Studies in Iconography: Themes and Variations

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New Perspectives on the Man of Sorrows

Edited by Catherine R. Puglisi and William L. Barcham
The Man of Sorrows in Northern Europe: Ritual Metaphor and Therapeutic Exchange

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Anyone who has studied premodern Christian art’s changing forms will appreciate how dazzlingly varied the imagery centered upon, or incorporating, the figure Hans Belting dubbed the “Passion portrait” became in the half-millennium following its earliest formulation, an origin scholarship now places in the mid-twelfth century. Better known as the Man of Sorrows and by its medieval Latin title, Imago pietatis, the image type—in its celebrated passage from Byzantium to the West and its exemplary transformation from iconic Repräsentationsbild to an affective Andachtsbild—spread out over an iconographic territory so expansive that, despite a century of dedicated scholarship, a convincing genealogy of the many affiliated types continues to elude us.1 With the possible exception of the Crucifixion image, with its numerous narrative, devotional, allegorical, and votive variations, no other image in the repertoire of Christian art has lent itself to such an array of permutations and recombinations. To map them all is the iconographer’s impossible dream, a totalizing ambition no art historian would dare entertain—especially after the critique of iconography that accompanied art history’s realignments in the 1970s and 1980s.2

What pathways, then, are open to us today? How should we try (again) to make sense of the whole? Along with the fine exhibition staged at the Museum of Biblical Art in early 2011, and the symposium that accompanied it, came the chance to confront these problems anew. For me there were two notable things that, each in its own way, stimulated the undertaking. First was the productive frisson felt by someone unconsciously stamped by Erwin Panofsky’s assertion that it was only the visibly interpretable “Passion portrait” that strictly speaking, deserved the mantle (and the nomenclature) of Imago pietatis—the animated Christ who, with eyes open, wields the arma Christi or advances through space; the Christ who, with arms raised, offers himself or spouts blood into the chalice—that strictly speaking, deserved the mantle (and the nomenclature) of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant.3 Yet most of the blue-chip works one encountered in the show depicted not the type of Christ German artists had, since the early fourteenth century, ventured to “set on his own feet” (auf eigene Füße zu stellen), but the dead Christ, typically mourned by angels who support him in the tomb. This was the interpretation that attracted Veronese and so many other Italian painters: the Christ who, replete with all
the "motifs of helplessness" (Motive der Hilflosigkeit) that conveyed the impression of a lifeless corpse, could nevertheless be animated by the painter's vivifying art. However, because such divergences within the progressive development of the type cannot be explained solely in terms of national traditions—north or south—or by discourses of the image, they beg the question of whether all of our starting iconographic definitions do not have to be fundamentally rethought.

Equally pivotal for my own thinking about the image was a happy accident that occurred on my way to the symposium in 2011. Due to an innocent clerical error, the talk I was intending to give, "Confrontations with the Man of Sorrows"—a title informed by earlier research into the antagonist powers of the image—was suddenly being billed in a decidedly more ecumenical spirit: conversations with the Man of Sorrows. Here fortune had delivered something reason could embrace (a rare occurrence, according to Petrarch). In fact, a new line of thought was born from the episode. For the idea of conversations already seemed to crystallize something I had long suspected: that across its many changes of form, function, genre, and symbolic meaning, the Passion portrait of Christ is an image uniquely defined by its capacity to organize exchanges and compel reciprocities. That is, whatever we may wish to say, or refrain from saying, about the "agency" of images, an entirely new vista opens when we acknowledge that for beholders across the different domains in which the Man of Sorrows might be glimpsed, admired, encountered, and addressed, it was perceptions of mutual obligation that provided the psychological groundwork for response. Sometimes these perceptions were geared toward specific benefits, sometimes to the intersubjective virtues of trust, loyalty, love, and worthiness. Exchange is the mechanism, reciprocity the ethos (Ethos).

Following this profane illumination, it seemed desirable to attempt a new kind of functionalist interpretation of the Man of Sorrows using these two concepts—exchange and reciprocity—to rethink the way certain images behaved, or could behave, under certain conditions of interactive use. Of course, identifying and isolating the main functional contexts into which the Man of Sorrows was enlisted, in one form or another, during its long career in Christian art presents methodological problems no less daunting than the iconographic taxonomizing I just declared bankrupt. A case can be made, however, for organizing the whole according to functional genres, a notion heralded for modern art history by Jacob Burckhardt's wish for an "art history according to tasks" (Kunstgeschichte nach Aufgaben): tasks set for the artist, and tasks set for the work of art. 1 In a similar—though more determinedly ethnographic—spirit I want to offer six rubrics, each of which both demarcates a functional context broadly conceived and privileges the functional form of the Man of Sorrows that was more or less dominant within it:

1. Passion liturgy in the Greek East / Ακρα ταπεινίτις
2. Passion mysticism and devotions in the Latin West / Ιμια πετιτάς
3. Holy Blood cult and pilgrimage / "Blood-shedding Savior"
4. Pious charity and the Works of Mercy / "Image of loving mercy"
5. Mortuary and purgatory cult (i.e., tombs and epitaphs) / multiple types
6. Meditative "spiritual exercises" / Christ in Repose

This list, arranged in a way that shadows the image's accepted morphological history without making specific claims about it, is offered here at the outset merely to suggest the contours of a larger project to be pursued elsewhere. Its working assumptions, however, inform what follows. Among them is the observation that structural parallels prevail across the different roles the Man of Sorrows image was enlisted to play in these different functional contexts and the pictorial genres particular to them (which correspond only roughly to generic categories such as Repräsentationsbild, Andachtsbild, Kartbild, Votivbild, and Meditationbild). For each functional context broadly defined, each situation of interactive "use," so far as we can reconstruct it, allowed the Man of Sorrows to become more than the representation or communication of a theological idea, more than a "pictorial concept" (Bildgedanke). Rather, I want to see the image serving as the prompt and the fulcrum of a ritual action, an action that can be understood, first and foremost, as a formalized exchange. Sometimes this exchange takes the form of a dialogue, as Belting and others have emphasized—though not always a dialogue of real or implied words. Just as often, as we will see, it was a matter of reciprocal giving and offering, a form of ritual interaction to which the Man of Sorrows figure, in its distinctive metaphorical layering, is uniquely suited (I suspect this has something to do with the sui generis nature of Christ's suffering body, which appears to supplicants not simply as the vehicle of gift exchange but as the offering itself; but the labors of comparison and exegesis involved in testing that particular hypothesis cannot occupy us here).

