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Source: *Speculum*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (Oct., 2005), pp. 1172-1208

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Medieval Academy of America

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20463497>

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“The Sweet Lean of His Head”: Writing about Looking at the Crucifix in the High Middle Ages

By Sara Lipton

In the spring of 1272 or 1273, at the conclusion of his Good Friday sermon, an unknown preacher stood in a church in Paris, gestured toward a crucifix, and cried out to his flock: “Ha! Veroi chrestien, regarde, regarde, comment il a le chief encliné por toi beisier, les bras estendu por toi embrachier!”¹ (Oh see, Christian, look, look! See how [Jesus] has his head leaning down to kiss you, his arms extended to embrace you!) Was there ever a more heartfelt response to a work of art, a clearer indication of the immediate power of the religious image to move and inspire? In encouraging his listeners to look up at a crucifix, so confident that they will find there bliss, the preacher seems to express supreme faith in the force and transparency of art, that famed Bible of the Simple.²

An earlier version of this paper was presented at “Objects of Interpretation: Writing about Art in the Middle Ages,” a symposium in honor of Prof. Walter Cahn at the Yale University Divinity School, March 29, 2003. I would like to thank the participants at that event, especially Professors Cahn, Jeffrey Hamburger, Margot Fassler, Creighton Gilbert, Camille Serchuk, and Charles McClendon for their invaluable conversation and suggestions. I thank, too, the very helpful anonymous readers for *Speculum*, and the Howard Foundation and the Metropolitan Museum of Art for financial support. This paper is dedicated to Professor Cahn with gratitude.

¹ This sermon appears under the rubric “Passio” in a collection of *distinctiones* assembled by Raoul de Châteauroux, a member of the Sorbonne, based on notes of sermons delivered in 1272–73 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 16482, fols. 136r–141v). It is transcribed in Nicole Bériou, *L’avènement des maîtres de la Parole: La prédication à Paris au XIIIe siècle*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Moyen Âge et Temps Modernes 31–32 (Paris, 1998), 2:787–99, and is discussed briefly at 1:280, 286, and 490–94 and also by Bériou in “Latin and the Vernacular: Some Remarks about Sermons Delivered on Good Friday during the Thirteenth Century,” in *Die deutsche Predigt im Mittelalter*, ed. Volker Mertens and Hans-Jochen Schiewer (Tübingen, 1992), pp. 268–84. See also A. Lecoy de la Marche, *La chaire française au moyen âge, spécialement au XIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1886), pp. 309–11. A very defective edition (according to Bériou) of this sermon is in F. Maillard, “Sermon en français (fin du XIIIe siècle),” in *Actes du 99 Congrès national des sociétés savantes, Besançon 1974, Section de philologie et d’histoire jusqu’à 1610*, 1: *La piété populaire au moyen âge* (Paris, 1977), pp. 91–105. See, too, G. Hasenohr, “Un recueil de *Distinctiones* bilingue du début du XIVe siècle,” *Romania* 99 (1978), 47–96 and 183–206, here p. 54 n. 1.

² The phrase refers to Pope Gregory the Great’s well-known defense of the use of images in his letter to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles: see *Epistola* 9.208 and *Epistola* 11.10 in Gregory the Great, *Registrum epistolarum*, ed. Dag Norberg, CCSL 140A (Turnhout, 1982), pp. 768 and 874. The letters may also be found in MGH Epp. 2:195 and 270. For further references and a critical review of the concept, see L. G. Duggan, “Was Art Really the ‘Book of the Illiterate’?” *Word and Image* 5 (1989), 227–51; and Celia Chazelle, “Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I’s Letters to Serenus of Marseilles,” *Word and Image* 6 (1990), 138–53. Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York, 2002), p. 86, cites an eleventh-century sermon that specifically refers to the crucifix as a visual aid to *illiterati*. See, too, Michael Camille, “Mouths and Meanings: Towards an Anti-iconography of Medieval Art,” in *Iconography at the Crossroads: Papers*

Or does he? In fact, this pastor does *not* take for granted what his hearers will see: he tells them what to see and how to “read” it. And what a curious method of “reading” this is. A literal reading of the image before them (probably similar to the crucifix in Fig. 1), one analogous to literal exegesis of Scripture, would say that the head leans because Jesus is dead or dying, that the arms are extended because they are nailed to the cross.³ Indeed, directly before this final exhortation, the preacher had quoted verbatim the Gospel text describing Jesus’s death: “And inclining his head, he gave up the ghost” (John 19.30).⁴ When it comes to the image, however, the preacher’s “reading” is not just “nonliteral” but decidedly against the grain; he offers an unexpected, even counterintuitive view of Jesus’s posture, breaking the frame of his Passion narrative to provide a dramatic, visceral, but far from obvious climax. Our Bible for the Simple is, it seems, not quite an open book after all. More intriguing still is the fact that the preacher’s *cri de coeur*, this spontaneous act of succumbing to sight, is actually a learned quotation, ultimately traceable to a text written more than a century earlier in a different language and genre, for a very different audience, and almost certainly in response to a very different kind of crucifix.

The preacher’s appeal thus leaves us with questions: When medieval people looked at a crucifix, what did they see? To what end, and with what effect, was their attention directed by a preacher or teacher toward this—or any other—work of art? To what extent were their responses to an image contoured by the appearance of the object, the words they heard, the texts they read, the lives they led?⁵

These are large questions, which have been and continue to be explored by many fine scholars. Indeed, in the past few decades, the influence of the social sciences, especially anthropology, on the one hand, and of cultural theories such as reception and reader response and feminism, on the other, have combined to

from the Colloquium Sponsored by the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, 23–24 March 1990, ed. Brendan Cassidy (Princeton, N.J., 1993), pp. 43–58. I am currently exploring art in high-medieval preaching in a study entitled *The Vulgate of Experience: Preaching, Art, and Piety in the High Middle Ages*.

³ Compare, for example, the anonymous eleventh-century meditation in PL 40:901–9: “[T]he young head . . . bends on his snowy neck as it relaxes in a most precious death. . . . [H]is extended arms are stiff . . .” (trans. Matthew J. O’Connell, in *Meditations of Saint Augustine*, ed. John E. Rotelle [Villanova, Pa., 1995], pp. 21–41, quoted in Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, p. 529 n. 192). We see a similarly “literal” reading of the image in John of Ford, *Super extremam partem Cantici canticorum sermones CXX*, ed. Edmund Mikkers and Hilary Costello, CCCM 17 (Turnhout, 1970), Sermon 25, line 211: “sponte se tradens patibulo ad crucifigendum, gratis postremo neci caput inclinans ad moriendum.”

⁴ “Quant il ot ce dit il enclina son chief et mist hors dou cors l’espirit.”

⁵ This is another way of formulating the question addressed by Jeffrey Hamburger in “Seeing and Believing: The Suspicion of Sight and the Authentication of Vision in Late Medieval Art,” in *Imagination und Wirklichkeit: Zum Verhältnis von mentalen und realen Bildern in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Klaus Krüger and Alessandro Nova (Mainz, 2000), pp. 47–70: was the medieval response to devotional art improvised or orchestrated? Because I wish to focus here on the relative roles of perception and convention, and on the didactic uses of writing about art, I touch only very lightly upon theological aspects of devotion to the crucifix. For recent fine explorations of those issues, see Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, and Celia Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ’s Passion* (Cambridge, Eng., 2001).

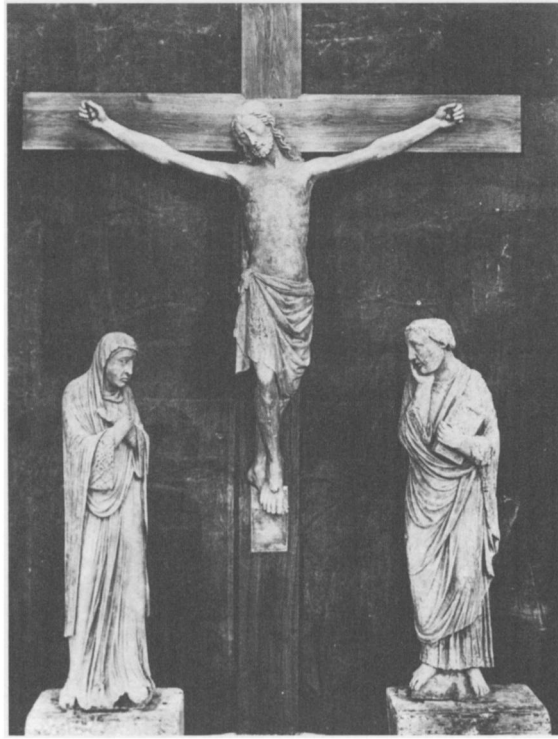


Fig. 1. Wooden crucifix. Sens, ca. 1260.
(Photograph: Cliché Arch. Phot./Coll. MAP,
Centre des Monuments Nationaux, Paris.)

render the interactions of perception, experience, and faith among the most absorbing of current historical concerns.⁶ In this article I hope to contribute to our understanding of these interactions in medieval Christendom by examining the

⁶ For a lucid and thoughtful overview of recent trends in the study of medieval religion, see John Van Engen, "The Future of Medieval Church History," *Church History* 71 (2002), 492–522. Van Engen closes this essay with a call for "better language and frameworks for teasing out . . . how people defined and negotiated distinct sacred and profane spheres, how certain aspects of human life, or of culture, or of social power, or of the interior life, moved from one to another or back again." The many works of Caroline Walker Bynum are probably the most influential studies of religious experience, especially *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, Calif., 1987) and *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1991). See, too, the multifaceted approach to religious experience in Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, Eng., 1991); and Jeffrey Hamburger's explorations of the relationship of faith and art in the articles collected in *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York, 1998). The texts collected by James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein, eds., *Reception Study: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies* (London, 2001), provide a good introduction to reception theory and its critics. On the influence of response theory in medieval art history, see Jonathan J. G. Alexander, "Art History, Literary History, and the Study of Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts," *Studies in Iconography* 18 (1997), 51–66.

career of one simple phrase, this exhortation to look at the crucifix and see in Christ's posture a nod and an embrace. I have so far identified fourteen other versions of the same phrase, spanning four hundred years and seven countries.⁷ Each text highlights a slightly different aspect of Christ's appearance, guides its reader/listener through a different perceptual and devotional process, and uses the image for different pastoral ends; these sources thus afford a unique opportunity to examine the complex interplay of text, object, teacher, and audience. Together they reveal the creativity and diversity of medieval responses to art and the multiple factors that contoured the experience of seeing. They suggest, too, that such diversity could be seen as posing a threat to Christian unity and that writing about looking at the crucifix was neither a simple record of seeing nor a straightforward blueprint for visual devotion. Rather, such writing was a means by which some clerics sought to balance the promise and the dangers of vision, to resolve the paradoxes inherent in the devotional object, to assemble isolated impressions into a significant whole, and to create meaning out of tension and contradiction.⁸

HIS EYES OPEN UPON ME

The earliest trace I have found of the trope of the crucifix's nod, kiss, and embrace appears in book 12 of Rupert of Deutz's *Commentary on Matthew* (*De gloria et honore Filii hominis*), written in 1127.⁹ In this book Rupert defends himself against the charge that his frequently idiosyncratic explication of Scripture is presumptuous and vainglorious by revealing the source of his inspiration: visions that he received in his youth. The most powerful of these visions came to him in the midst of a spiritual crisis when he was in his twenties (ca. 1108). One night, he tells us, he went to bed tormented by a sense of his own sinfulness and terrified of the Last Judgment, but then his sleep was made "sweet" in this way:

Standing before the altar, I was looking at the Lord's cross standing in the middle of it, and on it was an image of the Lord Savior. When I had most diligently gazed at it, I knew him to be the Lord Jesus himself, crucified and living, having his eyes open upon me. When I perceived him there, immediately inclining my face, I said to him, "Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23.39). With what great humility, with how reverential a bending down of his head he received this salutation, I cannot state, except to say that the man seeing this could to some extent sense inside how truly he said of himself, "Learn from me, for I am soft and humble in heart" (Matt. 11.29). I was not satisfied unless I might seize him with my hands, and I might kiss affectionately the embraced one. But what could I do? He was too high on the altar for me to reach.

⁷ See Appendix 1, below, for a list of these texts. I fully expect to learn there are many more medieval versions, and I have not even tallied the modern ones, which are myriad.

⁸ They are not, of course, unique in this; the resolution of contradiction is the very form of Scholastic summae, and Bériou notes in the conclusion to *L'avènement des maîtres* that it was similarly the goal of high-medieval sermons.

⁹ On the writing of this commentary, see John Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*, Publications of the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies 18 (Berkeley, Calif., 1983), pp. 352–57. Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, Eng., 1995), p. 172, notes that the seventh-century Nestorian ascetic Dadisho was said to have kissed and embraced the cross.

But as he saw this thought or desire of mine, he, too, desired it for himself. I sensed indeed that he desired it, and at the nod of his will, the altar opened in the middle and received me running inside it. When I had quickly entered, I seized him “whom my soul loves” (Cant. 1.6), I held him, I embraced him, and I kissed him for a long while. I sensed how joyfully he received this gesture of love, since as he was being kissed he opened his mouth, that I might kiss him more deeply.¹⁰

This is an intriguing passage from a range of perspectives, and it has attracted considerable scholarly comment. Richard Trexler’s attention was arrested by the idea of a monk “French-kissing” Christ; Stephen Jaeger, too, explored the role played by homoeroticism in Rupert’s spiritual life; Rachel Fulton has analyzed the passage in the context of Rupert’s Marian devotion, and much is left to ponder regarding these and other issues.¹¹ Here I would like to consider what this passage reveals about Rupert’s interaction with the material object: Is this, in fact, a text about looking at the crucifix? If so, what does it tell us about the experience of looking? And what function is served by writing about the experience?

The account is temporally and structurally quite intricate, encompassing three distinct layers of “experience”: mental or internal vision, memory, and, it does seem clear, the physical act of seeing. Although Rupert acknowledges from the outset that the vision came to him while he was sleeping, it is worth noting that Rupert does not use any of the various possible words for either dream or vision, moving directly from his opening sentence to the verb “Videbam” (“I was looking” or “I used to see”).¹² He seems to want to emphasize that what came to him was not an illusion or even a prophecy but a real experience. This experience, however, was not a sudden and immediate encounter with Christ; rather, it emerged from an extended process of looking, encompassing the passage of time and thereby incorporating the faculty of memory (“cum diligentius intuitus essem”). Although this remembered prolonged “gazing” could have been an exercise of pure imagination, a mental exercise rather than a physical activity,¹³ I do not think

¹⁰ Rupert of Deutz, *De gloria et honore Filii hominis super Mattheum*, ed. Rhabanus Haacke, CCCM 29 (Turnhout, 1979), pp. 382–83; see also PL 168:1601. On Rupert and art, see H. Silvestre, “Trois témoignages mosans du début du XIIe siècle sur le crucifix de l’arc triomphal,” *Revue des archéologues et historiens d’art de Louvain* 9 (1976), 225–31; and R. Haacke, “Rupert von Deutz: Kräfte der Bilde und neue Rationalität,” in *Grosse Gestalten christlicher Spiritualität*, ed. Josef Sudbrack and James Walsh (Würzburg, 1969), pp. 113–21.

¹¹ Richard Trexler, “Gendering Jesus Crucified,” in *Iconography at the Crossroads*, pp. 107–20, here p. 108; C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia, 1999), p. 134; Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, pp. 309–10. The passage is also discussed in Jacqueline Jung, “The West Choir Screen of Naumburg Cathedral and the Formation of Social and Sacred Space (Germany)” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2002), pp. 168–84.

