to omit such references to the poor, and to focus on penitents' perceptions of their body and sexuality. The Milanese friar Michele Carcano put it this way:

And [consider] whether you have ever derived pleasure from seeing how well formed and beautiful you are; and also whether you have ever wished to look at some woman or your wife or somebody else's wife, while you were in bed, or when you were not [...].²⁵

The Jesuit Imagination

How about the Jesuits? It seems clear that the early Jesuits adopted the conventional format, categories, and instructions for confession.²⁶ This was also true for the senses. In a sermon about confession, for instance, Ignatius discussed 'the five senses of the body' along the lines of Antoninus's prescription: 'The first is seeing: we sin when we see a thing with evil intention'. Thereupon he checked off the other senses, warning against using them 'with pleasure' ('con delectatione') or in

²⁴ Antoninus of Florence, *Confessionale di Sancto Antonino Arcivescovo de Firenze del Ordine de Predicatori* (s.l.: s.a.) [Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Incun. VI. 39 (int. 3)] fol. 76v: 'Delli cinque sentimenti del corpo humano. Et prima del vedere. Vedere questo sentimento si falla in vedere cose vane: o che pascano l'ochio & haverne dilecto: o quando ti desdegni de guardar cose vile: o persone povere o persone spresiate per amore de Dio o quando le guardi con schiviltade [...]. Del senso del Udire. In questo sentimento si falla in udire voluntiera dire mal d'altrui [...] Del senso del Odorare. In questo sentimento si falla in haver dilecto di cose odorifere, o per desdegno havere a schiffo persone povere o vile, lequale fosseno per poverta strazate [sic] i panni, o il loro dosso [...]'.
²⁵ Carcano Michele, *Confessionale generale de la gran Tuba* (s.l.: s.a.) [Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Incun.VI.39 (11)] fol. [Axii]v: 'Et primo del vedere: unde domanda [...] se mai ha pigliato diletto guardando te come sei ben formato: et come tu sei bello: et cosi se tu hai voluto guardar qualche donna o tua moglie o quelle daltri quando sei stato in letto o fora de letto [...]'.
²⁶ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* 136–152.

a 'disorderly way' ('disordinatamente').²⁷ Ignatius only hinted at the content of those confessions, but the point about 'delectatione' suggests that his frame of reference was not far removed from that of contemporary confessionals.

This penitential use of the senses also found its way into the *Spiritual Exercises*, even aside from its possible application in the preliminary confessions and examinations of conscience. The technique re-appeared, in a modified version, in Week Four, as Ignatius introduced three modes of prayer:

The first method of prayer is on the ten commandments, the seven capital sins, the three powers of the soul, and the five senses of the body. The purpose of this method of prayer is to provide form, method, and exercises through which the soul may prepare itself [better], derive [more] benefit from the prayer, and make it [more] acceptable, than [would be the case] without any form or method.

The method then started with the first commandment: 'For the first method of prayer, it is well to consider and think over the first commandment, how I have kept it, and in what I have failed [...]'.²⁸ While this prayer is thus not exclusively self-accusatory, as is confession, it has a vital penitential component mirroring confession. Ignatius immediately confirmed this by suggesting that the consideration of the commandments should be proportionate in length to the degree to which one had sinned against them. Having discussed the capital sins and the three powers of the soul in like manner, Ignatius then turned to the five senses. Here he expected the exercitant to observe 'the same order', while only 'changing their subject matter'.

It is worth pointing out that the early Jesuits evidently shared the moral concerns underlying this penitential method – i.e., that the senses might be a conduit for sinful temptation. In a commentary of

²⁷ Ignatius of Loyola, "Della confessione", in *Epistolae et Instructiones*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 12, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* 42 (Madrid: 1911) 672–673.

²⁸ *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 1 312, par. 238: 'La primera manera de orar es cerca de los diez mandamientos y de los siete peccados mortales, de las tres potencias del ánima, y de los cinco sentidos corporales; la qual manera de orar es más dar forma, modo y exercitios, cómo el ánima se apareje y aproueche en ellos, y para que la oración sea accepta, que no dar forma ny modo alguno de orar' and 314–316, par. 241: 'Para el primer modo de orar conuiene considerar y pensar, en el primer mandamento, cómo le he guardado, y en qué he faltado [...]'; *The Spiritual Exercises* (ed. Mottola) 105 (revised).

1587 the Jesuit Giuseppe Biondo recommended that practitioners of the *Exercises* who were active in public life should seek an ‘inward concentration’ (‘raccoglimento interiore’) within their worldly life, among other things by abstaining from laughter, observing strict modesty, and practicing the ‘discipline of the senses’ (‘custodia dei sensi’).²⁹ Subsequently, according to Antonio Valentino, another explicator of the *Exercises*, this practice should be evaluated in the examination of conscience: ‘Consider how you have spent your time well and guarded the gates of the five senses’.³⁰ More generally, the discipline of the senses was to enter the bloodstream of devotional and educational texts of the early modern period. There is little doubt that the Jesuits contributed their share to this trend. One example must suffice here: Roberto Bellarmino’s highly influential *Ars moriendi* of 1620. It was a work of Bellarmino’s old age: the prospect of his own death presumably led him to revisit the classic genre of assistance to the dying. But what he proposed was a general spiritual guide, on the principle that to die well, one had to live well. Thus, as he considered the sacrament of extreme unction, particularly the anointing of the senses, he used the occasion to exhort Christians to review their senses methodically. The long penitential meditation that ensued was focused anxiously and almost exclusively on the temptations of the flesh.³¹

What implications does this argument have for the interpretation of the *Spiritual Exercises*? If I am right about the influence of penitential practice, this means, first, that the sense application proposed in the *Exercises* combined the medieval tradition of meditations on the life of Christ with the mnemonic-systematic tools of confession. Second, this merger would render the practice more complex than it might seem. It would prompt us to distinguish a penitential use of the senses from their contemplative function. In the former, the senses served as an aid to facilitate the recollection, categorization, and subsequent

²⁹ *Annotationes P. Iosephi Blondo* [1587], in *Directoria exercitiorum spiritualium* (1540–1599), ed. I. Iparraguirre, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* 76 (Madrid: 1955) 474.

³⁰ *Meditationes et Exercitia spiritualia P. Antonii Valentino* (saltem a. 1579), in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 213.

³¹ Bellarmino Roberto, *De arte bene moriendi libri duo* (Viterbo, Typis Discipulorum: 1620) 175–205; trans. J.P. Donnelly – R.J. Teske, “The Art of Dying Well”, in Bellarmino Roberto, *Spiritual Writings* (New York: 1989) 303–320. On the book’s influence, see Roche D., “La mémoire de la mort’: recherche sur la place des Arts de mourir dans la librairie et la lecture en France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles”, *Annales ESC* 31 (1976) 76–119.

rejection of sins; in the latter, they strengthened the imaginative component of meditations. The two might complement each other, but there was also an obvious point of tension. In the recall of sin, memory was essential, but the imagination had only a limited role. An overly vivid remembrance or re-evocation of sin might lead to its repetition. Authors of confessors' manuals were clearly aware of this risk: for this reason they urged that sins – especially carnal sins – be described only in their essence and in the abstract language of casuistic terminology. It was this technical discourse that Foucault recognized as the first specialized, professionalized language on sexuality before the rise of modern psychiatry.³²

This caution left a further mark on the sense application prescribed by the *Exercises*: it was arguably the principal motivation behind the recourse to metaphor central to the penitential meditations. The first exercise of the First Week, where Ignatius introduced the notion of invisible contemplation, was relatively unproblematic, in that the exercitants contemplated the sins of others – of the angels, of Adam and Eve, and ‘of any person who went to hell because of one mortal sin’ – albeit always in relation to their own. But in the second exercise, all attention was turned to their own failings. This involved a limited use of the sense of vision:

The first point is the review of [my] sins, that is, to recall to mind all the sins of [my] life, looking at them year by year, and period by period. Three things will help [me] to do this: first, observe the place and house where I lived; second, the associations I had with others; third, the position I held.

Yet the mnemotechnic method of confession immediately gave way to the process of rejection: ‘The second [point is] to weigh [my] sins, considering the ugliness and the malice that every mortal sin committed has in itself, even if it were not forbidden’. The following points provided techniques to reinforce this rejection. Exercitants reflected on the ‘corruption and foulness’ of their body and saw themselves ‘as a sore and an abscess from whence have come forth so many sins, so many evils, and the most vile poison’.³³ Thus metaphor entered the scene.

³² See De Boer W., *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden: 2001) 101–102.

³³ *Exercitia spiritualia (Autographum)*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 1 194, par. 56–58: ‘1º puncto. El primer puncto es el processo de los pecados, es a saber, traer a la

The process reached a climax in the next exercise. The famous meditation on hell featured a methodical use of all five senses to impress on the exercitant the horrendous nature of the place.³⁴ Hell was, of course, the ultimate consequence of sin, and therefore its most effective metaphor as well as the best example of invisible contemplation. The rationale of Ignatius's remark on the subject now becomes clear. If the mnemonic power of the senses to remember sins played a preparatory role in the meditation on sin, their imaginative power should not be used in that context: a realistic representation (like the one pursued in the meditations on the life of Christ) was dangerous and counter productive. However, that imaginative power was an asset in the metaphorical consideration of the consequences of sin; hence their intensive use in the meditation on hell. It was, we may conclude, a deliberate substitution or overlay of spiritual imagery to repress all too vivid recollections of sin.

This hypothesis is confirmed by a tale that Ignatius's biographer Luis González de Camara heard from his master's own lips. It presented a vision as aiding his wish to relegate his (sinful) past thoughts to oblivion.

Awake one night, he clearly saw an image of Our Lady with the Holy Child Jesus. From this vision he received for a considerable time the greatest consolation; and he was left with such disgust of his entire past life, especially of the things of the flesh, that it seemed to him that all images previously painted in his soul had been erased from it. From that hour until August 1553, when this is being recorded, he never gave even the slightest consent to the things of the flesh.³⁵

memoria todos los pecados de la vida, mirando de año en año o de tiempo en tiempo; para lo qual aprouechar tres cosas: la 1ª, mirar el lugar y la casa adonde he habitado; la 2ª, la conuersación que he tenido con otros; la 3ª, el officio en que he viuido. 2º punto. El 2º, ponderar los pecados, mirando la fealdad y la malicia que cada pecado mortal cometido tiene en sí, dado que no fuese vedado 3º punto [...] 4º, mirar toda my corrupción y fealdad corpórea; 5º, mirarme como vna llaga y postema, de donde an salido tantos pecados y tantas maldades y ponzoña tan turpíssima'; *The Spiritual Exercises* (ed. Mottola) 56–57. In the last sections, the reflections on sin are offset by the realization of God's goodness, and by an imaginative review of all beings – angels, saints, the sun and planets – that have sustained the exercitant's life.

³⁴ *Exercitia spiritualia (Autographum)*, *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 1 200–204, par. 65–72.

³⁵ *Acta Patris Ignatii scripta a P. Lud. González de Camara (1553/1555)*, *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis* 1, ed. D.F. Zapico – C. De Dalmases, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* 66 (Rome: 1943) 374–376: 'Estando una noche despierto, vido claramente una imagen de nuestra Señora con el santo Niño Jesús, con cuya vista por espacio notable recibió consolación muy excesiva, y

The anecdote precisely illustrates what Barthes has called the ‘apotropic function’ of Ignatius’s imagination, which is ‘first and foremost, the power to repress foreign images’.³⁶

Sense Application Contested

If this analysis has revealed an inherent tension in the *Exercises*, it may also shed new light on the extensive debates surrounding their application in the later sixteenth century. In a climate in which mental prayer was regarded with suspicion, and at a time when the Roman Holy Office and the Index of Forbidden Books showed increasing concern about the potential for heterodoxy, opposition against mystical interpretations of the *Exercises* gathered force.³⁷ It was particularly the issue of sense application that led to controversy. Was it merely a first step onto the ladder of meditation or did it represent a higher stage of spiritual engagement? Such questions generated an increasing number of rules, directives, commentaries and models that sought to circumscribe Jesuit spiritual practices.³⁸

Among those normative texts, the authoritative *Directorium* of 1599 came down firmly on the side of a ‘plain’ use of sense application.³⁹ While this development is fairly well known, a review of some of the

quedó con tanto asco de toda la vida pasada, y especialmente de cosas de carne, que le parecía habérsele quitado del ánima todas las especies que antes tenía en ella pintadas. Así desde aquella hora hasta el Agosto de 53 que esto se escribe, nunca más tuvo ni un mínimo consenso en cosas de carne’. The passage is also discussed in Fabre, *Ignace de Loyola* 32–33.

³⁶ Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* 57–58; trans. Miller 51–52: the ‘fonction apotropaique’ is ‘au premier chef, le pouvoir de repousser les images étrangères’. He goes on to argue that the deployment of all five senses, incorporating even the smallest details of daily life, is meant to ‘chass[er] du champ de la retraite les langues mondaines, oiseuses, physiques, naturelles, en un mot les langues autres’ and ‘accomplir l’homogénéité de la langue à construire [...]’.

³⁷ Caravale G., *L’orazione proibita. Censura ecclesiastica e letteratura devozionale nella prima età moderna* (Florence: 2003) esp. 78–129.

³⁸ De Certeau M., *La fable mystique, 1: XVI^e–XVII^e siècle* (Paris: 1982) 343–344, and n. 37.

³⁹ This debate is chronicled extensively in Iparraguirre I., *Historia de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio*, vol. II: *Desde la muerte de San Ignacio hasta la promulgación del Directorio oficial (1556–1599)* (Bilbao – Roma: 1955) esp. chapters 14–16. For shorter accounts, see *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 301–302 n. 116; Marxer, *Die inneren geistlichen Sinne* 29–38 and, focused on the issue of *compositio loci*, Fabre, *Ignace de Loyola* 121–162.

particulars may be helpful. Polanco's *Directorium* of 1573–1575 had proposed two modes of sense application – on the one hand, the simple use of the ‘imaginative’ senses, and on the other, the more advanced application of the ‘spiritual’ (or ‘mental’ or ‘intellectual’) senses as conceived in Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*.⁴⁰ Yet in an important commentary Father Gil González Dávila (c. 1587) rejected the spiritual mode as too abstract and likely to arouse ‘curiosity’ in the ignorant and inexperienced – that is, in most practitioners. ‘The more attention one gives to these anagogical senses, the more one tends to lose the fruit of the meditation’.⁴¹ A first draft of the *Directorium* (c. 1590), which was prepared under González's leadership, retained both options but adopted his critique, considering anagogy more fit for preaching than meditation. The text unambiguously preferred the ‘first application, which is plainer and clearer’.⁴² The two *Directoria* subsequently approved and printed (in 1591 and 1599) left out the second application entirely, retaining only the ‘very easy’ alternative.⁴³

Not all were satisfied with this outcome. An anonymous Neapolitan Jesuit contested the notion, in the 1591 edition, that meditation was ‘more intellectual, more grounded in ratiocination, and altogether higher’ than sense application. The latter, he inferred from Ignatius's own words, was more akin to contemplation: not only did it involve discourse but it also went beyond the ‘discourse of meditation’. Last but not least, Ignatius's own metaphorical reading of taste and smell pointed necessarily in the direction of a spiritual interpretation of sense application.⁴⁴ In a further sign of the anxiety surrounding the debate, some suspected that the Jesuit leadership wished to limit the practice of sense application in other ways as well. Fabiano Quadrantini, another critic of the 1591 edition, accused its authors of deviating

⁴⁰ *Directorium P. Ioannis Alfonsi de Polanco (1573–1575)*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 300–303, par. 65–66. The *Directorium Exercitiorum P. Cordeses*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 549, par. 86–87, echoes Polanco's view.

⁴¹ *Annotationes P. Aegidius González Dávila*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 487–488, par. 14, and 510, par. 94: ‘quanto más atención se suele poner en estos sentidos anagogicos, tanto se suele perder de fruto en la meditación’.

⁴² *Directorium variorum (versus 1590)*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 676–678, par. 154 (italicized text).

⁴³ *Directorium editum a. 1591* and *Directorium definitive approbatum (1599)*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 676, par. 154.

⁴⁴ *Avvertimenti sopra il Direttorio degli Essercitii*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 781, par. 15. For the criticized passage from the *Directorium*, see *Directorium editum a. 1591*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 680, par. 156.

from Ignatius's express intent that a full hour of this exercise conclude every day, not merely of the second week, but of the second through fourth weeks; repetitions of preceding meditations might occasionally be cut, but not the sense application.⁴⁵

Whether Quadrantini's complaint was justified or not, by the 1590s the official view of sense application had moved away from spiritual, anagogical, and perhaps more generally metaphorical uses of the senses, and towards plainer, more literal forms. In one scholar's view, this move rendered the practice 'innocuous to the point of caricature'.⁴⁶ Yet life was not so simple, as one anonymous commenter noted: despite the 1591 *Directorium's* clear instructions, 'experience teaches that in no *Exercise* is there such danger of injuring the organs of the head'. It was, particularly, the imagination that was at risk.⁴⁷

This remark is not without irony. From early on, commenters on the *Spiritual Exercises* had hedged their recommendation of the 'very easy' form of sense application – soon to be normative – with warnings and restrictions. Thus Juan de Polanco:

there is no difficulty in seeing with the imagination persons and their circumstances, nor in hearing the words they say or that we can imagine them saying with decency. Nor is there much of a problem with touch if we imagine kissing the traces of Christ's feet or clothes. But if we imagine kissing something else, we must combine the imagination with reverence, for example in kissing the feet of Christ, who is our true and highest pontiff [...], or his hands, as those of our true and highest father, king and lord... With smell and taste we must rise above the imagina-

⁴⁵ *Notata P. Fabiani Quadrantini*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 765, par. 28. Quadrantini reacted to the suggestion in the 1591 *Directorium* that the application might be folded into the meditation instead of being done separately ('sed potest etiam fieri in eadem meditatione, diverso tamen tempore, et hoc praesertim in quibusdam Exercitiis, in quibus non adeo locum habet haec applicatio sensuum ut unam horam occupet', *Directorium editum a. 1591*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 678, par. 155). An anonymous reviewer of Quadrantini's text apparently agreed with him, adding the marginal note 'Bene moneat'. Yet the 1599 *Directorium*, in its revised comment, did not endorse the practice of sense application separate from the meditations: 'Quod non ita accipiendum est, quasi hanc applicationem debeamus habere seuunctam ab omni materia meditationis, sed ut praecipuus scopus circa mysterii considerationem sit sensuum applicatio' (*Directorium definitive approbatum (1599)*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 677, par. 155).

⁴⁶ Sudbrack, "Die 'Anwendung der Sinne'" 98.

⁴⁷ *Dubia circa Directorium (1591–1593)*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 785, par. 9: 'Verum experientia docet quod in nullo Exercitio tantum sit periculum laedendi organa capitis, quam in isto; etiamsi iuxta mentem Directorii, atque adeo P.N. Ignatii, sollicitè explicetur quomodo sit procedendum. Proinde forsàn commode moneretur Director, ut advigilet ne exercitans nimium fatiget imaginationis organum, quando in isto versatur Exercitio'.

tion to reason, considering [the former to be] the fragrance, as it were, of God's distant gifts to the holy soul, and the latter [as] the taste of those immediately present, which restore us with their sweetness.⁴⁸

In short, Polanco circumscribed the sensual imagination with rules of decorum and honor. The closer its application came to the physical realities of the world, the more caution was needed in applying them, particularly for those beginners to whom this exercise was especially recommended. Young people (*gente tierna*), another early commenter, Father González, confirmed, 'should do this with reverence, without discourteous audacity...and without mixing human affects with the beauties of the spirit'.⁴⁹ In the case of the lower senses of smell and taste, both Polanco and González suggest, the imaginative act had to bypass the physical sensation altogether and spiritualize it immediately. Thus, to use Polanco's term, 'reason' stepped in to elevate literal meaning to anagogy. Inevitably, this took the process back into the territories of spiritual interpretation that the *Directorium* was so cautious about. But the same *Directorium*, in all three versions, faithfully echoed Polanco and González's concerns about the 'plain' form of sense application.⁵⁰

Others in this period were more explicit. The best-selling *Guía de pecadores* by Fray Luis de Granada reveals deep worries about vision that may have resonated with the Jesuit leadership:

⁴⁸ *Directorium P. Ioannis Alfonsi Polanco*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 300–301, par. 65: 'nulla difficultas est in visu imaginario personarum cum suis circumstantiis, et in auditu verborum, quae loquuntur, vel decenter loqui posse imaginamur. In tactu parum est etiam difficultatis, cum imaginamur nos osculari vestigia, ubi fuerunt pedes Christi vel vestes. Sed si aliquid amplius osculari imaginamur, sit cum reverentia coniuncta imaginatio, ut esset osculando pedes Christi, veri et summi pontificis nostri [...] vel manus ut nostri summi et veri patris, regis ac Domini [...]. In olfactu et gustu, super imaginationem, ad rationem est ascendendum, considerando fragrantiam quasi absentium, et gustum quasi presentium donorum Dei in anima sancta, et sua suavitate reficientium nos'. Again, Antonio Cordeses followed Polanco quite literally (*Directorium Exercitiorum*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 549, par. 86–87), except where smell and taste were concerned. Since these senses 'no se pueden aplicar a esto' (i.e., the imaginative mode), they could be omitted.

⁴⁹ *Annotationes P. Aegidii Gonzalez Davila*, in *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 510, par. 95.

⁵⁰ *Monumenta Ignatiana* ser. II, 2 676–677, par. 154. Later interpreters like Francisco Suárez and Luis de la Puente spiritualized sense application as 'a certain participation in the contemplation' ('una cierta participación de la contemplación', Suárez) or 'experiential knowledge of God' ('conocimiento experimental de Dios', De la Puente). In this context, they insisted particularly on a metaphorical notion of smell and taste as enhancing the contemplation of virtues or the gifts of the soul; see Calveras, "Los cinco sentidos" 52–53.

And especially persons given to prayer should take particular care in guarding this sense [of vision], not only to preserve chastity but also to seclude their heart, because otherwise the images of things which enter through these gates into us, will leave depicted into our soul so many figures as to molest and disturb it when it turns to prayer or meditation, and cause it to think of nothing except what it has in front of them. Therefore spiritual persons work hard to keep their vision so withdrawn that they not only turn their eyes away from things that may harm them, but also take care not to look at beautiful buildings and images of precious tapestries, and similar things, so as to have their imagination all the more clear and pure when they converse with God. For this exercise is such, and so delicate, that it is hindered not only by sins, but also by the representations of the images and figures of things, even when they are not evil.⁵¹

Thus the application of the senses remained a problematic pursuit. It facilitated the recall of sins in penitential meditations, but there it required that any literal representation be suppressed by a metaphorical substitute. The evocation of holy figures and narratives constituted a safe territory, where the senses proved especially fruitful when applied most concretely. Yet the very appeal to the realm of physical sensation, however neutral the subject, again raised the specter of worldly seductions and transgressions. Hence the trend, also here, both to void the mind of evil impressions and instead to turn to metaphor and spiritual interpretation. Complexities and ambiguities such as these obviously had implications for artistic and poetic expressions of Jesuit spirituality. This is not the place to reflect on these implications. But the issue was clearly critical in an age characterized both by the censorship of cultural practices condemned for their sensuality and by cultural innovations resting on the deliberate manipulation of the senses for purposes of spiritual advancement.

⁵¹ Luis de Granada, *Guía de pecadores*, ed. J.M. Balcells (Barcelona: 1986) 403: 'Y especialmente las personas dadas a la oración tienen particular necesidad de poner mayor recaudo en este sentido, no sólo por la guarda de la castidad, sino también por el recogimiento del corazón, porque de otra manera las imágenes de las cosas que por estas puertas se nos entran, dejan el ánima pintada de tantas figuras, que cuando se pone a orar o meditar, la molestan y inquietan, y hacen que no pueda pensar sino en aquello que tiene delante. Por donde las personas espirituales procuran traer la vista tan recogida, que no solamente no quieren poner los ojos en las cosas que les pueden empecer, mas aun se guardan de mirar la hermosura de los edificios, y las imágenes de las ricas tapi- cerías y cosas semejantes, para tener más desnuda y limpia la imaginación al tiempo que han de tratar con Dios, porque tal es y tan delicado este ejercicio, que no sólo se impide con los pecados, sino también con las representaciones de las imágenes y figuras de las cosas, puesto caso que no sean malas'.

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MEDITATION IN THE SERVICE OF CATHOLIC ORTHODOXY:
PETER CANISIUS' *NOTAE EVANGELICAE**

Hilmar M. Pabel

Historians who take a serious interest in the life of the soul, in the way in which human beings have thought or prayed or meditated, must confine their research to sensory objects, to texts or visual representations, for example. They can also pay attention to the reports of voyeurs, who can take us behind closed doors, as it were, to witness the manifestations of spiritual events usually out of the public eye. Georg Scherer had been a young sixteenth-century voyeur. In 1604, he penned a letter to Ferdinand Alber, a confrère in the Society of Jesus and rector of the Jesuit college in Vienna. Scherer recalled an event that had taken place a little more than forty years previously, sometime between 1559 and 1562, when he was responsible for looking after the bedchamber of a senior Jesuit in the Viennese college. This was Peter Canisius, head of the Society's Upper German Province (1556–1569), who on 14 December 1559 received the nineteen-year-old Scherer and two other applicants into the Society: 'I gladly enroll you in our roster'. Although the passage of time had erased much from Scherer's memory, one incident remained lodged in his heart. Hearing shouting from Canisius' room, he peered through the keyhole to find out what was the matter. 'I saw and heard', he wrote, 'Father Canisius, kneeling like Abraham the patriarch, conversing, shouting, and arguing with God in fervent prayer and with straining voice like Jacob wrestling with the angel'. Scherer looked on in silence and said to himself: 'I shall not interfere in the quarrel or controversy that is between Father Canisius and God. They will settle the problem without me'. The young man scurried off. Scherer felt justified in concluding from what he had witnessed that 'Canisius was not only a great orator

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in worldly eloquence (*magnus Orator in seculari eloquentia*) before a human audience but also a great man of prayer and accomplished suppliant (*magnus Orator et Exorator*) in the presence of the Almighty'. Scherer also had evidence of a quieter, more meditative Canisius. He reported to Alber that he had happened upon 'some pages, in which Canisius had carefully noted even the thoughts he had all day long. And by this fact he demonstrated supreme diligence in the examination of conscience'.¹

The composite representation of the restless Jesuit Jacob also adept at scrutinizing his conscience reflects how A. de Pelsemacker, borrowing from Jerome Nadal's characterization of Ignatius of Loyola, thought of Canisius: 'a contemplative in action'.² The combative Canisius whom we glimpse vicariously through the keyhole wore the public face of the relentless critic of Protestantism. Pelsemacker called him 'un controversiste consommé'. Swiss Catholic admirers, comparing him with St. Jerome, acclaimed Canisius in 1597, the year of his death, 'the scourge of heretics'. Conversely, some German Protestants, who believed that the Jesuits originated in determined opposition to the Reformation in Germany, were under the mistaken impression that Canisius (not Ignatius) was their founder.³ Yet Canisius the catechist, the polemicist, the preacher, the Provincial, the founder of colleges, the envoy of popes and confidante of Habsburg and Wittelsbach princes – this Jesuit dynamo has attracted more attention than the methodical meditator.

Canisius encouraged others to develop their spiritual lives. This included students, if he wrote what might count as the earliest plan of study (*ratio studiorum*) for a Jesuit school, composed perhaps in 1560 or 1561 after the foundation of the Jesuit colleges of Prague, Ingolstadt, and Cologne.⁴ The third and final section announces rules for

¹ Braunsberger O. (ed.), *Beati Petri Canisii Societatis Iesu epistulae et acta*, 8 vols. (Freiburg i. Br.: 1896–1923) vol. II 558 (Canisius' welcome); 825 (Scherer's letter to Alber).

² Pelsemacker A. de, "Saint Pierre Canisius: la spiritualité d'un apôtre", *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 35 (1959) 187.

³ *Ibid.*, 188; Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. VIII 447; Duhr B., *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*, vol. I: *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge im XVI. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg i. Br.: 1907) 822–823; 825.

⁴ Tesser J.H.M., *Petrus Canisius als humanistisch geleerde* (Amsterdam: 1932) 172–175 contested Canisius' authorship of the *ratio studiorum*, whereas Brodrick J., *Saint Peter Canisius* (London: 1935) 297 and Haub R., "Das Erziehungskonzept der Jesuiten und der Stellenwert des Katechismus", in Filser H. – Leimgruber S. (eds.), *Petrus Canisius: Der Große Katechismus* (Regensburg: 2003) 36–39 accept Canisius' authorship.

promoting the pursuit of piety and learning of Christian youth. 'The first responsibility of students', the *ratio* decrees

will be that they prove to be students of all the virtues and moreover especially of a sincere Catholic piety and also of religious worship. They should above all fear, love, and worship God, and, furthermore, earnestly meditate upon the life, suffering, and death of Christ the Lord, imprinting these deeply with devout feeling onto their hearts.⁵

Canisius' celebrated catechisms facilitated this meditation. In a 1564 edition of the *Parvus catechismus catholicorum* printed in Cologne by Maternus Cholinus, Canisius added a feature that appeared often again in his Large and especially Small Catechisms: daily meditations on the virtues of Christ.⁶ Addressing in November 1580 the Poor Clares at their convent called 'Paradise' near Constance, Canisius interpreted the bread that strengthens the human heart (*Psalm* 103: 15): 'Our bread is the frequent meditation on Christ's suffering and on our end'.⁷ Four years later at the congregation of the Upper German Province, Canisius urged his fellow Jesuits to devote themselves to meditation.⁸

Canisius' greatest monument to meditation was a product of his last years. Abraham Gemperlin printed the voluminous *Notae evangelicae*, to use the abbreviated title, in Fribourg in two stout quarto volumes in 1591–1593. The complete title on the title page of both volumes reads: *Notae in evangelicas lectiones, quae per totum annum dominicis diebus in ecclesia catholica recitantur. Opus ad pie meditandum ac simul precandum Deum accommodatum, et nunc primum in lucem editum* (*Notes on the Gospel Readings that are read publicly in the Catholic Church throughout the Year on Sundays: A Work Appropriate for Pious Meditation and moreover at the same time for Prayer to God, now appearing in Print for the first time*).⁹ Already in 1594, Canisius reported that he had revised the *Notae*. He wanted to have his

⁵ Pachtler G.M. (ed.), *Ratio Studiorum et Institutiones scholasticae Societatis Jesu per Germaniam olim vigentes collectae concinnatae dilucidatae*, vol. I 1541–1599 (= vol. II of Kehrbach K. [ed.], *Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica: Schulordnungen, Schulbücher und pädagogische Miscellaneen aus dem Landen deutscher Zunge*) (Berlin: 1887) 169.

⁶ Braunsberger O., *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen des seligen Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg i. Br.: 1893) 124–125; Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. IV 1024.

⁷ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. VII 851.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. VIII 647.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. VIII 817; 834.

meditations appear in three volumes and to send them to Antwerp for publication, presumably with the heirs of the renowned printer Christopher Plantin (d. 1589).¹⁰ Canisius died in 1597, long before Friedrich Streicher in the twentieth century fulfilled his wish for a revised publication in three volumes.

Surprisingly, although scholars remember to include the *Notae* among Canisius' literary productions, they have eluded sustained scholarly analysis.¹¹ The few publications that consider Canisius' spirituality generally neglect the *Notae*. These restrict themselves or at least devote considerable space to his spiritual experiences and character as drawn from his two autobiographies. In his 'spiritual portrait' of Canisius, Pelsemacker emphasizes his debt to the fourteenth-century German mystic, Johannes Tauler. In a pious essay published in 1923, Otto Braunsberger, the assiduous editor of Canisius' correspondence, emphasized the importance for Canisius of prayer and of teaching others to pray. Braunsberger mentioned the *Notae* but rightly complained that they are not well known.¹² Almost ninety years of research have not remedied the neglect that Braunsberger lamented. In a more recent essay on Canisius as a 'man of prayer', Paul Knopp deliberately excluded from consideration the prayers from the *Notae*, leaving an analysis of these to 'another opportunity'.¹³

In his biography of Canisius, Braunsberger briefly interpreted the *Notae* as showing 'pastors how they could meditate and apply the object of meditation to the piety of the faithful'. They allowed the aged Canisius to preach in print when he was too weak to speak from the pulpit. The local ordinary, the exiled Bishop of Lausanne signalled their importance when he ordered his clergy to buy and work their way

¹⁰ Ibid., vol. VIII 375–376.

¹¹ Fellay J.-B., "Canisius in Freiburg", in Bruhin J. (ed.), *Petrus Canisius* (Freiburg, Switzerland: 1980) 91; Haub R., "Petrus Canisius als Schriftsteller", in Oswald J. – Rummel P. (eds.), *Petrus Canisius: Reformator der Kirche* (Augsburg: 1996) 152; Haub R., "Petrus Canisius und die Bedeutung seiner literarischen Tätigkeit für die Schweiz", *Freiburger Geschichtsblätter* 74 (1997) 47–49.

¹² Richstätter K., "Deutsche Mystik und Ignatianische Ascese im Innenleben des hl. Petrus Canisius", *Zeitschrift für Ascese und Mystik* 1 (1925) 25–37; Coreth A., "Die geistige Gestalt des hl. Petrus Canisius", *Jahrbuch für mystische Theologie* 7 (1961) 113–156; Knopp P., "Der heilige Petrus Canisius – ein Man des Gebets", *Analecta Coloniensia* 2 (2002) 140–153; Pelsemacker, "Saint Pierre Canisius" 168; 177–183; Braunsberger O., "Ein Meister des innern Gebetes. (Zum Teil nach ungedruckten Quellen.)", *Stimmen der Zeit* 105 (1923) 89.

¹³ Knopp, "Der heilige Petrus Canisius" 136.

through the *Notae*.¹⁴ Brodrick, Canisius' English biographer, added little to the assessment of 'the two remarkable volumes' other than to say that the Jesuit's 'love of the Church's liturgy' inspired them. To his credit, Brodrick included a few extracts in translation to give readers a flavour of the *Notae*. His evaluation of a sample passage of prayerful petitions a preacher should undertake will strike modern readers as hagiographically insipid: 'The hundreds of such subjects and suggestions for prayer which Peter thus adds to his commentaries have a special interest as showing how all-embracing was the charity that possessed him. He had indeed come unto a wide heart for there is hardly a verse in the whole breviary of human sorrows which escapes his compassion'.¹⁵

Writing more than 150 years ago, Florian Rieß identified some of the chief features of the *Notae* like no scholar afterwards. They constituted the *chef d'oeuvre* of Canisius' long stint in Fribourg (1580–1597). Although they were destined for preachers, they offered neither specific *topoi* nor analyses for preaching. Of greater moment for Canisius was the devout formation of a preacher nourished through recourse to the Church Fathers, who figure prominently in the meditations. Rieß called them 'a practical school for preachers' for the abundant passages from the Bible and the Fathers that they contain, for the interpolation of theological discussions, and for 'the reference to contemporary controversies'.¹⁶

Although it is not possible in this first study of the *Notae evangelicae* to analyze every aspect of the unfortunately neglected contribution to meditational writings by Peter Canisius, it makes sense to focus on these 'contemporary controversies'. Manifested repeatedly in the contest between Catholicism and heresy, the theological conflicts of Canisius' day profoundly shaped the *Notae*. Meditation for the indefatigable Jesuit was certainly a vital act geared to prepare the clergy for the liturgy and for preaching. At the same time, meditation inculcated orthodoxy. Clergymen who followed the programme of the *Notae* obliged themselves to the defence of Catholicism and a principled and vigorous repudiation of heresy.

¹⁴ Braunsberger O., *Petrus Canisius: Ein Lebensbild* (Freiburg im Breisgau: 1917) 290.

¹⁵ Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* 794; 795; 799.

¹⁶ Rieß F., *Der selige Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu. Aus den Quellen dargestellt* (Freiburg i. Br.: 1865) 485–487.

The Notae: Genesis, Purpose, Structure

The origin for the idea of the *Notae* dates back at least to 1570. In a letter to his younger confrère Peter Buys, Canisius writes that news has reached him from Leuven and from Antwerp that Spanish nobles want him to write a book. He cannot promise to fulfill their 'pious wish' since he is too busy completing a work against the Magdeburg Centuriators. (This turned out to be the first installment of the *De verbi Dei corruptelis*, published in 1571.) The next sentence reveals what sort of book the nobles had in mind. Canisius prays that the Lord grant him the strength, leisure, and will 'to produce in short order and moreover in proper form (*breviter ac rite*) a work in this manner of postil'. In 1570, Paul Hoffaeus, his successor as Provincial of Upper Germany, indicated to Superior General Francisco Borgia that he would have been much happier for Canisius to compose a postil, a cycle of sermons for the liturgical year, than to engage in polemics, for which he, in the opinion of Hoffaeus and apparently other Jesuits, had no aptitude. Two years later, in 1572, Canisius is more specific when writing to Jerome Nadal, vicar general of the Society. Christopher Plantin informed Canisius that King Philip II of Spain as well as some Spanish aristocrats wanted him to prepare 'a more extensive explanation of the chief points of doctrine' combined with summaries of the liturgical readings, especially for feast days ('*diebus praesertim sacris*'). The king and his magnates 'think that this labour will certainly benefit parish priests'.¹⁷

Canisius made little progress in the next few years as an abandoned attempt at a postil from the 1570s reveals. He did not get beyond the first Sunday of Advent, the beginning of the liturgical year. In the preface to the discarded postil, Canisius recalls that he had served as a theologian and preacher in Upper Germany for many years and protests his loyalty to the Roman Church against its many public enemies. Owing to his long service as a preacher, he feels he should assemble something 'for some brothers and, moreover, especially for those less educated in order to be of some use for preaching holy sermons in churches'. Recognizing that many Catholics of distinction had already produced postils, Canisius believes that nothing should stop him from adding to the findings of others, from treating and organizing the same

¹⁷ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. VI 384–385; 700; vol. VII 37.

material differently, and from commending 'this, my effort to God and the Church'.

A firm and unambiguous commitment to Catholicism will set Canisius' projected postil off from those of other Catholic writers, whose teaching is not sufficiently and not always careful and sincere and whose writings fall short of the standards of 'the more solid theology' defended by Catholic schools and of the Council of Trent. Not only do the *postillatores* adhere above all to the literal sense of the scriptural readings prescribed for the liturgy and bog down readers in unnecessary things, thus falling short of addressing contemporary human mores. They also, it seems, rarely write *ex professo* as Catholics and are too eager to employ 'the words, phrases, analysis, and practice of the sectarians'. Thus they seem intent on charming rather than curing the hearts of their audience. In their writing and preaching, they aim to please and immerse themselves in commonplaces. 'They often chirp at us', Canisius complains, 'about God's mercy, the merits of Christ, the righteousness of faith, Christian liberty, and clerical abuses'. But they tend to be either silent or weak-kneed and make a bad impression on those of sound faith when it comes to the burning questions of the day: the teaching about the relationship between works and the satisfaction for sins and the merit of believers, the recommendation of the three necessary parts of penance, the discussion of papal and episcopal authority, the defence of the cult of the saints, the affirmation of the Catholic concept of the evangelical counsels and of monasticism.

On these and other controversial topics the people scarcely receive a word of admonition since 'the physicians, either because of ineptitude or fear of the judgment of the common folk, do not attack the ulcers. Consequently the common errors, seeds of the new doctrine, spread far and wide by the adversaries, have grown'. Since these errors have not been removed from human hearts, they gain support from 'this perverse silence and foolish dissembling'. In many hearts they appear to have spread like the plague. The 'despondent and miserable situation' of German Catholics 'abundantly reveals how much the neglect of and at the same time the contempt for true piety and Catholic teaching have gathered strength'.¹⁸

The preface reveals Canisius' confessionalized concept of preaching. Loyalty to the faith and teaching of the Catholic Church, which

¹⁸ Ibid., vol. VII 605–606.

Canisius asserts is 'my faith and teaching',¹⁹ suffuses the preface. The 'sectarians' and 'adversaries' are easy codes for Protestants, the 'new doctrine' for Protestantism. Canisius in the preface adumbrates the unmistakably confessional character of the *Notae*. To meditate on the gospel passages for Sundays and saints' days meant in large part to confirm one's commitment to Catholic truth and repudiation of Protestant heresy.

By the 1580s, Canisius resumed work on the project. In a letter of 27 February 1587, he seems to suggest that his provincial, Ferdinand Alber, has approved publication. But it took another three years for his *opus Evangelicum* to go to press. On 7 January 1591, he informs Superior General Claudio Aquaviva that the *Notae* will appear very soon and hopes that his new book will give at least partial satisfaction to his fellow Jesuits. At the end of May, Canisius tells Gregor Rosephius, his successor as cathedral preacher in Augsburg, that he has published the *Notae* 'so that I might instruct neighbouring rural pastors'. His intended audience changes to 'some preachers' at the end of August. But in November he knows that he must go back to work and complete the project. In March 1593, after the second volume, which contained meditations on the gospels for various saints' days, had appeared, Canisius prays: 'May God grant that my labour might bring forth the desired fruit for the strengthening of the Church and that it will please at least Catholic readers'.²⁰

Canisius' dedicated service to the Catholic cause was patent in the dedicatory letter that introduced each volume. Addressing himself to the town council of Fribourg in the second volume, he predictably embarked on a long defence of the cult of the saints. Its overarching theme pitted the antiquity of Catholicism against the wanton novelty of error. The partisans of 'new doctrines of the faith' opposed 'the established practice of our ancient Church'. Those 'addicted to religious innovations' subject all external devotion to hostile scorn. Not only 'have they impiously prohibited' the cult of the saints; they also have not hesitated to murder many pious people who remained faithful to 'the ancient custom' of honouring the saints, thus causing the spread of 'the heretical barbarity'. Canisius closes the letter by con-

¹⁹ Ibid., vol. VII 605.

²⁰ Ibid., vol. VIII 251; 308; 319; 332; 334; 336; and 354. On Rosephius, see *ibid.*, vol. II 559.

gratulating the town's leadership for their 'burning zeal in defending the Catholic religion' and their determined vigilance to prevent 'the deadly poison of the new and false teaching' from finding its way into Fribourg.²¹

Similarly in the first volume, Canisius praised his audience for their repudiation of 'every heresy and schism' and their persistence 'in the traditions of the apostles and Fathers', but the unfolding of the purpose of the *Notae* is the real value of the dedicatory letter to Peter Schneuwly, vicar general of the Bishop of Lausanne, Erhard Torin, Dean of the chapter of St. Nicholas, and the rest of the clergy in Fribourg. In the letter, we hear echoes from the 1570s. Canisius realizes that many theologians have gone before him in commenting on the gospel readings and that scholars, preachers, and other Catholics have deservedly read these commentaries. Conceding the prestige of his predecessors, he has decided 'to follow a different method of teaching'. Unlike others, he will not linger over the literal interpretation and will as much as possible refrain from a vexed discussion of 'the gospel narrative (historia evangelica) and the context of the words'. To apply a few of the main points of the text to meditation, teaching, and prayer should be sufficient. In this way, Canisius can serve the interests of 'at least good and honest readers', if not of intellectuals. His goal is not so much intellectual elucidation as the stirring up of religious feelings.

This leads to the underlying agenda of an orthodox spiritual revitalization in Canisius' enterprise. At issue is the justifiable complaint that many make about 'the supreme unfairness of these exasperating times, when the ancient piety of the orthodox either lies extinct in the hearts of many or has indeed become so stale that it seems hardly possible to restore it to the vitality of its original function'. We need, Canisius maintains, to be compelled to drive out our indifference and sluggishness, to reject 'false security', and to renew 'in our hearts the fear and love of God'. It would be 'stupid' not to apply 'to these last days of ours' the eschatological warning of Christ about the emergence of seductive false prophets coupled with the promise of salvation to those who persevere until the end (*Matthew* 24: 11–13) and Paul's foretelling of those who in the dangerous last times display the appearance of piety but deny its power (2 *Timothy* 3: 1, 5).

²¹ Streicher F. (ed.), *S. Petri Canisi doctoris ecclesiae Meditationes seu notae in evangelicas lectiones*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Munich: 1957–1961) vol. III, pp. I, II, V, VI.

