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«L'ERMA»  
di BRETSCHNEIDER

Società internazionale di  
Storia della miniatura

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SEEING WITH THE EYES OF THE SOUL.  
PACINO DI BONAGUIDA'S SCENES FROM THE *LIFE OF CHRIST*  
*AND THE LIFE OF BLESSED GERARD OF VILLAMAGNA*  
(NEW YORK, THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM, M.643)

In 1308, close to death, the Augustinian nun and abbess Clare of Montefalco (aka saint Clare of the Cross, 1268-1308) reprimanded her sisters who, gathered at her bedside, were praying and repeatedly making the sign of the cross over her. She again rebuked them when they brought a crucifix into her cell and placed it beside her bed so that the vision of the sacred image could comfort her. Useless outward gestures, Clare repeated dryly, for Christ crucified was already impressed on her heart. The abbess's words were confirmed shortly after Clare's death, when the sisters performed an autopsy on her body, discovering that her heart literally bore the marks of Christ's Passion imprinted on the flesh<sup>1</sup>. The episode, which is part of a tradition attested, with some variations, also for other mystics of the same period<sup>2</sup>, is exemplary of the forms of internalisation of the imagery linked to the Passion that proliferated in the late Middle Ages, following the impetus of a widespread devotional literature and the rise of meditative practices that stimulated the introjection of the sacred events. In these practices, the devotee was invited to relive in the mind the events and the sufferings of the sacred characters to the point of experiencing them first-hand.

Clare of Montefalco had completed a path of spiritual growth based on the *Imitatio Christi*, on identification and intimate union with Christ. Her reaction to the visual media of an imagery that for her was now purely mental was consequently one of rejection, almost of contempt. In the initial stages of the journey, however, the images were an essential tool for triggering the believer's empathic reaction and imprinting on their memory a clear mental image that they could visualise and use during prolonged meditative practices. The stages of this evolution can be retraced ideally by looking at the story of Angela of Foligno (1248-1309), as she herself narrates in her *Memoir*: initially, Angela recalls

Whenever I saw the Passion of Christ depicted in art, I could not bear it; a fever would overtake me, and I would become sick. For this reason, my companion carefully hid all pictures of the Passion for me<sup>3</sup>.

Later in the text, she reports a radically different reaction:

Whenever I came close to a painting of the cross or the Passion, it seemed to me to be nothing in comparison with the extreme suffering which Christ truly endured, and which was shown to me and impressed on my heart. And so, I no longer wished to look at such paintings, because they seemed to be almost nothing in comparison with the reality<sup>4</sup>.

According to Cordelia Warr, the difference in attitude between the two moments of the blessed woman's life is due to a never totally overcome tension, intrinsic to the use of images and the meaning attributed to them in the Middle Ages<sup>5</sup>. In my opinion, however, the key to



1. New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.643, Pacino di Bonaguida: *Moses preaching to the Israelites*, fol. 20r.

### *The Manuscript*

The manuscript measures 245×176 mm; it consists of 20 folios for a total of 38 miniatures dedicated to the life of Christ, summed up, as will be explained in detail later, in 32 scenes (fols. 2r-17v); to the story of Blessed Gerard of Villamagna, a Franciscan tertiary who lived between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, condensed into 5 episodes (fols. 18r-19v); and finally, to the two iconic figures of David and Moses placed respectively at the opening and closing of the codex (fols. 1v, 20r).<sup>7</sup>

As already mentioned, this is a picture-book, a type of codex with only illuminated images, not accompanied by written text.<sup>8</sup> This feature calls for caution, and requires that consideration be given to the possibility that the manuscript originally contained other sheets with text, which were subsequently removed following reworking<sup>9</sup>. It must be said, however, that the work was already in its present form in 1821, when it was sold by Sotheby's, and was described in the auction catalogue as «Vita Jesu Christi. – A series of 38 highly executed drawings, (ON VELLUM), in gold and colours, bound in calf with brass bosses»<sup>10</sup>. According to Maria Fredericks, although brief, this description may well correspond to a type of binding in use in an Italian context at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and may therefore refer to the original one. By the end of the nineteenth century this binding had been removed and replaced with a modern one, and the manuscript was placed in a new leather cover, probably by Lord Ashburnham, whose ink markings appear on the new spine<sup>11</sup>. This operation makes it impossible to ascertain what the original structure and number of quires might have been; at present, the codex consists of two quires of four

the interpretation lies in the explicit reference to the fact that the image of the Passion had already been imprinted on Angela's heart, and had therefore been fully assimilated and internalised, making the painted representations of the episode superfluous and devoid of meaning and value in her eyes.

The aim of this article is to examine the mental and spiritual process of introjection of the sacred event and the imagery associated with it, the mechanism that allowed the passage from a material representation, experienced with the senses, to a mental image, impressed in the memory, then evoked and relived in a purely spiritual form. To do this, it will adopt a combined methodology, putting together the art-historical approach with investigative tools and theories developed in other fields of knowledge and recently integrated into the humanities following the cognitive, sensorial and material turns. The starting point of the investigation will be an illuminated manuscript, a picture-book produced by Pacino di Bonaguida around 1320 and currently preserved in New York (Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum, M.643)<sup>6</sup>. The codex contains a sequence of illustrations serving as meditation on the sacred event, and thus allows us to examine the practices and experiences of the faithful of the time from the material data.





2. New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.643, Pacino di Bonaguida: *Gerard in His Coffin Approached by the Faithful*, fol. 19v.

design phase. Scholars have observed that different painters were at work here, active in the workshop of Pacino di Bonaguida, to whom the manuscript was initially attributed by Richard Offner on the basis of stylistic and iconographic similarities with other paintings by the artists, also dated, like our work, to around the 1320s<sup>13</sup>. The miniatures are characterised by precious colours (pl. VII), marked by the predominance of bright blues and reds, used not only for the clothing of the protagonists in an often juxtaposed way, but also in the frames surrounding the scenes. The latter are repeated identically throughout the manuscript and consist of an outer blue band and an inner red band, with a further, thin white border in pen and ink in the inner field, sometimes decorated with spirals. The size of the frames is also the same at 180×135 mm, with slight margins of variation. The use of a limited and repeated range of colours, as well as the repetition of the same frame schemes, favoured the sequential reading of the story, facilitating the memorisation of the images and contents, and finally the subsequent process of meditation on the concepts acquired<sup>14</sup>.

In short, we are clearly dealing with a manuscript designed for individual use, an object that the owner could freely handle and consult in the course of their daily spiritual practices. The identity of the patron is not known, and the collecting history of the manuscript, placed on the antiquities market by Abbot Luigi Celotti<sup>15</sup>, does not help to clarify the matter. Nonetheless, it must have been an individual who gravitated towards Franciscan devotional contexts, as suggested by the reference to the story of Blessed Gerard of Villamagna and certain iconographic variants, which scholars have already placed in relation to the sensibility of the Friars Minor. The same circles are also referred to in the *forma mentis* that characterises

bifolios each, and a third quire consisting of a single bifolio.

