

FEATURES

VIOLENT IMAGERY IN LATE MEDIEVAL PIETY¹

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Anyone who has done even the most cursory sight-seeing in European churches has encountered the apparent expressionism and morbidity of late medieval piety. Given the current preoccupation of scholarship in the humanities with what contemporary jargon calls “alterity” or “the transgressive,” we are hardly likely to miss the twisted crucifixes bearing a dead and tortured God, the *transi* tombs that display carvings of the elite of Europe nude and gnawed by worms, or the vast altarpieces telling of grisly and prolonged executions of the culture’s martyred heroes and heroines, the saints. *See plate 1.* Nor, given the national crisis that has followed so precipitously upon our own millennial turn, are we likely to ignore medieval fears of the apocalypse or the period’s often eroticized depictions of naked bodies tormented eternally by strange beasts in the mouth of hell. There is much sentimentalism, to be sure, in the later Middle Ages—sweet-faced Madonnas with chubby babies, cozy scenes of the domestic life of God’s family—but a quick walk through any museum of European art leaves one with uncomfortable memories of writhing hands, severed body parts, monstrous claws, torn hunks of flesh, and everywhere streams of bright red blood. Comparisons to Picasso’s *Guernica* or the paintings of Francis Bacon spring unbidden to mind.

Popular accounts such as those of Johan Huizinga, Barbara Tuchman, and Philippe Ariès have stressed the horrors of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—plague, economic collapse, famine, war—and have described the “violent tenor of life”—persecutions, pogroms, public torture and executions.² I do not wish today to return to the topic of medieval society and politics they have explored, although the world they describe is not irrelevant as background. But what I wish to talk about here is the violent quality of the religiosity itself—what we might call its visual violence, especially the prominence of the motifs of body parts and of blood. At a time when depictions of violence are controversial in our own culture—consider, for example, last summer’s obsession with the details of Timothy McVeigh’s execution—we may learn something from consid-



Plate 1. Detail from an altarpiece by Henri Bellechose, commissioned about 1416, depicting the last communion and beheading of St. Denis. Paintings of the gory martyrdom of saints were very popular in the later Middle Ages.

ering the violence our late-medieval ancestors located at the heart of their religion.

Exhortations to Christians to meditate on the fragmenting and bleeding of bodies—both the bodies of the saints and the body of Christ—are everywhere in late medieval devotion. Although the age of the martyrs was in fact long past, by far the largest number of saints' lives told, retold, and depicted in retables and prayer books were stories of the prolonged deaths of early Christian heroes and heroines, piece by piece by bloody piece.³ Favorites were virgin women who, defending themselves against both apostasy and rape, were described as "intact" and "integral" to the end despite drowning, burning, the severing of breasts and lips, and finally decapitation. What German historians call *redende Reliquiare*, speaking or expressive reliquaries—that is, containers in the shape of body parts—appeared alongside the earlier reliquary form of box- or church-shaped casket and became ever more popular. See plates 2 and 3. Prayers to the wounds of Christ proliferated, although traditions differed as to the number. (Some held there were 5475, others counted 6666; but whatever the precise enumeration, the obsessive and quantitative nature of such spirituality is clear.)⁴ The so-called *arma Christi* or instruments of Christ's death became popular devotional foci as well; and the heads of scoffers and torturers that, in such depictions, floated around Christ along with flails, knives, etc., contributed to a visual association of fragmented body parts with passion piety. See plate 4. Despite the emphasis of Gospel accounts on the wholeness of the dead Christ (whose cloak was not divided among the soldiers, nor his legs broken), prayers to his body parts developed and proliferated, and devotional images came to depict his severed hands and feet or to focus on the wound in his side or heart, disconnected from his body. See plates 5, 6, 10 and 11. Although there was considerable theological dispute about them, relics (supposed actual pieces) of Christ's body were revered at certain locations. (Charroux, for example, in a rare parallel to the body and blood of the eucharist, claimed to possess both the holy foreskin and the blood of the circumcision.)⁵

Over it all washed blood. Several trends, among them the establishment and promotion of the feast of Corpus Christi and the withdrawal of the chalice from the laity, made devotion to the eucharistic host (the body of Christ) ever more central liturgically and theologically, it is true. But what was known as "spiritual communion" (receiving the presence of Christ in the eucharist through seeing the host or even through meditation) tended to eclipse sacramental reception—that is, eating. And the less frequent became reception of blood and even body, the more central devotion to blood became. The bleeding Christ, sometimes pitiful, sometimes threatening, was—at least in northern Europe—omnipresent. See plate 7 for an example. Eucharistic hymns and prayers, which in the days of



Plate 2. This thirteenth-century arm reliquary, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is an example of the body-part reliquaries so popular in late medieval Europe. Although the container depicts a body part, the sheathing of silver and cabochon crystals suggests that the bones inside (which were probably not arm bones) possess already the incorruptibility of heaven.



Plate 3. Reliquary bust from Cologne about 1350, now in the Schnütgen Museum. This bust did not contain a skull but rather served to display fragments of other bones, dust or garments in the grillwork on the breast.



Plate 4. Panel painting of the so-called “Mass of St. Gregory” from Nuremberg about 1490. Here we see Christ, the Man of Sorrows, surrounded by the instruments of his torture and execution (known as the *arma Christi*), appearing in a vision to pope Gregory the Great.



Plate 5. The “*Arma Christi* with Five Wounds,” outer panel of the Buxheim altar (ca. 1500), workshop of Daniel Mauch, now in the Ulm Museum. In this depiction of the five wounds received by Christ on the cross, the Savior’s body disappears entirely to be replaced by bleeding fragments.



Plate 6. The “Five Wounds of Christ” from a Flemish diptych of 1523. A particularly graphic example of Christ’s body parts standing for, and evoking, the whole.



Plate 7. In this small drawing from the first half of the fourteenth century, now in the Schnütgen Museum, St. Bernard of Clairvaux and an anonymous nun embrace a crucifix on which Christ has become a bloody smear. Depictions that emphasize the bleeding Christ became increasingly common, especially in northern Europe, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

the early church saw grain and grape gathered into loaf and bunch as a symbol of Christian unity, increasingly stressed the eucharistic body as beaten on the threshing floor, ground in the mill, and squeezed in the wine press until no drop of blood was left. Pilgrimages swelled to places such as Walldürn, Wilsnack, Weingarten, and Orvieto, which claimed to display the blood of Christ, either collected under the cross on Golgotha or produced miraculously in cases of sacrilege or extreme devotion. The dramatic impact of the liturgy was sometimes enhanced by acting out the wounding of Christ's side with a large wooden figure containing a hidden bladder of animal blood.⁶

Two examples from opposite ends of Europe will show how vivid, expressionist, even tinged with violence, such blood piety was. The first is from a traditional vision-narrative of the late twelfth century, which tells of an English monk from Evesham Abbey, found as if lifeless on Good Friday with "the balls of his eyes and his nose wet with blood." Once recovered, the monk recounted to his brothers a vision of the cross.

While I was kneeling before the image and was kissing it on the mouth and eyes, I felt some drops falling gently on my forehead. When I removed my fingers, I discovered from their color that it was blood. I also saw blood flowing from the side of the image on the cross, as it does from the veins of a living man when he is cut for blood-letting. I do not know how many drops I caught in my hand as they fell. With the blood I devoutly anointed my eyes, ears and nostrils. Afterward—if I sinned in this I do not know—in my zeal I swallowed one drop of it, but the rest, which I caught in my hand, I was determined to keep.

Following this encounter, the monk traveled in vision through the places of punishment, graphically described, and thence to the places of glory. But even in the midst of glory, there was blood.