A little earlier in the letter, Canisius describes the *Notae* to his clerical audience as a 'testimony and, moreover, token of my desire and of the shared effort that we owe to moulding the hearts of the Christian people'. He trusts that the *Notae* will please the priests of Fribourg in their zeal for 'orthodox teaching' and will prove advantageous to the task of 'instilling piety in the people'. They supply 'passages and headings' that can be brought again to the attention of and be driven into the mind especially on Sundays but also at other moments with the goal of 'curing the illnesses of hearts at this, indeed, pestilential time'.

Canisius presses the Catholic case for the *Notae* to the end of the letter. They will make the somnolent listen, kindle indifferent minds, and call the otiose from their leisure to the responsibility that they owe above all 'to Christ and the Church' and to 'the eagerness for prayer and meditation'. Even though we can find many who approve of and are devoted to 'the rule and order of Mother Church in these very readings', it is surprising that few pay serious attention to 'the feast days and rituals of the Church' so that as true children of a most holy mother they would endow themselves with and delight in her 'thinking and spiritual feelings'. Too many neglect what they hear read in Church, and yet 'it is not at all enough to retain the Catholic name unless we also observe the law of the Church'. Canisius integrates within his interpretation of the gospel texts 'testimonies from the Sacred Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers'. These, glowing like stars and jewels, 'retain their favour among the devout, and, furthermore, just as they often prove the error of profane novelty, so too they shine much light on and also strengthen the orthodox truth, now especially under siege'. Canisius hopes not only to bestow his 'labour' on the Fribourg clergy as 'guardians and champions of pure, Catholic teaching', but he wishes that through them it will appeal more to the faithful entrusted to them.²²

When opening the *Notae*, what would clergy and lay people, such as Hans Jacob von Staal, the clerk of the Swiss town of Solothurn whose opinion of the work Canisius solicited,²³ have found? The first

²² Ibid., vol. I 5–7.

²³ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. VIII 327–328. In 1995, Hans Jakob van Staal's copy of the *Notae* surfaced in the book trade in Freiburg im Breisgau. See Weber P.J., "Die Brieffreundschaft zwischen Petrus Canisius und dem Solothurner Patrizier Hans Jakob von Staal d. Ä.," *Freiburger Geschichtsblätter* 74 (1997) 116–121.

volume contained meditations for the Sundays of the liturgical year, beginning, of course, with Advent. Along with these Sundays Canisius added meditations for some other days, related, by and large, to the seasons of the liturgical year, such as Christmas Day, the feast of the Circumcision, and Epiphany in the Christmas season, Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of Lent, and Ascension in the Easter season. Corpus Christi also takes its place in the first volume, which ends with long meditations on the ceremony for the dedication of a church, on public processions, and on indulgences. The second volume encompasses mostly the feast days of New Testament saints: Marian feasts (Immaculate Conception, Purification, Visitation, Assumption, and Nativity), as well as those of the apostles and evangelists, Stephen the protomartyr, Mary Magdalene, and the Archangel Michael and all the angels. Canisius also includes meditations on the gospel texts for the feasts of a few early Christian saints, such as Nicholas, Lawrence, Martin of Tours, and Catherine of Alexandria as well as of the feasts of the Invention (i.e. finding) of the Cross, the translation of the remains of Nicholas, All Saints, and All Souls.

Each meditation falls into three sections. It begins with an *argumentum* in which Canisius introduces the pericope from the gospel, which follows the *argumentum*. The second and longest section bears the title: 'Notes for meditations and prayers on the gospel' (*Notae meditationum et precationum circa evangelium*). In the second volume, the title indicates meditations and prayers on the feast as well as on the gospel. Canisius usually divides the meditative notes into three parts, according to what he called 'passages and headings' (*loci et capita*) in the dedicatory letter of the first volume. In this volume, Canisius organizes his discussion in accordance with three passages from the pericope that function as headings for each part. In the second volume, this is true for only the first two parts. In the third part, the feast itself becomes a topic for meditation. Directions for prayer end the meditation. In the third and final section, "De precibus", the meditating preacher undertakes to offer at least three prayers usually according to these formulae: 'precandum est mihi Deus' ('I must pray to God'), 'orabo' ('I will pray'), and *petam* ('I will ask'). While the phrase 'precandum est mihi' always initiates the promises to pray, other resolutions, such as 'Deum invocabo' ('I will call upon God') or 'Deum implorabo' ('I will implore God') at times replace 'petam'.

*General Characteristics of the Notae**Argumenta*

The *argumenta* elaborate on the gospel text. Like Erasmus' paraphrases on the New Testament, they amplify the text instead of summarizing it. With the *argumenta* Canisius immediately begins to direct the reader's interpretation. He quickly identifies what he would call the literal sense of the pericope so as to move on to its lesson as soon as possible.

The gospel reading for the fifth Sunday after Epiphany is the parable of the wheat and the tares (*Matthew* 13: 24–30). Canisius begins the *argumentum* by identifying and summarizing the text: 'This is the parable about the two sowers, the good and wicked. The former plants good wheat seed in his field; the latter, like an enemy, secretly and at night plants darnel or tares no doubt to spoil the wheat in the same field.'²⁴ When the servants of the landlord notice that the growth of the tares is harming the wheat, they promise their master to uproot them. The master orders them to wait until the harvest in order to separate the wheat from the tares. 'This consequently raises the question', Canisius continues, 'that is often and usually considered: If Christ ordered the toleration of the tares, should heretics be punished and eliminated?'

Canisius is right to add that for a long time Catholics have been accustomed to raise this question.²⁵ In the early Church, Christian writers thought of the tares as heretics and, despite their contempt for them, they interpreted the master's decision to allow the wheat and tares to grow together until the harvest as the forbearance of heretics until the Day of Judgment. But by the time of Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, forbearance yielded to coercion, a position that magisterial Protestant interpreters, *pace* Martin Luther's scruples, accepted.²⁶ Canisius moves in that direction when he provides the brief and learned answer of one (nameless) theologian: 'The angels are not allowed here to destroy the wicked, but the judge is not forbidden to kill the heretic – "and indeed he does not bear the sword in vain"

²⁴ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. I 158.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Bainton R., "The Parables of the Tares as the Proof Text for Religious Liberty to the End of the Sixteenth Century", *Church History* 1 (1932) 67–89.

(*Romans* 14: 4) – and he is forbidden to the extent that the danger should arise that the good should also be destroyed in this situation’. After promising to say more about this later, that is, in the notes for meditation, Canisius unfolds Christ’s will. In this parable, he wants to teach that every good comes from God while evil comes from the devil, that Christians should not rush into punishing the wicked, and that the wicked live together with the good until the ‘complete separation’ that will take place at the final judgment.²⁷

Luke 18: 9–14 was prescribed for the eleventh Sunday after Trinity Sunday. ‘This gospel’, Canisius explains, ‘contains the parable, and indeed a famous one, about the Pharisee and the tax collector’. He draws on Tertullian’s polemic *Against Marcion* (4,36) when he observes that about this parable ‘Tertullian declares that here two worshippers are brought into the temple, “the Pharisee in pride and the tax collector in humility, and thus the one is condemned and the other left justified”. Thus we are taught with what sort of discipline we should pray to God who lifts up the lowly and destroys the proud’. The parable thus becomes a primer on prayer: the vices of the Pharisee that need to be rejected and the virtues of the tax collector that should be associated with prayer. Canisius defines prayer as ‘the turning – supported by faith, hope, and love – of the pious and humble mind to God or the properly formed reaching out of the devout mind towards God in order both to avert with entreaty what is evil and to obtain what is good’. The arrogance of the Pharisee, however, hinders or prevents ‘the fruit of legitimate prayer’. Yet there is more. Alluding to the central doctrine of Protestant theology, Canisius asserts: ‘This gospel blunts the pestilential error of those who argue that they are justified by faith alone, since Christ recommends the tax collector not so much for his faith but for his humility’. After a discussion of this point, the *argumentum* ends with what Jerome said ‘beautifully’ in *Ep.* 122: ‘The Pharisee’s justice perishes through pride, and the tax collector’s humility is saved through confession’.²⁸

Canisius begins his introduction to the gospel (*John* 15: 1–10) for the feast of St. Mark (25 April) by briefly providing the immediate historical context and summarizing the pericope: ‘After the Last Supper,

²⁷ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. I 158.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. II 188–189. For the passages in Tertullian and Jerome, see *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (Turnhout: 1953 –), vol. I 643; *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna: 1866–), vol. LVI 66–67.

Christ, about to depart from his disciples for death, offers in order to console them in their future troubles a remarkable parable or allegory, which comprises, briefly, a vine, a vinedresser or cultivator, and vine branches, some of which bear fruit and some of which do not'. The allegorical identifications follow. Christ is the vine, his Father the vine dresser, the branches 'all the faithful, whether they are good or bad, who at least by faith are joined to Christ the vine and remain in his Church'. The fruit-bearing branches 'combine faith with love and the fruits of good works', while the barren branches lack virtues and 'do not produce the fruits of good works'. The latter are like the foolish maidens without oil for their lamps (*Matthew* 25: 3) or the guest who came without wedding attire (*Matthew* 22: 11). Furthermore, the gospel is about the word of God, 'which, correctly and worthily understood, purifies and also prunes the apostles and all the faithful, so that, as Augustine says, "the more fruitful they are, the more purified they will be" (*Tractates on John's Gospel* 80.2)'. The gospel also 'emphasizes and confirms the love through which we should always abide in Christ and through which we express our obedience by keeping his commandments'. Those who have faith in Christ but demonstrate no love are branches without fruit.²⁹

Notae meditationum

A telling indication that the *Notae* primarily constitute a series of meditations and not a postil is the prominent use of the first person singular in the sections "Notae meditationum et precatationum" and "De precibus". The first-person *proposita* or resolutions that Canisius inculcates in his reader are consonant with a similar strategy in Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. Although the Jesuit director gives the *Exercises*, many of the practices are formulated in the first person with the exercitant in mind. Commenting on the general examination appointed for the First Week, W.H. Longridge explained that 'here, as in so many places, S. Ignatius uses the first person singular, in order that the exercitant may apply everything to himself'.³⁰

²⁹ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. III 134. For the passage in Augustine, see *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, vol. XXXVI 529.

³⁰ Longridge W.H., *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola translated from the Spanish with a Commentary and a Translation of the Directorium in Exercitia*

According to the Latin edition printed in Rome in 1548, the so-called *Versio vulgata*, in the First Week, for example, the exercitant promises that, before going to sleep, 'I will consider (cogitem) when I must get up and what exercise I must do' (*Exx.* 73). Reflecting in the Third Week on Christ's sufferings, 'I will begin (incipiam) to stir up within myself grief, sorrow, and weeping' (*Exx.* 195). Rising from bed, 'I will strive (adnitar) at the same time keenly to spur myself on to sadness and grief on account of Christ's many and great punishments' (*Exx.* 206). After getting up in the Fourth Week, 'I will immediately put before my eyes (mihi ponam ob oculos) the appointed contemplation, and I will make an effort (studeam) to become cheerful in the joy of the Lord with his people' (*Exx.* 229).³¹

Canisius knew the *Exercises* well. Still a university student at Cologne, Canisius went to meet Ignatius' early companion Pierre Favre in Mainz in 1543. Favre directed him in the *Exercises*. The experience brought about a profound spiritual change in him and directly led to his entry into the Society of Jesus.³² As a Jesuit, he was keenly aware of the power of the *Exercises*. In November 1563, the 'spiritual meditations' gave Ambrosius Sanctinus, a fellow Jesuit and his amanuensis, 'greater peace in the Lord'. Ursula Fugger, who had married into the famous commercial family of Augsburg, urged a parish priest to request 'our meditations', Canisius reported again in November 1563. Canisius, who directed him, thought that the best way that the Jesuits could ingratiate themselves in Augsburg was by restoring 'the parish priest properly reformed'.³³ Jesuits too needed to be reformed spiritually. They should become 'more skilled in the use of our exercises', Canisius urged in 1596. In a letter of 1584 from Peter Michael, the rector of the Jesuit college in Fribourg, to Superior General Claudio Aquaviva we glimpse Canisius following the *Exercises* meditatively.³⁴

In 1588, between 30 August and 3 September, Canisius gave the *Exercises* to Sebastian Werro, a prominent priest in Fribourg. Werro's record of Canisius' directives represents one of the most revealing and complete early documents relevant to the practice of the *Exercises*. The

(London: 1919) 47. I am grateful to John O'Malley for bringing this commentary to my attention.

³¹ *Monumenta Ignatiana: Exercitia spiritualia S. Ignatii de Loyola et eorum directoria*, vol. I (Rome: 1969) 204; 282; 288; 304.

³² Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* 36–37.

³³ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. IV 375, 397.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. VIII 419; 652.

notes show Canisius' fidelity to the thought of Ignatius, even in the application of specific points.³⁵ They reveal some first-person *proposita*, such as the promise to make the following prayers on the third day of Werro's retreat dedicated to Christ the King:

I will ask from the self-same King the grace of earnestly and faithfully undertaking and pursuing what he requires of me for his glory and the salvation of my neighbours. I will ask for the light of knowledge, the strength of help, and the gift of perseverance. And I will implore the ranks of the saints that they might help and support my weakness.³⁶

The *proposita* that Canisius prescribed for himself in November 1594 and September 1595 suggest that he was making the *Spiritual Exercises*.³⁷ His agenda for November 1594 began with the resolve to end his studies at four o'clock in the afternoon, to take a short walk, and to spend the time until dinner in 'prayers, readings, or meditations'. At dinner, he would drink less than at lunch and would forgo the third course or fruit. In the evening before going to sleep, he would pray the litany of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints. Other tasks for the month included saying written prayers in the morning, reviewing in the evening 'the morning meditation of the next day', reading documents relevant to the Society, saying Mass, reciting the gradual and penitential psalms, the Office of Holy Cross, the Office for the Dead, and the rosary. He resolved, among other things, to speak more slowly, to think of everyone as his superior, to overcome his pride, gluttony, and sloth, to deepen his friendship with God, to look past the faults of others, 'to contemplate your cross, to ask for specific virtues from you, and furthermore to appreciate [them] in Christ'.³⁸

The *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Notae* are two very different books, however. According to Joseph de Guibert, the former represented 'not an exposition to be studied, but a collection of diversified instructions intended to direct the performance of a certain number of interior exercises which are systematically organized. Therefore the *Spiritual*

³⁵ Ipparraguirre I., *Historia de la práctica de los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio de Loyola*, vol. I: *Práctica de los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio de Loyola en vida de su autor (1522-1566)* (Bilbao - Rome: 1946) 186.

³⁶ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. VIII 781.

³⁷ Braunsberger O., "San Pedro Canisio y los Ejercicios Espirituales", *Manresa* 1 (1925) 331.

³⁸ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. VIII 849-850.

Exercises is a book not to be read, but to be practiced'.³⁹ Canisius clearly meant the *Notae* for clerical reading. Their structure is simpler than that of Ignatius, who assumes a direct relationship between God and the exercitant.⁴⁰ In the *Notae*, Canisius takes complete charge of directing the meditation of the preacher. Furthermore, as John O'Malley explained, the *Exercises* is not 'a book of dogma, but a dogmatic book – that is, it assumes that its basic message is the common Christian heritage and that that message, therefore, need not be argued'.⁴¹ In this perspective, the *Notae* represent the reverse of the *Exercises*. Canisius' meditations form a 'book of dogma', in which the Jesuit reasserts the truth of Catholicism.

Meditation in the *Notae evangelicae* principally meant affective, spiritual action. This is obvious from the two prolegomena with which Canisius prepares the preacher for his weekly study of the gospel texts. 'First of all', the preacher resolves at the very beginning of the first prolegomenon, 'I will give thanks to God, the author of all good things, and to his divine wisdom' for the regular cycle of times and seasons that contribute 'a pleasant benefit to a more suitable practice of human life'. This realization 'will stir me up to extol the name of God most high', for it is by his 'kindness and extraordinary wisdom' that 'time in the Church is arranged for the faithful by custom and, moreover, adapted to different devotional practices'. 'I will rejoice', promises the preacher, in the fitting and helpful foresight of the Church, in which through divine dispensation the year has been arranged according to the advent, nativity, suffering, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

Gratitude and joy mingle with sorrow and grief in the preacher's meditations. In the first prolegomenon, Canisius has the preacher realize that the contemporary enthusiasm for religious innovation manifests itself in the establishing and re-establishing of church formularies and orders. The innovators are more fickle than Proteus and always more intent on tearing down than on building up. Consequently, the preacher says: 'I will sorely lament (*valde dolebo*) their lot since, not guided by a good spirit, they undermine the most holy Fathers of

³⁹ Guibert J. de, *The Jesuits, Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice: A Historical Study*, trans. W.J. Young (St. Louis: 1986) 111.

⁴⁰ Endean P., "The Spiritual Exercises", in Worcester T. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* (Cambridge: 2008) 62.

⁴¹ O'Malley J.W., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: 1993) 42.

the Church in proportion to what they vainly and presumptuously arrogate unto themselves in religious matters'. In fact, the preacher is more likely to deplore Protestant arrogance than the recompense for it. Canisius goes on to denounce the innovators for proudly despising and, whenever possible, doing away with the days that have for a long time been dedicated to 'Christ the Lord, his holy mother, and the venerable apostles, and the other excellent saints'. With the Epicureans and the atheists those who desacralize the sacred seem to say with the words of Psalm 73: 8: 'Let us make sure that all feast days on earth are no longer observed' ('quiescere faciamus omnes dies festos a terra'). Indeed, 'today' the cunning Calvinists do their best to abolish by law the most ancient feast of Christmas. In response to 'the sectarians of this age', who ignore or reject liturgical seasons and days highly valued 'by our ancestors', the preacher promises: 'To be sure, I will never allow myself to be torn away from the firm pillars of the Church and the approved Fathers'. After recalling the impiety of the Roman Emperor Licinius (308–324), whose policy of allowing the people to assemble in the fields near a city would find favour with 'our Anabaptists', the preacher again promises: 'I will therefore feel grief (*dolebo*) that in this profane age the public enemies of the Church with impunity proceed' with the barbaric acts of abrogating feasts, desecrating churches, and despoiling sacred places. Yet not only heretics break the preacher's heart. 'I will also deplore', he resolves, 'the abuse of a good thing by Catholics' when they observe feast days in body only without spiritual benefit.

Before taking up the weekly meditations, the preacher commits himself repeatedly to a diligent ecclesiastical and liturgical piety. He shall strengthen 'mind and will' in accord with the commands of God and of the Church. He shall not consider it enough to obey the Catholic Church, but he shall do all in his power to urge others by word and example to abide by 'the intention and discipline' of the Church and thus to offer with sincerity 'the supreme and most pleasing worship, called *latria*, to the divine majesty'. The 'sacred reading' prescribed by the Church shall have his complete attention and become the stuff of his meditation. He shall ask God for the grace diligently to apply his memory, understanding, and will 'to the festivals appointed by the Church as if to a divine ordinance'. Instructed by Canisius in the second prolegomenon, the preacher undertakes, among other things, not to let a single Sunday escape his notice, to increase his 'zeal for prayer

and time for meditation' on Sundays, and to pay attention to the pronouncements of Church councils on Sunday devotions.⁴²

The notes for Quinquagesima, the Sunday before the beginning of Lent, aptly illustrate Canisius' method of propelling the preacher's meditation with autoprescriptions. In the gospel (*Luke* 18: 31–43), Jesus, on his way to Jerusalem, foretells to the twelve apostles the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Son of man. Nearing Jericho, he heals a blind man, who had repeatedly demanded that Jesus take pity on him. In the *argumentum*, Canisius points out the two parts of the gospel: Christ's prophecy and miracle. The first part corresponds to 'the article of faith that all Christians profess concerning the suffering of the Lord and that the Church until the end of Lent offers for our meditation with an extraordinary feeling of devotion'. 'The second part', Canisius continues, 'declares the power of Christ the Lord', upon which both the sick and the blind often laid claim. While 'it is our duty to glory in the cross and suffering of Christ, as it were on the pedestal of human salvation', we must also 'toil with Bartimaeus' – this is how, borrowing from *Mark* 10: 46, Canisius prefers to call the blind man – 'so that we apply the grace of Christ to us and furthermore so that we above all escape the darkness of the vices and of the mind'.⁴³

Jesus' opening words to the apostles – 'Behold we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things will be fulfilled that have been written by the prophets' (*Luke* 18: 31) – become the first focus for meditation. The preacher begins by resolving: 'To Christ the Lord I shall give special thanks, for he, as if playing the part of the best commander, fortifies and equips his soldiers before combat so that they will be all the more immune from menacing evils and dangers'. Gratitude soon gives way to self-accusatory grief. The preacher will lament that he does not sufficiently take to heart 'the most holy and most bitter suffering of Christ'. Nevertheless, that Christ gave his life for us in our unworthiness is a source of comfort and encouragement for the preacher and other believers. Some, like Peter, did not understand the message of the cross and wanted to spare Christ his suffering. Yet Christ's word and example shall suffice for the preacher to unite with patience and gladness his will and feeling to his crucified leader.

⁴² Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. I 14–19; 21; 24; 25.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, vol. I 189.

Since Christ had to suffer before entering into glory, the preacher shall not resist the power of God, who wants the cross to be a necessary stage to glory for the elect. 'I will greatly value', the preacher promises, 'not only those who acknowledge and venerate but also those who love the cross of Christ'. He does not see why he should treat it as a burden to share 'with most holy men the common lot' of drinking from the same cup as that of Christ and his followers.

Self-criticism is the main motif in the second meditation, based on the handing over of the Son of man to the gentiles for ill treatment (*Luke* 18: 32–33). Given Christ's horrible suffering and death, the preacher resolves to upbraid himself for not gazing more frequently at the face of Christ, 'betrayed, mocked, spat upon, scourged, and crucified for me'. He also does not weep over the causes of these sufferings. Nor does he shun and completely despise the sins that subjected Christ to affliction. Why does he not reprimand himself for not sufficiently appreciating 'this supreme and most excellent work of redemption and human salvation so that it might take hold of my memory, intellect, and will night and day and thoroughly wound my mind?' Why does he not in time of adversity seek consolation and support from the 'abundant power' of Christ's sacrifice?

In the third meditation, Canisius has the preacher think of Bartimaeus, who implores Jesus' mercy so that he might see (*Luke* 18: 39, 41), as admonishing him to ask Christ for the grace to acknowledge, deplore, and overcome the blindness of his heart. The more the preacher stands in need of 'the light of true knowledge and wisdom', the more often he shall seek refuge in the 'author and source of true and eternal light'. He shall make a special effort not to embrace willingly 'reprehensible ignorance' or to afford it any opportunity, and avoid any association with the 'children of darkness', but walk with the wise and know or desire to know God's will. For himself and others he shall hope for the enlightenment that produces increased awareness of all that pertains to 'the hope, progress, and end of our calling so that, furthermore, we might know, just as Paul made clear, what the superlative greatness of the divine power and of the heavenly inheritance is' (*Ephesians* 1: 19, 18).⁴⁴

The meditations throughout the *Notae* are saturated in the language of the Bible. Canisius adduces scriptural quotations time and again to

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I 190–194.

sustain the momentum of the meditations. As a rule, the quotations do not come from the relevant gospel reading. Often Canisius strings several quotations together. He also integrates them into the first-person discourse of the preacher.

The amplification of one scriptural passage through others already begins in the *argumentum* to the gospel for the twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity Sunday. This is ‘the account of Christ’s double miracle for two females’, the deceased daughter of Jairus the leader of the synagogue and the woman with the hemorrhage (*Matthew* 9: 18–26). As ‘the model of the good and honest paterfamilias’, Jairus cares for all of his children and in time of need hastens to ‘Christ the supreme physician confidently to ask for and also to expect help from that lord of the living and the dead. And concerning him Paul also wrote: “For this Christ died and rose so that he might be lord of the dead and the living” (*Romans* 14: 9)’. That the mourners in Jairus’ house subjected Jesus to scorn and ridicule shows ‘the old and depraved nature of the world’ that deprecates the praise and imitation of the best people, attacking them ‘with abuse and mockery’. That is why Solomon says: ‘The one who walks on the right path and fears the Lord is despised by him who proceeds along the road of disgrace’ (*Proverbs* 14: 2).⁴⁵

Meditating on the passage that mentions how Jairus, after approaching and worshipping Jesus, reported the death of his daughter, the preacher resolves to ‘embrace reverently’ the Messiah’s two miracles, attribute them to his ‘incomparable power and mercy’, and to give thanks for all things through which he has ‘displayed his kindness and glory to us’. ‘Accordingly’, the preacher continues,

with the prophet Moses and his sister the prophetess Miriam I will sing: ‘The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. This is my God and I will glorify him, the God of my Father, and I will exalt him’ (*Exodus* 15: 2). Likewise with John I will proclaim that this same one is ‘the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth, who loved us and washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us a kingdom and priests for God and for his Father, to whom be the glory and rule for ever and ever’ (*Revelation* 1: 5–6).

Canisius casts another *propositum* in biblical words in the second meditation, inaugurated by the touching of the fringe of Jesus’ garment by

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. II 311. The Matthean pericope does not mention the name of the dead girl’s father. Canisius has assimilated Jairus’ name from the parallel passages in *Mark* 5: 21–43 and *Luke* 8: 40–56.

the woman with the hemorrhage (*Matthew* 9: 20). The preacher shall consider credible the report, as witnessed by Eusebius of Caesarea (*Ecclesiastical History* VII 18), that she had a statue of Christ erected in front of her home in Caesarea Philippi. The woman's act of gratitude shall remind the preacher to give thanks for God's goodness in his heart and, if appropriate, in public. Of course, mindful of the prohibition against idols in the Ten Commandments, the preacher promises: 'I shall sing with the prophet: "Let all be thrown in confusion who worship carvings and who take pride in their images" (*Psalms* 96: 7)'. Yet nothing prevents the erection of 'pious images' that honour Christ and the saints.⁴⁶

Canisius holds up the woman as an example of humility. Borrowing from the more detailed account in *Mark* 5: 43 or *Luke* 8: 47, he writes: 'she came forward not without tremendous fear and trembling and fell down completely at the feet of Jesus, having publicly and modestly admitted the entire truth about her cured illness'. Canisius has the preacher sigh: 'But if only I would acquire at least some part of this humility and then especially manifest it when I make my way to begin the sacred liturgy (*ad cultum divinum accedo*) and pour out my prayers to God. For it is written: "Those who fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and in his sight they will sanctify their souls" (*Sirach* 2: 20)'. Canisius weaves other references to fear into the preacher's meditation:

Not in vain did Paul point out that everyone was to work out his own salvation 'with fear and trembling' (*Philippians* 2: 12) since according to Wisdom 'he who is without fear cannot be justified' (*Sirach* 1: 28). But 'for the one who fears the Lord it will go well at his end, and he will be blessed on the day of his death' (*Sirach* 1: 13). Why therefore do I not plant deep within me and why do I not more frequently and indeed diligently ponder within myself that divine oracle (*Isaiah* 66: 2): "To whom shall I show favour except to the one who is lowly and poor and contrite in spirit and who trembles at my words?"⁴⁷

Canisius' goal is obviously to make the preacher meditate in the language of the Bible.

The Church Fathers do not appear as regularly and as relentlessly as the Bible in the preacher's meditations, although they seem to be

⁴⁶ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. II 312; 317–318.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. II 315–316.

more prominent in the meditations on the feast days in the second volume of the *Notae*. Their function is similar to that of the quotations from Scripture. They undergird Canisius' exposition and at times the preacher explicitly makes their words his own. Thus, in his quest for divine enlightenment while meditating on the gospel for Quinquagesima, the preacher proposes: 'But I will gladly and repeatedly say with Augustine: "May I know you, may I know myself, Lord"'. Canisius has reversed the wording of Augustine's prayer in *Soliloquies* 2,1 addressed to 'God always the same' ('Deus semper idem'), but the sense remains unaltered.⁴⁸ Among the authorities whom he cites most frequently are Ambrose, Bernard of Clairvaux, John Chrysostom, Cyprian, Jerome, and Tertullian. Canisius appeals to Augustine more than any other Christian writer.

Cyprian is the first Father who contributes to the meditation for the fifth Sunday after Epiphany. The parable of the wheat and the tares 'shall warn me', states the preacher, 'that there are two lords who defy comparison, Christ and Satan'. The preacher will 'dread and furthermore curse' the latter, that ancient enemy, 'equipped with so many accomplices and forces', who not only controls infidels but even exercises power 'in the territory of God, namely the Church'. Fighting against 'God's will, law, and Church', Satan 'supplies and arms his new ministers, who forcibly introduce (ingerere) and establish new doctrines, new ceremonies, and new factions, since he knows best that novelty itself is the daughter of caprice, the mother or nurse of chance, but also the sister of every superstition and impiety'. These diabolical innovators are, of course, Canisius' Protestant contemporaries. Furthermore, Satan 'delights in stirring up and also spreading every disagreement and quarrel, but especially heresy'. To illustrate this Canisius reproduces a long quotation from the *De unitate ecclesiae* (3) in which Cyprian describes the work of the devil. It will suffice here to quote only the first sentence to show how a patristic authority reinforces Canisius' opinion: 'He invents heresies and schisms by which he might overthrow faith, corrupt truth, and tear up unity'.⁴⁹

Augustine helps expound the landlord's command in the parable to let the wheat and tares grow together until harvest time (*Matthew* 13: 30).

⁴⁸ Ibid., vol. I 193. For the passage in Augustine, see *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. LXXXIX 45.

⁴⁹ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. I 160. For the passage in Cyprian, see *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, vol. III,1 250.

The heretical tares should not be uprooted so as not to harm the Catholics. If this danger does not exist, however, the punishment of heretics is an advantage to the Church. It is not simply permissible but even fitting and useful to eradicate the heretics. Canisius concedes that Augustine believed that no one should be compelled into the unity of Christ and that debate was the only procedure for dealing with heretics. Yet later the same Augustine wrote: ‘As we have proved and continue to prove by experience, it was helpful to many people, first to be coerced by fear and pain so that later they could be taught, or could pursue with actions what they had already learned through words’ (*Ep.* 185.21).⁵⁰ Augustine thus became an apologist for religious violence. Elsewhere in the *Notae*, Canisius wrote: ‘a war undertaken to protect true religion is much more praiseworthy than to strive for that sort of peace that separates and severs us from God, from God’s Church, and from true religion’.⁵¹ Religious wars were a conspicuous feature of the sixteenth century. At the very beginning of the 1590s as Canisius prepared the first volume of the *Notae* for publication, the French Wars of Religion had not yet come to an end, and the Calvinist Dutch Republic was still embroiled in armed conflict with Catholic Spain.

Augustine figures prominently among several ancient authorities in the exposition of the gospel for the feast of St. Mark. We observed above how Canisius refers to him already in the *argumentum* in order to elaborate on the purifying power of God’s word. Augustine helps the preacher in his meditation interpret other passages from the Bible and realize that faith is of no benefit without love.⁵² The preacher shall especially honour Mark because he regards him as a defender of monasticism ‘against which today the sectarians are extremely hostile’. ‘Whatever the new Satanism might fabricate and furthermore spew out against the monks’, the preacher shall value monasticism highly, and with Augustine (*Ep.* 78.9) he shall acknowledge:

However difficult it was for me to encounter anyone better than those who made progress in monasteries, so too I did not encounter anyone worse than those who failed in monasteries. Thus I think what is written in the Apocalypse is relevant here: ‘Let the righteous person become

⁵⁰ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. I 163–164. For the passage in Augustine, see *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. LVII 19. I thank Karla Pollmann for checking this reference for me.

⁵¹ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. I 320.

⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. III 136; 137; 139.

more righteous, and let the one who resides in filth become filthier still' (*Revelation* 22: 11).⁵³

When the preacher considers that God's wrath has permitted all of Europe to be filled with apostates and heretics, he makes Augustine's words his own when he describes these transgressors as 'useless twigs' (*De symbolo ad catechumenos* 6,14) who have been cut off from the Church.⁵⁴

The Church Fathers, next to the Bible, were highly useful instruments for the inculcation of Catholic orthodoxy. In the meditation for the first Sunday after Easter, Canisius assembles a host of patristic witnesses – Chrysostom, Theodoret, Augustine, Leo the Great, Justin Martyr, Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria – to the fact that the risen Christ still bore the wounds of his crucifixion. Consequently, the preacher promises: 'I will agree with these ancient Fathers of the Church, who are highly esteemed throughout the entire world, and I will yield no ground to the new and blaspheming enemies of the Church' who reject 'this constant belief of the orthodox' that the risen Christ who appeared to his disciples, who ascended into heaven, and who will come again to judge the world still bears scars in his flesh. In their ignorance, these blasphemers call this belief 'the stupid raving of an old woman'.⁵⁵

Canisius does not identify 'the new and blaspheming enemies of the Church', but he may have in mind some Anabaptists whose profession of the celestial flesh of Christ meant that he had a glorified body in his resurrected state.⁵⁶ The *Notae* abound in code words for Protestants, such as heretics, sectarians, and innovators, but, exceptionally, Canisius can be more precise. In the prolegomena to the octave of Christmas, he begins a discussion of the perpetual virginity of Mary with a polemical flourish: 'Not only were the Manicheans and the followers of Jovinian condemned by the Church long ago, but also in our day the Calvinists are so impure and impious that they dare to deny the perpetual purity of the Virgin Mother when giving birth'.⁵⁷

⁵³ Ibid., vol. III 142. For the passage in Augustine, see *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. XXXIV 344–345 = *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, vol. XXXI A, 91.

⁵⁴ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. III 140. For the passage in Augustine, see *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, vol. XLVI 197.

⁵⁵ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. I 321.

⁵⁶ On the celestial flesh of Christ, see Williams G.H., *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Kirksville, MO: 1992) 488–500.

⁵⁷ Streicher F. (ed.), *Meditationes*, vol. 1, 79.

Other controversial themes inform the preacher's meditations. Anna the widow, who was in the temple at Jerusalem when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to be circumcised, becomes the occasion for defending virginity and fasting in the meditation on the gospel (*Luke 2: 33–40*) for the Sunday in the octave of Christmas. The preacher decides: 'I will be puzzled by the new sectarians, who put no value on the chastity of a virgin or a widow, no matter how much Paul wrote: "He who marries his fiancée does well, but he who does not marry does better". And again he says of the widow: "It will be more fortunate, if she remains as she is" (1 *Corinthians 7: 38, 40*)'. Although Scripture praises Anna's fasting, 'the new doctors distort' it by regarding it as nothing more than sobriety, frugality, and 'the abstaining from every type of sin'. 'But', the preacher expostulates,

let the smooth and crafty doctors persist in their new fast, for nothing difficult pleases them, and they despise every tradition of holy fasting, abstinence, penance, chastity and ancient piety. They have already publicly done away with these in their churches so that they seem to have practically nothing in common with this Anna and with the commendable deeds and customs of other saints.⁵⁸

Not surprisingly, on Ash Wednesday the preacher hopes that

the orthodox person will not yield either to Satan or to his accomplices and also to other enemies of Catholic piety, whoever they might be, in proportion to what the new sectarians rashly demand and everywhere usurp for themselves when it comes to the abrogation of the choice of foods and the repeal of every law of fasting without meanwhile having any thought for scandal, obedience, custom, rank, penance, or age-old practice.

Catholics should not turn 'evangelical liberty' into 'the license of the flesh'.⁵⁹ Meditating on the gospel of Jesus the good shepherd (*John 10: 11–16*), appointed for the second Sunday after Easter, will move the preacher to deplore 'the preoccupation and depravity' of the sectarians who with contempt for ecclesiastical hierarchy trespass upon the 'mission of pastors'. He recognizes the characteristic of the good pastor to profess the doctrine that is 'old and received' not 'new or suspect'. He will have nothing to do with the 'false brothers' and 'public enemies of the Church', who before the common people ridicule the faults of

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 98–99.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I 199.

pastors and priests.⁶⁰ On Trinity Sunday, the preacher will especially deplore ‘the fate of infants, who either through the neglect of their parents or the cruelty of the new sectarians’ – a reference to Anabaptists – ‘are often cheated of this necessary sacrament and thus cannot be counted among the believers who partake of Christian grace’.⁶¹ On the feast of St. Stephen (26 December), the preacher recognizes the importance of professing ‘the freedom of the will together with the orthodox Fathers’ and knows that ‘anyone who denies this is not Catholic’.⁶² Whether or not human beings had free will in matters of salvation represented, of course, a fundamental debate between Catholic and Protestant theology.

De precibus

The Catholic nature of the prayers that the preacher promises to say at the conclusion of the meditations is unmistakable. Several of the petitions designated for feast days begin by mentioning Catholics. ‘I must pray to God’, the preacher promises on St. Andrew’s day (30 November), ‘for Catholic preachers that, as they embark on the fishing expedition of the gospel, they above all ensure that they have a legitimate calling and furthermore mission from those who can bestow it and ordain clerics, just as the apostles and their successors have had in perpetuity’. The gospel tells of Jesus’ call of Peter and Andrew to become fishers of human beings (*Matthew* 4: 18–22), and, in the meditation, the preacher will deplore the ‘haughty rebellion’ of ‘the seditious innovators’ against episcopal authority.⁶³ On the feast of the Annunciation (25 March), the preacher must first pray that ‘the Catholic peoples’ reflect upon and reverence the ‘mystery of the incarnation’. On the feast of the Assumption of Mary (15 August), the preacher undertakes to pray that Catholics, like Marthas and Magdalenes, serve Christ faithfully. The petition relates to the gospel of Jesus’ visit to the two sisters – the industrious Martha and contemplative Mary (*Luke* 10: 38–42).⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I 329; 330.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, vol. II 54.

⁶² *Ibid.*, vol. III 54.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, vol. III 8; 10; 19.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. III 132–133; 275; 293.

Canisius' preacher should also mention heretics in their prayers. On the fifth Sunday of Lent, he affirms: 'I must pray to Christ for the treacherous heretics and for all the dangerous persecutors of the Church, whether they sin out of ignorance or malice'. Paul foretold 'these dangerous times' when he wrote: 'Wicked people and those who lead others astray will become increasingly worse as they err and bring others into error' (2 *Timothy* 3: 13). His statement

especially equips Catholics, if they know how to take healthy advantage of the assault and harm of the enemies, if furthermore, strong and steady, they persevere in what Mother Church taught them in accordance with that saying of the Apostle: 'But you continue in what you have learned and what has been entrusted to you' (2 *Timothy* 3: 14).

Canisius provides more guidance elsewhere. On the eighth Sunday after Trinity Sunday, the preacher resolves:

I must pray to God for the Church's deserters and opponents, but especially for the countless heretics of this time, both for those who seduce and those who have been seduced, so that, to be sure, the veil of heretical perversity might be taken away from their blind eyes and that they might be reconciled with the Catholic Church, outside of which the merits of Christ benefit no one, or at least that with their deceit, treachery, and cunning they might cause less harm to the orthodox.

On the feast of the conversion of St. Paul (25 January), the preacher will ask for mercy on 'the savage persecutors of the Church and the other manifest enemies of Catholics' that, like Paul, 'from persecutors of the faith they might become the champions and promoters of the Catholic religion'.⁶⁵

The directions for prayer bring each of the meditations for each Sunday or feast day to an appropriate end since, as should be obvious, they derive their significance from the gospel, Canisius' interpretation of it, or the feast day itself. The petitions that Canisius enjoins on the preacher for the fifth Sunday after Epiphany come as no surprise, therefore. The preacher obliges himself to pray 'that we might love the pure planting of the Lord' and that we might not corrupt it 'with the pestilent tares'. This is especially important given that many people 'in this time' are bent on 'innovating upon and changing the old religion'. The preacher also hopes for an increase of grace for Catholic

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I 243; vol. II 166; vol. III 91.

magistrates so that they might fulfill their responsibility ‘in restraining the wicked and excluding the public enemies of the faith’.⁶⁶ In other words, the Catholic wheat and the heretical tares should be kept separate not only in the spiritual realm of a Catholic’s affections but also in the physical world of human society, where the sword of the prince holds sway.

Conclusion

In 1595, a new book of gospel meditations written by a Jesuit appeared in print: Jerome Nadal’s *Adnotationes et meditationes in evangelia*. This was a posthumous publication since Nadal had died in 1580. The *Adnotationes*, intended primarily for a Jesuit audience, claimed as its genesis a suggestion from Ignatius of Loyola himself. The final product reveals the influence of the *Spiritual Exercises* much more than Canisius’ *Notae evangelicae*. With its illustrations of the gospel stories, the *Adnotationes* use images as powerful portals into the stories. Colloquies, integral to the *Spiritual Exercises*, abound in Nadal’s book. Not only does he address the reader, but his meditations are replete with colloquies between the reader and Jesus and other characters in the gospels. Robust expressions of Catholic orthodoxy constitute a common element shared by the *Adnotationes* and the *Notae*, although they appear less frequently in the former than in the latter. Nadal concludes his meditation on Jesus taken to Caiphas by proudly telling of Catholics ready ‘to profess clearly and faithfully the Catholic faith and orthodox creed, and anathematize Luther, Calvin, their followers, and all heretics’. In a meditation on the appearance of the risen Christ to the apostles on Mount Tabor, Nadal embarks on what Walter Melion rightly called an ‘anti-heretical diatribe’. After promoting respect for the clergy, Nadal instructs his reader not only to embrace Catholic teaching ‘completely and sincerely in our own hearts’ but also to ‘move decisively against all who desert Christ and His Church, Lutheran foes, and all wretched and pestilential toads who rant and rage from their swamps’.⁶⁷ Nadal and Canisius engaged in different

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. I 164–165.

⁶⁷ Nadal J., *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*, trans. F.A. Homann with introductory studies by W. Melion, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: 2003–2007) vol. II 126; vol. I 13; vol. III 139.

styles of meditation, but they both easily combined spirituality with a strident Catholic identity.

If we return to Georg Scherer's 'insight', we can postulate a consistency in the spiritual life of Peter Canisius. Still on the eve of his renown as a Catholic writer and spied through the keyhole of a door in the Jesuit college in Vienna, the combative Canisius in prayer to God appears as of one piece with the ageing priest, persistent in publishing but removed in Fribourg from the major developments within the Society of Jesus, the Catholic Church, and the religious world of Europe. In his declining years, Canisius remained as spiritually robust as ever.

If he actually did tussle with God some thirty years before publishing the *Notae evangelicae*, in the 1590s Canisius continued to fight a spiritual battle. The mode, targets, and aims of combat had changed, however. Canisius fought vicariously through the Catholic clergy who followed the meditational programme of the *Notae*. They committed themselves to specific spiritual dispositions and petitions in response to gospel pericopes expounded by Canisius. The focus of attack became the spiritual imperfection of Catholics and above all those who had rejected the antiquity of the Catholic Church in favour of innovations in doctrine and religious practice, which of necessity were heretical.

If Canisius could have imagined looking into the souls of Catholic preachers, what might he have seen? We can answer this question with reference to what he endeavoured to pour into their souls. They had a capacity for gratitude and grief and a responsibility to apply these feelings as they meditated upon gospel passages appointed throughout the liturgical year. That Canisius repeatedly reminded the preacher of his commitment to Catholicism with an accompanying determined rejection of heresy and heretics suggests perhaps that he could not take Catholic loyalty for granted. Since Canisius deliberately constructed his identity on a conspicuous confessional foundation,⁶⁸ he obviously expected his coreligionists, especially the clergy, to do so as well. If the septuagenarian Jesuit found his confrères at the college in Fribourg in need of a 'reformation' because, among other things, they argued too much, celebrated Mass without conforming themselves to the liturgical rubrics, did not apply themselves enough to their studies, and lacked

⁶⁸ Pabel H.M., "Augustine's *Confessions* and the Autobiographies of Peter Canisius, SJ", *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007) 466–471.

a sufficiently serious demeanour,⁶⁹ then he might well have suspected that clergy in general were no more than lukewarm in their spiritual and intellectual allegiance to Catholicism.

The *Notae* were Canisius' vehicle for correcting this potential lethargy by obliging preachers to assume a vigorous Catholic identity. He commanded their attention in the quiet of meditation, which was anything but quietist. Week after week, feast day after feast day, Canisius' meditating preachers earnestly renewed their dedication to spiritual probity and Catholic orthodoxy. Meditation became a means for securing orthodoxy's triumph.

⁶⁹ Braunsberger (ed.), *Epistulae*, vol. VIII, 419.