¹² Medieval dream theory was drawn largely from Macrobius, who defined five kinds of dream: *somnium*, *visio*, *oraculum*, *insomnium*, and *phantasma* or *visum* (*Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. William Harris Stahl [New York, 1952], pp. 87–92). See also Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 14 (Cambridge, Eng., 1992); and Thomas Ricklin, *Der Traum der Philosophie im 12. Jahrhundert: Traumtheorien zwischen Constantinus Africanus und Aristoteles*, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 24 (Leiden, 1998).

¹³ For some fine studies of visual meditation, see Hamburger, *Visual and the Visionary*; Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2003); Peter Dinzelsbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter*, Monographien zur Geschichte des

that is the case. Rupert specifically mentions that the cross, and probably by implication the corpus upon it, is standing (“in medio stantem”), that Jesus is living (“viventem”), and that his eyes are open (“oculos in me apertos habentem”). These details match precisely the type of crucifix he is most likely to have seen ca. 1108 (Fig. 2).¹⁴ Rupert mentions earlier in the book that it had long been a habit of his to gaze at the altar cross, and as we will see, he energetically defended image-based devotion against its critics. There seems little reason to doubt that a real encounter with a real object lay at the core of the vision.¹⁵

What, then, does the passage reveal about Rupert’s experience of seeing? His account radiates with both the intensity and the limitations of the power of art. The young monk, consumed with doubt and searching for comfort, returned repeatedly to the altar cross because he felt this tangible object to be his best hope for approximating—in the sense of “coming close to” and also of “achieving identity with”—his Lord.¹⁶ The means by which this approximation was to be achieved—focused visual concentration leading first to external and then to internal *imitatio*—is embodied in Rupert’s choice of words. At the threshold of his journey, he uses the same term to describe both himself and the Lord’s cross: he is “standing looking” before the “standing” cross, on which by implication is a “standing” God-man.¹⁷ Having imitated Christ’s posture, he next must also imitate his action, Christ’s own intent and focused *looking*. It was this act of *imitatio* that launched his spiritual journey: only when Rupert had gazed intently enough was he able to find in Christ’s open eyes a glimmer of communication, a sense of contact. Having been brought closer to Christ by returning his regard, Rupert

Mittelalters 23 (Stuttgart, 1981); and Denise Despres, *Ghostly Sights: Visual Meditation in Late-Medieval Literature* (Norman, Okla., 1989). On memory, see Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 10 (Cambridge, Eng., 1990).

¹⁴ Although we cannot know precisely the appearance of the altar cross at Liège, the typical Mosan crucifix in the early twelfth century still depicted “Christ Triumphant,” open-eyed and standing with feet separated upon the *suppedaneum*. See Erich Pattis and Eduard Syndicus, *Christus Dominator: Vorgotische Grosskreuze* (Innsbruck, 1964); Edgar Hürkey, *Das Bild des Gekreuzigten im Mittelalter* (Worms, 1983); and Paul Thoby, *Le crucifix: Des origines au Concile de Trente* (Nantes, 1959), pp. 124–25. Several works of art from early-eleventh-century Cologne do foreshadow Rupert’s emotionalism in depicting a suffering Savior, with eyes closed and body sagging (C. R. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West, 800–1200* [New Haven, Conn. 1993], pp. 150–51), but nothing in this passage evokes such visual conventions, which were still an exception in the year 1108, when Rupert’s experience is said to have occurred, and even in 1127, when Rupert was writing.

¹⁵ Though I acknowledge Newman’s cautions concerning our ability to reach beyond vision to real experience (*God and the Goddesses*, p. 29), I hope to show in this article that convention coexists in tandem with—and finds a balance or synthesis with—individual or actual experiences and impressions.

¹⁶ Rupert’s practice of hugging the cross is discussed in Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, pp. 336–41. On Rupert’s approach to the concept of *imitatio Christi*, and his distinction between image and likeness, see Constable, *Three Studies*, pp. 167–68 and 186.

¹⁷ Through the syntactic figure of zeugma, “stantem” may be taken to modify both “crucem” and “imaginem Domini.” This external *imitatio* explains a rather odd aspect of the passage: the fact that Rupert is not bent or prostrate before the cross, as was more usual. On postures of prayer, see Richard C. Trexler, *The Christian at Prayer: An Illustrated Prayer Manual Attributed to Peter the Chanter* (D. 1197), *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 44 (Binghamton, N.Y., 1987).

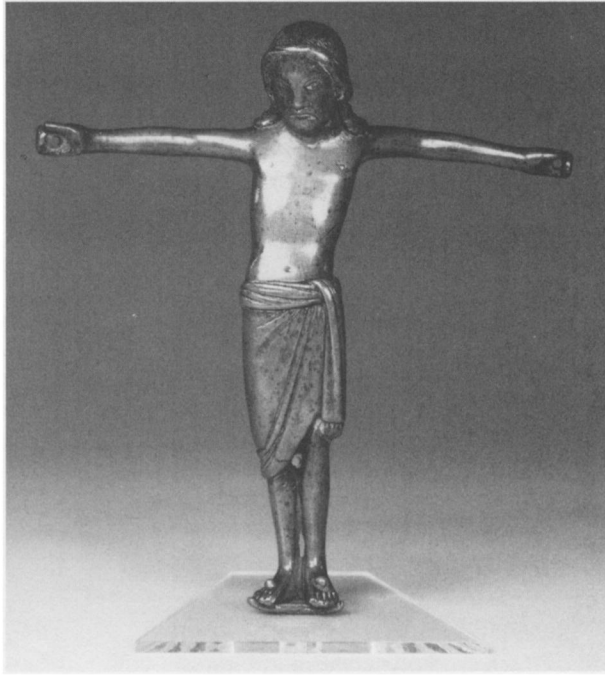


Fig. 2. Brass corpus from a crucifix. Workshop of Rainer of Huy, Meuse valley, ca. 1110. (Photograph: Musées royaux des arts et d'histoire, Brussels, Inv. Nr. 3672.)

confirms their bond by echoing his gesture: Rupert nods in reverential greeting, and he reads in the inclination of Jesus's head a gracious reply.

So far, the entire experience could well be a description of an individual's response to a material object. Jesus has been entirely passive; it is Rupert who has changed externally and internally, by carefully observing and imitating isolated elements of Christ's appearance—his posture, his stare, the lean of his head. However, at this point, having demonstrated eloquently the power of art to stimulate devotion, Rupert promptly signals its limitations. The crucifix was high up and out of reach, he tells us, and he felt thwarted by its distance. His piecemeal visual survey of Jesus's body matches the partial nature of their bonding. Merely looking at an image is in itself an incomplete act, he seems to declare, capable of arousing desire but not of sating it (*"Non satis hoc mihi erat"*). Nor could any subsequent act on Rupert's part overcome that distance; neither fetching a footstool nor climbing on the altar would bring him the longed-for delight. Not until we move out of the realm of human will and into that of divine grace is Rupert's desire brought to climax, for the first aspect of this episode that transcends a natural experience anyone might share is the miraculous splitting open of the altar effected by Jesus's nod, which allows the monk to penetrate the barrier of matter and approach, embrace, kiss, and be kissed by his Lord.

Now, none of this is surprising; medieval theologians from Pseudo-Dionysius through Abbot Suger, Hugh and Richard of Saint-Victor, Aquinas, Bonaventure, and beyond accorded precisely this initiatory role to visual perception, envisioning an ascending hierarchy that passed from sight, through imagination, to intellect or understanding.¹⁸ Indeed, Rupert's passage could well serve as a textbook for this approach to devotional imagery. Which brings me back to my third question: what is the function of this piece of writing about looking at the crucifix? To answer this, we must return to its context—book 12 of an unusual and controversial Gospel commentary.¹⁹ Rupert wrote this book in 1127 to ward off mounting criticism of his very personal and innovative exegetical approach. But the book was also written directly after Rupert had completed his *Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew*.²⁰ A central concern of the *Dialogue* was to refute the Jews' charge that Christian veneration of images, and most especially of the crucifix, amounted to idolatry.²¹ Rupert's response was to distinguish "Christian signs of truth" from the simulacra adored by pagans and to repeat long-standing Christian explanations of the efficacy of images: "While we externally image forth [Christ's] death through the likeness of the cross, we [are kindled] inwardly to love of him." He then explicitly criticizes the Jews for their "blindness," their inability to see and recognize Jesus for what he was.²²

This admittedly conventional trope of Jewish blindness is patently polemical, but it is also reflective of an essential truth: Jews did not look at the crucifix and see what Rupert wanted them to see. Indeed, we have a record of at least one Jew—who was personally acquainted with Rupert, having taken part in a religious debate with him—looking closely at depictions of Jesus and reacting with shock and revulsion, though also fascination. Written sometime in the second half of the twelfth century, the controversial "Little Work of Herman the Former Jew" purports to be the memoirs of a Christian canon who had been born a Jew named Judah and who converted to Christianity in the 1120s. The work vividly recalls the author's initial reaction, while still a Jew, to the sight of a crucifix:

I was not yet entering the basilica out of devotion so much as out of curiosity. . . . Examining everything in it with more than some care, I saw, among the artful varieties of carvings and pictures, a particularly monstrous idol. To be exact, I discerned one and

¹⁸ In addition to the works cited above in n. 13, see David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1989), pp. 161–91; and Cynthia Hahn, "Purification, Sacred Action, and the Vision of God: Viewing Medieval Narratives," *Word and Image* 5 (1989), 71–84.

¹⁹ This discussion is indebted to Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*.

²⁰ Rupert's *Anulus sive Dialogus inter Christianum et Iudaeum* has been edited by Rhabanus Haacke in Maria Lodovica Arduini, *Ruperto di Deutz e la controversia tra cristiani ed ebrei nel secolo XII*, *Studi Storici* 119–21 (Rome, 1979), pp. 183–242; it also appears in PL 170:560–610. For a discussion of the work and Rupert's relations with Jews, see Arduini as above; Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*, pp. 241–48; Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (London, 1995), pp. 118–19; and Abulafia, "The Ideology of Reform and Changing Ideas concerning Jews in the Works of Rupert of Deutz and Hermannus Quondam Iudeus," *Jewish History* 7 (1993), 43–63.

²¹ "Dico enim te idololatriae cultum non reliquisse . . .": Arduini, *Ruperto di Deutz*, p. 232; PL 170:601.

²² Arduini, *Ruperto di Deutz*, pp. 234–35; PL 170:604.

the same man debased and exalted, despised and raised up, ignominious and glorious. Below, he hung wretchedly on a cross. Above, by means of painting's lies, he was enthroned, handsome enough to seem to have been deified.²³

The contrast between this Jew's description of looking and Rupert's narrative of his visual encounter is worth noting. Not (yet) ready to accept the idea of a God-made-man, Judah/Herman completely ignores those aspects of the image that Rupert felt closest to and most able to mirror: he tells us nothing about Christ's eyes, mouth, head, arms, wounds, or breast. Instead, he focuses on more external aspects of Christ's presentation. The "pictura" (that is, painting: probably an apse fresco of Christ in Majesty) apparently seemed "handsome" and "godlike" to Judah/Herman, a convincing though counterfeit image of a god, because it was raised high up ("exaltatum" and "evectum"), was colorful or well dressed ("venustissimum" may mean either; as a painting it was certainly brightly colored, and Christ enthroned was always richly appareled), and presented its subject in a noble and imposing manner ("residentem" and "gloriosum" would certainly apply to an image of Christ in Majesty).²⁴ Size, placement, color, social position: these, then, are the components of beauty and divinity highlighted in Judah's text.²⁵

By the same criteria the image of the crucified Christ is labeled "wretched." This object (it is not called a *pictura*, and so was probably one of the *celaturae* referred to earlier) appeared despicable to Judah/Herman because it was lower than the painting and so in a less impressive location ("humilitatum" and "despectum"; "debased and looked down upon"), because Jesus was represented in a

²³ Gerlinde Niemeyer, ed., *Hermannus quondam Iudaeus: Opusculum de conversione sua*, MGH Quellen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 4 (Weimar, 1963), p. 75: "... basilicam non tam adhuc devotus quam curiosus intrabam, quam antea velut delubrum quoddam exhorueram. Ubi studiosius omnia perlustrans, inter artificiosas celaturarum ac picturarum varietates monstruosum quoddam ydolum video. Cerno siquidem unum eundemque hominem humilitatum et exaltatum, despectum et evectum, ignominiosum et gloriosum, deorsum miserabiliter in cruce pendentem, et sursum pictura mentiente venustissimum velut deificatum residentem" (translated and discussed in Karl F. Morrison, *Conversion and Text: The Cases of Augustine of Hippo, Herman-Judah, and Constantine Tsatsos* [Charlottesville, Va., 1992], pp. 80 and 105–6). On the *Opusculum*, see Abulafia, "The Ideology of Reform," and most recently Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La conversion d'Hermann le Juif: Autobiographie, histoire et fiction* (Paris, 2003), with extensive bibliography. The authenticity of the work was challenged most forcefully by A. Saltman in "Hermann's 'Opusculum de conversione sua': Truth or Fiction?" *Revue des études juives* 147 (1988), 31–56. (I would like to thank Eva Frojmovic for stimulating and challenging discussions about Judah/Herman.)

²⁴ Dignity, luxury, size, and beauty are all clearly considered essential signifiers of divinity in an iconographical note in a twelfth-century manuscript describing how Christ should be depicted, published by J. Leclercq in *Revue bénédictine* 56 (1945–46), 216–17: "Christus statura fuit altus et eminens et humeris super omnes qui praecedebant eum vel qui sequebantur. Erat modo speciosus iuxta habitum religionis suae, capillo niger, longa barba." On wall painting in twelfth-century Germany, see Dodwell, *Pictorial Arts*, pp. 126–30.

²⁵ In the Middle Ages (as in many other periods), color was often equated with both beauty and sacrality. According to St. Bernard, "eo creditur sanctior, quo coloratior": Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance": Bernard of Clairvaux's Apologia and the Medieval Attitude toward Art* (Philadelphia, 1990), pp. 280–81; quoted and discussed in relation to thirteenth-century art by Paul Binski, "The Angel Choir at Lincoln and the Poetics of the Gothic Smile," *Art History* 20 (1997), 350–74, here p. 367. See also John Gage, *Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction* (London, 1993), p. 374 n. 59.

degrading situation (“miserabiliter in cruce pendentem”), and because his appearance was ignominious (“ignominiosum”). This last term may refer to Jesus’s size (even a triumphal crucifix would be dwarfed by an apse fresco), to his garb (most, though not all, crucifixes of the period would depict Jesus as naked except for his loincloth), or it may signal his relative colorlessness (even on a polychromed stone or wooden object the corpus of the crucified would be pale and unadorned).