The tongue cannot reveal nor human weakness worthily describe what we saw as we went on. . . . In the middle of endless thousands of blessed spirits who stood round, . . . the pious redeemer of the human race appeared. It was as if he were hanging on the cross with his whole body bloody from scourgings, insulted by spitting, crowned with thorns, with nails driven into him, pierced with the lance; while streams of blood flowed over his hands and feet, and blood and water dropped from his holy side! Near him stood his mother, not anxious and sorrowful now, but rejoicing . . . with a most calm countenance . . .⁷

However fearful the monk of Evesham felt at consuming blood from the crucifix, he felt not so much grief or fear as wonder and vindication at the

heavenly display of Christ's wounds, which snatched men from the devil's clutches into the choirs of angels.

By the later fourteenth century there was no longer fear of the audacity of drinking, even drowning in blood. Catherine of Siena wrote to her confessor and spiritual son, Raymond of Capua:

I, Caterina, . . . send you greetings in the precious blood of God's Son. I long to see you engulfed and drowned in the sweet blood . . . , which is permeated with the fire of his blazing charity I am saying that unless you are drowned in the blood you will not attain the little virtue of true humility [S]hut yourself up in the open side of God's Son [and] there . . . rest in the bed of fire and blood.

Nor is Catherine's desire for drowning and burning only metaphorical. The letter that opens with these words is a report to Raymond concerning the execution of the young Perugian Niccolò di Toldo for the political crime of uttering a drunken slur against the new Sienese government. Catherine accompanied him to the scaffold, knelt beside him, and (she says):

His head was resting on my breast. I sensed an intense joy, a fragrance of his blood [And] when he had received the sign I said: "Down for the wedding, my dear brother, for soon you will be in everlasting life." He knelt down very meekly; I placed his neck [on the block] and bent down and reminded him of the blood of the Lamb. His mouth said nothing but "Gesù!" and "Caterina!" and as he said this, I received his head into my hands, saying, "I will!" with my eyes fixed on the divine Goodness.

Then was seen the God-Man as one sees the brilliance of the sun. [His side] was open and received [Niccolò's] blood into his own blood Once he had been so received by God , the Son . . . gave him the gift of sharing in the tormented love with which he himself had accepted *his* painful death . . . for the welfare of the human race

Now that he was hidden away where he belonged, my soul rested in peace and quiet in such a fragrance of blood that I couldn't bear to wash away his blood that had splashed on me So don't be surprised if I impose on you only my desire to see you drowned in the blood and fire pouring out from the side of God's Son. No more apathy now, my sweetest children, because the blood has begun to flow and to receive life!⁸

An English commonplace book of the fourteenth century expresses the same spirituality in a simple anonymous jingle:

I wolde ben clad in cristes skyn
 That ran so longe on blode
 & gon t'is herte & taken myn In.⁹

What then are we to make of the obsession of late medieval piety with bodily partition and bloodshed? Is the graphically violent art and devotion of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the response of an exhausted Europe to famine, war, religious controversy and epidemic, a morbid wallowing in rising rates of death and disfigurement, an expiation and displacement of actual by visual and textual violence? Placing motifs of fragmentation and bloodshed in their context suggests immediately that the answer is far more complex. For the fragments so prominent in late medieval texts and images are metonyms, *partes* standing *pro toto*; the blood was—as the passages from Catherine and the monk of Evesham explicitly state—fertile and salvific in its very terribleness.

I begin my exploration of the religious significance of parts and partition with those obvious fragments, the relics of the saints. Historians have made much of the way containers came to echo or “speak” contents in the later Middle Ages; indeed the German term *redende Reliquiare* means just that. Yet recent research shows that speaking reliquaries usually do not in fact contain the bones their shape implies.¹⁰ Arm reliquaries hold shin or pelvic bones. Head reliquaries only sometimes contain skulls; often they are merely forms for displaying other bone chips on the breast. See *plates 2 and 3*. A reliquary that depicts one saint may contain the splinters, dust, or garments of another. Indeed if the point of arm reliquaries were to display arm bones, it would be puzzling that the vast majority are right arms. And why are there no elbows or thighs? Sketches of actual rituals suggest that the function of such objects was often liturgical—that is, arm reliquaries served to extend and make visible the arm of the prelate high above crowds as he blessed the faithful with the sign of the cross.¹¹

There was in the Middle Ages, it is true, an enthusiasm for dividing the bodies of the saints in order to spread the power of holy bodies as widely as possible. Indeed even the bodies of non-holy but prominent figures—kings and queens, nobles, cardinals—were for similar reasons divided for multiple burials. But the form of reliquaries—like the form of *transi* tombs, with peaceful, clothed, regal figures carved above worm-eaten skeletons—was intended not so much to display the partition of earthly death as to foreshadow the glory of bodily resurrection. Hagiographers wrote of the saints as pearls, carbuncles and crystals at the very moment of death; arm, rib and head reliquaries denied putrefaction by sheathing the bits they contained in gold and precious stones.¹² The art that recounts the severing of Agatha’s breasts, the multiple penetrations

of Sebastian by arrows, the torture of St. Catherine on the wheel also displays these same saints whole, carrying their severed parts as attributes. We know St. Lucy is Lucy on medieval altarpieces because she bears her eyes on a plate, but she faces us with those eyes restored. *See plate 8.* The future is wholeness. At the blast of the last trumpet God will reassemble in every detail the body as it was in life, for Christ himself promised “Not a hair of your head shall perish” (Luke 21.18). As Peter the Venerable wrote in the mid-twelfth century, the relics of the saints are already their resurrection bodies:

The divine dignity divides his martyr into equal parts, so that he may retain his soul for himself among the mass of the blessed and give, with marvelous largess, the relics of his sacred body to be venerated by the faithful still living in the flesh. . . . Behold whose bodies you venerate, . . . in whose ashes you exalt, for whose bones you prepare golden sepulchres. They are sons of God, equal to angels, sons of the resurrection. . . . And in this hope I have confidence more certainly than in any human thing that you ought not to feel contempt for the bones of the present martyrs as if they were dry bones but should honor them now full of life as if they were in their future incorruption. . . . Therefore because the bones of the present martyr shall flower like an herb, rising to eternal life, because the corruptible shall put on the incorruptible and the mortal the immortal, because this body of a just man snatched up to meet Christ shall always remain with him, who will not, with full affection, bring to be honored in this life what he believes will be elevated in the future glory.¹³

Even depictions of the moment of Last Judgment sometimes show God’s angels reassembling the scattered bits of long-departed human beings at the end of time.

Moreover, the grisly accounts and depictions of martyrdom from the high Middle Ages show curiously affectless victims. The saints do not appear to feel their torture. Although to modern tastes there is something almost pornographic about the slashings and penetrations of the slim, smooth, beautiful—and highly objectified—bodies of Agatha and Sebastian (and I do not discount the complexity of medieval responses as well), medieval theory was clear: the saints were blessed in death by the anesthesia of glory. *See plate 9.* God extended the bliss of the beatific vision to block their pain. According to Thomas Aquinas, only Christ suffered in execution, and that only because he willingly assumed his torment for the sins of the world.¹⁴



Plate 8. In this initial L from a fourteenth-century manuscript, the martyr Lucy appears serene and beautiful with her eyes both in their normal position on her face and in the dish she carries.



Plate 9. Modern viewers are often surprised both at the sadism of medieval depictions of martyrdom and at the serenity with which the saints face execution. Theologians argued that the martyrs' vision of God protected them from feeling pain. In this painting of "The Martyrdom of St. Agatha" from 1473, the saint seems almost smug in her imperviousness to torture.