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DARK IMAGES, CLEAR WORDS.
PIETER PAETS'S ILLUSTRATED DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE
FROM THE *MISSIO HOLLANDICA*¹

Feike Dietz

In the Middle Ages, the process of Christian meditation involved the use of devotional images. The tradition of meditation enhanced by techniques of visualisation was further developed in the *Spiritual Exercises* (ca. 1522) of Ignatius de Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order. Ignatius assumed that a believer first imagines himself as being part of a situation (*memoria* or mind). After that, the reader examines the situation intellectually (*intellectus* or intellect) before his senses stir up devout feelings (*voluntas* or will).² For more than a century, Ignatius's readers had to visualize without the aid of images. The *Spiritual Exercises* was first printed in 1548, but not illustrated until 1657.³

The religious emblem book *Pia Desideria* (*Pious Wishes*, Antwerp: 1624), written by the Jesuit priest Herman Hugo, tried to translate Ignatius's meditative programme into words and images.⁴ Hugo's work consists of pictures by Boëtius a Bolswert, which allegorically depict the relationship between God and the believer, in order to enhance the

¹ This paper forms part of my PhD project, "Emblematic Dynamics in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century: Word, Image, Religion", which focuses on the reception of the Counter-Reformational emblem book *Pia Desideria* (Antwerp: 1624) in the early modern Northern Netherlands. My study is part of the international research project "The Religious Emblem Tradition in the Low Countries in the light of Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria*". In this project, I work with Els Stronks of Utrecht University and with Marc Van Vaeck, Toon Van Houdt and Lien Roggen of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium). I would like to thank Alana Gillespie (Bleeding Ink Translations & Editing) for her editorial comments.

² See, for example, Verheggen E., *Beelden voor passie en hartstocht* (Zutphen: 2006) 27–29.

³ Mochizuki M.M., "Ignatius de Loyola, S.J., Geestelycke oeffeninghen van den H. Vader Ignatius van Loyola (Antwerp: Michiel Cnobbaert, 1673)", in Begheyn P., S.J. – Faesen R., S.J. (eds.), *Jesuit Books in the Low Countries 1540–1773* (Leuven: 2009).

⁴ The *Pia Desideria* is read in the Ignatian tradition by, for example, Leach M.C., *The literary and emblematic activity of Herman Hugo SJ (1588–1629)* (London: 1979).

communication between them. The accompanying texts facilitate this process by stimulating the reader's intellect.

The *Pia Desideria* was often adapted by early modern Christians. In the *Corpus Librorum Emblematum*, Daly and Dimler list nearly 150 editions and translations of the *Pia Desideria* in almost all European languages: Latin, Dutch, French, German, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, Russian, Polish and Italian.⁵ Two different appropriation techniques existed: early modern users of the *Pia Desideria* reworked the collection of emblems either into a combination of images, *mottoes*, poems and prose texts, or into a combination of images, *mottoes* and poems. On the basis of available research, it would seem that both techniques fit the Ignatian meditative programme as propagated by the Jesuits.

In the Dutch Republic, the Amsterdam Catholic printer Pieter Paets (1587–1657) appears to have employed neither of these two existing strategies, as he published an unusual selection of elements from the *Pia Desideria* in several illustrated devotional works, sometimes even combining elements of the *Pia Desideria* with texts by other authors.⁶ Although Paets's works do not include instructions on how to use them, we can surmise that they served as instruments for meditation. The use of a title like *Vierighe meditatie* (*Devout Meditations*) places Paets's works in the meditative literary tradition.

In this article, I will explore Paets's composition of elements from the *Pia Desideria*. My analysis will focus on how Paets's works related to the Ignatian tradition of meditation. I hope to show that his works were indeed meditative in nature, but differed from other known *Pia Desideria* adaptations due to the position of the Catholic Church in the Dutch Republic at the time. Paets's works are highly suited to the Dutch context, in which meditation literature – let alone Catholic meditation literature – was rarely produced. Paets was the first to combine Dutch texts and meditative pictures in the Dutch Republic.⁷

⁵ Daly P.M. – Dimler R., *Corpus Librorum Emblematum* (Montreal: 1997) 112–255.

⁶ 'Devotional literature' was recently used by Eire for a wide range of religious literature which was viewed or used as a means of shaping the faith of its readers. See Eire C.M.N., "Early modern Catholic piety in translation", in Burke P. – Po-chia Hsia R. (eds.), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 2007) 83–100, especially 85–86, 97–99.

⁷ Dietz F., "Under the Cover of Augustine. Augustinian Spirituality and Catholic Emblems in the Dutch Republic" (forthcoming); Stronks E., "Gewapende vrede: woord, beeld en religie in de Republiek", *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 25,1 (2009) 2–25.

This context determined the way Paets presented the *Pia Desideria* to his audience.

The first section will explore the two most common strategies in the appropriation and adaptation of the *Pia Desideria* in various European countries, before focusing on the third strategy Paets appears to have employed. After that, the origins and backgrounds of Paets's strategy and literary products in the Dutch Republic will be explored, as will the impact Paets's works seem to have had in the Dutch Republic.

*Two dominant types of meditation in international
Pia Desideria adaptations*

In Hugo's original composition of the *Pia Desideria*, each emblem consists of several elements: a *pictura* representing the children *Anima* (the human soul) and *Amor divinus* (divine love), a biblical phrase as a *motto*, a lyrical Latin poem which is called the *subscriptio*, and an anthology of prose fragments from biblical texts and texts by the Church Fathers:⁸

Scholarly research on the European reception of the *Pia Desideria* has shown that contemporary editors and translators of the *Pia Desideria* most often reproduced these elements in one of two combinations. They either reused all four elements, or selected *picturae*, *motatoes* and *subscriptionses*. I will refer to the former adaptation practice as 'type 1' and the latter as 'type 2.'

According to the Amsterdam publisher Pierre Poiret, who printed the French *L'Ame amante de son dieu* by Jeanne Marie Guyon from 1717, type 2 was the most common. He himself removed the prose fragments, 'explaining that none of the earlier adaptations had used the quotations'.⁹ The Spanish *Affectos Divinos* by Pedro de Salas from

⁸ *Pia Desideria* consists of three parts, each with fifteen emblems. There is one opening emblem which does not belong to one of the three parts. There are no prose fragments in the opening emblem. Digitalized edition used in this article: Hugo Herman, *Pia Desideria* (Antwerpen, Hendrick Aertssens: 1624). Emblem Project Utrecht: <http://emblems.let.uu.nl/hu1624.html>.

⁹ Guiderdoni-Bruslé A., "'L'Ame amatante de son Dieu' by Madame Guyon (1717): pure love between Antwerp, Paris and Amsterdam, at the crossroads of orthodoxy and heterodoxy", in Gelderblom A.J. et al. (eds.), *The low countries as a crossroads of religious beliefs*, in: *Intersections. Yearbook for Early Modern Studies* 3 (Leiden: 2004) 308.

1638 and the Polish *Pobożne pragnienia* by Aleksander Teodor Lacki from 1673 are other examples of type 2.¹⁰ Examples of type 1 are such early adaptations as Justus de Harduwijn's 1629 *Goddelycke wenschen* (Divine Wishes) from the Southern Netherlands, the French *Les Pieux Désirs* (1627) by translator 'P.I. Jurisconsult', and the English *Emblemes* (1635) by Francis Quarles.¹¹ Variations on type 1 or 2 also existed. In variations on type 1, the prose part could be shortened: in the Southern Netherlands, several Latin reissues were published with just one prose quotation.¹² In Christian Hoburg's *Emblemata Sacra* (1661) and in Petrus Serrarius's *Goddelicke aendachten* (Divine Meditations, 1653) the prose commentary was replaced by a biblical fragment.¹³ The protestant author Erasmus Francisci varied type 1 by adding prayers and songs to the images, *mottoes* and prose fragments and replacing the dropped *subscriptions*.¹⁴

¹⁰ Campa P., "The Spanish and Portuguese Adaptations of Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria*", in Daly P.M. – Russell D.S. (eds.), *Emblematic Perceptions* (New York: 1994) 43–60; Dietz F. – Stronks E. – Zawadzka K., "Rooms-katholieke *Pia Desideria*-bewerkingen in internationaal perspectief", *Internationale neerlandistiek* 47,3 (2009) 31–49.

¹¹ On *Goddelycke wenschen*: Daly – Dimler, *Corpus Librorum Emblematum* number J680. On *Les Pieux Désirs*: Daly – Dimler, *Corpus Librorum Emblematum* number J701–J702; Black L.C., "'Une doctrine sans étude': Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria* as les *Pieux Désirs*", in Manning J. – Van Vaeck M. (eds.), *The Jesuits and the Emblem Tradition. Selected Papers of the Leuven International Emblem Conference 18–23 August, 1996* (Turnhout: 1999) 233–247. Quarles's *Emblemes* is not mentioned by Daly and Dimler, but the relationship between Quarles's *Emblemes* and the *Pia Desideria* has often been explored. See for example: Höltgen K.J., "Francis Quarles and the Low Countries", in Westerweel B. (ed.), *Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Field of the Emblem* (Leiden etc.: 1997).

¹² See also: Raspa A., "Arwaker, Hugo's *Pia Desideria* and Protestant Poetics", *Renaissance and Reformation* XXIV, 2 (2000) 63–74. Raspa analyses the Protestant adaptation *Divine Addresses* by Arwaker from 1686. In this edition, no prose fragments were included. Raspa thinks the omission is the effect of the source Arwaker used; his *Divine Addresses* was based on an Antwerp edition of *Pia Desideria* from 1636, in which many prose texts were omitted. Raspa was right to argue that some Antwerp editions of *Pia Desideria* removed most prose quotations. To the best of my knowledge, the oldest edition of type 2 was not printed in Antwerp in 1636, but in Leuven in 1628: Hugo Herman, *Pia Desideria* (Leuven, Henrick van Hastens: 1628). In this edition, a *scriptio* is not followed by more than one prose text. The editions of type 1 and 2 from the Southern Netherlands were never mapped in detail until now. Daly and Dimler do not note the differences between the editions in their *Corpus Librorum Emblematum*.

¹³ Schilling M., "'Der rechte Teutsche Hugo'. Deutschsprachige Übersetzungen und Bearbeitungen der 'Pia Desideria' Hermann Hugos S.J.", *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 70 (1989) 287.

¹⁴ Schilling, "'Der rechte Teutsche Hugo'" 288.

Editors did not arbitrarily select one of these combinations of elements. In the Spanish *Affectos Divinos* by De Salas from 1638, the omission of the prose commentary contributed to the book's perspicuity.¹⁵ According to Guiderdoni-Bruslé, the publisher Poiret also consciously deleted the emblem's prose quotations:

From his point of view, the essential pieces of the emblems were the images ('les figures'), the quotations from the Bible (which were like the *mottoes* of each emblem) and the poems. He was also worried about the physical weight of the volume [...].¹⁶

The appearance of many European *Pia Desideria* adaptations of type 1 or 2 indicates that most of the contemporary users thought that the meditative character of the *Pia Desideria* was due to the combination of all the elements, or to the combination of images, *mottoes* and poems.

In recent decades, several scholars have speculated about the meditative capacity of both types. Some scholars argue that the merging of images with *mottoes*, poems and prose texts stimulates the process of meditation (type 1); others hold that the meditative potency is directly linked to the merging of images, *mottoes* and lyrics (type 2). I will discuss both views in more detail, because they help us to understand the processes of – mainly Ignatian – meditation that contemporary users of the *Pia Desideria* tried to put into practice.

According to Leach, the *Pia Desideria* is an Ignatian meditation book because it combines all four elements: images with *mottoes*, poems and prose texts. The *Pia Desideria* owed its meditative power to the merging of images, lyrics and prose, all culminating in the prose element.¹⁷ 'In a brief picturae/epigram/prose meditation format, extraordinarily complex questions – the relationship of God to the world, the opposition of purity of soul and the temptations of the senses – could be explored', argues Leach.¹⁸

In contrast, Rödter and Dimler argue that the meditative character of the *Pia Desideria* results from the combination of elements typically found in type 2, the emblematic 'Deutungsspiel zwischen *pictura*,

¹⁵ Campa, "The Spanish and Portuguese Adaptations" 45.

¹⁶ Guiderdoni-Bruslé, "L'Ame amatante de son Dieu" 308.

¹⁷ Leach, *The literary and emblematic activity* 121–122.

¹⁸ Leach, *The literary and emblematic activity* 111–112.

inscriptio und *subscriptio*'.¹⁹ According to Rödter, the prose texts simply serve to broaden the reader's perspective on the emblem's central theme, without demanding special attention.²⁰ Dimler pays little attention to the prose fragments, and characterizes them only as 'proofs to a thesis or as confirmation of an argument'.²¹ Both scholars acknowledge the Ignatian influences in the *Pia Desideria*, but consider the Ignatian meditative phases of *memoria*, *intellectus* and *voluntas* only as features of the poems.²² According to Dimler, the *pictura* and *motto* function as the preparation of the Ignatian meditation. They are the 'composition of place' or 'the mental image of the place': 'One sees with the mind's eye the physical place where the object to be contemplated is present'.²³

Many scholars adhere to Rödter and Dimler's opinion that the omission of prose texts would not have reduced the meditative effect of the *Pia Desideria*. Campa described a Spanish edition without prose texts, *Affectos Divinos* by De Salas (1638), as 'a milestone in the development and popularization of Ignatian meditation', which consisted of 'well structured meditative tracts', the rhetorical structure of which was based on Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*.²⁴ Guiderdoni-Bruslé claimed that the omission of prose from *L'Ame amante de son dieu*, a type 2 adaptation from 1717, actually gave rise to 'mystical' emblems. In her view, they place more emphasis on the communion with and love for God than Hugo's original emblems.²⁵ The Polish edition of type 2, *Pobożne przagnienia* by Lacki (1673), was made more lyrical and emotional by the exclusion of the prose texts.²⁶

¹⁹ Rödter G.D., *Via piae animae. Grundlagenuntersuchung zur emblematischen Verknüpfung von Bild und Wort in den "Pia Desideria" (1624) des Herman Hugo S.J. (1588–1629)* (Frankfurt a.M.: 1992) 194.

²⁰ Rödter, *Via piae animae* 88–89; 284; 289.

²¹ Dimler, "Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria*" 359.

²² Rödter, *Via piae animae* 86; Dimler G.R., "Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria*", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Visser A.Q. (eds.), *Mundus Emblematicus: Studies in Neo-Latin Emblem Books* (Turnhout: 2003) 363.

²³ Dimler, "Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria*" 363.

²⁴ Campa, "The Spanish and Portuguese Adaptations" 47–48.

²⁵ Guiderdoni-Bruslé, "L'Ame amatante de son Dieu" 313–315. The German translation of *L'Ame amante de son dieu* of 1719 is also a type 2 adaptation. See Schilling, "Der rechte Teutsche Hugo" 290.

²⁶ Dietz – Stronks – Zawadzka, "Rooms-katholieke *Pia Desideria*-bewerkingen".

Paets's exceptional selection of elements from Pia desideria

Against the backdrop of the European reception history of the *Pia Desideria*, the Catholic *Pia Desideria* reception in the Northern Netherlands is unusual; Paets's adaptations consist of *picturae*, *mottoes* and prose texts. I call this rare combination of elements 'type 3'.²⁷

No fewer than four of Paets's books are type 3 *Pia Desideria* adaptations, produced with woodcuts based on Bolswert's *Pia Desideria* engravings, made by the famous woodcutter Christoffel van Sichem II (1581–1658) [Fig. 1+2].²⁸

A recent article that I published with Stronks and Zawadzka briefly focussed on Paets's *Goddelycke wenschen* of 1645.²⁹ In this book, Van Sichem's woodcuts were combined with Dutch translations of the texts from the *Pia Desideria*, made by Justus de Harduwijn for *Goddelycke wenschen* (Antwerp: 1629). Paets used De Harduwijn's type 1 adaptation in a specific way: all *subscriptions* but one were entirely omitted [Fig. 3].³⁰

There are practical reasons to assume that Paets purposely transformed De Harduwijn's type 1 adaptation into a type 3 adaptation.

²⁷ There is only one other known specimen of this 'type 3': the 1627 translation *Gottselige Begirde* by the German Jesuit priest Georg Stengel. See Schilling, "Der rechte Teutsche Hugo" 286.

²⁸ In her recent study *Beelden voor passie en hartstocht*, the art historian Evelyne Verheggen relates Paets's books to the *Pia Desideria*. She assesses Paets's illustrated books reusing woodcuts based on the *Pia Desideria*, made by the famous woodcutter Christoffel van Sichem II (1581–1658): Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie*, 79, 237–240. She especially focuses on the *Nachleben* of the *picturae* from the *Pia Desideria* in Paets's illustrated meditation books, and is convinced that the pictorial reception of the *Pia Desideria* was of more importance than the textual reception; see Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie*, 82–83. However, texts from the *Pia Desideria* were also intensively used in Paets's meditative books. See: Dietz F., "Sprekende beelden, sprekende woorden. De plaats van de tekst in het onderzoek naar de Noord-Nederlandse receptie van *Pia Desideria*", *Kunstlicht* 30,3/4 (2009) 40–46.

²⁹ Dietz – Stronks – Zawadzka, "Rooms-katholieke *Pia Desideria*-bewerkingen". In this article, we make a comparison between the *Goddelycke wenschen* by Paets and the Polish *Pobożne pragnienia* by Lacki. The hypotheses about Paets's programme are explored in more detail in this article.

³⁰ Verheggen was right to argue that Paets reprinted *Goddelycke wenschen* in a shorter version; see Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie* 79. The method of reduction remained unnoticed by Verheggen, but had been explored before by Dambre: Dambre O., "Bibliographie van de werken van Justus de Harduwijn", *Het boek. Tweede reeks van het Tijdschrift voor Boek- en Bibliotheekwezen* 13 (1924) 194; Dambre O., *De dichter Justus du Harduwijn* (Den Haag: 1926) 154. However, the *scriptio* of the opening emblem, the only emblem without any prose quotations, was not omitted.



Fig. 1. Boëtius à Bolswert, *pictura* of emblem 1 from Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria* (Antwerp, Hendrick Aertssens: 1624), engraving.



Fig. 2. Christoffel van Sichem II, *pictura* of emblem 1 from Justus de Harduwijn, *Goddelycke wenschen* (Amsterdam, Pieter Paets: 1645), woodcut.




Fig. 3a. Illustration of emblem 1 from Justus de Harduwijn, *Goddelycke wenschen* (Amsterdam, Pieter Paets: 1645), woodcut.

HET I. BOECK.

*Mijne siele heeft u ghewenscht in den
nacht. Isaia 26.*

AVGVSTINVS foliloq. cap. 31.



En tijdt was eens dat ick
u niet en kende! wee dien
tijdt dat ick u niet en heb-
be ghekent! wee die ver-
blinthept als ick u niet en
sagh! ô licht des Werelts
ghy hebt my verlicht/ ende
ick hebbe u aenschoutot.

Ibidem cap. 33.

Waerachtigh Licht/ ick hebbe u te late ge-
kent/ ick hebbe u te late ghekent. Want booz-
de oogghen mynder ydelhept was een groote
dicke dupster wolcke / soo dat ick niet en
was machtigh te aenschouwen de Sonne
der gerechtichept/ noch het schynsel der waer-
hept. Ick een kint der dupsternissen was ge-
gewonden in dupsterhept. Mijn dupsterhept
ick beminde/ om dat ick het licht niet en ken-
de. Ick was blind/ ende ick beminde de blind-
hepde / ende wandelde by nachte in 't midden
der dupsternissen. Maer wie heeft my uptge-
trocken? daer ick blind mensche was sittende
in dupsterhept/ ende in de schadue des doots?
Wie heeft my om upt te trecken / ghenomen
by der haant? wie is dan desen mynen verlich-
ter? Ick en socht hem niet/ ende hy heeft my
gesocht?

Fig. 3b. Emblem 1 from Justus de Harduwijn, *Goddelycke wenschen* (Amsterdam, Pieter Paets: 1645).

Paets seems to have been a precise and careful worker: all other pictorial and textual elements from the emblem book were meticulously reused, the original sequence was preserved, the preface and abstracts by De Harduwijn were carefully reprinted and the title page of De Harduwijn's book was copied.³¹ But he highlighted the references to Bible books and texts by the Church Fathers by prominently placing them above each fragment – in the original *Pia Desideria* (1624) and in the Dutch edition by De Harduwijn (1629), the references were just printed in the margins.

Paets's *'t Schat der zielen* (*The Treasure of the Soul*, 1648) follows the same strategy. *Goddelycke wenschen* was reprinted in this anthology in an even more abridged form and only a selection of the prose fragments was included [Fig. 4].³²

So far, the fact that the prose texts from the *Pia Desideria* also play an important part in Paets's *Bibels tresoor* (*Biblical Treasure*, 1646) and *Vierighe meditatie etc.* (*Devout Meditations*, 1631) has gone unnoticed.³³ In *Bibels tresoor, picturae, mottoes* and some prose fragments from *Goddelycke wenschen* were reprinted in a new order.

I will introduce *Vierighe meditatie etc.* in some detail, in order to explain why this book can be classified as a type 3 adaptation of *Pia Desideria*. *Vierighe meditatie etc.* is a book consisting of five Dutch translations of five texts, each attributed to different Fathers.³⁴ The first

³¹ I take Paets to be the editor of his books. There are no indications that other editors were involved, but it remains a possibility I can not completely rule out.

³² Dambre has already mentioned this abridging: Dambre, "Bibliographie van de werken" 195; Dambre, *De dichter Justus du Harduijn* 155. I think practical motives determined the selection of prose fragments. Because Paets printed one emblem per page in *'t Schat der zielen*, there was simply no room for all the prose quotations. Paets reprinted De Harduwijn's prose texts without any changes until a page was completely filled. The text in emblem 1 therefore still opened with the fragment from chapter 31 from the *Soliloquia* by pseudo-Augustine. Paets omitted the next fragment from chapter 33 of the same work because of its large size, but included the following three citations without any change.

³³ The complete title is *Sinte AUGUSTINUS Vierighe Meditatie ofte aen-dachten. Ende de Alleenspraecken der Zielen tot GODT. Ende ooc dat Handt-Boecxken vander aen-schouwinghe CHRISTI. Item noch Sinte Bernardus devoote aendachten. Ende een Boecxken van S. Anselmus, ghenaemt: De Strale der Goddelijcker Liefden, met sommige van sijne Ghebeden*. The book *Vierighe meditatie etc.* is not to be confused with the tract *Vierighe meditatie etc.* as a part of that book. *Vierighe meditatie etc.* will be explored in more detail in my articles, Dietz, "Spreekende beelden"; Dietz, "Under the Cover of Augustine".

³⁴ Paets reused the popular translations made in the sixteenth century by Anthonius van Hemert, a regular canon from Eindhoven. On Van Hemert and his translation, see Verschuere L., "Antonius van Hemert", *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 7 (1933) 405–522.

726 Goddelijcke wenschen.

Mijn siele heeft u gewenscht in den nacht, Isaie 26.



AVGVST. folil. cap. 31.

D En tijdt was eens dat ick u niet en kende ! wee dien tijdt dat ick u niet en hebbe ghekent ! wee die verblintheyt als ick u niet en sagh ! *ô* licht des Werelts ghy hebt my verlicht, ende ick hebbe u aenschout.

AVGVSTIN. folil. c. 17.

Heere ghy zijt het licht, ghy zijt het licht van de kinderen des lichts, ghy zijt den dach die noyt en gaet onder in welcken dat wandelen uwe kinderen, sonder te misdoene, ende die in den selvé niet en wandelē, zijn in duyfterheydt, om dat sy u, *ô* eenich licht des werelts niet en hebben.

D. GREGORIVS in Iob cap. 21.

Want dit tegenwoordigh leven eenen nacht is, in welcken wy soo langhe schemer-ooghen, om dies wille dat wy het inwendich onder een onsecker inbeeldinghe alhier aenschouwen. Want den Prophete om Godt te sien bevoelde hem met eenige verduyfterheyte te zijn ghedwongen, als hy seyde: *Mijn siele heeft u gewenscht in den nacht.* Als oft hy opentlijck wilde segghen : In de duyfternisse van dit teghenwoordigh leven, hebbe ick begeerte om u te aenschouwen, maer als noch ter tijdt ben ick gevangen in een wolcke der katijvighet.

AVGVSTINVS in Psal. 76.

Het is licht voor de menschen alle dinck te wenschen van den Heere, ende niet te wenschen den Heere selver.

638. Figuer. Gode

Fig. 4. Emblem 1 from *'t Schat der zielen* (Amsterdam, Pieter Paets: 1648), woodcut.

three texts include many *Pia Desideria picturae* and *mottoes*. These three texts are translations of the tracts *Meditationes*, *Soliloquia* and *Manuale*, with the titles *Vierighe meditatie* (*Devout Meditations*), *De Alleenspraecken der Zielen tot Godt* (*The Soul's Soliloquy with God*) and *Handt-Boecxken vander aen-schouwinghe Christi* (*Handbook on the Observation of Christ*). Those tracts were attributed to Augustine, but were actually compilations of highly devotional fragments written by several medieval theologians.³⁵

Herman Hugo was one of the many people who made substantial use of these texts during the early modern period. In the *Pia Desideria*, many prose fragments can be traced back to these sources. For example, chapter 33 of *Soliloquia* was reused almost in its entirety in emblem 1. The following fragment clarifies this point:

Caecus eram, et
caecitatem amabam, et ad tenebras per tenebras ambulabam. Quis me eduxit? ubi eram homo caecus sedens in tenebris et umbra mortis?

I was blind and I loved my blindness, and I walked from darkness to darkness. Who led me out of there, from where I was, sitting as a blind human being, in darkness and in the shadow of death?³⁶

Paets chose the picture from emblem 1 to illustrate chapter 33 of his *Soliloquia* or *Alleenspraecken*. In *Vierighe meditatie etc.*, the *pictura* from the first *Pia Desideria* emblem was combined with the pseudo-Augustinian text that had been used by Hugo in emblem 1 before.

Ick was blindt ende ick beminde mijn blindtheyt, ende ick wandelde door de duysternissen totter duysternissen. Wie heeft my daer uytgheleydt daer ick was sittende inde duysternissen ende inde schaduwe des doots?³⁷

I was blind and I loved my blindness, and I walked from darkness to darkness. Who led me out of there, where I was sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death?

³⁵ For the sources of the tracts, see, for example, Frandsen M.E., *Crossing Confessional Boundaries* (New York: 2006) 119. Robert Sturges considers the *Meditationes*, *Soliloquia* and *Manuale* as part of an interpretative process by which Augustine's work came to be read in a devotional way: Sturges R., "Pseudo-Augustinian Writings", forthcoming in *Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*.

³⁶ Unless otherwise stated, all translations of the Latin are mine.

³⁷ Augustine, *Alleenspraecken*, in *Vierighe meditatie etc.* (Amsterdam, Pieter Paets: 1631) 153–154.

In this way, Paets preserved the specific combination of *picturae*, *mot-toes* and prose texts in *Vierighe meditatie* etc.³⁸

Paets's decision in 1631 to create a type 3 *Pia Desideria* adaptation was deliberate. It was a type which he would reuse more explicitly in 1645 and 1648. I have argued elsewhere that the hidden *Pia Desideria* use in *Vierighe meditatie* etc. might be related to the restricted freedom permitted Catholic printers in the Republic.³⁹

In sum, Paets's *Pia Desideria* adaptations indicate that combining *picturae*, *mot-toes* and prose fragments (type 3) was considered the most effective way of reusing the *Pia Desideria* for Dutch Catholics, more effective than the merging of images, *mot-toes*, poems and prose texts (type 1) or the merging of images, *mot-toes* and lyrics (type 2).

Rays of light in Pia desideria's prose parts

By combining *picturae*, *mot-toes* and prose fragments, Paets developed his own idiosyncratic strategy in appropriating *Pia Desideria* features. In order to see how Paets's products relate to the Ignatian meditative tradition, I will focus on the way Paets's *Pia Desideria* adaptations deal with two characteristics of Ignatian meditation: the intellectuality of the texts and the strong relationship between word and image, which prompts the reader's engagement. In this section I will analyse *pictura*, lyric and prose texts in the first emblem of the *Pia Desideria*, in order to increase our insight into the way Paets's works appropriate elements from the Ignatian meditative tradition.

The first emblem of the *Pia Desideria* is based on the *motto* deriving from the book of Isaiah: 'Anima mea desideravit te in nocte' (With my soul have I desired thee in the night).⁴⁰ The *pictura* from the first emblem depicts the well-lit face of the winged *Amor divinus* in a dark environment. *Anima* focuses all her attention on the light before her [Fig. 1+2]. Both the poems and the prose texts from the *Pia Desideria*

³⁸ Paets often reused word-image-relationships created in *Pia Desideria* by illustrating a chapter of *Vierighe meditatie* with the *pictura* from the *Pia Desideria* emblem in which Hugo had previously quoted the specific pseudo-Augustinian fragment. However, not every textual reference from *Pia Desideria* was transformed into a pictorial one by Paets, in fact he made his own critical selection. See Dietz, "Under the Cover of Augustine".

³⁹ Dietz, "Under the Cover of Augustine".

⁴⁰ I have cited *King James Version* (1611). See: www.biblija.net.

represent the believer's devout feelings. The difference lies in how both parts express emotion. The *subscriptions* make use of erudite embellishments.

Hei mihi quam densis nox incubat atra tenebris!
 Talis erat Pharios quae tremefecit agros.
 Nubila, lurida, squallida, tetrica, terribilis nox;
 Nocturno in censu perdere digna locum.
 Non ego tam tristes Scythico, puto, cardine lunas,
 Tardat ubi lentas Parrhasis Ursa rotas:
 Nec tot Cimmerio glomerantur in aethere nubes,
 Unde suos Phoebus vertere iussus equos:
 Nec reor invisi magis atra cubilia Ditis,
 Fertur ubi furua nox habitare casa.
 Nam licet hic oculis nullam dent sidera lucem,
 Non tamen est omni mens viduata die:⁴¹

Woe! In what deep darkness will the black night lie! Such a night was the one that made the land of Pharos⁴² tremble. Cloudy, lurid, foul, horrid, terrible night, worthy to lose its place in the census of nights.⁴³ There are not, I believe, such awful moons found in the Scythian skies, where the Arcadian Bear slows down the wheels to a crawl, nor do so often the clouds accumulate in the Cimmerian ether, from where Phoebus was ordered to turn his horses. Nor are, I think, the black sleeping quarters of Dis more hateful, where night, it is said, stays in its gloomy home. For although no stars give light here to the eyes, Still the mind is not bereft of all daylight.⁴⁴

In this fragment, Hugo pulls out all the expressionistic stops: mythological references, complicated comparisons and learned tropes. For example, *Anima* compares her night to the underworld, which turns out not to be so dark. Pluto, god of the underworld, darkens the physical eyes, but not the spiritual ones. Hugo's *subscriptions* were extremely lyrical – and in the translation by De Harduwijn they became even more so.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Hugo Herman, *Pia Desideria* emblem 1: <http://emblems.let.uu.nl/hu1624001.html>.

⁴² The lighthouse of Pharos was destroyed by two earthquakes in the fourteenth century.

⁴³ Meaning, presumably, a night one hopes never to experience again.

⁴⁴ The Latin *scriptio* translations were done by Gerard Huijning.

⁴⁵ The literary character of De Harduwijn's *Goddelycke wenschen* was the subject of studies by Dambre and Van Vaeck, but contemporaries also mentioned the poetic sound of De Harduwijn's work. See Dambre, "Bibliographie van de werken" 178; Dambre, *De dichter Justus du Harduwijn* 268–271, and Van Vaeck M., "The Reception of the *Pia Desideria* by Justus De Harduwijn". Unpublished lecture of the Fifty-Fifth

The prose texts, in contrast, express feelings through clear explanations and concrete suggestions. In this way, the prose fragments encourage readers to take action themselves. The poems, on the other hand, are not very optimistic about man's ability to increase his own happiness. This difference can best be elucidated by comparing a lyric and prose description of God as the only light. In the next fragment from the first *subscriptio*, *Anima* distinguishes two suns, of which only the second can drive away darkness. The reader must interpret the reference-laden description to conclude that *Anima* regards the natural sun as one sun while God as a spiritual light is the other.⁴⁶

Sed nimis haec longas tenebris nox prorogat horas,
 Quae tibi mane negat cedere, Phoebus, diem.
 Cum redit Arctoo Titan vicinior axi,
 Exultat reducis quisque videre iubar.
 Scilicet Aurorae gens vertitur omnis in ortus,
 Quisque parat primus dicere, Phoebus adest!
 Sic ego, saepe oculos tenui sublimis Olympo,
 Aspiciens, gemino qui iacet orbe, Polum.
 Et dixi tam saepe; Nitesce, nitesce meus Sol!

But too much this night draws out the long hours in darkness,
 The night that in the morning denies to cede the day to you, Phoebus.
 When Titan returns closer to the North Pole
 everybody rejoices to see his crest when he comes back.
 Indeed, all the people turn towards Aurora's rising,
 and everybody tries to be the first to say: 'Phoebus is here!'
 So I have fixed my eyes, high up on the Olympus,
 while I looked at the double orbit.
 And so often I said: 'Start shining, start shining, my Sun!'

In a prose quotation from the seventeenth chapter of pseudo-Augustine's *Soliloquia*, God is also presented as the only real light. However, the complicated and indirect information is replaced by a clear explanation:

Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, Los Angeles 19–21 March 2009. Van Vaecck considers the case of Gillis Haefacker, a pastor and missionary in the diocese of Utrecht, who testified in 1621 that except for Justus de Harduwijn's *God-delycke lof sanghen*, he had never seen a religious songbook that was made properly according to the art of poetry. For more on this subject, see also Buitendijk W.J.C., *Het calvinisme in de spiegel van de Zuidnederlandse literatuur der Contra-Reformatie* (Groningen/Batavia: 1942) 269.

⁴⁶ See also Rödter, *Via piae animae* 186.

Tu lux Domine; tu lux filiorum lucis, tu dies qui nescis occasum, in qua ambulant filii tui sine offensione, et sine qua omnes qui ambulant, in tenebris sunt, quia te lucem mundi non habent.

Lord, you are Light; you are the light of the children of light, you are the day which never ends, in which your children walk without erring, without which they are in darkness, because they do not have you, the light of the world.

Prose and lyric also express desire for God differently. In the *subscriptio*, the longing is conveyed indirectly in the descriptions of the horrible darkness experienced by *Anima*. The prose texts articulate divine love directly: 'O aeterna veritas et vera charitas et chara / aeternitas! Tu es Deus meus, tibi suspiro die / ac nocte' ('O eternal truth and true love and loving eternity! You are my God, I crave you day and night'). Those expressions of love are meaningful, as a fragment by Bernard states that the believer contributes to his own purification by addressing Christ lovingly:

Putas erit qui intellectum illuminet, qui inflammet affectum? Erit vtique si convertamur ad Christum [...].

Do you think there will be someone who will enlighten your understanding and who will kindle your affection? That will definitely happen when we turn ourselves to Christ.

While the human soul sings of its wretchedness passively in the poem, in the prose fragments, divine love has already made possible an encounter between God and man. This encounter is described by quotations from chapter 33 of *Soliloquia*: 'Vere Domine tu es Deus meus/ qui eduxisti me de tenebris, et umbra mortis, / et vocasti me in admirabile lumen tuum' ('Truly Lord, you are my Lord, who led me out of darkness and the shadow of death, and who called me in your wonderful light').

In sum, the *subscriptio* and the prose fragments diverge in their degree of clarity. Whereas the *subscriptions* intensifies the literal and figural darkness of the depicted night, the prose part, in conjunction with the image, serves to clarify and instruct the practising believer, as if illuminating him with rays of light. Therefore, to opt for the prose is to privilege sober and instructive piety.

The relationship between *pictura* and *subscriptio* and between *pictura* and prose parts also differs. The *pictura* and the *subscriptio* are strongly connected; the poem is the direct expression of the portrayed *Anima*'s condition. The prose commentary, on the other hand, consists of collected

fragments. Although these fragments are related to the theme of the *pictura*, they do not directly describe what is depicted. The reader of Paets's books is therefore not automatically encouraged to interconnect pictures and prose texts. Especially in the case of *Vierighe meditatie* etc. – a combination of *Pia desideria picturae* and devotional texts attributed to different Fathers – the relationship between word and image is often weak and unclear.

Dutch piety

As we can now conclude, Paets's illustrated devotional literature did not support the Ignatian meditative programme, in which intellectual and strongly connected words and images gradually arouse devout feelings. In this section, I will argue that Paets's decision to create *Pia Desideria* adaptations of type 3, as well as to remain silent about the advisable use of those adaptations, is dependent on their functional context in the *missio Hollandica*.

Due to the fact that the States General had officially prohibited the public celebration of the Mass in 1580, the Catholic Church became a mission church in a Calvinistic-oriented society. *Schuilkerken* (hidden churches or conventicles) replaced traditional church buildings and the apostolic vicariate replaced the diocese.⁴⁷ Although the freedom of conscience proviso in the Union of Utrecht (1579) provides Catholics in the Dutch Republic the liberty and protection that confessional minorities in other European countries lacked, the practice of the Catholic faith was restricted. A 'structure of intolerance, harassment, and exclusion' characterized the life of Catholics in the *missio Hollandica* or 'Holland Mission'.⁴⁸

Many historians have discussed the nature of Dutch Catholicism at the time. Rogier is considered as the historian 'most responsible for shaping the historiography of Dutch Catholicism'.⁴⁹ In comparison to

⁴⁷ Frijhoff W.T.M. – Spies M., *1650. Bevochten eendracht* (Den Haag: 1999) 354; Eijnatten J. van – Lieburg F. van, *Nederlandse religiegeschiedenis* (Hilversum: 2005) 169; 182; Spaans J., "Stad van vele geloven 1578–1795", in Frijhoff W. – Prak M. (eds.), *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam. Centrum van de wereld 1578–1650* part II–I (Amsterdam: 2004) 387–388.

⁴⁸ Parker C.P., *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age*. (Cambridge etc: 2008) especially 24.

⁴⁹ Parker, *Faith on the Margins* 14.

believers in the Southern Netherlands and Southern Europe, Catholicism in the Republic was considered 'colder' and 'more Puritanical'; without 'frivolity' and 'nonchalance'. The differences were not only caused by Calvinistic infiltration, but also by Catholics' attempts not to seem objectionable.⁵⁰

Following Rogier, several scholars have argued that in the *missio Hollandica*, Catholics professed their belief more modestly and formally than elsewhere in Europe.⁵¹ However, some scholars have since contributed corrections or new ideas to this standpoint. For example, Spaans has argued that the sober religious practice was due not to any cautiousness on the part of Catholics, but rather to the difficult circumstances endured by them. Their financial means and manpower were limited and they could not practice their religion publicly.⁵² Spiertz attributes the sober Catholic practice to the Jansenist tendencies of the apostolic vicars Van Neercassel (1663–1688) and Codde (1688–1701).⁵³

However, Parker has recently placed Dutch Catholicism within the context of the European post-Tridentine church, arguing that 'heretofore scholarship has left Catholic communities too detached from the international revival of the Roman Church'.⁵⁴ Hoppenbrouwers also questioned Rogier's thesis on the national character of Dutch Catholicism twelve years before Parker.⁵⁵

By focusing on Paets's illustrated devotional literature, I approach the historical and theological discussion on the character of Dutch Catholicism from a new perspective. I am not the first to use religious literature as a source in scholarly research dealing with the nature of Dutch spirituality,⁵⁶ but my research on Paets's illustrated devotional

⁵⁰ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme* (Amsterdam: 1964) especially 795.

⁵¹ See for example Spaans J., "Cornelius Hagius, een katholiek priester in een protestantse Republiek", *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 10,1 (1994) 29; Spiertz M.G., "Godsdienstig leven van de Katholieken in de 17^{de} eeuw", *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden* part 8 (Haarlem: 1979) 353.

⁵² Spaans, "Cornelius Hagius" 34.

⁵³ Spiertz, "Godsdienstig leven" 353. About Van Neercassel and Codde: Ackermans G., *Herders en huurlingen. Bisschoppen en priesters in de Republiek (1663–1705)* (Amsterdam: 2003).

⁵⁴ Parker, *Faith on the Margins* 14.

⁵⁵ Hoppenbrouwers F.J.M., *Oefening in volmaaktheid. De zeventiende-eeuwse rooms-katholieke spiritualiteit in de Republiek* (Den Haag: 1996) 99.

⁵⁶ Hoppenbrouwers, for example, has already considered the impact of international influences on Dutch Catholicism. His focus is on the broad collection of foreign spiritual literature circulating in the Dutch Republic. See: Hoppenbrouwers, *Oefening*

books is especially able to increase insight into the interaction between national and international influences; the books are products of the *missio Hollandica* and can be situated among the international successors to the *Pia Desideria*. Paets's illustrated meditation literature indicates that Dutch Catholics reused international Catholic material and themes, but adapted them in a special way in order to support an instructive piety. Paets must have been aware that in the Dutch Republic, it was this kind of piety rather than baroque, exuberant lyrics that would secure the devotional potency of the *Pia Desideria*.

Although Dutch readers were not used to dealing with illustrated religious literature at the time,⁵⁷ Paets did not give any instructions on how the reader should relate to the images, nor did he discuss any aspect of the reading or meditating processes he might have envisioned. It is probable that he published his books without any instructions about how to look at or meditate upon the images in an attempt to avoid controversy. It seems that Paets had every reason to be cautious. After all, when Joost van den Vondel explicitly reflected on the meditative effect of sensory perceptions in his *Altaergeheimenissen*, he encountered fierce resistance from Protestants.⁵⁸

in volmaaktheid especially 97 and chapter 4. Polman has written about the specifically frugal character of the Dutch church book *Christelycke onderwysingen en gebeden* (Christian Lessons and Prayers, 1685), and the way it differs from baroque books from the Southern Netherlands. See: Polman P., *Katholiek Nederland in de achttiende eeuw* part 1 (Hilversum: 1968) 131–133. Clemens has also explored the sober piety in church books from the *missio Hollandica*. He looked at the enormous distribution of *Christelycke onderwysingen en gebeden* in the Southern Netherlands and its limited popularity in the Northern Netherlands, suggesting that sober piety was not a 'Northern-Netherlandish' kind of piety. See: Clemens Th., *De godsdienstigheid in de Nederlanden in de spiegel van de katholieke kerkboeken 1680–1840* part 2 (Tilburg: 1988) 172; Clemens Th., "De uitgavegeschiedenis van het kerkboek de *Christelycke onderwysingen en gebeden* en de implicaties ervan voor de geschiedenis van de vroomheid in de Nederlanden (1685–1894)", *Archief voor de geschiedenis van de katholieke kerk in Nederland* 27 (1985) 215–253; Clemens Th., "Katholieke vroomheid en hun schisma van 1723", *Holland* 25 (1993) 197–220.

⁵⁷ As stated before, Catholic meditation literature was rarely produced in the Dutch Republic. See for example Dietz, "Under the Cover of Augustine"; Stronks, "Gewapende vrede".

⁵⁸ Stronks, E., *Negotiating Identities, Word, Image and Religion in the Dutch Republic* (forthcoming).

Paets as a trendsetter?

Could Paets's preference for *Pia Desideria* adaptations of type 3 be an example of a trend within Catholic Dutch milieu? Because of our limited knowledge of Catholic *Pia Desideria* adaptations, it is difficult to answer this question convincingly. However, all the evidence points to the existence of an actual trend.

First of all, Paets's activities did not remain unnoticed: his shortened *Goddelycke wenschen* was reprinted in *'t Schat der zielen; Vierighe meditatie etc.* was republished in 1645. The reprints indicate that Paets's adaptations gained in popularity.

In addition, several other books by Paets also reused Van Sichem's woodcuts. Paets's *Biblia sacra* (1657) was illustrated by Van Sichem's woodcuts after the *Pia Desideria* and other religious books from the Southern Netherlands.⁵⁹ In 1628, Paets reprinted Thomas a Kempis's *Alleen-spraecke der zielen met Godt* (*The Soul's Soliloquy with God*), in which the *Pia Desideria* woodcuts were also included.⁶⁰ In all of these books, Paets only used pictures and *motatoes* from the *Pia Desideria*. However, they were again combined with prose texts instead of lyrical poems. Thus the connection with type 3 did not disappear.