Thus, even though Judah’s reaction was conditioned by his faith, his narrative undeniably addresses the visual aspect of the images, forcefully asserting the incommensurability of ugliness and abjection with divinity. It matters little for our purposes whether the autobiography is authentic or, if so, whether the memory is accurate. What matters is that the Latin-reading audience for which this treatise was written believed such a response to be plausible; they could easily imagine a Jew looking at a crucifix and recoiling in disgust at just these visual characteristics. And the fact that Rupert (like Anselm and Gilbert Crispin before him) took the trouble to critique Jewish objections suggests that many pious Christians did not simply dismiss them as infidel error but were disturbed by them.²⁶

The account of Rupert’s youthful vision in book 12 of the commentary he called *De gloria et honore Filii hominis*, then, serves a bifurcated and even contradictory purpose. It must defend the “glory and honor of the Son” against those who impugn his most visible manifestation (Jews and perhaps also heretics)²⁷ by demonstrating that looking at the crucifix can bring love and at least the beginnings of illumination to a person with steady and clear sight.²⁸ At the same time, however, it must preserve Rupert’s claim to *special* authority and inspiration by underscoring the limitations of sight.²⁹ Rupert shapes his account of his visionary

²⁶ In Gilbert Crispin’s *Disputatio Iudei et Christiani*, the Jew expresses horror at the crucifix: *The Works of Gilbert Crispin*, ed. Anna Sapir Abulafia and G. R. Evans (London, 1986), pp. 50–51. St. Anselm writes at the beginning of *Cur Deus homo* that he was prompted to compose the treatise because “unbelievers” had scoffed at various aspects of Christian faith, most especially the idea that God would become a man and suffer death. See R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge, Eng., 1990), pp. 198–202; Anna Sapir Abulafia, “St. Anselm and Those outside the Church,” in *Faith and Identity: Christian Political Experience*, ed. David Loades and Katherine Walsh, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 6 (Oxford 1990), pp. 11–37; and F. B. A. Asiedu, “Anselm and the Unbelievers: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the *Cur Deus homo*,” *Theological Studies* 62 (2001), 530–48. I treat the *Opusculum* (which I read as a Christian polemic against Jewish literalism) and these other texts in greater depth in a forthcoming work: *Jews, Vision, and Witness in Medieval Christian Art*.

²⁷ Heretics’ hatred for the crucifix was a topos of antiheretical polemic; see Guy Lobrichon, “The Chiaroscuro of Heresy: Early Eleventh-Century Aquitaine as Seen from Auxerre,” in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, N.Y., 1992), pp. 80–103. On Jews and heretics as the objects of an apologetic about sacred images, see André Vauchez, “L’image vivante: Quelques réflexions sur les fonctions des représentations iconographiques dans le domaine religieux en Occident aux derniers siècles du moyen âge,” in *Biedni i bogaci: Studia z dziejów społeczeństwa i kultury ofiarowane Bronisławowi Geremkowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin* (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 231–41.

²⁸ It also highlights the extent to which the artwork might engage senses other than sight, as was pointed out to me by the anonymous reader for *Speculum*, whose thoughtful comments on this and other topics were most stimulating and helpful.

²⁹ Rupert’s cautious attitude toward other monks’ recourse to art thus resembles the fifteenth-century attitudes toward women’s visuality analyzed by Penny Howell Jolly, “Learned Reading, Vernacular

experience in such a way as to emphasize the heights that must be scaled consequent to the act of looking if *intellectus* is to be achieved. Merely looking, no matter how ardently, at the crucifix was not enough to allow Rupert to reach Christ. The looking followed a long period of suffering and exertion; and before it could relieve the gazer's distress, it had to be properly focused, to provoke external and internal change, and, eventually, to be blessed with Christ's grace. Rupert's intimate embrace of and fusion with Christ was the culmination of a difficult, miraculous, and by implication quite unique ascent, and the *Commentary on Matthew* in which it is recorded is simultaneously its proof and product.

MOUTH WITHOUT BEAUTY

But are dissidents—Jews and perhaps heretics—the only audience targeted by the first part of Rupert's vision narrative, the part that insists that love *can* be engendered by gazing at Christ? Let me turn now to my second text, an anonymous meditation from the mid- to late twelfth century (see Appendix 2 below).³⁰ The *Meditation*, which so far as I know survives in a sole manuscript from the Belgian charterhouse of Diest, has been mistakenly attributed to both Augustine and Anselm of Canterbury but is clearly Bernardine in inspiration. It opens with what reads very much like a description of a crucifix:

Jesus is sweet in the inclination of his head on the cross, sweet in the extension of his arms, sweet in the opening of his side, sweet in the piercing of his feet with one nail.

Sweet in the inclination of the head: for, inclining his head on the cross, he seems as if to say to his beloved: "O my beloved! You who so often have desired to enjoy the kiss of my mouth, announcing to me through my companions, *he kissed me with the kiss of his mouth* (Cant. 1.1), I am ready, I incline my head, I offer my mouth, to kiss [you] however many times it pleases: and do not say in your heart, 'I do not seek that mouth, which is without beauty and loveliness (cf. Isa. 53.2) but rather that glorious one, which the angelic citizens always desire to enjoy.' Do not, do not err thus, [for] unless first you will have kissed affectionately that [unlovely] mouth, you will not be able to reach that [glorious] one at all. Therefore, kiss that mouth which now I offer to you, since, though it may be without beauty and loveliness, nevertheless, it is not without grace."

Sweet in the extension of his arms: for, extending his arms to us, he shows that he himself desires our embraces and seems as if to say: "*O all you who are worked and*

Seeing: Jacques Daret's Presentation in the Temple," *Art Bulletin* 82 (2000), 428–52. In general, while I agree that there is a strong gendered component to medieval writings about visual devotion, I see gender as only one among many forms of hierarchical categorization that affected medieval thinking about visuality. See the conclusions reached by Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, pp. 227–32. I discuss the issues of gender and lay/clerical ways of looking further below.

³⁰ Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 5246–52, fol. 18vb. Although J. van den Gheyn, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, 2 (Brussels, 1902), p. 142, ascribes the *Meditation* to Augustine, and a version is printed in PL 158:761–62 as Anselm's *Meditation X*, it is almost certainly by a disciple of Bernard of Clairvaux. See A. Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin: Études d'histoire littéraire* (Paris, 1932), p. 194, who dates the handwriting of these particular folios to the late twelfth or very early thirteenth century. Other texts in the same manuscript include works by Alcher of Clairvaux (d. ca. 1165–75) and Guido of Clairvaux (d. 1214); for a detailed description see *Handschriften uit Diestse Kerken en Kloosters* (Diest, 1983), pp. 175–78. (I thank Ms. Anne Richards of the Bibliothèque royale for her generous help with references and reproductions.)

burdened, come to me and rest (Matt. 11.28) within my arms, within my embraces. See, see that I am prepared to gather you within my arms, that I remember just as I had promised, my prophet saying thus: ‘*like a shepherd he will feed his flock, he will gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his breast, and gently lead those who are with young*’ (Isa. 40.11). Come, therefore, all: let no one fear that he will be repulsed, because *I do not want the death of the sinner, but that he be converted, and live* (Ezek. 33.11). *My delights are to be with the sons of men* (Prov. 8.31).”

Sweet in the opening of his side: inasmuch as that opening revealed to us the riches of his goodness, you may know the love for us in his heart.

Sweet, too, pierced in the feet with one nail: because through this, it is as if he speaks to us thus: “Behold, if you judge that I might flee, and you therefore tarry in coming to me, knowing that I am exceedingly swift, like a young stag. Further, see that my feet have been fixed by the nail of pity thus, so that I can in no way flee you, because pity holds me entirely bound; nor will I flee you as you merit on account of your sins, because my hands are pierced with nails.”

Kind Jesus, humble Jesus, pious Jesus. Sweet in mouth is he, sweet in ear. Sweet in heart, inscrutably and indescribably delightful, pious and merciful, powerful, wise, kind, generous but not profligate, mighty, sweet, and pleasant you are! The only and highest good, *beautiful in form beyond the sons of man* (Ps. 44.3), pretty and lovely, and *chosen among the thousands* (Cant. 5.10), and *wholly desirable* (Cant. 5.16). Beautiful things are becoming to the beautiful. Well, well will you have come, my beloved, *son of my vows* (Prov. 31.2), since you are always near to those desiring you and speaking of you. O my Jesus, now all my soul [desires to be] in your embraces, and kisses. O my Jesus, what am I do? Let me press you entire to myself, so that now at last, not I, but you might be all in you; you are all my inclination, my whole and unceasing love, you are all my desire, you are all my life; I seek nothing except you, though no punishment for sin should follow, though no reward of justice be promised in return; even if there were no hell and no paradise, nevertheless for the sake of your sweet goodness, for the sake of you yourself I wish to cleave and cling to you. You are my ceaseless meditation, my word, my work. Amen.

The *Meditation* shares much with Rupert’s vision narrative. In addition to echoing Rupert’s reference to the lean of Christ’s head and his theme of embracing and kissing Christ, it explicitly replicates much of Rupert’s vocabulary, cites the same chapter (and a neighboring verse) in Matthew, repeatedly invokes the Song of Songs, and adopts Rupert’s overall goal of using meditation on the crucifix to “kindle love for God.”³¹ But it nevertheless accords a very different emphasis to the similar material, and anticipates a very different reaction, suggesting that faithful Christians, too, and not just infidels or dissidents, could be troubled by looking at the crucifix.

Like the writings of Bernard himself, the *Meditation* shimmers with visual sensitivity, reflecting its author’s intense awareness of and response to works of

³¹ On Rupert’s commentary on the *Song of Songs*, the controversy it aroused, and its apparent influence on Cistercian devotions, see Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, pp. 289–95, 345–47, and 356–61. It is, of course, not possible to know with any certainty if the author of this text was familiar with Rupert’s commentaries, but it is worth noting that the Diest charterhouse is only about twenty-five miles from Cologne and thirty-five miles from Liège. The charterhouse was founded in the fourteenth century; there is no way of knowing when or whence it acquired this manuscript. Clairvaux did own copies of Rupert’s works; see Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*, p. 66.

art.³² This is no merely “generic” imagining of the Crucifixion. Although the slant of Christ’s head and the opening of his side might be thought to apply to almost any medieval crucifixion image, as the spread of the arms surely does, it is noteworthy that such signs of vulnerability are precisely the details that came to be accentuated in Western crucifixes in the mid- to late twelfth century.³³ Remember that Rupert, whose work may have inspired this author, focused particularly on the living Christ’s open eyes, making no mention of Christ’s fatigue, pain, or wounds.³⁴ But even more striking is the reference to both feet being pierced by a single nail, so firmly insisted upon (the Latin twice refers to the feet being fixed “clavo uno”).³⁵ Though one cannot rule out the possibility that this detail was produced by the author’s imagination, it seems more than coincidental that a single nail piercing both Christ’s feet first became an iconographic motif in the West in the mid- to later twelfth century, the period to which this text dates.³⁶ In fact, the earliest known figural representation of the “three-nailed crucifix” appears on a baptismal font dated 1149, from Tirmont (Tienen), Belgium, about twelve miles from the Diest charterhouse.³⁷

I believe, then, that although this author certainly began with a preformed idea concerning where meditation on the crucifix must lead, and drew heavily from exegetical and theological works he had read, including (probably) Rupert’s com-

³² The issue of Bernard’s response to art is a complex one; see Rudolph, *The “Things of Greater Importance”*; M. B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams*, Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History 56 (Leiden, 1994), pp. 217–30; and Caroline Walker Bynum, “Monsters, Medians, and Marvelous Mixtures: Hybrids in the Spirituality of Bernard of Clairvaux,” in her *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York, 2001), pp. 113–62. I agree with those who see Bernard as intensely, if ambivalently, receptive to visual beauty rather than as indifferent to it, in spite of the hagiographers’ praises of his willful blindness to beauty. Indeed, resisting the power of beauty is only praiseworthy if such power is felt, just as poverty is only a sign of sanctity when voluntary.

³³ Thoby, *Le crucifix*.

³⁴ It was the altar that opened in the middle to receive Rupert, not Christ’s body; this fact is confused in some discussions of the passage. Rupert does mention Christ’s wounds in a Marian context in his commentary on Canticles: see Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, p. 330.

³⁵ Compare this to the references to nails (in the plural) piercing Jesus’s feet in the Bernardine lyrical hymn in PL 184:1319: “Clavos pedum, plagas duras.”

³⁶ Gérard Cames, “Recherches sur les origines du crucifix à trois clous,” *Cahiers archéologiques* 16 (1966), 185–202. Western tradition to this point tended to favor the use of four nails in the Crucifixion; see, for example, Gregory of Tours, *De gloria martyrum* 1.6, PL 21:710. The question of whether Jesus was crucified with three nails or four continued to exercise theologians through and beyond the end of the Middle Ages; see Johannes Molanus, *Traité des saintes images* 14.6, ed. and trans. François Boespflug, Olivier Christin, and Benoît Tassel, 2 vols. (Paris, 1996).

³⁷ Brussels, Musées royaux d’art et d’histoire, no. 354. For a photograph, see plate 7 in *Tesori dell’arte mosana (950–1250)* (Rome, 1973). Cames, “Recherches sur les origines,” attributes the appearance of the three-nailed crucifix in this time and place to the influence of Byzantine theater and art, which would have been familiar to Lotharingian participants in the crusades. That may well be, but my texts suggest that the iconography may have appealed especially to this generation because of contemporary trends in Lotharingian devotional culture, as developed by Rupert and elaborated in local religious houses and as manifested in the particular popularity in the region of the trope of Christ’s embrace. See F. P. Pickering, “Exegesis and Imagination: A Contribution to the Study of Rupert of Deutz,” in his *Essays on Medieval German Literature and Iconography* (Cambridge, Eng., 1980), pp. 31–45.

mentaries and (certainly) Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs, his visual experience was by no means preprogrammed. He openly and actively *looked* at a crucifix.³⁸ He accordingly discarded those aspects of Rupert's narrative that no longer made any visual sense, dwelled precisely on those visual details that were new and therefore striking, and sought to make sense out of them.

The *Meditation* suggests that these new details were simultaneously a stumbling block and an inspiration.³⁹ Although its first word is "dulcis" (sweet), although the ultimate goal of the text is to make the reader feel that the crucified Christ is "pretty and lovely," and although the final paragraph is a paean to Christ's beauty, the *Meditation* begins with an acknowledgment that the crucified Christ is *not* visually appealing: "though [my mouth] may be without beauty and loveliness . . . do not say . . . I do not seek that mouth, which is without beauty and loveliness." The entire paragraph underscores the contradiction between the glorious Christ that Christians seek and the unlovely Christ that Christians see.⁴⁰ Apparently the new mode of portraying Christ, and especially the intensified pathos associated with the three-nailed iconography, could discomfit unaccustomed viewers.⁴¹ Indeed, the *Meditation* seems to fear that its readers will react very much like the Jew in Judah/Herman's *Opusculum* and question whether divinity can reside in one so lacking in outward glory.⁴²

³⁸ This is not to deny that some people powerfully react to art without carefully observing it at all; see the comments of Jeffrey Hamburger in "To Make Women Weep: Ugly Art as 'Feminine' and the Origin of Modern Aesthetics," *Res* 31 (1997), 9–33.

³⁹ Here I am consciously echoing 1 Cor. 1.23.

⁴⁰ Christian prayer had long acknowledged the ugliness of the Crucifixion, and Christian aesthetics theoretically challenged the association of goodness with beauty (see Hamburger, "To Make Women Weep"). But for many Christians this association nonetheless lingered. When Hrabanus Maurus (d. 856) conceded that "leper [Christ] is ugly to look upon," he went on to warn, "Beware lest you throw away the nut on account of the bitterness of the shell," and to recommend that those too disturbed by the sight of death meditate on "the letter" alone, without the assistance of visual images (*Opusculum de passione Domini*, PL 112:1425; quoted and discussed in Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, p. 154). See also *Meditation 5* of Guigo, prior of Chartreuse (d. 1136), which dates to a few decades before the Diest *Meditation: Meditationes Guigonis Prioris Cartusiae: Le recueil des pensées du B. Guigue*, ed. André Wilmart, *Études de Philosophie Médiévale* 22 (Paris, 1936), p. 70; and Hamburger's discussion of pilgrims' discomfort with the ugliness of the Veronica in *The Visual and the Visionary*, p. 366.

