The Writing on the Wall: Inscriptions and Descriptions of Carthusian Crucifixions in a Fifteenth-Century Passion Miscellany

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Typology, late medieval passion piety, the record of responses to images, monastic patronage, literature and spirituality in the fifteenth century, the relationship of German to Netherlandish painting, not to mention little known or overlooked illuminated manuscripts: these are just a few of the many areas in which James Marrow has made fundamental contributions in the course of his career. It is rare, however, that all these topics come together between the covers of a single manuscript. A late-fifteenth-century devotional miscellany from the Carthusian monastery of St. Margaretha in Basel (Öffentliche- und Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. A VIII 37) is just such a work. Unpublished apart from its brief description in Konrad Escher’s catalogue of illuminated manuscripts in the library’s collection, published in 1917, the manuscript is of greater interest for the history of late medieval painting than its single miniature, a Crucifixion, might initially indicate (fig. 1). In ways that could be taken as exemplifying the relationship between text and image in numerous manuscripts, the inscriptions that cover the Crucifixion both record and seek to dictate the viewer’s response. They also enter into a continuum with other texts in the manuscript, which comprehends not only pious tracts on the Passion, but also a record of inscriptions and tituli on wall paintings that once formed part of the visual environment in which the manuscript was both written and read. The miniature is but one in a series of images whose location can be reconstructed with precision and that structured the spirituality of their Carthusian viewers with the same rigor that characterized all other aspects of the Carthusian rule.

The miniature of the Crucifixion is inserted on a single leaf of parchment (fol. 57v) in the midst of a series of Passion devotions composed by the Carthusian Heinrich Arnoldi von Alfeld (1407–1487). Arnoldi’s meditations were copied by a fellow Carthusian, Johannes Gipsmüller, one of as many as six scribes who contributed to the compendium. Arnoldi also served as the manuscript’s corrector. More than most monks, Carthusians defined themselves as closed communities, and the manuscript testifies to a close collaboration among various members of the

catalogue of manuscripts in the A series, housed in the manuscript room in Basel. Escher (Die Miniaturen in den Basler Bibliotheken, 1917 [as in note 1]) identifies as many as six separate scribes in the manuscript. For further examples of the handwriting of Arnoldi and Gipsmüller, see A. Bruckner, (as in note 2). For example, on folios 119r, 139v, 150v, again, according to typescript catalogue (as in note 3).
monastery, raising the question as to whether the miniature itself might also be the work of a monastic craftsman. After a stint in Rome at the papal curia, Arnould acted as a notary at the Council of Basel, after which, in 1436, he entered the city’s Carthusian community of St. Margarethenal, of which he became prior in 1449, a post he held until his resignation for reasons of poor health in 1480. Jacob Louber, his successor (1480–1500), also left his mark on the manuscript in the form of a shelfmark (E 400) on the front flyleaf (ar). Louber himself was not a significant author, but nonetheless systematized the work of his predecessor according to five categories: writings on Christology (e.g., De passione Domini, De vita Christi, De mysterio redemptionis humanae dialogus inter Jesum et Mariam); on Mariology (De conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis, Lectiones et officia de visitacione BMV, Sermon de commissione BMV, Meditationes BMV); prayers; meditations organized according to the liturgical calendar; and writings on monastic life, which include a chronicle of the Carthusian monastery in Basel.5 The text into which the miniature is inserted bears the title Passio domini una ex QUATUOR CUM EXCEPTRS PATRIUM NECNON SUFFRAGIS (fols. 13r–69v). In combining Passion sequences from the four Gospels with excerpts from patristic authors, distributed according to the liturgical calendar, even as it contrasts monastic theologia mystica with scholastic learning, the little treatise adheres to two of Louber’s categories. The miniature itself sits in the midst of the texts for the hour of sext.