My principal terms—interaction and ritual, exchange and gift, reciprocity and obligation—will be broadly familiar to students of social anthropology and behavioral sociology as staples of the symbolic interpretation of culture. As with all analytical concepts, the inflections they acquire depend on which across-the-board purpose of symbolic human action a particular writer happens to subscribe to. My own inclination is to look for the underlying purpose behind ritual actions not in the soteriological arguments and promises images were authorized to make in the Middle Ages, but in the therapeutic expectations that surrounded and informed them: therapies for the soul, for the body, for the religious conscience (or ego), indeed, for the entire personality. Tracking the northern Man of Sorrows across the full range of ritual contexts into which he entered, and grappling with the distinct modes of therapy these appearances betoken, reveals the dominant role played in some settings (for instance, pilgrimage) by the hopes and demands of a grassroots religiosity; and in another setting (for example, in private Passion mysticism) by elite forms of spiritual training and self-fashioning. Still other settings (here pious charity comes first to mind) are characterized by the bridges built between popular and elite—or clerical and lay, or collective and personal—tasks for Christian devotional art. Here I report on only three of these contexts: the third, fourth, and sixth on my list. This will serve as one way; at least, to fulfill my charge for the present collection, of representing something of the distinctive life (Eigenleben) of the Man of Sorrows image in northern European art.
Cult of the Holy Blood

In the story of the European reception of the Byzantine icon known alternately as King of Glory (Basileus tis doxes) and Utmost Humiliation (Akra tapeinosis), told so richly by Hans Belting, the Latin Imago pietatis, even before it had a name, found its earliest enlistment in the West as a devotional image. The dominant forces shaping and reshaping the functional form of the image at this early stage seem to be a Passion mysticism indebted to Bernard of Clairvaux's writings, and a penitential ethos long rooted in monastic culture but slowly translated into new forms of affective piety by the mendicant orders—Franciscans first, then Dominicans. Within a century of its coming ashore, however, powerful eucharistic connotations would come to define the Imago pietatis and its permutations. This second major transformation in the Passion portrait's Western career was fueled in large part by a pious legend put into circulation through Carthusian networks around 1400, according to which the bleeding Savior appeared in a vision on the altar during a Mass celebrated on Good Friday by Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604), who later commemorated the event in an image and granted indulgences to pilgrims who venerated it. The primary beneficiary of this legend was the little mosaic icon at Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome (Fig. 1), now known to international exhibition audiences—an imported, relic-like image, whose Carthusian caretakers succeeded in elevating to the status of an “original” worthy of being copied, disseminated, and indulgenced. The story has become a staple of the art historical literature on both the Man of Sorrows and the iconography of the Mass of St. Gregory, and needs no rehearsal here.

Alone, the Gregory legend would not have stamped the northern European Man of Sorrows with such an enduring sacramental identity, nor would it likely have prompted such innovative eucharistic figurations as Meister Francke’s breathtaking Man of Sorrows in Leipzig (ca. 1420; Fig. 2). For all this to happen two further alignments were necessary: the legend had to conjoin with liturgical representations of Christ as the new manna and the “the living bread which came down from heaven” (from John 6, a text that provided the gospel for the feast of Corpus Christi during the later Middle Ages); and the “iconic” Man of Sorrows had to cross-fertilize, so to speak, with two important eucharistic allegories first developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Christ in the Winepress and the Fons pietatis, both of which emphasized Christ’s body as the source of life-giving substance and imagined his tomb as a vivifying fountain of life (fons vitae). It may be that the reshaping of the Imago pietatis into a “Eucharistic Man of Sorrows” occurred from two different directions, concurrently folding two processes of assimilation.

A third key impetus in these iconographic and formal developments was the emergence of a new functional context: pilgrimage shrines to the Holy Blood, or Heilig-Blut, which proliferated throughout German-speaking lands between the last decade of the thirteenth century and the onset of the Reformation in the 1520s. One type of Heilig-Blut shrine centered on relics of Christ’s blood called Blutreliquien, typically claimed by their custodians to be identical with the historical blood shed on Calvary; meanwhile, a second type acclaimed as miraculous the blood that materialized on eucharistic hosts when they were abused. The resulting stained or flecked wafers were displayed in monstrances and referred to as Bluthostien, the term from which our somewhat misleading term “bleeding
Fig. 2. Master Francke, Man of Sorrows. Tempera on wood, 42.5 x 31.3 cm, ca. 1420; Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste, inv. 243. (Photo: pbk Berlin / Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig / Ursula Gersternberg / Art Resource, NY.)

host" is derived. Eucharistic cult figures, some with wonder-working powers, can be traced to a number of these sites, among them Iphofen (Lower Franconia), Deggendorf and Mainburg (Lower Bavaria), Erding (Upper Bavaria), Pulkau (Lower Austria), Grillham (Upper Austria), Wilsnack (Brandenburg), and several others; a few of these "blood-shedding Savior" (blutvergießende Heiland) figures survive in situ. As cult images, these heroic figures stand as the mimetic doubles of the embattled sacrament and express in their dynamic gestures a whole phenomenology of salvific action, one that appealed to the popular desire to see Christ's "glorified blood." As an instrument of legitimation, the German Man of Sorrows had his work cut out for him at shrines whose foundation legends linked them to eucharistic miracles prompted by the host's sacrilegious abuse (Hostienfrevel), since suspicions of fraud dogged many of these cult startups. Clerical planners at the Church of the Holy Blood in Pulkau, for example, seized upon the explosion of peregrinating piety that marked the two decades before the Reformation to renew their church, commission a massive Schnitzaltar by leading Viennese artists, and break with all known iconographic precedent by placing the Man of Sorrows on center stage as the shrine's patron (Fig. 3). Yet the installation did not go forward until nearly 175 years after the shrine's founding miracle, which occurred in 1338—a miracle remembered as a sacrilege committed by Jews, a "crime" whose punishment unleashed a wave of massacres reaching nineteen different Jewish communities in Lower Austria, a dark episode I treat at length elsewhere.

Visual metaphors of offering and outflow, cleansing and renewal, unite this family of cult images. At Pulkau, in the shrine's Holy Savior figure (attributed to the sculptor Michael Tichter), bold intimations of blood's virtual movement through space test the strictures of clerical mediation and control. A panel now in Cologne brings together these same metaphors by visualizing the outflow from Christ's body as a mingling (but not a merging) of solid and liquid substances, body and blood, cascading down into a font that runs red below the cross then clear in the pool surrounding it (Fig. 4). What flows in offering from the side wound of these visionary Man of Sorrows figures—here and, significantly, in many Gregory Mass images as well—is a moving, sparkling, living blood that betokens a perpetual therapy. Traditional German Catholic culture employs the plural noun Spenden to characterize the "blood poured out" for humankind's redemption. Christ's merciful gift is his Blutspenden.