Lord Ashburnham and his intervention were probably responsible for the decision to trim and glue the initial and final folios of the codex on the verso of the modern cover, with the figures of David and Moses (fig. 1). Of the entire manuscript, these appear to be the only trimmed sheets: their width is 6 mm less than the others, which are intact in their original proportions. Although the images of the Old Testament characters do not appear in their original position, their placement at the opening and closing of the narrative sequence is consistent, as we will discuss in greater detail later. Moreover, stylistic, technical, and formal data leave no doubt that these images belonged to the manuscript from the beginning, given their total conformity with the other miniatures in the codex. Finally, it should be noted that recent scientific investigations conducted on the work have shown that the verso of the folios on which the Old Testament figures are painted does not bear any characters, unlike all the other folios in the codex, which are illuminated on both sides<sup>12</sup>.

The illustrative apparatus is distinguished by an extreme uniformity, suggesting an efficient, rational, and detailed organisation of workshop processes already in the





3. New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.643, Pacino di Bonaguida: *The Betrayal of Christ*, fol. 9v.

the commission and the type of work, which in some ways, as I will say later, constitutes a *pendant* in exclusively visual form to the widespread devotional literature produced in Franciscan circles.

#### *The Franciscan Context*

According to his *Vita*, Gerard was allegedly born around 1174 in Villamagna (Bagno a Ripoli, Florence) and was orphaned at an early age<sup>16</sup>. He soon entered the service of the Florentine Folchi family, who owned several properties in the territory of Villamagna and many of whose members belonged to the Order of Jerusalem, i.e. the Knights of the Hospital of saint John of Jerusalem, or Knights Hospitaller. Through them, Gerard is said to have made two trips to the Holy Land, in turn earning the title of Knight Hospitaller by virtue of his charitable work and counselling. He met St Francis either in the Holy Land or on his way back to Italy, and was given the habit of a tertiary by him. Once back home, he retired to live as a hermit near Villamagna, where he lived in privation and mortification of the flesh, making pilgrimages on his knees to the local churches to ask for alms for the many needy people who came to him<sup>17</sup>, and where he died in the mid-thirteenth century in the odour of sanctity. His cult spread at an early date, as evidenced by the fact that Boccaccio and Sac-

chetti mention him in the *Decameron*, the *Trecentonovelle*, and the *Lettera sopra le dipinture de' Beati*, where Sacchetti states that in the fourteenth century the body of the blessed was kept in the church of Santa Croce in Florence, and that his altar was covered with wax ex-votos<sup>18</sup>. A recent study by Giovanni Giura has shown that the chapel dedicated to Blessed Gerard should be identified as being the one belonging to a branch of the Baroncelli family, located in the left aisle and near the rood-screen<sup>19</sup>. Gerard was therefore celebrated in the main Franciscan foundation of the Tuscan city, and many local worshippers were devoted to him. At the same time, an oratory was built in Villamagna, in the place where Gerard lived as a hermit, annexed to the parish church of San Donnino. According to tradition, Gerard himself had built it, dedicating it to St John in Jerusalem, in honour of the Knights Hospitaller order, a title that was later changed in favour of Gerard himself. In 1313, Aldobrandino Cavalcanti undertook to build a hospital and a house for the priest next to the oratory<sup>20</sup>; the Bardi family, which boasted numerous properties in the area, contributed to the local cult and together with the Magli household, commissioned a stone tabernacle adorned with the family crests for the oratory<sup>21</sup>.

While the written sources on the life of Blessed Gerard are rather late in date, it is to be believed that his cult was promoted by means of figurative narratives; it is generally thought that the miniatures by Pacino are the earliest evidence of the figurative hagiography of the blessed figure<sup>22</sup>, but I wonder whether they do not propose an iconography that was already in some way established. There is, in fact, a seventeenth-century engraving published as a frontispiece to the life of the blessed in a book dedicated to the Knights Hospitaller, which is very similar



4. New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.643, Pacino di Bonaguida: *Christ Carrying the Cross*, fol. 11v.

of *Christ carrying the Cross* (fig. 4) and *Christ ascending the Cross* (fig. 5). Specifically, Derbes notes how the episode of Christ carrying the Cross, in the overall narrative of the Road to Calvary, was frequently mentioned in devotional texts of the Friars Minor, and how the concept of taking up one's own cross was central to Francis' thinking, to the point that the image was soon incorporated into figurative works that belonged to Franciscan context<sup>25</sup>. In the miniature, moreover, Christ has a noose around his neck and is dragged along by a soldier, a detail, as Derbes points out, that is often found in Franciscan works from the mid-thirteenth century onwards<sup>26</sup>. Thomas of Celano, moreover, in the *Life of Francis*, states that the *poverello* of Assisi used to perform extreme acts of penance, and that at times he was dragged along by a rope by a brother like a delinquent<sup>27</sup>; Bonaventure, for his part, associated «the ropes that bound Christ in the Passion with the cords worn by all friars»<sup>28</sup>. In this way, the figures of Christ and Francis, who in accordance with a widespread practice, was presented as *Alter Christus*, were united. Similarly, the image of Christ ascending to the cross by means of a ladder laid against it, one based on Byzantine precedents, gained popularity in Italy at the beginning of the fourteenth century<sup>29</sup>. As scholars have pointed out, the reason for this is to be found in a series of Franciscan reflections, dedicated in particular to Christ's acceptance of sacrifice and death, celebrated in numerous texts of the Order and frequently taken up in works associated with them<sup>30</sup>. I would also add that within the Franciscan sphere there was a widespread typological parallel between Christ and Moses, and to an even greater extent between Christ, Moses and Francis<sup>31</sup>. Bonaventure, among others, presented Francis as the new Moses, in a constant attempt to associate the life of the Assisi-born saint with that of Christ<sup>32</sup>. Pacino and

to the penultimate miniature in our codex<sup>23</sup> (fig. 2); the image shows the Blessed Gerard's coffin raised into the branches of a tree and protected by two armed men, while cripples and pilgrims crowd around, women on the left and men on the right. While it seems unlikely to me that the engraver was familiar with our manuscript, I wonder whether Pacino and the seventeenth-century artist were looking at a common, older model.

With respect to the manuscript examined here, the Franciscan cultural and devotional context is evoked not only by the reference to the figure of Blessed Gerard, but also by some iconographic variants found in the miniatures dedicated to the life of Christ, which refer to models widespread in the Minorite sphere. Thus, in the *Betrayal of Christ* (fol. 9v), Christ, totally indifferent to Judas who kisses his right cheek, is instead concentrated on blocking the action of Peter, portrayed with a guilty air as he holds the knife in his right hand, and blessing Malchus, who kneels at his feet (fig. 3). This version of the biblical episode was used in the Franciscan context between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, where it served, in Anne Derbes' reading, to visualise Christ's total acceptance and conscious willingness to go towards the ultimate sacrifice<sup>24</sup>. Also typical of Franciscan imagery are the two episodes





5. New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.643, Pacino di Bonaguida: *Christ Ascending the Cross*, fol. 12r.