⁴¹ Creighton Gilbert, "A Statement of the Aesthetic Attitude around 1230," *Hebrew University Studies in Literature and the Arts* 13 (1985), 125–52, discusses a text dating to 1227 in which Bishop Lucas of Tuy bitterly condemns the still quite new, three-nailed iconography as a "heretical innovation," designed by heretics to deceive the faithful. But though Lucas censured the innovation, he did not dispute its emotional effect, conceding that the iconography might stimulate devotion by "giving a more vivid feeling for the painfulness of the Passion." On medieval resistance to artistic change, see also Paul Binski, "The Crucifixion and the Censorship of Art around 1300," in *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson (London, 2001), pp. 342–60.

⁴² Concern that high-medieval Christians were all too similar to Jews was a not uncommon theme in contemporary theological works. See the remark of Gerhard of Cologne that Christians of his own day were "new Jews," quoted and discussed in Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Blood of Christ in the Later Middle Ages," *Church History* 71 (2002), 685–714, here p. 701 (I am grateful to Professor Bynum for sending me an offprint of this article). I argue that similar concerns underlie much of the anti-Jewish illustration in the *Bible moralisée* in *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible moralisée* (Berkeley, Calif., 1999). Heretics' objections to visual representa-

The audience for this monastic meditation, then, was expected to share many of the same ideas about appearance and godliness as a Jew. On the one hand, this correspondence needn't surprise. Though Judah/Herman's disgust for the very idea of a dying God, and even more to its depiction, issued from his Jewish upbringing, neither his aesthetic theory nor his concept of divinity was exclusive to the Jewish faith. Medieval Jews and Christians seemed fundamentally to agree about what was visually beautiful, and members of both faiths were equally disposed to read truth in triumph and to equate strength with righteousness, beauty with virtue.⁴³ But if the correspondence does not surprise, its implications are nonetheless worth noting. In suggesting that the heightened emphasis on Jesus's suffering embodied in the new iconography could well unsettle even faithful and orthodox Christians, the *Meditation* signals the power and autonomy of visual response. No matter how ardently viewers of art might believe in Christ the Savior (there is no reason to think that the *Meditation* was written for souls wavering in their faith), and no matter how familiar they might be with the narrative of the Crucifixion and the general form of the crucifix, they could still be shocked and distressed by an image of the dying Jesus, that is, by the appearance of a work of art. One did not have to be a heretic or a Jew to be worried by the visual similarities between the crucified God and dead and defeated mortal bodies—especially when their impact was not yet blunted by convention.

Later medieval devotions, as Jeffrey Hamburger and others have shown us, addressed this issue by accentuating aesthetic extremes, turning the very ugliness of the Passion into a source of spiritual force.⁴⁴ By contrast, and in keeping with the graceful and sensitive crucifixes carved and painted in the same period, this late-twelfth-century author maintains a delicate balance between denying and reveling in the unsightliness of death by crucifixion. (See Fig. 3, a restrained image from the twelfth-century diocese of Cambrai, in which a human and vulnerable

tions of the Crucifixion are another possible target of Christ's reproach in this text, but there is little else about the calm and reverent monastic *Meditation* that reads like an antiheretical polemic; see n. 27 above.

⁴³ On Christian aesthetics, see nn. 24 and 41 above. Jewish manuscript and synagogue decoration suggest that Jews shared Christian aesthetic judgments and adopted Christian artistic styles (while appropriating them to their own religious needs), and Jewish texts indicate that their ideas about what constituted outward beauty did not diverge from Christian ones. For various perspectives on the question of a "Jewish aesthetic," see Kalman P. Bland, *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton, N.J., 2000); Eva Frojmovic, ed., *Imagining the Self, Imagining the Other: Visual Representation and Jewish-Christian Dynamics in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, Cultures, Beliefs, and Traditions 15 (Leiden, 2002); Marc Michael Epstein, *Dreams of Subversion in Medieval Jewish Art and Literature* (University Park, Pa., 1997); and Katrin Kogman-Appel, *Omanut yehudit ben Islam le-Natsrut: 'Itur sifre Tanakh 'Ivriyim bi-Sefarad* (Tel Aviv, 2001).

⁴⁴ Hamburger, "To Make Women Weep." See 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*, *Ars Neerlandica* 1 (Kortrijk, 1979); and Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago, 1999). Although the "abject" is threatening to become an overused (and somewhat underanalyzed) concept in medieval studies, Julia Kristeva's fundamental work, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York, 1982), cannot fail to stimulate and challenge any student of medieval devotions to the crucifix.

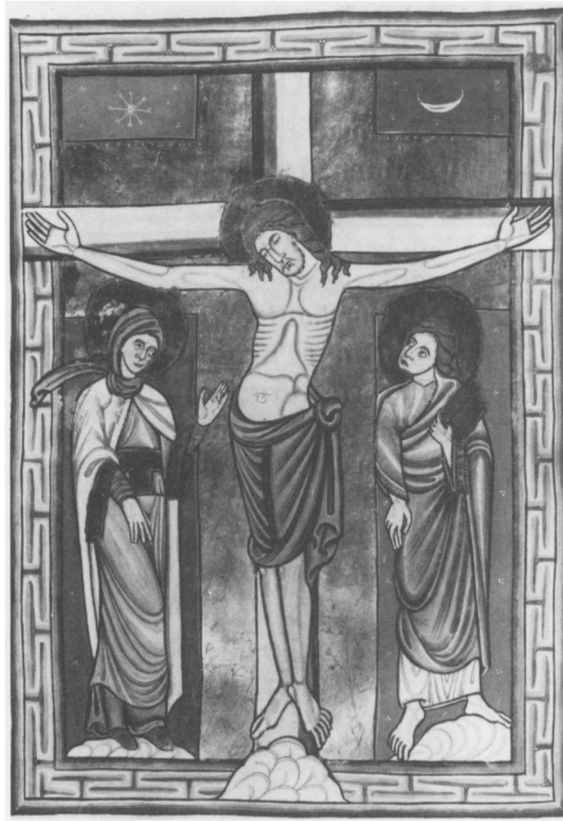


Fig. 3. Crucifixion from a missal for the abbey of Maroilles. Saint-Amand or Arras, ca. 1160. Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 431, fol. 125v.
(Photograph: Bibliothèque Mazarine/
Suzanne Nagy, Paris.)

Christ is portrayed with eyes closed, head leaning, and feet slightly crossed, but with no blood, wounds, or nails visible.) Instead of ignoring (or encouraging) the potential recoil of the viewer, he gently manipulates it, adopting what might be called a heuristic of revulsion. Immediately after acknowledging that his reader might shrink away from Jesus, he turns the table on him (or her, for some monastic meditations were presented to female patrons).⁴⁵ He subtly reminds readers how

⁴⁵ Anselm sent meditations to Countess Mathilda of Tuscany and to Adelaide, daughter of William the Conqueror; and John of Fécamp sent his to Empress Agnes and to an unknown nun. See André Wilmart, "Les prières envoyées par S. Anselme à la comtesse Mathilde en 1104," *Revue bénédictine* 41 (1929), 35–57; Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 92; Jean Leclercq and Jean-Paul Bonnes, *Un maître de la vie spirituelle au XIe siècle: Jean de Fécamp*, Études de Théologie et d'Histoire de la Spiritualité 9 (Paris, 1946), pp. 205–17.

unappealing they themselves might look to Jesus (“you who are worked and burdened”) and highlights the contrast between humans’ ungrateful shrinking away from Christ and Christ’s unbounded generosity and compassion toward mankind: “See, see that I am prepared to gather you within my arms. . . . Let no one fear that he will be repulsed.” In coercing readers/viewers to take a second look at Jesus’s form and gesture (literally: “videte” is uttered twice), the *Meditation* leads them to feel guilt at their initial aversion, brings them to a sharp recognition of their own unworthiness and blemish, and sets them on the path toward contrition.

Having thus transformed the sag of Jesus’s head into a sign of lenience and love, so much tenderer in tone than the reverential nod perceived by Rupert, the *Meditation* now eschews Rupert’s profoundly focused gazing in favor of a far more diffuse visual experience. It moves across and down Jesus’s body, from head to arms to side and finally feet, reversing in the process Rupert’s upward trajectory. The eye is never allowed to linger on any physical detail, so that the intensity of Rupert’s concentration is rendered wholly impossible.⁴⁶ Christ’s eyes, those portals to ecstasy for Rupert, are never even mentioned, and but a single sentence is devoted to the wound of Christ, that token of suffering that will loom so large in subsequent Cistercian and Franciscan devotion.⁴⁷ Moreover, vision is intermittently suspended. For each body part, the author passes from description of what is actually before the eyes (the extension of the arms, the gape of the wound, the piercing of the feet) to a simile or metaphor that cannot be seen (embraces that “seem as if to say,” an opening filled with “riches” like a purse or treasure chest, the crossed and bound feet of a captured stag).⁴⁸ In the last paragraph, reflection moves from the solid, external body parts cited in the opening sentence (head, arms, side, feet) to orifices and organs that are increasingly difficult to see, because insubstantial or wholly internal and invisible (mouth to ear to heart). The penultimate sentence prescribes a conceptual but probably also a physical embrace of the crucified one; this would wholly preclude further visual contemplation of Christ, as it is impossible to see an object clasped close to the chest. Indeed, the

⁴⁶ The deliberate, punctuated, and piecemeal form of looking prescribed here echoes St. Anselm’s recommendations that the recipients of his meditations read them “not cursorily or quickly, but little by little . . .” (quoted in Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, p. 172).

⁴⁷ See Richard Kieckhefer, “Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion,” in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt, Bernard McGinn, and John Meyendorff, World Spirituality 17 (New York, 1987), pp. 75–108; Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300* (New Haven, Conn., 1990), pp. 72–75; Flora Lewis, “The Wound in Christ’s Side and the Instruments of the Passion: Gendered Experience and Response,” in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Jane H. M. Taylor and Lesley Smith (Toronto, 1997), pp. 204–29; and Sheryl Frances Chen, “Bernard’s Prayer before the Crucifix That Embraced Him: Cistercians and Devotion to the Wounds of Christ,” *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 29 (1994), 23–54. In contrast to many later meditations, here there is no mention at all of Christ’s blood.

⁴⁸ The *hinulus*, or young deer, appears in Cant. 2.9 and 2.17. In each of these verses, the stag is evoked for his fleetness of foot. The stag appears as a figure for Christ in early Christian art and the commentaries of Augustine on Psalms, and it features prominently in St. Bernard’s sermons on the Canticles. But if the image of the stag was drawn from the Bible and exegesis, it may also have been inspired by the visual congruence between the image of Christ’s two feet pierced by a single nail and the appearance of the bound legs of a captured quarry.

very act of reading the *Meditation* restricts the free flow of vision, in that the reader's eye perforce must focus on the page rather than on the object—or even mental image—putatively discussed.⁴⁹

Such restrictions on vision may well have been the author's way of balancing his sanction of visual devotion with his master Bernard of Clairvaux's deeply ambivalent legacy concerning visuality. Indeed, a well-known and very close parallel to—perhaps even rebuttal of—Rupert of Deutz's vision of the embracing crucifix may be found in the *Exordium magnum*, Conrad of Eberbach's compilation of Bernard's miracles.⁵⁰ According to this account, a Cistercian monk once saw a crucifix miraculously appear on the pavement directly in front of Bernard while the abbot was praying prostrate before the altar. The abbot adored it and kissed it affectionately. Then Christ disengaged his arms from the ends of the cross and “seemed to embrace [Bernard] and draw him to himself.” Similar as the accounts may be, the differences are nonetheless telling. In Rupert's version, he had spent long hours staring intensely at the crucifix. In the Cistercian tale, Bernard was not looking at a crucifix, or any object at all, but was lying with his face flat on the floor; one senses that if the crucifix had not appeared directly before him “on the pavement,” he would not have noticed it, so intent was he on his prayers. In fact, the power of art to distract from devotion was the main thrust of Bernard's criticisms of monastic decoration in his famous *Apologia*.⁵¹ Bernard's own “visual obliviousness” was often cited as a sign of his sanctity: another anecdote in his *Vita* relates that he was so ignorant concerning the appearance of the chapel where he regularly attended offices that he was surprised to learn one day that there were three windows in the chevet, and not just one, as he had thought.⁵² Rupert's vision and the Cistercian miracle tale of “the cross that embraced Bernard,” then, may perhaps be considered yet another chapter in the Benedictine-Cistercian dispute

⁴⁹ Reading was informed by and analogous to, but took precedence over, the act of looking at art: Anselm described the reader of one of his meditations as looking at the page “as one would gaze at a painting” (quoted in Mark Amsler, “Affective Literacy: Gestures of Reading in the Later Middle Ages,” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 118 [2001], 83–110, here p. 86). Bernard saw the two kinds of looking as existing in tense competition, objecting to art because it tempted monks to gaze upon it instead of fulfilling the important obligation of spiritual reading: one would rather read in marble than in books (Rudolph, *The “Things of Greater Importance,”* p. 121). Even if the *Meditation* was read aloud, the listener's perusal of the image would be arrested by the punctuated progress of the text.

⁵⁰ *Exordium magnum Ordinis Cisterciensis* 2.7; briefly registered in PL 185:1026. The full text can be found in the seventeenth-century revision of the *S. Bernardi Vita prima* 7.7 in PL 185:419–20. Conrad wrote this section of the *Exordium* at Clairvaux between 1186 and 1193. On the composition and revision of Bernard's *Vita* and miracles, see Adriaan H. Bredero, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Between Cult and History* (Edinburgh, 1996).

⁵¹ See nn. 32 and 49 above.

⁵² PL 185:238. Similarly, Bernard's hagiographers bragged that he once traveled an entire day along the shores of Lake Lausanne without ever noticing the water (Bartholomew of Trent, *Liber epilogorum in gesta sanctorum*, ed. Emore Paoli, Edizione Nazionale dei Testi Mediolatini, 2, ser. 1/1 [Florence, 2001], p. 248). As I suggested above, I see Bernard's “visual obliviousness” as proof of his rigorous self-discipline, his willful rejection of visual pleasure, rather than as an indication that he lacked innate sensitivity to beauty.

about images, with the latter constituting a gentle warning against overreliance on visual devotions to effect communion with Christ.⁵³

Accordingly, each of the *Meditation*'s textual techniques serves carefully to direct and control the reader's encounter with and interpretation of the image. By moving swiftly from detail to detail, by shifting back and forth between vision and imagination, by interjecting other and very different visual memories and recalling mundane social practices, by establishing a purely one-way dialogue between object and viewer (only Jesus speaks) and then by interrupting that dialogue, by giving the voice of authority to an omniscient narrator and reminding readers that they are part of a community ("it is as if he speaks to *us* thus"), the *Meditation* has effectively acknowledged, harnessed, and channeled the power of art. The goal of this process is not to ignore or erase visual reality but to invest it with a carefully orchestrated meaning, so that the very same mouth, wounds, and limbs once viewed with distaste are seen in a new light. As in Rupert's narrative, it is not the object viewed but the viewer who has changed, has moved from revulsion to desire, has been infused with love for Jesus. The viewer has become "beautiful" and so can now, finally, see Christ's beauty: "beautiful things befit the beautiful" ("pulchrum pulchra decent").⁵⁴ By the end of the *Meditation*, the reader is (or should be) able to exclaim with the author, "[You are] beautiful in form beyond the sons of man. . . . O my Lord, you are all my desire . . . for the sake of you yourself I wish to cleave and cling to you"—desires and wishes, but does not experience. That is, the reader has reached only the point at which Rupert started.