This brings us to those other parts I spoke of above—the fragments of Christ’s body, the torture instruments, the waves of crimson blood. Here also things are not quite what they seem. Indeed the *arma Christi* were until about 1300 signs not of suffering but of triumph, of Christ’s authority to judge. They were, as the name implies, coats of arms, signs of nobility and power; and as *arma*, they were also defensive (shields against the devil and his works) or offensive (weapons of attack against the enemies of Christ). Only in the later Middle Ages did they become signs of pain and injury, visual triggers to remind Christians of what God had suffered for them,¹⁵ and even such torture was sometimes understood as love. In an odd reversal of the passion story, some late medieval images portray Christ crucified by the virtues, the saving sacrifice poured out in response to human love and fortitude.¹⁶ Hence the *arma Christi* became inducements of empathy, signals of enacted *caritas* to which *caritas* responds. Non-narrative and scattered around the picture field with no regard to perspective or proportion, these *arma* functioned as signs, a heaping up of detail to encourage pious adherents to meditate in a random order that could be different in every recourse to the image, hence ever challenging and ever new.¹⁷ Understanding this, we are struck more by the restraint than by the violence. In a panel painting of the so-called “Gregorymass” from Nuremberg about 1490, for example, a knife represents the circumcision but we do not see cutting; three nails remind us of the moment when hands and feet were violated; a single spitting head stands in for mocking, beating and humiliation. See *plate 4*.

Like the *arma Christi*, the wounds of Christ evoked love. In a fifteenth-century Carthusian miscellany, for example, the suffering Christ, or Man of Sorrows, displays his own heart to a little lay figure kneeling below. See *plate 10*. The heart bears within it all five wounds of Christ’s body, and the accompanying dialogue, which offers both reproach and comfort, ends with the hope that we will soon come to joy. God complains: “O man unkynde, hafe in mynde, my paynes smert. Beholde and see, that is for the, percyd my hert . . .” And man responds: “O lord right dere, thi wordes I here, with hert ful sore. . . . That we may alle, into thi halle, with ioy cum sone. Amen.”¹⁸

This image returns us to the theme of fragmentation, for here as elsewhere in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century devotion we find special attention given to the severed parts and gouged out organs of God. The stress on blood is palpable; red is one of the few colors in this artist’s simple palette. Yet when we read the words inscribed around—indeed we might say spoken by—the wound in the heart, what we find surprises us.¹⁹ For the wound says: “This is the mesure of the wounde that our Ihesus Christus sufferd for oure redemption.” Something about the



Plate 10. In this drawing from a fifteenth-century Carthusian miscellany (London BL Add. 37049, fol. 20r), Christ displays his side wound to a kneeling layman. Between the kneeling figure and the Savior, Christ's heart, which incorporates all five wounds, almost becomes Christ himself. The accompanying dialogue castigates humankind for piercing Christ's side with sin.

length of the incision seems to be important. And indeed images of the side wound were adored, valued and (we can tell from the worn quality of the parchment) repeatedly kissed not because of the erotic overtones some modern historians have thought to see in them but because medieval devotees believed they represented an authentic measurement of Christ. In a late fifteenth-century woodcut in the National Gallery in Washington D.C., the wound becomes Christ's body. *See plate 11.* A scroll to the left says: "This is the length and width of Christ's wound which was pierced in his side on the Cross. Whoever kisses [it] . . . will have . . . seven years indulgence. . . ." And the scroll to the right tells us that what is within the wound is not merely an abbreviated version of the *arma Christi*—the cross, mocking titulus, and the heart with three nails—but another measure: "This little cross standing in Christ's wound measured forty times makes the length of Christ in his humanity. Whoever kisses it with devotion shall be protected from sudden death or misfortune."²⁰ The image is a kind of amulet; the little measure within the wound participates in Christ as fully as do the relics of his blood, foreskin or shroud.

An enthusiasm for measurement and quantification was a new characteristic of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century culture;²¹ the counting of Christ's wounds (5475, 6666, etc.) and the exact calculations of indulgences surely reflect this. But the sense that length is metonym for person has far older roots. I cannot discuss them all. But it is worth noting that pilgrims traditionally brought back from the Holy Land measures of Christ and of holy places (some of these measurements were said to have miraculous origins), and that those who sought healing or offered thanks for it afterward often gave to the altar of the saints candles made to their own measure. We are told, for example, in a twelfth-century account of wonders at Becket's tomb that a certain Ethelburga wished to give the martyr a candle made to the length of her gouty left arm, in hope of a cure. The miracle consisted in the fact that she "had scarcely begun to measure [the limb] with a thread than . . . she felt all the pain receding."²² Because made to her length, the candle *was* Ethelburga. If made to the dimensions supposedly given in a vision or brought from the Holy Land, an image of the wound *was* Christ.

Enumerating parts, anatomizing the body, was, moreover, a means of possessing it, of re-uniting the fragments and incorporating them into oneself. Just as medieval love poetry dwelt tenderly on the details of the beloved's beautiful form—lips, eyes, eyebrows, neck—so poems to the wounds of Christ named and counted his parts, making them one with the soul, his lover. Thus, for example, when Gertrude of Helfta used Psalm 102 to pray to the wounds, she addressed the first verse to the

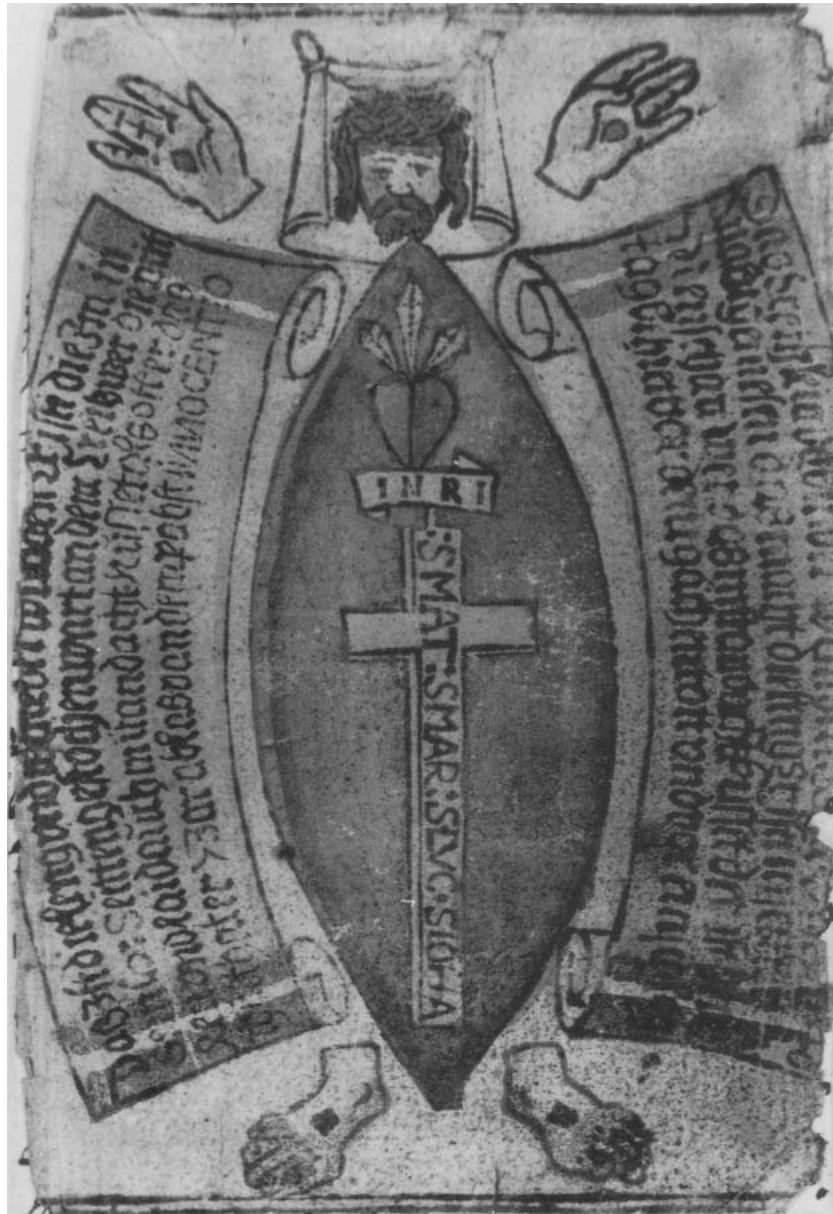


Plate 11. In this late fifteenth-century German woodcut, the side wound (tilted on end) becomes Christ's body; the Veronica serves as head, the wounded hands and feet as limbs. Within the wound, a little cross—one of an abbreviated set of *arma Christi*—provides a measure of the true length of the human Christ. The little image offers to those who kiss it seven years of indulgence and protection against sudden death.