Knights Hospitaller, to which Gerard belonged<sup>34</sup>. The episodes in the life of the blessed, concentrated on prayer in hermitic settings, engaged in actions to assist the poor and beggars, and dressed with the brownish robe that was typical of the order (the only discordant, dark note, in the otherwise brightly-dressed crowd) could well serve as an *exemplum* for those who pursued the same ideals of life. Alternatively, the patron could have been a member of the noble families mentioned above, linked in various ways to the geographical locations and sacred spaces of the public cult of Gerard<sup>35</sup>: the Baroncelli, owners of the chapel in Santa Croce, or the Bardi and Cavalcanti, who were involved in the endowment of the oratory of Villamagna. It is worth remembering that Pacino was very well inserted in the art market at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and worked in different media for patrons belonging to various social groups, both religious and secular, producing works that embody the spirit and drives of their time in an exemplary manner<sup>36</sup>. Alongside important public commissions that are well known and documented and often linked to mendicant orders, it will be useful to recall his activity in the service of private patrons, with the production of works intended for individual forms of devotion lived in the intimacy of the personal sphere. Of particular note in this context is MS. Redi 102 in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, with the *Volgarizzamento del Pater Nostro* by Zuccherro Bencivenni.<sup>37</sup> The codex, made around 1330 and probably intended for individual prayer, is similar to ours in its illustrative system, with narrative miniatures framed by rectangular frames edged in red, but in this case interspersed with sections of text. The images are more summary, and the ornamental system is lesser, suggesting that this was a product intended for a less demanding patron than our codex.

the commissioner of the codex, we might say, go a step further, proposing an unprecedented connection between Moses and Gerard as the ideal heir of Francis, both of whom are engaged, in the miniatures, in preaching to a colourful crowd of onlookers.

More generally, the idea of a long sequence of episodes from the Life of Christ, extensively narrated with the inclusion of unusual subjects, and the emphasis on the crucial moments of the Passion, visually conceived so as to induce an empathic reaction and identification with the subject, also refer to Franciscan sensitivity. These themes, concepts and functions are clearly linked to the didactic use of images developed in the environment of the Friars Minor, as well as to a widespread devotional literature developed in the same context, which finds its most illustrious and well-known result in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*<sup>33</sup>. We will return to this later.

It is now important to return briefly to the question of the possible patron or recipient of the work. Having ascertained the Franciscan devotional context of reference, it is certainly the inclusion of the life of Gerard that makes it possible to specify more closely the environment to which the commissioner of the work belonged. There are two hypotheses: he could have been a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis, or of the



6. New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.643, Pacino di Bonaguida: *The Baptism of Christ*, fol. 5v.

*The Narrative Strategy: Images of Memory, the Senses, and Meditative Practices*

The narrative strategy, as we have already mentioned, is masterfully orchestrated. The sequence of episodes guides the viewer through a journey which, starting from the prophecy of Christ's coming, retraces all the fundamental stages of his life, encouraging the faithful to identify in particular with the episodes of the Passion. Finally, the exemplary story of Gerard offers a contemporary version of religious behaviour, inserted into the contemporary fabric, and therefore more easily assimilated by the beholder. The viewer's attention is continually stimulated by the inclusion of details that invite them to imagine sounds, smells, and bodily sensations, to recreate in their mind an immersive environment in which to relive the events of Christ with increasing emotional intensity. Within the sequence, the images are combined in pairs, which can be appreciated when the book is opened, almost like a collection of diptychs in succession. The viewer was therefore invited to move through the scenes with an active attitude, assimilating not only the overall meaning of the stories but also the micro-stories they tell, in clearly identified thematic nuclei, and the specific messages they bring with them, in an active reading, played out on several levels and multimodal.

It is precisely the perfect coherence of the narrative scansion that leads us to believe that, even if the manuscript had originally been rounded off with sections of text, written on sheets that have been removed and are now missing, the figurative part did not differ from what we see today, and that the system for reading the episodes was also similar to that of today.

When the codex is opened, the viewer is presented with the images of David looking to his left and of the *Annunciation* (fols. 1v-2r). The progenitor of Joseph, Christ's putative father, and therefore ancestor of Jesus, introduces the story and, together with the scene of the *Annunciation*, condenses the events preceding the birth of the Saviour. The *Visitation* and the *Nativity* (fols. 2v-3r) show the first moments of the Incarnation, with the gestation and birth of the Child. The next two episodes, illustrating the *Adoration of the Magi* and the *Presentation in the Temple* (fols. 3v-4r), show the moments when the exceptional nature of the Child is recognised and confirmed, first by the three kings and then by Simeon and the prophetess Anna. In both scenes, Christ, still a child but already aware of his destiny, is shown in a singular active attitude, moving about, turning in on himself, touching objects. In the first scene, it is he himself who grasps the gifts brought to him by the Magi, opening the vase held by the elder. He therefore seems to be consciously going towards his destiny – as when, in the following pages, he voluntarily ascends the Cross – but at the same time invites the viewer to activate their spiritual senses, imagining the tactile sensation of touching the object. We will return to this aspect later in the text. The *Flight into Egypt* and *Christ among the Doctors* (fols. 4v-5r) – two of Mary's seven sorrows – mark Christ's passage from infancy to maturity, from a babe in swaddling clothes in need of parental protection, expressed in Mary's loving gesture





7. New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.643, Pacino di Bonaguida: *The Miracle at the wedding at Cana*, fol. 6r.

spiritual sense, of penance and faith in Christ, is also present. In many exegetical texts, Lazarus represents the archetypal sinner, and his resurrection is associated with the forgiveness of sins, following a similar process to that of Mary Magdalene<sup>40</sup>. The *Entry into Jerusalem* and the *Last Supper* (fols. 7v-8r), on the fifth day before Passover, introduce the theme of Christ as the Lamb of God, an allusion to the supreme sacrifice that is about to take place. The *Betrayal of Christ* (fig. 3) and *Christ before Pilate* (fols. 9v-10r), with the betrayal and the official act of condemnation, begin the Passion, which unfolds in the next two scenes, with the *Flagellation* and *Mocking of Christ* (fols. 10v-11r). The images of the raised rods with which Christ is about to be beaten, and of the horn played by the man on the left, evoke the raucous and confused din of the moment, triggering an almost physical disturbance in the viewer. The horn returns in the next image, creating a similar background sound for the scenes, with the *Road to Calvary* (fol. 11v). The climax thickens around the intertwined gazes of Mary and Christ, who turns back to meet his mother's eyes one last time (fig. 4). The intimate bond between the two is further emphasised by the position of the cross which, held by Christ, touches Mary's head with its crosspiece, almost as if Jesus and his mother shared the weight. And it is the cross, almost totemic in its monumental isolation, that is the protagonist of the next three scenes, with the *Christ ascending the Cross* (fol. 12r; fig. 5), and then the pair of the *Crucifixion* and the *Lamentation* (fols. 12v-13r). The *Crucifixion* is almost detached from the narrative and is transformed into an iconic, static image, suspended in time, which can be meditated on individually, isolated from its context. Blood spurts from the wounds on the hands and side of Christ, and pools at the foot of the cross, inviting the faithful to meditate