Perhaps added as an afterthought, the miniature nonetheless represents an intelligent insertion. In keeping with the authorities embedded in the surrounding text, one of its many inscriptions stems from a patristic source, a letter sent by Paulinus of Nola to Augustine of Hippo about 410. The text frames the Crucifixion in terms of penetrating vision: “Does this [Simeon’s prophecy] relate to her maternal feelings when she later at the time of the Passion stood by the cross, where the child of her own womb was nailed, and was herself pierced by the anguish of a mother’s heart? Was the sword that pierced her heart that sword formed by the cross, which before her very eyes had transfixed her Son of the flesh?”6 The inscriptions in the upper and lower margins carry the commentary further and are, for the most part, typological in character. The annotations in the upper margin combine two quotations, of which the first identifies itself as an excerpt from Luke 9:58: “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” As noted by James Marrow in his definitive study of Passion narrative and its biblical sources, this passage had been illustrated as early as the patristic period, the most famous example being a small scene in the Gospels of Saint Augustine of Canterbury.7 Marrow further observes that related imagery became especially common beginning in the fourteenth century, following the dissemination of the Vita Christi by the Carthusian Ludolph of Saxony.8 The continuation of the inscription in the upper margin derives from Lamentations 3:19 (“Remember my poverty, and

5. For the chronicle, see Basler Chroniken, vol. 1, ed. W. Vischer and A. Stern (Leipzig, 1872), 233–306.


8. Marrow, Passion Iconography (as in note 7), 168.
transgression, the wormwood, and the gall"), which was interpreted as referring to Christ's abjektion and suffering at the Crucifixion, in particular, the offering of the sop of vinegar.9

The inscriptions in the lower margin likewise offer a typological gloss on the image at the center, drawing on 2 Kings 2:14, 1 Chronicles 21:13, Isaiah 1:6, Lamentations 1:12 and 3:65 (see appendix 1). Of these quotations, the second—"I am on every side in a great strait: but it is better for me to fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are many, than into the hands of men"—is, as the scribe duly notes, a paraphrase of the first. Marrow observes that the third quotation ("From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein: wounds and bruises and swelling sores: they are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil") "represents perhaps the most important prophecy dealing with [Christ's] wounds per se."10 Familiar to modern readers from Handel's Messiah, not to mention the liturgy of Holy Week, the excerpts from Lamentations ("O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow; Thou shalt render them a recompense, O Lord, according to the works of their hands") represent "a first person affirmation of sorrow without equal" that "figures prominently in late medieval devotional literature."11 At the very bottom of the folio, an added tag ("Crucifixio memoria crucifigit omnia vitia") sums up the purpose of the image, indicating that meditation on the crucified Christ itself crucifies all vices.

In comparison to the garrulous Passion narrative of the later Middle Ages that Marrow, drawing on the work of Kurt Ruh and F. P. Pickering, demonstrated could be derived from Old Testament prophecies, the static Crucifixion in the Basel miscellany displays remarkable restraint.12 Instead of a "crowded Crucifixion" of a kind common in German art from the beginning of the fifteenth century, it is an image of striking simplicity.13 In a manner reminiscent of large-scale sculptural groups, the composition reduces the Crucifixion to a minimum, in keeping with the suprahistorical character denoted by the many inscriptions. Although the Evangelist's lifted left leg suggests that he strides toward the cross, his stiff right leg and the columnar quality conveyed by the broken, tubular folds of his garments lend him monumental stability. Other than the far end of Mary's outer garment, which disappears behind the edge of the frame, no element in the picture (other than the titulus) transgresses the border. The space indicated by the curving hillock is remarkably shallow; the short shadows suggest a strong source of illumination from above, which further flattens the stage on which Christ's sacrifice is enacted. Most of the shadows cluster around the cavities and contours of Christ's emaciated body, whose careful, graphic delineation contrasts with the dazzling white broad planes of the Virgin's mantle.