wounds of the feet, the second to the side, the third to the left hand, the fourth to the right. An English poem of the fifteenth century not only speaks to each body part as a well or refuge within which the soul can hide—well of mercy (right hand), well of grace (left hand), etc.—but also accompanies each verse with a little drawing of the wound in question, making the anatomizing visual.²³ As David Areford has brilliantly shown, medieval *mappae mundi* often situate the entire known world within the body parts of Christ, suggesting that parts contain whole, that enumeration is incorporation.²⁴ Just as the devotee moves around the field of the *arma Christi*, taking into himself the suffering, guilt and protection of Christ's agony, instrument by instrument, so he enters Christ's wounded parts themselves, incorporating as he is incorporated into God. The fourteenth-century mystic Richard Rolle wrote:

And, yit, Lord, swet Jhesu, thy body is lyk to a nette; for as a nette is ful of holys, so is thy body ful of woundes. Here, swet Jhesu, I beseche the, cache me into this net of thy scourgyng, that al my hert and love be to the; . . .

Efte, swet Jhesu, thy body is like to a dufhouse. For a dufhouse is ful of holys, so is thy body ful of woundes. And as a dove pursued of an hawk, yf she mow cache an hool of hir hous she is siker ynowe, so, swete Jhesu, in temptacion thy woundes ben best refuyt to us. . . .

Also, swete Jhesu, thi body is like to a honnycombe. For hit is in euche a way ful of cellis, and euch celle ful of hony, so that hit may nat be touched without yeld of swetnesse. . . .²⁵

The tendency of medieval piety to metonymy was undergirded by a central doctrine of learned theology, the doctrine of concomitance (the idea that the whole Christ is present in every particle of the eucharist). Often thought to have developed as a rationalization for withdrawing the chalice from the laity, the doctrine was in fact older than this practice.²⁶ Formulated in the eucharistic disputes of the eleventh century as a defense against literalist claims that Christ, really present in the consecrated host, was broken and digested, the doctrine meant not only that Christ's blood was fully present in the consecrated wafer but also that the Christ present in the sacrifice of the mass was the Christ of the resurrection, "invisible, impassible, indivisible."²⁷ As Gabriel Biel would argue in the fifteenth century, it had to be bread that became body at the consecration; the nature of the species is important; like must become like. Hence bread becomes body, wine blood. But the wafer was all of Christ by concomitance—blood, soul, and the glory of divinity. Otherwise the faithful would receive only dead flesh.²⁸

Indeed, in the high Middle Ages, metonymy or concomitance became a general way of thinking about presence. A Dominican champion of the supposed relic of Christ's blood at Weingarten, for example, defended this non-eucharistic presence with an argument borrowed from eucharistic theology. Opponents had argued that Weingarten's relic must, for theological reasons, be spurious; Christ could have left no particle of his glorious body behind on earth after his resurrection. But, argued Gerhard of Cologne:

just as [Christ] could make his subtle and glorified body touchable and visible to his disciples, so he could have one and the same blood in heaven and yet leave it behind as a comfort for his believers here on earth. Cannot one and the same all-powerful Savior in one and the same moment be changed into the sacrament in the hands of a thousand priests, really here present and undivided, and yet not be absent there [in heaven]?²⁹

From folk assumptions that a measure or particle (fingernails or hair) can be the person to abstruse theological debates over the mode of presence of an immaterial God, medieval culture gloried in the paradox of parts that not so much represented as *were* the whole.

It is this quality of paradox that characterizes the blood cult at the center of late medieval piety. The ubiquitous Man of Sorrows is not only a half dead figure in his coffin, mournful and mourned; the bleeding body stands upright; there is a hint—if only a hint—of resurrection. The cult of the wounds, the blood, the heart of Christ expresses not solution or resolution but the simultaneity of opposites: life and death, glory and agony, salvation and sin.³⁰ The beautiful *Schmerzmann* of Meister Francke, whose wounds pour blood and whose crimson-lined white cloak encircles him like flayed skin, is tenderly, almost erotically, alive. Accompanied by angels, who bear the lily of resurrection and the sword of judgment, he is sacrificial victim, lover, and the judge who is to come.³¹ See plate 12. The wounds, the blood of Christ, are present then even in heaven; they are access, condemnation, and recompense. Gertrude of Helfta, summoned by Christ to “drink from the torrent of [his] delights,” saw in a vision a hedge set with thorns over which she could not pass. It was only when Christ himself lifted her over and set her beside himself that she saw the wound in his outstretched hand.³² The bleeding hole in Christ's flesh was not beginning and hurdle; it was goal and reward.

The gifted theologian Julian of Norwich summed up the paradoxical significance of blood when she described her own moment of death and transformation:

And when I was thirty and a half years old, God sent me a bodily sickness in which I lay for three days and three nights, and on the



Plate 12. The “Man of Sorrows,” ca. 1430, by Meister Francke, now in Hamburg, is a particularly beautiful evocation of the suffering Christ, who is judge (one angel bears a sword), promise of resurrection (the other angel bears a lily), lover, and sacrificial victim.

third night I received all the rites of Holy Church and did not expect to live. . . . So I lasted until day, and by then my body was dead from the middle downwards, as it felt to me. Then I was helped to sit upright and supported, so that my heart might be more free to be at God's will, and so that I could think of him whilst my life would last. My curate was sent for to be present at my end; and before he came my eyes were fixed upwards and I could not speak. He set the cross before my face, and said: I have brought the image of your saviour; look at it and take comfort from it. . . . After this my sight began to fail . . . Everything around the cross was ugly and terrifying to me, as if it were occupied by a great crowd of devils.

. . . And suddenly at that moment all pain was taken from me, and I was sound

And at this, suddenly I saw the red blood flowing down from under his crown, hot and flowing freely and copiously, a living stream, just as it was at the time when the crown of thorns was pressed on his blessed head

And in the same revelation, suddenly the Trinity filled my heart full of the greatest joy. . . . And I said: Blessed be the Lord! . . . and I was greatly astonished by this wonder and marvel, that he who is so to be revered and feared would be so familiar with a sinful creature living in this wretched flesh.

. . . [And] I saw that [our Lord] is to us everything which is good. . . .³³

It is not that joy replaces pain, or brilliance blood. The hot blood flows at the moment of intimacy and liberation. Blood *is* ecstasy.

I seem thus to have argued here not only that things are not what they seem but that they are indeed their opposite: agony is ecstasy, part is whole, torture is redemption. And that is at some deep level the heart of Christian belief in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Paradox is the core.