What did pilgrims arriving at the shrine with their afflictions and needs offer in return? In what form did they make their donations, their Pilgerspenden? We know they brought their prayers and their gratitude, and to the extent that "blood piety" is always suffused with the intensity of Passion devotion, they also brought their pity and contrition. But pilgrims also brought material things like votive candles; wood, metal and wax ex-votos; and they brought their coins, those most abstract tokens of value. A pen and colored-ink drawing from a miscellany produced in Nuremberg around 1480, a manuscript containing the Seven Works of Mercy, depicts the "poor souls" in purgatory as an almost palpable presence beneath the feet of pilgrims (Fig. 5). Approaching the church with rosary in hand, a well-dressed burger drops an obligatory coin into the Opferstock, the alms box, outside the portal. Opfer, it should be added, is one of those polysemic terms in German religious
Fig. 3. Michael Tichter (attributed), Man of Sorrows flanked by SS. Bartholomew and Sebastian. Shrine figures from the Pulkau Passion Altarpiece, limewood and polychromy; Pulkau, Church of the Holy Blood. (Photo: Author.)

Fig. 4. Christ as Blood Source. Mixed technique on panel, 39 x 26 cm, lower Rhenish, ca. 1480; Cologne, Kolumba: Kunstmuseums des Erzbistums Köln. (Photo: Kolumba: Kunstmuseums des Erzbistums Köln.)
Fig. 5. Pilgrims Performing Good Works for Poor Souls. Colored pen drawing, south German, ca. 1480; Nürnberg, Stadtbibliothek, Handschrift Cent. V, App. 34a, fol. 129v. (Photo: Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg.)

culture; denoting both "offering" and "victim," it neatly captures the substitutional logic of sacrifice and atonement that underlies all of this imagery.

That such participatory giving had an important place in the gift economy of Holy Blood shrines where the Man of Sorrows presided as the patron image is demonstrated in a set of pen and watercolor drawings depicting the choir area of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher at Deggendorf, in Lower Bavaria. The drawings in question illustrates a petition prepared by Deggendorf’s newly installed city priest—Johann Riepl, a former canon at SS. Martin and Kastalus in Landslut—whose zealous efforts to turn back Protestant reforms included interventions in the liturgical furnishings of the choir, among them the removal of a beloved stone cult figure. The first of the two Riepl drawings reproduced here shows an over-life-sized Man of Sorrows perched atop a stone column that houses an alms box, with the whole installation set before a ciborium-shaped sacrament house (Fig. 6); against propriety (in Riepl’s view), worshippers kneel in the direction of the statue rather than the high altar. Another drawing from the report shows the same area after the statue had been prescriptively removed (Fig. 7). Burgers marked with the letter A kneel in orderly devotion toward the high altar; several others marked B face the sacrament house rising next to the sacristy door, their view no longer impeded by the statue; while two women, C and D, gaze longingly toward the blank space atop the ruined pedestal.

We need not concern ourselves here with the complex rationale for the renovations, nor the chain of events that ultimately led to Riepl’s departure. Both the drawings and the petition itself, which describes the local custom of praying before the image, verify the existence and veneration of a eucharistic Man of Sorrows statue at Deggendorf’s influential Holy Blood shrine, an object which has left no other material trace. And not just the figure’s existence is verified: also visible in the drawing is that distinctive language of gesture that links the type of the “blood-shedding Savior,” who stands over the Fountain of Mercy, with the Christ of intercession (Fürbittechristus), who displays the wounds to prove his merit before the Father (or who frames the side wound as a mystical portal opening into the safe harbor of his heart). German scholarship calls the type that encompasses both gestures the Erbarmbild, or “image of loving mercy,” an identity that also offers a bridge to the next functional context we shall consider.

Fragmentary though this evidence may be, together it strongly suggests that at Heilig-Blut shrines featuring the cult image of Christ as blood source, and especially where these figures were brought into a symbolic proximity to holy wells, pilgrims were called upon to imagine hosts, blood, and water cascading—as Blutspenden—from the side wound of Christ as they prayed and gathered water and as they let their coins—the Pilgerspended—clatter down into the alms box.
Fig. 6. Interior of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Deggendorf, showing the earlier placement of the Man of Sorrows statue in the choir. Pen and watercolor drawing; Staatsarchiv Landshut, Zivilakten Rep. 97d, F. 674, Nr. 83. (Photo: Eder, Deggendorfer Gnaden, p. 373.)

Fig. 7. Interior of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Deggendorf, showing the choir area after the removal of the Man of Sorrows statue. Pen and watercolor drawing; Staatsarchiv Landshut, Zivilakten Rep. 97d, F. 674, Nr. 83. (Photo: Eder, Deggendorfer Gnaden, p. 455.)
Works of Mercy

No one, to my knowledge, has attempted to write a cultural history of the alms box (Fig. 8), although antiquarians have surely classified the different types one still encounters across the length and breadth of Catholic Europe. Arrayed in pilgrimage churches at key points in a visitor's circuit, these simple metal, wood, and stone depositories appear as the pecuniary counterparts, so to speak, of the Eucharist's glorious abode, the sacrament tabernacle that not only reserves the consecrated species near the altar but broadcasts its presence throughout the whole space of the church. At the site of donation basic security is often provided by large padlocks or barrel locks conspicuously placed; "enhanced security" comes from holy persons, whose nearby images may have served a talismanic function akin to that of guardian figures on altarpieces. In northern Italy—at San Marco's in Venice, for example—one can find the Man of Sorrows himself (elsewhere it is the Ecce Homo) rising over the alms box, shoring up the close association between sacrifice and pious charity (Fig. 9).

This parallelism of host and coin is neither accidental nor purely formal: the reciprocal dynamic of pietas also informs the relationship, as the following two examples, one Italian and one German, demonstrate. In the first we find the Imago pietatis appearing as the "logo" of a charitable program conceived in northern Italy by Franciscan friars, the so-called monti di pietà (Fig. 10). This was essentially a communal banking and loan scheme designed to offer small-scale loans—today called microcredit—to the deserving urban poor. A promotional image painted for one of these outfits shows the Man of Sorrows in half-length, seated in the tomb, which in turn is perched atop the "mountain" of communal wealth. Clients line up with their pledges, or peggzi, before the bank's loan officers, who dispense the seed capital in small bundles. Catherine Puglisi and William Barcham have interpreted the enlistment of the Man of Sorrows as the bank's patron and emblem, its visionary mascot as it were, as a "model of compassion" for urban elites, whose philanthropy had to be prodded, sometimes quite aggressively, by the friars. Observant Franciscans such as Bernardino da Feltre, who deployed an Imago pietatis-emblazoned banner in his fundraising spectacles, saw in this almost ubiquitous devotional image a "figural insignia well-suited to their needs," precisely because Christians had to be shown, as Puglisi and Barcham explain, that "through the suffering Christ they could help others." A penitential connection had long existed between Passion commemoration and charitable giving: friars routinely raised funds during Lenten services and processions. But what specific aspects of the image, what metaphorical motifs, made it so powerful in organizing the symbolic reciprocities that structured pious charity? Consider those signs of the body's pathetic morbidity that were so central to the Passion portrait: within the context of pious charity and its penitential imperatives, "motifs of helplessness" inspired pity and demonstrated the need for mutual aid. In other words, they functioned as ritual metaphors, visual codes of pious charity's rites of mutual assistance: nourishment and shelter, protection and companionship, and, of course, funding. Also operative here are figurations of the Eucharist and its special form of Christological immanence. As the ultimate expression of God's mercy, Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist sanctifies all forms of merciful giving. Otherwise "dead" tokens of exchange—cold metal coins—are enlivened by Christ's presence in the Eucharist, they become salvific surrogates in the hands of the needy.