Thus, although their goals seem to be similar—combining an actual visual stimulus, a deliberate process of looking, and an imaginative devotional exercise to ignite love for God—there are also notable differences between these two pieces of writing about looking at the crucifix. Rupert, writing to buttress his claim to exegetical authority, was himself the actor, taking the initiative, echoing the gestures of Christ, and clasping and tasting the beloved, successfully transported by and beyond vision and art. The *Meditation* seems to have been inspired but also warned by Rupert's example and by Bernard's reservations. Most likely written for the spiritual benefit of monks under the author's direction (perhaps novices), or even possibly for laymen or women, it is less sanguine about the immediate effect of the image on the viewer, more wary of the transporting power of the

⁵³ But let us note that saints by definition realize ideals that are unattainable by the majority of the faithful: Bernard may not have needed to look at the crucifix to experience Christ's love, taste his mouth, and feel his embrace, but the monk-witness eagerly trained his gaze on Bernard, and the hagiographer needed an eyewitness to the embrace to prove Bernard's sanctity. Vision cannot be eschewed in the flawed world (note, though, that the more intimate experiences of tasting and touching the divine were reserved for Bernard alone). It should also be noted that Bernard never objected to the use of art *within* churches or by the laity, and he did not oppose veneration of crucifixes. Indeed, in Sermon 25.9, Bernard himself urges his audience to look closely at the marks of the crucifixion: "Intuere sane pannis sordidum, plagis lividum, illitum sputis, pallidum morte: nigrum vel tunc profecto fatebere" (*S. Bernardi Opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, and H. M. Rochais, 8 vols. [Rome, 1957–77], 1:168).

⁵⁴ This phrase echoes, though in inverted form, Hugh of St. Victor's "Ineptum est deformia pulchris conjungere" in *De arrha animae* (PL 176:954). See also Bernard's Sermon 62.7 in *S. Bernardi Opera*, 1:159.

image, and more cautious in its aims. Far from replicating Rupert's passage from sight to consummation, the carefully choreographed exercise mandated in the Diest *Meditation* seeks simply to arouse the first stages of desire, and perhaps to quell doubt in an initially confused or even recalcitrant subject.

MADE LEPROUS ON THE CROSS

If the author of the Bernardine *Meditation* pointed to Christ's unlovely face and limbs precisely in order to temper the unsightliness of the image of the dying Savior, another cleric living some decades later used almost exactly the same words to exhort his hearers to draw courage from its very ugliness: we next encounter the trope of the crucifix's nod and embrace in a sermon preached to members of a lepers' community by a thirteenth-century cleric from the diocese of Liège—Sermon 32 of Pseudo-Augustinus Belgicus's *Sermones ad fratres in eremo commorantes* (see Appendix 3, below).⁵⁵ The authorship and precise date of this sermon are unclear, and it is impossible to know with any certainty if the preacher was directly or even indirectly influenced by the Diest *Meditation*, though the correspondences in wording and the association of both texts with the Liège region seem to suggest some kind of connection between the two.⁵⁶ In any case, in echoing the *Meditation* so closely and yet to such different effect, the sermon testifies both to the growing prominence and fascination of the visual image of the dying Christ and to the diverse and creative responses that this image could provoke, even when mediated through an increasingly conventional tradition.

The goal of the sermon is to encourage leprous "brothers" to bear their affliction

⁵⁵ PL 40:1293–94. The collection known as the *Sermones ad fratres in eremo commorantes* is among the most notorious (and clumsy) of all medieval forgeries, having been compiled and modified by an unknown forger during the fourteenth-century conflict between Augustinian canons and Augustinian friars in order to bolster the claims of the latter to have been founded by the bishop of Hippo himself and thus to have temporal and spiritual priority. Scholars agree, however, that most, though not all, of the sermons in the collection (including Sermon 32) date to the twelfth or thirteenth century and were written by a Belgian cleric (he called himself a "compatriot" of Sigebert de Gembloux and used several words peculiar to Belgium). This cleric has been alternatively identified as Godfrey of Bath (fl. 1120s) and as Geoffrey Babion (fl. 1130s). Neither of those identifications is tenable; many of the sermons draw upon the work of Peter Comestor (d. 1178). See A. Treloar, "The Augustinian *Sermones ad fratres in eremo commorantes*," *Prudentia* 3 (1971), 39–50; J. P. Bonnes, "Un des plus grands prédicateurs du XIIe siècle: Geoffroy du Loroux, dit Geoffroy Babion," *Revue bénédictine* 56 (1945–46), 174–215; and J. Machielson, *Opera homiletica*, *Clavis Patristica Pseudepigraphorum Medii Aevi* 1A (Turnhout, 1990), pp. 242–50. Since there is no tradition of preaching *ad leprosos* before ca. 1228–40, when Jacques de Vitry included one such sermon in his collection of *sermones ad status*, and since although the expulsion of lepers *extra castra* is a biblical topos, the sort of ostracism, segregation, fear, and hatred to which the sermon refers did not become the rule until about the same period, I favor a mid-thirteenth-century date for Sermon 32. On preaching to and attitudes toward lepers, see Nicole Bériou and François-Olivier Touati, *Voluntate Dei leprosus: Les lépreux entre conversion et exclusion aux XIIème et XIIIème siècles*, *Testi, Studi, Strumenti* 4 (Spoleto, 1991); and François-Olivier Touati, *Archives de la lèpre: Atlas des léproseries entre Loire et Marne au moyen âge*, *Mémoires et Documents d'Histoire Médiévale et de Philologie* 7 (Paris, 1996), pp. 52–60, with further bibliography.

⁵⁶ It is equally possible that the preacher encountered the trope in excerpted form; see "Saint Bernard Said . . ." below.

with patience—to regard their disease not as a hindrance but as a spiritual opportunity.⁵⁷ It is clear that the audience is suffering not just physical but social agonies: these “brothers” bitterly resent their ostracism and social degradation.⁵⁸ The preacher, considering such resentment a grave threat to his listeners’ spiritual well-being, reminds them that they had a noble predecessor in suffering and assures them that their debasement is in fact a route to eternal exaltation: “I implore you, in [the name of] our lord Jesus Christ, by whose precious blood you were redeemed, not to lose courage in those tribulations that are for your glory: knowing that through bodily affliction we kill mental weakness.” The preacher then follows this brief reference to Christ’s sacrifice with an eloquent paean to the virtue of patience, capping a rather abstract enumeration of the qualities of patience with a direct appeal to his audience: “If it is grievous to you that you are leprous, have patience in all things!”

But then, sensing perhaps that he was asking a great deal of very troubled souls, he casts about for a way to help them rise above their distress, to direct their minds outward and away from their own misery. Art provides that way, as the preacher offers up to his audience not merely abstract moral exhortation but a conspicuous and proximate model in the form of the crucified corpus high above them: “Raise up your heads, and perceive with your heart [*sic*] the wounds of our Savior hanging on the tree, the pains of the dying one, the price of the redeeming one, the scars of the one rising up again!”⁵⁹ There are two ways of “seeing,” he explicitly concedes; and if physical vision is by no means tantamount to internal understanding, yet the eyes can—indeed, in this case they evidently must—lead the heart. The preacher thus aims to capture his hearers’ eyes by starting with what was most obvious and, perhaps, most shocking: he points out first and foremost the marks and scars on Jesus’s skin.

His intention in highlighting such signs of ugliness is quite different from that of the Diest *Mediation*, which linked the apparent unsightliness of the crucifix to the spiritual imperfections of its viewers. The author of that earlier text evidently feared that his readers, whether monks, novices, laymen, or laywomen, tended, like most flawed souls, toward superficiality, a mistaken and perhaps excessively fastidious attention to the *appearance* of things. He accordingly composed a visual meditation taking advantage of and then subverting their very inclination to look at surfaces and make judgments based on looks. The leprous auditors of Sermon 32, however, knew only too well and from bitter personal experience that external appearance could indeed matter. Themselves victims of disdainful stares, they did not need to be warned against shrinking from Christ’s ugliness, nor did they have to be taught how to identify with suffering. They needed, rather, to cease dwelling

⁵⁷ It was standard to segregate the sexes within thirteenth-century leprosaria and for preachers to refer to their (male) audiences as “brothers.” See Bériou, *Voluntate Dei leprosus*, p. 45.

⁵⁸ Toward the end of the sermon, the preacher remarks, “But you say, ‘Oh how burdensome, oh how inhuman, oh how hard it is not to be able to live among men! Behold indeed, we are separated from the cities, people spurn us, parents hate us, brothers and sisters flee, friends desert us, we are separated from the camps, as if we were not born of men.’”

⁵⁹ On the suspension of crucifixes from the triumphal arch or high on the *jubé* in twelfth-century Belgium, see Silvestre, “Trois témoignages.”

on their own suffering and to realize that even scarred and blemished bodies could and should feel love, power, and control over their own souls and actions. Following solid pedagogical principles (address first what is most obvious about an image or text, and start with what your students know), the preacher accordingly asks his leprous listeners to visually ponder and even take comfort from what Rupert did not even mention and what the Bernardine *Meditation* rushed past so hurriedly and obliquely: the wounds and scars of the crucified Christ, which by the mid-thirteenth century had become increasingly conspicuous sights. (A century earlier this exhortation would have made little visual sense: the surface appearance of a discreetly pierced Romanesque Christ would have had little in common with leprous skin.)⁶⁰ The materiality and the location of the art object constitute a considerable part of its power, as the very act of looking requires that the listeners stir themselves and train their gazes on high (“Elevate capita vestra!”). In asking these lepers to move their own bodies in order to contemplate Christ’s body, in highlighting above all else Christ’s wounds and scars, so visually similar to the lepers’ own lesions, the preacher underscores what these men share with the Godman and effectively transfers the focus of his homily from the very real complaints of his audience to the very visible features of the crucifix hanging above them.⁶¹

However, as in our other texts, in this sermon, too, surface appearance can never be the end of contemplation. Just as these lepers want their neighbors to see them with their hearts and not just with their eyes, the preacher’s true aim is to help his listeners look beyond those surface traces of pain, those witnesses to merely passive suffering. Now—and only now—that the lepers’ attention has been detached from their own cares can the preacher follow his predecessors and ask his audience to perceive in Jesus’s gestures true tokens of love:

What else will we be able to see, unless the head inclined for calling and sparing, the heart bared for loving, the arms extended for embracing, the entire body exposed for redeeming!? Think how great are these things, you who grieve: weigh out these things on the balance of your heart, so that all [of him] is fixed in your heart, who for you was wholly fixed on the cross.

Here, then, we have almost exactly the same words as those used by the author of the Bernardine *Meditation*. Yet although the words and the underlying theory about visual meditation may be identical, in the context of a spoken homily the application of that theory cannot but be different. In the Diest *Meditation* the purpose of visual meditation was to lead to inner searching; no sooner had it asked its readers to see Jesus’s unlovely mouth then it turned their gaze back upon themselves. The art object became a vehicle for internal contemplation and dialogue. But for the distraught and angry auditors of Sermon 32, excessive intro-

⁶⁰ In the text cited in n. 40 above, Hrabanus Maurus called Jesus ugly like a leper, but he did not seem to be basing his comparison on specific visual features of a crucifix. It was not uncommon for Christian commentators to refer to Christ as “leprous”; Isa. 53.4 (“Quasi leprosum . . .”) was often applied to Christ. See Bériou, *Voluntate Dei leprosus*, pp. 5 and 36. On the image of Christ as leper in later medieval art, see Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, pp. 52–54.

⁶¹ Later in the sermon the preacher states even more clearly the parallels between his hearers and the figure upon whom he has asked them to gaze: “Behold! Indeed the Savior suffered, was made leprous on the cross for us . . . leaving us an example, that we might follow his tracks.”

spection posed only danger. Their pastor's goal was not to direct the lepers' thoughts inward but to lead them, via their gaze, outward. In turning to the crucifix to help lift his hearers beyond their hurt, the preacher thus makes use of that very tendency of art to distract and divert that so worried Bernard and his disciple. The preacher wants these lepers to move from passivity to action, from resentment to resolve, to "follow his tracks" in bearing "weakness without vexation." This is a call, not to *caritas*, but to fortitude and endurance (which may be why the lean of Christ's head is interpreted not as a kiss but as a summons), eloquently though silently seconded by the looming form of Christ above the listeners' heads. Christ remains distant from these lepers: unlike Rupert, and Bernard as seen by the monk in the *Exordium* tale, this audience is expected neither to taste the kiss nor to return the embrace of the Lord.

"SAINT BERNARD SAID . . ."

Thus far, the trope of the crucifix's nod and embrace has been confined to institutional contexts, having been used by a Benedictine monk to celebrate his own union with a "living" aristocratic Christ, by a Cistercian or Carthusian monk to guide those repelled by an inglorious image to the threshold of *caritas*, and by a preacher at a leprosarium to help restore to abject souls their essential humanity. In each case, the author has endowed the image of the crucified Christ with a particular meaning by constructing a prolonged or guided meditation, whether in the form of intense gazing at, orchestrated perusal of, or even (in the case of Bernard) willful disregard of Christ's outward form. Such leisurely yet controlled forms of "looking" harmonize well with the rhythms and hierarchy of institutional life, which provided its members training in, and time and quiet for, profound meditation and customized space in which to contemplate the ever-present image of the Lord.⁶² The world was moving rapidly in the decades after 1200, however, leading to the development of many new devotional patterns, spaces, practitioners, and practices, and our exhortation traveled with it, for at some point in the early thirteenth century, an unknown writer, probably a Cistercian, converted the *Diest Meditation* or a very similar text into a brief (and apocryphal) *sententia*, or "saying," of St. Bernard himself. In that form, and following contemporary religious and artistic trends, it moved beyond cloister walls altogether, perhaps following the footsteps of mendicants, and became a staple, even cliché, of lay devotional literature. The trope of the crucifix's nod and embrace thus allows us to explore whether lay male and female viewers and readers were thought to have their own, distinctive ways of seeing and reading the crucifix.⁶³

⁶² Even if the *Diest Meditation* was written for a layman or woman, the same observations apply, as a layperson requesting a monastic devotion would have been under monastic guidance and trying to approximate monastic spirituality rather than create a specifically lay form of worship. Similarly, leprosaria, though serving a lay population, were modeled on monasteries.

⁶³ On the truism that the laity learned Bible and doctrine from art, see n. 2 above. Scholarly approaches to women and medieval art generally assume that women either actually were or were perceived by clerics to be particularly susceptible to visual images. For a thoughtful overview, see Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, pp. 13–34. For some fine specific studies, see the other articles collected there and Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent*

The earliest evidence for the excerpting and attribution to St. Bernard of our trope appears, so far as I have been able to determine, in an English text of the *Ancrene Riwe* dating to about 1225–50.⁶⁴ The phrase does not appear in the body of the *Riwe* itself but on the last folio of the manuscript, completing a series of miscellaneous short verses in English and Latin appended to the *Riwe*. Beside the marginal notation “Bernardus” is the following passage:

I could circle the earth and sky and never find you, Lord, except there on the cross. There you feed, there you drink, there you clothe, there you rest, there you are all things to us. That is, you give yourself sweetly and abundantly. Likewise, who is not carried away with confidence in obtaining what he hopes for, who attends to the placing of his body on the cross, namely, head bent down for a kiss, arms extended for an embrace, hands perforated for giving, side opened for loving, body stretched for devoting all of himself to us?⁶⁵

These lines, which so far as I know appear in no other manuscript of the *Ancrene Riwe*, were presumably included by the scribe for the anchoresses to recite during their devotions—veneration of the cross figured prominently in the daily routine laid out in the *Riwe*.⁶⁶ The passage is a composite text. The first part (“Circuire possum . . . affluenter das”) appears in several works, including an anonymous Cistercian *Meditation on the Passion* and a sermon preached by Arnold of Bonneval (d. 1156), friend and biographer of Bernard, suggesting that the scribe turned especially to Cistercian sources when assembling prayers for the anchoresses.⁶⁷ The second part of the passage is, of course, a version of our trope. It, too, presumably was drawn from a Cistercian source, probably a now-lost com-

(Berkeley, Calif., 1997); Caroline A. Bruzelius, “Hearing Is Believing: Clarissan Architecture, ca. 1213–1340,” *Gesta* 31 (1992), 83–91; Jolly, “Learned Reading, Vernacular Seeing”; and Kathryn A. Smith, “The Neville of Hornby Hours and the Design of Literate Devotion,” *Art Bulletin* 81 (1999), 72–92. On gender and lay religiosity see Anne Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1995); Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe’s Dissenting Fictions* (University Park, Pa., 1994); and David Aers, *Community, Gender and Individual Identity: English Writing, 1360–1430* (London, 1988).