as she clasps the child to her breast, resting her cheek on his face, to a young man now aware of and master of his role. With the next two episodes, Christ's adult life begins. The *Baptism of Christ* and the *Miracle of Changing Water into Wine at Cana* (fols. 5v-6r) share the centrality of water in the double meaning of natural, tangible element and miraculous material, prelude to wine and therefore, in full, to the blood of Christ (figs. 6-7); the two episodes, not by chance, were often linked by the sources of the time, especially Franciscan ones<sup>38</sup>. The reference to water, once again in relation to the blood of Christ and the ultimate sacrifice, seems to return in the *Washing of the Feet* and in the *Agony in the Garden* (fols. 8v-9r), where the basin filled with water in the foreground of the first episode corresponds in the second to the figure of Christ kneeling and exuding copious streams of blood from his hands and feet (Luke 22:43-44), the moment that marks the start of the Passion<sup>39</sup>. But proceeding in order, after the *Miracle at Cana*, we see the *Supper in the house of the Pharisee*, with Mary Magdalene prostrate at Christ's feet and washing them with her hair, and the *Resurrection of Lazarus* (fols. 6v-7r), where the figure of the sinners par excellence is clearly the protagonist, but in which images, however, the idea of the healing power in a



8. New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.643, Pacino di Bonaguida: *Gerard Encouraging a Layman to Give Alms*, fol. 18v.

*Incredulity of Thomas* and the *Ascension* (fols. 16v-17r), Christ's earthly existence comes to an end. The extended finger of Thomas, plunged into the wound of Christ, who exposes it by raising his arm, dispels all scepticism and invites the faithful to exercise constant faith, to believe firmly in the Resurrection, and to find refuge in Christ in moments of despair<sup>41</sup>. In fol. 17v, the *Pentecost*, the apostles receive the gift of tongues and with it the mission to evangelise the peoples; the descent of the Holy Spirit marks the beginning of the Church, starting with the community of Jerusalem, or Jerusalemites (Acts 2:42-48). It is not surprising, therefore, that it is a member of the Order of Jerusalem, a Knight Hospitaller, that is Gerard, who is portrayed in the adjacent miniature (fol. 18r) as he distributes bread to the poor and feeds the needy, thus carrying out the mission that Christ had entrusted to the Apostles, here reinterpreted in a contemporary key, demonstrating that the Holy Spirit is still present in the community and guides the actions of enlightened individuals<sup>42</sup>. The mission continues in the subsequent scenes, where *Gerard encouraging a layman to give alms* (fig. 8), *Gerard Kneeling before an Altar* and *Gerard Preaching to a Group of People* (fols. 18v-19r) seem to address the viewer directly, with a manner that becomes more and more concrete and contemporary. Just like the knight in the miniature, the reader is ideally invited to offer alms to the poor and to pray to the Cross – the one in which, a few pages earlier, they saw Christ crucified, recognising here in the object placed on the altar the most eloquent, powerful, and significant simulacrum of the Christian faith. Finally, the scene of *Gerard and his coffin approached by the faithful* (fol. 19v; fig. 2) brings the story into a contemporary perspective, offering a link to the lived experience of the user, who may in turn have seen, or see, the relics of Blessed Gerard,

on the redeeming significance of the sacrifice. The empty cross in the adjacent miniature, still stained with the coagulated blood of the deposed Christ, stands isolated in the centre of the space, against the blue background of the sky, and has become a symbol par excellence (pl. VII). Below the cross, Mary weeps for her dead son, and Mary Magdalene joins in the mourning in a spontaneous, moving gesture of desperation, while the faces bent by grief induce empathic reactions in the observer. Thus, Christ's earthly life comes to an end, and the next two scenes, the *Resurrection* and the *Three Marys at the tomb* (fols. 13v-14r), in which the empty sarcophagus is the protagonist, make it definitively clear that he now belongs to another dimension. With the *Noli me Tangere* and the *Road to Emmaus* (fols. 14v-15r) Christ returns to the disciples who had followed him in life, and who now welcome him with a radically different attitude: Mary Magdalene recognises him instantly, while the two companions on their way to Emmaus remain totally unaware of his real identity. This will be revealed in the next two scenes, with the *Supper at Emmaus* and the *Apparition to the Apostles* (fols. 15v-16r), at first only to the disciples with whom Christ had just shared the journey, and then to his most faithful companions. With the

and together with them the throng of supplicants. *Moses preaching to the Israelites* closes the narrative (fol. 20r; fig. 1), and reminds the viewer of the need to follow the precepts, but also balances the biblical times and recalls the figure of Gerard preaching to the crowd, in fulfilment of one of the main duties of the Friars Minor.

The believer was therefore to meditate daily on these exemplary images in order to carry out a process which, starting from a sensory stimulus triggered by the physical perception of the object, and therefore the visual perception of the stories, would lead them through successive stages of abstraction until the final interiorisation of the contents. Aristotle had already claimed that «the soul never thinks without an image» (*De anima* III.7, 431<sup>a</sup>16-17), theorising that knowledge originates in a sensory input, which the intellect then processes through a complex cognitive act involving sequential steps of abstraction and imagination<sup>43</sup>. These theories were taken up, reinterpreted in a Christian key, and further developed by the scholastic theologians, and exemplary in this sense is the thought of Thomas Aquinas, condensed in the well-known parathetic axiom «Nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses» (*De veritate*, q. 2 a. 3 arg. 19)<sup>44</sup>, and in the concept of embodiment of knowledge<sup>45</sup>. In the *De anima* especially, he describes the perception and subsequent introjection of knowledge as an act that involves the body of the user and implies a change in its matter: the images of memory are literally imprinted in the mind and thus in the spirit of the faithful<sup>46</sup>, just as the signs of the Passion were imprinted in the heart of Clare of Montefalco. In this context, it is useful to recall that Michael Camille already drew attention to the repeated use of terms relating to the concept of impression, understood as the imprint left by an object on a support, in late-medieval theories on the physical effects of vision<sup>47</sup>; more recently, Gordon Rudy has shown how the language used by theologians changed drastically in the thirteenth century, welcoming new expressions linked to the body and the senses<sup>48</sup>.

These concepts spread rapidly and generated new spiritual practices, made available to the faithful through devotional literature, especially in the Franciscan sphere, and accessible to them. The *Meditationes Vitae Christi* and similar texts such as the *Stimulus amoris* by the Franciscan James of Milan, invite the faithful to meditate, imagining themselves in the episodes narrated, while ideally interacting with the characters, conversing with them, performing the same actions, experiencing the same sufferings, so as finally to reach an intimate union with Christ<sup>49</sup>. Reading the texts or observing the images passively, the authors warn, is not enough. An active cognitive effort is required of the faithful. The reading must be digested, ruminated on, memorised with a continuous ‘murmur’<sup>50</sup>. The story must be retraced, relived, and reenacted mentally over and over again, with the help of the mental images imprinted on the mind from the figurative media and the words of the text.