Within this carefully calculated image, the titulus stands out as anomalous. Not only does it protrude from the otherwise self-contained image, it is more casually drawn in light brown ink than the rest of the composition. Were it not for the inscription in the upper margin, which is integral to the image yet leaves room for the titulus lettering, one could conclude that the latter represents an addition. Such could be the case, however, only if the inscriptions had been added still later; but they are written in the same red pigment employed for the frame. This integration of text and image implies a corresponding identity of

10. Ibid., 44, 47-50, 51, 54, 117-18, 121, 135, 140, 141, and 196.
Christ's crucified body with the Logos to which Scripture is a living witness. The painter employs the same red pigment as the scribe, not only for the frame, but also for the bold, blood red of John's cloak and the wounds on Christ's body. In contrast to the brilliant yellow of the otherwise transparent nimbi crowning Mary and John, Christ's halo takes the form of three triple rays of red. Delicate flecks of blue on the otherwise unpainted parchment surface prevent the inscriptions within the frame from disturbing the overall sense of surface pattern and hint at the delicate atmospheric perspective suggested by the more pronounced application of blue in the narrow strip of sky above the horizontal arm of the cross. Although Mary and John both turn inward toward the corpus at the center, the fanning of their garments outward in polygonal patterns at either side of their bodies creates a simultaneous impression of frontality that is virtually symmetrical with respect to the picture plane. In addition to the titulus, which forms part of the same visual field as the inscription in the upper margin, the annotations in the margins are aligned, like the arms of the cross, according to a strict grid, a sober contrast to the curling banderoles found in many fifteenth-century paintings.

The inscriptions within the frame are similarly aligned and imply a comparable integration of image and text, the continuity of Christ's corpus with the words in which it is embedded. In contrast to the inscriptions outside the frame, most of which come from the Old Testament, those within the privileged space of the frame include quotations from the New Testament and reproduce words either spoken by or about Mary and John (at least as construed by Christian exegesis) or words spoken to or about them by God, an angel, and the High Priest Simeon. To the right of the Virgin Mary, we read, "Thou has wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse" (Song of Songs 4:9), a quotation that Christian exegesis commonly assigned to Christ himself, in reference to the wound in his side, but which in this instance applies equally well, regardless of gender, to the Virgin, who, in Simeon's words, was pierced as if by a sword, so great was her sorrow at the sight of Christ's crucifixion. There follows the most famous Gospel passage referring to Mary's sorrows: "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Luke 2:35). The mutual applicability of the inscription defines in a nutshell Mary's compassion with Christ, which, as noted by Otto von Simson, was elaborately developed in Carthusian spirituality.14

The importance of Mary's compassion in Carthusian writings easily explains the mix of texts in the miscellany, which combines Marian devotions and exempla with those focused on the Passion. For example, an excerpt from the Stimulus divini amoris (fols. 71v–73r), which immediately precedes the miniature, has its reader declare: "I will follow the steps of his most sweet mother, whose soul the sword of her son's Passion pierced; and being myself wounded, I will henceforward boldly speak unto her, and induce to do whatsoever I will have her."15 The reader puts himself in the place of the Christ Child suckling at Mary's breast: "And I will not only appear crucified with her Son, but, going to the manger, I will there lie like a little infant with him, that by that means I may suck of her breasts with her Son. I will there mingle the mother's milk with the Son's blood, and I will therewithal make a most delicious and delicate drink for me."16 What, one is compelled to ask, might an illustration of this passage have

14. O. G. von Simson, "Compassio and Co-Redemptio in Roger Van der Weyden's Descent from the Cross," Art Bulletin 35 (1953): 9–16. Inscribed in the narrow space between the Virgin and the vertical beam of the cross, and written as if proceeding from her mouth, a quotation from Daniel 12:5, originally spoken by Susanna as she is confronted by the elders, reads: "I am straightened on every side."


looked like? Late medieval representations of the Nativity commonly include an onlooking donor who joins Mary in her devotion, but none goes so far as to place the worshipper in the crib with Christ. Texts such as the *Stimulus divini amoris* serve as a reminder that, at least as far as a history of response is concerned, medieval onlookers saw more than meets the modern eye.