⁶⁴ London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero A.xiv. This manuscript has been edited by James Morton as *The Ancren Riwe: A Treatise on the Rules and Duties of Monastic Life, Edited and Translated from a Semi-Saxon MS. of the Thirteenth Century*, Camden Society Publications 57 (London, 1853); and again by Mabel Day as *The English Text of the Ancren Riwe: Edited from Cotton MS Nero A.xiv, on the Basis of a Transcript by J. A. Herbert*, EETS O.S. 225 (London, 1952). Written ca. 1220 in a southwest Midlands dialect, perhaps by an Augustinian canon or Dominican friar, the *Riwe* is a guide for three sisters, laywomen who wished to live as recluses while following the rigorous lifestyles and devotional practices of Cistercian or Benedictine nuns. For a modern English version, see Hugh White, trans., *Ancrene Wisse: Guide for Anchoresses* (London, 1993). Of the many studies devoted to the *Riwe*, see especially E. J. Dobson, *The Origins of Ancren Wisse* (Oxford, 1976); and Elizabeth Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1990).

⁶⁵ BL Cotton Nero A.xiv, fol. 131v; see Appendix 1, no. 5, below, for the Latin text.

⁶⁶ *Ancrene Riwe* 1, lines 31, 127–33, 207–31, and 359–73. See Barbara Raw, “The Prayers and Devotions of the *Ancren Wisse*,” in *Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honour of Rossell Hope Robbins*, ed. Beryl Rowland (London, 1974), pp. 260–71.

⁶⁷ PL 184:751 and PL 189:1744, respectively. It also appears in a sermon attributed to the eleventh-century Cardinal Drogo (PL 166:1525); in an anonymous sermon in an early-thirteenth-century English manuscript in the British Library (Royal 4.B.x, fols. 58r–59r); and in an anonymous sermon in a fourteenth-century English manuscript at Yale University (Beinecke MS 472, fols. 38r–39r).

pilation of Bernard's "sayings."⁶⁸ The fact that precisely the same wording and attribution appear in a thirteenth-century collection of *distinctiones* and in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* (ca. 1260), as well as (in slightly different forms, but also with the attribution to "Bernardus") in two English devotional miscellanies of ca. 1250, suggests that by the mid-thirteenth century the "quotation" was fairly widely dispersed.⁶⁹ (See Appendix 1, below, nos. 6, 7, 8, and 9.)

As recorded in these works, the "saying of St. Bernard" is interesting both for what it adds and what it leaves out vis-à-vis its precursors. First, the *sententia* includes two phrases not found in any of the earlier texts: references to the perforation of Jesus's hands and to the "extension" or "stretching" of his body. There is no way of knowing for sure when, by whom, or why these phrases were added, but it seems likely that they date to the thirteenth century, as both details reflect the ever more elaborate imaginings of the Crucifixion that characterized thirteenth-century devotions, as well as visual features that were increasingly apparent in thirteenth-century art (note the sag of Christ's arms and consequent stretching of his torso and exposure of his rib cage in Fig. 1).⁷⁰ They thus testify to the freedom and inventiveness of a compiler of florilegia, who proved willing to add new observations to an existing text, even while attributing it to a venerable authority.

Secondly, in this abbreviated and decontextualized form, the "saying" of Ber-

⁶⁸ One such collection of Bernard's sayings was compiled by his secretary Geoffrey of Auxerre under the title *Sententiae exceptae* or *Declamationes* (PL 184:437–76). This phrase does not appear in that work. The instructions by the Cistercian Aelred of Rivaux (d. 1166) to his anchoress sister may be a still earlier echo of the trope, though the connection is hard to assert confidently, as the image of the embrace may well have occurred to many people independently. Aelred does not explicitly cite Bernard, and he makes no mention of Christ's nod, kiss, wounds, or feet. See *A Rule of Life for a Recluse* 26, trans. Mary Paul Macpherson in *The Works of Aelred of Rievaulx, 1: Treatises; The Pastoral Prayer*, Cistercian Fathers Series 2 (Spencer, Mass., 1971), p. 73.

⁶⁹ Collection of *distinctiones*: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm. 23447, fol. 23v. According to Wolfgang Hoermann, in *Bayerns Kirche im Mittelalter: Handschriften und Urkunden. Ausstellung veranstaltet von den Bayerischen Staatlichen Bibliotheken in Verbindung mit den Staatlichen Archiven Bayerns, Juni–Oktober 1960* (Munich, 1960), p. 31, col. 2, this manuscript is a topical concordance to the Bible, made in the thirteenth century, most likely as a preaching aid. Karl Halm et al., eds., *Catalogus codicum Latinorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis*, 2/4 (Munich, 1881), call it "a collection of biblical and patristic passages." (My thanks to Dr. Brigitte Gullath of the Staatsbibliothek for supplying information about this manuscript, and to Prof. Camille Serchuk for invaluable bibliographical assistance.) For the *Legenda aurea*, see the fine new edition by Giovanni Paolo Maggione, *Millennio Medievale* 6, Testi 3, 2 vols. (Florence, 1998), 1:346. Maggione traced the "saying" to the Munich collection, though I have been unable to determine whether Jacobus knew the manuscript. The two devotional miscellanies are Trinity College Cambridge MS B.14.39 (formerly MS 323) and London BL Add. MS 11579, both lyrical and devotional miscellanies. In the first, four short Latin prayers appear on fol. 83v, each followed by an English verse. Although the catalogue calls these verses "equivalents in English," the accompanying English poem is not a translation at all, omitting all reference to Christ's kiss and embrace and dwelling instead on his torments (see *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century*, ed. Carleton Brown [Oxford, 1932], no. 34, pp. 61–62). The relevant section of the manuscript dates to ca. 1250 and may be from Lincoln. In the second manuscript, the Latin reads very much like a preacher's exhortation; it is followed by an abbreviated French meditation attributed to Bernard and then by a more penitential English lyric.

⁷⁰ See F. P. Pickering, *Literature and Art in the Middle Ages* (Coral Gables, Fla., 1970), pp. 223–307. The reference to Christ's hand wounds may reflect the increased emphasis accorded them in the wake of St. Francis's reception of the stigmata in 1224.

nard entirely omits the shade of crisis and longing that inspired Rupert's approach to the crucifix and the doubt and hesitation concerning Christ's appearance and the efficacy of vision that mark the Diest *Meditation*. Gone is any sense of Jesus's distance, ugliness, or rebuke. Reframed as a rhetorical question to which no negative answer need be feared, the "saying" banishes frustration, ambiguity, and guilt and seems to radiate confidence that no one could possibly look at the body of Christ and find anything other than love and reassurance.

In light of the other responses to the crucifix we have read, which needed to work quite hard before Jesus's posture could be seen unequivocally as a stance of love, it is hard not to feel that the "saying" protests too much, that denial of the possibility of alternative readings is in fact tacit admission of their danger. Could such blinkered optimism have been introduced specifically with a lay male or female readership/audience in mind? Was the frank acknowledgment of doubt penned by Rupert, the Diest author, and the Pseudo-Augustine preacher considered inappropriate for laymen or for female souls engaged in personal devotions? It is impossible to know for sure, but the *sententia*'s implicit and contradictory lesson of "look, but don't look" closely matches the balance of strong visual sensibility and ambivalence concerning vision detectable in the *Ancrene Riwele*. On the one hand, the *Riwele* elegantly combines courtly sensibilities with visual stimuli, most notably in a vivid passage comparing Christ to a knight and the shape of his crucified body to a triangular shield.⁷¹ On the other hand, in book 4 of the *Riwele* the author warns, "Consider no sight that you see, either in sleep or while awake, anything but error, for it is nothing but [the devil's] guile" (4, lines 561–62); and in general, as Robert Hasenfratz has observed, the *Riwele* displays a distinct preference for reading over other meditative exercises.⁷² Indeed, one can conjecture that this excerpted "saying" was appended to the *Ancrene Riwele* by the Cotton Nero scribe, and eventually became so popular in lay literature, precisely because in such a crisp form it exploited the appeal of the image while preempting overly imaginative looking and precluding the kind of extended contemplation practiced by Rupert, and even the carefully controlled visual meditation prescribed in the Diest text. Note, too, that this saying refrains from inviting

⁷¹ *Ancrene Riwele* 7, lines 86–89: "His shield, which covered his divinity, was his dear body, which was spread out on the cross, wide at the top, like a shield, where his arms were stretched out, and narrow at the bottom, where one foot (so many suppose) was placed on top of the other . . ." (White, trans., *Ancrene Wisse*, pp. 180–81). This image of the shield is drawn from Bernard's Sermon 5.1 on Psalm 91 (*S. Bernardi Opera*, 4:402); see Rosemary Woolf, "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight," *Review of English Studies* 13 (1962), 1–16. Note how explicitly the author explains the basis for the shield analogy; he apparently trusts that his reader will see the literal sense (the triangular shape) when it is pointed out to her, but he does not assume that she will "see" the allegorical sense (Jesus's resemblance to a shield) without his explanation. The text suggests, too, that the single nail in Christ's crossed feet, which was something of a shocking innovation when the Diest *Meditation* was written, was now more familiar, though not yet ubiquitous or taken for granted. In a fifteenth-century adaptation of the *Ancrene Riwele*, this construction of Christ as chivalric lover actually leads directly into "Bernard's" *sententia: The Tretyse of Loue*, ed. John H. Fisher, EETS O.S. 223 (London, 1951), pp. 12–16 (see Appendix 1, below, no. 14).

⁷² *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Robert Hasenfratz (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2000), introduction. Hasenfratz comments that in this preference for reading over visual meditation, the *Wisse* "may betray a male fear of women's spirituality."

its readers/listeners, whether male or female, to contemplate intimate union via taste or to return Christ's touch.⁷³

"CHRESTIEN, REGARDE, REGARDE!"

With these diverse but related texts in mind, and with the question of whether there were specifically lay or female forms of "looking" still pending, let us return to our anonymous Parisian preacher, whom we left standing in his church and exhorting his flock to look up and gaze at the crucifix. We now know that however heartfelt his response to art may have been, the exclamation itself was far from spontaneous. Indeed, it seems clear that in gesturing at the cross, he was consciously echoing a venerable textual and devotional tradition.⁷⁴ But it is a faint and fleeting echo indeed. Nothing in the preceding sermon, which is simply a vivid vernacular retelling of the Passion, explains his recourse to that tradition. The preacher reproduces neither the structure nor the message of the model Passion sermon in the *Legenda aurea*, his probable source; he expresses none of Rupert's or the Diest *Meditation's* longing for communion with God; his homily shares none of the particular pastoral concerns underlying Pseudo-Augustine's evocation of the object.⁷⁵ The preacher notes that Jesus asked for his followers' faith, joy, and salvation but not that he expected their love, and in general the preacher's rendering of the Gospel tale lays no special stress on love, the quality most readily evoked by Jesus's kiss and embrace. Why, then, did he turn to the crucifix?

One obvious reason for the preacher to conclude with a gesture toward the crucifix is that it was the next item on the day's liturgical program. This sermon would most likely have been preached directly after the reading of John 18 and 19.1–42, the final of three biblical readings in the first part of the Good Friday liturgy. This section, known as the Liturgy of the Word, was immediately followed by the Veneration of the Cross, in which a crucifix with a veil draped over it was carried into the middle of the choir and dramatically unveiled in three stages as the priests sang *Ecce lignum crucis*. After the clergy venerated the cross, it was

⁷³ As the *Speculum* reader noted, it can thus be compared to the ambivalent "touch but don't touch" of the sermon to the lepers. Many nonetheless strove to breach the distance: according to Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, p. 80, embracing an image of the crucified Christ formed part of the distinctive visual culture of nuns, and Bynum in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* has drawn attention to the centrality of taste and eating in female piety.

⁷⁴ I think it most likely that he accessed this tradition via the *Legenda aurea*, where the *sententia* appears in the section "De Passione Domini." This section is essentially an extended Good Friday sermon, though it bears no resemblance to our homily. See *Legenda aurea*, ed. Maggione, 1:336–53. Although the earliest known French manuscript of the *Legenda* dates to 1281, there is evidence for its use by Dominicans in Paris as early as 1267. See Barbara Fleith, *Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der lateinischen Legenda aurea*, Subsidia Hagiographica 72 (Brussels, 1991), pp. 417–28. Several other sermons in the collection containing our Good Friday sermon display the *Legenda's* influence (Bériou, *L'avènement des maîtres*, 1:185 and 193n). If our preacher did indeed borrow the trope from the *Legenda aurea*, we can probably assume that he was a Dominican friar.

⁷⁵ He does, however, note that Jesus's feet were "placed one upon the other and . . . fixed . . . to the wood with one great nail" (Bériou, *L'avènement des maîtres*, 2:797).

taken to the nave to be saluted, venerated, and kissed by the laity.⁷⁶ Completing his sermon by attributing to Christ the very actions they themselves so soon would perform may have been the preacher's way of preparing his hearers, putting them in the correct frame of mind for properly fervent devotions.⁷⁷

And yet, what kind of preparation is this? The preacher provides no lesson, no explanation of what his lay listeners are about to see and do. If his goal is to guide the meditations and shape the responses of his auditors, to use the art object as a pastoral tool, he is going about it rather perfunctorily. Rupert's *Commentary on Matthew*, the *Bernardine Meditation*, the pseudo-Augustinian *Sermon*, and the *Ancrene Riwe* all show us the extent to which art had to be explained, vision had to be guided, if the image before the eyes was to "mean" what the Christian teacher wanted it to mean. The long textual convention upon which the preacher drew, and which had worked so painstakingly to reconcile vision and doctrine, would not have been available to aid his auditors, to place the visual stimulus in a suitable context.

It is, of course, perfectly possible that in asking his audience to "see" something they might neither "see" nor necessarily understand, our preacher was simply revealing pedagogical clumsiness. But it is also possible that in gesturing at the crucifix he was not trying to "teach" or illuminate doctrine at all. He certainly had no need to use art as a "Bible for the Simple"; he had just very effectively translated the Gospel text into a folksy and entertaining vernacular homily. Nor does it seem likely that he invoked the crucifix in the hopes of launching his flock on a contemplative journey toward Christ; the thought was completed almost as soon as it was uttered, and neither the setting nor the audience could have been considered ideal for meditation.