A third argument is supported by the fact that Protestant editors of the *Pia Desideria* from the Northern Netherlands never chose to model their adaptations on type 3 adaptations. Just like foreign Protestants, Dutch Protestants preferred types 1 and 2.⁶¹

⁵⁹ On Paets's illustrated Bible books see Coelen P. van der, *De schrift verbeeld. Oudtestamentische prenten uit renaissance en barok* (Nijmegen: 1998) 173–176, 199–201; Poortman W.C., *Bijbel en Prent*. part 2 (Den Haag: 1986) 92–97.

⁶⁰ The *Alleen-spraecke der zielen met Godt* is mentioned in Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie* 79. For a brief description of this book, see Dietz, "Spreekende beelden"; Dietz, "Under the Cover of Augustine". *Alleen-spraecke der zielen met Godt* will be explored in greater detail in my dissertation.

⁶¹ Until now, the reuse of *Pia Desideria* in Protestant milieu has not received intense scholarly attention. The relationship between *Pia Desideria*, Serrarius's *Goddelicke aendachten* (1653), *Goddelyke liefde-vlammen* (Divine Flame of Love, 1691) and Luyken's *Jezus en de ziel* (Jesus and the soul, 1685) is briefly explored in Meeuwesse K., "Een teruggevonden werkje van Petrus Serrarius", *Studia Catholica* 25 (1950) 241–263. Stronks focuses on the relationship between *Pia Desideria* and *Jezus en de ziel* in Stronks E., "Jan Luyken's first emblem books. The rekindling of the Dutch love emblem", *Emblematica* 15 (2007) 319–342. I have recently studied the reuse of *Pia Desideria picturae* in the eighteenth-century Protestant children's book *Uitmuntenende verzaameling* (*Extraordinary Collection*, 1780): Dietz F., "Pia Desideria through children's eyes. The eighteenth-century revival of *Pia Desideria* in a Dutch children's book", *Emblematica* 17 (2009) 191–212. All the indications are that the prose

Moreover, Dutch Catholic printers and authors did not make type 1 or 2 editions, although there is some affinity between type 1 and *Christelycke offerande* (Christian Sacrifice, 1640), in which the Catholic poet Jan Harmenszoon Krul creatively integrated parts of images, *mottoes*, *subscriptions* and prose texts from *Pia Desideria*.⁶² Compared to the clear preference for types 1 and 2 seen elsewhere in Europe at the time, this exception distinguishes the unique nature of the Dutch tradition.

My fifth argument appears most convincing, but can hardly be maintained due to a lack of evidence. The design of Paets's devotional books is closely related to a Catholic manuscript in which forty-five copperplates by Boëtius a Bolswert were included, briefly mentioned by Verheggen in *Beelden voor passie en hartstocht*.⁶³ We do not have much information about the date, origin and function of this handwritten adaptation, which was part of a composite book. A handwritten dedication tells us that it was given by Sister Catharina Simons to Sister Maria van Heel, who entered an unknown convent on 29 August 1666. We do not know whether Sister Catharina composed the composite book to commemorate Sister Maria's joining the order. Verheggen presumes that, but this hypothesis cannot be confirmed, since Sister Catharina may have been merely a temporary owner of the book.⁶⁴

Nor do we know much about the place of origin. Verheggen maintains that the manuscript can be counted among the *Pia Desideria* reception in the Northern Netherlands, but it is still not clear if the book was actually made or read in the Republic. Since the 1970s, the convolute has been in the university library of Nijmegen. Before that, it was in the monastery library of Wittem in Limburg, where Redemptorists have lived since 1836.⁶⁵ The father of a Redemptorist from Amsterdam donated a part of the impressive manuscript collection to the library at Wittem when his son joined the order at the

commentary was not influential in the Protestant reception history. The Protestant reception history will be explored in more detail in my dissertation.

⁶² For a brief description of *Christelycke offerande*, see Dietz, "Spreekende beelden".

⁶³ Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie* 82. This manuscript will be further explored in: Dietz, F., "Gedrukte boeken, met de pen gelezen", *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 26,2 (2010).

⁶⁴ Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie* 82.

⁶⁵ I am grateful to Robert Arpots, curator of the University Library in Nijmegen, and to Father Jozef Konings, curator of the monastery library at Wittem for this information.

end of the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ Was the convolute part of the gift, and can we conclude that it once served a function in Amsterdam? It is very unlikely that it had always been in Amsterdam. Since 1580, it was forbidden to enter a monastery or convent in the Northern Netherlands. Therefore, it is virtually certain that the unknown convent Maria entered in 1666 was located outside the Seven Provinces.⁶⁷ Maybe the convent was situated in the border regions between the Northern and Southern provinces, where convent life was not always made impossible.⁶⁸ Maria could have entered the convent for regulars in Emmerik. At 4 April 1684, apostolic vicar Van Neercassel wrote a letter to Paulus Roskam, the rector of Emmerik's convent. In the ecclesiastical administration, the letter was mentioned in conjunction with a letter to – among others – ‘Soror [sister, FD] van Heel’.⁶⁹ Did this ‘Soror’ and Roskam live together in Emmerik – and was the first name of this ‘Soror’ Maria? In that case, we could situate Sister Catharina and Sister Maria *outside* the Seven Provinces, but *inside* the territory of the *missio Hollandica*.⁷⁰

Let us focus on the content of the handwritten *Pia Desideria* adaptation for a moment. Although Verheggen holds that the maker of the manuscript composed his or her own meditative texts next to the *Pia Desideria picturae*, the texts are in fact Dutch translations of *mot-toes* and prose fragments from the *Pia Desideria*.⁷¹ The combination of

⁶⁶ Huisman G.C., *Catalogus van de middeleeuwse handschriften in de Universiteitsbibliotheek Nijmegen* (Louvain: 1997) XIII.

⁶⁷ Since the Dutch parliament had officially forbidden Catholic worship in 1580, it was impossible to enter a convent or missionary community. See, for example, Monteiro M., *Geestelijke maagden: leven tussen klooster en wereld in Noord-Nederland gedurende de zeventiende eeuw* (Hilversum: 1996) 16. However, other religious communities, such as beguinages, were also sometimes called convents. Whether Sister Maria and Sister Catharina lived together in such a community in the Dutch Republic is a possibility I can not rule out.

⁶⁸ The Norbertine Sint-Catharinedal priory in Breda and Oosterhout, for example, still existed in the seventeenth century. However, convent life was not unproblematic; the continued existence of the Norbertine Sint-Catharinedal priory was seriously threatened at the beginning of the seventeenth century. See Sponselee-De Meester M.T.A.R., *Het norbertinessenklooster Sint-Catharinadal in de Staatse periode 1625–1795. Portret van een religieuze vrouwengemeenschap in benarde tijden* (Hilversum: 2004).

⁶⁹ Bruggeman J., *Diarum litterarum O.B.C.* part 4 (Utrecht: 1982) 1319. On Roskam as the rector of the Regulars' Convent in Emmerik: Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme* 398.

⁷⁰ Emmerik was part of the *missio Hollandica*. However, not all border regions were. See also Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme* 349–356.

⁷¹ Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie* 82.

images, *mottoes* and prose texts indicates that the manuscript is a type 3 *Pia Desideria* adaptation.

There are two reasons to assume that the author of the manuscript did not explicitly make use of Paets's texts. First, the creative selection of prose fragments in the manuscript is not the same as Paets's selection in *'t Schat der zielen* or *Bibels tresoor*. The maker of the manuscript even added a new fragment occasionally, which had not been used before by Hugo.⁷²

Second, the translations differ from De Harduwijn's translation in *Goddelycke wenschen*. The author often made use of Dutch translations of biblical texts and texts by the Church Fathers. The quotation from Augustine's *Confessions* in the first emblem, for example, came from the *Boecken der Belijdenissen van S. Augustijn* (Books of the Confessions of Saint Augustine, 1603).⁷³ When compared to the fragment from *Vierighe meditatie* etc. quoted above, it becomes clear that the author of the manuscript used the Dutch source of *Soliloquia* [Fig. 5]:⁷⁴

Ick was blint ende ick beminde myn blintheyt ende ick wandelde door die duysternisse toter duysternissen wie heeft myn daer vuyt⁷⁵ geleyt / / daer ick was sittende inder duysternisse / endt onder schaduwe des doots [...]

I was blind and I loved my blindness, and I walked from darkness to darkness. Who led me out of there, where I was sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death?

However, I contend that the fragments in the manuscript were not all taken from existing translations. For example, the author used a fragment from one of Augustine's psalm editions, which did not circulate

⁷² I refer to a fragment by Bernard. The maker of the manuscript made mention of Bernard's name, but not of the specific source. I have not found the source yet.

⁷³ Augustine, *Boecken der Belijdenissen van S. Augustijn* (Emmerik, Jacob van Eckeren: 1603). According to De Rynck and Welkenhuysen, this is the oldest translation of the *Confessiones*. See: Rynck P. de – Welkenhuysen A., *De Oudheid in het Nederlands* (Baarn: 1992) 106.

⁷⁴ The translation used by the manuscript author and Paets was done by Van Hemert (cf. note 34). However, the author of the manuscript did not use either Paets's 1631 or 1645 edition of *Vierighe meditatie* etc. The corrections that were made in Paets's edition by the notary Bredan, were not found in the manuscript. However, we do not know which edition the maker of the manuscript actually used. Many editions were circulating in the seventeenth century. See Verschueren, "Antonius van Hemert" 409–416.

⁷⁵ We are probably supposed to read 'uuyt', or 'uit', which means 'out'.

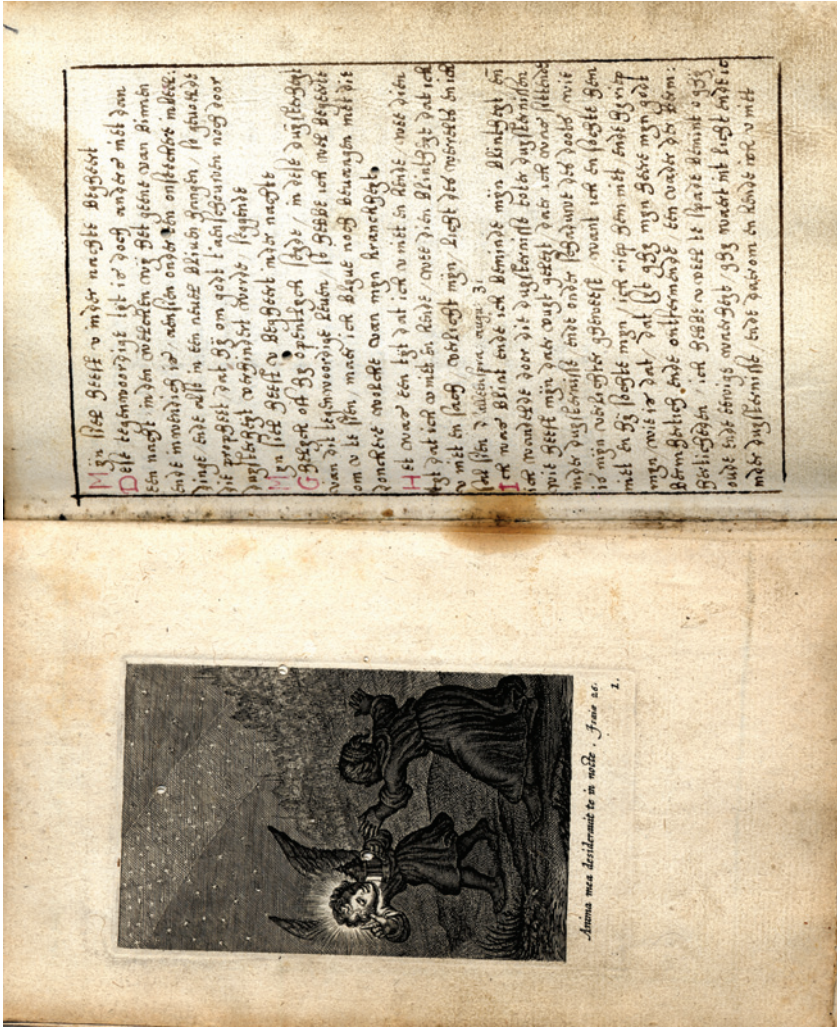


Fig. 5. Emblem 1 from manuscript 325, University Library of Nijmegen, engraving.

in a printed Dutch translation to the best of my knowledge.⁷⁶ The author may have combined existing and new translations.

Did the author know about Paets's type 3 editions and did he or she want to follow this particular method of combining elements from the *Pia Desideria*?⁷⁷ Or did Paets and the manuscript author both arrive independently at the same conclusion, namely that the merging of *picturae*, *mottoes* and prose fragments was the most effective way of re-using the *Pia Desideria*? Both possibilities indicate that Catholics, both in and outside of religious orders, preferred to create *Pia Desideria* adaptations of type 3.

Conclusion

For contemporary users, the meditative character of the *Pia Desideria* was attributed to the effect of the combination of pictures, *mottoes*, poems and prose quotations (type 1) or of the combination of *picturae*, *mottoes* and *subscriptions* (type 2). In striking contrast to foreign editors, the Amsterdam Catholic printer Pieter Paets regarded the potency of the *Pia Desideria* as the result of the unique combination of *picturae*, *mottoes* and prose texts (type 3). His *Pia Desideria* adaptations are not compatible with the Ignation meditation programme, in which intellectual and strongly connected words and images gradually act as a stimulus to the *voluptas* or will. The selected prose fragments are characterized by their austere style, the clarity of instruction and practical suggestions. This 'instructive piety' is suited to the religious programme of the Dutch Mission – in contrast to the expressionistic and erudite lyric in the *subscriptions*. In order not to seem objectionable in a Republic which was dominated by Calvinists, Paets printed his *picturae* and prose commentary without any explanation of their use and potency.

Some scholars assume that the specific character of Dutch Catholicism was due to the exceptional position of Catholics in the Republic: Calvinistic infiltration, Catholic cautiousness and practical limits all

⁷⁶ According to De Rynck and Welkenhuysen, the first Dutch printed translations of Augustine's psalms were published in 1729. See De Rynck – Welkenhuysen, *De Oudheid* 112. I did not find older psalm translations in *Index Aureliensis. Catalogus Librorum Sedecimo Saeculo Impressorum*, part 1, book A, vol. V (Baden Baden: 1964).

⁷⁷ The author maybe knew Paets's *Goddelycke wenschen* (1645), see Dietz, "Geduchte boeken, met de pen gelezen."

influenced the formal piety in the *missio Hollandica*. Was the omission of baroque lyrics the result of their caution? Or does the preference for meditation type 3 betray a desire to assimilate the Protestant meditative tradition in the Republic into their own religious experience? That tradition also emphasised the importance of clear instructions and was distrustful of emotional or visual stimulation.⁷⁸ Stripped of evocative comparisons and cryptic embellishments, the Counter-Reformational *Pia Desideria* seems to have acquired a Protestant hue in its resemblance to Protestant Dutch meditation literature and in the differences it had with foreign Catholic traditions.

⁷⁸ On the lack of emotional or visual stimulation in Protestant literature, see, for example, Stronks E., “De zwetende lezer. Religieuze leeservaringen in de Republiek” *Vooy*s 27,3 (2009) 15–23. Current research that is a part of our research project (cf. note 1) will explore the relationship between Catholic and Protestant meditation literature from the Republic in more detail. The results will be published in my forthcoming dissertation and in Stronks, *Negotiating Identities*.

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IV. RELIGIOUS MEDITATION IN THE VISUAL ARTS,
13TH-17TH CENTURY

HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE
ON THE SPIRITUAL AND PICTORIAL INTERWINING
BETWEEN THE JOHANNESCHÜSSEL AND THE
VERA ICON (1200–1500)*

Barbara Baert

For Lise

*Habes Ioannem vocem.
Quid habes Christum, nisi Verbum?
Vox praemittitur, ut Verbum postea intellegatur.
Et quale Verbum?
Audi illud tibi clare ostendentem.*

Augustine

*Quid ergo tu faceres si haec videres?
Numquid non te projiceres super ipsum Dominum?*
Ludolph of Saxony

Augustine ends his 288th sermon *In natali Ioannis baptistae* (*De voce et verbo*) with a reflection on a particular verse in *John* 3:30: 'Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui'. 'He must increase, but I must decrease'.¹ These are the words of John the Baptist's response to his own disciples when they ask him why Christ, that other man who baptizes, is becoming more popular among the Jewish population. The phrase in *John* 3:30 refers to a fascinating bond between Christ and John the Baptist. The concept of 'decrease' (John the Baptist) in order to 'increase' (Christ) initiated a dynamic energy between the two most important male figures in Christianity. The mystery of the last prophet of the Old Covenant disappearing for the sake of the Messiah and the New Covenant has important implications on exegetical, iconographical and pictorial levels.

This article will explore the effects of this connection between the last prophet and the Savior who supersedes him, in visual culture.

* I am grateful to dr. Irene Schaudies for correcting my English. I am grateful to Karl Enenkel and Walter Melion for their suggestions.

¹ I used the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. In other translations is used 'He must increase, but I must diminish'.

More specifically, I will develop a comparative analysis of two artifacts: the *Johannesschüssel* and the *vera icon*. Both image types would go their separate ways, but eventually their paths would cross, leading to hybrid schemes in which John and Christ seem to ‘melt’ together in spiritual and visual ways. Secondly, this article will examine the relationship between concepts of meditation and the spiritual-pictorial imbrication of the *Johannesschüssel* and the *vera icon*. Indeed, the two men’s heads can be seen to implicate each other, and thusly to effect the way beholders meditated before these two kinds of image.

The phenomenology of an object

*What is the Johannesschüssel?*²

Scripture tells that John the Baptist’s head was severed by order of Herod, who had been charmed by the wiles of Salome into promising her anything she should desire. The disciples buried his body (later burnt by Theodosius the Apostate); Salome³ and her mother Herodias, Herod’s wife, buried the head.⁴ Two monks would discover it at this location in 391.⁵ The fifth- and sixth-century martyrologies develop several *inventiones* of this head between Jerusalem, Emessa and Constantinople. The head was kept in a *hydria* (water jar) or hidden inside the wall of a house in Emessa. It was later rediscovered in an ‘argentea urna’ (Dionysius Exiguus, ca. 470–ca. 550).⁶ When the head was transported from Emessa, where it was allegedly found, to Constantinople, the carriage of Emperor Valentius refused to go any further, indicating that the head wanted to be interred there. Later, Emperor Theodosius

² Réau L., *Iconographie de l’art chrétien*, vol. II.1 *Iconographie de la Bible – Ancien Testament* (Paris: 1956) 431–463; Combs Stuebe I., “The Johannesschüssel. From Narrative to Reliquary to Andachtsbild”, *Marsyas. Studies in the History of Art* 14 (1968–1969) 1–16; Arndt H. – Kroos R., “Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel”, *Aachener Kunstblätter* 38 (1969) 243–328, esp. 245.

³ Her name is mentioned for the first time by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (c. 37–after 100); Michl J. et al., lemma “Johannes der Täufer”, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg i. Br.: 1960) vol. V, cols. 1084–1089.

⁴ Innitzer T., *Johannes der Täufer* (Vienna: 1908) 397.

⁵ Semoglou A., “Les reliques de la vraie croix et du chef de Saint Jean Baptiste. Inventions et vénération dans l’art Byzantin et post-Byzantin”, in Lidov A. (ed.), *Eastern Christian Relics* (Moscow: s. d.) 217–233.

⁶ *De inventione capitis Joannis Baptistae*, in *Patrologia Latina* 57, cols. 421 and 443.

ordered the head to be brought to Constantinople. A description of this *translatio* to Constantinople mentions a case where the head was hidden (Marcus Aurelius Cassiodorus, ca. 560).⁷

The existence of a head relic is recorded from the 12th century onwards in letters and registers from the East (Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, ca. 1157).⁸ After the Fourth Crusade of 1204, there was a proliferation of purported skulls of St. John. By the end of the Middle Ages, there were no fewer than twelve such skulls.⁹ The most popular among them was definitely the skull of Amiens.¹⁰ It attracted many pilgrims and was associated with an extensive *translatio* legend involving the Crusader Wallon de Sarton, who was said to have found the head immured in Constantinople. Wallon's skull relic had an incision above the right eyebrow. On the basis of this wound, a later legend developed, which claimed that the frenzied Herodias had gashed the severed head of the Baptist with a knife.¹¹ According to the *translatio*

⁷ 'Thecam in qua caput Baptistae iacebat', *Historia tripartita*, in *Patrologia Latina* 59, col. 1159.

⁸ E.g. 'Caput cum capillis integrum et barba [...] in palatiis antiquis'; Riant P., *Exuviae sacrae Constantinopolitanae* 2 (Geneva: 1878) 213–214.

⁹ Réau L., *Iconographie de l'art chrétien* 431–463; Arndt – Kroos, "Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel" 243–328; esp. 245.

¹⁰ Rückert R., "Zur Form der byzantinischen Reliquiare", *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 3,8 (1957) 7f.; Breuil A., "Du culte de saint Jean Baptiste et des usages profanes qui s'y rattachent", in *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie* 8 (s.l.: 1846) 3–90; Du Cange C.D., *Traité historique du chef de saint Jean-Baptiste* (Paris: 1645); Salmon A., *Histoire du chef de saint Jean-Baptiste* (Amiens: 1876); Pardiac J.B., *Histoire de saint Jean-Baptiste et de son culte* (Paris: 1886); Corblet J., "Culte et iconographie de Saint-Jean-Baptiste dans le diocèse d'Amiens", *Revue de l'art chrétien* 8 (1864) 458.

¹¹ This motif also became popular in the theatre. The *Mystère de la passion* adapted for Mons by Jean Michel (d. 1501) contains the stage direction 'Icy frappe Herodyas d'un cousteau sur le front du chef de Saint jehan et le sang en sort'. The original was presumably written by Eustache Marcadé (d. 1440) and performed in Arras between 1420 and 1430. Jean Michel's adaptation consisted of 30,000 verses, the performance of which lasted a week; Cohen G., *Le livre de Conduite du Régisseur et le compte des Dépenses pour le Mystère de la Passion* (Oxford: 1925) 192; Subrenat J., "La mission de Jean-Baptiste dans les passions du XV siècle. L'exemplaire du Mystère de la passion d'Arras", in *Jean-Baptiste le précurseur au Moyen Âge. Actes du 26^e colloque du CUER MA* (Aix-en-Provence: 2002) 185–199. This established legend was a variation on an early Christian version in which Herodias was said to have posthumously pierced John's tongue with a needle. For it was with his tongue that he had chided her and incurred her wrath; Combs, "The Johannesschüssel. From Narrative to Reliquary to Andachtsbild" 5. This incident is mentioned in the Egyptian *Serapion martyrion* (c. 390): *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 11 (Manchester: 1927) 234–287; 456. The *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine (c. 1260) does not mention the motif; Ryan

legend of Wallon, the head had been placed on a precious dish with a silver cover – which items he sold for a great deal of money.¹² To this day, the cathedral of Genoa claims to possess the ‘original’ relic of this agate dish.¹³

These few examples show that a new type of image emerged in the West during the age of the Crusades: St. John’s severed head on a platter, either embossed or in some other three-dimensional format

W.G., *Jacobus de Voragine. Readings of the Saints*, 2 vols. (Princeton: 1993) 132–140. Later, however, it was picked up in the mystery plays (supra). See also: Thulin O., *Johannes der Täufer im geistlichen Schauspiel des Mittelalters und der Reformationszeit* (s.l.: 1930).

¹² Arndt – Kroos, “Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel” 245.

¹³ Arndt – Kroos, “Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel” 252–253. The gilt silver rim and the decorated holder on the back, with vines as a symbol of the Eucharist, were added later, presumably c. 1300 in a French workshop (Müller Th. – Steingraber E., “Die französische Goldemailplastik um 1400”, *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 3,5 (1952) cat. no. 16). A cross with a medallion was adorned with delicate vines, symbolizing – the Eucharist, sacrifice, and martyrdom (*John* 15:5). An inscription on the rim reads: ‘INTER NATOS MULIERUM NON SURREXIT MAIOR JOHANNIS BAPTISTAE’ (*Matthew* 11:11). Around 1420, a small head of St John in gold enamel was added to the middle of the dish and mounted in an aureole set with rubies. In medieval lapidaries, the agate was associated with the sea. When submerged, it was believed to attract pearls. The *Physiologus* calls it the gem of the precursor, because, when thrown into the sea, it attracts the pearls and points the fishermen to them. In the same way, John pointed to the spiritual pearl: ‘Ecce agnus dei’; *Der Physiologus*, ed. O. Seel (Zurich – Stuttgart: 1960) 42. The red ruby, the gem of gems, was compared to Christ, as the divine light, but of course also to the blood of the Passion. In the context of John the Baptist, the ruby refers to the blood of his martyrdom. In his last will and testament of 1492, Pope Innocent VIII (Giovanni Battista Cibo) asks for the brown agate dish of Salome to be placed in the chapel of St John the Baptist in Genoa cathedral, beside the reliquary with the ashes. The text is quoted in Arndt – Kroos, “Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel” note 100, and published by Banchemo G., *Il duomo di Genova* (Genova: 1855) 208f. See also Grosso O., “Le Arche di S. Giovanni Battista e il Piatto di Salome”, *Dedalo* 5 (1924) 432. The last will specifies *Bellissimo bacile de calcidonio, ossia agata*. This emphasis on chalcedony refers to the martyrdom of the Baptist as mentioned in the *Legenda Aurea* (1260) (after the *Historia tripartita*); Graesse T. (ed.), *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda Aurea* (Dresden-Leipzig: 1846) 356 (see also, for the Latin edition, Maggioni G.P., *Legenda aurea* (Florence: 1998); Ryan, *Jacobus de Voragine* 132–140. On Ascension Day and the Day of the Decollation of St John (29 August), the Genoa dish was put on display on the altar (Grosso, “Le Arche di S. Giovanni Battista e il Piatto di Salome” 433). The pope had, in fact, been given the dish by the French cardinal Balu, who had acquired it from a church ‘from the East’. It is not clear whether this dish is the same agate dish described in a pilgrim’s account in the sixth-century Church of the Holy Sepulchre: *Breviarus de Hierosolyma* (‘Ubi est ille discus ubi caput sancti Johannis portatum fuit’); Kötting B., *Peregrinatio religiosa, Forschungen zur Volkskunde* 33–35 (Regensburg-Münster: 1950) 360. Aristocrats collected precious “Salome dishes”. Jean, Duc de Berry, owned an extremely valuable specimen in gold, agate and gems, including sapphires, emeralds and rubies; Guiffrey J., *Inventaires de Jean, Duc de Berry* (Paris: 1896) part II 80.



Fig. 1. Maker unknown, *Johannesschüssel* in limestone, early 16th century. Cologne, Schnütgen-Museum.

[Fig. 1].¹⁴ The first *Johannesschüsseln* can be found as independent objects, but also as decorative elements on keystones,¹⁵ Johannite seals¹⁶

¹⁴ Arndt – Kroos, “Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel” 271–286.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 286–294. Just as with the seal, the tectonics of the round form played a decisive role in the choice for a crown stone. But there is more. Sicard of Cremona (d. 1215) says ‘Joannes fuit lapis angularis inter Vetus et Novum testamentum’; cf. Gulielmus Durandus (1237?–1296): ‘Fuit enim ioannes quasi lapis angularis, id est vetus et novum testamentum coniungens’. The Church Fathers interpreted John the Baptist literally as the ‘keystone’, as the bridge between old and new, which is why this image became such a popular motif as a crown to vaults – in Christian places of worship.

¹⁶ Arndt – Kroos, “Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel” 260–271, with numerous examples. The Order of St John presumably started building hospitals in Amalfi from the 11th century onward. In the 12th century, they were confirmed as a regular order whose presence in the Holy Land was fully acknowledged, and financed by rich clerical and aristocratic patrons. John the Baptist was not only the patron saint of the Hospitallers; Sinclair K.V. (ed.), *The Hospitallers’ Riwl: Miracula et Regula Hospitalis Sancti Johannis Jerosolimitani*, *Anglo-Norman Text Society* 42 (London: 1984); idem, “The Anglo-Norman Miracles of the Foundation of the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem”, *Medium Aevum* 55 (1986) 102–108. The choice of an image of John the Baptist for the seal of the Hospitallers was self-evident; moreover, the head of St John on a dish made an excellent pictogram.

and amulets.¹⁷ It is a particular object, more an artifact really, that simulates the words of Herodias in *Matthew* 14:8: ‘Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter’ (*in disco*), and additionally forms the *Ersatz* for the mother object behind it: the skull relic.¹⁸ Indeed, the artifact often displays the cut eyebrow and in some cases, the *Johannesschüssel* harbors other relics as well. In short, the *Johannesschüssel* is a tangible object, one that fills the interstice between the textual and the ‘relictual’, transforming the macabre climax of the narrative into a touchable object of devotion. As an object of devotion, it presents the mother of all deaths: the decapitation of the last prophet and the first martyr (*proto-martyr*).

In patristics, John is a *precursor*.¹⁹ John went forth before Christ. He baptized Jesus and recognized him as the Messiah. When John’s followers are enraged to see Jesus baptizing people, John tells them: ‘Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him’ (*John* 3:28). Christ himself says in *Matthew* 11:11: ‘Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist’. The Baptist thus belongs both to the Old Testament and the New. In that sense, he is called not only *precursor*, but also *mediator*. He bridges Old and New.

By reading its typical formal and material features and shapes (its phenomenology) we see that the *Johannesschüssel* belongs to many zones. It can be moveable or attached to an architectural setting. It can be made of different materials – precious metals, but also wood, terracotta and even papier-mâché. The *Johannesschüssel* refers to both high patronage and low. As a consequence, it is able to accommodate many definitions: now it is a head relic, now an *Andachtsbild* for the beholder; sometimes it functions as a superstitious amulet, sometimes

¹⁷ Arndt – Kroos, “Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel” 247.

¹⁸ Kretzenbacher L., “Johannishäupter’ in Innerösterreich. Ein Beitrag zu Verehrung und Brauch um Johannes den Täufer”, in *Carinthia I. Festschrift zur Vollendung des 60. Lebensjahres des Hofrates Universitätsprofessor Dr. Gotbert Moro* 152 (1962) 232–249; esp. 240.

¹⁹ The foundations of the exegetical tradition and its hermeneutics were laid by M. Hartmann in *Der Tod Johannes des Täufers. Eine exegetische und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studie auf dem Hintergrund narrativer, intertextueller und kulturanthropologischer Zugänge*, Stuttgarter Biblische Beiträge 45 (Stuttgart: 2001). Further, see also Ernst J., *Johannes der Täufer. Interpretation. Geschichte. Wirkungsgeschichte* (Berlin: 1989); and Lupieri E., *Giovanni Battista fra Storia e Leggenda* (Brescia: 1988); Pape D.R. – Goodwin K., *Der Vorläufer. Johannres der Täufer, Prophet und Wegbereiter des Herrn* (Stuttgart: 1991).

as a deeply rooted, proto-Christian death totem.²⁰ Analyzing literary, iconographical and ethnographical sources allows us to formulate the anthropological functions of the *Johannesschüssel*.²¹ These functions operate in two main spaces: the performative and the bodily.

Performative space concerns dancing, dramaturgy, processions and rituals, such as those held on the summer solstice: June 24, the *dies natalis*, whence the light will diminish until Christmas [Fig. 2]. Even Augustine touched on this cyclic interpretation in the sermon mentioned earlier.²² The *Johannesschüssel* merges with the equinox, and as such is also associated with the solar disc. Head and sun, dish and solar disc. On the seals of the Knights Hospitaller, the circular face often stands between a moon and a star, so that the head of St. John on its dish assumes the position of the sun [Fig. 3].²³ The *Johannesschüssel* therefore becomes a symbol of the source of light, of the sun.²⁴ Or again, in Augustine's words: 'He understood that he was a lamp, and his fear was that it might be blown out by the wind of pride'. These words imply a 'waning' to foster growth, comparable to the solar cycle and the light of the days themselves. Farming communities once held midsummer altar processions in which the *Johannesschüssel* was carried around to implore the regeneration of the land and the fertility of the womenfolk.²⁵

²⁰ See on the pluriform object: Weddegen T., *Rest, Fetish, Reliquie, Kritische berichte* 3 (Trier: 2008).

²¹ Lambrechts P., *L'exaltation de la tête dans le pensée et dans l'art des celtes* (Brugge: 1954); Merrifield R., *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* (London: 1987); Barb A.A., "Diva Matrix", *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953) 193–238; Gauthier C., *La décollation de Saint Jean-Batiste. Etude ethnologique*, 2 vols. (diss.) 2001; Gauthier C., *Saint Jean et Salomé. Anthropologie du Banquet d'Hérode* (Tours: 2008); Carneiro da Cunha M., "Cannibalisme", *Dictionnaire de l'ethnologie et de l'anthropologie* (Paris: 1991) 124; Klingbeil W., *Kopf-Masken,- und Maskierungszauber in den antiken Hochkulturen, insbesondere des alten Orients* (Berlin: 1935); Penrose R., *Wonder and Horror of the Human Head. An Anthology* (London: 1953); Gastaut H., *Le crâne. Objet de culte, objet d'art* (Marseille: 1972).

²² 'Nam a Natali Ioannis incipiunt dierum detrimenta; a natali Christi autem, renovantur augmenta' [<http://www.augustinus.it/latino/discorsi/index2.htm>].

²³ Arndt – Kroos, "Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel" 261, fig. 19.

²⁴ Marrow J., "John the Baptist, Lantern of the Lord. New Attributes for the Baptist from the Northern Netherlands", *Oud Holland* 73,1 (1968) 3–12.

²⁵ Sartori P., "Johannes der Täufer", *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (1932) vol. IV, cols. 704–765; esp. cols. 704–741; all over the world human sacrifice seems closely linked to the mystery of food production; cf. Merrifield R., *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* (London: 1987) 23. The sun was often represented in the form of a wheel made of straw and then burnt on the eve of 24th June. Such a ritual was still being performed in Herderen-Riemst in Limburg at the beginning of the 20th



Fig. 2. Maker unknown, *Johannesschüssel*, early 13th century. Painted wood. Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum.



Fig. 3. Maker unknown, *Seal with John's head*, 13th century(?), for 'Heinrich'. Copenhagen, private collection.

Bodily space concerns the healing forces of the *Johannesschüssel*. The mother relic in Amiens was believed to be effective against epilepsy, headaches, sore throats, female hemorrhaging, melancholy, depression and, most particularly, against men's erotic restlessness. The papier-mâché platter of St. John now in Museum 'M' Leuven was made for the chapel of St. Peter's Hospital around 1500. According to oral tradition it was worshipped on August 29, the feast day commemorating John's beheading – headaches and sore throats indeed [Fig. 4].²⁶ This particular *Johannesschüssel* also features the cut to the forehead, referring to the prototype of the skull in Amiens. The platter has an inscription that reads 'INTER NATOS MULIERUM NON SURREXIT MAJOR JOANNE BAPTISTE', from *Matthew* 11:11 ('Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist').²⁷ The same inscription is also found on its twin relic in Italy, the 13th-century platter in the cathedral of Genoa.

In short, we are dealing with an extremely haptic object that, due to its multi-sensory functions, radiates a strong performative energy. The very DNA of this artifact comprises four elements: the third dimension, death, the head and the platter. This DNA is deeply rooted in proto-Christian head cults. Along with the *Johannesschüssel*, totemism and the ritual sacrifice of bodily fluids like blood and brains (and even anthropophagy) have survived within Christianity, making these taboos acceptable by subsuming them into the common prototypes of masculinity sacrificed and salvation by blood.²⁸ The secret of the *Johannesschüssel*, the one that guaranteed this continuum between proto-Christianity and Christianity, is the mystery of the threshold. The threshold between death and life, between chaos and order, between

century. It is possible that *Johannesschüsseln* were produced from less durable materials for these St John celebrations. If so, they would have been far less likely to survive; Caspers C., "Het Sint Jansfeest in kerk- en volksgebruik", in *Getuigenis op straat. De Laremse Sint Janstraditie*, ed. L. Janssen and K. Loeff (Laren: 2005) 121–135.

²⁶ Smeyers M., "Sint-Jan-in-disco", *Schatten der Armen. Het artistiek en historisch bezit van het O.C.M.W.-Leuven* (Louvain: 1988) 144–147.

²⁷ This passage was also read as an antiphon in the office of the Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist, 24th June.

²⁸ Bloch M., *Death and the Regeneration of Life* (Cambridge: 1982); Andree R., *Die Anthropophagie. Eine ethnographische Studie* (Leipzig: 1887); Reeves S.P., *Divine Hunger. Cannibalism as a Cultural System* (Cambridge: 1986); Arens W., *The Man-Eating Myth. Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (Oxford: 1980); Nagy A., "Le repas de Thyeste. L'accusation d'anthropophagie contre les chrétiens au 2e siècle", *Hungarian Polis Studies* 7 (2000).



Fig. 4. Maker unknown, *Johannesschüssel*, ca. 1500. Papier-mâché (with epigraph). Leuven, Museum 'M'.

old and new, between increasing and diminishing, between sun and moon: the *Johannesschüssel* stands at this very threshold, incorporating the degree zero, the ending and not-yet-begun, as if a door were ajar. And again: this incorporation is particularly potent in the essence of a dead head presented on a platter. No object or image can be stronger than this *deixis* of decapitation.

This brings me to the second part of my analysis: an archeology of medium and gaze. By researching prototypes of images and their gazes in separate media, we will touch upon different forms of meditative function and the spiritual responses of the beholder.

Towards an archeology of medium and gaze

The *Johanneschüssel* must simulate the cruelty of death and martyrdom in its most direct form, and this direct form is the archaic medium of idols and cultic reliquary imagery. The platter is not only the physical bearer of the head and the referent to the text – *in disco* – it is also fused with the image type as such. This fusion goes deeper than one might think. In Indo-European semantics, the root of “head” and “skull” is the same for dish, pan and recipient.²⁹ Heads and skulls are, archetypically speaking, hollow tools for keeping liquids in a cultic context. Sacrificial rites involving skulls lived on during the Christian era in the form of legends and popular customs.³⁰ Skulls were made into cups, used in the so-called *Schädeltrunk* in the context of martyrs and saints. The drinker hopes that the power of the deceased will be transposed into his own body. In 570 Anthony of Placentia reports that he drank out of the skull of a saint. Even as late as 1466, Gabriel Zetzel from Neuss in the Lower Rhine region writes: ‘Do sahen wir in der kirchen einen kostlichen sarch, dorin leit der lieber heilig sant Quirin und sahen sein hirschalen. Daraus gab man uns zu trinken’.³¹

The skull of St. John had infiltrated Europe by the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century. But in the same period we first encounter testimonies bearing witness to the *sudarium*.³² The

²⁹ Root / lemma: (s)kel-1, in [<http://www.indoeuropean.nl/index2.html>]

³⁰ Aldhouse Green M., *Dying for the Gods. Human Sacrifice in Iron Age and Roman Europe* (Stroud: 2001) 95–110.

³¹ [first name unknown] Bargheer, lemma “Kopf”, in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (1932) vol. V, cols. 202–214; esp. 202.

³² The literature on the *vera icon* is abundant; see especially Kessler H.L., “Configuring the Invisible by Copying the Holy Face”, in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation* (Bologna: 1998) 130–151; Koerner J.L., *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago – London: 1993) 80 and *passim*; Wilson I., *Holy Faces, Secret Places. The Quest for Jesus’ True Likeness*. (Toronto: 1991) 112–113, figs. 10, 14, 21, and 111; Dragon G., “Holy Images and Likeness”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991) 23–33; Dobschütz G. von, *Untersuchungen zu christlichen Legenden* (Leipzig: 1899); Hinrichs G.W. “From Mandylion to Veronica. Picturing the ‘disembodied’ Face and Disseminating the True Image of Christ in the Latin West”, in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation* (Bologna: 1998) 153–179; Kuryluk E., *Veronica and her Cloth. History, Symbolism, and Structure of a ‘True’ Image* (Cambridge: 1991); Wolf G., *Schleier und Spiegel. Traditionen des Christusbildes und die Bildkonzepte der Renaissance* (Munich: 2002) 50–52; Morello G. – Wolf G., *Il volto di Cristo*, exh. cat. (Rome: 2000).

sudarium is one of the most important prototypical images of Christianity, and it is, like the Johannesschüssel “head-relate”. In this part of the article I want to investigate the borders between these two traditions. In fact, a confrontation of the head on a platter with the face of the *sudarium*, the *vera icon*, reveals a number of contrasts and similarities in functions and ways of meditation.

Gervasius of Tilbury (1150, † ca. 1235) mentions an image ‘secundum carnem’ – evidently a bust-length figure painted by Veronica and preserved in San Pietro.³³ Giraldus of Wales says that he saw a veil (‘peplum’) in Rome with the imprint of Christ’s face: ‘vera icona, id est, imago vera’. According to the same author, nobody could see the actual image because a veil (‘velum’) was hung in front of it.³⁴ The earliest images of the Veronica are also preserved in England, in the Matthew Paris chronicle of St. Albans (1200–1259).³⁵ It concerns a frontal face with bust [Fig. 5]. The same manuscript shows two other iconic models: the Virgin and child, and the dead Christ. These three iconic models refer to the incarnation, passion and glorification of Christ. Innocent III (1160–1216) stimulated the Veronica cult in Rome with processions, indulgences and other such elements.³⁶ The prototype of the neckless face, such as the Greek *acheiropoietos* of Abgar, known as the Mandylion, arrived in the West in the form of the Laon icon, as early as 1249 [Fig. 6].³⁷

If the Veronica cult was mainly top-down (central, Roman, papal), the cult of John’s head was more bottom-up (peripheral, scattered throughout Europe). One could say that the complex story of Veronica introduces the archetype of the image as imprint, as *acheiropoietos* and epiphany, as the flat medium, as visible invisibility belonging to the metaphors of textiles and weaving, and therefore to the incarnation: the Word becomes flesh, the Word demonstrates itself as an imprint that veils and unveils at the same time. Meditating before the *vera icon*, is indeed looking at the face that had its prototypes in the invis-

³³ von Dobschütz, *Untersuchungen zu christlichen Legenden* 292.

³⁴ Giraldus Cambrensis, *Speculum Ecclesiae*, IV, 6: *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* 21, 4, 274.

³⁵ Cambridge, *Corpus Christi College*, Ms. 16, fol. 53v; Wolf G., *Schleier und Spiegel* 52.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁷ Grabar A., *La Sainte Face de Laon. Le mandylion dans l’art orthodoxe* (Prague: 1931).



Fig. 5. Matthew Paris, *Vera icon*. Illumination to the Chronicle of Saint Albans, 1200–1259. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Ms. 16, fol. 53v.



Fig. 6. Maker unknown, *Mandylion icon*, ca. 1249. Laon, cathedral.

ibility of God, but also in the life-giving impact of that God through the flesh.

The *Johannesschüssel*, on the other hand, is more like a deliriously plastic object that owes its third dimension to its prototype, the skull, but also has its own symbolic weight. In Christianity the dish is never neutral: on a literal level it refers to the meal; on a liturgical level, to blood sacrifice, and hence, on a sacramental level, to the Eucharist. *Platter-dish-paten*. One could say that the *Johannesschüssel* reintroduced the proto-Christian archetype of the idol as skull/head, as *apotropaion* and magical totem in the community, belonging to the metaphors of

stone and bone, and therefore to the world of totems and relic cults, the *Ersatz* or body part that presents itself in such a direct and unmediated way that it is virtually impossible to look at. Here we touch the very threshold between the unbearable visibility of iconoclasm and the bearable, veiled gaze of iconophilia. The *Johannesschüssel* incorporates this threshold. As decapitated last prophet and proto-martyr, it is positioned at the degree zero between the unbearable image of the Old Covenant and the bearable veil of the New. Meditating before the *Johannesschüssel*, the last prophet and the first martyr, is indeed looking at the head that has its prototypes in the visibility of the relic cult, but also in the raw impact of the artifact as totem.

On the one hand we have the “relictual” idol (the *Johannesschüssel*) and on the other the “relictual” icon (the ‘vera icon’). With regard to these image mutations of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Hans Belting speaks of ‘kultischer Wandel’ as ‘Strukturwandel’: a complex adaptation and modification of visual functions already known in the East and in Byzantine art.³⁸ Recipient versus imprint, head versus face, death versus gaze, three dimensions versus two, bleeding neck versus bleeding side wound, cut above eyebrow versus cut above the heart. These medium-specific features of the *Johannesschüssel* and the *vera icon* tend to favor the lower bodily and performative spaces and the higher mental spaces, respectively. However, this does not mean that the *Johannesschüssel* was originally averse to iconization, nor the *vera icon* to objectification – nor does it mean that the former never leads to mental spirituality and the latter is never used in performative action. In short, the medium-specific features of the *vera icon* and the *Johannesschüssel* have their own impact on meditative definitions and actions (the invisibility of God and the visibility of a martyr’s relic/totem), but both are image and object with inherent cross-overs and mutual fertilizations.