Fig. 8. Alms box beneath a baroque crucifix with Mater Dolorosa, with votive candles; Upper Bavaria, Tutenhausen, pilgrimage church of Mariä Himmelfahrt. (Photo: Author.)
Fig. 9. Paolo Tremignon, *Imago pietatis* almobox. Bronze, signed and dated 1710; Venice, San Marco. (Photo: William Barcham.)

Fig. 10. Giambattista Bertucci, Bank and Pawnshop of the Monte di Pietà. Oil on canvas, ca. 1500–1515. (Photo: Banca di Romagna Spa, Faenza.)
Urban elites in Germany fixed upon a very different pictorial formula to evoke the dynamics of reciprocal giving, as we see in a panel by Hans Schaufelein (ca. 1480–1540), a work signed and dated 1522 (Fig. 11). Residing now in the city museum of Nördlingen, it was once on display in the city’s St. Georgskirche, where the original convex construction of the panels provided for its secure installation on a cylindrical nave pier (it has since been flattened from a Säulenbild into a gallery picture). In the panel’s lower zone, prosperous burghers responding to the Isaianic injunction of the inscription (“Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house”) enter the church with food for the assembled poor and coins for the alms boxes. Above them, with outstretched arms displaying blood-streaked wounds, hovers Schaufelein’s Man of Sorrows, a figure clearly indebted to Dürer’s engraving (ca. 1500), which was on display in Passion in Venice (Fig. 12). A powerful visionary presence seen only by the panel’s beholders—the illusion of corporeality would have been enhanced by the panel’s bowed form—the figure casts an anxious sidelong glance to the left, presumably the direction from which one approached the installation, which almost certainly paired a real alms box with the pictured one. Offering himself in loving mercy, the Man of Sorrows appears as something like the patron saint for civic works of charity. Vouchsafed
in their power to cancel out sin, the clattering coins of the Norderlingen panel—offered in emulation of Christ’s sacrificial giving—descend into a heavy wooden chest that doubles as a tomb and spring back, so to speak, as salutary reward. Their therapeutic potency moves in two directions: toward the poor and needy, comprehended in the later Middle Ages as a living image of the suffering Christ (a notion expressed in the formula “pauperes Christi heredae nostros instituitum,” frequently used in testaments and donations), and toward the spiritual “health” of the souls of their donors (“pro remedio animae”).27

Clearly we’ve stepped into a different functional context for the northern Man of Sorrows than the pilgrimage shrines discussed in the preceding section. But when we think of these exchanges in terms of their penitential and therapeutic effects, the two contexts draw closer together. Consider how the rituals of obligatory pious charity, formalized in the Works of Mercy (of which there were two kinds, corporeal and spiritual), extended over a continuum that united the needed living and the grateful dead. This is revealed at a glance in a homology revolving around the German adjective arme (meaning “poor,” “lacking,” or “needful”). The fund accumulating at the feet of Schäuflein’s Christ is addressed to the needs of arme Leute, the poor among the living (and a designation that allowed for a distinction between the poor residents of a city, the “deserving poor,” and their opposite—vagrants, drunks, and the like). Meanwhile, pilgrims who brought their coins and their prayers to Holy Blood shrines did so with the expectation that they were joining Christ in assisting the Armeselen, the “poor souls” in purgatory, whose legitimate demand for pious charity paralleled that of the arme Leute.28

Every economy has its spectrum of exchangeable goods, preferred modes of exchange, and privileged currencies—all referring back to a common source of value. Reciprocal offerings in the salvific economies I have sketched as functional contexts for the northern Man of Sorrows meet all of these requirements in a way that would be tiresome to rehearse here. Two things, however, are crucial to point out. The first is that the ultimate source of value in these economies is Christ’s sacrificial blood, the sanguinis Christi. Blood as sacrifice and blood as gift permeate the language of reciprocal offering in the pilgrim economy. Leviticus 17:11 furnished the deep roots of this notion: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life that is in it.” Everything within the commerce between God and man—and, likewise, between the living and the dead—is vouchsafed by Christ’s living blood, and in a profound way becomes a token of it. The second crucial point is that the sacrificial reciprocities demanded by late medieval Passion piety yield something along the lines of what philosopher Georges Gudroux would call a “paradoxical form of exchange,” meaning a sort of commerce, in this case, a commerce between heaven and earth, never fully exhausted by the process of exchange but rather open-ended, perpetual.29 If in late medieval perception Christ’s Blutspenden continued to pour forth, if souls in purgatory continued to cry out for rescue, if the poor continued to go cold and hungry, if the Opferstock was ever in need of replenishment, it was because human sin perdured. Atonement is always ever an incomplete project. No final cancellation of humanity’s debt would occur before the end of time. Christ suffers the pains of the Passion and distributes the fruits of sacrifice as long as he must.

Let us turn now to a very different set of therapeutic ritual behaviors whose setting, I will suggest, formed a hitherto unrecognized functional context for the northern Man of Sorrows from the later fifteenth century onward. In spite of its complexity, I will set this whole range of practices under a simple rubric and refer to them, using historian of philosophy Pierre Hadot’s term, as spiritual exercises. Hadot’s work traces a massive inheritance from antiquity: the ancient model of a programmatic and disciplined self-transformation—born in the schools of Stoic, Epicurean, and Skeptical philosophy—was Christianized and set on its own course of development, roughly speaking, from the desert fathers to Ignatius Loyola. Hadot identifies this long tradition with philo-sophia itself: not the abstract discourses of speculation rooted in the universities but the practical therapies of the soul rooted in the world—the “training for wisdom” as Philo of Alexandria called it, the transformation of the individual’s total attitude and vocation—in short, a whole “way of life,” a mode of “existing-in-the-world which had to be practiced at each instant.” It is my contention that within those personalized practices of spiritual training for life and death known to late medieval and early modern Christians, images such as the Man of Sorrows, and perhaps especially the Man of Sorrows—reframed and updated for new styles of subjective engagement after 1450, as this section will show—had important roles to play, roles that transcended the divisions between monastic and lay piety, elite and popular devotions, and, perhaps most significantly of all, between devotion and philosophy.

