

MEDIUM ÆVUM

VOL. LXXXVIII, No. 1

2019

WOUNDING, SEALING, AND KISSING: BRIDAL IMAGERY AND THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

Inclinans enim caput in cruce quasi dilecte sue dicere videtur: ‘O dilecta mea, quae tociens 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.’ ... Extendens enim brachia nobis, insinuat quod amplexus nostros ipse desideret.

(Inclining his head on the cross, [Christ] 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 kisses me with the kiss of his mouth’ (Cant i.1), ‘I am ready, I incline my head, I offer my mouth to kiss [you] however many times it pleases.’ ... Extending his arms to us, he shows that he himself desires our embraces.)¹

In this passage from the so-called *Meditatio de passione Christi* probably written by a Cistercian in the second half of the twelfth century, the static posture of Christ is abandoned, he becomes animated, and life is given to the body of the dead Christ and to its image. The dialogue of the Song of Songs is used as a script through which Christ reciprocates the devotee’s desire for mystical union. The quotation combines two elements that were common in late medieval devotional culture. First of all, imagery of the passion is mixed with elements of bridal mysticism, in which Christ is presented as the divine bridegroom of the human soul. Secondly, the text animates the static posture of the dead Christ, describing it in accordance with the visual culture of the time, and making use of the vocabulary of the Song. While the animation of images of Christ has been studied before,² this article considers the role of Song of Songs imagery in mystical and visionary interactions with images.

The mystical interpretation of the Song of Songs gained popularity in the twelfth century under the influence of the Cistercian abbot and mystic Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153).³ In his *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* he presents the biblical love dialogue as a mystical conversation between the soul and Christ, using the sensual and emotional vocabulary of the Song to speak about mystical experience. This is often seen as the beginning of bridal mysticism, closely linked with affective piety, in which devotion to the human and suffering Christ was central. The origin of affective piety is associated with the eleventh-century spiritual writings of authors such as Anselm and John of Fécamp, while the Cistercians from the twelfth century and the Franciscans from the thirteenth century onward were active promoters of this devotion to the human Christ.⁴ The passage from the *Meditatio de passione Christi* quoted above combines these two traditions by presenting Jesus both as bridegroom and as suffering man.

It can be shown that the vocabulary of the Song of Songs was used not only to express mystical union with Christ, but also to animate images of Christ. Many of the examples that will follow portray Christ as a suffering bridegroom, combining imagery of the passion with the Song of Songs. While animation of the crucified Christ employing the vocabulary of the Canticle was common in late medieval devotional culture, this article will show that earlier sources, from the twelfth century onward, were formative for this practice. Several scholars have pointed out the continuity of spiritual culture between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.⁵ An exploration of the use of bridal imagery confirms this continuity, but it must take into account the dynamics of the period, especially with regard to visual culture.

The focus of this article is on three verses from the Song of Songs that were used in medieval sources to shape and describe the relation between the viewer and the image of the crucified Christ in bodily terms:

Osculetur me osculo oris sui.

Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth. (Cant i.1)⁶

Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa; vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum, et in uno crine colli tui

Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of thy neck. (Cant iv.9)

Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum

Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm. (Cant viii.6)

The medieval interpretation of these verses, I argue, is crucial to understanding the way devotees looked at images in the late medieval period. Once it had been successfully incorporated into the immensely popular passion piety, the Song of Songs provided an embodied ‘bridal mode of looking’ at the image of

the suffering Christ, involving a strong desire that was reciprocated through the animation of Christ's image.

Mutual desire and the senses

An important theme in the interaction between devotees and Christ is the reciprocity of desire. In their striving for mystical union it was important for mystics to know that it was not only they who desired this union, but that it was God's will too. This emphasis on the will and desire can be understood in the context of the Augustinian tradition of mysticism that was current in the twelfth century. Augustinian mysticism is characterized by a certain reserve when it comes to the possibilities of union.⁷ In the loving union with God, both parties remain separate substances, and the union is a 'union of wills'. Because of this emphasis on the will mutual desire is crucial in attaining mystical union.

The reciprocity of desire was often expressed in sensory terms, especially in relation to images. The mutual kiss and mutual embrace from the Song of Songs were the ultimate goal. A hierarchy of the senses could be used to describe an increasing proximity to God, from distant seeing to intimate touch.⁸ Sight and tactility were seen as the most extreme senses on the spectrum. Touch was often presented as the lowest of the senses, connected to the flesh, but also as the highest sense, indicating a high degree of proximity. Touch was positively connected to the will because, as Jacqueline Jung put it, 'an active touch grasped only what it wanted'.⁹ Although sight and touch were in some regards seen as opposites, they were also strongly intertwined. In *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages*, Suzannah Biernoff explores 'the dynamic, reciprocal nature of medieval vision, ... simultaneously receptive, passive, vulnerable to sensations; and active: roaming, grasping or piercing its objects'.¹⁰ This embodied, reciprocal vision, in which rays go out of and into the eye, is grounded in the body and in tactility.

Medieval visual theology can help us understand the relation between looking at material and mental images, for example in visions. Augustine distinguished between three different types of vision: *visio corporalis*, *visio spiritualis*, and *visio intellectualis*. The former two, bodily vision and that of the imagination and memory, are incapable of perceiving God. The intellect, the highest faculty of the rational soul, is an image of God and thus capable of perceiving imageless divine truth. Augustine's three types of vision were influential throughout the medieval period. Similar ideas were developed in texts concerned with bridal mysticism, such as the Daughter Zion tradition, discussed by Annette Volting.¹¹ This tradition consists of allegorical narratives rooted in the Old Testament. Closely connected to the mystical reading of the Song of Songs, the Daughter is on a quest for a bridegroom, culminating in the firing of an arrow into Christ's heart, inspired by verse iv.9 of the Canticle. As Volting shows, the

Daughter Zion allegory has been associated with *speculatio* or mediated vision ever since Origen (d. c.253).¹² In the fourteenth-century *Von der tochter Syon*, also known as the 'Alemannic Daughter Zion', the Daughter declares that her name is *Speculatio*, while her goal is to achieve a spiritual transformation that will allow her unmediated vision.¹³ The text describes three stages of devotion: meditation, speculation, and imageless contemplation: 'got sehe ane miteli, daz heiz contemplieren' ('seeing God unmediated, that is called contemplation').¹⁴ The theories of Augustine and the 'Alemannic Daughter Zion' allot material and visionary images only a limited role in mystical union; the final stage of contemplation is imageless. In practice images played a more important role than this, as we will see.¹⁵ The Daughter Zion tradition leads us on to the first type of imagery to be discussed here: the wounded heart.