Yet the horror remains. And repulsion was a possible response.³⁴ Medieval Christians were themselves sometimes sickened at the violence of image and text. For example, when Christina Ebner of Engelthal saw a vision of Christ as he hung on the cross, she was terrified.³⁵ Margery Kempe became physically weak and fell down, crying and twisting, when she thought of the crucifixion. Moreover, people were aware that one kind of violence could be displaced onto another, that violence echoes violence. Margery tells us she thought of Christ beaten or wounded not just when she saw the crucifix but whenever she "saw a man or a beast . . . [with] a wound or if a man beat a child before her or smote a horse or another beast with a whip . . . as well in the field as in the town" ³⁶ To

Margery, the violence of everyday life only reduplicated her sorrow at the violence inflicted on Christ.³⁷ But the displacement could work the other way; the horror and filth of living could seem to pollute God. A fourteenth-century woman from Montailou named Aude recoiled in horror from the physicality attributed to the host on the altar:

I thought of the disgusting afterbirth that women expel in childbirth and whenever I saw the body of the Lord raised on the altar I kept thinking, because of that afterbirth, that the host was somehow polluted. That's why I could no longer believe it was the body of Christ.³⁸

Whatever the personal and experiential roots of Aude's obsession with the placenta may have been, her skepticism was directly engendered not only by the doctrine of real presence but also by an affective devotion to the body of the infant Jesus that carried with it overtones of cannibalism and contamination.

Mystics and theologians sometimes deployed concomitance and paradox to focus the gaze of Christians away from such horror. University professors and canon lawyers struggled to contain outbursts of pilgrim enthusiasm for the bloody bits and pieces of sites such as Orvieto or Wilsnack, attempting not only to harness but even to suppress blood cult. To give only a single example. In late-fifteenth-century Würzburg, a tractate on "the perils of the eucharist" maintained: "It is a *periculum* to the host if the figure of flesh or a child or any other thing appears in it." Hence, argues the treatise, the priest should consume such a host immediately if an individual claim is made; if, however, many people profess to see it, the priest should repeat the consecration with new hosts, and the miraculous one should be hidden from view so that every opportunity for a crowd to gather is avoided.³⁹ Yet, despite the efforts of papal legates and learned professors to staunch the flow of bloody hosts and miracles, fourteenth- and fifteenth-century spirituality ever more intensely visualized experience as fragmentation, anatomized the body of God itself, and craved blood.

Modern historians have sometimes used psychoanalytic theory to understand this piety. In such interpretation, late medieval meditation becomes a kind of neurotic fetishizing, a transferring of religious response to isolated body parts, an obsessive and voyeuristic compulsion to repeat that reflects and creates ever-increasing anxiety about the body.⁴⁰ And the anxiety, the obsessive enumerating, are clearly there. But it is easy to over-emphasize this, to forget the beauty and centering of the images. The parts depicted in the Carthusian miscellany are not the parts of Picasso or Francis Bacon; they pull toward wholeness.⁴¹ The wounds Rolle apostrophizes are cells of honey, clefts of refuge, doorways to sal-

vation. It is not so much that we pull Christ toward us when we anatomize him as that he lifts us to heaven. As the German translation of the Song of Songs (a text much loved by medieval mystics) put it: “[Christ says]: Grow and eat me, not that I will be changed into you through the eating of the body but rather you will be changed into me.”⁴² The frightening and mournful *Schmerzensmann* of Dürer’s famous Gregorymass offers in one of the *arma Christi* itself a ladder to heaven. Whereas in the Nuremberg panel of 1490 (see plate 4 above) the ladder is simply propped among lance and sponge as an instrument of torture, in the Dürer it breaks across the picture space, joining the viewing pope (and us who view him) to the otherworldly place where the vision of Christ appears. See plate 13. In these examples, art and text connect more than they divide. Psychoanalytic theories of voyeurism and obsession move too far from the medieval context to offer more than an interpretative hint, distorting although suggestive, as much a projection of our own fetishizing displacement as a response to medieval images.

Yet there is a sense in which we need, I think, a psychological interpretation, although one closer to the concepts of medieval theologians and craftsmen.⁴³ For, as the images and texts themselves tell us, something nagged at the heart of this spirituality: a blaming of self that could oh so easily become a blaming of other. Sacrificed for humankind in an overwhelming love that made even the virtues a cause of his death, Christ was forever reproach as well as lover, judge as well as friend. Poem after poem apostrophized (and blamed): “O man unkynde. . . .”⁴⁴ As Mechtild of Madgeburg asserted: the wounds of Christ will bleed until there is no more human sin—that is, they will bleed, accusing sinners, until Judgment Day itself.⁴⁵ The reproaches of Good Friday—“Oh my people, what have you done unto me?”—reverberated around the *Schmerzensmann*.

We see this move from love to blame if we look at the figure of Longinus, the soldier who lanced Christ’s side with a spear. Over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the image changed. Early understood as penitent sinner who knelt to ask forgiveness and was healed under the cross by Christ’s blood—or even as facilitator of redemption who opened Christ’s side so that the saving blood might descend—Longinus came to stand for accused humankind.⁴⁶ Thus the lance and indeed the entire *arma Christi* came to have new meaning. As *arma*, they were increasingly seen to be daily wielded by us against God. And they were also wielded by God against us. In the later thirteenth century, the author of the immensely popular *Golden Legend* wrote: “They [the *arma Christi*] show Christ’s mercy and justify his anger, for we remember that not all men are willing to accept his sacrifice [emphasis added].” The author of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* wrote in the fourteenth cen-



Plate 13. In this woodcut of the “Gregorymass,” by Dürer, 1511, the looming Christ is both terrifying and compassionate. The ladder is no longer only the instrument by which he was lifted to agony; it has become a means of access, for both pope and viewer, as well.

tury: "All Christ's weapons are aimed against sinners."⁴⁷ We are the Christ killers. The enemy is us!

Such a burden of guilt seems to cry out for transfer. And transferred, projected, displaced it was. As early as the eighth century, the wounds of Christ had been given multiple significances. Bede enumerated these. The wounds were proof of Christ's death, intercession to God the Father, demonstration of love, reproach to the evil and the damned. By the fourteenth century, texts regularly expanded the final category to target the Jews. A German sermon explained that the purpose of the third (demonstration of love) was to show the blessed how dearly they were blessed, the fourth (reproach) was to demonstrate at the Last Judgment the guilt of the Jews.⁴⁸ The Provençal mystic Marguerite of Oingt, in a different enumeration, wrote that Christ held a book for teaching in which the white letters told his life, the silver ones detailed his blood poured out for us, the black described "the blows and slaps and filthy things the Jews threw in his face and on his noble body . . . [until it] looked like a leper's."⁴⁹

The blame reverberated from self to other and back to self. Gerhard of Cologne wrote, defending the relic of Christ's blood: "we are the new Jews." In a Dürer woodcut of 1510, the *Schmerzensmann* accused all Christians:

I bear these cruel wounds for thee, O man!
And I heal thy frailty with my blood.

. . . .

But thou dost not thank me. With thy sins thou often tearest open
my wounds.

I am still lashed for thy misdeeds.

Have done now.

I once suffered great torment from the Jews.

Now, friend, let peace be between us.⁵⁰

Set amidst graphic *arma Christi*, the isolated mocking and spitting heads of Christ's humiliation become increasingly hostile, increasingly distorted, increasingly Jewish. Note the mocking Jewish head in the Nuremberg panel, spitting at the face of Christ; plate 4.