Around 1500, ambitious artists found in the multiple transposable types of the late medieval Man of Sorrows a license to invent, explore, and test a wide new range of metaphorical statements, to use Bernard Radvaner’s term.30 Liberating the Man of Sorrows from its established “iconic” schema was part of this effort; also renegotiated, as we will see presently, was the passage from narrative back to icon. In the image type known variously as Christus in der Rast (Christ in Repose) and Christus im Elend (Christ in Misery or Distress), Jesus is portrayed during a suspended interval prior to the Passion’s climax; seated upon the Cross, he appears in a state of sorrowful dereliction while action swirls around him. Artists might alternately perch him in solitude upon the “cold stone” of Golgotha, a prisoner silently awaiting execution, bound with ropes at the wrists and ankles.31 Both formulas, which find liturgical parallels in texts such as the “Dies irae” of the Requiem Mass, are expressive of the tendency within late medieval mysticism to visualize moments of calm between the Passion’s crest of violent action and mark them out as occasions for contemplating the deep significance of Christ’s sufferings.32 Drawing metaphorical depth from the formulas’ interventional connections to other seated Christ themes—the Crowning with Thorns and the Mocking of Christ—the genre has been likened by iconographers to the “timeless” Man of Sorrows for its capacity to condense the whole of the Passion. Passion narrative tradition and Passion portrait innovation thus converge on a holistic image of the seated sufferer that is at once abject and poetic. Were the new forms adaptations to certain new functional requirements? Did new practices emerge in response to iconographic and formal novelty?

Revisiting a few well-known examples will help pry open these problems anew. Painters for their part understood that the portrayal of the derelictio Christi could succeed amidst the scenographic hustle and bustle of Calvary or in the interstices of the Passion
drama, with extras momentarily off-camera. By the time Hans Holbein the Elder produced his version for the so-called Graue Passion, a series of twelve panels from a dismembered altarpiece dated ca. 1495-1500 (Fig. 13), both conceptions were widespread; the idea of freezing the Passion's cinematic progress here, just before the torturers begin their bloody work of affixing body to cross, had already been established in northern German panel painting for two full generations. Yet Holbein's version, a relief-like picture cast in somber tones like some kind of mortuary decor, is particularly affecting. In it we find Christ sitting upon the Cross, pausing in mournful anticipation of the Passion's climax. While several executioners attend to the technical prerequisites of the crucifixion, the unbound prisoner, raising his hand to his chin, becomes sport for others, in particular a malevolent bearded Jew who thrusts a cursing gesture—the so-called mano jica, the medieval equivalent of our raised middle finger—at the holy face. At once forlorn and serene, tormented and passive before the abuse, Christ exemplifies patience. In perfect obedience to the will of the Father, silent like a lamb before its shearer in the words of Isaiah 53:7 (“quasi agnus coram tondente obnutescet”), he submits to whatever comes next.

Holbein undoubtedly knew that sculptors of the preceding generation, first in northern Germany then in the imperial south, had pressed the logic of Christ's contemplative isolation to its starkest realization: independent or semi-independent figures, carved nearly in the round. On its own, such a format created an entirely new object for Christian meditation, and a new subject as well. Now that the visual field has been evacuated of everything extraneous to it, the beholder's attention can fix exclusively on the very thing that mirrors it: Christ's own meditations on the Passion. In other words, where the seated Christ is condemned to a solitary contemplation on Golgotha, the subject of meditation crosses imperceptibly from a known genre—the narrative excerpt, the "devotional close-up" compellingly described by Sixton Ringbom—into something unfamiliar and "undetermined": it becomes something like the emblem of a cognition that mirrors our own, unfolding in real time, perhaps even in response to ours. Not a stilled action but an active stillness, form now figures the beholder's properly inward attitude toward the Passion and models the self-examination essential to it. The devotional-philosophical attitude proper to this new reflexive-functional form of the seated Christ I would like to call vigilant repose.

Oldest among surviving examples of this theme is a wooden figure today in the Cathedral of Braunschweig, part of a tableau that includes a totemic 'Passion column' adorned by the Veronica and the arns Christi and topped by St. Peter's Cock, the whole dated on dendrochronological grounds to about 1460 (Fig. 14). Lonely and despondent, the arm resting on one tensed leg, the torso hunched, and the rest of the body slackened in exhaustion, this Christ is just barely able to shoulder the scourge and the birch. His face expresses neither physical agony nor mental anguish; he is carried away by neither fear nor sorrow; rather, he appears lost in tranquil reflection while a storm of forces, a violence to which he must soon submit again, gathers around him. Not only the look on his face but the stereotyped support of his sunken head in his hand—already by this time a conventionalized sign of interiority—convinces us that Christ has become a model of that tragic-poetic absorption that ancient, medieval, and modern beholders would recognize as melancholic.
Early in the sixteenth century ambitious German painters and sculptors refined and further modernized the "melancholic" type of Christ in Repose into independent works of art, yielding some of its most powerful conceptions. A masterfully carved limewood figure at present in Berlin (Fig. 15), its arresting corporality dramatized by a baroque polychromy, is one of two known versions of the theme associated with Hans Leinberger of Landshut (active ca. 1510–30). Leinberger offers us a Christ of heroically built whose delicate, and somewhat undersized, head presses down through a rigid diagonal column composed of forearm and lower leg, the whole powerfully planted in the ground by a massive foot with almost amphibious, splayed toes. For all its awesome monumentality, however, the figure measures a mere 75 cm in height, suggesting an original placement in a small niche (the figure’s back is cut away to accommodate this). Likewise conceived as a complete and self-sufficient work, in all likelihood for an educated patron with humanist inclinations, is the large chalk drawing Swiss artist Urs Graf made late in his career, and which is now in Basel (Fig. 16). In place of the calligraphic bravura characteristic of the greater share of his 180 preserved drawings, Graf here works his materials across the muscular contours and projecting joints of the body—all of them smooth and clean, unharmed—to achieve a luminous, painterly finish. Provocatively, the artist eschews both the tragic downcast eyes and the distant pensiveness of the sculptural tradition. From under an explosive, quill-like tangle of thorns Christ confronts us with a mesmerizing glare that seems to come from the right eye alone, propped up and locked on its target by the powerfully cramped left hand, whose upward pressure also distorts the features of his face, producing a downturned mouth that seems to snarl as it tries to speak.

Iconographers grant the theme of Christ in Repose a privileged metaphoric fungibility—and for this reason it has emerged as a prime occasion for intervisual thinking and symbolic interpretation. A fair consensus points to the figure of Job suffering on the dung heap, naked but for his loincloth, as the key biblical prototype behind the conception. But in excavating the sese Chresti theme’s typological and allegorical strata, scholars have exposed other likely models: David the psalmist’s entreaties to God for guidance and peace; the German Minnesänger’s plaintive meditations on justice; Jeremiah’s dolorous cry for Israel’s repentance (Lamentations 1:12); Adam’s sorrowful meditations on the Expulsion; even Aeschylus writing and philosophizing in the open air. Few other iconographic themes have so illuminated what F. P. Pickering called “the dangers and delights of associative thinking about pictures,” nor proven, as he also remarked, how infrequently those dangers curb our rampant exegetical enthusiasm. Furthermore, all this splendid iconographical research has somehow only reinforced our collective certainty that the theme is, in some sense or another, an Andachtsbild in the classic sense defined by Panofsky: an image styled for “contemplative immersion” (kontemplative Versenkung), a work whose visible form invites an affective, subjective response from the beholder (and then harnesses that response to the mystical goal of union with God). Recognizing the evocative power of Christ’s absorbing inwardness, scholarship has, by and large, persisted in describing Christ in Repose as the outgrowth of a Passion mysticism whose Franciscan, Carthusian, and Dominican sources and inspirations are well-known.
Fig. 15. Hans Leinberger, Christ in Distress; Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Skulpturensammlung, inv. 8347. (Photo: pbk Berlin / Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Berlin / Joerg P. Anders / Art Resource, NY.)