The wounded heart

In verse iv.9 of the Canticle it is the bridegroom who is wounded by his bride, but medieval authors also reversed the relationship and considered the human soul or heart to have been wounded by love as well. To understand this reversal of the wounded subject, it is necessary to examine the concept of *compunctio cordis* or *compunctio animi* (compunction or piercing of the heart or soul). Originally a medical term implying acute physical pain, in the Christian spiritual tradition *compunctio* came to be an eschatological concept related to penance. According to Gregory the Great (d. 604), there are two related types of *compunctio*: compunction of fear and compunction of love.¹⁶ Compunction of fear is the stinging realization of sin and the related prospect of hell, while compunction of love, following on penance, is the assurance of God's forgiveness and the longing for heavenly joy. Jean Leclercq describes Gregory's notion of compunction as 'an act of God in us, an act by which God awakens us, a shock, a blow, a "sting", or a sort of burn. God goads us as if with a spear.'¹⁷ Medieval spiritual authors often preserve this connection with physical pain.

In the later medieval period the understanding of compunction turns away from eschatology and focuses more on the personal relation between the devotee and God.¹⁸ For the compunction of fear this means sorrow for one's own sins for which Christ has suffered, and for the compunction of love it means a desire for God's love and for mystical union. Sandra McEntire sees the cause of this shift in affective piety: 'the widely increasing devotion to the sufferings of Christ which evolved into meditations and imaginative recreations of the Passion with the individual an active participant.'¹⁹ The parallel between compunction and Christ's wounds was already drawn by Anselm (d. 1109) in his well-known 'Prayer to Christ'.²⁰ He describes the various violations of Christ's body and urges the soul to be pierced in return: 'Cur, o anima mea, te praesentem non transfixit gladius

doloris acutissimi, cum ferre non posses vulnerari lancea latus tui salvatori?’ (‘Why, O my soul, were you not there to be pierced by a sword of bitter sorrow, when you could not bear the piercing of the side of your Saviour with a lance?’)²¹ This implies a reciprocal action: Christ being wounded on the cross enables the devotee’s soul to be pierced with compunction through meditation on the passion.

The tradition of bridal mysticism should also be taken into account when we consider the changing meaning of compunction. In Bernard of Clairvaux’s *Sermones* the wounding of the heart mentioned in verse iv.9 of the Song is connected with Mary’s sorrow for her suffering son:

Est etiam sagitta electa amor Christi, quae Mariae animam non modo confixit, sed etiam pertransiuit, ut nullam in pectore virginali particulam vacuum amore relinqueret. ... Et illa quidem in tota se grande et suave amoris vulnus accepit: ego vero me felicem putaverim, si summa saltem quasi cuspidem huius gladii pungi interdum me sensero, ut vel modico accepto amoris vulnere, dicat etiam anima mea: Vulnerata caritate ego sum.

(Also, Christ’s love is his chosen arrow, which not only pierced Mary’s soul but penetrated it, so that not even the tiniest spot within her virginal breast was untouched by love. ... In the process she experienced through her whole being a wound of love that was mighty and sweet; and I would reckon myself happy if at rare moments I felt at least the prick of the point of that sword, so that even if only having received love’s slightest wound, I could still say: ‘I am wounded by love.’)²²

In this passage it becomes evident that not only the bridegroom, but also the devotee wishes to be wounded, in a process reminiscent of compunction. This leads to the question whether the wounding of the heart should always be seen as an expression of one-sided desire, or whether this can also be a reciprocal process experienced by the bridegroom and bride – Christ and the soul – wounding and desiring each other. While Bernard does not use this imagery in a reciprocal way, Gilbert of Hoyland, who wrote a continuation of Bernard’s unfinished sermons, does. In his comments on verse iv.9 of the Song he explains this verse as mutual wounding of desire between the soul and Christ. Christ’s love for the soul came first, so the soul is indebted to love him in return. While Christ wounds the soul with compunction, the soul is encouraged to respond: ‘puri aspectus in illum spicula vibra: reputa illum quasi signum positum ad tales sagittas. Tales favorabiliter excipit, quia tales jacit.’ (‘aim at him the arrows of a pure gaze; regard him as a target set up for such arrows. Such he welcomes with favour, for such are the arrows he fires.’)²³

Bernard’s sermons are also of interest to the present study because of the connection that the Cistercian abbot makes between wounding and the act of looking. This relation is already present in the biblical text of the Canticle, where the bride has wounded the groom with her eye. In his sixty-first sermon Bernard discusses verse ii.14: ‘Columba mea, in foraminibus petrae, in caverna

maceriae' ('My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall'). He explains that these clefts are the wounds of Christ, who is the rock. The clefts are a safe space, where the weak can seek refuge. Moreover, through the clefts or wounds God's mercy can be received. Bernard describes this in terms of gazing: 'At clavis reserans clavus penetrans factus est mihi, ut videam voluntatem Domini. Quidni videam per foramen?' ('But the nail that pierced him has become for me a key unlocking the sight of the Lord's will. Why should I not gaze through the cleft?')²⁴ Bernard proceeds by explaining that through the wounds or clefts Christ's heart is laid open, showing the mystery of loving.

The connection between wounding and looking is also made in the illustrations of the so-called Rothschild Canticles, well known since it was studied in detail by Jeffrey F. Hamburger.²⁵ This manuscript is a florilegium produced around 1300, probably for a Flemish nun.²⁶ It contains Latin excerpts from biblical, theological, and liturgical texts, illustrated with highly innovative and unique images. On fols 18^v and 19^r, we can see several depictions of Christ as heavenly bridegroom, and his spouse, the bride from the Song of Songs (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Christ and the bride in the garden; the bride piercing Christ's side. New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, MS 404, fols 18^v–19^r. c.1300. Photo: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

In the upper frame on fol. 18^v, a joyous meeting is depicted. On the right, the bridegroom joins his bride in a garden, and on the left the two lovers embrace. In the lower frame, the bride is seated, holding a spear and holding back her veil as if to emphasize the act of looking. This image is clearly connected to the illustration on fol. 19^r, where we see Christ as a man of sorrows with his five wounds and the instruments of the passion. He points at his side wound, which according to the Gospel was caused after his death by the soldier Longinus, whose blindness was healed by the touch of Christ's blood. Here, it is not Longinus who has wounded Christ, but the bride.