In exegetical and para-liturgical contexts, John and Christ are thought of as together. In the East, Theodore the Studite (Stoudios) (759–826) developed a cosmic parallel between John’s birth, death and discovery, and the life of Christ, to commemorate the discovery of John’s head on August 29: ‘The feast of his birth resembles in a sense the birth of the son, which has shown wondrously to the world the ascent, from the maternal loins, of the star of spiritual morning. The festival of his decapitation represents its setting. It expresses in effect

³⁸ Belting H., *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter* (Berlin: 1981) 35.

that the torch, the lamp, the precursor of Christ the sun of justice has descended into earth as if it wished to proclaim also to the inhabitants of Hades the salvific coming of Christ. As to the current feast [the discovery of the head], it expressed so to say his admirable resurrection. He has risen in effect anew and he has assumed a new life through the discovery and manifestation of his holy head.³⁹

In her article “The Face Relics of John the Baptist in Byzantium and the West”, published in *Gesta* in 2007, Annemarie Weyl Carr analyses a fascinating 12th-century icon from Mount Sinai, that is contemporary with the period in which the head of John the Baptist became an important cultic object and motif in art [Fig. 7]. Here, John is accompanied by his own severed head. More than a mere attribute, this head is a protagonist on its own, an icon within an icon with a speaking face. The inscriptions on the icon all refer to sight. The first inscription repeats John’s own invocation: ‘See that the axe lies at the root of the tree’ (*Matthew* 3:10; *Luke* 3:9). On the reverse, he addresses himself to Christ:

You see what these do, O Word of God; those who do not bear the refutations of their darkness. For, behold, they cover this head of mine in the earth, having cut it off with a sword. But since you have returned it from its hidden place, into the light by means that you know, so I beg you preserve those in life, who reverence my venerable icon.

The text exhorts the beholder to look, and to pray for the head that is excavated, brought into the light as a relic, but also exalted into a facial icon. The light-darkness metaphor is also prominent in baptismal spirituality. In fact the head lies in a font-like receptacle. The third message above the head icon says: ‘Behold the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world’ (*John* 1:19). This is the moment at which John recognizes Jesus as Christ in His sacrificial role. The light shed on Christ by John is the light of sight and insight. Here we reach the heart of the deictic function of the *prodomos*. The epigraphs and icons point to the cycle of light and shadow, centered on sacrifice, baptism and patrilineal Salvation.

A lobed Eucharist paten with John’s head is represented on the icon of Mount Athos from 1363 [Fig. 8]. The text on the reverse of the icon, taken from *Matthew* 11:10, reads: ‘Behold, I send my messenger [*angelos*] before thy face’. John is accompanied by the Theotokos.

³⁹ Weyl C.A., “The Face Relics of John the Baptist in Byzantium and the West”, *Gesta* (2007) 161–162.



Fig. 7. Maker unknown, Icon with St. John for the feast of February 24, 12th century. Mount Sinai, St. Catherine.

All point to the upraised face of the head. The upraised position of the head/face is typical of the *Johannesschüssel's* sacrificial meaning. Moreover, the example of the two icons may point to a nuance in the supposed polarity between them: in the East, John's head was also moving towards an iconized face. However, this face would never conquer the face of the Mandylion, neither in liturgy nor in sacred space. John's face would never enjoy or join the Mandylion's place



Fig. 8. Maker unknown, *St. John with Hodegetria*, 1363. Mount Athos, St Catherine cloister.

in the apse.⁴⁰ John would remain *prodomos* in the ‘antichamber’ of Christ’s face.

If we compare the bond between the two heads in Western exegetical and para-liturgical contexts, we might refer to Sicard of Cremona (+1215)⁴¹ and to Gulielmus Durandus (1237?–1296) who both say that John is the anglestone (keystone) that connects Old and New Testament.⁴² The *prodomos* is the keystone between old and new, and therefore often to be found together with the *vera icon* on the ceilings of Western churches [Fig. 9]. Here the two male faces are indeed joined in space. Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (ca. 1275–1334) writes that both died, but Christ was exalted at the cross, and John was diminished in the platter.⁴³ Ludolph of Saxony also draws the Augustinian comparison: John is diminished by decapitation; Christ grew on the cross.⁴⁴ The redemptive sacrifice of Christ was connected with the beheading of John the Baptist, so that the meaning of the latter was elevated to a sacrifice too. Both of them: *in utroque*. The Baptist was allowed to grow openly towards the suffering and death of Christ.

The York breviary equates the head of John the Baptist with Christ as the “figure” of the Eucharistic body of Christ.⁴⁵ The analogy extends from head to body, from dish to altar. According to A.A. Barb, the association originated in Celtic tradition, where the concepts of the skull and the blood still flourished in the myth of the Holy Grail:⁴⁶ “Their veneration as a symbol – a pre-figuration, as it were, of the Eucharistic sacrifice – was acknowledged by the Roman Church; thus the bleeding

⁴⁰ Weyl, “The Face Relics of John the Baptist in Byzantium and the West” 173.

⁴¹ Arndt – Kroos, “Zur Ikonographie des Johanneschüssel” 286–294: ‘Joannes fuit lapis angularis inter Vetus et Novum testamentum’.

⁴² See also note 16; Arndt – Kroos, “Zur Ikonographie des Johanneschüssel” 286–294: ‘Fuit enim ioannes quasi lapis angularis, id est vetus et novum testamentum coniungens’.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 301: ‘Vel de morte utriusque, Nam corpus christi exaltatum est in cruce: corpus Joannis capite minoratum’.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 301: ‘Iste minutus est in capite, ille crevit in cruce’.

⁴⁵ ‘Caput Johannis in disco: signat corpus Christi, quo patimur in sancto altari, et quod ecclesie gentium tribuitur in salutem ac remedium animarum’; Barb A.A., “Mensa Sacra. The Round Table and the Holy Grail”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 19 (1956) 40–67, esp. 46f., develops the convergence of the Eucharist and decapitation in the British Isles on the basis of two cultural backgrounds: the Grail and the *mensa* mythology, and the Celtic customs of preserving skulls and integrating them in social life as protective totems.

⁴⁶ Burdach K., *Der Gral. Forschungen über seinen Ursprung und seinen Zusammenhang mit der Longinuslegende*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geistesgeschichte 14 (Stuttgart: 1938).



Fig. 9. Maker unknown, *Vault with Johannesschüssel*, 1346. Münster, Liebfrauenkirche.

head on the dish was taken from the unholy hands of Herodias's daughter Salome'.⁴⁷ This taking of the head and dish from the unworthy hands of Salome in the veracity of the Eucharist is the rehabilitation of the necessary and redemptive sacrifice. The English are indeed known to have entertained a great production of St. John's platters in alabaster (for the most part in the form of actual tablets) [Fig. 10]. This production was not only for local use, but also for export.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Barb, "Mensa Sacra" 46.

⁴⁸ Hildburgh W.L., "Iconographical Peculiarities in English Medieval Alabaster Carvings (Continued)", *Folklore* 44, (1933) 123–150; Markl D., "Tres paines de alabastro de Nottingham do museu de arte antiga a iconografia das St. John's heads", *Panorama* 4, 46–47 (1973) 51–55; Boldrick S., *Wonder. Painted Sculpture from Medieval England*, exh. cat. (Leeds: 2002).



Fig. 10. Maker unknown, John's head on alabaster tablet, 15th century. Cambridgeshire, Fitzwilliam Museum.

In the Western tradition, contamination has become consanguinity in the Eucharistic sense.⁴⁹ A source from the convent of Katharinenthal, dating from ca. 1590, reports on the procession held in the convent to

⁴⁹ To such an extent that the legendary eyebrow wound was seen as the counterpart to Christ's wound in the side. In fact, the position is similar. The right side of the face/body is the positive side. In the Easter hymns, the wound is praised as 'vidi aquam egredientem de templo a latere dextro, alleluia, et omnes ad quos pervenit aqua ista salvi facti sunt et dicent: alleluia alleluia', paraphrasing the vision in *Ezekiel* 47:1-12. The river of the temple is on the right. In *John* 2:19, Christ himself to the temple. Consequently, in the vision, the side wound is located 'a latere dextro'; Gurewich V., "Observations on the Iconography of the Wound in Christ's Side, with Special Reference to its Position", *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20 (1957) 358-362; Barb A.A., "The Wound in Christ's Side", *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971) 320-321; Aus R., *Water into Wine and the Beheading of John the Baptist* (Atlanta: 1988) 62-65.

celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi, in which the priest carrying the monstrance was followed by ‘creutz, kertzen und fanen, darnach der Sarch und die singenden Frowen, daruff S. Johanshoupt’.⁵⁰ The platter with the head of St. John belonging to this convent vacillates between chalice and paten [Fig. 11]. A 13th-century that describes how the keystone of a vault in Halberstadt decorated with John’s head drips blood into the priest’s chalice every August 29, is symptomatic of a growing osmosis between the blood cults of John and Christ.⁵¹ According to G. Snoek, a cross-pollination between forms of presentation takes place in the late Middle Ages in the veneration of the Host and aspects of the relic cult.⁵² This mutual influence is both formal, with reliquaries coming to resemble monstrances and vice versa, and cultic, with the relic, *corpus pars pro toto*, being swept along, in the veneration of the Host, into the reality of the *corpus Christi*. In the concrete case of the *Johanneschüssel*, this is revealed both by the allusions on the paten and the involvement of the object in processions on the Feast of Corpus Christi. In Snoek’s view, the force of attraction between the two forms of presentation (host and relic) is particularly strong in the case of the *Johanneschüssel* because of the factors ‘blood’ and ‘consanguinity’. The blood of St John was also considered hypostatic, and in spiritual terms, it was placed on a par with the blood sacrificed by Christ for humanity. After all, were not both men genetically related by blood, as second cousins?

⁵⁰ Lanz H., “Johanneschüssel aus St. Katharinenthal”, *Krone und Schleier. Kunst aus mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern*, exh. cat. (Bonn-Essen: 2005) 418–419; Caspers C., *De eucharistische vroomheid en het feest van Sacramentsdag in de Nederlanden tijdens de late Middeleeuwen* (Louvain: 1992) *passim*.

⁵¹ The fourteenth-century legend tells of the ‘bleeding stone of St John’ in the church of St John at Halberstadt. The mason was in the process of setting the keystone. The priest consecrated the stone with three hammer-strokes and asked the mason to provide for a hollow to hold the relic of St John. Once the relic was inserted and the keystone set, the head appeared to come alive to the faithful. On the feast of St John the Baptist, 24 June, the canons noticed that the keystone had shed three drops of blood. The drops were carefully collected from the floor in a chalice and shown to the faithful. Sick people who touched the blood were healed in body and soul. Whenever the store of blood in the chalice was depleted by the many fingers that had touched it, the gold chalice was placed underneath the keystone once again, and each time, three fresh drops of blood fell down for the benefit of the faithful. Kretzenbacher, “Johannishäupter” 240.

⁵² Snoek G.J.C., *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: a Process of Mutual Interaction* (Leiden: 1995).



Fig. 11. Maker unknown, *Johanneschüssel* for procession, ca. 1500. Silver and gold. Cloister St. Katharinenthal.

On hybridism

In this last section I want to investigate how the exegetical and paraliturgical intertwining of John and Christ is translated visually. Does the iconographical corpus of the *Johannesschüssel* and the *vera icon* react in a specific way to this intertwining, and if so, what kind of visual solutions did artists offer for these contaminations? And how did these solutions influence the ways of meditation? I will present three case studies of visual hybridism in northern Europe and Italy.

During the fifteenth century, when the cult of the *Johannesschüssel* reaches its apogee, the subject begins to appear in pictorial form. The head of John the Baptist is painted on a round panel, which suggests the bearer-dish [Fig. 12]. The earliest traces of the production of these tondi, which inspired around a dozen copies, lead us to the studio of Dirk and Albrecht Bouts in Leuven.⁵³ In the pictorial medium, the head of St. John loses its tactile directness but gains in macabre illusion. Idol becomes icon, and in the absence of a spatial setting, the tondo is a direct answer to the sculptural, object-oriented definition of the *Johannesschüssel*. Unlike the earlier Byzantine iconizations, these late-medieval tondi show a frontal visage or face in three-quarter profile like a macabre portrait. The dish is replaced by the wooden bearer itself. Illusionism and *paragone* seem to come to the fore.⁵⁴ From the fifteenth century onwards, at least in Flanders, the true face of Christ is also depicted on a round panel, as if it were not borne by a cloth, but floating in the air [Fig. 13].⁵⁵ Note too that both men begin to grow the same doublepointed beard, a physical feature derived from the Lentulus letter. Publius Lentulus is a fictitious person, said to have been Governor of Judea before Pontius, and to have written a letter to the Roman Senate, concerning Jesus.⁵⁶ This apocryphal text had an

⁵³ Smeyers M. and K. (eds.), *Dirk Bouts (ca 1410–1475). Een Vlaams primitief te Leuven* (Louvain: 1998) 568–569.

⁵⁴ On these mergers, see Koerner J.L., *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago – London: 1993) *passim*.

⁵⁵ There are earlier examples of Christus in the *clipeus*, in the Byzantine type of the *Theotokos clipeata* (the Virgin Mary carrying the face of Christ on a round shield). In the thirteenth-century mural in Sint-Truiden, it is Mary Magdalene who carries the *clypeus*. Cf. Vandenbroeck P., *Hooglied. De beeldvorming van Religieuze Vrouwen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, vanaf de 13de eeuw*, exh. cat. (Brussels: 1994) 265–270.

⁵⁶ von Dobschütz, *Untersuchungen zu christlichen Legenden, passim*.



Fig. 12. Painter unknown (after Dirk Bouts), *Johannesschüssel*, late 15th Century. Warsaw, Muzeum Narodowe.



Fig. 13. Albrecht Bouts, *Face of Christ*, ca. 1500. Oil on panel, 29 × 29 cm. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.



Fig. 14. Erhard Altdorfer, *Veneration of a Johannesschüssel*. Detail of the Gutenstetten Altarpiece, 1511. Gutenstetten, parish church.

enormous impact on the visualizations of Christ. 'His beard is abundant, of the color of his hair, not long, but divided at the chin'.

Both portraits are indeed indebted to one another. Both faces tend toward a 'true visage', an incarnated image. We presume they were used as *retabula* or exposed in public, as can be deduced from the following detail from the 1511 Gutenstetten altarpiece [Fig. 14]. Erhard Altdorfer shows a small congregation praying before an altar.⁵⁷ On

⁵⁷ Barb, "Mensa Sacra" 40–67; 61; figs. 10d–10e; Combs, "The Johannesschüssel. From Narrative to Reliquary to Andachtsbild" 6, fig. 3; Benesch O., "Erhard Altdorfer als Maler", *Jahrbuch der preußischen Kunstsammlungen* 57 (1936) 157–168; Wiegand E., "Der Meister des gutenstettener Altares", *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 5 (1938) 125–141; figs. 9–10.

the altar is a dish with the head of St John. This source demonstrates the para-liturgical function of the late-medieval *Johannesschüsseln*. But there is more. The artist has painted the head as a head of flesh and blood, and not as the artifact it must obviously have been. In the severed head, the artist has pushed his imitation of reality to a hyper-realistic extreme, so that it calls forth the actual presentation upon which the represented object is based, an event enacted mentally in the religious interaction between spectator and object.⁵⁸ Because “the head of St. John the Baptist was venerated as a prefiguration of the body of Christ, and even as the body of Christ, the precursor of Christ therefore preceded Him in sacrifice.

The growing reciprocity between the blood cults of John and Christ is mirrored in the concurrency of media. The *vera icon* has always belonged to the world of woven fluidity; the *Johannesschüssel* to the fixed world of stone. But John’s head could not enter entirely into Christ’s world without removing its cloak of three-dimensionality. This ultimate step – the exchange of medium – was the necessary sacrifice for a complete *in utroque*. The *Johannesschüssel* would now become the re-presenting (and not presenting) image. This is the second important *Strukturwandel* of the fifteenth century. The ‘versus’ makes way for the ‘and’: recipient and imprint, head and face, death and gaze, three dimensions and two. By the end of the medieval and early modern periods, the two men are fused into a single prototype, doubly emphasizing the importance of masculinity sacrificed and salvation by blood in Christian salvation history.

A tondo by Giovanni Bellini in the Musei Civici of Pesaro (1464–1468, formerly in the sacristy of S. Giovanni in Pesaro) forms the link in this late-medieval phenomenon between northern and southern visual traditions [Fig. 15].⁵⁹ Its morphology refers to the northern tondi. However, the masculine type is different. This Baptist is more

⁵⁸ Krüger K., “Gesichter ohne Leib. Dispositive der gewesenen Präsenz”, in Suthor N. – Fischer-Lichte E. (eds.), *Verklärte Körper. ästhetiken der Transfiguration* (Munich: 2002) 183–222.

⁵⁹ Combs, “The Johannesschüssel. From Narrative to Reliquary to Andachtsbild” 10. The tondo was formerly attributed to Mantegna; Paccagnini G., *Andrea Mantegna*, exh. cat. (Mantua: 1961) 90–91. It has recently been connected with Marco Zoppo; see also Bellini (Classici dell’arte) 2004 (*passim*). Bellini may have known the medieval relief of the head of St John on the baptistery of the San Marco in Venice, but the tondo does not derive from the relief. San Marco also possessed a skull relic of John the Baptist, though it attracted fewer pilgrims than the Amiens relic.



Fig. 15. Giovanni Bellini, *Testa di San Giovanni*, 1464–1468. Tempera on wood, diameter 28 cm. Pesaro, San Giovanni, sacristy.

“porträtfähig” than his wild-bearded counterparts of northern Europe. Furthermore, there is no longer any suggestion that the head lies on a dish. Instead, it appears to be suspended in a vacuum. The head is painted with a ‘spectacular’ *raccourci*, transforming the neck wound into a morbid cynosure.⁶⁰ Bellini’s work shows the extent to which this subject becomes a focus of the quintessence of painterly possibilities, and how this isolated head thereby becomes the *Andachtsbild* of pictorial illusionism, the ultimate paragon of decollation. In the sobering features of the agonies of death and the emphasis on the neck, the tondo links up with the Medusa genre.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Idolfi C., *Le Maraviglie dell’Arte* (Venice: 1648) 40–41, tells the anecdote of a sultan who saw this work of art and complained to the artist about the incorrect anatomy of the severed neck. To press home his point, he ordered the beheading of a slave and showed the result to the artist.

⁶¹ Karakostas D., *La figure mythique de Méduse dans la littérature européenne*, (diss.) 2002; Huot S., “The Medusa Interpolation in the Romance of the Rose. Mythographic program in Ovidian Intertext”, *Speculum* 62 (1987) 865–877; Stafford B.M.,

In the ancient world the dead visage of the Medusa was dispersed on countless shields and amulets. The copies propagate her power against the enemy. Her image is reconfigured as an *apotropaion*. The activity of absorbing evil, the capacity to protect, is related to the throat. The throat embodies the activity of devouring (*verschlingen*, *Kehle*, *Hals*). The word *Gorgo* is in fact related to this, with derivatives in *gurgel*, *gurguli*, *gorges*, *gorge*.⁶² Even today the inhabitants of Venice still call the Chiesa di San Giovanni Battista *San Gorgo*. This is not the place to go into the more psychoanalytical aspects of the problem, in which decapitation is an image of castration and the throat is an image of the uterus (and therefore of *hysteria*).⁶³ Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the neck is actually a feminine *topos* of vulnerability, not being a part of the body of the heroine, but of the victim.⁶⁴

Julia Kristeva calls the Medusa myth the archetype of the assumption of form and matter, as incarnation indeed.⁶⁵ In fact, the early Renaissance reinvents the *Johannesschüssel* on the back of the Medusa archetype,⁶⁶ making it the essence of painting and art in general: the very birth of the image as powerful gaze. Or as Chr. Kruse has pointed out, 'Der Kopf der Gorgo ist immer zweidimensional und frontal, eine Oberfläche ohne profil und Volumen, er ist, wie die Verstorbenen in der Unterwelt, ein Schatten (eidolon), nicht tastbar und ohne Substanz'.⁶⁷ In that sense, the *Johannesschüssel* tondo touches on the matter of 'mediality' at the edge separating the medieval and early modern periods in the most fundamental way.

"Medusa or the Physiognomy of the Earth. Humbert de Superville's Cosmological Aesthetics", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972) 308–338; Wilk S.R., *Medusa. Solving the Mystery of the Gorgon* (Oxford: 2000).

⁶² Root / lemma: g^{er}-1, g^{er} in [<http://www.indoeuropean.nl/index2.html>]

⁶³ See: Kristeva J., *Visions capitales* (Paris: 1998); Schneider L., "Donatello and Caravaggio. The Iconography of Decapitation", *American Imago* 33 (1976); Veith L., *Hysteria. The History of a disease* 2 (Chicago: 1965).

⁶⁴ Boyarin D., *Dying for God. Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: 1999) 76, note 36: "Strictly speaking it is death by piercing or slashing the throat that is marked as 'feminine'".

⁶⁵ Kristeva, "Visions capitales" 40.

⁶⁶ The scope of this article does not allow me to go into the mythographic affinity between the *Johannesschüssel* and the Medusian *apotropaia* here. This intercultural and ethnographic-anthropological angle was developed in my article "The Head on a Plate. John the Baptist and the Image of the Precursor and the Mediator", in *the Annual of the Antwerp Royal Museum* (2006: 9–41); Marin L., *Détruire la peinture* (Paris: 1977) 139–199.

⁶⁷ Kruse Chr., *Wozu Menschen malen. Historische Begründungen eines Bildmediums* (Munich: 2003) 397.



Fig. 16. Michele Bono, *Vera icon*, 1440. Tempera and pastiglia on wood, 48 × 33.5 cm. Pavia, Musei Civici.

My second case testifies to another kind of hybridism. The lower inscription on Michele Bono's *vera icon* of 1440 (Pavia, Musei Civici) [Fig. 16] referring to Crivelli is false;⁶⁸ however, the *cartello* above is

⁶⁸ Wolf, *Schleier und Spiegel* 149–156; Wolf G., “Vera icon”, in Krischel R. – Morello G. – Nagel T., *Ansichten Christi. Christusbilder von der Antike bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, exh. cat. (Cologne: 2005) 130; cat. no 37.

authentic: 'Sum deus atque caro. Matris et patris origo. Non piger ad lapsus, sed flenti proximus adsum'. Paraphrased this means: I am the God of flesh. I came from a father and a mother. I am not indifferent to those who have fallen, but I stay close to those who weep. Scholars have discovered that this phrase refers to the inscription in the absis of Santa Maria Assunta of Torcello.⁶⁹ Michele Bono was a famous mosaic worker in the Veneto and involved with the restoration of Torcello's iconographic program in the early 15th century. The epigraphy not only connects the patron or the artist with Torcello, but also connects the iconography with the twelfth-century Hodegetria cult.

A striped *sudarium* is fixed with real nails against a black background. Christ's face is seen in three-quarter profile. The position of the head seems to refer to the sacred *historia* in which Christ falls and the weeping Veronica presses her *sudarium* to His face. The word *lapsus* refers to His fall as well as to the fall of mankind. The painting reinvents the *vera icon* in the narrative snapshot of the encounter between Christ and Veronica. Veronica is evoked outside the frame, the true addressee to whom the true countenance and its *cartello* speak: 'I remain close to those who weep'. Veronica is pinned down from our perspective. The persona Veronica is the *proxima* of our own *imitatio Christi* and thus our very personal guide in meditation.

But this *Andachtsbild* also reinvents a second visual tradition. The head turned to the left in three-quarter profile seems to be cut out of the *imago pietatis* format, which became increasingly popular in northern and central Italy from the first half of the fifteenth century onwards. The idea that Christ's head has been detached – 'severed' – from a visual prototype is suggested by the neck, which is sunken into the textile. The hybridism of an isolated *imago pietatis* presented as a true countenance evokes a kind of 'pictorial decapitation'. The gold halo that has materialized reinforces this association, as if the head has two separate bearers. The first bearer, the *velum* of textile, brings the image into the realm of the imprint, the *acheiropoietos* and the word made flesh. The halo-dish brings the image into the realm of suffering, consummated by *crudelitas*, and the bleeding flesh sacrificed. The latter layer seems to open yet a third pictorial layer for the *Johannesschüssel*. The position of the head echoes small objects that Bono might have known, such as seals, jewels and miniature paintings. Moreover, the half-open eyes and slightly open mouth tend more toward John's typology than Christ's. In other words, John seems to

⁶⁹ Wolf, *Schleier und Spiegel* 154–155.

be pulsating behind this image as a *pictorial* precursor. Again, the semantics of *in utroque* have melted right into the medium of painting itself, this time generating a kind of *meditative palimpsest* of one man covering the other. This palimpsest leads us to the recognition of two Saviors that gradually flowed together into one image of devotion and meditation. To meditate over this hybrid scheme is to uncover, in the mind's eye, behind the first face, the face of its forerunner.

My third and last case is *The Head of St. John the Baptist on a Tazza* by Andrea Solario, painted in 1504 for Cardinal Georges d'Amboise (1460–1510) at his residence in Rouen [Fig. 17].⁷⁰ It is known that Cardinal d'Amboise suffered from severe colic and fever attacks at the time and likely commissioned this traditional image for its healing power.⁷¹ But strictly speaking, this painting is not a *Johannesschüssel*. There is ambivalence at play here: pictorial *paragone* and *ekphrasis* involving Greek models.⁷² We know of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Cretan icons with the upright profile of St. John that were shipped to Italy for the rite of the *inventio caput[capitis] Iohannis*, celebrated, as we have seen, on February 24 in the Greek Orthodox Church.⁷³ The Johannite order and their material culture of amulets and relics played an intermediary role between East and West. The seal that was made to commemorate the dedication of the church of the Knights Hospi-

⁷⁰ Brown D.A., *Andrea Solario* (Milan: 1987) 161–173, nrs. 38–41; idem, *Andrea Solario. Milano circa 1465–1524*, in *I Leonardeschi* (= The Legacy of Leonardo) (Milan: 1998) 231–250; Béguin S., *Andrea Solario en France, Les dossiers du Département des Peintures* 31, exh. cat. (Paris: 1985) 96; idem, “Andrea Solario en France”, in *Léonard de Vinci entre France et Italie, “miroir profond et sombre”* (Caen: 1999) 81–98. Few is known about the *pedigree* of the painting. In 1841, it appears in the collection of Comte Portale in a deed of sale (26th of March) to Eugène Lecomte. Lecomte donates it in 1868 to the Musée Napoléon III, after this it was sold to the Musée du Louvre; Béguin, *Andrea Solario en France* 88, note 29. The elder studies about Andrea Solario are: de Schlegel L., *Andrea Solario* (Milan: 1913); idem, “Andrea Solario”, *Rassegna d'Arte* 13, 6 (1913) 89–99; Badt K., *Andrea Solario. Sein Leben und seine Werke. Ein Beitrag zur Kunstgeschichte der Lombardei* (Leipzig: 1914); Cogliati Arano L., *Andrea Solario* (Milan: 1966); idem, “Andrea Solario”, *Kalòs* 3 (1971) 73–80.

⁷¹ Brown, *Andrea Solario* 162. The cardinal made his last will and testament on 31 October 1509, weakened by a trip to Italy in April of that year, during which he had already had to be carried on a litter. In one year's time, wrote the French ambassador in Florence to the Signoria of the city, the cardinal had aged twenty years; Bridge J.S.C., *A History of France* (Oxford: 1929) vol. IV 64.

⁷² Farago C., “Exiting Art History: Locating ‘Art’ in the Modern History of the Subject”, *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 70,1–2 (2001) 3–19.

⁷³ Schwartz E., “The angel of Wilderness. Russian Icons and the Byzantine Legacy”, *Byzantinoslavica* 58 (1997) 169–174, 171; Sdrakas E.D., *Johannes der Täufer in der Kunst des christlichen Ostens* (Munich: 1943).



Fig. 17. Andrea Solario, *Head of St. John on a tazza*, 1507. Paris, Louvre.

tallers in Vienna in 1269 shows a frontal head of John the Baptist on a dish with a chalice-type foot.⁷⁴ Moreover, the Amboise family had several important diplomatic interests in this order. Emery d'Amboise, Georges' cousin and Grand Master of the Hospitallers from 1505 to 1512, had received a fragment of the Amiens skull relic in 1501 and

⁷⁴ Arndt – Kroos, “Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel” 262, fig. 20; Stephan W., “Mittelalterliche Siegel als Kunstwerke”, *Nordelbingen* 20 (1952) 37.

commissioned a copy of the Amiens reliquary.⁷⁵ According to some scholars, Georges d'Amboise (or was it Solario himself?) was in fact portrayed in the clever optical trick at the foot of the tazza.⁷⁶

The authentic ebony frame of Solario's painting still bears its original epigraph:⁷⁷ 'ALVO. VERGINIS LATENTEM CHRISTUM EX V(T)ERO AGNOVI EDITUM INDICAVI LAVI ET LOTUS FUTURAE SALUTIS ANGELUS CRUORE FIDEI TESTIMONIUM SANXI'.⁷⁸ This inscription diverges from conventional inscriptions on *Johannesschüsseln*, such as the well honored 'INTER NATOS MULIERES' from *Matthew* 11:11.⁷⁹ A unique intertextual epigraph was composed from at least eleven different biblical passages.⁸⁰ One of these refers to the moment of the Visitation (*Luke* 1:41–44), when John leaps in Elizabeth's womb.⁸¹ Others refer to baptism and to the fact that John was a precursor of Christ. The unusual *epitheton* of the 'angel' is derived from *Matthew* 11:10, 'the messenger', a phrase that indeed refers to the Byzantine icons discussed above. The deictic role ('indicavi') and the cyclical play of light and shadow, discovery and concealment, is also prominent in Byzantine visual culture.

⁷⁵ G. Caoursin's *Obsidionis Rhodiae urbis descriptio* printed by Johann Reger in Ulm in 1496 mentions that the Turks were forced, on the occasion of this victory, to bring the arm relic of St John from Constantinople to Rhodes. The arm demanded a head relic, as it were; Arndt. – Kroos, "Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel" 256.

⁷⁶ It was noticed by E. Galichon in 1865, afterwards forgotten with the exception of K. Badt in 1914, and rediscovered on the occasion of the Louvre exhibition in 1987 by S. Béguin, using modern technology: on the base of the dish, there is a double reflection of a male face. According to the laws of optics, we see the face twice, inverted. Since this rediscovery, Béguin and Brown have engaged in a polemic as to the identity of the man. Brown, together with Galichon, claims it is a portrait of Georges d'Amboise. Béguin, on the other hand, following Badt, identifies him as the artist, Andrea Solario; Galichon E., "La Galerie Pourtalès, III. Tableaux italiens", *Gazette des beaux-arts* 18 (1865) 5–19; Badt, *Andrea Solario* 41; Béguin, *Andrea Solario en France* 33; Brown, *Andrea Solario* 162.

⁷⁷ This type of frame is found in the North and in France, but not in Italy, which indicates that the painting was not framed in Milan, but by order of the presumed client; Béguin, *Andrea Solario en France* 88.

⁷⁸ 'In my mother's belly, I recognized Christ hidden in his mother's womb. When he appeared, I indicated him, washed him, and myself, as an angel of salvation, confirmed the testimony of the faith with blood'; Jan Papy kindly assisted with the translation.

⁷⁹ See Arndt – Kroos, "Zur Ikonographie des Johannesschüssel" 299–301, for an overview of *Johannesschüsseln* and their inscriptions.

⁸⁰ *Luke* 1:41–44; *Jer.* 1:5; *John* 1:26–34; *Isa.* 42:1; *Mark* 1:9–11; *Matthew* 3:13–17; *Luke* 3:21–22; *Matthew* 14:3–12; *Matthew* 11:10; *Mark* 1:2.

⁸¹ Whereupon Elisabeth cries out to her cousin Mary: 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb' (1: 42). These events refer to the topos 'ex utero', in which sancity was present from in the womb.

In addition to these indications of a Byzantine *ekphrasis*, there is also a remarkable tension in this painting between the ‘dead’ subject and the ‘speaking’ inscription – or better yet, between the passivity of the image and the activity of the canvas. The dialogue between word and image allows the onlooker to experience the “interior monologue” of the martyr. It brings to mind that other major typology developed by Augustine in his 288th sermon, namely that between *vox* and *verbum*. Augustine juxtaposes John’s words ‘I am the voice crying in the desert in *John* 1:22–23⁸² with the fourth evangelist’s prologue (*John* 1:1–3).⁸³ Augustine argues that since it is hard to distinguish word from voice, even John himself was thought to be the Christ. He explains that the voice was thought to be the Word. But the voice acknowledged what it was, anxious not to give offence to the Word. Augustine says: ‘I am not the Christ, he said, nor Elijah, nor the prophet. And the question came: Who are you, then? He replied: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord. The voice of one crying in the wilderness is the voice of one breaking the silence. Prepare the way for the Lord, he says, as though he were saying: “I speak out in order to lead him into your hearts, but he does not choose to come where I lead him unless you prepare the way for him”’.⁸⁴ Is this not the very *iconicité* (‘iconicity’) of Solario’s painting?

‘In my mother’s belly’: it is the beginning of the text, but also the beginning of all beginnings – ‘ex utero’. According to Bernard of Clairvaux, John is immaculately touched by Mary’s words during the Visitation through Elizabeth’s ear.⁸⁵ Bernard calls John *vas*, which is normally a female *epitheton* for the womb. Having sprung from the dark, having become visible, having indicated, having spoken – being voice and voice only – and having returned to the origin again. The

⁸² ‘Ego sum vox clamantis in deserto’.

⁸³ ‘In principio, inquit, erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum: hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil’. [<http://www.augustinus.it/latino/discorsi/index2.htm>].

⁸⁴ [<http://www.augustinus.it/latino/discorsi/index2.htm>].

⁸⁵ ‘Ex utero’ also gave rise to the belief that John too had been the fruit of an immaculate conception. On account of the libidinous contact between Elisabeth and Zacharias, the conception was believed to have escaped from original sin (Beda Venerabilis, d. 735). This belief is a popular corruption of the immaculate conception of Mary by Anne and Joachim in their old age, another instance of an elderly couple who were considered infertile whose libidinous intercourse was free of original sin. On this subject, see Hüe D., “Le Baptiste et Marie: images et résonances”, *Jean-Baptiste le précurseur au Moyen Âge*, 111–130; esp. 114; Getty-Sullivan M.A., *Women in the New Testament* (Collegeville: 2001) 9–19.

voice prepares the word. Where the sound of the voice dies down, the verb lives on in the flesh. After all, the ear is the mysterious immaculate black tunnel that connects voice with verb, the *prodomos* with the incarnated God through the virgin. Indeed, an ear is actually painted and reflected by Solario in the center of his painting, as a pulsating navel, the mysterious *umbilicus* whence visuality springs. Therefore, one could say that Solario's *Head of St. John the Baptist on a Tazza* pays homage to the iconogenesis, to the *pneuma* as such. This intellectual approach of painting and looking is typical for the auto-reflective energy of humanistic painting. But this does not exclude a form of meditation. Meditating upon the *Head on a Tazza* means meditating on the materialization of intellect in form, just as God was incarnated in form and matter.

We see the same iconogenetic resonance between John and Christ in an early sixteenth-century drawing by Guercino [Fig. 18],⁸⁶ which depicts angels worshipping Veronica's *sudarium*. Below the *vera icon*, shrouded in shadow on a wooden table, lies the head of the Baptist on a dish. The head is like a black ink stain, formless, erased and melting into its own medium of shadow, in order that the true face may appear, made visible in the medium of the sharp line, of circumscription.

After making a lengthy progress from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, the meaning of the bond between the *Johanneschüssel* and the Veronica has culminated in the waxing and waning of visuality itself. The word made flesh, the face, must increase, but the voice, the skull, must dec(r)ease. The dish with the head turns out to be a fading object, an image that appeals to the sense of hearing. The dish with the head is an ephemeral echo that will soon transform itself, in the persistence of sight, into the veil with the face. There, in that transforming moment, the medium of the speaking textile will become the covering and hushing shroud of a crying stone. In the cultural history of Christianity, there might be no object as lonely as the *Johanneschüssel*.

⁸⁶ Princeton University, Art Museum; Combs, "The Johanneschüssel. From Narrative to Reliquary to Andachtsbild" 11, fig. 10; Wolf G., "Teller und Tuch, Haupt und Gesicht", in *Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe, Tod* (Vienna: 1998) 397–398.



Fig. 18. Guercino, *Vera icon and Johanneschüssel*, ca. 1622. Oil on copper, 28.5 × 24 cm. Princeton University, Art Museum.

Conclusion

From the viewpoint of biblical history, the figure of John the Baptist is a transitional figure: he is the last prophet and the first martyr. The idea of 'transition' finds expressive fulfillment in the *Johanneschüssel*. It is the radical signifier of mediation based on two important archetypes that are found in cultural anthropology. The first archetype is that of the *apotropaion* of the severed head. The idea of the power to avert evil is connected with the prototype of Medusa. In Christian terms, the *Johanneschüssel* offers protection through the impact of the decapitated gaze. The second archetype is the head cult. The presentation of the head refers to the transfer of redemption for the benefit of the community, of the generations. In Christian terms, this

is the profound change from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The *Johannesschüssel* teaches us something about the thin lines between the artifact and magical practice, about the medieval image as an article of use.

The position of the *Johannesschüssel* at this climax of revolutions and inversions, historical as well as cosmological (solstice), has implications for artistic theory and the relation between image and gaze. I propose to see the *Johannesschüssel* as the solitary artifact of the threshold, of the gate. Metaphorically speaking, the *Johannesschüssel* relates to the idiom in which images were unmediated and the impact of figurative art was believed to be so great that it could kill, like the Medusa. But the *Johannesschüssel* also eagerly anticipates the age in which images are the skin-bearers of a procreative God. It has not yet reached the countenance of the incarnation – visibility – but it is already removed from the all-destroying face. The extinguished pupil is freed from the fatal impact of the figurative and is, *at the same time*, not yet that first living gaze of the incarnated face of the *vera icon*. This degree zero is the resting place of the *Johannesschüssel*. On account of its function and significance, the head of the Baptist exists in *rigor mortis*, but simultaneously promises new life in the *vera icon*.

As the *prodomos*, John is *more* than Christ, but he is *nothing* without Christ. John the Baptist and Christ are well matched. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, this relationship of necessity led to a formal cross-fertilization, to an *iconization* between the head and dish of John and the *vera icon*. The suffering head of the Baptist became the subject of the pictorial *Andachtsbild*, and the suffering *vera icon* was represented on a round panel. The two masculine heads of Christianity have grown into each other – *in utroque*. The growing devotion for St. John at the end of the Middle Ages elevated the *Johannesschüssel* to a level which is very close to Christ and hence engaged with the doctrine of the Eucharist.

The problems of medium-specificity also reveal the artistic intersections between North and South, between the Middle Ages and Modernity. The *Johannesschüssel* is a Northern phenomenon: it circulates in Flanders, the Rhineland, Northern Germany, Bohemia. The first versions were sculptures, mostly of common workmanship, but by 1500 they evolved into beautiful virtuoso objects that were most often meant to be hung. The *Johannesschüssel* seems increasingly to lose its performative mobile nature for the benefit of a rather decorative and exhibitivite function. The platter that was a *pars pro toto* of a

mensa, a *tabulum*, evolves into a *retabulum*. An apparently concentrated production can be situated in Brabant, in the studio of Dirk and Albrecht Bouts. Although these works were undoubtedly produced in series, this group gives evidence of great quality, a pictorial ‘upgrade’. The Italian contribution to the history of the *Johannesschüssel* reveals a different conjuncture. The importance of popular sculptural versions seems to be significantly less, but the pictorial revolution runs parallel to that in the North, even if its aesthetic affinities lie with the antique Medusa prototype.

The hybrid scheme of Michele Bono’s *vera icon* shows how the intertwining between John and Veronica could lead to a form of “inter-visibility”. Christ’s face is represented as a decapitated head captured in the veil. The resonance of John’s head is subtle, covered, hidden behind, as if this *vera icon* overruled the older *Johannesschüssel*. Indeed, the imprint, the veil would suppress the dish of the *prodomos*, and it seems as if the painter understood this, with a new kind of early modern hybridism: the pictorial palimpsest operates as metaphor for the new possibilities of the medium.

The northern Italian Leonardeschi, as we saw in the painting of John’s head on a *tazza* by Solario, also display a hypersensitivity to the medium of painting. In this context Klaus Krüger writes: ‘Was sich darin anzeigt, ist das elementare Bestreben, die Paradoxie des Bildes, seine ‘Seinsart’ als Medium und Membran, in eine umfassende Poetisierung seiner Darstellung aufzuheben, genauer gesagt: in eine neue, von der Darstellung aus eigenen Mitteln geleistete ‘Sprachfähigkeit’.⁸⁷ But there is more. In Christian culture, the head and the face are intertwined with the very origin of visibility itself. For a Renaissance mind, the *Johannesschüssel* and the *vera icon* gained their reciprocity in the capacity to communicate about the medium through the virtuosity of that same medium, be it Medusan, be it veiling. Similarly, Guercino’s drawing also radiates this inner power of self-reflection.

The optimistic, intellectual love of art made these pieces function almost as aesthetic-theoretical pamphlets on the almost unlimited possibilities of the medium and its relationship with “reality beyond”. It is precisely at the level of this “beyond” that we encounter the mother of all mysteries concerning John’s head and Christ’s face: the intertwining

⁸⁷ Krüger K., *Das Bild als Schleier des Unsichtbaren. Ästhetischen Illusion in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit in Italien* (Munich: 2001) 95.

of *vox* and *verbum*. It is in the bosom of early-modern self-reflection that we 'hear' the *Johanneschüssel* for the first time. Suddenly, the visuality of John's head seems to be that of an echo. The head cries to us from a place as vast as the desert in order that we should finally see what we needed to see from the start.

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CULTIVATING PIETY.
RELIGIOUS ART AND ARTISTS AFTER
THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

Jan L. de Jong

Already since her youth, the Dominican tertiary Osanna Andreasi da Mantova (1449–1505) had been very responsive to images. One day, according to the biography of Francis Silvester, a monk in the monastery of St Mary in Milan offered her a picture to inspect, which was ‘very beautiful and quite devout’ (‘pulcherrima admodumque devota’). ‘Hardly had she fixed her gaze upon it, when she was carried away by her emotions and persisted in that state for several hours’.¹

The impact of this picture was in line with the expectations of the Church. Traditionally it had considered images not only as an instrument to instruct the faithful (in particular those who could not read), but also as a means to fuel piety and devotion. This appears, to mention just one among many sources, from a passage in the treatise on pictures that Johann Eck wrote some fifteen years after Osanna’s death: ‘I would think that the best reason for the use of images is that not only do they recall to us the memory of Christ and the saints [...] but also because they stimulate a feeling of devotion’.² In 1542, the Dominican bishop of Minori, Lancelot Politi (in religion Ambrosius Catharinus) even stated: ‘Pictures and images stir the senses and the imagination, and stimulate thinking and meditation, as well as, ultimately, mental contemplation’.³

¹ Dinzelbacher P., “Religiöses Erleben vor bildender Kunst in autobiographischen und biographischen Zeugnissen des Hoch- und Spätmittelalters”, in Kaspersen S. – Haastrup U. (eds.), *Images of Cult and Devotion: Function and Reception of Christian Images in Medieval and Post-medieval Europe* (Copenhagen: 2004) 61–88, esp. 68.

² *De non tollendis Christi et sanctorum imaginibus* (Ingolstadt: 1522) chapter 8. Quoted after Mangrum B.D. – Scavizzi G. (tr. and eds.), *A Reformation Debate: Karlstadt, Emser and Eck on Sacred Images: Three Treatises in Translation* (Ottawa: 1991) 99.