Indeed, given the setting and audience for this sermon, it seems clear that the preacher's goal in invoking art was not the same as that of Rupert or the Diest *Meditation* or even of the pseudo-Augustinian sermon to leprous brothers. Preaching manuals testify to far more limited goals for public sermons to the laity. The great enemies of the preacher, the most pervasive vices in the flourishing urban world of thirteenth-century Paris, were simply complacency and inattention. Preaching manual after preaching manual frets about the difficulties of getting hearers to pay heed.⁷⁸ Maurice de Sully noted that many Parisian auditors found sermons a waste of time that could better be used for business, and Nicole Bériou has concluded that in general preachers in this period found indifference a greater threat than heresy.⁷⁹ High-medieval preachers did not seek to lead their flocks to

⁷⁶ See Guillelmus Durandus, *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, ed. A. Davril and T. M. Thibodeau, CCCM 111A and B (Turnhout, 2000), 2:369–87. Durandus concedes that there is confusion concerning whether Jesus was crucified with three nails or four.

⁷⁷ Like his sources, the preacher calls Jesus "sweet," perhaps to foreshadow and sweeten the kiss each worshiper soon will bestow upon the object.

⁷⁸ See, among many examples, the *Verbum abbreviatum* of Peter the Chanter (PL 205:41 and 197) and the *Liber quo ordine sermo fieri debeat* of Guibert de Nogent (PL 156:24). My favorite example is a story recounted by Caesarius of Heisterbach: an abbot woke his dozing (monastic!) audience by beginning to tell a tale about King Arthur (*Dialogus miraculorum* 4.26, ed. Joseph Strange, 2 vols. [Cologne, 1851], 1:205).

⁷⁹ Bériou, *L'avènement des maîtres*, 1:24, 39, 61, 134, 141, 290, and 473.

ecstasy but to rouse them from their torpor. Apathy may have been less of a problem at the Good Friday service than at other times of the year, but then again clerical expectations were probably higher, and distractions greater. What our Parisian pastor wants, at the conclusion of his Good Friday sermon and as he prepares for the Veneration of the Cross, is to force upon the well-fed and worldly burghers, shoemakers, and fishwives before him at least a moment of elevated awareness. In that task he enlists the heuristic not of revulsion but of surprise.⁸⁰ Having just declared in his last remarks that Christ has died, the preacher dramatically brings him back to life in his final exhortation. In finishing with a single phrase ripped violently out of context from its long and carefully crafted original source, in eschewing the calm resolution to which his predecessors had steered their meditations, in ignoring all the visual signs developed during the previous decades that must have rendered this later thirteenth-century crucifix a portrait of pathos and suffering, in forcing his restless or distracted flock to look up and try to see the living Christ in an image of a dead body, and then in leaving this exhortation without comment or sequel, he is willfully exploiting exactly what the Diest *Meditation* sought to suppress: the power of art to disturb, question, and confuse.

What, then, does this far too rapid survey through a century and a half of writing about looking at the crucifix tell us about how medieval Christians saw, responded to, and wrote about art?⁸¹ It reveals, first, a rich and complex dialogical relationship among text, reader/viewer, and object. Each author borrows images and phrases from, and filters visual experience through, previous texts, but no author stops there. Each author inverts, subverts, or otherwise modifies his source text in some way and also goes beyond his textual sources to draw inspiration and emotional power from the object before him. Even in the midst of familiar devotions, medieval Christians looked, and looked intensely. Changes in iconography were noted; material, placement, size, shape, and adornment were commented upon; both unique and traditional features could make a powerful impression.

As prescribed in these texts, the process of looking was far from passive. Proper contemplation of the crucifix required care and effort on the part of the viewer; small elements were to be isolated from their context and perused in turn; meaning was painstakingly built up through the assembling of distinct fragments.⁸² The immediate impression was generally regarded as suspect. Rupert had to gaze long and hard before the image came alive for him; readers of the Diest *Meditation* had to move beyond their initial recoil; Cistercian monks and English anchoresses alike had to be trained to trace a shield in the form of the crucified. This may well

⁸⁰ On surprise in sermonizing, see Bériou, *L'avènement des maîtres*, 1:503.

⁸¹ Although I shall not attempt it here, the story could be continued through and well beyond the end of the Middle Ages. See Appendix 1, below, and also the words of Mother Teresa of Calcutta: "Look at the cross and you will see Jesus' head bent to kiss you, His arms extended to embrace you, His heart opened to receive you, to enclose you within His love" (Edward Le Joly, *Mother Teresa of Calcutta: A Biography* [San Francisco, 1983], pp. 334–35).

⁸² This assembling of meaning through fragmentation is hardly unique to the encounter with art. Rather, it is reminiscent of and linked to the most central intellectual, religious, and political projects of the years in question.

explain the popularity of the trope of Christ's kiss and embrace: it forces the viewer to query the obvious and to distrust the apparent—to pierce the veil of the image.

The result of such active, creative, and dialogical looking is a reading of art both deeply personal and also thoroughly immersed in Christian tradition and contemporary culture. Depending upon viewer and context, the angle of Jesus's head, for example, might convey a range of ideas, from ignominious defeat to humble acknowledgment, noble greeting, divine compassion, intimate affection, or chivalric gallantry. But the range was nonetheless limited; a nod could not signify infinite or completely arbitrary concepts.⁸³ The objectness of the crucifix was an integral aspect of its meaning: Rupert was affected by the crucifix's distance, the leprous brothers by its height, the author/readers of the *Diest Meditation* by their ability to handle, turn, and clasp it.⁸⁴

Artistic change and doctrinal elaboration seem to have unfolded according to a delicate oscillating rhythm. A theological conception of Christ as a loving and compassionate God-man may be an indispensable prerequisite for seeing the image of Jesus as leaning to kiss and embrace, and indeed Rupert of Deutz gave voice to this concept and managed to read it into his crucifix well before it came to dominate representations of Christ crucified. But the readers of the *Diest Meditation* apparently perceived misery in Jesus's face before they were fully ready to accept it. If prevailing artistic practices facilitated the parallels drawn by the pseudo-Augustinian preacher between Christ's body and those of his leprous listeners, his emphasis on Jesus's scars and wounds anticipated more extreme later medieval images, which in turn would inspire further devotional excesses. Ultimately, it is fruitless to attempt to assign either temporal or conceptual priority to "ideas" versus "images." The history of our trope makes it clear that ideas and images, doctrine and art, existed in a dialectical relationship, with innovation appearing in sometimes one and sometimes the other realm. But rarely did innovation in one area so fully outstrip the other that resolution was beyond reach—a resolution that as often as not took the form of writing about looking at the crucifix.

Thus, in spite of the personalized nature of some of their readings, these texts suggest that the action of looking at the crucifix was *not* the experience of a single soul encountering God alone. I have called the process of looking dialogic, but it is perhaps more accurately portrayed as a conversation among many voices, across many centuries. Just as each author echoed and extended a long tradition, each

⁸³ So, for example, although the Superman-saturated schoolchildren to whom I used to lecture at the Cloisters often asked me why the crucified Jesus was flying, no medieval text that I am aware of ever read the crucifix in this way. A self-propelled airborne man with outstretched arms was simply not a cultural concept to which medieval viewers had access. Thus, although I agree with most proponents of reception theory that the engaged reader/viewer completes, or "concretizes," the text/artwork, reading meaning into it from the standpoint of his or her own cultural paradigms, beliefs, and values (or "horizon of expectation," as Jauss called it), I would not follow the more radical theorists in characterizing the text/image—and certainly not so anthropomorphic an image as a crucifix—as utterly indeterminate. See Hans Robert Jauss, "The Identity of the Poetic Text in the Changing Horizon of Understanding" in Machor and Goldstein, *Reception Study*, pp. 7–28.

⁸⁴ Even a painted crucifixion was a "thing" to be touched and manipulated: the drawing of the crucifixion at the bottom of fol. 147v in a fourteenth-century missal (Paris, BnF MS lat. 861) is worn from having been repeatedly kissed.

individual viewer refracted the gaze of a community or parish, of the larger Body Christian, and of the wide world; the space before the altar is a crowded one. As Rupert struggled to see and hear the greeting of his Lord, he heard, too, and felt the presence of his clerical critics, his Jewish opponents, and his own doubts and fears. Similarly, the author of the Diest *Meditation* heard his reader's objections even as he wrote to overcome them; perhaps he, too, heard the taunts of Jews crying out against his image of God. (In case this seems far-fetched, I must note that most traditional depictions of the Crucifixion do, in fact, position Synagoga or Jews among those before the crucifix, if only to veil their view.)⁸⁵

This sense of a conversation becomes almost a cacophony at times. The multiplicity of possible approaches to the crucifix reflects the complexity of Christology and of Christian society, of course, but also the peculiar ability of art to say two things at the same time: to condense "God" and "man"—which in spoken language cannot be uttered in the same breath, and in written language can at best be hyphenated—within a single image.⁸⁶ Many of our texts, while drawing inspiration from just this ability, also breathe fear that the artwork they address might say too many uncontrolled and contradictory things, and say them too forcefully. Writing about the art object helps contain this threat: responses can be acknowledged and then redirected; impressions can be exploited and reinterpreted; the gaze can be guided, controlled, and arrested. The counterintuitive aspects of the trope of Christ's kiss and embrace rupture the unmediated connection between artwork and viewer even while provoking further, and more thoughtful, contemplation. And the next time the object is viewed, the viewer/reader's response is filtered through the text just read.

Preached sermons, however, while drawing on the same textual traditions, cannot guide vision in quite the same way. The moment is too fleeting and the audience too detached, distracted, and diverse for coordinated image-based devotions. But still the art object has its function. The two sermons we have looked at, both of which seem actually to have been delivered (though subsequent editing may have taken place), suggest that high-medieval preaching developed its own peculiar way of using art, one that exploited the power of the glance rather than the power of the gaze to provide a sudden and visceral visual jolt.⁸⁷

These different approaches to the image point to subtle rather than stark clerical/lay, elite/popular, or male/female differences in ways of looking. Both monastic

⁸⁵ Indeed, the many voices implicit in these texts are given explicit form in later medieval art. On the increasingly crowded and social (and anti-Jewish) nature of later medieval Passion imagery, see Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, and Anne Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant* (Cambridge, Eng., 1996).

⁸⁶ This ability was disputed by iconoclasts and heretics and was therefore forcefully asserted by orthodox writers. See, for example, the inscription by Hildebert de Lavardin: "Nec Deus est nec homo, praesens quam cernis imago, / Sed Deus est et homo quem sacra figurat imago" (PL 171:1283); also on the north portal of S. Miguel at Estella (Calvin B. Kendall, *The Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and Their Verse Inscriptions* [Toronto, 1998], no. 47). On images, paradox, and Christ's two natures, see Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, p. 340.

⁸⁷ Preaching thus constitutes, I believe, a complicating factor in the high-medieval shift to the "prolonged gaze" outlined by Cynthia Hahn, "Visio Dei: Changes in Medieval Visuality," in *Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge, Eng., 2000), pp. 169–96. I address this issue in greater depth in *The Vulgate of Experience*.

and lay texts approach the crucifix through isolated parts, constructing religious meaning by way of fragmented visual experience; and both kinds of text read the religious image in light of secular social practices and symbols. No segment of the Body Christian was immune to either the power or the threat of the image; our texts suggest that clerics/males were considered as sensitive to art's allure and as susceptible to its dangers as lay viewers/women. No significant differences in ways of looking distinguish the sermon preached to lay male lepers from the sermon preached to a mixed lay audience. The *Diest Meditation*, whether intended for monks or for lay patrons of either sex, does allow somewhat greater scope for visual exploration than that other, female-destined and individually read devotion, the *Ancrene Riwe*. But this probably reflects the fact that the *Meditation's* author had more confidence in his ability to prepare and guide his charges' interactions with the object; the basic approach to visual devotion is essentially the same. Rupert of Deutz felt the power of the crucifix intensely while discouraging his fellow monks from attempting to follow him into its embrace, and Bernard of Clairvaux worried about the effect of art on his monastic brothers. The primary difference seems to occur in the realms of taste and touch rather than of sight, with the most intimate contacts being reserved for individuals with a peculiar claim to grace. Instead of classifying responses to and concerns about art (as more or less emotional, or immediate, or captivating, or transporting) according to gender or clerical or social status, we should envision a graduated scale, reflecting variations in spiritual preparation as well as differences in the situations and needs of the audiences.⁸⁸

In apparently agreeing that the power of vision was simultaneously inescapable and incomplete, these writings about looking at the crucifix almost reluctantly acknowledge the centrality of the visual in human experience, and hence of the religious image in the lives of medieval Christians. It is, then, both fitting and ironic that at the close of the Middle Ages, our trope makes a final appearance in the service for the infirm known as *The Boke of the Crafte of Dying*.⁸⁹ Because the *moriens* may be unable to hear, speak, or understand, the *Boke* instructs, the priest should display an image of the crucifix so that the dying person can take solace in God's love. The *Boke* then quotes "St. Bernard," exhorting the dying one to think of Jesus on the cross "his head inclined to greet you, his mouth to kiss you, his arms spread to clasp you. . . ." In the end, it seems, what is left to a soul deprived of all other means of access to the divine is sight. And art.

⁸⁸ Because of the nature of my texts, I have primarily discussed gender in relation to audience rather than authorship. I have, in fact, been unable to identify any salient gender-based distinctions between how men employ our trope and how women writers such as Catherine of Siena and Mother Theresa use it.

⁸⁹ In *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole . . . and His Followers*, 2, ed. Carl Horstmann, Library of Early English Writers 2 (London, 1896), pp. 409–10. See Nancy Lee Beaty, *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars moriendi in England*, Yale Studies in English 175 (New Haven, Conn., 1970). The injunction to look at the cross is discussed in R. N. Swanson, *Catholic England: Faith, Religion, and Observance before the Reformation* (Manchester, 1993), p. 130; and Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven, Conn., 1992), pp. 314–15. Although Mary Catharine O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars moriendi* (New York, 1942), p. 29, n. 112, cites Bernard's *Sermo in feria IV Hebdomadae Sanctae* (S. Bernardi Opera, 5:56–67) as a source for *The Boke*, in fact the reference to Jesus's embrace and kiss is wholly metaphorical and makes no mention of Christ's appearance on the cross.

APPENDIX 1
List of Texts

1. Rupert of Deutz, *De gloria et honore Filii hominis super Mattheum* 12 (ed. Rhabanus Haacke, CCCM 29 [Turnhout, 1979], p. 382). Benedictine; Liège and Cologne, 1127.

Quod cum festinus introissem, apprehendi quem diligit anima mea, tenui illum, amplexatus sum eum, diutius exosculatus sum eum.

2. Conrad of Eberbach, *Exordium magnum* 2.7 (PL 185:420). Cistercian; Clairvaux, 1186–93.

Qui [Bernardus] cum prostratus esset ante altare, apparebat ei quaedam crux cum suo crucifixo super pavimentum, posita coram illo, quam idem vir beatissimus devotissime adorabat, ac deosculabatur. Porro ipsa majestas, separatis brachiis a cornibus crucis, videbatur eumdem Dei famulum amplecti, atque astringere sibi. . . .

3. Anonymous *Meditation* (Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 5246–52, fol. 18v, transcribed in full in Appendix 2, below; cf. PL 158:761–62). Cistercian or Carthusian; France or Belgium, mid- to late twelfth century.