This scene may seem puzzling at first sight, but some of the excerpts on fol. 17^v provide a starting point for an interpretation. Verse iv.9 of the Song is quoted, alongside Apc iii.20: 'Ecce sto ad ostium, et pulso: si quis audierit vocem meam, et aperuerit mihi januam, intrabo ad illum, et coenabo cum illo, et ipse mecum.' ('Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.') Hamburger sees the bride as the one who knocks on the door to gain access to Christ's heart, striving for mystical union with her divine lover.²⁷ The wounding by the bride is not an act of aggression, but of love and desire, an attempt to enter Christ's heart.

Suzannah Biernoff, however, in her study of medieval embodied sight, has pointed out that in the verse from Revelation cited here it is actually Christ who knocks on the door.²⁸ She argues that Christ asks for access to the bride's heart, and that her eyes serve as points of entry. Christ and the bride are both wounded – the former through the side wound, the latter through the eye – in an exchange that Biernoff characterizes as 'interpenetration and mutual affect'.²⁹ Thus, while in Hamburger's interpretation the bride unilaterally desires union with Christ, Biernoff emphasizes the mutuality of their desire for each other. The mutual exchange between Christ and the bride can serve as a model for the reader-viewer, who can adopt the bride's piercing gaze when looking at the image of Christ on fol. 19^r. The image of Christ belongs to the iconography of the passion, but the intended mode of looking is informed by bridal mysticism.

The sealed heart

In the medieval exegesis and use of verse viii.6 of the Canticle: 'Put me as a seal upon thy heart', the reciprocity of love and desire between the soul and God also plays an important role.³⁰ Interesting in this respect is Baldwin of Ford (d. 1190), an English Cistercian abbot who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1185. In the footsteps of Gilbert of Hoyland he wrote a continuation of Bernard's unfinished sermons, but the text that concerns us here is a short treatise on verse viii.6 of the Song, 'On the Seal of the Love of God'. Baldwin emphasizes that God

loves us and wishes to be loved in return. Therefore he has made a seal with the image of love, and by setting this seal upon our hearts we receive a likeness of his image.³¹ Thus when we desire God, the love is reciprocal, although not equal:

Haec autem dilectio nostra ad Christum quaedam vicissitudo est, quamvis impar dilectionis ipsius quoad nos, et coimaginata similitudo. Ipse enim prior dilexit nos, et per exemplum amoris quod nobis proposuit, factus est nobis signaculum, quo efficiamur conformes imaginis ipsius ... sicut dilecti sumus, sic et eum diligentes.

(The love of ours for Christ is a sort of exchange, even though unequal to his love for us, and a likeness [of his love] stamped with his image. He loved us first, and by the example of that love which he offered to us, he was made a seal for us, which enables us to be conformed to his image ... loving him as we are loved.)³²

Verse viii.6 expresses the mutual desire of the soul and God, which the soul can attain by taking on God's image. Another aspect that is touched upon in Baldwin's treatise is that this verse was, in the medieval spiritual tradition, strongly connected with memory. Baldwin explains that with the words 'Set me as a seal upon your heart' Christ says: 'Ama me, sicut amo te. Habe me in mente tua, in memoria tua, in desiderio tuo, in suspirio tuo, in gemitu et singulte tuo' ('Love me as I love you. Have me in your mind, your memory, your desire, your yearning, your sighing and your sobbing').³³

Seals and wax as metaphors for the memory go back to antiquity, as Mary Carruthers has shown in her study on medieval memory.³⁴ Other writing materials, such as papyrus and later the codex, were used as metaphors for the memory too. Carruthers suggests that the use of these metaphors by medieval authors was encouraged by their basis in both classical sources and Scripture.³⁵ One of those biblical passages is Prov. iii.3, 'Misericordia et veritas te non deserant; circumda eas gutturi tuo, et describe in tabulis cordis tui' ('Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the tablets of thine heart'). The Benedictine spiritual writer John of Fécamp (d. 1079) interpreted this writing on the heart as both the memory of and desire for God: 'Scribe in tabulis cordis mei voluntatem tuam et justificationes tuas, ut te immensae dulcedinis Dominum et praecepta tua semper et ubique habeam prae oculis meis ...: ut sacrificium spiritus contribulati et cordis contriti obortis lacrymis quotidie offeram tibi' ('Write your will and your [divine] justice on the tablets of my heart, so that I may always and everywhere keep my eyes fixed on you, my infinitely sweet Lord, and on your commandments. ... Then I shall daily offer to you amid tears the sacrifice of an afflicted spirit and a contrite heart').³⁶ In this prayer, which is mainly concerned with asking Christ for the grace of tears, John conflates the writing-as-memory metaphor with the notion of *compunctio cordis*.³⁷

Interesting for the present study is the capacity of the wax tablet to refer not only to writing, but also to the imprint of images. Medieval theologians argued

that images were particularly effective in stimulating the memory, because they operate through the sense of sight which is directly linked to the heart, and do not have to be processed by the mind, like words. The French bishop William Durandus (d. 1296), for example, when writing on church decoration, states, following Horace, that images move the mind more powerfully than writing: ‘Per picturam quidem res gesta ante oculos ponitur quasi in presenti generi uideatur, sed per scripturam res gesta quasi per auditum, qui minus animum mouet, ad memoriam revocatur’ (‘An illustration sets events before the eyes, as if they are actually seen, while writing recalls them to memory, as if through hearing, which moves the mind less’).³⁸

The impression of images on the heart and on the memory was not only metaphorical, but could turn into physical action. In his *Exemplar* (the authorized collection of his works), the fourteenth-century Dominican mystic Henry Suso describes how he carved Jesus’s name – the letters IHS – into his chest with a stylus.³⁹ This sign remained over his heart for the rest of his life, and although he kept it hidden according to the *Exemplar*, the images in the famous Strasbourg manuscript show Suso with a bare chest, displaying his ‘tattoo’ (Fig. 2). At the very end of his *Exemplar* Suso tells a related story about St Ignatius of Antioch, who claimed that the name of Jesus was engraved in his heart. After his torturers had killed him, they cut open his heart and saw the name Jesus thrice, in gold letters.⁴⁰

Another relevant episode in the *Exemplar* immediately follows Suso’s self-wounding. After this event he went to the altar in the church, where he spoke to the crucifix:

Eya, herr mine und mins herzen einigú minne, nu luog an mins herzen grossen begirde! Herr, ich enkan noch enmag dich nit fúrbaz in mich gedruken; owe herr, ich bite dich, daz du es volbringest und daz du dich nu fúrbaz in den grund mins herzen drukest und dinen heiligen namen in mich also zeichnest, daz du uss minem herzen niemer me gescheidest.