³ *De certa gloria, invocatione ac veneratione sanctorum libri duo*, in: *Opuscula* (Lyon, Mathias Bonhomme: 1542) 92. Quoted in Hecht C., *Katholische Bildertheologie im Zeitalter von Gegenreformation und Barock: Studien zu Traktaten von Johannes Molanus, Gabriele Paleotti und anderen Autoren* (Berlin: 1997) 159: ‘Ex picturis enim et imaginibus movetur sensus et phantasia, et excitatur cogitatio ac meditatio,

From this outlook, it would be fascinating to know more about the picture that put Osanna Andreasi in a state of rapture. Who had made it, when and where was it produced, and what did it look like? What does it mean that it was 'very beautiful and quite devout'? And, probably most importantly: what caused its devotional impact? Was this perhaps in some way due to the fact that it was so beautiful?

More than fifty years after Osanna Andreasi's ecstasy, Catholic clergymen may have raised similar questions when they took a critical look at contemporary religious images. This critical look was prompted by the generally disapproving attitude towards religious art by the Protestants, but more specifically by discussions over the appropriateness of Michelangelo's painting of *The Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel [Fig. 1]. Pope Paul III, who had commissioned this work, deeply admired it, but over the years it attracted increasing criticism.⁴ In 1563 Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fabriano published an extensive discourse on the painting, in which he concluded that it may be unsurpassed as a work of art, but fails to fulfill its religious function. Not only does it contain many details that are not in accordance with the text of the Bible or the teachings of the Church, and is its nudity offensive, but its high artistic quality stands in the way of devotional feelings.⁵ Generally speaking, this is true for most of the religious art that was produced in Italy around the middle of the sixteenth century: its artistry overpowers its devotional content, and admiration for the artistic skill may easily distract the attention of the faithful away from the spiritual content.⁶

ac denique mentis contemplatio'. The notion that images should instruct, remind and stimulate was formulated in 599–600 by Pope Gregory the Great, in various epistles to the bishop of Marseille. See Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 48–49, 169 ff.

⁴ De Maio R., *Michelangelo e la Controriforma* (Bari: 1978) 17–63; Murray L., *Michelangelo. His Life, Work and Times* (London: 1984) 153–200; Barnes B.A., *Michelangelo's Last Judgment: the Renaissance response* (Berkeley, CA.: 1998) 71–101.

⁵ Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fabriano's *Dialogo nel quale si ragiona degli errori e degli abusi de' pittori circa l'istorie*, the second of his *Due dialoghi* (Camerino, Antonio Gioioso: 1564) has been included in Barocchi P., *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma*, 3 vols. (Bari: 1960–1962; Scrittori d'Italia 219, 221, and 222) II, 3–115.

⁶ The amount of literature on (changes in) religious art in the second half of the sixteenth century is enormous. Some of the most relevant publications are: Zeri F., *Pittura e Controriforma. L'arte senza tempo di Scipione da Gaeta* ([Turin]: 1957, rev. ed. 1970); Blunt A., *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450–1600* (Oxford: 1980⁵) chapter 8; De Maio, *Michelangelo e la Controriforma*; Scavizzi G., *The Controversy on Images from Calvin to Baronius*, Toronto studies in religion (New York: 1992); Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie*; Barnes, *Michelangelo's Last Judgment*.



Fig. 1. Michelangelo, *The Last Judgment* (1534–1541). Fresco, 1370 × 1220 cm. Rome, Sistine Chapel.

In other words: while the pulchritude of the picture shown to Osanna da Mantova may have contributed to its devotional content, the beauty of many sixteenth-century works of art proved to be an obstacle to inciting devotional feelings. In December 1563, therefore, the church fathers at the Council of Trent decreed in accordance with the

tradition of the Church, that images should not only instruct the faithful, but also move them 'to adore and love God and cultivate piety'.⁷

In this respect, the church fathers at Trent did not announce anything unexpected or original. What was new, however, is that they added specifications that had to be avoided, 'so that no representation of false doctrines and such as might be the occasion of grave error to the uneducated be exhibited. [...] Furthermore, in [...] the sacred use of images, all superstition shall be removed, all filthy quest for gain eliminated, and all lasciviousness avoided, so that images shall not be painted and adorned with a seductive charm'.⁸ Obviously, they had learned a lesson from the discussions ignited by Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*. Yet neither the traditional decrees nor these specifications explain how, why or when an image would move an observer 'to adore and love God and cultivate piety'. This raises the question: what kind of representations did the church fathers envision when they decreed that images should move the faithful 'to adore and love God and cultivate piety'? Which elements should an image include to achieve that effect? Is it a matter of style, of subject and iconography, or does it depend on other factors? In brief: what is it that makes an image trigger feelings of devotion?

The church fathers at Trent phrased their decrees in very general terms. After the Council, therefore, a number of treatises were composed to clarify and specify these decrees. The two most important of them were written by Joannes Molanus, published in 1570,⁹ and Gabriele Paleotti, in 1582.¹⁰ Unfortunately, these treatises also do not explain what it is that makes an image trigger feelings of devotion. They do extensively discuss the pitfalls and mistakes that artists should avoid and thus mark out the limits they have to respect. Within these limits, however, they seem to grant the artists full freedom to develop a style or conceive of other means to generate feelings of piety and

⁷ Session XXV, tit.2. The full English translation of the Council's decrees has been included in Klein R. – Zerner H., *Italian Art, 1500–1600: Sources and Documents* (Evanston, IL: 1989) 120–122, esp. 121.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Molanus J., *De picturis at imaginibus sacris* (Louvain, Hieronymus Wellaeus: 1570); 2nd ed.: *De historia SS. imaginum at picturarum pro vero earum usu contra abusum* (Louvain, Jean Bogard: 1594).

¹⁰ Paleotti G., *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (Bologna, Alessandro Benacci: 1582); 2nd ed.: *De imaginibus sacris et profanis libri quinque* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1594).

devotion.¹¹ It has been an ongoing debate among art historians, if artists did indeed respond to this challenge, and if so: who did it, and how?¹² The names of various artists, working in a wide variety of styles in the period between 1560 and 1600, have been suggested, such as Giuseppe Valeriano and Scipione Pulzone,¹³ who were both active in Rome in the 1580's, Santo di Tito in Florence,¹⁴ and Annibale Carracci and Michelangelo da Caravaggio,¹⁵ who both came from Northern Italy and moved to Rome around 1600, more than thirty years after the Council of Trent. Yet one may wonder if the church fathers at Trent, and more specifically the treatise writers after them, left it totally to the artists to develop images that would again stir the faithful to piety and devotion. Didn't they give any clue in their writings of what kind of works they were thinking of, or which aspects they thought would arouse these feelings?¹⁶

To answer these questions, it would be useful to know what exactly is meant by 'piety' and the word that is more often used: 'devotion'.¹⁷ Unfortunately, in the various treatises these labels are not specified. Related terms such as 'meditation' or 'contemplation' are not used at all. Summarizing what Thomas Aquinas has written about it, Michael

¹¹ Scavizzi, *Controversy on Images* 249 ff.; Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 204 ff. The latter even uses the term 'stilistische Neutralität' (210) and states: 'Die Traktate stellen keine stilistische Vorgaben auf' (331).

¹² A brief overview in Scavizzi, *Controversy on Images* 253–259.

¹³ Zeri, *Pittura e controriforma* 60 ff.

¹⁴ Spalding J., "Santi di Tito and the Reform of Florentine Mannerism", *Storia dell'arte* 47 (1983) 41–52.

¹⁵ Boschloo A.W.A., *Annibale Carracci in Bologna: Visible Reality in Art after the Council of Trent* (The Hague: 1974); Dempsey C. "La riforma pittorica dei Carracci", in *Nell'età di Correggio e dei Carracci: pittura in Emilia dei secoli XVI e XVII*, exh. cat. Bologna-New York-Washington (Bologna: 1986) 237–254; Scavizzi, *Controversy on Images* 258–259; Gash J., 'Caravaggio, Michelangelo Merisi da' in the *Grove Art Online* (the online version of *The Dictionary of Art*), <http://www.oxfordartonline.com> (accessed on 9 June 2009).

¹⁶ Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 156, 167–168, 144, 323, 331, adduces examples which show that these writers often assume that it is primarily the subject, not the style of an image which arouses feelings of piety.

¹⁷ The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. 'devotions' (online version: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12275b.htm>, accessed on 13 May 2009) explains these terms as: 'Devotion, in the language of ascetical writers, denotes a certain ardour of affection in the things of God, and even without any qualifying prefix it generally implies that this ardour is of a sensible character. On the other hand, by the term "devotions" in the plural, or "popular devotions", we commonly understand those external practices of piety by which the devotion of the faithful finds life and expression'.

Baxandall described devotion as follows, in his book on *Painting and Experience* from 1972: 'devotion is the conscious and willed turning of the mind to God; its special means is meditation, its effect is mingled joy at God's goodness and sadness at man's inadequacy'.¹⁸ For the sake of argument, I will use the word 'devotion' as a general term that covers meditation, contemplation and other ways of intensifying one's religious experiences.

Next to the term devotion, there is a second issue on which the treatises are not very clear. No distinctions are made between various types of images, as for instance altarpieces versus small paintings for domestic use, or between different genres, such as history paintings versus representations of saints. Apparently, there were no types or genres that were deemed better able to arouse devotion than others.¹⁹

Finally, there is a third respect in which one would have wished more specificity: hardly any concrete works of art are mentioned, neither in a negative way as cases to be avoided, nor in a positive way as examples to be followed. As a result, there are no detailed discussions of existing images, which could give an idea of what the treatise authors envisaged exactly. In general, their ideas and considerations seem to spring from a theological discourse rather than from concrete examples or artistic practice.²⁰

With these limitations in mind, we can now go back to the question what kind of images the treatise writers were envisioning when they stated that pictures should arouse devotion. In the absence of concrete examples, it may help to make an inventory of the kinds of images that were considered 'devotional' in the period directly preceding the Council of Trent. Generally speaking – it is of course impossible to be exhaustive – these were, as a first category, old representations, of Christ, the Madonna or other saints. These images derived their 'devotional effectiveness' from a long history of veneration and an established record of arousing piety. Over the years, many of these images had been restored, repainted and even replaced without apparently affecting their 'devotional potential'.²¹ A second category is miracle

¹⁸ Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy. A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: 1972) 149.

¹⁹ Pertinent observations in Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 70–78.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 44 ff., 88 ff., 187 ff.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 123 ff., 214; Scavizzi, *Controversy on Images* 169 ff., Zuraw S.E., "The Efficacious Madonna in Quattrocento Rome: Spirituality in the Service of Papal Power", in: Ladis A. – Zuraw S.E. (eds.), *Visions of Holiness: Art and Devotion in Renaissance*



Fig. 2. Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna and Child* (ca. 1505). Oil on canvas, transferred from wood, 67 × 86 cm. London, National Gallery.

working images such as the SS Annunziata in Florence. In this case, the feelings of devotion they aroused were a direct consequence of the miracles they performed.²² A third category is constituted by paintings of the Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini [Fig. 2] and contemporary Venetian artists. It is not unlikely that comparable pictures made in other cities aroused similar feelings of devotion, but in the case of Giovanni Bellini we are fairly well informed. In his 1556 discussion of noteworthy things in Venice, Francesco Sansovino described Bellini's pictures as 'molto belle e devote'.²³ Modern research has shown that his *Madonna and Child*-paintings – in all kinds of variations – as well as adaptations by other artists were acquired in large numbers

Italy (Athens, GA.: 2001) 101–121; Goffen R., "Icon and Vision: Giovanni Bellini's Half-Lenght Madonnas", *The Art Bulletin* 57 (1975) 487–514, esp. 509–510.

²² Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 137–145.

²³ Sansovino F., *Dialogo di tutte le cose notabili che sono in Venetia* (Venice: 1563; originally 1556), no pagination.

and used as devotional objects in many houses.²⁴ A fourth category of devotional pictures consists of images mentioned in the treatises themselves and partly overlaps with the first one: pictures from times of yore, made by almost legendary artists of whom the only identifiable one is Pietro Cavallini, and more recent paintings made by Albrecht Dürer and the Dominican monks Fra Bartolommeo and Fra Angelico [Figs. 3, 4, and 5].²⁵ Curiously, the treatises do not mention the works of Giovanni Bellini.

If we try to find out which factors made these images elicit devotional feelings, we must conclude that they were partly of a non-artistic nature. Criteria like a long history of veneration, with an established record of arousing piety or performing miracles, suggest that these images should be regarded more as relics than as works of art. Moreover, the fact that they could be restored, updated and even replaced by copies, without affecting their ‘devotional efficacy’, also indicates that it was not their artistic qualities that caused them to arouse piety.²⁶ In the case of Giovanni Bellini [Fig. 2] and Fra Angelico [Fig. 3, 4, and 5], however, we can point to some artistic features. Their works are characterized by a certain simplicity, in the sense that they seem clear and easy to grasp. Distracting details are lacking, and there is no conspicuous demonstration of artistic skill. In Bellini’s *Madonna*’s, moreover, there are no details that point to a story or action that is going on, which helps to create an atmosphere of quiet and tranquility that is conducive to contemplation.²⁷

These findings about the devotional character of the works of Bellini and Fra Angelico are based on contemporary descriptions and have been confirmed by modern research. As we have seen, Bellini’s paintings were already qualified as ‘devotional’ in 1556, and in recent publications by Rona Goffen, Ronda Kasl and Johannes Grave the

²⁴ Goffen, “Icon and Vision”; Golden A., “Creating and Re-creating: The Practice of Replication in the Workshop of Giovanni Bellini”, in: Kasl R. – Christiansen K. (eds.), *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion* (Indianapolis, IN.: 2004) 91–127; Christiansen K., “Giovanni Bellini and the Practice of Devotional Painting”, in *ibid.*, 6–57, esp. 22.

²⁵ Paleotti, *Discorso* I, 8, in Barocchi, *Trattati* II, 163–168. Paleotti’s enumeration is repeated and extended with examples taken from Giorgio Vasari’s *Vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori, et architettori* (Florence, Giunti: 1568) by Romano Alberti, *Trattato della nobiltà della pittura* (Rome, Francesco Zannetti: 1585), in Barocchi, *Trattati* III, 232–233, with pertinent commentary on 514–515.

²⁶ Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 64–65, 338–339.

²⁷ Christiansen, “Giovanni Bellini and the Practice of Devotional Painting” 28–29.



Fig. 3. Fra Angelico, *Transfiguration* (ca. 1440–1441). Fresco, 193 × 164 cm. Florence, Convent of S. Marco, cell 6.



Fig. 4. Fra Angelico, *Coronation of the Virgin* (ca. 1433–1434). Tempera on panel, 213 × 211 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

appropriateness of this qualification has been further explored and specified.²⁸ More or less the same is true of Fra Angelico's works. In 1481, in the foreword to his edition of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, Cris-

²⁸ Goffen, "Icon and Vision"; Kasl R., "Holy Households. Art and Devotion in Renaissance Venice", in: Kasl – Christiansen, *Giovanni Bellini* 58–89; Grave J., *Landchaften der Meditation: Giovanni Bellinis Assoziationsräume* (Freiburg im Breisgau: 2004).

toforo Landino described Fra Angelico's style of painting as *devoto*. Michael Baxandall has explained that this refers to such qualities as: unelaborate, intellectually unassertive, easily understood, and good for edifying and instructing the people.²⁹

Some examples *ex negativo* confirm that aspects such as simplicity, plainness and the lack of a conspicuous demonstration of artistic skill were indeed seen as conducive to feelings of devotion. Around 1530, Antonio Maria Zaccaria, a priest from Cremona and one of the founders of the Barnabites, recommended in the constitutions of the order that their oratories should be decorated in a very restrained way: 'There should be no pictures that display artifice, but pictures that generate contrition'.³⁰ In 1552 Ambrosius Catharinus stated that, 'some images [are] so extravagant that you can hardly recognize the human figure in them [...] And elsewhere you see compositions made with so much artifice that at times among so many improper gestures they ignore the decorum of the figures, and do not have any dignity and do not excite to devotion at all'.³¹ In 1563 Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fabriano complained, in his discourse on Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, 'when it happens that painters want to make their figures look strained, they should do it in such a way that it does not hamper feelings of devotion'.³²

From all this it appears that there is no necessary connection between artistic quality and feelings of devotion – in fact, the statements just quoted make it almost seem as if artistic quality is an obstacle.³³ More-

²⁹ Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience* 148–150, with the quote from Cristoforo Landino's preface to the *Divina Commedia* (Florence, Della Magna: 1481) on 118: 'Fra Angelico et vezoso et divoto et ornato molto con grandissima facilita'. See also Christiansen, "Giovanni Bellini and the Practice of Devotional Painting" 25–28.

³⁰ Klerck B. de, *The Brothers Campi: Images and Devotion. Religious Painting in Sixteenth-Century Lombardy* (Amsterdam: 1999) 148: 'Vi si faranno immagini che non dimostrino artificio, ma che causino compunzione'. See also his conclusions on 193 ff.

³¹ *Disputatio de cultu et adoratione imaginum* in idem, *Ennarationes in quinque prioia capita libri Geneseos* (Rome, Antonius Bladus: 1552) 144: 'Vidi enim ego quasdam imagines ita inconditas ut vix humanam speciem referrent, sed potius monstrosa membra. Alias autem e contrario tanta arte compositas, ut quibusdam importunis gestibus interim personarum decorem non servent, nihil gravitatis habentes, nihil devotionis excitantes'. Translation after Scavizzi, *Controversy on Images* 251.

³² Gilio, *Dialogo* 114: 'quando avvenisse che i pittori le [sc. figure] volessero fare sforzate, dovrebbero darli tale sforzo che non impedisce la devozione'.

³³ I here use 'artistic quality' in its sixteenth-century sense, more or less corresponding to what we would now describe as 'mannerist art'. I am far from suggesting

over, there also does not seem to be a direct connection between certain subjects and specific forms or feelings of devotion. From various sources it appears that Bellini's Madonna-paintings evoked different kinds of thoughts and feelings, and accordingly several indications seem to suggest that a specific train of thoughts was never intended.³⁴ All this leaves us with the question: why did the treatise writers single out artists 'of yore', and more recent (but not contemporary) painters such as Albrecht Dürer, Fra Bartolommeo and in particular Fra Angelico as artists whose work stirred devotion?³⁵ What devotional potential do their works contain that other images are missing?

As we have seen, the devotional effectiveness of certain images from times of yore was not directly related to their artistic qualities. More or less the same seems to be true for the works of Fra Angelico, the painter who is mentioned most often in the various treatises and on whom I will now focus. In the sixteenth century his works, as well as those of his contemporaries, were appreciated, but not wholeheartedly. The usual reservation was that they were good works according to the standards of the time when they were made.³⁶ However, judged by the norms of modern times – that is, the sixteenth century – they look stiff

that the works of Fra Angelico or Bellini are lacking 'artistic quality', but it is a kind of quality that is very different from that of sixteenth-century works.

³⁴ Kasl, "Holy Households" 77, 80 ff.; Grave, *Landschaften*, in particular chapter VI, where he writes (105) about the *Polyvalenz* of the landscapes in Bellini's religious paintings, aimed at 'den Gedankengang des Rezipienten anzuregen und nicht festzulegen'. Cf. Grindler-Hansen P., "Public Devotional Pictures in Medieval Denmark", in Kaspersen – Haastrup, *Images of Cult and Devotion* 229–243, esp. 232–233.

³⁵ As I have already pointed out before, the works of Giovanni Bellini are not mentioned in the treatises, even though they were much in demand as devotional paintings.

³⁶ Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 337. The attention for and (relative) appreciation of pictures of yore may be related to the emergence of 'christian archeology' around the middle of the sixteenth century. In their polemics on the question whether religious art is allowed and/or necessary, Protestants based themselves on texts, while Catholics increasingly pointed to old pictures as proof that the Church had allowed and used images from its earliest beginnings on. See Scavizzi, *Controversy on Images*, 178 ff.; Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 123 ff. and 145 ff.; and Herklotz I., "'Historia sacra' und Mittelalterliche Kunst während der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts in Rom", in De Maio R. (ed.), *Baronio e l'arte: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi; Sora, 10–13 ottobre 1984* (Sora: 1985) 21–74, and Liverani P., "Der Bau der Basilika St. Peter und die Anfänge der Christlichen Archäologie", in Frings J. (ed.), cat. exh. *Kunst und Kultur im Rom der Päpste* (Bonn, Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland) vol. II: *Barock im Vatikan: Kunst und Kultur im Rom der Päpste II, 1572–1676* (Leipzig: 2005) 427–435.

and awkward. According to Gilio da Fabriano, in 1563, artists before Michelangelo made

sacred images modest and devout, with those signs that have been given by the ancients for the privilege of sainthood, which have seemed to the moderns to be vile, clumsy, common, humble, without *ingegno* and art. Through this, opposing art to modesty, abandoning the customary practice of making draped figures, modern artists have made and keep making them nude. Abandoning the customary practice of making them devout, they have made them strained, it seeming to them a great accomplishment to twist the head, the arms, the legs, so that it seems they represent acrobats and actors rather than those who stand in contemplation. And thus they have lowered the holy usage with their new invention [...].³⁷

The same opinion is voiced by Giorgio Vasari in the second edition of his *Lives* of famous artists from 1568. Discussing the work of Fra Angelico, he writes:

And in truth a talent so extraordinary and so supreme as that of Fra Giovanni [Angelico] could not and should not descend on any save a man of most holy life, for the reason that those who work at religious and holy subjects should be religious and holy men; for it is seen, when such works are executed by persons of little faith who have little esteem for religion, that they often arouse in men's minds evil appetites and licentious desires; whence there comes blame for the evil in their works, with praise for the art and ability that they show. Now I would not have any man deceive himself by considering the rude and inept as holy, and the beautiful and excellent as licentious; as some do, who, seeing figures of women or of youths adorned with loveliness and beauty beyond the ordinary, straightway censure them and judge them licentious, not perceiving that they are very wrong to condemn the good judgment of the painter, who holds the Saints, both male and female, who are celestial, to be as much more beautiful than mortal man as Heaven is superior to earthly beauty and to the works of human hands; and, what is worse, they reveal the unsoundness and corruption of their own minds by drawing evil and impure desires out of works from which, if they were

³⁷ Gilio, *Dialogo* 111: 'le sacre imagini oneste e devote, con que' segni che gli sono stati dati dagli antichi per privileggio de la santità, il che è paruto a' moderni vile, goffo, plebeo, antico, umile, senza ingegno et arte. Per questo essi, antepoendo l'arte a l'onestà, lasciando l'uso di fare le figure vestite, l'hanno fatte e le fanno nude; lasciando l'uso di farle devote, l'hanno fatte sforzate, parendoli gran fatto di torcerli il capo, le braccia, le gambe, e parer che più tosto rappresentino chi fa le moresche e gli atti, che chi sta in contemplazione. Et hanno tanto quel santo uso sbassato con questa nova loro invenzione [...]'. Translation after Barnes, *Michelangelo's Last Judgment* 85.

lovers of purity, as they seek by their misguided zeal to prove themselves to be, they would gain a desire to attain to Heaven and to make themselves acceptable to the Creator of all things, in whom, as most perfect and most beautiful, all perfection and beauty have their source.³⁸

Four points from this passage deserve special attention:

1. In comparison to sixteenth-century works of art, Fra Angelico's paintings seem rude (*goffo*) and inept (*inetto*)
2. Yet his works are effective in stirring feelings of devotion
3. Fra Angelico's works are effective in arousing devotion, due to the fact that Fra Angelico himself was a very devout person
4. If persons claim that certain sixteenth-century works of art are licentious and arouse inappropriate feelings, it reveals more about their own disposition than about the works of art.

Vasari's third point – Fra Angelico's paintings arouse devotion because Fra Angelico himself was very devout – also occurs in other treatises. Gabriele Paleotti, for instance, states in the foreword of his discourse that artists who are no true believers themselves, can never arouse

³⁸ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, De Vere G.d.C. (tr.), Ekserdjian D. (ed.) (New York, NY.: 1996) vol. I 408–409. I specifically quote from Vasari's second edition, in which Fra Angelico's biography differs considerably from that in the first edition, due to the different religious climate after the Council of Trent. In the first edition, Vasari excessively praises Fra Angelico's way of life, but carefully avoids to give an opinion on his works, saying that *others* (in the time of Fra Angelico) appreciated it highly. In the second edition Vasari is still not enthusiastic, but he states it less openly and includes a few remarks (such as the one quoted, which is an extended version of a remark in the first edition, moved to a different place in the biography) in which he justifies the kind of works that were less appreciated after the Council of Trent, and argues against the assumption that 'primitive' paintings are necessarily devout (implying that Fra Angelico's work is indeed 'primitive'). The same is true for the biography of Giovanni Antonio Sogliani (1492–1544) in Vasari's second edition, compared to the original version in the first edition. I do not agree with Diane Cole Ahl's reading of Vasari's biography of Fra Angelico, which she seems to take literally and believes is 'one of Vasari's most intellectually ambitious, intricate, and inventive creations', concluding that, 'Although Angelico's *vita* has been dismissed as pietistic fiction, it in fact exhibits conscientious research. The catalogue of works alone reveals Vasari's intense aesthetic and spiritual engagement with the friar's art as well as a sense of connoisseurship that is truly remarkable'. Ahl D.C., "Sia di mano di santo o d'un angelo: Vasari's Life of Fra Angelico", in Barriault A.B. – Ladis A. – Land N.E. – Wood J.M. (eds.), *Reading Vasari* (London: 2005) 119–131 (quotes on resp. 121 and 127).

feelings of true devotion through their works.³⁹ Later on he claims that in order to create works that trigger devotion, it is not enough to be just a skilled craftsman. It is also necessary to have a truly Christian disposition and affection that will shine through in the works.⁴⁰ A few years later, in 1585, Romano Alberti expressed the same opinion in his *Treatise on the Nobility of Painting*: painters have to be ‘spiritual’ in order to express devout feelings, for if they do not experience them personally, they can never arouse them in others.⁴¹

Along these lines of reasoning, Fra Angelico came to be regarded as the paradigm of an artist who created devotionally effective works: not so much because of their artistic qualities, which fell actually short of the standards of contemporary sixteenth-century art, but due to his truly Christian personality and way of living. This portrayal of Fra Angelico was not totally unfounded. Already around 1450, when he was still alive, Fra Giuliano Lapaccini characterized him in his *Chronicle* as ‘a man of complete modesty and religious life’.⁴² Within fifteen years of his death, he was designated as ‘Angelico’.⁴³ Thirty years later, in 1481, Cristoforo Landino described his style of painting as ‘devout’.⁴⁴ Some eighty years later, however, Vasari described Fra Angelico as a somewhat otherworldly religionist, who would say that ‘the man who occupies himself with the things of Christ should live with Christ’. And Vasari continues:

³⁹ Paleotti G., *Discorso*, “Proemio”, in Barocchi, *Trattati* vol. II 120: ‘L’altra [causa... di tanti abusi e così notabili difetti che tutto ’l giorno si scorgono in questa professione di formare le immagini] è che, ricercandosi nelle immagini, quanto alle sacre, che muovano i cuori de’ riguardanti alla divozione e vero culto di Dio, i pittori, per non essere comunemente meglio disciplinati degli altri nella cognizione di Dio, né essercitati nello spirito e pietade, non possono rappresentare, nelle figure che fanno, quella maniera di divozione ch’essi non hanno né sentono dentro di sé; onde si vede per isperienza che poche immagini oggi si dipingono, che produchino questo effetto’.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 136: ‘Ora ricordiamo sol due cose: l’una, che deve essere perito l’artefice di quello che vuol fare, dicendo il proverbio antico: *Quam quisque norit artem, in ea se exerceat*; l’altra, che non basta solo esser buono artefice, ma, oltre l’eccellenza dell’arte, essendo egli di nome e di professione cristiano, ricercano da lui l’immagini ch’egli farà, un animo et affetto cristiano, essendo questa qualità inseparabile dalla persona sua, e tale ch’egli è ubligato di mostrarla ovunque fia bisogno’.

⁴¹ Alberti, *Trattato*, in Barocchi, *Trattati* vol. III 231: ‘Giova ancora alli pittori la pittura cristiana, incitandoli a dover esser spirituali per esprimere li affetti devoti, i quali se non sentono in lor stessi, non possono produrli facilmente. E di più, come potranno unir li altri con Dio, se essi da quello seran disuniti?’.

⁴² Quoted after Gilbert C., *Italian Art, 1400–1500: Sources and Documents* (Evanston, IL.: 1992) 206.

⁴³ Hood W., *Fra Angelico at San Marco* (New Haven, CT.: 1993) 9.

⁴⁴ See above, n. 29.

It was his custom never to retouch or improve any of his pictures, but to leave them ever in the state to which he had first brought them; believing, so he used to say, that this was the will of God. Some say that Fra Giovanni [Angelico] would never have taken his brushes in his hand without first offering a prayer. He never painted a Crucifix without the tears streaming down his cheeks; wherefore in the countenances and attitudes of his figures one can recognize the goodness, nobility, and sincerity of his mind towards the Christian religion.⁴⁵

This tale is echoed in the words that Cardinal Paleotti used to reprimand modern artists who might be considered capable craftsmen, but lack piety and modesty. According to him, they should follow the example of ‘a very devout painter from our time, who would, before he set himself to paint a saint’s picture, read carefully about his life and get himself an idea of his virtues. Based on that he would try to represent this saint in such a way that, seeing him, he would experience feelings of contrition and thus arouse others to devotion’.⁴⁶ This model of a divinely inspired artist, moreover, goes well with the biblical description of Bezalel, whom God filled with his Spirit and endowed with wisdom, making him a skilled craftsman who could create objects of art with gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood.⁴⁷ Thus the example of Fra Angelico acquired an almost biblical dimension.

Yet this idolization of Fra Angelico was not always based on personal acquaintance with his works. For instance, the paintings that belong to Fra Angelico’s most deliberate attempts to evoke feelings of meditative devotion are those in the monks’ cells in the monastery of San Marco in Florence [Fig. 3].⁴⁸ Each cell has a real window that looks out on the actual world, and a painted window with a view on the spiritual world. This painted view – usually an episode from the New Testament – is plain and direct, without distracting details or unnecessary artistry. The depicted scene is introduced by one or two

⁴⁵ Vasari, *Lives* I, 410.

⁴⁶ Paleotti, *Discorso* II, 52, in Barocchi, *Trattati* vol. II 503: ‘l’esempio d’un devotissimo pittore dei nostri tempi, che inanzi si mettesse a formare l’immagine d’alcun santo, leggeva diligentemente la sua vita e dal concetto appreso delle virtù sue cercava poi di rappresentarlo tale, che, vedendolo, si movea a compunzione e gli altri eccitava a divozione’.

⁴⁷ *Exodus* 31: 1–11, esp. 3–5.

⁴⁸ The following analysis of Fra Angelico’s paintings in the San Marco monastery is based on Hood W., “Saint Dominic’s Manners of Praying: Gestures in Fra Angelico’s Cell Frescoes at S. Marco”, *The Art Bulletin* 68 (1986) 195–206, and idem, *Fra Angelico at San Marco* 209–236.

persons who are members of the Dominican order. They function as a link between the Dominican monk in his cell who is observing the picture, and the biblical event that is represented. But they do more than that. Their specific positions correspond to (one of) the nine positions in which St Dominic had taught his followers to pray. That means that these Dominican personages do not only introduce the painted event, but also indicate in which position and state of mind it should be observed and reflected on. Vasari briefly mentioned these paintings and must therefore have known about them, but he hardly discussed them.⁴⁹ Instead he singled out for special praise a work that for its opulence, its many colors and its multitude of details is hardly a characteristic devotional painting: the *Coronation of the Virgin* that is now in the Louvre, in Paris [Fig. 4].⁵⁰ There are no clear indications that Cardinal Paleotti was personally well familiar with Fra Angelico's work. Romano Alberti, who mentioned Fra Angelico in his *Treatise on the Nobility of Painting* from 1585, simply repeated the account of Paleotti.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Vasari's almost complete silence about the frescoes in the monks' cells may be explained by the fact that he did not have access to them (curiously he mentioned them more explicitly in the first edition of the *Lives*, 1550, than in the second from 1568 (resp. 'È in tutte le celle de'frati una storia del Testamento Nuovo per ciascuna' and 'molte altre cose per le celle'). He did describe Fra Angelico's paintings in other parts of the monastery, which were apparently more public, such as the frescoes in the first cloister and the chapter room. He also mentioned the altarpiece in the adjoining church of S. Marco (now in the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), with a 'Madonna [che] muove a divozione chi la guarda per la simplicità sua' ('a Madonna whose simplicity inspires devotion in the onlooker').

⁵⁰ Vasari, *Lives* I, 406: 'But superior to all the other works that Fra Giovanni [Angelico] made, and the one wherein he surpassed himself and gave supreme proof of his talent and of his knowledge of art, was a panel that is beside the door of the same church [S. Domenico da Fiesole], on the left hand as one enters, wherein Jesus Christ is crowning Our Lady in the midst of a choir of angels and among an infinite multitude of saints, both male and female, so many in number, so well wrought, and with such variety in the attitudes and in the expressions of the heads, that incredible pleasure and sweetness are felt in gazing at them; nay, one is persuaded that those blessed spirits cannot look otherwise in Heaven, or to speak more exactly, could not if they had bodies; for not only are all these saints, both male and female, full of life and sweet and delicate in expression, but the whole colouring of that work appears to be by the hand of a saint or an angel like themselves; wherefore it was with very good reason that this excellent monk was ever called Fra Giovanni Angelico. Moreover, the stories of the Madonna and of S. Dominic in the predella are divine in their own kind; and I, for one, can declare with truth that I never see this work without thinking it something new, and that I never leave it sated'.

⁵¹ See above, n. 25.



Fig. 5. Fra Angelico, *Last Judgment* (ca. 1435–1440). Tempera on panel, 103 × 65 cm (central), 103 × 28 cm (each wing). Berlin, Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen.

There was one person, however, who was well acquainted with Fra Angelico's work: Pope Pius V (1566–1572). Around 1570, he commissioned the Netherlandish painter Bartholomeus Spranger to make a copy of Fra Angelico's *Last Judgment* for his tomb monument in Bosco Marengo [Fig. 5, 6]. The pope was familiar with Fra Angelico's painting because it was located, most probably, in the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome.⁵² This church belonged to the

⁵² Zeri, *Pittura e controriforma* 52; Kanter L.B. – Palladino P., *Fra Angelico* (cat. exh. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; New York NY. – New Haven CT. – London: 2005) 170. The painting is now in Berlin, in the Gemäldegalerie der Staatliche Museen.



Fig. 6. Bartholomeus Spranger, *Last Judgment* (ca. 1570). Copper, 116 × 148 cm. Turin, Galleria Sabauda.

Dominican order, of which not only Fra Angelico but also Pius V was a member. This may have contributed to the pope's appreciation of Fra Angelico's work, but it was probably more important that Pius V was an austere personality, who strongly rejected the lavishness and artificiality that still dominated most of the arts of this time.⁵³ In Fra

⁵³ See the entry on Pius V in Kelly J.N.D., *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* (Oxford: 2006), 268–269 (also on line: *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t99.e263>, accessed on 3 June 2009). For the pope as a patron of arts, see the entry on Pius V by Carlenrica Spantigati in *Grove Art Online* (the online version of *The Dictionary of Art*), <http://www.oxfordartonline.com> (accessed on 3 June 2009). Spantigati wrongly claims that Spranger copied the earlier version of Fra Angelico's *Last Judgment* (c. 1424) that is now in the S. Marco Monastery in Florence, but as we have seen (above, n. 52) he copied the one in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin. On Pius V, see most extensively Von Pastor L., *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters. Pius V. (1566–1572)*

Angelico's work he may have seen the purity and sincerity that would fuel feelings of truly Christian devotion. Yet it is instructive to observe that Spranger did not make an exact copy of Fra Angelico's painting. He maintained the general composition, but made the individual figures less stiff and the representation as a whole more 'fluent'. Thus he tried to keep its devotional content intact, while softening its 'rude' (*goffo*) and 'inept' (*inetto*) style and updating it to sixteenth-century standards. In other words: Spranger treated Fra Angelico's painting just as old pictures with a long tradition of veneration were handled: if necessary they could be 'restored' and 'updated', apparently without any loss of their devotional impact.⁵⁴ It is now also instructive to compare Fra Angelico's *Last Judgment* with Michelangelo's painting of the same subject [Fig. 1, 5], and read a paragraph from Cardinal Paleotti's *Archiepiscopale Bononiense* (a collection of rules and orders for the archdiocese of Bologna) from 1594:

We have heard that a very famous painter and sculptor [written in the margin: Michelangelo Buonarroti] said, when he saw some of the venerable pictures painted with admirable religious feelings by a religious man [Fra Angelico]: "This good man painted with his heart, so that he conveyed with his brush at the same time both inner devotion and outer piety, in a way that I would never be able to, as I feel that I do not have a heart in me that is just as well disposed."⁵⁵

What does all this contribute to answer the question, which kind of representations the church fathers at Trent were envisioning when they decreed that images should move the faithful 'to adore and love God and cultivate piety?' What is it that they thought would make an image trigger feelings of devotion?

(Freiburg im Breisgau: 1923) 81 ff. According to Von Pastor, 85, Pope Pius V even owned a panel painting by Fra Angelico, representing *The Last Judgment*. On the various depictions of *The Last Judgment* by Fra Angelico once in the Vatican, see Brandon Strehlke C., "Fra Angelico: A Florentine Painter in "Roma Felix", in Kanter – Palladino, *Fra Angelico* 203–213, esp. 204.

⁵⁴ Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 343–344.

⁵⁵ *Archiepiscopale Bononiense, sive de Bononiensis Ecclesiae administratione, auctore Gabriele Palaoto S.R.E. Cardinali* (Rome, Aloysius Zanettus: 1594) 81, quoted after Barocchi, *Trattati* II, 616, n. 5: 'Clarissimum quendam pictorem et sculptorem [in margine: Michael. Ang. Bonarot.], cum sacras quasdam imagines a quodam religioso viro [l'Angelico] miro religionis affectu pictas vidisset, dixisse accepimus: "Iste bonus vir pingebat corde, ita ut interiorem devotionem ac pietatem foris etiam penicillo repraesentaret, quod ego nequaquam efficere possem, quippe qui non adeo bene affectum cor me habere sentiam"'.⁷

First of all, we have seen that within certain limits artists were allowed ample freedom. It is true that the treatise writers came up with directions and prescriptions to ensure that religious images would indeed be theologically correct, but apparently it was left to the artists to develop a style and method that would effectively arouse feelings of piety and devotion.⁵⁶ However, we have also seen that the latter was only considered to be possible when the artists were devout Christians themselves, working with sincere intentions and genuine emotions.

The idea that only an artist with sincere feelings can elicit the appropriate emotions from the observers, has a long tradition. One can point, for instance, to Horace's famous lines: 'If you would have me weep, begin the strain, / Then I shall feel your sorrows, feel your pain'.⁵⁷ Still the idea that the desired emotions are only evoked by genuine feelings of the artists themselves does not quite work, and in spite of all their assertions about the importance of the artists' honesty, the treatise writers did sense that in the field of arts there is no one-to-one connection between 'input' and 'output'. This appears from the fourth point of Vasari's paragraph on Fra Angelico, in which he denounces persons who 'draw evil and impure desires out of works from which, if they were lovers of purity [...], they would gain a desire to attain to Heaven and to make themselves acceptable to the Creator of all things [...]'. Thus, 'they reveal the unsoundness and corruption of their own minds'.⁵⁸ In other words, the artists' feelings may be important, but in the end it is the observers who matter most. It is their duty to ignite the spark presented to them into a fire of devotion. We read the same opinion in the treatise of Cardinal Paleotti, phrased more explicitly and explained with a fitting comparison: 'One and the same picture will produce diverse effects, depending on the different ideas that the observers extract from it. [...] Thus we see how the bees distill sweet honey from the juice of the flowers in the fields, while spiders turn it into poison'.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie* 178 ff., 243 ff.

⁵⁷ *Ars Poetica* 102–103: 'si vis me flere, dolendum est / Primum ipsi tibi: tum tua me infortunia laedent'.

⁵⁸ See above, n. 38.

⁵⁹ Paleotti, *Discorso* I, 10, in Barocchi, *Trattati* vol. II 172: 'Di modo che la medesima imagine partorirà più differenze, secondo i varii concetti che di essa piglieranno i riguardanti, conforme assai a quel detto delle scuole, se bene in altro proposito: *quod omne receptum habet se per modum recipientis et non recepti*. Onde noi veggiamo che ancor del succo de' fiori nati alla campagna le api ne fanno soave mele e le aragni ne cavano mortifero veneno'.

The importance of the observers' role leads us back to one of the observations at the beginning of this paper, namely that there is no necessary relation between the style or the iconography of an image, and the form of devotion it arouses. The church fathers at Trent, and more particularly the treatise writers after them, may have realized this and therefore come up with the notion of 'honesty'. 'Honesty' may not guarantee anything, but the example of Fra Angelico demonstrates that it was considered effective enough to compensate for artistic deficiency and would in any case be more functional than excessive artistry. The decisive step, however, had to be made by the observers. With no unnecessary details or redundant artistic ingenuity to distract them, they could surrender themselves to contemplating the religious message offered to them and rise to a state of devotion and piety.

What does all this contribute to a better understanding of Osanna da Mantova and the picture that put her in a state of rapture? We still do not have any factual information about the image, but we do know now that its description as 'beautiful' and 'devout' does not necessarily imply high artistic quality. Nor does it tell anything about the honesty of the unknown artist's feelings. But the story does explain why Osanna came to be considered as *beata*, for she was able to turn the juice of this picture into sweet devotional honey that led her into a state of contemplative rapture.

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EXEGETICAL DUALITY AS A MEDITATIVE CRUX IN
MAARTEN VAN HEEMSKERCK'S *BALAAM AND THE ANGEL*
IN A PANORAMIC LANDSCAPE OF 1554

Walter S. Melion

Designed collaboratively by two learned artists, the draftsman Maarten van Heemskerck and the etcher-engraver Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert, the exceptionally large print of *Balaam and the Angel* (29.7 × 85.5 cm) portrays a traditional biblical subject in a novel way that calls attention to an exegetical crux rooted in *Numbers* 22–24, the famous account of the soothsayer Balaam, who found himself compelled by God to bless the Israelites whom Balak, King of Moab, had summoned him to curse [Fig. 1].¹ This crux, explored most fully by Origen in his *Selecta* and *Homilia in Numeros*, and codified in the *Glossa interlinearia et ordinaria*, concerns the morally ambiguous indeed ambivalent status of the prophet Balaam, and in light of this, the nature of divine prophecy that issues from the mouth, but not always from the heart and sense of the prophetic instruments divinely chosen to reveal the word of God.² In this paper, I shall argue that Van Heemskerck and

¹ On *Balaam and the Angel*, see Veldman I.M., *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 2 vols., in Luijten G. (ed.), *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts 1450–1700* (Roosendaal – Amsterdam: 1993) I 76–77, no. 77; eadem, “Naar Maarten van Heemskerck, Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert, *Bileam en de ezel in een landschap*, 1554”, in Filedt Kok J.P. – Halsema-Kubes W. – Kloek W. Th. (eds.), *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm: Noordnederlandse kunst 1525–1580* [exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam] (The Hague: 1986) 262–263, no. 144, and Melion W.S., “Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries”, in Clifton J. – Melion W. (eds.), *Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in Netherlandish Prints of the Sixteenth Century* [exh. cat., Museum of Biblical Art, New York] (New York – London: 2009) 53–54.

² On Origen's special interest in Balaam, see Baskin J.R., “Origen on Balaam: The Dilemma of the Unworthy Prophet”, *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983) 22–35. All references to the *Glossa* are taken from the Venetian edition of 1588, which derives from the third Basel printing of 1508, by way of the popular Lyon edition of 1545: *Biblia Sacra cum glossis. Interlineari, et ordinaria, Nicolai Lyrani Postilla ac Moralitatibus, Bergensis Additionibus et Thoringi Replicis*, 7 vols. (Venice, Società dell'Aquila [Giovanni Varisco and Comp.]: 1588). On printed editions of the *Glossa* published between the *editio princeps* of 1480–1481 and the Venetian edition of 1588, see Froehlich K. – Gibson M.T., *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81*, 4 vols. (Turnhout: 1992) XII–XXII.



Fig. 1. Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert, after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Balaam and the Angel in a Panoramic Landscape* (1554). Etching and engraving, 29.7 × 42.8 cm (left plate), 29.8 × 42.7 cm (right plate). Vienna, The Albertina.