Fig. 16. Urs Graf, Christ in Distress. Black chalk heightened with white, 45 x 35 cm, signed with monogram and dated; Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, U.III.76. (Photo: Kunstmuseum Basel, Martin P. Bühlcr.)
Rather than rely on the *Andachtsbild* model for an understanding of the image, I propose we recast the image as a *Meditationsbild* and restate its functional form within that emergent Christian philosophical culture that first penetrated Renaissance ethics in the later fourteenth century and then made gradual inroads among educated urban elites in northern Europe in the course of the following century. William J. Bouwsma regards this tendency toward a revaluation of Hellenistic and Roman Stoicism as so significant that he christened it, alongside Augustinianism, one of the “two faces of Renaissance humanism.” By juxtaposing the premises and principles of this revaluation with the iconographic developments we have been describing, I believe we can grasp a special therapeutic potential for art that, at first glance, may look similar to the mystic’s goal of purifying the human soul in preparation for union with its Creator but in fact differs dramatically from it. The literary touchstones of this emerging philosophical culture are well-known: Petrarch’s *De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae* (*On the Remedy of Two Kinds of Fortune; ca. 1370*), the immensely popular *Narrenschiff* (*Ship of Fools; 1494*) by Sebastian Brant, and Erasmus of Rotterdam’s beloved *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (*Handbook of the Christian Knight; 1503*), to name only the most widely read. Illustrated here is an emblematic image from that tradition, the *Wheel of Fortune* by Hans Weiditz, who was once known only as the “Petrarch Master” for his work on the 1532 German edition *De Remediis*, for which the woodcut version of this drawing, now in the British Museum, served as the frontispiece (Fig. 17). Guided in large part by a renewed Christian valuation of Hellenistic and Roman Stoicism, these authors promoted the view that reason and the rational application of rules of the mind would guide the soul toward perfection. Calming the passions had to be the first step. As a practical craft, philosophy meant forging weapons to battle down the turbulent spirits that left the mind vulnerable to attack. Erasmus says as much in his conclusion to the *Enchiridion*, where he clarifies his purpose in writing about Christian virtue as a kind of inner training:

This only was my desire...to show a certain manner and craft of a new kind of war, how one might arm oneself against the evils of the old life burgeoning forth again and springing afresh. Therefore, as we have done in one or two things [here in this treatise] so must you do...in everything, one by one: but most of all in the things wherein you perceive yourself to be stirred or instigated...whether it be through vice of nature, custom, or evil upbringing...[Against] these things some certain decrees must be written in the tablets of your mind, and they must be renewed now and then, lest they should fail or be forgotten through disuse, as against the vices of backbiting, filthy speaking, envy, guile, and other [such vices]: these are the only enemies of Christ’s soldiers, against whose assault the mind must be armed long beforehand with prayer, with noble sayings of wise men, with the doctrine of Holy Scripture, with example of devout and holy men, and specially [that] of Christ. 

Erasmus spent the rest of his career as a reformer elaborating what he set down in the *Enchiridion*. With a proper conversion to reason, he argued, Christians could concentrate wholly on calming the storm of the passions that led to confusion and discord, an inner
training that rendered the soul invulnerable to fortune's arrows, a program of "ethical-spiritual exercise" that aimed at the complete "metamorphosis of [the] personality." 

Albrecht Dürer's melancholic Man of Sorrows in Karlsruhe, a small devotional panel evidently made during the young painter's sojourn in Basel and Strasbourg (1492-94), where he found work and contacts among humanist publishers, offers a compelling test for this effort to reconstitute the Imago pietatis within a renewing tradition of spiritual-ethical training (Fig. 18). Tear-swollen eyes, set deeply in dark sockets ringed with weariness, look out at us from beneath a blood-drizzled brow. Freighted with its garland of twisted thorns, Christ's head weighs down heavily on the flexed right hand, whose rent flesh puckers at the site of the nail wound, eerily echoing the man's pursed lips. The body's sole support comes, it seems, from the bent right knee, anchored invisibly behind the marble parapet (possibly meant to stand for the edge of the sepulcher). This stony threshold is shown from above, to foster the illusion of a presence emerging from a visionary "no place" into the space we occupy. That empty silent space, a blue ether charged with faint radiance, seems torn open at the threshold between two realities, a screen consubstantial with the panel's worked gilded surface. Counterposed to the body's tension on the right, the left arm falls slack across the stony threshold—a canonical motif of lifelessness recommended by Alberti in Della pittura (on the basis of the Meleager reliefs, so admirable because in the dead man carried in procession "there is no member that does not seem completely lifeless"). In the Karlsruhe panel such motifs take their place within a surplus of signs clearly calibrated "to move the soul of the spectator."

Like the Christ in Repose theme, Dürer's melancholic Christ is typologically infused with the symbolism of Job's faithful patience in suffering. But Dürer's composition also troubles the standard iconographic definitions on which Christ in Repose rests: by virtue of the visibility of the stigmata, he is simultaneously the dead Christ and the living Imago pietatis; whatever tortures he contemplates, he also suffers in the present. Several scholars have therefore seen in the figure a kind of innovative fusion of the Imago pietatis and Christ in Repose. Yet Dürer was not the first to invest the Imago pietatis with the attributes of melancholic inwardness—which here include aspects of his own face—or if we view this moment of generic "fusion" from another angle, to rework the iconography of Christ in Repose along such lines. Working with a similarly limited color palette, the unknown Alsatian painter responsible for the beautiful panel now in Boston transports the Man of Sorrows back to the hill of Golgotha, pictured as a verdant mound in a visionary no place, and casts him in the role of the melancholy thinker (Fig. 19). Although this is a full-length figure in a scenic setting, it shares one remarkable feature with its earliest bust-length counterparts, from the Byzantine Akra tapeinosis to its earliest western adaptations—that is, the uncrowned head. This makes the figure, in a sense, the purest example of a fusion across the icon-narrative divide that separates, in theory at least, the Man of Sorrows from Christ in Repose.