(My Lord and only Love of my heart, look at the intense desire of my heart. My Lord, I do not know how to press you into me further, nor can I. Alas, Lord, I beg you to finish this by pressing yourself further into the ground of my heart and so draw your holy name onto me that you never again leave my heart.)⁴¹

After Suso’s heart has been wounded with desire he wishes for a more intense and permanent union, as this passage shows. He directs this request to Jesus through his image, connecting the imprinting of God’s immaterial image onto his heart to the devotion to and animation of material images.

A similar attitude towards images can be found in the work of the Dominican nun Margareta Ebner (1291–1351), who lived in the convent of Maria Medingen near Dillingen in southern Germany. She describes how she ‘het die begird, daz

given to me with all its suffering and pain throughout my entire body').⁴² After she had received communion she felt great joy:

und wa ich mich gefüegen maht, daz ich ain criucz hete, daz kusset ich als vil und dick, als ich immer maht. und druket ez an min hertz, als vil ich von creften maht, und daz tet ich emslichen, daz mich dick duht, ich möht lebent da von nimmer geschaiden von als grosser gnaud und übercreftiger süezkait, diu mir zo starclichen in drang in daz hertz und alliu miniu lider, daz ich niema kund komet. als ich gieng, so het ich ain criucz an mir. dar zuo het ich ain büechlin, da was auch ain herre an dem criucz, daz schob ich haimlich in den buosen als offenz, und wa ich gieng, so drukt ich ez an min hertz mit grosser fräude und mit unmessiger gnaud. (Wherever I found that I had a cross, I kissed it as vehemently and frequently as possible, and I pressed it with all my strength as firmly against my heart as I could, and did so zealously, so that I often thought I would never be able to get away alive, so great was the grace and so overpowering the sweetness that penetrated my heart and all my members so forcefully that I could not withdraw myself. When I went away, I still had a cross to carry. In addition, I possessed a little book in which there was a [picture of] the Lord on the cross. I placed it secretly between my breasts, leaving it open at that place, and wherever I went I pressed it against my heart with great joy and [in receipt of] immeasurable grace.)⁴³

Pressing crosses against her heart, like seals in wax, can be seen as a striving for *christiformitas* through the power of touch.⁴⁴ In this passage, the pierced heart and the sealed heart come together. Images and devotional objects serve as proxies for Christ, inciting desire and joy in the devotee. The tactile nature of these interactions gives a sense of immediacy and intimacy.

In all examples discussed so far it is the devotee's heart that is sealed by God. In a drawing from the convent of St Walburg in Eichstätt, executed around the year 1500, the relationship is reversed, as has been noted by Hamburger (Fig. 3).⁴⁵ The images depict a nun embracing the infant Christ, and dwelling in the wounded heart of the adult crucified Christ. A ladder of virtues leads up to an opening in the heart, in the shape of a wound. Attached to the wound there hangs a small round object, which Hamburger identifies as a seal. He interprets this motif in the light of the seal's mystical meaning of taking on Christ's images, but, 'rather than the soul bearing Christ's image, Christ bears the nun's body in his heart'.⁴⁶ The creativity of the artist who reversed the relationship seems to come forth from a desire to give expression to the mutual love between the soul and Christ, who embrace each other as equals in the wounded heart.



Fig. 3. *The Heart on the Cross*. Eichstätt, convent St Walburg. c.1500. Reproduced with permission, photo kindly provided by Jeffrey F. Hamburger.

The kiss of the mouth

The *Meditatio de passione Christi* quoted at the beginning of this article, interpreting Christ's inclined head as a sign of his desire for a kiss, was often attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux. This might not seem surprising; in his sermons on the Song, Bernard devoted more sermons to the verse i.1 on the kiss of the mouth than to any other part of the Canticle.⁴⁷ In the *Sermones*, however, the kiss is not given by the crucified Christ. This element is more likely adopted from an apocryphal *sententia* attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, based on a vision in which Bernard, while praying in church, was embraced by an apparition of the crucified, as reported by a witness.⁴⁸

Even before Bernard's *Sermones* and his vision, the Benedictine Rupert of Deutz (d. 1130) from Liège used the image of the kiss to describe a mystical experience that took place in a vision and involved an interaction with an image of Christ. This was part of a series of visions, recorded in his 1127 'Commentary on Matthew' (*De gloria et honore Filii hominis*), that were experienced after Rupert kissed a crucifix that he had taken down from the altar.⁴⁹ The following visions took place during his sleep, culminating in a vision where Rupert is standing before the altar, looking at the image of the crucified Christ who looks back at him. For Rupert this mutual gaze is not enough:

Non satis hoc mihi erat, nisi in manibus apprehenderem, amplexumque deoscularer. Sed quid agerem? Altius erat altare ipsum quam ut eum attingere possem. Ut ergo vidit eiusmodi cogitationem seu voluntatem meam, voluit et ipse. Sensi enim ego quia voluit, et nutu voluntatis eius ipsum altare per medium sese aperuit, meque introrsus currentem suscepit. Quod cum festinus introissem, apprehendi quem diligit anima mea, tenui illum, amplexatus sum eum, diutius osculatus sum eum. Sensi quam graviter hunc gestum dilectionis admitteret, cum inter osculandum suum ipse os aperiret, ut profundius oscularer.

(I was not satisfied unless I might seize him with my hands, and I might kiss affectionately him whom I had embraced. But what could I do? The altar was too high for me to reach him. But as he perceived 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 rushing into 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 deeply he received this gesture of love, since as he was being kissed he opened his mouth, that I might kiss him more deeply.)⁵⁰

Rupert stresses the reciprocity of this encounter; the kiss and embrace only take place after both parties somehow express their desire for each other. With his references to the Song, he participates in the love dialogue between the bride and her heavenly bridegroom. Rupert provides a second account of this vision in his Marian commentary on the Song of Songs, *De incarnatione Domini*, where the vision is part of his exegesis of verse v.4: 'Dilectus meus misit manum suam per foramen, et venter meus intremuit ad tactum ejus.' ('My beloved put his hand through the key hole, and my bowels were moved at his touch.')