Coornhert depart crucially from earlier printed images of *Balaam and the Angel*, such as the woodcuts in various editions of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* and *Dat spieghel onser behoudenisse*, in order to compel the viewer to reflect upon and ultimately to experience what it means spiritually to discern the mystery of the Incarnation [Figs. 5 and 7].³ The two halves of the engraving – the left featuring Balaam and the she-ass and their encounter with the angel, the right opening out onto a panoramic vista of Moab, Jericho, the Jordan, and just beyond, the Israelite encampment – correspond to the two aspects of Balaam, venal magus and inspired oracle, set forth in the *Glossa*, that seen in tandem, constitute an affirmation of God's power to express itself where- and howsoever it will, and to save all of sinful humankind, both Jews and Gentiles [Fig. 1]. Although the continuous landscape binds the image into a seamless whole, the scene at left foregrounds Balaam, implying his motion forward through the corridor of massive ruins, whereas the scene at right reverses this motion, casting our eyes deep into the landscape that fills the field of vision. Moreover, the left-hand scene depicts Balaam enclosed, or better, closed off by ruinous walls, his attention entirely focussed on the recalcitrant ass, his back turned toward the right-hand scene that by contrast appears limitlessly to expand beyond the aqueduct-like coulisse atop the high hillside. And yet, as shall soon become apparent, the panorama likewise alludes to Balaam, in effect eliding him into his proleptic vision of Israel, the vatic prospect of which he was privileged to behold in spite of himself. If *Balaam and the Angel*, as it would seem, is an image at once divided and unified, this pictorial structure accords perfectly with the exegetical argument of the *Glossa*, that invites us to meditate upon the manner and meaning of Balaam's divergent response to his prophetic vocation.

Printed from two plates, *Balaam and the Angel* consists of two joined sheets precisely coincident with this bipartite composition [Fig. 1]. Embedded signatures identify Van Heemskerck as the inventor of the image ('Martinus Hemskerck Inventor'), Coornhert as the person who executed the print ('DVC fecit'), and Hieronymus Cock as the publisher

³ On the *Spieghel onser behoudenisse*, a Dutch translation of thirty-two chapters from the *Speculum*, see Daniels L.M. Fr., O.P., *De Spieghel der menscheliker behoude- nesse* [Studiën en tekstuitgaven van Ons geestelijk erf, IX] (Tiel: 1949) XXII–XXX; and Wilson A. – Lancaster Wilson J., *A Medieval Mirror: Speculum humanae salvationis, 1324–1500* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: 1985) 212.

who commissioned it ('Hieronijmus Cock excude<bat>'). The terms 'fecit' (executed), 'invenit' or 'inventor' (invented or inventor), and 'excudebat' (published) had recently become normative for reproductive prints, that is, prints engraved in a standardized hand by masters specially trained to imitate the designs provided by specialist draughtsmen.⁴ Print publishers such as Cock, founder of the Antwerp firm *Aux Quatre Vents*, among whose elite clients was Antoine Perrenot, Bishop of Arras, oversaw the costly process of production, aiming to appeal to affluent and well educated buyers.⁵ Coornhert and Van Heemskerck, both based in Haarlem, collaborated closely between 1548 and 1559, and began working with Cock in 1553. *Balaam and the Angel* was one of several large prints he commissioned in the early 1550's to establish his reputation as a noteworthy publisher.⁶ Having secured an imperial privilege ('Cum gratia et privilegio. per An<nos> 6'), Cock started

⁴ However, Van Heemskerck and Coornhert seem to have used this terminology in a distinctive way: although Coornhert often initiated the process of finding pictorial subjects, Van Heemskerck was allowed to claim the title *inventor*, for having translated a purely notional invention into a working drawing; Coornhert would then follow this modello when etching and/or engraving the copperplate. On this procedure, see Melion W.S., "Book Review of Ilja M. Veldman, *De wereld tussen goed en kwaad*", *Print Quarterly* 9 (1992) 88–90.

⁵ On Cock, see Pauw-de Veen L., *Hieronymus Cock: prentuitgever en graveur, 1507(?)–1570* [exh. cat., Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, Brussels] (Brussels: 1970); Riggs T., *Hieronymus Cock: Printer and Publisher at the Sign of the Four Winds* (New York: 1977); and Burgers J., *In de Vier Winden: de prentuitgeverij van Hieronymus Cock, 1507/10–1570 te Antwerpen* [exh. cat., Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam] (Rotterdam: 1988). On printmaking in Antwerp, see Stock J. van der, *Printing Images in Antwerp: The Introduction of Printmaking in a City, Fifteenth Century to 1585* (Rotterdam: 1998).

⁶ Other large-format prints issued by Cock include Giorgio Ghisi's *Saint Paul Preaching in the Areopagus (School of Athens)* of 1550 and *Disputa* of 1552, both after Raphael, and *Last Supper* of 1551 after Lambert Lombard, on which see Boorsch S. – Lewis M. – Lewis R.E., *The Engravings of Giorgio Ghisi* [exh. cat., The Saint-Louis Art Museum – The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York – Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, University of California, Los Angeles] (New York: 1985) 61–70. On the collaborative method of production used for large-format prints in Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries, see Wyckoff E. – Silver L., "Size Does Matter", in *Grand Scale: Monumental Prints in the Age of Dürer and Titian*, eds. Silver – Wyckoff [exh. cat., Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College – Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven – Philadelphia Museum of Art] (New Haven – London: 2008) 8–13, esp. 11; and Boorsch S., "The Oversize Print in Italy", in *ibid.*, 35–51, esp. 46–47. On the privileges secured by Cock and their significance, see Veldman I.M., "*Bileam en de ezel in een landschap, 1554*", in *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm* 263. On Van Heemskerck and the publishers and reproductive engravers whom he supplied with drawings, see Veldman I.M., *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck* [exh. cat., Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem] (The Hague: 1986) 13–16.

marketing this important double-sheet in 1554. The privilege, which protected the print from illicit copying for a period of six years, indicates that *Balaam and the Angel* was an unusual and valuable asset in which Cock had invested time, energy, and capital.

In addition to size and scope, what made this image so uncommon as to merit the privilege, as well as the conspicuous reference to its singular invention ('Hemskerck Inventor')? In format and argument, the print diverges from the typological mode of presentation popularized for this subject in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, where the prophet's encounter with the angel prefigures either the Annunciation or, more frequently, the annunciation to Joachim of the birth of Mary [Figs. 2 and 6].⁷ This association derives from the exegetical tradition that reads *Numbers* 24: 17 as an oracle of the Incarnation: 'I see him, but not now; I behold him but not nigh: a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel'.⁸ The *Speculum* identifies this passage not with the Nativity but with the conception of Mary, whose name and uterine sanctity were proclaimed by the angel, Christ having chosen her as the vessel through whom he would enter the world to heal its sin-inflicted wounds. Her *generatio* is construed as the pivotal first step that enabled him to fulfill his vocation of service as the living embodiment of the parabolic Good Samaritan.⁹ The reference to this *parabola sive similitudo*, which Christ is seen

⁷ Based partly on the *Biblia pauperum*, which attaches two Old Testament types, as well as two pairs of prophets, to each New Testament antitype, the *Speculum humanae salvationis* increases the figurative types to three. On the system of figurative exegesis distilled in the *Speculum*, see Breitenbach E., *Speculum humanae salvationis: eine typengeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Strassburg: 1930); Daniels *Spiegel der menscheliker behouedenesse VII–XXI*; Wilson – Lancaster Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror* 111–217; Cardon B., *Manuscripts of the Speculum humanae salvationis in the Southern Netherlands (c. 1410–c. 1470): A Contribution to the Study of the 15th-Century Book Illumination and of the Function and Meaning of Historical Symbolism* (Leuven: 1996), esp. 1–41, 323–333; and Labriola A.C. – Smeltz J.W., *The Mirror of Salvation [Speculum humanae salvationis], An Edition of British Library Blockbook G. 11784* (Cambridge: 2002) 1–8.

⁸ *Numbers* 24: 17, in *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. R. Weber et al. (Stuttgart: 1994): 'videbo eum sed non modo intuebor illum sed non prope orietur stella ex Iacob et consurget virga de Israhel'. The sceptre belongs to Christ the King whose nativity the star of Bethlehem announces.

⁹ 'Capitulum tertium', in *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Augsburg, Günther Zainer: 1471/1473), unfol.: 'Necessarium fuit in primo, ut daretur matris sue generatio [...] Samaritanus custos interpretatur, per quem Hiesus Christus custos noster designatur. Et nisi custos iste in hunc mundum venisset, nunquam homo in vitam eternam introisset'. Although this edition illustrates the Annunciation, the supporting text describes the annunciation to Joachim of the conception of Mary.

Hic annunciat conceptio & sanctificatio eius in utero
 Da wirt verkündet wie cristus enpfangen ward im
 müter leib.



Capitulum Tertium.

Quoniam modum nostre redemptionis scire
 desideramus. Primo de annunciatione marie
 incipiamus. Cum enim ventura erat beata christi
 incarnatio. Necessarium fuit in primo ut daretur
 mater sue generatio. Quod ut facilius et lucidius intel-
 ligatur. Una parabola siue similitudo primo audi-
 at. Homo quidam ab hierusalem in hiericho descen-
 debat. Et in desertum veniens in latrones caecidebat.
 Qui eum spoliauerunt et vulnerauerunt. Et semivivum
 relinquentes abierunt. Videntes autem sacerdos et levi-
 ta ipsum pertransibant. Qui vulnera ipsius sanare nequi-
 bant. Tunc samaritanus quidam ille appropinquabat. Et
 misericordia motus vulnera eius sanabat. Et nisi sa-
 maritanus ille aduenisset. Nunquam sanatus ille
 sanatus fuisset. In hac parabola genus humanum siue
 homo designatur. Qui de paradiso voluptatis in hoc testu-
 m eiciebatur. Qui spoliatus est bonis et gratia sibi a deo datus
 Et vulneratus est vulnere perpetue mortalitatis. Qui

Fig. 2. *Annunciation*. Woodcut illustration from *Speculum humane sal-
 vationis* (Augsburg, Günther Zainer: 1471/73), chapter 3. By permission of
 The British Library (G.117.83).

to complete, introduces the exegetical system of types and anti-types initiated in chapter 3 of the *Speculum*, in which the annunciation of the birth of Mary is the anti-type prefigured by three types: the dream of Astyages (taken from Herodotus by way of the *Historia scholastica*) [Figs. 3 and 6], the sealed fountain in an enclosed garden (taken from the *Song of Songs*) [Figs. 4 and 7], and Balaam and the angel [Figs. 5 and 7].¹⁰ The latter subject was thus closely associated with this pattern of visual exegesis, the sequence of which, extending from the conception of Mary to the Last Judgment, it serves to inaugurate in the *Speculum*. As King Astyages envisions his daughter bearing a verdant and fruitful vine whose branches entirely overhang his kingdom, so he shall see himself eclipsed by her son Cyrus, the future liberator of the Jews [Figs. 3 and 6]; and so too, Joachim sees his daughter give birth to a royal son who shall liberate humankind from its Babylonian captivity ('de captivitate dyabolica') [Figs. 2 and 6].¹¹ And as Solomon envisages the bride as a pure fountain at the heart of a walled garden, so we must visualize Mary as sealed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit within the '[h]ortus' of her mother's womb [Figs. 2, 4, 6, and 7].¹² Finally, as Balaam, mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, foretells the star arising out of Jacob, so he prophesies *figuraliter* the birth of Mary, the future dwelling place of God ('futura Dei cella'); and as the Holy Spirit transforms Balaam's curses of Israel into blessings, so Christ through the mediation of the Virgin transforms human malediction into benediction [Figs. 2, 5, 6, and 7].¹³ Balaam's star also stands for Mary as the *stella maris* whose intercession guides storm-tossed sinners toward safe haven in Christ.¹⁴ Furthermore, this *benedicta stella* signifies the very act of visual exegesis, for it requires us to consider how we must

¹⁰ Ibid.: 'Una parabola sive similitudo primo audiatur'. On this triad of types, see Breitenbach, *Speculum humanae salvationis* 95–102; Wilson – Lancaster Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror* 146–147, and Labriola – Smeltz, *The Mirror of Salvation* 22–23.

¹¹ *Speculum*, chapt. III: 'Sed alia est mistica huius prefiguratio. Astrigi monstratum est quod filia sua Regem Cyrum generaret. Joachim nunciatus est quod filia sua Regem Christum portaret. Cyrus liberavit iudeos de captivitate Babilonica. Et Rex Christus liberavit nos de captivitate dyabolica'.

¹² Ibid.: 'Nam ortum conclusum eam in canticis nominabat. Et fonti signato, id est sigillato, eam comparabat'.

¹³ Ibid.: 'Per quod et spiritus sanctus figuraliter praeostendebat, quod nostra maledictio in benedictionem converti debebat. Et hoc fieret mediante quadam puella. Cuius ortum praefiguravit in quadam stella'.

¹⁴ Ibid.: 'Hec est beatissima maria vera stella maris, fluctuantium ductrix et adiutrix singularis'.

Rex Astyges vidit de filia sua orti vitem.
Der König Astyges sahe von seiner tochter ent-
springen einen weinteten.



multo tempe quasi semiuuus iacebat. Quia in aia
mortuus erat. licet in coepe vivebat. Quem nec sacer-
dos nec leuita sanare potuerunt. Quia nec circūcisio
nec penitentia hominem ad patriam reduxerūt. Tan-
dem samaritanus quidem a pinguabat. Et saucia
vulnera misericorditer sanabat. Samaritanus cus-
tos interpretat. Per quem hiesus xp̄us custos noster
designat. Et nisi custos iste in hūc mundum venissz
Nunqm̄ homo in vitam eternam introissz. Laudemz
z benedicamus d̄m n̄m ih̄m xp̄m. Qui venit i hūc
mundum sanare semiuuum istum. Cum aūt filius
dei in hūc m̄dm venire satagebat. Virginem de qua
nasceret p̄mittere disponebat. Misit ergo angelum
q̄ conceptōnem eius nunciauit. Et sanctificatōem in
vtero z nomen pat̄ter intimauit. Hec est beatissima
virgo maria. Per quam venit huic sauciato sanato
pia. Quam etiam deus in multis figuris p̄monstra-
uit. Et p̄phetaz oraculis m̄tiple insinuauit.

Fig. 3. *The Dream of Astyges*. Woodcut illustration from *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Augsburg, Günther Zainer: 1471/1473), chapter 3. By permission of The British Library (G.117.83).

Ortus conclusus fons signatus p̄figavit Mariam
Der verchlossen gart. vnd verzeichnet brunn bezeit.
tend Mariam.



Prima figura.

Rex Astages visionē mirabilem videbat. Quō
videbat de vtero filie sue vitis pulcherrima
crescebat. Que frondibus ⁊ folijs se amenissi-
me dilatabat. Et fructus p̄ferens. totum regnū suū
obumbrabat. Didum est autem ei. quam interp̄ta-
tōnem hec visio gerat. Quō videbat de filia sua rex ma-
gnus nasciturus erat. Hec filia. p̄ hec Cyp̄um regem
generavit. Qui filios israhel de captiuitate babilōni-
ca liberauit. Hec est litteralis huius visionis signifi-
catio. Sed alia est mystica huius p̄figuratio. Asta-
gi monstratum est. q̄ filia sua Regem Cyp̄um gene-
raret. Joachim nunciatum est. q̄ filia sua Regem
Christum portaret. Cyp̄us liberauit iudeos de captiui-
tate Babilonica. Et Rex Christus liberauit nos de
captiuitate dyabolica. Filia ergo regis Astagis figu-
rat mariam. Que p̄tulit m̄do vitam veram ⁊ piam.
Benedicta sis tu O sūmi regis filia. Glos candēs sup
omnia lilia. Benedicta sit tue p̄ceptōnis annūciatio

Fig. 4. *The Sealed Fountain in an Enclosed Garden*. Woodcut illustration from *Speculum humane salutacionis* (Augsburg, Günther Zainer: 1471/1473), chapter 3. By permission of The British Library (G.117.83).

Balaam ppheta p̄figurauit cœtum marie per stellam
Numeri. Balaam ter pphet hauc vortedeu ter ten
vrsprung marie durch ten steren.



Dei quam cœtū habuit nostre captiuitatis liberatio
Benedictus sit deus pater qui te nobis restituit. Be-
nedictus sit dei filius qui te i matrem adoptauit. Be-
nedictus sit spūs sanctus qui te in vtero sanctificauit
Benedictus sit vterq; patens qui te mūdo generauit.

Secunda figura

O hac beatissima filia etiam salomon p̄cne-
bat. **Q** in vtero matris sue sanctificari debe-
bat. Nam cœtum conclusum eam in canticis
nominabat. Et fonti signato id est sigillato eam cō-
pabat. Que cum mater adhuc in vtero conclusum
ferebat. Spiritus sanctus ei sanctificatōnem infun-
debat. Et sigillo sancte trinitatis sic eam signabat.
Q in eam nunq̄m aliquid coinquatum intrabat
O maria tu es vere cœtus omniū deliciarum. Et fons
indeficiens sitientium animatum.

Tercia figura

Fig. 5. *Balaam and the Angel*. Woodcut illustration from *Speculum humane salvationis* (Augsburg, Günther Zainer: 1471/1473), chapter 3. By permission of The British Library (G.117.83).

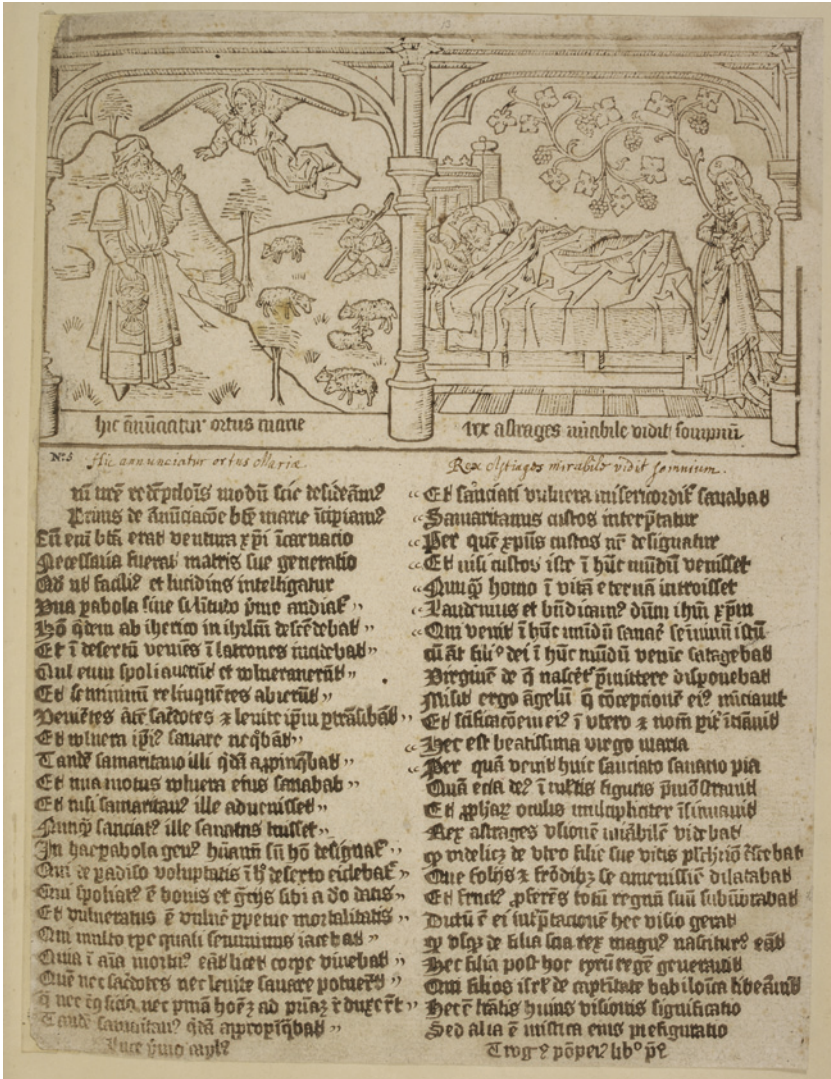


Fig. 6. Annunciation to Joachim of Anna's Conception of Mary and The Dream of Astyages. Woodcut illustration from *Speculum humanae salvationis* (n.p. [Holland?]; ca. 1470), chapter 3. By permission of The British Library (G.117.84).

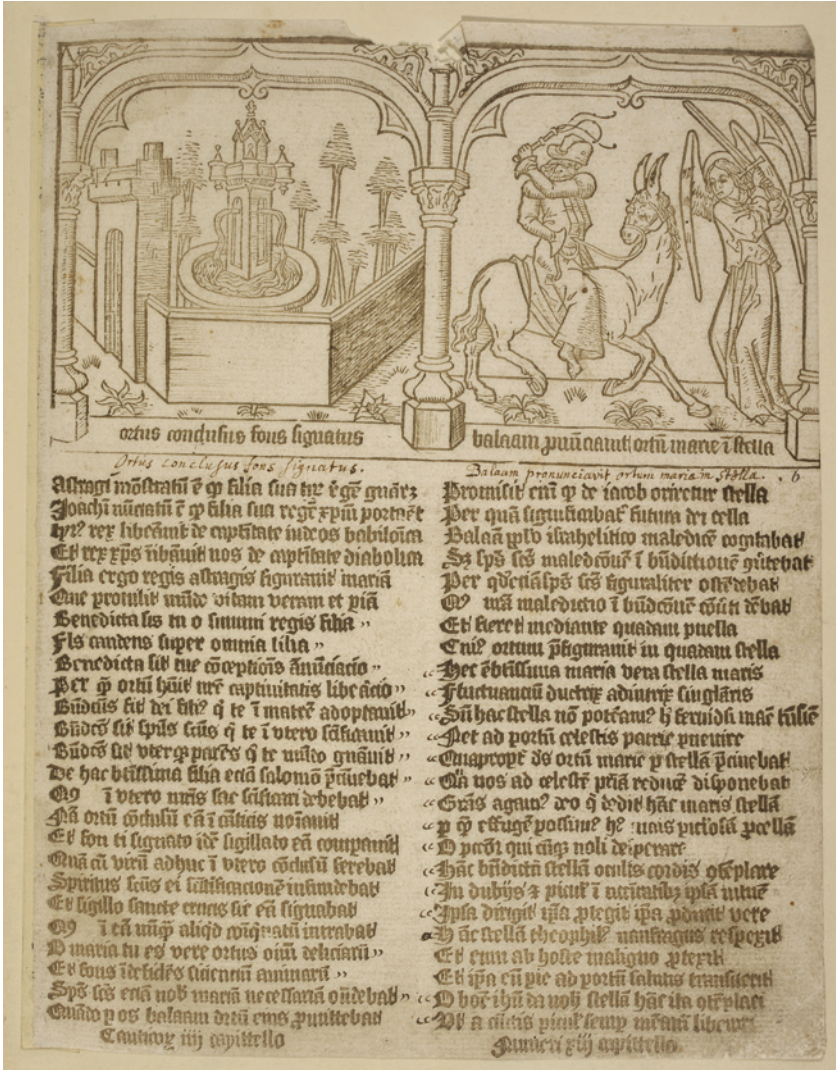


Fig. 7. *The Sealed Fountain in an Enclosed Garden and Balaam and the Angel.* Woodcut illustration from *Speculum humanae salvationis* (n.p. [Holland?]: ca. 1470), chapter 3. By permission of The British Library (G.117.84).

gaze not with corporeal but with spiritual eyes, interpreting the star as an image of Mary *mediatrix* who ensures the forgiveness of even the gravest sins: ‘O sinner, despair not, however much you have sinned. Instead contemplate this blessed star with the eyes of the heart (oculis cordis contemplant)’.¹⁵ As the *Speculum* text indicates, the woodcuts of *Balaam and the Angel* generally conflate two episodes from *Numbers* 22–24: the advent of the star prophesied in the fourth of his five oracles is combined with the episode of his encounter with the angel; more precisely, Balaam is shown beating the ass that reproves him for unjustly punishing her and failing to see the menacing angel [Fig. 5]. The latter scene refers to his intention of cursing Israel, since he is en route to Balak when the angel bars his path and instructs him to speak only as God enjoins. The star either appears within the image or is evoked by the caption: ‘Abraham prophesied the birth of Mary in a star’.¹⁶ In addition, visual analogies – the angel announcing the birth of Mary and the vine foretelling the birth of Cyrus, or the position of Astyages’s daughter and that of Balaam’s angel – connect the various scenes, prompting the viewer to search for exegetical analogies that likewise connect the antitype and its types [Figs. 6 and 7].

Van Heemskerck and Coornhert have clearly rejected this allegorical reading of *Numbers*, that identifies Balaam’s prophecy of the star and his inability to curse Israel, as Marian types [Fig. 1]. They attend far more to historical detail and topology, and their panoramic image cleaves closely to the biblical account, observing the unities of time and place, at least apparently. For example, the king’s messengers with whom Balaam travelled to Moab descend the hillside at right, their caravan consisting of nobles on camelback accompanied by soldiers. The angel blocked Balaam’s way three times, causing the ass to stray off course, and the sites of the second and third detours are precisely described—the narrow path between vineyards and the walled boundary against which the ass retreated, crushing her master’s foot. Having twice beaten the fearful animal, Balaam raises his hand against her a third time, for she has lain down beneath him, and she miraculously chastises him for his futile and merciless rage. The fury with which he threatens to kill the she-ass is made palpable: ‘And Balaam said [to the

¹⁵ Ibid.: ‘O peccator, quantumcunque peccasti, noli desperare. Hanc benedictam stellam oculis cordis contemplant’.

¹⁶ *Speculum humanae salvationis* (n.p. [Holland?]: c. 1470), unfol.: ‘Balaam pronuntiavit ortum Marie in stella’.

ass], “Because you have made sport of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you”.¹⁷ Van Heemskerck and Coornhert have thus portrayed Balaam just before the Lord opens his eyes to the angel’s minatory presence, and he confesses his sin of having pressed God to let him go to Balak and more importantly, of having failed to recognize the divine will, as embodied by the angel. The sinful Balaam, not the prophet of the Incarnation, and certainly not the oracle of the Virgin, is the personage they vividly characterize.

This image of the prophet derives from the historical print of *Numbers* 22 in one of the earliest illustrated bibles published in Antwerp – Hansken van Liesveldt’s *Bybel met groter neersticheyt gecorrigeert* of 1538 [Fig. 8].¹⁸ Adapted from the celebrated woodcut in Hans Sebald Beham’s *Biblische Historien* of 1533, this print represents the precise moment when Balaam first describes the angel, having been chided by the recalcitrant ass. The position of the protagonists in the two woodcuts is relatively similar, as also is the confrontational attitude of the angel, its diagonal motion enhanced forcefully in the later print [Figs. 1 and 8]. The hilly setting is also comparable, though very much simplified in the print of ca. 1538. Like all the illustrations in the Van Liesveldt Bible, *Balaam and the Angel* invites a close historical reading of the scriptural text summarized in the image, that functions like a rubric, and it was no doubt this aspect of the print that appealed to Van Heemskerck and Coornhert, as they formulated their alternative to the allegorical image in the *Speculum*. However, they diverged from this model in one important respect: gripped by blind rage, heatedly conversing with the she-ass, Balaam remains oblivious to the avenging angel, his eyes as yet lowered. That the angel is so radiant and yet unseen, enhances the viewer’s sense that Balaam is virtually blind. Subject to his passions and spiritually inattentive, he is characterized as the flawed prophet invoked in 2 *Peter* 2: 15, *Jude* 1: 11, and *Revelation* 2: 14. The Latin inscription underscores the prophet’s failings in terms borrowed from these New Testament places, accusing him of impiety, injustice, cupidity, and iniquitous rage: ‘Whither do you hasten, mad-

¹⁷ *Biblia Sacra*, *Numbers* 22: 29: ‘respondit Balaam: quia commeruisti et ilusisti mihi. Utinam haberem gladium, ut te percuterem’.

¹⁸ On this print, copied from the woodcut in Simon Cock’s *Historien ende prophecien* of 1535, see Rosier B., *The Bible in Print: Netherlandish Bible Illustration in the Sixteenth Century*, 2 vols. (Leiden: 1997) I 216; and Melion, “Scripture for the Eyes” 49–50. On the richly illustrated 1538 edition of *Den Bybel met groter neersticheyt gecorrigeert*, published in Antwerp by Jacob van Liesveldt’s son Hansken, see Rosier, *Bible in Print* I 26, 213–222.



Fig. 8. *Balaam and the Angel*. Woodcut illustration to *Numbers 22*, from *Den Bybel met groter neersticheyt gecorrigeert* (Antwerp, Hansken van Liesveldt: 1538), fol. G1v. By permission of The British Library (3041.g.6).

man? Balaam, why with unjust rod do you strike the innocent she-ass? You shall but punish impiously. Knowing the truth, you yet proceed to oppose it, your counsel being dreadful, and nor does a knowing conscience deter you. The hope of reward, the wicked longing for riches makes you do this. And therefore the fearful Fates pursue you. Beware! For whoever knowingly opposes truth with sacrilegious intent shall incur the wrath of an offended God'.¹⁹

This strongly moralizing text, possibly composed by Hadrianus Junius, negatively exemplifies Balaam as a corrupt prophet [Fig. 1]. In particular, *2 Peter 2: 15–16* provided the basis for the image and

¹⁹ 'Quo vaesane ruis? Quid verbere cedis iniquo/ Insonem, Balaame, asinam? Dabis impie poenas./ Cognosti verum, sed vero obsistere pergis/ Consilio horrendo, nec te mens conscia terret./ Hoc spes mercedis, lucri scelerata cupido/ Hoc facit. Ergo tibi dira instant fata. Caveto./ Nam quisquis vero adversatur conscius, ausu/ Sacrilego, offensi experietur numinis iram'.

the inscription, that together convey his cupidinous and duplicitous temperament: 'Forsaking the right way they have gone astray; they have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a dumb ass spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness'.²⁰ Balaam stands for the false prophets and teachers whom Peter decries for distorting the 'knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ'.²¹ Other passages in *2 Peter 2* are equally relevant: having failed to discern the angel, unaware of his sinful ignorance, he stands for 'whoever [...] is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins'.²² Enraged and vengeful, he epitomizes the 'corruption that is in the world because of passion'.²³ He embodies the opposite of the true follower of Christ, whose virtues concatenate – self-knowledge linking to self-control, self-control to steadfastness, steadfastness to godliness, godliness to brotherly affection, and brotherly affection to love.²⁴ What is more, the pagan ruins hemming him in and strewn throughout the landscape refer to the 'ancient world' that God 'did not spare' and the 'cities [...] he condemned [...] to extinction', as examples of the wages of sin.²⁵ In *Revelation 2: 14*, John reprimands the church of Pergamum for preserving the 'teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality'.²⁶ The three idols standing in niches of the ruined temple behind Balaam (two at right, one at distant left) surely allude to the prophet's association with idolatry, which is

²⁰ *Biblia Sacra*, 2 *Peter 2: 15–16*: 'derelinquentes rectam viam erraverunt secuti viam Balaam ex Bosor qui mercedem iniquitatis amavit. correptionem vero habuit suae vesaniae subiugale mutum in hominis voce loquens prohibuit prophetae insipientiam'. On Junius as a supplier of Latin inscriptions and poetic inventions, see Veldman I.M., "Maarten van Heemskerck and Hadrianus Junius: The Relationship between a Painter and a Humanist", *Simiolus* 7, 1 (1974) 35–54.

²¹ *Biblia Sacra*, 2 *Peter 1: 8*: 'haec enim vobis cum adsint et superent, non vacuos nec sine fructu vos constituent in Domini nostri Iesu Christi cognitione'.

²² *Biblia Sacra*, 2 *Peter 1: 9*: 'cui enim non praesto sunt haec, caecus est et manu temptans oblivionem accipiens purgationis veterum suorum delictorum'.

²³ *Biblia Sacra*, 2 *Peter 1: 4*: 'quae in mundo est concupiscentiae corruptionem'.

²⁴ *Biblia Sacra*, 2 *Peter 1: 5–7*.

²⁵ *Biblia Sacra*, 2 *Peter 2: 5–6*: 'et originali mundo non pepercit [...] et civitates [...] in cinerem redigens eversione damnavit exemplum eorum, qui impie acturi sunt, ponens'. Among the ruins are a Roman triumphal arch and the Septizonium, as Veldman observes; see "*Bileam en de ezel*" 263.

²⁶ *Biblia Sacra*, *Revelation 2: 14*: 'sed habeo adversus te pauca quia habes illic tenentes doctrinam Balaam qui docebat Balac mittere scandalum coram filiis Israhel edere et fornicari'.

further confirmed in *Numbers* 25: 1–3, *Deuteronomy* 23: 4, and *Joshua* 13: 22. Together these texts indict him for having advised Balak to deploy the ‘daughters of Moab’ as seducers of the Jews and inciters to idolatry, by means of whom he might alienate them from God, vanquishing his enemies by feminine means rather than by force of arms.²⁷ *Jude* 1: 11 adduces Balaam as a venal practitioner of divination for hire, referring implicitly to his insistence on journeying to Moab, in spite of God’s initial prohibition, as also to his insatiable desire for the reward he was offered in payment for his curses.²⁸ Two elements of the left-hand scene especially underscore Balaam’s association with purblind idolatry: the graven image that seems to stare down at him, its line of sight matching his, as if to emphasize that his inability to see the angel is bound up with the cult of idols; and the fact that the decayed and crumbling architecture, its effigies redolent of a pagan sanctuary, its oculus evocative of the Pantheon, blocks his view of the prophetic landscape that unfolds at right. Just beyond the apsidal wall overgrown with vines, the soldier who beckons toward the landscape, his hand extended in a pointing gesture, plays the traditional part of a mediative figure, inviting the viewer to do what Balaam, as he appears at left, cannot – namely, to look up and out at the people encamped on the far shore of the distant Jordan.

The notion that Balaam was irremediably flawed in fact derives from the *Historia scholastica*, in which Petrus Comestor enumerates his many failings. Being no true prophet, he merely feigned to consult God, when first approached by Balak’s representatives; indeed, his true master was Satan, whom he honored with the title Lord.²⁹ Covetous beyond measure, he plotted against the divine will, seeking any opportunity of cursing Israel, even after God had commanded him to do

²⁷ *Biblia Sacra*, *Numbers* 25: 1: ‘et fornicatus est populus cum filiabus Moab’. With reference to the events described in *Numbers* 25: 1–3, the *Glossa* censures Balaam for his teaching (‘doctrinam’), that caused the Israelites to be conquered by luxury, desire, avarice, impiety, and all wickedness (‘faciunt autem vinci, luxuria, libido, avaritia, impietas et omnis malitia’); see *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXV, vol. I, fol. 310v, col. 1F.

²⁸ *Biblia Sacra*, *Jude* 1: ‘vae illis quia via Cain abierunt et errore Balaam mercede effusi sunt et contradictione Core perierunt’.

²⁹ Comestor, Petrus, *Historia scholastica magistri Petri Comestoris sacre scripture seriem brevem nimis et obscuram elucidans* (Paris, Francoys Regnault: 1518), unfol.: ‘Domini enim prophetam si mentiebatur, licet in sacrificando consuleret demones, forte demonem qui sibi loquebatur, dominum vocabat’.

otherwise.³⁰ When God lifted his prohibition, allowing him to answer Balak's call, he was speaking ironically, calling attention to Balaam's inability to resist temptation. Balaam was of course incapable of ascertaining the Lord's displeasure.³¹ When reproached by the she-ass, he was neither fearful nor amazed, for accustomed to evil portents, he felt no terror at the animal's sudden power of speech.³² There is only one qualification to this inventory of moral failings: Balaam's prophecy first revealed the coming of Christ to the Gentiles, among whom his texts were preserved, ultimately inspiring the Magi to come to Judea when the star announced the Saviour's birth.³³ The *Historia scholastica* offers a compendium of Balaam's many shortcomings, that perhaps underlies his presentation in the left half of *Balaam and the Angel*, but neither this source nor the New Testament passages summarized in the inscription correlates with the panoramic vista filling the right-half of the print.

This expansive view instead adumbrates Balaam's prophetic vision of the greatness of Israel and the glorious coming of the Messiah [Fig. 1]. In *Numbers* 22–24, Balak takes Balaam to three high places, whence he sees the Israelites encamped on the plains of Jericho: the bare height of Bamoth-baal, then the summit of Mount Pisgah, and finally the summit of Mount Peor. From these vantage points, he first sees the 'farthest part of the people' ('intuitus est extremam partem populi'), then a portion of the whole ('partem Israhelis videas et totum videre non possis'), and finally the whole of 'Israel encamping tribe by tribe' ('elevans oculos vidit Israhel in tentoriis commorantem per tribus suas').³⁴ Instructed to curse the interlopers, he finds himself compelled by God thrice to bless them with prophecies of their invincibility and righteousness, much to Balak's displeasure. His first oracle concerns their singularity and fecundity: 'For from the top of the mountains I see him, from the hills I behold him; lo, a people dwelling alone, and not reckoning itself among the nations! Who can count the

³⁰ Ibid.: 'Mutaverat enim propositum et captus cupiditate promissorum disponebat, quomodo populo malediceret'.

³¹ Ibid.: 'Iosephus videtur velle quod dominus iratus quasi ironice dixerit ei, "Vade cum eis". Quod quia non intellexit, obstitit ei angelus'.

³² Ibid.: 'Assuetus iste monstis ad vocem asini non expavit'.

³³ Ibid.: 'Secundum hoc vaticinium dicitur venisse magos in iudeam visa stella. Et tunc extitisse apud eos scripta balaam super hac re'.

³⁴ *Biblia Sacra, Numbers* 22: 41; 23: 13–14, 28, and 24: 2.

dust of Jacob, or number the fourth part of Israel?³⁵ His second oracle praises the people's piety and strength: 'For there is no enchantment in Jacob, no divination in Israel [...] it does not lie down till it devours the prey'.³⁶ His third foretells the coming of Saul, the exaltation of the Jews under the reign of their kings, and their imminent conquests in Canaan: 'Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, the king shall be higher than Agag [...] he shall eat up the nations his adversaries'.³⁷ Formerly closed, his eyes are now fully opened ('homo cuius obturatus est oculus [...] et sic aperiuntur oculi eius'), and his field of vision dilates to embrace two further oracles, both relating to the Christian future ('qui novit doctrinam Altissimi et visiones Omnipotentis videt'): first he foresees the 'star [to] come forth out of Jacob' and the 'sceptre [to] rise out of Israel', and then he predicts the victories over Moab, Edom, Seir, and Amalek, to be followed successively by the rise of Assyria and Rome, all of which foreshadows the final triumph of Christ.³⁸ The panoramic vista, which I have previously construed as historically consequent, can be seen alternatively as a digest or distillation of the act of viewing from a high place that encompasses the full scope of Balaam's visionary *prospectus* of Jacob and Israel. Beheld from the 'top of the mountains', encamped amidst woods on the far side of the Jordan, the Israelites are depicted as a 'people dwelling alone', their distant tents likened to 'shady and

³⁵ *Biblia Sacra*, *Numbers* 23: 9–10: 'de summis silicibus videbo eum et de collibus considerabo illum; populus solus habitabit et inter gentes non reputabitur. Quis dinumerare possit pulverem Iacob et nosse numerum stirpis Israel'.

³⁶ *Biblia Sacra*, *Numbers* 23: 23–24: 'non est augurium in Iacob nec divinatio in Israel [...] non accubabit donec devoret praedam'.

³⁷ *Biblia Sacra*, *Numbers* 24: 7–8, in *ibid.*: 'fluet aqua de situla eius et semen illius erit in aquas multas tolletur propter Agag rex eius [...] devorabunt gentes hostes illius'. 'Devorabunt' refers to the people led by their king, which is why, following the Douai Bible, I have substituted 'he' for 'they'.

³⁸ *Numbers* 24: 17–24. In the *Additio* to *Numbers* 22–24, the *Glossa* states that Balaam made a fivefold prophesy, delivering four oracles about the people of Israel ('quod quatuor prophetiae istius Balaam videntur respicere quatuor status populi Israelitici') and one about the Gentiles ('in qua visione seu prophetia agit de tribus generibus dentium'). The four oracles concern four historical phases: from Abraham to the giving of the Law, from then to the donation of the promised land, from then to the time of the kings and the temple, and finally, from the advent of Christ to his second coming. The fifth oracle pertains to the Gentiles, whom Balaam informs about the kingdom of Christ, which shall vanquish all nations, that of the Hebrews included. On these five oracles and their subdivisions, see *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXIII.–XXV, fol. 310v, col. 2G.

arboreous valleys', 'gardens beside a river', 'cedars beside the waters'.³⁹ The many ruins dotting the landscape (the Septizonium among them), along with the Roman triumphal arch, allude to the oracles of nations risen and fallen, their peoples come to destruction, that Balaam sees once his vision is unveiled: 'The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye was closed, the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, but having his eyes uncovered'.⁴⁰ Viewed in these terms, the scene at left, in which the she-ass collapses beneath Balaam who looks neither at the angel nor the vista, would stand for the blinkered prophet's 'falling down' ('cuius obturatus est oculus [...] qui cadit'), prior to his arrival in Moab, whereas the scene at right would constitute an anticipatory synopsis of the prophet's act of viewing from the high places in Moab. First prompted to judge Balaam as spiritually blind, we are then allowed to see through his eyes, once they have been opened. It is important to emphasize that what transpires at right is not a literal representation of the prophet's fivefold benediction, for any oracular elements that operate purely as visionary allegory, such as the lion that drinks the blood of the slain, are excluded. Moreover, the sequence of prophecies is synchronized into an temporally integrative panorama. Rather, we are given the opportunity to see what was there to be seen, upon which the precise imagery of the oracles, as recorded in Scripture, may be projected. By superimposing this metaphorical imagery, we spiritually transform the literal vista, aligning it more closely with the prophecies that require to be seen and read in a way Balaam himself failed to educe – with the mind, heart, and sense. As I shall presently suggest, this is how the *Glossa* challenges us to look into the distance with Balaam, and by so looking, exegetically to transcend him.

Like the scene of Balaam and the angel, the panoramic vista derives from an illustration in a printed bible. In various editions of the Van Liesveldt Bible, the map *Position and Borders of the Promised Land* is inserted into *Numbers* 22–24, where it illustrates Balaam's fivefold prophecy of the triumph of Israel and advent of Christ [Fig. 9].⁴¹ In the

³⁹ *Biblia Sacra*, *Numbers* 23: 9 and 24: 6: 'ut valles nemorosae, ut orti iuxta fluvios inrigui, ut tabernacula quae fixit Dominus quasi cedri propter aquas'.

⁴⁰ *Biblia Sacra*, *Numbers* 24: 3–4: 'dixit Balaam filius Beor, dixit homo cuius obturatus est oculus, dixit auditor sermonum Dei, qui visionem Omnipotentis intuitus est, qui cadit et sic aperiuntur oculi eius'.

⁴¹ On this map, captioned *Die ghelegentheit ende die palen des lants van Beloften*, which first appeared in the Liesveldt Bible of 1526 and the Vorsterman Bible of 1528,



Fig. 9. *Position and Borders of the Promised Land, Including the Exodus.* Woodcut illustration to *Numbers 22–24*, from *Den Bybel met groter neersticheyt gecorrigeert* (Antwerp, Hansken van Liesveldt: 1538). By permission of The British Library (3041.g.6).

1538 edition, the woodcut map follows the small print of *Balaam and the Angel*, that portrays the moment when the prophet, his eyes divinely opened, describes the angel and promises to utter only what the Lord shall give him to speak [Fig. 8].⁴² As this print marks his acquisition of spiritual sight, so the map represents his expanding spiritual vision of Israel's future glory. The highlands of Moab, where Balak met Balaam at the river Arnon, lie east of Edom, south of the Ammorite kingdom, and north of the Arabian mountains. Balaam first saw the Israelites from these mountains, praising their fecundity and righteousness, and

see Delano-Smith C. and Morley Ingram E., *Maps in Bibles, 1500–1600: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Geneva: 1991) XXII–XXIV, 25–26; copied from the map of Exodus in Christopher Froschauer's German Old Testament of 1525, this map ultimately derives from Lucas Cranach's woodcut wall map issued sometime between 1508 and 1518. Delano-Smith and Morley Ingram argue that the map exemplifies Luther's conviction, based on *Hebrews 11: 23–29*, that the Exodus demonstrates faith in the fidelity of God, rather than prefiguring the sacrament of Baptism or the Resurrection of Christ.