Dürer's Karlsruhe panel carries off this fusion in a different way, however, one that will repay closer attention as we near this essay's conclusion. Both the Karlsruhe and Boston panels reflect the beholder's self-activity in provocative ways, and both could therefore be said to culminate a devotional tradition that, in Joseph Koerner's words, "emphasized the

Fig. 18. Albrecht Dürer, Man of Sorrows. Oil on fir panel, 30.1 x 18.8 cm; Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle, inv. 2183. (Photo: Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe.)
Fig. 19. Man of Sorrows in Repose. Oil on panel, 69.2 x 39.4 cm, Alsatian; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 56.262. (Photo: © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)

self's properly inward response to the entire Passion." But Dürr's panel would seem to go beyond this, staking a different kind of claim to mirror the soul's painful passage from distress to tranquility. This claim is lodged, on the one hand, in the immediacy of the dialogue instigated by the figure's penetrating gaze and, on the other, in the mirroring operation the performance of this dialogue entails. The degree to which Dürr has personalized the *Imago pietatis* through reflective resemblance is less at issue than the open potential any such mirroring operation—which one recent writer describes as a "splitting" of the self into viewing subject and viewed object—has to instigate a breakdown of fixed subject positions for the beholder. Here that mirroring works as both risk and opportunity for the beholder and I contend that for this reason it promises a better kind of therapy.

To see this, consider two opposing subject positions from which dialogue can proceed. The first is governed by the codes of compassionate identification that have constituted something of an unbroken tradition in Christian devotional art since the mid-thirteenth century. Approaching the panel with this hermeneutic, we beholders see the image through the eyes of a lover who is transfixed and transformed by the sorrowful gaze of a beloved (to paraphrase the famous Bonaventuran formula). "I am You," we hear ourselves saying, hopefully, prayerfully, penitently. A different dialogue ensues, however, when the same image is approached as a *Meditationsbild* styled to reflect the embattled condition of the soul as it withstands the turbulences of the world. Now Christ in Repose is not only a model for emulation or penitential identification but a reflexive symbol of the soul's distress—its stoic struggle, as it were, for peace amid the tempests brought by fortune and the disorder of the passions. "I am You" is again spoken, but now the words are spoken by Christ himself—or, we should say, by the figuration Christ has become—as his gaze penetrates the soul of the beholder. The mystic's anagogical ascent to a higher realm is here replaced by something like the philosopher's dialogical excavation of the soul's rooted disturbances, a therapy of the passions aimed at both consolation and repair. Such was, after all, the prime benefit of philosophy, according to Dürr's close friend Willibald Pirckheimer, who explained (with Cicero in mind) that philosophy "heals souls, dispels needless care, and banishes all fear." From the Karlsruhe panel's flickering space of solitude—an evocation of the tomb, a place of stillness where the passions are quieted—Christ counsels us in a wisdom, a constancy of mind, and a tranquility that consoles and heals; we consent to enter this place of repose beside him, endure fortune girded by his example, and offer consolation in return.

To review: under the *Andachtsbild* paradigm the image of Christ in Repose functions as a vehicle for compassionate identification, contemplation of the Passion's mysteries, and eventually a catharsis of the religious ego—steps along the mystic's vertical path toward the *visio Dei*, toward the soul's union with the divine. Under what I am calling the *Meditationsbild* model, the image of Christ's melancholy distress appears by contrast as a speculative reflection of the soul's inner strife and an instrument for its restoration and repair. Spiritual regeneration is now staked upon the cultivation of practical wisdom for living in the world, in reason's prescriptions for coping with adversity, and the discovery of ethical pathways in a world whose myriad disturbances—everything from the threats of war and plague down to the pettiest human follies and annoyances of urban life—afflicted the soul like so many fists, clubs, whips, and chains in the hands of the wicked. In the Karlsruhe panel, upon
the nebulous gold ground that surrounds Christ—a threshold that acts like a projection screen for the agitated mind—Dürer thematizes wisdom’s afflictions: in delicately pounced outlines we make out the form of an owl directly above the head of Christ, perched upon an arbor grown with thistle-like flowers of the genus Eryngium (the same plant held by the journeyman painter in the self-portrait dated 1493, now in Paris).33 Wings spread and head feathers bristling in fright, the owl (a nighttime creature) is being attacked by smaller (daytime) birds, an assault that, for its learned audience, surely evoked Christ’s persecution at the Passion and his loneliness in the tomb (cf. Psalm 102:6: “I am like a desert owl of the wilderness, like an owl of the waste places”).34 Meanwhile, other visual devices similarly capable of reflecting the subject’s self-activity extend beyond the figurative imagery of the panel’s obverse. On the reverse the artist offers up a dazzling trompe l’oeil section of cut agate, a symbolic evocation of the tomb and, according to some authors, the theme of the contemptus mundi.35 Whatever artistic ambitions Dürer might be declaring in this haunting flow of abstract color, we might productively think of it as another kind of space for vigilant repose, a tranquil and otherworldly formlessness that, complementing the instrumentality of the mirror, soothes the soul after its painful labor of self-examination.

Dürer worked through the protean possibilities of the Man of Sorrows and the Dead Christ throughout his career, and it was surely Dürer who succeeded in giving the boldest visual expression to the reflexive mode of ethical-spiritual therapy these images made possible. I speak—here only in closing—of the self-portrait the painter signed and dated 1522, six years before his death, a drawing once in the Bremen Kunsthalle but displaced and presumed lost during the Second World War (Fig. 20). Seeing this work as a kind of ascetic counterpart to the glorious christomorphy of the Munich self-portrait of 1500, Panofsky proclaimed it “a supreme symbol of the likeness of man unto God”; and it is indeed tempting to see it as a meditation on the suffering solidarity of God and man in a fallen world, the proclamation of a shared experience of pain that linked the artist—so prone to extravagant worries about his bodily health—to the Schmerzenmann.36 Might it be, however, that instead of a fantasy of fusion—the folding and merging that comes with compassionate identification—Dürer’s ultimate experiment with the septio Christi theme is better understood as an ethical exercise in fission: an insistence on the self-splitting and self-distancing required for the examination of conscience? “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith,” exhorts Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:5, “Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” Anyone could proclaim the gospel, as Dürer knew acutely in 1522, and already numerous voices were doing so, to the detriment of Christian unity. For peace to descend between Christians, let alone between God and man, something different was needed, a different kind of penitential practice: not the feverish ascent of the mystic toward the godhead, and certainly not the embrace of dead “externals” (adiaphora) in rite and cult, but a therapeutics of the soul—a conversion to reason, a vigilant attention to oneself, and the self-knowledge that comes from spiritual exercise, constantly renewed as the indispensable core of the Christian life. Pronoche was the name Stoicism gave this careful attention to conscience, considering it the fundamental philosophical attitude.37 We need not decide if Dürer had Epictetus, Seneca, or Marcus Aurelius in his library, or if he pondered their

Fig. 20. Albrecht Dürer, Self-Portrait as Man of Sorrows. Metal pen drawing; formerly in the Bremen Kunsthalle. (Photo: Erwin Panofsky, The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955], frontispiece.)
wisdom with his friend Pirckheimer. As a chill wind blows over the sitter’s shoulder in the Bremen drawing, we can see for ourselves how he slowly, reluctantly, turns to face it. With scourage and rod at the ready but without guarantees, the sufferer girds himself for the task that defines him as a man created in God’s image, condemned to live in a fallen world: to quiet the passions and battle melancholy, to guide the will toward reason, and to endure fortune—to live in a state of vigilant repose.