While John Van Engen maintains that Rupert has not been very influential, the concept underlying his original vision became a trope in late medieval devotional culture, perhaps through Bernard's vision and *sententia*. It is, for example, used by Thomas a Kempis in his meditations on the life of Christ, around 1450: 'Expandit amantissima brachia, vulnera ostendit aperta, caput inclinat ad osculum, paratus ad gratiam te recipere et omnia peccata absque mora

dimittere.’ (‘He extends his most loving arms, shows his open wounds, leans his head to kiss, being ready to receive you in his grace and to forgive all your sins without delay.’)⁵² Moreover, it is also cited in the *Bedudinghe op Cantica canticorum*, a popular early fifteenth-century commentary on the Song of Songs from the northern Netherlands.⁵³ In this way, three centuries after Rupert’s *De incarnatione Domini*, the trope found its way back again into the tradition of commentaries on the Canticle.

Although the image of the crucified Christ belongs to passion iconography and the tradition of affective piety, the examples cited show that the way medieval devotees looked at such images was informed by the imagery of the Song of Songs. The entanglement of bridal mysticism and the passion is already present in sources from the twelfth century, as we have seen, and gradually became more prominent in the later medieval period. The combination of sensual kisses and bloody wounds made for very impressive images, which would stick in the memory of the devotees. Moreover, this rich vocabulary offered by the Song, involving wounded hearts, crosses imprinted on the heart, and Christ’s kisses, provided a way to talk about the dynamics of unfulfilled desire and mutual love. The thirteenth-century mystic and beguine Mechthild of Magdeburg formulated this dialectic movement of pain and fulfilment of desire as follows:

Swelch mensche wirt ze einer stunt
 Von warer minne reht wunt,
 Der wirt niemer me wol gesunt,
 Er enküsse noch den selben munt,
 Von dem sin sel ist worden wunt.
 (Whoever at some point
 Is seriously wounded by true love
 Will never become healthy again
 Unless he kisses that same mouth
 By which the soul was wounded.)⁵⁴

Likewise, while Margareta Ebner described her unfulfilled desire in terms of pressing the book against her heart, as seen above, her desire was reciprocated when the image of the crucified Christ bent down from the cross in a dream vision:

Und so ich also vor im staun, so naigt sich min herr Jhesus Cristus her ab von dem criucz and liezz mich küzzen in sin offen herz und trankt mich mit seinem blut dar usse, und enphieng ich da als grozze creftig gnaud und süezkait, diu an mir lang wert.

(And as I stand before him, my Lord Jesus Christ bent down from the cross and let me kiss his open heart and gave me to drink of the blood flowing from his heart. I received such great and powerful grace and sweetness, that it stayed with me for a long time.)⁵⁵

The imagery of the Song of Songs reinforced the notion that wounding love would lead to Christ's kiss and embrace, and thus, that looking at an image of Christ could lead one closer to mystical union. This went against the grain of the ideal of imageless contemplation. While the twelfth-century promoter of mystical love, Bernard of Clairvaux, had an enormous impact on late medieval bridal mysticism, his hesitance towards the use of material images in the spiritual process of his monks proved to be less influential.⁵⁶ Of course, many later authors followed Bernard in his reservations about art as religious aid, most notably within the Cistercian and Carthusian orders and in later medieval movements such as the *Devotio moderna*. The increased production of religious artworks in the later Middle Ages for both lay people and religious houses, however, shows that they were not always successful in influencing religious practice.⁵⁷

The abundance of devotional images in the late medieval period shows that it was rather the attitude of Rupert of Deutz, with his vision of kissing Christ, that set the tone for later attitudes towards images. While his vision might not have been well known to late medieval authors, his use of the Song's imagery in the animation of the image of Christ, and the 'nod of his will' that led to a kiss and embrace, became common elements to describe interactions with Christ. This would probably not have been the case without Bernard of Clairvaux's popularization of the mystical interpretation of the Song and the account of his vision of the embrace by the crucified Christ, which was also formulated as a *sententia*.

The above examples of illustrations in the Rothschild Canticles and the drawing from Eichstätt show that the vocabulary of the Song of Songs inspired creative and sometimes unexpected visual imagery, and active and dialectical modes of viewing. As Barbara Newman has noted, 'the more Christianity came to define itself as a religion centred on the arousing and ordering of love, the more indispensable it found images'.⁵⁸ Mystics like Henry Suso approved of the use of images. As Ingrid Falque has shown, Suso sees them not only as essential to mystical transformation, but also as instruments of mystical knowledge; a way to 'capture what lies beyond images'.⁵⁹ The capacity of medieval images to show, paradoxically, the imageless by means of images is also discussed by Beth Williamson. She calls this a mode of experience in which 'the physical and sensory are not negated' but utilized, leading to an embodied experience of the invisible.⁶⁰ In this process the body is 'a valuable instrument, within which and through which the senses, with their capabilities and their limitations, can provide a multitude of ways of approaching and perceiving the divine'.⁶¹

One last example of this active, embodied mode of looking comes from a manuscript from the late fifteenth-century Low Countries illustrating a Middle Dutch translation of the hymn *Oratio rhythmica* or *Salve mundi salutare*, written by Arnulf of Louvain in the first half of the thirteenth century. This prayer,

addressed to different parts of Christ's body, was sometimes headed by a rubric connecting it to Bernard's Vision:

Hier beghint een ynnich gebet dat Sinte Bernaert gemaect heft, mede te bescreyen ons heren passie; ende men leest hoe, in eenre tijt, Sinte Bernaert dit ghebet las voerden cruce ons heren. Ende het waert ghesien, dattet beelde hem vanden cruce loesde, ende gaf hem neder, ende omhelsde Sinte Bernaert. Ende het is vanden Stoele van Roomen met schoenen afaet beghaest.

(Here begins a devout prayer that St Bernard made, to describe the passion of our Lord; and one reads how St Bernard once read his prayer out in front of the cross of our Lord. And it was seen that the image detached itself from the cross, and came down and embraced St Bernard. And it has been endowed by the Papal Throne with a splendid indulgence.)⁶²



Fig. 4. Christ embraces a canoness. Heverlee, Abdy van 't Park, AP MS 18, fol. 138^r. Late fifteenth century. Reproduced with permission, photo kindly provided by Kathryn M. Rudy.