The distinction between physical, sensory experience and cognitive process was therefore rather fluid; the reception of a work of art, of images, as an integral part of an active devotional practice, was part of a complex system, in which the work of art triggered the mechanism that brought together body and spirit, physical perception and spiritual introjection. The mediation often took place through direct contact with the images, which could be touched, kissed, sometimes even partially ingested; Kathryn Rudy has shown how the surface of manuscripts often bears biological traces left behind by these practices repeated over time, including fatty, oily substances from the epidermis and sometimes saliva and tears<sup>51</sup>. Our codex, on the other hand, bears no traces of wear and tear attributable to similar practices, and the illuminated images in particular are in excellent condition<sup>52</sup>, suggesting that the user merely experienced them visually, fixing them in their memory and imprinting them on their spirit, avoiding any form of direct contact. The only evidence of physical interaction with the codex can be seen on the lower outer margins of the folios (which, it should be remembered, do not appear trimmed), and are clearly attributable to the act of handling the book, leafing through it, and holding it open. More substantial traces can be seen on some of the folios, particularly those relating to the crucial moments of the Passion, with the pairs of the *Flagellation* and *Mocking of Christ* (fols. 10v-11r), *Christ carrying the Cross* and *Christ ascending the Cross* (fols. 11v-12r; figs. 4-5),



and finally the *Crucifixion* and the *Lamentation* (fols. 12v-13r; pl. VII), clearly indicating the beholder's predilection for these images.

In recent contributions, Francesca Manzari reiterated how, from the thirteenth century onwards, the new requirements for the use of sacred texts, linked in particular to forms of devotion and individual meditation, stimulated the production of new types of books, in which the central role assigned to illuminated images is unprecedented, to the point that they sometimes become autonomous instruments with respect to the text<sup>53</sup>. Pacino's manuscript discussed here, whether it began life as a picture-book from the outset or was deprived of the text at a later date, is an important part of this cultural and devotional context, of which it is one of the most representative products.

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1) The events are extensively narrated by the hagiographer Berengario: M. FALOCI-PULIGNANI, *La vita di Santa Chiara da Montefalco scritta da Berengario di Sant'Africano*, 'Archivio Storico per le Marche e per l'Umbria', 1 (1884), pp. 557-625, and 2 (1885), pp. 193-266; A. SEMENZA, *Vita Sanctae Clarae de Cruce O.E.S.A. ex codice Montisfalconesi saec. XIV desumpta*, Città del Vaticano 1944; L. SALA – S. NASSI, *Berengario di Donadio, Vita di Chiara da Montefalco*, Roma 1991. On the practices of preserving and preparing corpses in the Middle Ages, which often involved autopsies functional to the removal of internal organs and subsequent embalming, see R. SCHMITZ-ESSER, *The Corpse in the Middle Ages: Embalming, Cremating, and the Cultural Construction of the Dead Body*, London 2020.

2) One example is the case of Margaret of Città di Castello, who literally carried in her heart, as was discovered during an autopsy following her death, three precious stones decorated with images of the Holy Family, on which she used to meditate daily. For a historical analysis of this case, but also for more general reflections on this type of phenomenon, see: C. WARR, *Re-reading the Relationship between Devotional Images, Visions, and the Body: Clare of Montefalco and Margaret of Città di Castello*, 'Viator', 38/1 (2007), pp. 217-249.

3) *Angela of Foligno's Memorial*, edited by C. Mazzoni, Cambridge 1999, p. 32.

4) *Ibidem*, p. 52.

5) WARR, *Re-reading the Relationship* cit., p. 218.

6) Here I quote the bibliography on the manuscript as a whole, referring the literature devoted to specific aspects of the work and its author in the notes below: *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300-1450*, exhibition catalogue (New York, 17 November 1994-26 February 1995), edited by L.B. Kanter – B. Drake Boehm – C. Brandon Strehlke – G. Freuler – C.C. Mayer Thurman – P. Palladino, New York 1994, no. 3, pp. 51-55 (B. Drake Boehm); *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance. Painting and Illumination, 1300-1350*, exhibition catalogue (Los Angeles, 13 November 2012-20 February 2013), edited by C. Sciacca, Los Angeles 2012,

no. 36, pp. 188-192 (C. Sciacca); C. SCIACCA – M. FREDERICKS, *Pacino di Bonaguida's Picture Book. Commentary Volume to the Facsimile Edition of the Manuscript MS M.643 in The Morgan Library & Museum in New York*, New York 2015.

7) For the benefit of the reader, it should be said that all the sheets of the codex are digitised and available for viewing on the manuscript page of the Morgan Library & Museum website: <https://www.themorgan.org/collection/life-of-christ/141641/thumbs> (this and all the following links were last accessed on 25 November 2022).

8) This type of work had a certain popularity in the Middle Ages, and is attested for manuscripts of different kinds, with diverse audiences and functions. By way of example, three manuscripts are representative of the differences that existed: the picture-book of Madame Marie, intended for a woman of high rank, with elegant and precious miniatures of the biblical text (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Nouv. acq. fr. 16251); the picture-book in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (MS. 370), with exemplary images of saints in a cursive style, which the owner of the codex, the English monk Richard, mentioned in an inscription at the beginning of the manuscript, used in the course of his devotional practices; finally, the *Martirologio dei Battuti Neri di Ferrara*, enriched at a later date with portions of text, and intended for the comfort of the condemned to whom the confraternity dedicated itself (Venice, Fondazione Cini, inv. 2501/2). On these manuscripts see, respectively: *Le livre d'images de Madame Marie: reproduction intégrale du manuscrit Nouvelles acquisitions françaises 16251 de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, edited by A. Stones, Paris 1997; P. BINSKI – S. PANAYOTOVA, *The Cambridge Illuminations: Ten Centuries of Book Production in the Medieval West*, London – Turnhout, 2005, no. 75, pp. 183-184 (P. Binski); *Le miniature della Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Pagine, ritagli, manoscritti*, a cura di M. Medica – F. Toniolo, Cinisello Balsamo 2016, no. 118, pp. 321-333 (C. Guarnieri).