NOTES

1. This embattled distinction is only one of the inescapable fundaments of the field presented in Erwin Panofsky’s classic exercise in Typengeschichte, “Imago Pictatis: Ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des Schmerzensmannes und der ‘Maria Mediatricis,’” in Postskript für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstag, ed. H. W. van Lawick, E. A. Seemann, 1927, 261–308. Research assistance for portions of this article was provided by Alexandre Levin; unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.


5. Unrealized in Burchard’s lifetime, the moves in this direction can be glimpsed in “Das Altarbild,” published as one of three extended essays in the volume Jacob Burchardt, Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte von Italien (Basel: G. F. Lendof, 1898), 1–141.


13. Romuald Bayerreiss, Pius X: Das Schmerzensmannbild und sein Einfluss auf die mittelalterliche Frömigkeit (Munich: Widmann, 1931), lists ten places where the Image pictatis is associated with host shrines, but some of these involve postmedieval figures (83n176).


16. Deggendorf has long been notorious among Germany’s Eucharistic shrines as the site of a brutal anti-Jewish massacre in 1338, a long-standing blood-host cult, and an annual pilgrimage festival featuring anti-Semitic plays; those shameful aspects of its history have to remain in brackets here.Indispensable is Manfred Eder, Die Deggendorfer Gnade: Entstehung und Entwicklung einer Heiligenverehrung im Kontext von Theologie und Geschichte (Deggendorf: Stadt Deggendorf, 1992); and I profile the case in Barham, Pilgrimage and Pogrom, 33–37.

17. Staatsarchiv Landshut, Zivilakten Rep. 97d, F. 674, Nr. 83, an illustrated “Aktevorgang” addressed to Riepl’s superior in Straubing, the Vicedominius Ferdinand von Khuen-Belasy (1604–18). Exactly how long prior to 1611 the Man of Sorrows figure seen in Riepl’s drawing stood is uncertain. In the Deggendorf Grabkirche is a question the foremost scholar of the pilgrimage does not attempt to answer; see Eder, Die ‘Deggendorfer Gnade,’ with the additional drawings from the Riepl correspondence (370–78).


19. On this important issue, see Barham, Pilgrimage and Pogrom, 265–83.


21. Illustrated here is a bronze signed and dated 1710 by Paolo Tremignon, though its original provenance is unknown; my thanks to Catherine Puglisi and William Burcham for this information. An example of an alms box associated with the Eetu Homo can be found against a nave pier facing the north aisle at SanktAntonio, Padua.


23. Puglisi and Barcham, “Bernardino da Feltre,” 53; and for the staging of Bernardino’s public event, coordinated with the bishop of Padua in 1491, see 53–56.


37. 45 x 35 cm, black chalk heightened with white, signed with Graff’s PG monogram and dated (Basel, Kunfterstichkabinett, U.III.76). Sometime in the 1560s the drawing, along with numerous others by Graff, was acquired for the collection of the Basel jurist Basilius Amerbach (1533–91), though it remains unclear whether it resided earlier with another patron or with the artist himself. For catalog information, see *Schongauer to Holbein: Master Drawings from Basel and Berlin*, exhibition catalog (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1999), no. 149; and Grünwold und seine Zeit: Große Landenausstellung Baden-Württemberg, ed. Dietmar Lüdi, Jessica Mack-Andrick, and Astrid Reuter, exhibition catalog (Karlsruhe: Staatliche Kunsthalle, 2007), no. 136.


41. Recent work on early modern wisdom books and the allegorization of the Christian "pilgrimage of life" tops in early modern genre painting sets the stage for the approach taken in this section of the present essay. Especially noteworthy in this rich vein of scholarship are: Reinert L. Falkenburg, *Joachim Patinir: Landscape as an Image of the Pilgrimage of Life* (Amsterdam, 1988); Reinert L. Falkenburg, "Speculative Imagery in Petrarch’s Von der Arzney der Gluck (1532)," in *Petrarch and His Readers in the Renaissance*, ed. Karl A. E. Eenkel and Jan Papy (Boston: Brill, 2006), 171–92; and Leopoldine von Hengendorf Prosperetti, *Landscape and Philosophy in the Art of Jan Brueghel the Elder* (1568–1625) (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009). Especially productive for my own thinking has been Prosperetti’s characterization of several early modern genres of "ethical art" as an extension and transformation of the therapeutic impulse behind medieval devotional imagery.


44. This phrase is from Buddha, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 82.

45. Oil on fir panel, 30.1 x 18.8 cm; Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, inv. 2183 (acquired in 1941). For essentials: *Christus und Maria: Auseinandersetzungen christlicher Gemälde der Spätgotik und Frührenaissance aus der Karlsruher Kunstsammlung*, ed. Ines Dresel, Dietmar Lüdi, and Horst Vey, exhibition catalog.
From Book to Song: Texts Accompanying the Man of Sorrows in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

Susan Boynton

The verbal contexts for the image of the Dead Christ formed an important component of its received meaning for medieval viewers and readers. While most of this volume focuses on the Man of Sorrows as an autonomous image in panel painting and other media, the sheer variety of texts he illustrates in manuscripts signals the polyvalence of the figure as a sign and reaffirms its centrality to the religious practices of the late Middle Ages. Before turning to specific instances of texts accompanying the Dead Christ, let us consider the nature of their interrelationships. One question that should be asked is how, exactly, the images are connected to their texts, whether as illustrations or as parallel forms of expression. I favor the term “accompaniment,” which implies nothing more than the physical juxtaposition of text and image; viewer and reader determine the meaning of the pairing and the balance between the two media. Thus the reception of the image and text together constitutes a cognitive response in which the text plays a far more important role than as an accessory to the illustration. As Flora Lewis states, “the texts provide the words through which devotion speaks, the images through which the objects of devotion are visualized, and thus they play an affective as well as reflective role.”

While particular combinations of text and image are conventional in the manuscript tradition, each image is effectively also in conversation with other images that may relate less well to the text at hand. As Bernhard Ridderbos points out, “different versions of the Man of Sorrows do not represent theological concepts directly but rather refer to existing representations, between which a certain tension results as properties have been selected from them.” A similarly creative tension can emerge between the Imago pietatis and the texts it illustrates, for neither of the two components was originally intended to be accompanied by the other. Consequently, in many cases the connection between the Dead Christ and his accompanying texts demands explanation, for which reason we turn first to the manuscript context.

The texts considered in this study occur in books of hours and prayer collections, but also appear in liturgical books, such as missals and graduals, intended for the use of the clergy. Even more numerous are the types of texts illustrated by the Dead Christ: many are “devotional” offices such as the short Hours of the Cross, but the image also accompanies...