

Carved Sensations: Body, Cognition, and Meditation in Netherlandish Representations of 'Christ Sitting on the Cold Stone'

Between the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, a singular iconography known as *Christ Sitting on the Cold Stone* became popular in northern Europe. It depicts Christ almost naked, seated on a stone, waiting to be crucified and it mainly originated from apocryphal tales and devotional literature. My paper aims to examine the role played by Netherlandish sculptures of this image within processes of imagination and cognition inherent in meditations on Christ's Passion and practices of *Imitatio Christi*.

The episode stands out within the other moments of the cycle of the Passion, for Christ, left alone, has time to reflect on the fulfilment of his destiny. The body, the pose, and the sensation of cold reflect feelings of desolation, loneliness, and deep affliction, underscoring the tight connection between body and mind. Furthermore, the coldness of the stone is transferred to the body of Christ on contact. Therefore, at the peak of his humanity and abandonment, he experiences the sensation of cold, which is indeed in sharp contrast to the warmth of the divine fire that normally comforts the soul. Eventually, Christ is often depicted with his hands and feet tied, reinforcing a sense of helplessness and resignation to his fate. Simultaneously, this constraint, comprised in an haptic dimension, emphasizes Christ's still-human condition.

In conclusion, the paper aims to analyse the role of the body, cognition, and imagination during the beholding and contemplation of these sculptures. To do so, the study will take into account various aspects, including sacred writings, religious literature, iconography, and the materiality of the artworks.

Keywords: Passion meditation; Netherlands; Cold; Sculptures; Body.