Nor was blame and the projection outward of self-reproach limited to the Jews. The Man of Sorrows surrounded by torture instruments was sometimes (as in a very early example from Rhäzüns) connected with another motif of guilt and reproach: the image known as alternatively the *Feiertagschristus* or "Christ attacked by the sins of the world." In this image, blasphemers, criminals, and peasants or artisans who violate the Sabbath are depicted murdering Christ.⁵¹ See plate 14 where the draftsman has drawn lines from the tools of artisans to the wounds on Christ's

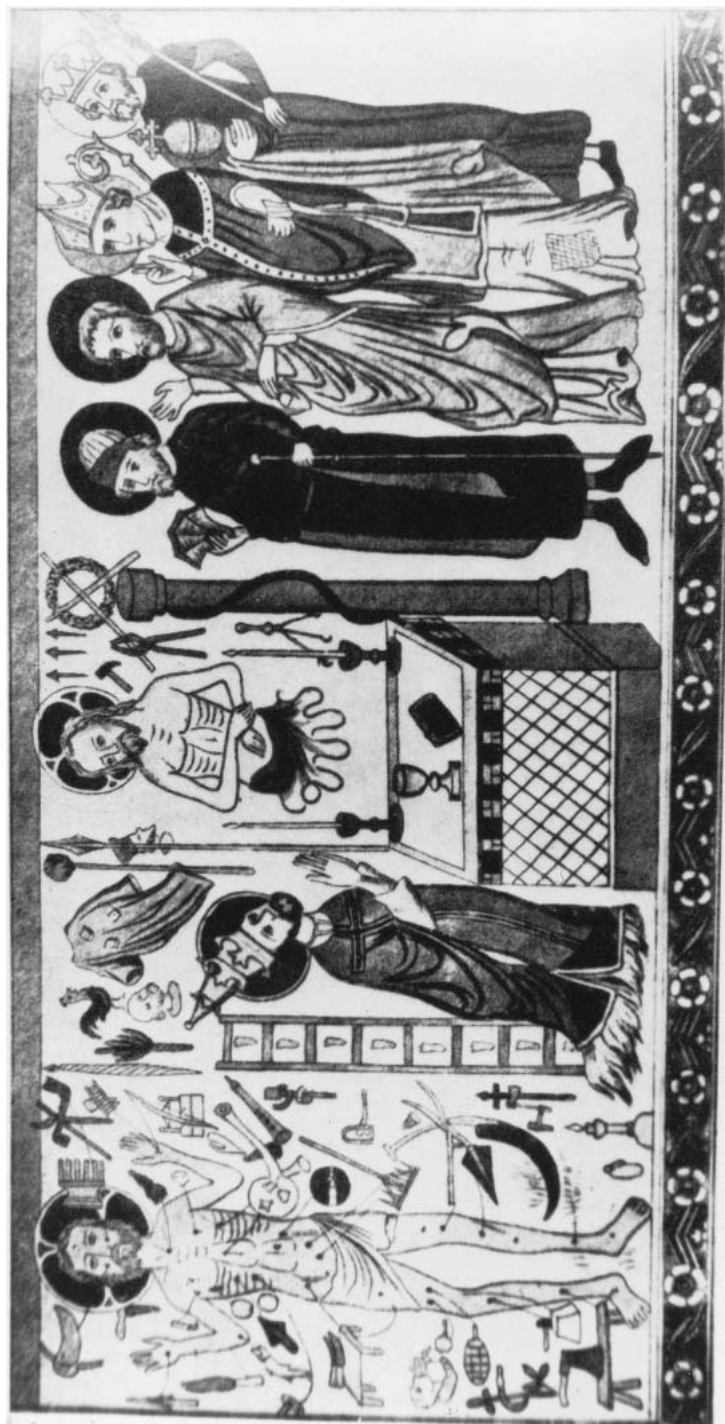


Plate 14. On the wall at Rhäzüns in Graubünden, Switzerland, about 1400, the Christ of the “Gregorymass” with surrounding *arma Christi* is joined by another depiction of attacks on Christ. The Man of Sorrows is also attacked by the tools of artisans and peasants who violate the Sabbath.

body. Although scholars have insisted that the *arma Christi* and the *Feiertagschristus* are independent traditions, at Rhazüns they are next to each other, visually parallel and conceptually linked. In both, the implements that surround the wounded Christ accuse their wielders of attacking God. Hence the Man of Sorrows—an image that often summoned Christians to identify with Christ’s suffering—here identifies Christians instead with those who attack Christ and calls them to expiate and expunge that guilt.

Wounds and *arma* accused both self and other. In an even more troubling and graphic sense, the blood that spilled across European piety also accused, calling for vindication of, as well as empathy with, Christ. The majority of the blood cults of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Europe were places of supposed host desecration, and these wonder-holds—sites of pilgrimage and pogrom—targeted lower-class women, thieves, and most of all Jews as violators of God. Holy objects and holy matter (the consecrated body and blood of Christ) were understood not merely to signal the presence of the divine by bleeding or surviving disaster but also to reproach the guilty and point out their secret crimes.⁵² The presence of blood came increasingly to be *ipso facto* proof of the violation of God. As long ago as the 1930s the German scholar Romuald Bauerreiss noted that the *Schmerzensmann* itself seemed to be a trigger of pilgrimage, persecution and pogrom.⁵³ Images themselves, as Paul Binski has argued, do not merely reflect, they constitute reality.⁵⁴ Hence there is horror as well as glory at the heart of late medieval piety—the horror of a guilt that easily turned from blaming of self to blaming of other in a spiral of scapegoating and self-castigation.

To conclude. My purpose in this lecture has been to make you uncomfortable, both with the material I have presented and with my argument. I have intended not only to talk about elements of religion that are to most of us frightening but also to force you to think about them in new ways, to admit that first impressions are misleading, to accept that things are not what they seem. I have argued that imagery of partition and bloodshed is often, if understood in historical context, not violent. In the religion of late medieval Europe, part is about whole; blood is about access, ecstasy and incorporation. However violent the general tenor of life in fourteenth and fifteenth-century Europe may have been, the gory body parts apostrophized in its prayers and panel paintings are no simple reflection of a violent society. They have a more complex and multi-layered significance. And yet, I have argued also that our first instincts are not totally inaccurate. There is a deeper violence in this spirituality after all. The images I have explored suggest and constitute a religiosity of blame and self-reproach as well as of ecstasy and love.

Thus I draw no easy lesson for modern viewers. Nor do I think we should take modern theories or parallels as more than hints to guide us into the quite alien world of the late Middle Ages. But perhaps an understanding of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century religious imagery will suggest to us that we too should not be cavalier about violence, projection and reproach in our own images and texts.⁵⁵ In the late Middle Ages at any rate, even subtle and sophisticated ideas of concomitance and paradox provided inadequate protection against the sin whose redemption they were meant to signify.

Notes

¹ I would like to thank Anne-Marie Bouché, Patricia Decker, and Jane Rosenthal for help with the plates and Dorothea von Mücke for her critical reading.

² The phrase is the title of chapter 1 of Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, tr. F. Hopman (revised English ed. of 1924; reprint, New York, 1956). See also Barbara W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century* (New York, 1978) and Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, tr. H. Weaver (New York, 1981). Relevant to this lecture are also James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, 1979); David W. Sabeau, *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1984); Christiane Raynaud, *La violence au moyen âge: XIIIe–XVe siècles: d'après les livres d'histoire en français* (Paris, 1990); Lionello Puppi, *Torment in Art: Paint, Violence and Martyrdom* (New York, 1991); Valentin Groebner, "Der verletzte Körper und die Stadt: Gewalttätigkeit und Gewalt in Nürnberg am Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts" in Thomas Lindenberger and Alf Lüdtke, eds., *Physische Gewalt* (Frankfurt, 1995), 162–89; Esther Cohen, "The Animated Pain of the Body," *The American Historical Review* 105.1 (2000): 36–68; Richard J. Evans, *Rituals of Retribution: Capital Punishment in Germany, 1600–1987* (Oxford, 1996); and Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago, 1999).