A further reminder of this sort confronts the reader right at the front of the miscellany, which opens with a paraphrase of Jordan of Quedlinburg's *Expositio dominicae passionis*, among the most popular Passion meditations of the later Middle Ages. Jordan's meditations begin with the injunction given by God to Moses (Exod. 25:40): "Look and make it according to the pattern, that was shewn thee in the mount" [*Inspice et fac secundum exemplar quod tibi in monte monstratum est*]. In Exodus, this command to shape and structure vision according to an example given by God forms part of the instructions concerning the fabrication of the Tabernacle, the Ark, and the other liturgical implements for the Temple. These were all considered archetypal images, and medieval justifications of imagery commonly appeal to their precedent. According to the typological pattern established by the inscriptions on the miniature, Mount Sinai becomes Golgotha and the exemplar to which the viewer's attention is directed, the crucified Christ.

In keeping with Paul's words in Hebrews 10:19-20 ("having therefore, brethren, a confidence in the entering into the Holies by the blood of Christ: A new and living way which he hath dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh"), the opening of Christ's wounds renders obsolete the veiled Holy of Holies.

In the miscellany in Basel, however, the compiler merely appropriates the opening of Jordan's meditation to introduce his own instructions on how to avoid the dangers posed by images. The perils and pitfalls that he has in mind include more than just the phantasms of the imagination, which Carthusian novices were regularly warned could distract and lead them astray. In terms reminiscent of the premises of negative theology, the reader is admonished to think of God as being neither this nor that (fol. 2r), not "big or small, large or short, white or black, here or there, existing in such a place or in another" [*ita ut non cogitetur rem magnam aut paruam, largam aut breuiter, albam aut nigra, hic aut ibi, in tali qui alio loco existentem*]. Nonetheless, in speaking of "how to pray in spirit without images" [*qualiter orandum et incunable: Lexemplaire alsacien des Soixante-cinq articles de Jourdain de Quedlinburg, Revue de l'art 145 (1964): 5-18.


21. See, e.g., the texts discussed by H. Rüthing, *Der Kartäuser Heinrich Egger von Kalten*, 1328-1408, Veröffentlichungen des Max-
tury witnessed the production of crucifixes in which Christ’s corpus was indeed naked. Regardless of whether he had such images in mind, the author’s concerns were not entirely abstract. He is at pains to make clear that he is not an iconoclast: “We nevertheless do not wish by this to reject visualizations of the work of our redemption, of the capture, shackling, mocking, spitting upon, flagellation, and Crucifixion of our lord Jesus Christ.” At issue is not the legitimacy of images per se, but rather how they should be viewed. In effect, what matters is that the viewer see beyond the body to the truth that lies behind it. As a model for this manner of seeing, the author points to the eucharistic Host, which appears to be one thing (a round wafer of white bread) but which the believing participant knows in faith to be another (the corpus Christi). The ultimate aim of images is to serve as stepping stones from the visible to the invisible: “And from these visible things we learn to pass in the mind to invisible things, from corporeal things to things spiritual.”

The viewer of the Basel miniature is confronted with a contradiction. The miniature represents both a distraction—hence, perhaps, the striking lack of illumination in most Carthusian manuscripts—and an exemplar. Its inscriptions serve as yet further instructions designed to keep the mind of the monk in his cell from wandering.

Complementing the inscriptions to either side of the Virgin, another pair frames John the Evangelist. Of these, the first employs words spoken to John in Apocalypse 2:10 by the “great voice, as of a trumpet” (“Be thou faithful unto death: and I will give thee the crown of life”) that refer to the mysterious moment in John’s Gospel (21:23) when Christ informs his beloved disciple that he “should not die,” but rather “remain till I come.” In evoking this verse, the miniature takes on an eschatological dimension that implicitly extends to all believers. Further testimony to Christ’s sacrifice comes in the form of his words as reported in John 15:13: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his soul for his friends.”