9) Dionora Corsi, for example, has proposed that the miniatures originally belonged to an Evangelary or a Psalter, the latter in relation to the presence of the figure of David at the opening of the codex: D. CORSI, *Gherardo da Vilamagna. Storia di una leggenda*, in *La terra benedetta. Religiosità e tradizioni nell'antico territorio di Ripoli*, catalogo della mostra (Bagno a Ripoli, maggio-settembre 1984), a cura di S. Guerrini, Firenze 1984, pp. 47-86: 48. Christine Sciacca notes, however, that David does not hold the musical instrument with which he is depicted in Psalters, and is instead shown in a standing position, with scroll and halo, details that in her view contrast with

the hypothetical belonging of the miniature to a Psalter; C. SCIACCA, *Scenes from the Life of Christ and the Life of the Blessed Gerard of Villamagna (MS M. 643)*, in SCIACCA – FREDERICKS, *Pacino di Bonaguida's Picture Book* cit. Maria Fredericks, following extensive diagnostic investigations on the manuscript, states that it is impossible to say, at the present time and on the basis of the existing evidence, whether the work be complete as it appears today or not: M. FREDERICKS, *Technical Features of the Manuscript and Evidence of a Fourteenth-Century Italian Binding*, *Ibidem*, pp. 65-72. Francesca Manzari, for her part, states firmly that «The codex, completely devoid of text, seems to be a picture-book of private and devotional destination, since its small size does not suggest that it could be a fragment of the illustration of a liturgical book, such as an Evangelary» (the translation provided here is my own); F. MANZARI, *La miniatura nel secolo di Giotto*, in *Giotto e il Trecento: 'Il più Sovrano Maestro stato in dipintura'. I saggi*, catalogo della mostra (Roma, 6 marzo-29 giugno 2009), a cura di A. Tomei, Roma 2009, pp. 271-289: 278-279.

10) Sotheby, Saibanti and Canonici Manuscripts. *A Catalogue of a Singularly Rare Collection of Manuscripts, on Paper and Vellum in the Oriental, Hebrew, Latin and Italian languages [...] sold by Order of the present Proprietor, by Mr. Sotheby* (London, 26 February 1821). See FREDERICKS, *Technical Features* cit.

11) Ashburnham bought the codex in 1861; in 1897 it was sold to Henry Yates Thompson; SCIACCA, *Scenes from the Life of Christ* cit., pp. 13-14.

12) FREDERICKS, *Technical Features* cit., p. 69.

13) R. OFFNER, *Studies in Florentine Painting. The Fourteenth Century*, New York 1927, pp. 12-16. According to Christine Sciacca, each of the three quires is the product of a different illuminator working under Pacino, while the individual images of the biblical characters could be the work of a fourth artist, also a member of Pacino's workshop: SCIACCA, *Scenes from the Life of Christ* cit., pp. 15-16; on the organisation of Pacino's workshop, see also EADEM, *Pacino di Bonaguida and his Workshop, in Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance* cit., pp. 285-303.

14) On the use of colours as memory aids, see: M. CARRUTHERS, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge 2008<sup>2</sup>, pp. 166-168.

15) The figure of Abbot Celotti has recently been the subject of in-depth investigation by Anne-Marie Eze, starting with her doctoral thesis: *Abbé Luigi Celotti (1759-1843): Connoisseur, Dealer, and Collector of Illuminated Miniatures*, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, London 2010; see also, by the same scholar: *Abbé Celotti and the Provenance of Antonello da Messina's 'The condottiere' and Antonio de Solario's 'Virgin and Child with St John'*, 'The Burlington Magazine', 151 (2009), 1279, pp. 673-677; *Abbé Luigi Celotti and the Sistine Chapel Manuscripts*, 'Rivista di Storia della miniatura', 20 (2016), pp. 139-154. Some useful further reflections are offered in: F. TONIOLO, *Le miniature della Fondazione Giorgio Cini*, in *Le miniature della fondazione Giorgio Cini* cit., pp. 11-65: 14-20.

16) The main sources on the life of the blessed are: O. MONZECCHI, *Vita del b. Gherardo da Villamagna*, Firenze 1709; G.M. BROCCHI, *Vita di S. Gherardo da Villamagna*, Lucca 1750; *Compendio della vita di san Gherardo da Villamagna presso Firenze recentemente ammesso al pubblico solenne culto dei santi dal regn. sommo p. Gregory XVI*, Firenze 1834. See also CORSI, *Gherardo da Villamagna* cit.; L. CORTI, *Santi ed eroi: l'immaginario dei cavalieri Gerosolimitani*, in *Lungo il tragitto crociato della vita*, catalogo della mostra (Venezia, 2000), a cura di L. Corti, Venezia 2000, pp. 201-227: 214-215; L.B. KANTER, *Der selige Gerhard von Villamagna im Florenz des*

14. Jahrhunderts: öffentlicher Kult oder private Frömmigkeit?, in *Zeremoniell und Raum in der frühen italienischen Malerei*, Ergebnisse eines internationalen Symposiums (Berlin, 21-23 October 2004), herausgegeben von S. Weppelmann, Petersberg 2007, pp. 184-193; E. FAINI, *Da Bagno a Ripoli a Firenze (e ritorno)*, in *Alle porte di Firenze. Il territorio di Bagno a Ripoli in età medievale*, Atti del Convegno (Bagno a Ripoli, 26 ottobre 2006), a cura di P. Pirillo, Roma 2008, pp. 41-56: 53-56.

17) Giuseppe Maria Brocchi claimed to have seen the body of Blessed Gerard, and asserted that it was still marked at the knees by enormous calluses due to his repeated pilgrimages; BROCCHI, *Vita di S. Gherardo* cit., p. 265.

18) G. BOCCACCIO, *Decameron*, a cura di V. Branca, Milano 2006, VI/10, p. 546; F. SACCHETTI, *Il Trecentonovelle*, a cura di D. Puccini, Torino 2008, CI, p. 290; IDEM, *Opere*, a cura di A. Chiari, Bari 1936-1938, Lettere XI, 101, 25, II, pp. 99-104.

19) G. GIURA, *Il Crocifisso di Donatello e la cappella del Beato Gherardo da Villamagna in Santa Croce: indagini per una ricostruzione*, in *Santa Croce. Oltre le apparenze*, a cura di A. De Marchi – G. Piraz, Pistoia 2011, pp. 73-111.

20) CORSI, *Gherardo da Villamagna* cit. pp. 52-53; KANTER, *Der selige Gerhard von Villamagna* cit.

21) G. CARROCCI, *I dintorni di Firenze*, II, Roma 1968, pp. 28-29.

22) G. KAFTAL, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting*, Florence 1952, no. 132, pp. 448-449. For an up-to-date list see Index of Medieval Art: <https://theindex.princeton.edu/s/SimpleSearchWorksOfArt.action>.

23) G. BOSTO, *Istoria della sacra religione et ill.ma militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano. Parte Prima. Di nuovo ristampata, e dal medesimo autore ampliata e illustrata*, Roma 1621, p. 619; CORTI, *Santi ed eroi* cit., p. 214.

24) A. DERBES, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant*, Cambridge – New York 1996, pp. 35-71.

25) *Ibidem*, pp. 113-137.

26) *Ibidem*, p. 133.

27) *Ibidem*.

28) *Ibidem*.