⁴² On *Balaam and the Angel*, see note 18, above.



Fig. 10a

Fig. 10. Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert, after Maarten van Heemskerck, *The Story of Ruth and Boaz* (1550). Etching, 28.7 × 43.2 cm (left plate), 28.4 × 42.7 cm (right plate). London, The British Museum.

forecasting their singular destiny. From Mount Pisgah whence less of the Israelite camp is visible, there ensues the second prophecy, exalting Israel led from Egypt by the power of the Lord. This oracle expands to encompass the map's southwestern quadrant: Egypt, the highlands of Edom and Midian, and the route tracing the Exodus (as well as the vignettes portraying Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, Moses promulgating the tablets of the law, and Moses raising the brazen serpent). From the summit of Mount Peor (just west of the wilderness of Zin), Balaam lifts up his eyes, and seeing the twelve tribes encamped, delivers his final prophecy, his vision swelling to reveal the full extent of this people's future ascendancy. There follows the oracle of the Incarnation, prefigured by the triumph of Israel, as well as the final oracle of the kingdoms. In the topographical map, these closing visions correspond to the panoramic vista comprised by Canaan and the tribal territories, their names clearly designated. The battle vignette bounded by the tributaries Arnon and Saret stands for the military victories foretold by Balaam. This cartographical landscape licensed the depiction of Balaam's prophecies through a panorama containing



Fig. 10b

the places he beheld, into the viewing of which his implied presence is subsumed.

As a matter of fact, Van Heemskerck regularly associated biblical prophecy with the prophet's, and by implication, the viewer's act of regarding a panoramic vista. In one of his earliest designs, *The Story of Ruth and Boaz* of 1550, etched and possibly published by Coornhert, the pseudo-prophecy concerning Ruth, who would build up the house of Israel as had Rachel and Leah, and Boaz, whose house would prosper in Ephrathah (Bethlehem) as had the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, is evoked by a landscape encompassing fertile, well-watered fields and a populous city, over which presides the effigy of Moses holding the tablets of the law [Fig. 10].⁴³ The fecundity of the Judean hill country is a premonition of the fruitfulness of Ruth and Boaz, the future ancestors of Christ (by way of Obed, Jesse, and David).⁴⁴ The ten elders who blessed their nuptials, prophesying the

⁴³ *Ruth* 4: 11–12. On *The Story of Ruth and Boaz*, one of the earliest collaborative prints by Van Heemskerck and Coornhert, see Veldman, *New Hollstein: Maarten van Heemskerck* I 90–91, no. 91.

⁴⁴ The lineage leading from Perez to David by way of Boaz is enumerated in *Ruth* 4: 18–22.

great things to come, cluster beside the Bethlehem gate at right. In *Jonah Complaining under the Gourd*, engraved by Philips Galle and published by Cock in 1562, the distant prospect of Nineveh, visible through an immense arch, refers both to Jonah's prophecy of the sinful city's destruction and to God's steadfast love of its penitent inhabitants, whose compunction causes him to relent, calling forth divine mercy [Fig. 11].⁴⁵ Furious that God, who forced him to deliver this oracle, now seems inclined to contravene it, Jonah stations himself outside Nineveh, where he waits to see whether the city shall indeed be saved or destroyed. As the Latin inscription makes clear, the panorama thus fulfills several functions: it bears witness to the 'clementia Dei', but also to the 'tumida caro' (prideful flesh) of Jonah, who desires to see his prediction vindicated, whatever the cost.⁴⁶ Beheld from a low vantage point that matches that of Jonah, the landscape aligns our viewing of the print with his visual gauging of his prophecy; by thus placing us in his moral position, the image warns against the imperfections found even 'in sanctissimis hominibus', but also confirms God's boundless compassion 'erga creaturas'. Jonah looks heavenward, his hands clasped in prayer, which indicates that he is learning the lesson implicit in the parable of the gourd: 'You pity the plant, for which you did not labour, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?'⁴⁷ His upward gaze tacitly transfers the city view to our charge, making it the object of our gaze and thereby equating us with the wayward prophet ('donec videret quid accideret civitati'). In a sense, we are made more like Jonah than the Jonah who appears in the engraving. This substitutive device is a variation on the one introduced in *Balaam and the Angel*, where the prophetic landscape expands to fill the viewer's line of sight; to the extent that this vista is comprised

⁴⁵ *Jonah* 3: 3–4 and 4: 1–11. On *Jonah Complaining under the Gourd*, see Veldman, *New Hollstein: Maarten van Heemskerck* I 153, no. 178.

⁴⁶ 'Natura et clementia Dei erga creaturas per Jonam prophetam ostenditur, rursus quam tumida caro etiam in sanctissimis hominibus, quae sibi consultum vult cum iactura proximorum demonstratur'.

⁴⁷ *Biblia Sacra, Jonah* 4: 10–11: 'et dixit Dominus tu doles super hederam in qua non laborasti neque fecisti ut cresceret, quae sub una nocte nata est et una nocte perit; et ego non parcam Nineve civitati magnae, in qua sunt plus quam centum viginti milia hominum qui nesciunt quid sit inter dexteram et sinistram suam et iumenta multa'.



Fig. 11. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Jonah Complaining under the Gourd* (1562). Engraving, 15.2 × 26.2 cm. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, Prentenkabinet.

by our vantage point, we are identified with the ‘other’ Balaam, that is, with the oracle inspired by the spirit of God (‘elevans oculos vidit Israhel [...] inruente in se spiritu Dei’).⁴⁸

Two additional designs, both engraved by Galle, install their respective prophets at the threshold of the image, where they double for the viewer looking at and into the landscape. *Elisha Receiving Elijah’s Mantle* of 1571 illustrates how Elisha, having seen Elijah taken up into heaven, receives a double portion of his master’s spirit of prophecy [Fig. 12].⁴⁹ The wide-angle view of Jericho stands for the breadth of his oracular faculty, while the towering effigy within the Colosseum-like amphitheatre, presages the use of his new-found gift to combat idolatry. *Isaiah’s Prophecy over Jerusalem* of 1564 depicts the proud city as it is described and forewarned in *Isaiah* 1–4: the many monuments and ornaments, most conspicuously the two obelisks, reveal that this is a ‘land filled with silver and gold’, replete ‘with no end of treasures’, whose people, ‘their looks haughty’, ‘bow down to the works of their

⁴⁸ *Numbers* 24: 2.

⁴⁹ *2 Kings* 2: 9–13. On *Elisha Receiving Elijah’s Mantle*, see Veldman, *New Hollstein: Maarten van Heemskerck*, I 122, no. 138.



Fig. 12. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Elisha Receiving Elijah's Mantle* (1571). Engraving, 17.3 × 32.5 cm. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, Prentenkabinet.

hands' [Fig. 13].⁵⁰ The palatial water-garden at left recalls the pleasure 'gardens [they] have chosen', in preference to serving the Lord.⁵¹ The walled temple, its portico tower rising high over the city, identifies Jerusalem as a place abounding in corporeal rather than spiritual sacrifices, and alludes to the divine admonition, 'I have had enough of burnt offerings'.⁵² The Latin inscription, composed by Hadrianus Junius, underscores this reference, condemning the 'impious sin-offerings of [this] hard-hearted people' ('*durae scelerata placula gentis*').⁵³ The colossal sun casting its brilliant light over the city foretells the 'glory of [the Lord's] majesty', that shall 'rise to terrify the earth', striking down all that is 'proud and lofty [...] lifted up and high'.⁵⁴ The blazing sun also evokes Isaiah's oracle of the city's destruction, when 'like a garden without water', the 'strong shall become tow, and his work

⁵⁰ *Biblia Sacra, Isaiah 2: 7–8*: 'repleta est terra argento et auro et non est finis thesaurorum eius [...] et repleta est terra eius idolis opus manuum suarum adoraverunt quod fecerunt digiti eorum'. On *Isaiah's Prophecy over Jerusalem*, see Veldman, *New Hollstein: Maarten van Heemskerck*, I 146, no. 169.

⁵¹ *Biblia Sacra, Isaiah 1: 29*: 'et erubescetis super hortis quos elegeratis'.

⁵² *Biblia Sacra, Isaiah 1: 11*: 'dicit Dominus plenus sum holocausta arietum'.

⁵³ 'Exagitat vates tensis ad sidera palmis Isacidum *durae scelerata placula gentis*'.

⁵⁴ *Biblia Sacra, Isaiah 2: 12*: 'quia dies Domini exercituum super omnem superbum et excelsum et super omnem arrogantem et humiliabitur'; 2: 21: 'a facie formidinis Domini et a gloria maiestatis eius cum surrexerit percutere terram'.



Fig. 13. Philips Galle, after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Isaiah's Prophecy over Jerusalem* (1564). Engraving, 17.9 × 29.0 cm. London, The British Museum.

a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with none to quench them'.⁵⁵ So too, the intense, unremitting light stands in opposition to the contra-oracle of the survivors of Israel and remnants of Jerusalem who shall be sheltered and saved: 'Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for over all the glory there will be a canopy and a pavilion. It will be for a shade by day from the heat'.⁵⁶ The viewer, seeing Jerusalem through the prophet's eyes, is prompted to observe it as it appears, but also as it shall be, when in the imagery of Isaiah, the majestic light that destroys becomes the flaming fire that preserves. Like *Balaam and the Angel*, the panoramic image propounds a template in and through which a great, multi-part prophecy, here the oracle opening the Book of Isaiah, may be visualized dynamically, as if it were unfolding at first hand.

⁵⁵ *Biblia Sacra, Isaiah* 1: 30–31: 'et velut hortus absque aqua, et erit fortitudo vestra ut favilla stuppae et opus vestrum quasi scintilla et succendetur utrumque simul et non erit qui extinguat'.

⁵⁶ *Biblia Sacra, Isaiah* 4: 5–6: 'et creabit Dominus super omnem locum montis Sion et ubi invocatus est nubem per diem et fumum et splendorem ignis flammantis in nocte super omnem enim gloriam protectio, et tabernaculum erit in umbraculum diei ab aestu et in securitatem et absconsionem a turbine et a pluvia'.

Although *Balaam and the Angel* shares the panoramic format of these prints about prophecy, it differs in complexity, for the bipartite print juxtaposes two accounts of the prophet – the one based on *Numbers* 22–24, as it is read in *2 Peter* 2, *Jude* 1, and *Revelation* 2, the other on the passages describing what Balaam was inspired to see from the heights of Moab [Fig. 1]. Together these two halves constitute a meditative crux upon which we are invited to reflect. The two readings of Balaam accord with the ways he is judged within two exegetical traditions, the one summarized by the largely positive *Speculum*, the other by the thoroughly negative *Historia*. In the one case he epitomizes spiritual blindness, in the other he is the divine instrument whose prophecies enable the beholder to exercise spiritual discernment by means of a simplified exegetical procedure. The print urges us to consider how the former condition transforms into the latter, when the eye once closed becomes the eye now opened. We might put this differently, noting that *Balaam and the Angel* poses an heuristic problem, combining contradictory readings of Balaam, that prompt us to question our understanding of his dual significance as a harbinger of the Incarnation and a negative exemplum of simony.⁵⁷ The doubleness of Balaam is a theme upon which the *Glossa* dwells, and this is why I propose it as the bipartite print's exegetical paradigm.

The *Glossa* interprets Balaam as himself bipartite, basing this reading on the two kinds of prophet he is seen to embody – *prophetae Dei et daemonum* – the latter by inclination, the former by force majeure. Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla*, standard in printed editions of the *Glossa*, explains this distinction: 'However, when revelation occurs through demons, such men are called the prophets of demons; but when it comes directly from God or through the mediation of holy angels, they are called prophets of God'.⁵⁸ The curious thing about Balaam is that he represents both kinds; how and why this is so, and what it implies, are the key questions addressed in the chapters on *Numbers* 22–24.

⁵⁷ In this respect, the print resembles the heuristic form and function of contemporary landscapes by Herri met de Bles, which as Michel Weemans has recently shown, make use of devices such as 'antithetic iconography' and 'schem[ata] of chiasmus' to mobilize the process of visual exegesis; see Weemans W., "Herri met de Bles's *Sleeping Peddler*: An Exegetical and Anthropomorphic Landscape", *Art Bulletin* 88 (2006) 459–481, esp. 467–469, 472–473.

⁵⁸ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXI, fol. 301v, cols. 1F–2H: 'Cum igitur revelatio fit hominibus per daemones, tales dicuntur prophetae daemonum: cum autem fit à Deo immediate, vel mediantibus angelis sanctis, dicuntur prophetae Dei'.

One reason has to do with the difference between the action of prophecy and the virtue of charity: whereas oracles issue from cognition of the truth, which arises when the prophet combines observation with understanding ('*propheta enim respicit actum intelligendi*'), charity proceeds from the will to do good, which derives from the active intelligence but goes beyond it ('*charitas autem quae facit hominem bonum, est actus voluntatis, quae procedit ab actu intelligendi*').⁵⁹ Prophetic revelation can therefore exist independently of charitable deeds, and even sworn enemies of the truth can yet testify to revealed truth. This is how Balaam, famed as a *propheta daemonum*, could also function, albeit under divine compulsion, as a *propheta Domini*: compelled to prophesy for the commendation of Israel and salvation of the Gentiles (Nicholas of Lyra is here referring to *Numbers* 24: 17), Balaam remains by conviction inimical to the people of God.⁶⁰ His oracle of the Incarnation may be canonical ('in Canonica Scriptura'), and his prophecies may address the future church of the gentiles, inspiring them to meditate on the advent of Christ ('ad salutem gentium, quae ex prophetijs Balaam motae sunt postea ad quaerendum Christum natum'), but he himself is the mere instrument of these glad tidings, in whom being unsought they bear no fruit ('inquantum aliquae veritates fuerunt sibi revelatae à Deo, licet ab ipso non quaereret').⁶¹ Balaam, in other words, is a meditative instrument, regardless of his inability to pray: 'No magus can invoke Michael, Raphael, or Gabriel, much less the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. We alone have been granted the power to do this'.⁶²

Why then did God privilege Balaam with so great a gift of prophecy, and why did he do so after first prohibiting his journey to Moab, and then having relented, chastising him en route? The answers turn once again on the doubleness of Balaam, as expressed by his duplicity. God forbids him from going in order to test his resolve: when cupidity overcomes his good judgment, and he importunes God for permission to go, having been seduced by 'divinacula' ('rewards received for divination'), he demonstrates his avarice, inconstancy, and baseness ('ipse autem reprobus mansit'), showing himself to be like the

⁵⁹ Ibid., col. 2H.

⁶⁰ Ibid., fol. 302r, col. 1B.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., fol. 302v, col. 1E: 'Non potest invocare magus Michael vel Raphael vel Gabriel. Minus ergo potest invocare patrem vel filium vel spiritum sanctum. Nos soli accepimus potestatem hanc'.

scribes and Pharisees impugned in *John* 7: 41 and 19: 7, who contravene Christ notwithstanding the signs that he is truly the Messiah. The 'divinacula' that sway Balaam are works of artifice, as the *Glossa* makes clear, implicitly comparing him to an idolator who worships things fashioned by the hands of men ('divinacula in artibus, quas curiositas humana composuit').⁶³ In short, Balaam is evil, and if God nonetheless selects him to effect good things, this is to show that divine wisdom disposes nothing otiosely, achieving whatsoever it will ('sapientia Dei omnia ita esse disposita, ut nihil otiosum sit apud Deum vel bonum vel malum'). Had Joseph not been sold into slavery, Israel would never have come to Egypt, and the chain of events chronicled in Pentateuch would never have transpired. Indeed, Scripture as we know it, would perforce not have been written.⁶⁴ By the same token, Balaam's prophecies were not only transcribed by Moses, the author of *Numbers*, but also preserved independently by the Gentiles, who considered Balaam their preeminent oracle, revering him as founder of the order of magi in Mesopotamia.⁶⁵ Through him, they realized the significance of the star of Bethlehem, and came to worship the newborn Christ: 'It is said that from Balaam there arose in oriental lands the race and order of magi. Among his oracular scriptures, they had this prophecy: "For a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a man stand forth out of Israel". Ergo, the Lord having been born, the magi recognized the star, discerning the fulfilment of the prophecy better than the Jews who held the oracles of the prophets in contempt. And so, acknowledging the present time, they came and adored the little child as if he were a great king, in proof of great faith'.⁶⁶

There is a kind of double conversion at work here: Balaam's intention of cursing Israel is converted into the obligation of blessing her, when reproached by the she-ass and confronted by the angel, he promises to speak only the words God shall place in his mouth ('et tamen iter illud quod faciebat intentione nocendi populo Israel, Deus convertit

⁶³ *Ibid.*, col. 1E.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 303r, col. 2C-D.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, cols. 1A and 2D.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, col. 1A: 'Ex illo fertur magorum genus et institutio in partibus orientis vigere. Qui scripta habentes omnia quae Balaam prophetaverat, hoc inter caetera habebant: Quia orietur stella ex Iacob, et exurget homo ex Israel. Ideo magi nato Domino agnoverunt stellam, et intellexerunt impleri prophetiam magis quam Iudaei, qui sanctorum prophetarum vaticinia contempserunt. Illi ergo agnoscentes adesse tempus, venerunt et adoraverunt'.

in bonum'); and his prophecies, reaching beyond the tabernacle and the temple where divine oracles were spoken solely to the Jews, begin the evangelical work of converting the Gentiles, alerting them to the mystery of the Incarnation, even before the coming of Christ.⁶⁷ Hence, Balaam the prophet, covetous, self-serving, and incapable of meditative insight, occupies at one and the same time the foremost rank among the major prophets of the Old Testament: 'For how is it that he, a student of magic, reliant upon divination and augury, now truly sees? Is it not because the spirit of God was formed within him, and the word of God placed in his mouth, that such great things are said about him? Certainly neither Moses nor any of the prophets is to be found elevated by such high praises. Whence these prophecies seem more to apply to that people in the time when converted to the Lord, they put aside the veil covering their hearts. But God is spirit, and so I have stated that his eyes were opened; just as they were formerly closed, so now they have been unveiled through the spirit of God formed upon him'.⁶⁸ Here the *Glossa* refers to *Romans* 11: 25–26, which predicts that once the Gentiles have been fully converted, all of Israel shall likewise embrace the gospel of Christ. The claim being made is that Balaam's prophecies are universal, and this is signified by the imagery of spatial expansion, that describes his words reaching beyond the Jewish sacred places: 'By a wondrous dispensation, it came to pass that the words of the prophets of Israel, contained within the temple forecourt, reached the Gentiles through Balaam, whom they all believed; and yet, he proffered the great treasure and secret mysteries of Christ to the nations, not in heart and sense, but by mouth and voice'.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 303v, col. 1F and 2G.

⁶⁸ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXIII, fol. 307r, cols. 1B–2C: 'Quomodo enim verè videns est, qui divinationi et augurijs servit? Qui magicæ studet? Nisi forte quia spiritus Dei factus fuit in ipso, et verbum Dei positum in ore eius, tam magna de eo dicuntur. Nec Moyses enim nec aliquis prophetarum facilè invenitur tantis laudibus elevatus. Unde magis videntur hæc illi populo convenire, eo tempore quo conversus ad Dominum deponit velamen quod erat super cor suum. Deus autem spiritus est. Ideo dicit, Revelati oculi eius, quasi qui ante clausi, per spiritum Dei qui super eum factus est, ablato velamine revelentur'.

⁶⁹ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXII, fol. 303v, col. 2G: 'Agebatur enim mira dispensatione, ut prophetarum verba quæ intra Israeliticam aulam continebantur, per Balaam ad gentes pervenirent, cum ei omnes gentes crederent et nationibus secreta de Christo mysteria, et thesaurum magnum proferet, non tam corde et sensu, quam ore et sermone'. On the significance of this passage in Origen's *Homilia* 14, see Baskin, "Origen on Balaam" 29–30.

So Balaam remains an ambivalent figure: the good news he delivers is there to be found, and it is incumbent upon us to find it, irrespective of his failure to do this for himself. The *Glossa* allegorizes the episode of Balaam and the she-ass in order to emphasize the contrast between the man and his message. Seated upon the ass, he is the antonymous type for Christ making his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, just as the animal he rides is the type for the church that bears Christ into the new Jerusalem, whenever its members' sins are absolved by the priesthood he established.⁷⁰ Citing Gregory the Great, the *Glossa* also adduces the ass as an allegory of the body's relation to the mind: if penitential discipline is applied, the body can sometimes serve to reproach the wayward mind, calling it away from its iniquitous intentions, so that it comes to know the invisible things of God, seeing him with spiritual eyes ('velociter tendentes impediatur, donec invisibilem qui sibi obviat innotescat').⁷¹ The ass signifies as well the pagan world insensible to the burden of idolatry it carries; the animal's power of speech represents the voice to be granted to the Gentiles by the advent of Christ, who shall loosen their tongues, enabling them to converse with God. The ass also embodies humankind as the fools ('parvuli') of *Psalms* 35: 6, who are given to know the great things that confute the wise, and to see the truths they are too blind to discern. Balaam on the other hand adumbrates Caiaphas, who is accused in *John* 11: 49–50, of condemning Christ, even though he acknowledges him as the redeemer; and to the extent that his knowledge of the Christ he so clearly foresees is deficient, Balaam epitomizes the imperfect prophet set forth in 1 *Corinthians* 13: 8–9.⁷² These readings complement the glosses on 2 *Peter* 2: 15, *Jude* 1: 11, and *Revelation* 2: 14, that equate Balaam with vanity and heresy, which come into being wherever concupiscence holds sway, deflecting the eyes of the soul from God ('Balaam, id est haeretici, qui docent terrenos principes qualiter subvertant videntes Deum').⁷³

And still, having made these claims, the *Glossa* returns to the theme of Balaam's dual nature, designating him as 'vituperabilis' for having insistently questioned the divine will, 'culpabilis' for having caused Balak to erect altars and sacrifice to demons, whom by magical means

⁷⁰ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXII, fol. 303v, col. 2G–H.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, col. 2H. Gregory concludes that Balaam was altered in voice, not in mind ('vocem non mentem mutavit').

⁷² *Ibid.*, fol. 304r, col. 1B.

⁷³ *Glos. ord. Apocalypsis*, chapt. II, vol. 6, fol. 244r, col. 1A.

he was wont to beseech for oracles, hoping to deceive the people with inauspicious counsel. On the contrary, he is 'laudabilis' for having received the word of God in his mouth, when the spirit of God was formed upon him; he is likewise praiseworthy for having prophesied the Christ and foretold to both Jews and Gentiles the future mysteries of his advent, and finally, for having blessed instead of cursing the people, when with mystic utterances he raised the name of Israel above visible, that is, terrestrial glory.⁷⁴ The *Glossa* summarizes his *diversitas* (diversity, contrariety, contradiction) as follows: 'And so it is difficult to fix or define the person of Balaam, to whom such *diversitas* applies, and who delivered what amounts to a self-prophecy: "Let my soul die among the souls of the just, and let my seed be as their seed"'.⁷⁵ Like every aspect of Balaam, the prayer of supplication closing his first oracle, 'Moriatur anima mea morte iustorum, et fiat novissima mea horum similia', is interpreted both positively and negatively. According to Nicholas of Lyra, it reveals the hypocrisy of a man who desires to live unjustly and yet be justified at his death, and it may also allude ironically to his just murder at the hands of the Israelites, as recorded in Joshua 13: 22.⁷⁶ But the *Glossa* also reads it as prophesying the 'semen' (posterity) of Balaam, both Jewish and Gentile, that will be justified by faith in Christ.⁷⁷ And again, judged in light of his threefold attempt to curse Israel and his closing stratagem aimed at seducing her people to idolatry, it exposes his failure to pray with true conviction. Rather, since he lacks perseverance, his prayer remains unsupported, wanting the steady weight of virtue ('virtutis enim pondus oratio non habet, quam perseverantia non tenet').⁷⁸ He is like those meretricious Christians who pray prolixly but fail utterly to lead a prayerful life, succumbing to pride, avarice, luxury, and other temptations, and forgetting how once they wept with desire for the kingdom of God.⁷⁹ Indeed, he is the mirror image of Paul who avers in *Romans* 7: 19–22: 'For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but

⁷⁴ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXII, fol. 304r, cols. 1B–2C.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, col. 2C: 'Difficile est ergo definire, personam eius statuere, cui non solum conveniat ista diversitas, sed etiam illud, quod ipse de se velut prophetans dicit: Moriatur anima mea inter animas iustorum, et fiat semen meum sicut semen iustorum'.

⁷⁶ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXIII, fol. 305r, col. 2D.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 305v, col. 1E.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, col. 1F.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, col. 1E.

sin which dwells in me [...] but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members'.⁸⁰ As Nicholas of Lyra puts it, Balaam has the spirit of prophecy but lacks justifying grace; he sees truths with regard to others, but fails to apply them to himself, and so, blinded by malice, he neglects to secure his own salvation ('quia fiebat sibi absque gratia iustificante ut sic videret veritates pro alijs, tamen non videbat ad consecutionem vel promotionem propriae salutis, et sic erat malitia excaecatus').⁸¹

Given that Balaam's *praescientia* (prescience) is a middling faculty, by turns susceptible to the influence either of God or of demons ('praescientia futurorum [...] medium quiddam esse, id est, neque propriè bonum, neque propriè malum'), how are we even to assure ourselves that he truly is a divinely inspired prophet?⁸² The *Glossa* is at pains to show why the answer lies with us, as becomes clear from the comparison drawn between Balaam and Jeremiah. The text at issue is *Numbers* 23: 19: 'God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should repent. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfil it?'⁸³ The *Glossa* juxtaposes this manifesto to the great avowal of divine mercy in *Jeremiah* 81: 5–8: "Then the word of the Lord came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done?" says the Lord. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it".⁸⁴ How does one reconcile this seeming contradiction, or to

⁸⁰ *Biblia Sacra*: 'non enim quod volo bonum hoc facio, sed quod nolo malum hoc ago, si autem quod nolo illud facio, non ego operor illud, sed quod habitat in me peccatum [...]. Video autem aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae et captivantem me in lege peccati quae est in membris meis'.

⁸¹ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXIII, fol. 307r, col. 2D.

⁸² *Ibid.*, fol. 306r, col. 1C.

⁸³ *Biblia Sacra*: 'Non est Deus quasi homo, ut mentiatur nec ut filius hominis, ut mutetur. dixit ergo et non faciet locutus est et non implebit?'

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*: 'et factum est verbum Domini ad me dicens, numquid sicut figulus iste non potero facere vobis domus Israhel ait Dominus ecce sicut lutum in manu figuli sic vos in manu mea domus Israhel, repente loquar adversum gentem et adversum regnum ut eradicem et destruam et disperdam illud, si paenitentiam egerit gens illa a malo suo quod locutus sum adversum eam agam et ego paenitentiam super malo quod cogitavi ut facerem ei'.

paraphrase the *Glossa*, why should Balaam's words spoken hesitantly ('suspense', that is, against his will) be preferred to Jeremiah's spoken distinctly and confidently ('absolute')?⁸⁵ Because the latter's prophecies were addressed to a neglectful and disdainful people, whom God wished to persuade and transform, whereas Balaam's are addressed secretly to a more righteous people (that is, to us, the Christian faithful whom his oracles adumbrate), whose task it is to see what Balaam saw, interpret what he failed to animadvert, and apply to ourselves the truths we discern ('Quomodo ergo possumus his quae absolutè per Hieremiam dicuntur, praeferre illa quae suspensè per Balaam dicuntur nisi quia negligentibus et contemptoribus illa confirmanda, haec verò à perfectioribus secretius advertenda sunt').⁸⁶

A great deal follows from this premise, not least a heightened awareness of our obligation to tease out the meaningful contradiction between what Balaam does and what he says, how he behaves and what he describes, and between the images he sees and their visual significance. For instance, the reference to Israel in *Numbers* 23: 24, as a lion that 'drinks the blood of the slain', is to be construed as a Eucharistic prophecy of the congregation that hears the evangelical words and drinks the sacramental blood of Christ.⁸⁷ We must discern this meaning in spite of the animal sacrifices that Balaam commands Balac to offer before his first three oracles, in hope of invoking maledictory spirits.⁸⁸ Whereas these sacrificial offerings indicate that Balaam is pharisaical, by which the *Glossa* means that he fails to put his faith in the Christ he foretells, the things he sees are incontrovertibly true, as *Micah* 6: 5 asserts: 'O my people, remember what Balak King of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened even unto the borders of Galgal, that you may know the justice of the Lord'.⁸⁹ Micah, the prophet of the salvation of Israel, is adduced to certify Balaam's prophecies of the triumph of Israel through the mystery of the Incarnation. His words attest that the justice and saving acts of God are evident 'ex responsis eius', if we but make the effort to

⁸⁵ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXIII, fol. 306r, col. 1B.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 306v, col. 2G.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, col. 2H

⁸⁹ *Biblia Sacra*; 'populus meus memento quaeso quid cogitaverit Balac rex Moab et quid responderit ei Balaam filius Beor de Setthim usque ad Galgalam ut cognosceret iustitias Domini'.

discover them.⁹⁰ That it is incumbent upon us to do so, becomes all the more obvious when we realize, following Origen, that his prophetic inspiration differs from that of any other prophet. Origen refers to the phrase ‘inruente in se spiritu Dei’ in *Numbers* 24: 2, noting that it signifies that the ‘spirit of God was formed upon Balaam’, an expression applied to no other prophet: ‘If the word of God was placed in Balaam’s mouth, and the spirit of God formed upon him, and the justice of God may be known through his oracles (‘responsa’), then the things he declared must be supposed to be prophetic and divine, even if it is difficult to find [elsewhere in Scripture] another prophet upon whom the spirit of God was formed’.⁹¹ The *Glossa* later stresses that the very fact that these words are transcribed in *Numbers* certifies them as divine (‘quae Moyses (his credo de causis) notavit immunda’).⁹² For this reason, with reference to *Numbers* 24: 4 and 16–17, and also to the final prophecy of the kingdoms, the *Glossa* states that Balaam’s newly opened eyes saw what those eyes opened by Christ, seeing further than the limitations of the carnal sense, may see more truly for themselves – the fulfilment of the prophecy foretold in *Daniel* 2: 44: ‘And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed’.⁹³

That we must see for ourselves what Balaam gives us to see, is also apparent from his curious use of the locution ‘dixit’, ‘he who has said’, instead of the more common ‘haec dixit Dominus’, ‘thus said the Lord’, to preface his oracles in *Numbers* 24: 3, 4, 15, and 16.⁹⁴ As the *Glossa* explains, this usage shifts onto Balaam the moral responsibility for the effects of his words: all forms of knowledge (*scientia*), whether practical, as in the case of artisanal skill (‘peritia erga aliquam artem’), or theoretical (‘cuiuslibet rei scientia’), are implanted by God, to be applied by us for good or evil.⁹⁵ The *Glossa* is prompting us to meditate exegetically on Balaam’s oracles, thus to appropriate them, as if speak-

⁹⁰ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXII, fol. 304r, col. 2C.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*: ‘Si enim Dei sermo positus est in ore eius, et spiritus Dei factus est super eum, et iustitia Dei ex responsis eius cognoscitur, quae ab eo dicuntur prophetica et divina esse credenda sunt, quamvis difficile inveniatur, quia factus est spiritus Dei super aliquem prophetarum’.

⁹² *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXIII, fol. 306v, col. 1F.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 307r, cols. 1B–2C. *Biblia Sacra*: ‘in diebus autem regnorum illorum suscitabit Deus caeli regnum, quod in aeternum non dissipabitur’.

⁹⁴ See, for example, *Biblia Sacra*, *Numbers* 24: 3: ‘adsumpta parabola ait dixit Balaam filius Beor dixit homo cuius obturatus est oculus’.

⁹⁵ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXIII, fol. 308 v, col. 1E.

ing from out of ourselves those things that formerly came forth out of him: 'From all this it is discernible how Balaam spoke from out of himself, that we may indeed understand that all knowledge originates from out of oneself ('scilicet ut intelligatur quod origo totius scientiae ab ipso coepit exordium').⁹⁶ In *Balaam and the Angel*, the landscape panorama that allows us to see through Balaam's eyes, exchanging his prospective viewpoint for ours, constitutes a visual acknowledgment of this moral principle that undergirds the exegetical enterprise of reading his person and prophecies. It transfers his *scientia* to us, making us responsible for construing it meditatively.

The two halves of *Balaam and the Angel* correspond to the two aspects of the man for which he merits the respective epithets 'vituperabilis' and 'laudabilis' [Fig. 1]. He is the former for having ridden to Balak, the latter for having prophesied from the heights of Moab. His 'absence' from the right-hand scene, or more precisely, the elision of his virtual presence into the panoramic vista, the viewing of which collapses our vantage point into his, thus making us notionally like him, is a meditative device: as the *Glossa* argues, Balaam is a meditative instrument who transmits to us, a people capable of true prayer, the mysteries of Christ and the Incarnation that he was inspired to convey, but alone by mouth and voice ('ore et sermone'). By substituting our eyes for Balaam's, the print pressures us to engage in a different kind of prayer that fully engages heart and sense ('corde et sensu'), opening the eyes of the spirit to the true meaning of the oracles he was given to deliver. We are also invited to consider the distinction between blind prophecy that speaks and knows, yet remains unaffected and unconverted, and exegetical discernment that reads and is moved by oracular images conferred from on high. There is also the simpler but no less crucial difference to be traced between resistance to the divine will, as negatively exemplified by Balaam's blindness to the angel's presence, and obedience to the spirit of God that opens eyes and unveils hearts, as positively exemplified by the wide and distant view that expands and deepens our field of vision.

The *Glossa* describes Balaam's oracles as an exegetical journey upon which we should embark in meditative solitude: 'If you understood

⁹⁶ Ibid., col. 1F: 'Ex his omnibus colligitur, quomodo Balaam dixit de semetipso, scilicet ut intelligatur quod origo totius scientiae ab ipso coepit exordium'. The passage concludes: 'sed vitio humanae malitiae conspirantibus et surripientibus daemonibus in perniciem versa sunt, quae pro utilitate concessa sunt'.

how much rest, grace, and sweetness are to be had from this ‘journey of knowledge’ (‘iter sapientiae’), you would neither dissemble nor delay, but rather undertake it, not fearing eremitical solitude’.⁹⁷ Such a journey is compared to the act of gazing toward a distant horizon that extends *ad infinitum*. With reference to *Numbers* 24: 4–5, ‘and so having his eyes uncovered [he said]: how beautiful are your tabernacles, O Jacob, your tents, O Israel’, the *Glossa* explains that Balaam is ‘foreseeing’ (‘praevidens’) two things at once: on the one hand, the fine house of Jacob, which stands for the perfection of corporeal works; on the other, the movable tents of Israel, which stand for the knowledge and wisdom of God that extend ‘in immensum’.⁹⁸ The vision of Balaam, precipitated when he lifts his eyes from atop Mount Peor (‘elevans oculos vidit Israel in tentoriis commorantem per tribus suas et inruente in se spiritu Dei’), is likened to a journey leading toward divine wisdom, that passes through shady groves, elysian riverside gardens, and other *loca amoena*, described so beautifully and copiously in Balaam’s oracles. This passage, crucial to the conception of *Balaam and the Angel*, reads *in extenso*:

Tents belong to those who are always on the road, always walking, and whose journey never ends. Jacob is thus to be seen in the persons who are perfected in [good] works, but Israel in those who strive after wisdom and knowledge. The perfection of works being finite, they are concluded once the person who ought to execute them has fully executed them. However, there is no conclusion for those who study the works of wisdom and knowledge. For shall there be an end or limit to divine wisdom? The more one approaches it, the more profound the things one discovers: for the wisdom of God is incomprehensible [...] [Balaam] admires the tents [of Israel], in which they journey and steadily advance, and the more they advance, the more their way forward is augmented, extending without end (in immensum tenditur): for that reason, he refers to tents (tabernacula). Anyone who progresses somewhat in knowledge and experience (scientiae cepit aliquos profectus et aliquid experimenti) realizes that when one attains to speculation and spiritual recognition (aliquam [...] theoreticam et agnitionem spiritualium), the soul dwells upon these matters as if tenting them (quasi in tabernaculo moratur). Then having found them out, it searches for others, and advances in the

⁹⁷ Ibid., fol. 308r, col. 1B: ‘Si intellexisti quantam requiem habeat iter sapientiae, quantum gratiae quantumque dulcedinis, noli dissimulare, noli negligere, aggredere iter, nec eremi solitudinem perhorrescas’.

⁹⁸ *Biblia Sacra*: ‘et sic aperientur oculi eius, quam pulchra tabernacula tua Iacob et tentoria tua Israel’.

intellectual senses (*ad alios proficit intellectus*), just as if from its raised tent the soul were reaching for higher things (*quasi elevato tabernaculo tendit ad superiora*); there in duration it establishes the fixed abode of the spiritual senses (*collocat animi sedem sensuum stabilitate confixam*), and thence it discovers yet other ones, disclosing the spiritual senses' effects (*spiritales sensus, quos priorum sensuum consequentia patefacit*), so that extending itself constantly, the tented soul approaches to further excellences (*ita semper ad priora se extendens tabernaculis incedit*). For once enkindled by the spark of knowledge, the soul can never rest or sit idle, but rather, is roused to go from good to better, better to best (*sed semper a bonis ad meliora, et a melioribus ad superiora provocatur*). In consequence of all this, [Balaam] with much grace and great beauty writes about journeying toward the knowledge of God, describing groves, elysian riverside gardens, etc. (*hoc ergo iter sapientiae Dei grandi et multo decore scripsit, dicens, ut nemora umbrantia, ut paradisi super flumina etc.*).⁹⁹

The fact that the journey *in immensum* exists concurrently with the perfection of works, signifies that Balaam's oracles operate both corporeally and spiritually. They pertain both to the *domus Jacob*, the things the people of God are seen to do, and to the *tabernacula Israel*, the stages of the spiritual journey they and the reader of the *Glossa* are seen to undertake. This journey is visualized as a passage through the landscape described by Balaam, the places of which are like stations where the people pitch their tents, leading from the 'scientiae aliquos profectus' to 'alios profectus intellectus', thence to 'superiora'

⁹⁹ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXIII, fol. 307v, col. 1E–F: 'Tabernacula vero eorum qui semper in via sunt et ambulant, nec itineris sui terminum reppererunt. Iacob ergo habendus est in eorum personis, qui in actibus perfecti sunt: Israel vero sunt qui sapientiae et scientiae student. Quia ergo actuum exercitia certo fine clauduntur (non enim sine fine est operum perfectio), ubi impleverit quis omnia quae facere debuit. Ipsa enim operum perfectio bona domus dicitur. Eorum vero qui sapientiae et scientiae student quia nullus finis est. Quis enim finis et terminus sapientiae Dei erit? Quanto enim amplius quis accesserit, tanto profundiora inveniet: incomprehensibilis est enim sapientia Dei [...] sed tabernacula miratur, in quibus ambulant, et semper proficiunt et quanto proficiunt, tanto proficiendi via augetur, et in immensum tenditur: ideo tabernaculum nominat. Si quis autem scientiae cepit aliquos profectus et aliquid experimenti, scit quia ubi ad aliquam venerit theoreticam et agnitionem spiritualium, ibi anima quasi in tabernaculo moratur. Cum ergo ex his quae reperit, alia rimatur, et ad alios proficit intellectus, quasi elevato tabernaculo tendit ad superiora, et ibi collocat animi sedem sensuum stabilitate confixam, deinde ex ipsis alios invenit spiritales sensus, quos priorum sensuum consequentia patefacit, ita semper ad priora se extendens tabernaculis incedit. Numquam est enim quando anima scientiae igniculo succensa otiosi possit et quiescere, sed semper a bonis ad meliora et a melioribus ad superiora provocatur. Hoc ergo iter sapientiae Dei grandi et multo decore scripsit, dicens, ut nemora umbrantia, ut paradisi super flumina etc.'

and an ascending scale of ‘spiritalis sensus’. As the *domus Jacob* stands to the *tabernacula Israel*, so the Israelite camp visible in the distance of *Balaam and the Angel* stands to the motion of the eye voyaging *in immensum*, along an optical itinerary signifying and eliciting the soul’s progress as it meditates on the meaning of the oracular landscape imagery.

The *Glossa* licenses what one might call the optical hermeneutics of *Balaam and the Angel*, for it pays close attention to the significance of what and how Balaam saw, when he laid eyes on Israel from a series of high vantage points. For example, *Numbers* 23: 9, ‘For from the top of the mountains I shall see him, from the hills I shall behold him’, is expounded as a call for an elevated construal of Israel: the lofty view stands for the refined application of exegetical knowledge, which combines observation with discernment, construing Israel as a spiritual entity whose people peregrinate from the earthly realm to the celestial (‘quasi quia in excelsis collibus et altis montibus positus est Israel, id est, in alta et ardua vita, ad quam intuendam et intelligendam nemo sit idoneus, nisi ascendat ad eminentem scientiam’).¹⁰⁰ Alternatively, Balaam’s use of the future tense (*videbo, considerabo*) refers to the proleptic vision of a converted Israel, whose exalted earthly life portends the higher exaltation of resurrection with Christ (‘et a montibus et ab his collibus intuebitur, id est, qui excelsam et caelestem vitam consurgentes cum Christo exercuerint super terram’).¹⁰¹ The exegete who interprets the prophet’s oracle in this way begins by inspecting Jacob—the corporeal things of Israel as observed by Balaam – and then rises to the contemplative vision of the spirit of Israel reformed in the image of Christ: ‘The acts of Jacob, that is, the actions [of the people] are discerned (‘actus Iacob, id est, activorum videntur’). The contemplation of Israel, that is, of its speculative [acts] is grasped only mentally (‘contemplatio Israel, id est, contemplativorum tantum intelligitur’). Surely in the resurrection to come, Jacob shall be seen, the body of Israel understood, that is, the soul and spirit of its people rising from the dead [shall be both seen and understood] (‘vel in futura resurrectiones Iacob videbitur, id est, corpus Israel intelligetur, id est,

¹⁰⁰ *Glos. ord. Numeri*, chapt. XXIII, fol. 305r, col. 1B. *Biblia Sacra*: ‘de summis silicibus videbo eum et de collibus considerabo illum’.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, col. 2C.

resurgentium anima et spiritus').¹⁰² So, to behold Jacob as did Balaam, is to accompany him in seeing the things he saw from a great height, but to contemplate Israel is fully to discern the future glory of the Jews, when subsumed into the community of the faithful, they shall be saved body and soul in Christ. On this account, the view taken from a high place operates as a hermeneutic figure of heightened exegetical discernment.

The *Glossa* defines as *parabolas* the oracular images promulgated when Balaam casts his gaze into the distance. They are designated as such because his words of prophecy are called *parabolas* in *Numbers* 23: 7, 18 and 24: 3, 15, 20, 21, 23 (ex.gr., 'adsumpta parabola sua'). Nicholas of Lyra justifies the scriptural use of the term in two senses: first, like all parables, Balaam's oracles involve the substitution of one word for another, here, the words of benediction for the words of malediction ('quando unum verbum pro alio ponitur, et hoc modo dicitur hic parabola, quia quaerebat verba maledictionis, et posita fuerunt in ore eius verba benedictionis'); second, the oracles consist of metaphors and similitudes that require to be decoded ('quia parabolice et per similitudines loquebatur').¹⁰³ The bipartite structure of *Balaam and the Angel* can be seen in these terms to utilize two modes of exegetical argument: the left-hand scene functions as a negative exemplum of blindness, requiring us to attend closely to Balaam, whose actions are judged by reference to *loci textuales* from the New Testament; the right-hand scene focuses not merely on an object of sight but on the act of viewing itself, which is read parabolically as a figure of prophecy and exegesis, visualized as an optical and hermeneutic *iter in immensum*. The negotiation of both these modes enables the viewer to meditate on the power of the divine will to express itself through any instrument: the movement from Balaam to the panoramic vista, from his initial failure of sight to an expansive opening out of the visual field that makes his gaze transparent to ours, stages us as participants in the emergence of the crucial prophecies foretelling the mystery of the Incarnation.

¹⁰² Ibid.: 'Actus Iacob id est activorum videntur. Contemplatio Israel id est contemplativorum tantum intelligitur. Vel in futura resurrectione Iacob videbitur id est corpus Israel intelligetur, id est resurgentium anima et spiritus'.

¹⁰³ Ibid., fol. 304v, col. 2H.

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