³ See Brigitte Cazelles, *Les Corps de sainteté d'après Jehan Bouche d'Or, Jehan Paulus, et quelques vies des XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Geneva, 1982).

⁴ Andrew Breeze, "The Number of Christ's Wounds," *The Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 32 (1985): 84–91. See also Christiane Raynaud, *Images et pouvoirs au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1993), 23–38 and plates 1–16. On blood devotion generally, see Peter Dinzelbacher, "Das Blut Christi in der Religiosität des Mittelalters," in Norbert Kruse and Hans Ulrich Rudolf, eds., *900 Jahre Heilig-Blut-Verehrung in Weingarten, 1094–1994: Festschrift zum Heilig-Blut-Jubiläum am 12. März 1994* (Sigmaringen, 1994), 1: 415–34, and Caroline Walker Bynum, "Das Blut und die Körper Christi im Mittelalter: Eine Asymmetrie," *Vorträge aus dem Warburg Haus*, 5 (2001), 75–119.

⁵ X. Barbier de Montault, *Oeuvres complètes*, 7: Rome (Paris, 1893), 5.2: 528.

⁶ David S. Areford, "The Passion Measured: A Late-Medieval Diagram of the Body of Christ," in A. A. MacDonald, H. N. B. Ridderbos and R. M. Schlusmann, eds., *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture* (Groningen, 1998), 214–15, referring to Robert Scribner, "Popular Piety and Modes of Visual Perception in Late-Medieval and Reformation Germany," *Journal of Religious History* 15 (1989): 456.

⁷ "The Monk of Evesham's Vision," in Eileen Gardiner, ed., *Visions of Heaven and Hell Before Dante* (New York, 1989), 198, 202–03, 214.

⁸ *The Letters of Catherine of Siena*, tr. Suzanne Noffke, OP, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 202 (Tempe, Arizona, 2000–2001), 1: 85–89. And see Caroline Walker Bynum,

Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women (Berkeley, 1987), 165–82.

⁹ Douglas Gray, "The Five Wounds of Our Lord," *Notes and Queries* (1963): 50–51, 82–89, 127–134, 163–68, esp. 129.

¹⁰ Anton Legner, *Reliquien in Kunst und Kult zwischen Antike und Aufklärung* (Darmstadt, 1995), esp. 134–99 and 256–316.

¹¹ Cynthia Hahn, "The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries," *Gesta* 36.1 (1997): 20–31; Legner, *Reliquien*, 259, points out that the phrase "speaking reliquaries" is not medieval.

¹² Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995), 208–14, and see Kathleen Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley, 1973).

¹³ Peter the Venerable, "Sermo in honore sancti illius cuius reliquiae sunt in presenti," ed. Giles Constable, "Petri Venerabilis Sermones Tres," *Revue bénédictine* 64 (1954): 224–72, esp. 265–72. For depictions of the reassembling of bones at the resurrection, see Caroline W. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1991), figures 7.9, 7.10, 7.11, 7.12, 7.14, 7.17.

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 3, q. 14, art. 1; q. 15, art. 5; and q. 54. And see Martha Easton, "Saint Agatha and the Sanctification of Sexual Violence," *Studies in Iconography* 16 (1994): 83–118.

¹⁵ R.E.D., "Arma Christi," in *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum, SJ, et al. (Rome/Freiburg, 1968), 1: cols. 183–87; Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, tr. Janet Seligman (Greenwich, Conn., 1972), 2: 184–98; Flora Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side and the Instruments of the Passion: Gendered Experience and Response," *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Experience*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor (London/Toronto, 1996), 204–229; and Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel*, 76 and 98. And see also Louis Gougaud, *Dévotions et pratiques ascétiques du moyen âge*, Collection Pax 21 (Paris, 1925), 74–128; Hubert Schrade, "Beiträge zur Erklärung des Schmerzensmannbildes," in Hans Teske, ed., *Deutschkundliches: Friedrich Panzer zum 60. Geburtstag überreicht von heidelberg Fachgenossen* (Heidelberg, 1930), 164–182, esp. 168–70; Gray, "The Five Wounds of Our Lord;" J. A. W. Bennett, *Poetry of the Passion: Studies in Twelve Centuries of English Verse* (Oxford, 1982), 43–45; Nigel Morgan, "Longinus and the Wounded Heart," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 46–47: *Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Kunst* pt. 2 (1993/94): 507–518; and Dinzelsbacher, "Das Blut Christi."

¹⁶ Jeffrey Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York, 1998), 121–24.

¹⁷ Robert Suckale, "Arma Christi: Überlegungen zur Zeichenhaftigkeit mittelalterlicher Andachtsbilder," *Städte-Jahrbuch* NF 6 (1977): 177–208.

¹⁸ British Library MS Add. 37049, fol. 20. On this manuscript, see Morgan, "Longinus," 515, and Marlene Villalobos Hennessy, "Morbid Devotions: Reading the Passion of Christ in a Late Medieval Miscellany, London, British Library, Additional MS 37049," Columbia University diss., 2001, 125. Morgan points out that most wounded heart poetry is an admonition to avoid sin.

¹⁹ Hennessy points out ("Morbid Devotions," 124–27) that the manuscript speaks elsewhere of "the mouth of the heart."

²⁰ Areford, "The Passion Measured," 212, 223, and 225.

²¹ See Joel Kaye, *Economy and Nature in the Fourteenth Century: Money, Market Exchange and the Emergence of Scientific Thought* (New York, 1998). For different interpretations, see Karma Lochrie, "Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies," in Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz, eds., *Constructing Medieval Sexuality* (Minneapolis, 1997), 180–200; Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side," 214–17; and Binski cited in n. 40 below.

²² John Shinnars, ed., *Medieval Popular Religion, 1000–1500: A Reader* (Peterborough, Ontario, 1997), 161; see also 165. For many other examples of measurements, both of Christ and holy

objects (such as the column of the Flagellation) and of penitents offering thanks, see the catalogue in Barbier de Montault, *Oeuvres complètes*, 7: 311–12, 340–43, 354, 364, 407 and 470.

²³ Gray, "Five Wounds," 163–4.

²⁴ Areford, "The Passion Measured," 211–238.

²⁵ *English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole*, ed. Hope Emily Allen (Oxford, 1931; reprint, 1988), 35.

²⁶ James J. Megivern, *Concomitance and Communion: A Study in Eucharistic Doctrine and Practice* (Fribourg/New York, 1963).

²⁷ William of Champeaux, cited in Megivern, *Concomitance*, 106.

²⁸ André Goossens, "Résonances eucharistiques à la fin du moyen âge," in André Haquin, ed., *Fête-Dieu (1246–1996) 1: Actes du Colloque de Liège, 12–14 Septembre 1996*, Université catholique de Louvain: Publications de l'Institut d'Études Médiévales (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1999), 173–91.

²⁹ Gerhard, *Tractatus de sacratissimo sanguine*, ed. Klaus Berg, "Der Traktat des Gerhard von Köln über das kostbarste Blut Christi aus dem Jahre 1280," in *900 Jahre Heilig-Blut-Verehrung in Weingarten*, 1: 459–76, esp. 467.

³⁰ Schrade, "Beiträge zur Erklärung des Schmerzensmannbildes," and Bernhard Ridderbos, "The Man of Sorrows: Pictorial Images and Metaphorical Statements," in *The Broken Body*, 145–181.

³¹ Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, 375, and on a related image, see Michael Camille, "Mimetic Identification and Passion Devotion in the Later Middle Ages: A Double-sided Panel by Meister Francke," in *The Broken Body*, 183–210.

³² See Elizabeth A. Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (Oxford, 1986), 210, 222–223.