29) M. BOSKOVITS, *Un opera probabile di Giovanni di Bartolomeo Cristiani e l'iconografia della "Preparazione alla Crocifissione"*, 'Acta Historiae Artium', 11/2 (1964), pp. 69-94; IDEM, *Un dipinto poco noto e l'iconografia della preparazione alla Crocifissione*, in IDEM, *Immagini da meditare: ricerche su dipinti di tema religioso nei secoli XII-XV*, Milano 1994, pp. 189-231; C. HECK, *L'échelle céleste dans l'art du Moyen Âge: une image de la quête du ciel*, Paris 1997, p. 173; M.G. FACHECHI, 'Stairway to Heaven': l'immagine di Cristo che salita la croce nei codici liturgici medievali tra Oriente e Occidente, 'Rivista di Storia della miniatura', 11 (2007), pp. 31-38.

30) A. EÖRSI, *Haec scala significat ascensum virtutum. Remarks on the Iconography of Christ Mounting the Cross on a Ladder*, 'Arte Cristiana', 85 (1997), pp. 151-166.

31) H. FLORA, *The Devout Belief of the Imagination. The Paris Meditationes Vitae Christi and Female Franciscan Spirituality in Trecento Italy*, Turhout 2009, p. 101. On the connection between Francis and Moses in Franciscan Literature: J.V. FLEMING, *From Bonaventure to Bellini: An Essay in Franciscan Exegesis*, Princeton 1983.

32) The comparison can be found in several passages: for example, BONAVENTURE, *The Soul's Journey Into God, The Tree of Life, and the Life of Saint Francis*, translated by Ewert Cousins, Mahwah 1978, p. 248.

33) The bibliography on the *Meditationes* is very vast; I will limit myself here to indicating the main contributions: FLORA, *The Devout Belief* cit.; S. McNAMER, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compass*

sion, Philadelphia 2010, pp. 86-115; EADEM, *The Debate on the Origins of the Meditationes Vitae Christi: Recent Arguments and Prospects for Future Research*, 'Archivum Franciscanum Historicum', 111 (2018), pp. 65-112; *Le Meditationes Vitae Christi in volgare secondo il codice Paris, BnF, en. 115. Edizione, commentario e riproduzione del corredo iconografico*, a cura di D. Dotto – D. Falvay – A. Montefusco, Venezia 2021; A. MONTEFUSCO, *Arctissima paupertas. Le Meditationes Vitae Christi e la letteratura francescana di inizio Trecento*, Spoleto 2021.

34) H. FLORA, *Cimabue and Early Italian Devotional Painting*, New York 2006, p. 29; *Painting and illumination* cit., no. 3, p. 55 (B. Boehm); *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance* cit., no. 36, pp. 191-192 (C. Sciacca); SCIACCA, *Scenes from the Life of Christ* cit., p. 13.

35) *Painting and illumination* cit., no. 3, p. 55 (B. Boehm); *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance* cit., no. 36, pp. 191-192 (C. Sciacca); SCIACCA, *Scenes from the Life of Christ* cit., p. 13.

36) On Pacino see at least, in addition to what has already been mentioned in the previous notes: M. BOSKOVITS, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting, III.9. The Fourteenth Century. The Painters of the Miniaturist Tendency*, Florence 1984, pp. 48-54, 254-272; A. LABRIOLA, *Pacino di Bonaguida*, in *Dizionario biografico dei miniatori italiani, secoli IX-XVI*, a cura di M. Bollati, Milano 2004, pp. 841-843; G.Z. ZANICHELLI, *Pacino di Bonaguida: un protagonista della miniatura fiorentina*, 'Alumina', 5/18 (2007), pp. 24-33; F. PASUT, *Pacino di Bonaguida e le miniature della Divina Commedia: un percorso tra codici poco noti*, in *Da Giotto a Botticelli. Pittura fiorentina tra Gotico e Rinascimento*, Atti del Convegno (Firenze 21-21 maggio 2005), a cura di F. Pasut – J. Tripps, Firenze 2008, pp. 41-62; S. PANAYOTOVA, *New Miniatures by Pacino di Bonaguida in Cambridge*, 'The Burlington Magazine', 151/1272 (2009), pp. 144-148; L. ALIDORI BATTAGLIA, *Due manoscritti inediti della bottega di Pacino di Buonaguida*, 'Rivista di Storia della miniatura', 13 (2009), pp. 62-72; Y. SZAFRAN – N. TURNER, *Techniques of Pacino di Bonaguida: Illuminator and Panel Painter*, in *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance* cit., pp. 335-359; C. SCHMIDT PATTERSON – A. PHOENIZ – K. TRENTIELMAN, *Scientific Investigation of Painting Practices and Materials in the Work of Pacino di Bonaguida*, *Ibidem*, pp. 361-371; F. PASUT, *La Bibbia Trivulziana di Pacino di Bonaguida. La decorazione miniata del codice Trivulziano 2139: una impresa di équipe*, 'Libri & Documenti', 39 (2013), pp. 27-69.

37) A. SPAGNESI, *Appunti sui codici miniati che riportano la versione toscana della Somme le Roi di Zuccherò Bencivenni*, in *Il codice miniato: rapporti tra codice, testo e figurazione*, Firenze 1992 (*Storia della miniatura. Studi e documenti*, 7), pp. 337-362; 347-348; G. CITTON, *Immagine e testo: le miniature della Somme le Roi e la loro tradizione italiana*, 'Cultura neolatina', 54 (1994), pp. 263-302; *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance* cit., no. 40, pp. 201-203 (A. Terry-Frytsch); *Onorevole e antico cittadino di Firenze. Il Bargello per Dante*, catalogo della mostra (Firenze, 21 aprile-31 luglio 2021), a cura di L. Azzetta – S. Chiodo – T. De Robertis, Firenze 2021, no. 18, pp. 174-177 (S. Chiodo).

38) As Anne Derbes has argued, the parallelism dates back to early Christian times and was also mentioned in the rite of blessing the baptismal water. Later, the belief that the wedding at Cana was celebrated exactly one year after Christ's baptism, i.e. on the day of the Epiphany, became widespread, and the three events, known as *tria miracula*, began to be closely associated in Franciscan texts (notably in some sermons of St Anthony of Padua, in Bonaventure's *Commentary on John*, and in the *Meditationes*), and then in the antiphon *Tribus miraculis*

that was recited on the eve of the Epiphany: A. DERBES, *Ritual, Gender & Narrative in Late Medieval Italy. Fina Buzzacarini and the Baptistry of Padua*, Turnhout 2020, pp. 175-176.

39) The verse from Matthew (26:39), which relates Christ's words to the Father («O my Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt»), was widely commented on by theologians, and read in reference to the Passion and the Eucharistic cup; in a sermon by Augustine, for example, we read «Which chalice, if not of humility, if not of the passion?». Augustine, *Sermon CLX, PL 38*, col. 875; DERBES, *Ritual, Gender & Narrative* cit., p. 187.

40) See A. DERBES – M. SANDONA, *The Usurer's Heart: Giotto, Enrico Scrovegni, and the Arena Chaaapel in Padua*, University Park 2008, pp. 132-133.