As Kathryn Rudy has shown, this manuscript was personalized by its owner, and probably belonged to the Gasthuiszusters Augustinessen of Geel.⁶³ She pasted small engravings from a sequence of passion scenes by Israel van Meckenem in the book as initials, and added some painted initials in the same style as the engravings, including an image of a sister embracing Christ (Fig. 4).

The owner's concern to personalize the manuscript is indicative of a need to visualize her interaction with the suffering Christ. The iconography of Christ's embrace was usually preserved for Bernard of Clairvaux,⁶⁴ but this image shows how the visions of saints were seen by devotees as experiences to be emulated. Through this image the reader-viewer of this manuscript could participate in the bridal relationship with Christ, and proceed from looking at the image to the embrace of the divine bridegroom. This 'bridal mode of looking' was modelled on the love dialogue of the *Canticle*.

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LIEKE SMITS

NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference 'Devotio: Individualization of Religious Practices in Western European Christianity (c.1350–c.1550)' at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, 27 October 2016. I would like to thank Nigel Palmer (University of Oxford), Rijcklof Hofman (Radboud University, Nijmegen), and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

¹ *Meditatio de passione Christi*, cited from Sara Lipton (ed. and trans.), "The sweet lean of his head": writing about looking at the crucifix in the High Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 80 (2005), 1172–1208 (pp. 1182f., 1206f.). The text is published in *PL*, CLVIII, cols 761f. as Anselm's *Meditatio X*. It is transmitted in a manuscript that belonged to the Carthusians in Diest around 1400: Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS 5246–52, fol. 18^r. The handwriting is dated late twelfth/early thirteenth century; see André Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du Moyen Âge latin: Études d'histoire littéraire* (Paris, 1932), p. 194.

² See *inter alia* David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, Ill., and London, 1989); Lipton, 'Sweet lean'; Jacqueline E. Jung, 'The tactile and the visionary: notes on the place of sculpture in the medieval religious imagination', in *Looking Beyond: Visions, Dreams, and Insights in Medieval Art and History*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, NJ, 2010), pp. 203–40. Hans Henrik Lohfert Jørgensen, in 'Live matter and living images: towards a theory of animation in material media', *Konsthistorisk tidsskrift/Journal of Art History*, 86 (2017), 251–70, distinguishes between three, sometimes overlapping, categories of animation: magical animation, in which an image really comes to life through supernatural forces; mechanical animation, denoting images that are externally or mechanically moved to create an illusion of life; and phenomenological animation, the experience of life in an image through interaction with the beholder (pp. 262–8). While the *Meditatio de passione Christi* belongs to the

latter category, this article will also consider the ‘magical animation’ of images of Christ in visionary experiences.

³ On medieval Song of Songs exegesis, see *inter alia* Ernst Friedrich Ohly, *Hobeliend-Studien. Grundzüge einer Geschichte der Hobeliendauslegung des Abendlandes bis um 1200* (Wiesbaden, 1958); E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of my Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia, Pa, 1990); Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 1995); Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, *My Secret is Mine: Studies on Religion and Eros in the German Middle Ages* (Leuven, 2000).

⁴ There is a vast scholarship on the origins, development, and characteristics of affective piety or affective meditation. Important studies include Richard Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven, Conn., 1953); Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York, 2005); Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia, Pa, 2010); Michelle Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, Ill., and London, 2011).

⁵ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, Calif., 1987); Giles Constable, ‘The popularity of twelfth-century spiritual writers in the late Middle Ages’, in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi (Florence and Dekalb, Ill., 1971), pp. 5–28; id., ‘Twelfth-century spirituality and the late Middle Ages’, *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 5 (1971), 27–60.

⁶ I quote from the Vulgate and have made use of the Douay–Rheims translation of the Bible.

⁷ Bernard McGinn, ‘Love: active, contemplative, essential’, in *Studies on Medieval Empathies*, ed. Karl F. Morrison and Rudolph M. Bell, *Disputatio* 7 (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 213–36.

⁸ Berndt Hamm, “Gott berühren”. *Mystische Erfahrung im ausgehenden Mittelalter: zugleich ein Beitrag zur Klärung des Mystikbegriffs*, in *Religiosität im späten Mittelalter. Spannungspole, Neuaufbrüche, Normierungen*, ed. Berndt Hamm, Reinhold Friedrich, and Wolfgang Simon, *Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation* 54 (Tübingen, 2011), pp. 111–37.

⁹ Jung, ‘The tactile and the visionary’, p. 109.

¹⁰ Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 3.

¹¹ Annette Volging, *The Daughter Zion Allegory in Medieval German Religious Writing* (Abingdon and New York, 2017).

¹² Volging, *Daughter Zion Allegory*, pp. 5–14.

¹³ Ernst Benz, ‘Christliche Mystik und christliche Kunst’, *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 12 (1934), 22–48 (pp. 25–7); Sixten Ringbom, ‘Devotional images and imaginative devotions: notes on the place of art in late medieval private piety’, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 73 (1969), 159–70 (p. 163); Volging, *Daughter Zion Allegory*, pp. 9f.

¹⁴ Quoted in Benz, ‘Christliche Mystik’, p. 27.

¹⁵ Cf. Ringbom, ‘Devotional images’; Barbara Newman, ‘What did it mean to say “I saw”? The clash between theory and practice in medieval visionary culture’, *Speculum*, 80 (2005), 1–43.

¹⁶ Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 3.34.2, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, trans. Paul Antin, 3 vols,

Sources chrétiennes 251, 260, 265 (Paris, 1978–80), II, 400.6–20. Cf. Sandra McEntire, ‘The doctrine of compunction from Bede to Margery Kempe’, in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: Exeter Symposium IV: Papers Read at Dartington Hall, July 1987*, ed. Marion Glasscoe (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 77–90 (p. 78); Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York, 1982), pp. 29–32. Concerning the prayers of Anselm, Benedicta Ward writes, in ‘Introduction’ to *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion*, trans. Benedicta Ward (New York, 1973): ‘By reading the prayers one is to be “moved to the love or fear of God, or to self-examination”. The steady discipline of attention in reading continues until one is moved by love or fear, which generally begins by awareness of sin and personal self-abasement. It is a matter of seeing steadily and truly the real situation of man before his Creator, the sinner before his Redeemer and Judge. Each of the prayers contains a long passage of self-scrutiny, where the horror of sin is brought to light by knowledge of the love of God. This is the first kind of compunction, a piercing of sorrow and dread, which leads, through a realization of its resolution in the love of God, to that other compunction of longing desire for God’ (pp. 53f.).