The inscriptions in the miniature in Basel form a continuum with the texts in the rest of the manuscript. Following the meditations on the Passion by Heinrich Arnoldi appears a series of exempla (fols. 70r-74v) on the Passion, some of which are taken from the early-thirteenth-century *Dialogus miraculorum* by the Cistercian Caesarius of Heisterbach. More than edifying stories, the exempla make the contents of the manuscript relevant to the experience of its monastic readers. The exempla are followed, in turn, by a separate series of twenty-one prayers on the Passion (fols. 77r-84r). Between these two sets of texts, written in several hands, the reader encounters a diptych (fols. 75v-76r), made up not of images but of texts,
written on the internal opening of an inserted bifolium (figs. 2–3).\(^2\) The text comprises many short passages, scattered across the surface. Most are quotations from Scripture. The remainder are in verse, German as well as Latin. The uppermost text on the opening verso identifies the entire ensemble as a transcription of the bilingual inscriptions that elaborated an image that once decorated one of the monastery’s cells. The paired pages mark a hiatus in the approximate middle of the manuscript, which in its entirety has 130 folios. Whereas the folios that precede the textual diptych are all devoted to the Passion, most (if not all) of those that follow take up other, related topics: in addition to the Passion prayers, a set of meditations on the Seven Joys of the Virgin (fols. 85r–100v); a Marian exemplum, also Cistercian in origin (fol. 100v); an Ars moriendi (fols. 101r–116v), in which the reader, having mediated on Christ’s mortality, can meditate on his own; and, finally, after a break of two folios (fols. 117r–118v), a short Tractatus de cottidiano holocausto spiritualis exerciti.\(^3\)

The treatise, which the miscellany assigns...

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2. Georg Zimmermann, transcription of the inscriptions in the mural of the Living Cross commissioned by Peter Wolfer, early 16th century, Basel, Öffentliche- und Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. A VIII 37, fol. 75v.

3. Georg Zimmermann, transcription of the inscriptions in the mural of the Living Cross commissioned by Peter Wolfer, early 16th century, Basel, Öffentliche- und Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. A VIII 37, fol. 76r.

29. For a transcription of folios 75v–76r, see appendix 1.

30. The Marian exemplum, which is drawn from Caesarius of Heisterbach’s Dialogus miraculorum, ed. Josephus Strange, 2 vols. (Cologne, Bonn, and Brussels, 1851), vol. 2, bk. VII, chap. 50, 70–73, is in accord with the Ars moriendi text that follows in that it relates ‘de monacho, quem sancta maria desolacibatur ante
The treatise defines itself as a "formula spiritualiter vivendi edita pro nouiter conversis ad religionem a uenerabili patre heinrici de kalkar prior ordinis Cartusiensis" (fol. 197r).

Even if the miscellany itself was not intended for novices, its contents were intended to aid in their instruction. The same holds true for the inscriptions in the image that the central opening transcribes: whereas those on the left "wing" (i.e., the verso) are exclusively in Latin and reproduce the inscriptions that one Peter Wolfer commissioned from a secular priest and that were included in a Crucifixion that stood next to the cell that he paid for (Typus Crucifixi iuxta Cellam Monachus per quendam sacerdotem secularem s. dominum Petrum Wolfer illic depingi procuratus insinuans hec mysteria), those on the right "wing" (i.e., the facing recto) identify themselves as the same types elaborated in vernacular rhymes (Idem typus sub rythmis Linguae vernaculae). The manuscript not only documents or comments on the mural, it echoes its bilingual character.