41) The wounds of Christ were an object of worship in the Middle Ages, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they became autonomous images of devotion, especially for individuals, reproduced in manuscripts and woodcuts. Reiterating the gesture of Thomas, the faithful were invited to touch the wounds, and sometimes to kiss them, reciting certain prayers and performing acts of penance. On these aspects, see: L. FLORA, *The Wound of Christ's Side and the Instruments of Passion: Gendered Experience and Response, in Women and the Book. Addressing the Visual Evidence*, edited by L. Smith – J.H.M. Taylor, London 1996, pp. 204-229; C.W. BYNUM, *Christian Materiality. An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*, New York 2015, pp. 65, 82-101; V. OLSON, *Penetrating the Void: Picturing the Wound in Christ's Side as a Performative Space, in Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Culture*, edited by L. Tracy – K. DeVries, Leiden 2015, pp. 313-339.

42) On the importance of these actions in the mendicant context, and their frequent depiction, see: J. CANNON, *Panem petant in signum paupertatis: The Image of the Quest for Alms Among the Friars of Central Italy*, in *Armut und Armenfürsorge in der italienischen Stadtkultur zwischen 13. und 16. Jahrhundert: Bilder, Texte und Soziale Praktiken*, herausgegeben von P. Helas – G. Wolf, Frankfurt am Main 2006, pp. 29-53.

43) CARRUTHERS, *The Book of Memory* cit., *passim*; M. KARNES, *Imagination, Meditation and Cognition in the Middle Ages*, Chicago – London 2011, pp. 23-61.

44) P.F. CRANFIELD, *On the Origins of the Phrase Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*, 'Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences', 25 (1970), pp. 77-80.

45) See A.J.P. KENNY, *Intellect and Imagination in Aquinas*, in IDEM, *Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Notre Dame 1976, pp. 273-296; S.M. COHEN, *St. Thomas Aquinas on the Immaterial Reception of Sensible Forms*, 'Philosophical Review', 91/2 (1982), pp. 193-209; M. TWEEDALE, *Origins of the Medieval Theory that Sensations is an Immaterial Reception of Forms*, 'Philosophical Topics', 2 (1992), pp. 215, 231; A.J.P. KENNY, *Aquinas on Mind*, London 1993, pp. 89-99; CARRUTHERS, *The Book of Memory* cit. pp. 69-73. In general, on the medieval theories of perception, elaborated within the scholastic framework on the basis of Aristotle and his early commentators: *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by S. Knuuttila – P. Kärkkäinen, Dordrecht 2008; P. KÄRKKÄINEN, *Internal Senses*, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, edited by H. Lagerlund, II, Dordrecht 2011, pp. 2111-2115; IDEM, *Sense Perception*, *Ibidem*, pp. 1182-1185; L. SPRUIT, *Species, Sensible and Intelligible*, *Ibidem*, pp. 1211-1215; S. KNUUTTILA – P. KÄRKKÄINEN, *Medieval Theories of Internal Senses*, in *Sourcebook for the History of the Philosophy of Mind. Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind*,

XII, edited by S. Knuuttila – J. Sihvola, Dordrecht 2014, pp. 131-145; D. PERLER, *Perception in Medieval Philosophy*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Perception*, Oxford 2015, pp. 51-65.

46) I borrow the definition of 'images of memory' from Lina Bolzoni, who has devoted exemplary studies to them; see at least, for the period of our interest: L. BOLZONI, *La rete delle immagini. Predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena*, Torino 2002. Moreover, on the relationship between theories of sensation, the construction of memory, and objects and artworks related to them, the works of Martina Bagnoli are in my opinion illuminating, and in particular: *A Feast for the Senses. Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*, exhibition catalogue (Baltimore, 16 October 2016-8 January 2017; Sarasota, 4 February-30 April 2017), edited by M. Bagnoli, New Haven 2016; M. BAGNOLI, *The Materiality of Sensation in the Art of the Late Middle Ages*, in *Knowing Bodies. Passionate Souls*, edited by S. Ashbrook – M. Mullet, Washington 2017, pp. 31-63. In addition to these, studies on the materiality of devotion in the Middle Ages and on the role of objects as mediators of the faithful's encounter with the divine should be kept in mind; without claiming to be exhaustive, see at least, with a previous bibliography: BYNUM, *Christian Materiality* cit.; B. PENTCHEVA, *Glittering Eyes: Animation in the Byzantine eikōn and the Western imago*, 'Codex aquilarensis', 32 (2016), pp. 209-236; C.W. BYNUM, *Dissimilar Similitudes: Devotional Objects in Late Medieval Europe*, New York 2020.

47) M. CAMILLE, *Before the Gaze. The Internal Senses in Late Medieval Practice of Seeing*, in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance. Seeing as Others Saw*, edited by R.S. Nelson, Cambridge – New York 2000, pp. 197-223: 209-211.

48) G. RUDY, *The Mystical Language of Sensation in the Later Middle Ages*, New York – London 2013.

49) On the *Meditationes* see above, note 33; on the *Stimulus amoris*: KARNES, *Imagination, Meditation* cit., p. 146-151.

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51) K.M. RUDY, *Dirty Books: Quantifying Patterns of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer*, 'Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art', 2 (2010), pp. 1-43; EADEM, *Eating the Face of Christ: Philip the Good and His Physical Relationships with Veronicas*, in *The European Fortune of the Roman Veronica in the Middle Ages*, edited by A. Murphy – H.L. Kessler – M. Petoletti – E. Duffy – G. Milanese, Brno 2017 (*Convivium, Supplementum*, 5) pp. 169-179; EADEM, *Touching the Book Again: The Passional of Abbess Kunigunde of Bohemia*, in *Codex und Material*, edited by P. Carmassi – G. Toussaint, Wiesbaden 2018 (*Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien*, 34), pp. 247-257.

52) FREDERICKS, *Technical Features* cit.

53) In the vast production of the scholar, see at least, with the previous bibliography mentioned there: F. MAN-

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New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, M.643

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Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, inv. 2501/2

#### Photographic credits

pl. VII, figs. 1-8: The Morgan Library and Museum, New York

#### Abstract

*Seeing with the Eyes of the Soul. Pacino di Bonaguida's Scenes from the Life of Christ and the Life of Blessed Gerard of Villamagna (New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, M.643)*

The purpose of this article is to investigate the mental and spiritual process of interiorization of the Passion imagery, the mechanism that permitted the transition from a material representation, experienced with the senses, to a mental image, impressed into the memory, then evoked and relived in a purely spiritual form. To do this, it will adopt a combined methodology, putting together the art-historical approach with investigative tools and theories developed in other fields of knowledge and recently integrated into the humanities following the cognitive, sensorial and material turns. The starting point of the investigation will be an illuminated manuscript, a picture-book produced by Pacino di Bonaguida around 1320 and currently preserved in New York (Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum, M.643). The codex contains a sequence of illustrations serving as meditation on the sacred event, and thus allows us to examine the practices and experiences of the faithful of the time from the material data.

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VII. New York,  
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Pacino di Bonaguida:  
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[Z. Murat]