¹⁷ Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, p. 30.

¹⁸ McEntire, ‘Doctrine of compunction’, pp. 84–9.

¹⁹ McEntire, ‘Doctrine of compunction’, p. 84.

²⁰ Richard Southern, in *Making of the Middle Ages*, presented this prayer as the beginning of affective piety (p. 222). Cf. Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, pp. 142–55.

²¹ Anselm of Canterbury, *Orationes sive meditationes* II, in *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera omnia*, ed. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, 6 vols (Edinburgh, 1938–61), III, 7, trans. Benedicta Ward as *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion* (New York, 1973), p. 95.

²² Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* 29.IV.8, in *Sancti Bernardi opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq, Henri Rochais, and C. H. Talbot, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77), I, 208f., trans. modified from Kilian Walsh and Irene M. Edmonds, *On the Song of Songs*, 4 vols, Cistercian Father Series, 4, 7, 31, 40 (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1977–80), III, 109f.

²³ Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermones in Canticum Salomonis* 30, *PL*, CLXXXIV, col. 156, trans. Lawrence C. Braceland as *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, 3 vols, Cistercian Fathers Series 14, 20, 26 (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1978, 1979, 1981), II, 363. Cf. Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: From Gregory the Great through the Twelfth Century*, vol. II of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York, 1994), p. 303.

²⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica canticorum* 61.2.4, ed. Leclercq, Rochais, and Talbot II, 150, trans. Walsh and Edmonds, III, 143.

²⁵ Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300* (New Haven, Conn., 1990).

²⁶ According to Jeffrey Hamburger, the manuscript was certainly made for a woman, probably a nun or canoness; see Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, p. 3. Hamburger gives Flanders and the Rhineland as possible regions of origin (p. 8). Wybren Scheepma, in ‘Filling in the blanks: a Middle Dutch Dionysius quotation and the origins of the Rothschild Canticles’, *MÆ*, 70 (2001), 278–303, has shown that a quotation from Ps.-Dionysius in the manuscript, identified by Hamburger as Ripuarian, is in fact written in Middle Dutch, making it plausible that the Rothschild Canticles were produced, or at least read, in the

Low Countries. On the basis of a prayer that has its origins in a hagiographical text that was unknown outside the abbey of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc in current French Flanders, Barbara Newman, in 'Contemplating the Trinity: text, image, and the origins of the Rothschild Canticles', *Gesta*, 52 (2013), 133–59, argues that the compiler was a monk of this abbey, who may have produced it for a canoness at the local abbey of Saint-Victor.

²⁷ Hamburger, *Rothschild Canticles*, p. 72.

²⁸ Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, p. 160.

²⁹ Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, p. 160.

³⁰ On the exegesis of this verse, see also Giles Constable, 'The ideal of the imitation of Christ', in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 143–248 (pp. 214f.).

³¹ 'Amans nos Deus, et amari desiderans, signaculum formavit, habens imaginem amoris insculptam, quo cor nostrum pressius signavit, ut coimaginatum similitudinem imaginis in se exciperet, et configuraliter exprimeret.' Baldwin of Ford, *Tractatus diversi* x, *PL*, CCIV, col. 511b.

³² Baldwin of Ford, *Tractatus diversi* x, *PL*, CCIV, cols 513d–514a, trans. adapted from David N. Bell, *Spiritual Tractates*, 2 vols, Cistercian Father Series, 38, 41 (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1986), I, 78f. Cf. n. 33.

³³ Baldwin of Ford, *Tractatus diversi* x, *PL*, CCIV, col. 514a, trans. Bell, I, 79.

³⁴ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 10 (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 18–37.

³⁵ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, p. 33.

³⁶ John of Fécamp, *Liber meditationum* 36, *PL*, XL, col. 931, trans. adapted from Matthew J. O'Connell, *Meditations of Saint Augustine*, ed. by John E. Rotelle with an introduction by Jean-Clair Girard (Villanova, 1995), pp. 104f. Cf. Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, p. 164f.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 165f.

³⁸ *Guillelmi Duranti Rationale divinatorum officiorum* 1.3.4, ed. Anselme Davril and T. M. Thibodeau, *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 140 (Turnhout, 1995), p. 36.64–7; trans. adapted from Herbert L. Kessler, 'Diction in the "Bibles of the illiterate"', in *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity*, ed. Irving Lavin, 2 vols (University Park, Pa, and London, 1989), II, 297–308 (p. 300).

³⁹ Henry Suso, *Exemplar, Leben* 1.4, in *Heinrich Seuse: Deutsche Schriften im Auftrag der Württembergischen Kommission für Landesgeschichte*, ed. Karl Bihlmeyer (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 15–17.

⁴⁰ Henry Suso, *Exemplar, Brief* 11, ed. Bihlmeyer, pp. 391–3.

⁴¹ Suso, *Exemplar, Leben* 1.4, ed. Bihlmeyer, p. 16, trans. by Frank Tobin as *The Exemplar, with Two German Sermons*, with a preface by Bernard McGinn (New York, 1989), p. 71.

⁴² Margareta Ebner, *Offenbarungen*, in *Margaretha Ebner und Heinrich von Nördlingen: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Mystik*, ed. Philipp Strauch (Freiburg and Tübingen, 1882), p. 19, trans. adapted from Leonard P. Hindsley, *Margaret Ebner, Major Works* (New York, 1993), p. 95.

⁴³ Margareta Ebner, *Offenbarungen*, ed. Strauch, pp. 20f., trans. with the kind assistance of Nigel Palmer. Margareta possibly refers to Cant i.12: 'Fasciculus myrrhae dilectus meus mihi; inter ubera mea commorabitur' ('A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he shall abide between my breasts').

⁴⁴ Bruno Quast, 'drücken und schriben: Passionsmystische Frömmigkeit in den Offenbarungen der Margarethe Ebner', in *Gewalt im Mittelalter: Realitäten – Imaginationen*, ed. Manuel Braun and Cornelia Herberichs (Munich, 2005), pp. 293–305 (pp. 294, 297–300).

⁴⁵ Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley, Calif., 1997), pp. 122f.

⁴⁶ Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, p. 123.