Dulcis in inclinatione capitis: inclinans enim caput in cruce quasi dilecte sue dicere videtur: “O dilecta mea, quae tociens desiderasti frui osculo oris mei.” . . . Dulcis in extensione brachiorum: extendens enim brachia nobis, insinuat quod amplexus nostros ipse desideret. . . . “Videte, videte quia paratus sum intra brachia mea congregare vos, quia memini me sicut promisisse. . . .” Dulcis in apertione lateris, apertio siquidem illa revelavit nobis divitias bonitatis suae, caritatem scilicet cordis sui erga nos. Dulcis et confixus pedum clavo uno . . .

4. Pseudo-Augustinus Belgicus, *Sermo 32 ad fratres in eremo* (PL 40:1293–94, translated in Appendix 3, below). Belgium, perhaps diocese of Liège, probably thirteenth century.

Elevate capita vestra, et corde aspice vulnera Salvatoris nostri in ligno pendentis, poenas morientis, pretium redimentis, cicatrices resurgentis. Quid aliud videre poterimus nisi caput inclinatum ad vocandum et parcendum, cor apertum ad diligendum, brachia extensa ad amplexandum, totum corpus expositum ad redimendum. Haec quanta sint, cogitate vos qui doletis: haec in statera vestri cordis appendite, ut totus vobis figatur in corde, qui pro vobis totus fixus fuit in cruce.

5. Verse appended to the English text of the *Ancrene Riwe* (London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero A.xiv, fol. 131v). Augustinian or Dominican; southwest Midlands, England, c. 1225–50.

Bernardus. Circuire possum celum et terram domine numquam te invenio nisi in cruce. Ibi pascis. Ibi potes. Ibi vestis. Ibi cubas. Ibi omnia nobis. Id est. Te te ipsum dulciter et affluenter das. Item quis non rapitur ad spem et fiduciam impetrandi qui eius attenderet corporis in cruce dispositionem, videlicet caput inclinatum ad osculum, brachia extensa ad amplexum, manus perforatas ad largiendum, latus apertum ad diligendum, corpus extensum ad se totum nobis impendendum?

6. Collection of biblical and patristic distinctions (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm. 23447, fol. 23v). Probably Dominican; thirteenth century.

De hoc etiam Bernardus: Quis non rapiatur ad spem impetrandi fiduciam, qui eius attendit corporis dispositionem, videlicet caput inclinatum ad osculum, brachia extensa

ad amplexum, manus perforatas ad largiendum, latus apertum ad diligendum, pedum affixionem ad nobiscum commanendum, corporis extensionem ad se totum nobis impendendum?

7. Devotional verse in Latin, French, and English (London, British Library, Add. MS 11579, fol. 36r–v). England, thirteenth century.

“Aspicias capud inclinatum ad te salutandum / Os clausum ad te osculandum / Brachia extensa ad te amplectendum / Latus apertum ad te diligendum / Pedes clavis confixos ad te commorandum / Totum corpus in cruce extensum / ad se tibi totum largiendum.”
Saint Bernard oez ke ben le dist.

8. Middle English devotional verse or excerpt (Trinity College Cambridge, MS B.14.39, fol. 83v). Perhaps Dominican; England, perhaps Lincoln, c. 1250.

Bernardus: Respice in faciem Christi tui. Vide fidelis anima, capitis inclinacionem ad osculum, brachiorum extencionem ad amplexum, lateris apercionem ad effectum, tocius corporis crucifixionem, ad nostre redempcionis affectum, illud quod ante latebat intra viscera pectoris, nunc patet per vulnera corporis.

9. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea* (ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggione, Millennio Medievale 6, Testi 3, 2 vols. [Florence, 1998], p. 346). Dominican; Italy, ca. 1260–63.

De hoc etiam Bernardus: Quis non rapiatur ad spem impetrandi fiduciam, qui eius attendit corporis dispositionem, videlicet caput inclinatum ad osculum, brachia extensa ad amplexum, manus perforatas ad largiendum, latus apertum ad diligendum, pedum affixionem ad nobiscum commanendum, corporis extensionem ad se totum nobis impendendum?

10. Good Friday vernacular sermon (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 16482, fol. 141v). Probably Dominican; Paris, 1272 or 1273.

Ha! Veroi chrestien, regarde, regarde, comment il a le chief encliné por toi beisier, les bras estendu por toi embrachier!

11. Ramon Llull, *Livro do amigo e do Amado* 91 (ed. Mark D. Johnston [Warminster, Eng., 1995], p. 36). Franciscan tertiary; Catalonia, 1280s.

Entreseyyas amat a son amich de vermellis e novells vestiments e esten sos braços per ço que labraç e enclina son cap per ço que li do un besar e esta en alt per ço quel puscha atrobar. / Intersignavit se amatus amico suo, novis et rubeis vestimentis, et expansit brachia ut amplectaretur eum, inclinavitque caput ut unum porrigeret ei osculum stetit etiam in alto ut inveniri posset.

12. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogo: Il Corpo Mistico della Santa Chiesa* 128 (ed. Gabriella Anodal, *L'Anima del Mondo* 34 [Casale Monferrato, 2000], p. 230). Dominican tertiary; Siena, 1378.

E nel vedere che il Verbo, per l'obbedienza che gli diedi, corse ad umiliarsi alla obbrobriosa morte di croce? Egli ha il capo chinato per te salutare, la corona in capo per te ornare, le braccia stese per te abbracciare, i piedi confitti per teco stare.

13. Thomas à Kempis, *De vita et beneficiis Salvatoris Iesu Christi meditationes* 2.18 (ed. M. J. Pohl in *Opera omnia*, 5 [Freiburg, 1902], p. 115, line 28). Augustinian canon regular; Zwolle, Netherlands, ca. 1450.

Expandit amantissima brachia, vulnera ostendit aperta, caput inclinat ad osculum, paratus ad gratiam te recipere et omnia peccata absque mora dimittere.

14. *The Tretysse of Loue* (ed. John H. Fisher, EETS O.S. 223 [London, 1951], pp. 12–16). England, fifteenth century (English translation of French devotional tract based on *Ancrene Riwe*).

Behold now, mortal wretches, he who suffered death for your life. . . . Whereof said Saint Bernard, “O! You blessed and happy spouse of Christ, behold on the crucifix the shield of Jesus Christ your spouse! And see the inclination of his head to kiss you; see the spreading of his arms to embrace you; behold the opening of his side and the crucifying of his fair body; and with great affection of your holy love, turn it and turn it again from side to side, from the head to the feet, and you shall find that there never was sorrow or pain like to that pain our lord Jesus Christ endured for your love.”

15. *The Boke of the Crafte of Dying* (ed. Carl Horstmann in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole . . . and His Followers*, 2, Library of Early English Writers 2 [London, 1896], p. 410). England, fifteenth century.

[Let the *moriens* think of Jesus on the cross] his heed enclyned to salve the, his mouth to kysse the, his armes I-sprede to be-clyp the, his hondes I-thrilled to yeve the, his syde opened to love the, hys body alonge straught to yeve all hym-self to the.

APPENDIX 2

Meditation on Jesus on the Cross

Anonymous, probably Cistercian, mid- to late twelfth century. From Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 5246–52, fol. 18v (cf. PL 158:761–62), with modern punctuation but no other editorial changes.

Dulcis Jesus in inclinatione capitis in cruce, et dulcis in extensione brachiorum et dulcis in operatione lateris, dulcis in confixione pedum clavo uno. Dulcis in inclinatione capitis: inclinans enim caput in cruce quasi dilecte sue dicere videtur: “O dilecta mea, quae totiens desiderasti frui osculo oris mei, nuncians mihi per sodales meos, *osculetur me osculo oris sui!* Ego paratus sum, caput inclino, os porrigo, osculare quantumlibet vel placet: nec dicas in corde tuo, ‘istud os non quaero, quod est sine specie et decore, sed illud gloriosum quo semper frui desiderant angelici cives.’ Noli noli sic errare, nisi primum deosculata fueris istud os, ad illud omnino pertingere non poteris. Igitur osculate istud os, quod tibi nunc offero, quoniam, etsi sine specie et decore est, tamen non sine gratia.”

Dulcis in extensione brachiorum: extendens enim brachia nobis, insinuat quod amplexus nostros ipse desideret, et quasi dicere videtur: “O vos omnes qui laboratis et honorati estis, *venite ad me et requiescite* intra brachia mea, intra amplexus meos. Videte, videte quia paratus sum intra brachia mea congregare vos, quia memini me sicut promisisse, sic prophetam meam dicentem: ‘*sicut pastor gregem suum pascet, in brachio suo congregabit agnos et in sinu suo levabit fetus ipse portabit.*’ Venite igitur omnes: nullus timeat se repelli, *quia nolo mortem peccatoris, sed ut convertatur, et vivat. Deliciae mihi sunt esse cum filiis hominum.*”

Dulcis in apertione lateris, apertio siquidem illa revelavit nobis divitias bonitatis suae, caritatem scilicet cordis sui erga nos.

Dulcis et confixus pedum clavo uno, quia per hoc nobis quasi ita loquitur, “ecce si putas quia fugere debeam, et ideo accedere ad me tardatis, scientes quia nimis sum velox sicut hinnulus. Porro videte quia pedes mei clavo misericordie sunt ita confixi, ut omnino fugere

vos non possum, quia misericordia me omnino ligatum tenet, nec fugiam vos ut meruistis propter peccata vestra, quia manus meae clavis confixae sunt.”

Benigne Jesus, humilis Jesus, pius Jesus. Dulcis est in ore, dulcis in aure. Dulcis in corde, inscrutabiliter et inenarrabiliter amoenus, pius, misericors, potens, sapiens, benignus, largus sed non prodigus, validus, dulcis, et suavis es. Solum et summum bonum, *speciosus forma prae filiis hominum*, pulcher et decorus et electus ex millibus, et totus desiderabilis. Pulchrum pulchra decent. Bene bene veneris dilecte mi, dilecte votorum meorum, siquidem semper ades te desiderantibus de te loquentibus. O mi Jesu, nunc tota animo in amplexus tuos et oscula. O mi Jesu, quid faciam? Te totum imprimam in me, ut iam non ego, sed tu totum sis in te, omnis affectio mea, tu omnis et continuus amor meus, tu omne desiderium meum, tu omnis vita mea. Nihil quaero nisi te ipsum, quamvis nulla pena peccatum sequeretur, quamvis iusticie nulla merces repromitteretur; licet et infernus, et paradisu non essent, tamen propter te ipsum tibi adhaerere et inhaerere vellem. Tu continua meditatio mea, verbum meum, opus meum.

APPENDIX 3

Sermo 32 ad fratres in eremo

Translated from PL 40:1293–94, “Ad Leprosos, Ut Patientiam Teneant.”

My most beloved brothers, I know that God struck you, and made you leprous unto the day of your deaths. Therefore I implore you, in [the name of] our lord Jesus Christ, by whose precious blood you were redeemed, not to lose courage in those tribulations that are for your glory, knowing that through bodily affliction we kill mental weakness. Indeed the spirit flags, while wretched flesh slumbers in delighting. Therefore, if poverty should oppress, if sorrow should cause grief, if the gullet should grieve, if the breast or the belly should be swollen, if pain of the whole body should disturb you, if calamity should vex you from all sides, let your love in God and pious patience and sure hope of celestial things gladden you in all labors and dangers of this life. Let us therefore despise riches in the heart, and we will be enriched. Let us despise the petitions of our enemies, and we will be always victorious. Let us despise health of the body, and we will receive eternal rest and health. Therefore supreme patience is necessary to you in infirmities and wearinesses. Indeed, no one can be blessed, no one is made a citizen of heaven, no one is designated a friend of God, who will not be found patient among evils.

O Patience! You withstand all chains, not in wrestling, but in suffering, not in murmuring, but in giving thanks for all things. For it is patience herself who removes from the dregs of all desire; herself who renders spotless souls to God; herself the vessel that leads all her lovers to the gate. It is she herself through whom hell is closed and paradise is opened to her lovers. It is she herself through whom each, and without whom none, is justified.

Oh! If it is grievous to you that you are leprous, have patience in all things. Raise up your heads, and perceive with your heart the wounds of our Savior hanging on the tree, the pains of the dying one, the value/price of the redeeming one, the scars of the one rising up again! What else will we be able to see except the head inclined for calling and sparing, the heart bared for loving, the arms extended for embracing, the entire body exposed for redeeming!? Think how great are these things, you who grieve: weigh out these things on the balance of your heart, so that all [of him] is fixed in your heart, who for you was wholly fixed on the cross.

And what more did our Savior bear for us, what more did he patiently carry? All his life was full of grief; and finally coming to the cross in the passion, he who is in truth the

palm of victory, is exposed to mockeries; is crowned with thorns, who came to break the thorns of sinners; is bound, who without labor and pain loosens fetters; is suspended on the tree, who raises up those who are crushed; the fount of eternal life drinks bitterness; order is felled; health is wounded; life dies. Death kills life for a time, so that for eternity death might be killed by life. Behold, brothers, the patience of Christ, behold the goodness and mercy of Christ!

And if it pleases [you] to hear more, we can also preach still more things about Christ. Therefore let it not weary you to listen. For if you were fatigued, I would not preach more to you. I desire indeed to console you, and not to sadden you. For if it is a tedium, say so, if indeed a joy, listen! Behold indeed, the Savior came ruling the stars, and wished to suck breasts. He himself who is bread, wished to hunger; who is a fount, to thirst; who is light, to sleep; who is rest, to be tired; who is truth, to be hidden; he himself who is judge of living and dead, [wished] to be condemned to death; he himself who is justice, to be judged by the unjust; he himself who is united, to be changed. Indeed, nothing is so salvation-bringing to us as to daily think about how much God and Man endured for us. Behold! Indeed the Savior suffered, was made leprous on the cross for us, was made suffering, leaving us an example, that we might follow his tracks. If you will do this, not only will you bear weakness without vexation, but with the prophet you will not desist to proclaim with voice and work: *Let my life fail without grief, and my years in sighs* (Ps. 30.11). But you say, "Oh how burdensome, oh how inhuman, oh how hard it is not to be able to live among men! Behold indeed, we are separated from the cities, people spurn us, parents hate us, brothers and sisters flee, friends desert us, we are separated from the camps, as if we were not born of men." O brothers! Listen patiently, and do not wish to agitate, for what you say is true, but I do not want you to ignore what you read. Indeed the Lord said to Moses: *The leprous person shall not dwell in my house* (Lev. 13.46). Why therefore do you agitate if you cannot live among men? Could the citizens of the world be superior to us? Could they open the house of the Lord to you? Could you be made better through their society? Are you unaware of what will have been said to the holy man Anthony: "If you desire to be saved, flee men, flee the world and its pomp"? Why, then, are you disturbed if you cannot converse among men? Behold indeed St. Job, just, wise, rich, upright, and fearing God, and nevertheless is made leprous; nevertheless he complains not, is thrown outside the camp, is despised and deserted by men. He is blasphemed by his wife, nevertheless he does not complain, and did not speak mortally against God with his lips, thinking another life to be soon about to come. Do not you therefore agitate, but consider that because of your sins God struck you, or so that he might test you. Behold indeed Maria, who murmured against her brother Moses, was made leprous. King Azarias, because he presumed, was made leprous; and Giezi, who committed simony; and Naaman, who glorified himself. You also, since you were struck, be patient, and accept it with a joyful soul, lest equally here and in the eternal future you should suffer torments. Be comforted therefore, and do not fear. I believed to be with you on the third day of Pasche, but because our Valentinus left this world, because of that I could not be with you.⁹⁰ But now with broken silver vases from the goods of the church of Hippo, I wish to provide for you in necessities and for captives. So let God console us, who consoles his in all tribulation. Amen.

⁹⁰ This sentence and the next are clumsy interpolations into the original sermon. See n. 55 above.