³³ Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, tr. Edmund College, OSA, and James Walsh, SJ (New York, 1978), Long Text, 179–83.

³⁴ See R. N. Swanson, "Passion and Practice: the Social and Ecclesiastical Implications of Passion Devotions in the Late Middle Ages," in *The Broken Body*, 1–30, esp. 11, and Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel*, 102.

³⁵ Leonard P. Hindley, *The Mystics of Engelthal: Writings from a Medieval Monastery* (New York, 1998), 159–60.

³⁶ *The Book of Margery Kempe: A New Translation, Contexts, Criticism*, tr. and ed. Lynn Staley (New York, 2001), 51.

³⁷ It is worth noting that some religious writers warned against substituting meditation for service of neighbor. Walter Hilton, for example, advised Christians not to strain after devotion but rather to wash Christ's feet by attending to others; see Bennett, *Poetry of the Passion*, 60.

³⁸ See Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (+203) to Marguerite Porete (+1310)* (Cambridge, England, 1984), 214, and Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 266.

³⁹ Wolfgang Brückner, "Liturgie und Legende: Zur theologischen Theoriebildung und zum historischen Verständnis von Eucharistie-Mirakeln," *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 19 (1996): 139–166, esp. 151. And see Hartmut Boockmann, "Der Streit um das Wilsnacker Blut: Zur Situation des deutschen Klerus in der Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 9.4 (1982): 385–408 and Hartmut Kühne, " 'Ich ging durch Feuer und Wasser . . .' Bemerkungen zur Wilsnacker Heilig-Blut-Legende," in Gerlinde Strohmaier-Wiederanders, ed., *Theologie und Kultur: Geschichten einer Wechselbeziehung: Festschrift zum einhundertfünfzigjährigen Bestehen des Lehrstuhls für Christliche Archäologie und Kirchliche Kunst an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin* (Halle, 1999), 51–84. And see at n. 29 above.

⁴⁰ Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, New York, 1996), 124–26. See also Lewis, “The Wound in Christ’s Side,” 222.

⁴¹ In his study of the iconography of the crucifixion, Mitchell Merback points out that, to medieval viewers, pain was world-constituting not world-destroying; see *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel*, esp. 20, 28, and 198–217.

⁴² Williram of Ebersberg, *Das hohe Lied. Übersetzt von Willeram. Erklärt von Rilindis und Herrat, Äbtissinen zu Hohenburg im Elsass (1147–1196). Aus der einzigen Handschrift der K. K. Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, ed. Josef Haupt (Vienna, 1864), 66, lines 10–13.

⁴³ Those who know the literature will recognize in my argument here a parallel to the emphasis of scholars such as Delumeau or Camporesi on the late Middle Ages as a culture of guilt; however, I shift the emphasis somewhat. See Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture*, tr. E. Nicholson (New York, 1990); Piero Camporesi, *Juice of Life: The Symbolic and Magic Significance of Blood*, tr. Robert R. Barr (New York, 1995).

⁴⁴ See above n. 18.

⁴⁵ See Margit M. Sinka, “Christological Mysticism in Mechtild von Magdeburg’s *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit*: A Journey of Wounds,” *The Germanic Review* 40 (1985): 126. Margaret of Cortona agreed; see Barbier de Montault, *Oeuvres complètes*, 7: 385. Dietmut Ebner of Nuremberg, however, saw the wounds transformed into glory; Hindsley, *Mystics of Engelthal*, 159.

⁴⁶ Rose Jeffries Peebles, *The Legend of Longinus in Ecclesiastical Tradition and in English Literature, and its Connection with the Grail* (Baltimore, 1911), 1–131, and Morgan, “Longinus.”

⁴⁷ Schiller, *Iconography*, 2: 189.

⁴⁸ Schrade, “Beiträge zur Erklärung des Schmerzensmannbildes,” 170–72, and see nn. 15 and 17 above, nn. 51 and 53 below. On the early medieval background to this sense of blood as blame and guilt, see now Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: An Intellectual History of Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary* (New York), to appear.

⁴⁹ See Petroff, *Medieval Women’s Visionary Literature*, 291.

⁵⁰ Schiller, *Iconography*, 2: 197. For Gerhard, see above n. 29.

⁵¹ Schiller, *Iconography*, 2: 204–05 and plates 689–691; Robert Wildhaber, “Feiertagschristus,” *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, ed. Otto Schmitt, (Stuttgart, 1948) 2: cols. 1001–1010; and Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London and Boston, 1972), 51–54.

⁵² Crucial on eucharistic miracles and host desecration is still Peter Browe, *Die Eucharistischen Wunder des Mittelalters*, Breslauer Studien zur historischen Theologie NF 4 (Breslau, 1938). For examples of bleeding objects other than hosts, see Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 329 n. 138. I am at work on a study of blood devotion in the later Middle Ages; for some first thoughts on the subject, see Bynum, “Das Blut und die Körper Christi.”

⁵³ Romuald Bauerreiss, *Pie Jesu: Das Schmerzensmann-Bild und sein Einfluss auf die mittelalterliche Frömmigkeit* (Munich, 1931); Peter Browe, “Die Hostienschändungen der Juden im Mittelalter,” *Römische Quartalschrift* 34.4 (1924): 167–97; Lionel Rothkrug, “Popular Religion and Holy Shrines: Their Influence on the Origins of the German Reformation and Their Role in German Cultural Development,” in *Religion and the People, 800–1700*, ed. J. Obelkevich (Chapel Hill, 1979), 20–86, esp. 27–8; and Friedrich Lotter, “Innocens Virgo et Martyr: Thomas von Monmouth und die Verbreitung der Ritualmordlegende im Hochmittelalter,” in Rainer Erb, ed., *Die Legende vom Ritualmord: Zur Geschichte der Blutbeschuldigung gegen Juden* (Berlin, 1993), 25–72. For recent work on persecution of the Jews, see generally R. Po-chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven, 1988); Diane Wood, ed., *Christianity and Judaism: Papers Read at the 1991 Summer Meeting and the 1992 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, *Studies in Church History* 29 (Oxford, 1992); Erb, ed., *Die Legende vom Ritualmord*; J. M. Minty, “Judengasse to Christian Quarter: The Phenomenon of the Converted Synagogue in the Late Medieval and Early

Modern Holy Roman Empire," in *Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe, 1400–1800*, eds. R. Scribner and T. Johnson (New York, 1996), 58–86; John McCulloh, "Jewish Ritual Murder: William of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth, and the Early Dissemination of the Myth," *Speculum* 72.3 (1997): 698–740; Robert C. Stacey, "From Ritual Crucifixion to Host Desecration: Jews and the Body of Christ," *Jewish History* 12.1 (1998): 11–28; and Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, 1999). On medieval anti-Semitism, see Gavin I. Langmuir, *History, Religion and Antisemitism* (Berkeley, 1990), and idem, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley, 1990).

⁵⁴ Paul Binski, "The English Parish Church and Its Art in the Later Middle Ages: A Review of the Problem," *Studies in Iconography* 20 (1999): 1–25, esp. 1–2 and 6.

⁵⁵ On the effects of the violence in our own imagery, see Garry Wills, "The Dramaturgy of Death," *The New York Review of Books* 48.10 (June 21, 2001): 6–10. Eamon Duffy, reviewing James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword* (2001) in *The New York Review of Books* 48.11 (July 5, 2001): 24–27, takes the position, with which I agree profoundly, that traditions must not dismantle themselves in order to effect reconciliation. Nonetheless, for all Duffy's efforts to defend late medieval piety against charges that it was violent and guilt-ridden—to find resurrection, for example, in its images of crucifixion—the conclusion of my paper is that some of that charge must stick.