⁴⁷ There are eight sermons in which the image of the kiss plays a significant role.

⁴⁸ Lipton, 'Sweet lean', pp. 1194–8. The vision was first recorded in Herbert of Clairvaux's *Liber miraculorum* of the late twelfth century and was later included in Conrad of Eberbach's *Exordium magnum*, composed in the early thirteenth century.

⁴⁹ On this series of visions, see Hrabanus Haacke, 'Die mystischen Visionen Ruperts von Deutz', in *Sapientiae doctrina: Mélanges de théologie et de littérature médiévales offerts à Dom Hildebrand Bascour O.S.B.*, ed. Roland Hisette, Guibert Michiels, and Dirk M. J. van de Auweele (Leuven, 1980), pp. 68–90; John Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley, Calif., 1983), pp. 51–3, 349–52; Christel Meier-Staubach, 'Ruperts von Deutz literarische Sendung,' in *Aspekte des 12. Jahrhunderts: Freisinger Kolloquium 1998*, ed. Wolfram Haubrichs et al., *Wolfram-Studien* 16 (Berlin, 2000), pp. 29–52. Meier-Staubach argues that Rupert sees the understanding of Scripture as inextricably linked to life itself and to the vision of God, and discusses these personal mystical and visionary experiences in his commentary (p. 48).

⁵⁰ *Ruperti Tuitiensis De gloria et honore Filii hominis super Mattheum*, ed. Hrabanus Haacke, *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 29 (Turnhout, 1979), pp. 382f., trans. adapted from Lipton, 'Sweet lean', pp. 1175f. Meier-Staubach, in 'Ruperts von Deutz literarische Sendung', shows how this is a culmination of different openings that take place in the series of visions: first of the inner eyes, than of a book, and finally of the altar and the mouth (pp. 34–40).

⁵¹ *Ruperti Tuitiensis Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum* 5.2–8, ed. Hrabanus Haacke, *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 26 (Turnhout, 1974), p. 111. See Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, pp. 317–44.

⁵² *Thomae Hemerken a Kempis ... Orationes et meditationes de vita Christi* 2.18, ed. Michael Joseph Pohl, *Thomae Hemerken a Kempis Opera omnia* 5 (Freiburg, 1902), pp. 115.28–116.1. On the limited influence of Rupert in the medieval period, see Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*, pp. 3–6. Rijcklof Hofman, in 'Introduction' to *Gerardi Magni Scripta contra simoniam et proprietarios*, ed. Rijcklof Hofman and Marinus van den Berg, *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis* 235A (Turnhout, 2016), however, argues that Geert Grote might have had access to some of Rupert's works, making his influence on late medieval authors more probable (pp. 52f.).

⁵³ With forty-three surviving manuscripts, the *Bedudinghe* was a real medieval bestseller. Some of these manuscripts contain only excerpts of the text. There are two redactions: the first is found mainly in manuscripts from nunneries of the canonesses and tertiaries in Holland, while most surviving manuscripts with the second redaction originate from the eastern part of the northern Netherlands, where they circulated in both male and female monastic houses affiliated to the movement of the Modern Devotion. See Kees Schepers, *Bedudinghe op Cantica canticorum: Vertaling en bewerking van Glossa Tripartita super Cantica: Teksthistorische studies en kritische editie*, 2 vols, *Miscellanea Neerlandica* 34, 35 (Leuven, 2006), I, 127–46.

⁵⁴ Mechthild von Magdeburg, *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit: Nach der Einsiedler Handschrift in kritischem Vergleich mit der gesamten Überlieferung*, 2.15, ed. Hans Neumann, 2 vols (Munich, 1990), II, 48, trans. Frank Tobin as *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, with a preface by Margot Schmidt (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998), pp. 79f.

⁵⁵ Margareta Ebner, *Offenbarungen*, ed. Strauch, pp. 21f., trans. with the kind assistance of Nigel Palmer.

⁵⁶ Bernard famously criticized exuberant art in monasteries in his *Apologia ad Guillelmum abbatem*. See Conrad Rudolph, *The 'Things of Greater Importance': Bernard of Clairvaux's 'Apologia' and the Medieval Attitude toward Art* (Philadelphia, Pa, 1990), including an edition and translation of the text.

⁵⁷ On the art of the *Devotio moderna* see *Geen povere schoonheid: Laat-middeleeuwse kunst in verband met de Moderne Devotie*, ed. Kees Veelenturf (Nijmegen, 2000). On the role of art in late medieval devotional culture, see *inter alia* Ringbom, 'Devotional images'; Hans Belting, *Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich, 1990); Jeffrey F. Hamburger, 'The visual and the visionary: the image in late medieval monastic devotions', *Viator*, 20 (1989), 161–82.

⁵⁸ Barbara Newman, 'Love's arrows: Christ as Cupid in late medieval art and devotion', in *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2005), pp. 263–86 (p. 283).

⁵⁹ Ingrid Falque, "'Daz man bild mit bilde us tribe": imagery and knowledge of God in Henry Suso's *Exemplar*', *Speculum*, 92 (2017), 447–92 (p. 449).

⁶⁰ Beth Williamson, 'Sensory experience in medieval devotion: sound and vision, invisibility and silence', *Speculum*, 88 (2013), 1–43 (pp. 41f.).

⁶¹ Williamson, 'Sensory experience', p. 42.

⁶² Arnulf of Louvain, *Oratio rhythmica* (Middle Dutch translation), ed. Desideer A. Stracke 'Over het: Ave mundi salutare, in het Diets', *Ons Geestelijk Erf*, 24 (1950), 409–19 (p. 410). A similar rubric occurs in some manuscripts at the start of what Kathryn Rudy calls the Colnish *pater noster* and another prayer to Christ's body parts; see Kathryn M. Rudy, *Rubrics, Images and Indulgences in Late Medieval Netherlandish Manuscripts* (Leiden, 2017), pp. 94–8.

⁶³ Rudy, *Rubrics, Images and Indulgences*, p. 97.

⁶⁴ On the iconographical tradition of the so-called *amplexus Bernardi*, see *inter alia* Carolyn Diskant Muir, *Saintly Brides and Bridegrooms: The Mystic Marriage in Northern Renaissance Art* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 91–115; Franz Posset, 'Amplexus Bernardi: the dissemination of a Cistercian motif in the later Middle Ages', *Cîteaux*, 54 (2003), 251–400 (including a catalogue).