In fact, the content of the two folios is not identical, though this is implied by the inscription at the head of folio 76r. To begin with, the inscriptions on the verso are far more extensive than those on the facing recto. There are also linguistic differences. Although the inscriptions on the verso refer to the presence of the vernacular, indicating that in the original from which they were copied, they were, at least in part, accompanied by translations or glosses in German (cum hec sunt

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33. For a full transcription of the text, which is itself a transcription, see appendix 1.
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verba ex Interpretatione lingue germanice], all the transcriptions are in Latin, the majority from scriptural sources that, as in the miniature on folio 57v, are largely typological in content. In contrast, on the more sparsely inscribed facing folio in vernacular rhyme, Latin tags are expanded in German couplets. For example, the label "Fides coronans" [Faith crowning], which characterized the action of a personification of Faith in the image, is glossed in German as "Die Judischeit wirt gehônet / Die Christenheit wirt gekrônet" [Judaism is scorned, Christianity is crowned].

This anti-Jewish verbal imagery, to which the actual images lent a sharper, anti-Semitic edge, combined with the indication of a personification of a Christian virtue engaged in the activity of crowning, immediately identifies the image from which the inscriptions were taken as a previously unrecorded example of a relatively rare iconographic type known as the Living Cross.36 Excluding the lost mural in Basel, thirty-eight examples have been identified.37 Images of this type, which appear to have originated in the fourteenth century, perhaps in Italy, prior to having been disseminated north of the Alps, show the Crucifixion, not as a narrative, but rather as a eucharistic allegory of salvation, with the cross serving as a divider between personifications of Ecclesia and Synagoga and, more generally, the blessed and the damned.38 The cross, far from being a prop, takes an active role in the form of hands bearing attributes that emerge from all four of its extremities.

No two extant examples of this image are identical, and the lost example in Basel appears to have been no exception. This variability itself gives the lie to accepted notions of an iconographic type. The type is at best a formula that allows or invites variations on a theme. Elements common to many, if not all, incarnations of the image, however, are the actions of the hands. The hand appended to the bottom of the vertical beam hammers the door to hell. The miscellany in Basel describes this action as "beneath the trunk, the hand and hammer striking signifying death by which all things are bound" [Subtus stipitem manus et malleo percutiens significans morte qui omnibus debet] and reproduces a short tag from Hosea 13:14, "O death, I will be thy death," which can also be found in other examples of the image.39 The hands that are grafted onto the left and right extremities of the horizontal beam batter Synagoga and crown Ecclesia. The right hand [Dextra benedicens] takes Ecclesia as its bride [Tanquam sponsam secoravit me corona. Isaie 61. Vel sicut textus huius quasi sponsum decoratum corona].

In his recent article on the iconography of the Living Cross, which he aptly characterized as the "avenging crucifix," Achim Timmermann suggests that "of the many late medieval visual allegories centered on the crucifix, that of the so-called Living Cross [Lebendes Kreuz] probably required the least theological erudition."40 Timmermann's assertion requires qualification. In the Carthusian mural in Basel, the inclusion of German transla-


37. Timmermann ("The Avenging Crucifix") lists the seven examples discovered since the thirty described by Füglister in Das Lebende Kreuz (both as in note 36).

38. Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix"; these relationships were discussed to some extent by O'Reilly, Iconography of the Virtues and Vices (both as in note 36).

39. Füglister, Das Lebende Kreuz (as in note 36); see, e.g., p. 75.

40. Timmermann, "The Avenging Crucifix" (as in note 36).
tions and paraphrases of the Latin inscriptions suggests that no matter how familiar its component parts, taken as a whole, its arcane, unfamiliar imagery required explanation. The inscriptions do not correspond with those found in any of the other surviving examples, none of which, in turn, reproduces another. A remarkably labile image, the staurological allegory of the Living Cross, rooted in exegesis of Ephesians 3:18 ("You may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth"), was readily adaptable to the requirements of various contexts, be it a monastery or a parish church. If anything, the image is characterized by a kind of inscribed overdetermination: it seeks to explain too much.

As noted by Timmermann, the violence embodied in and enacted by the allegory of the Living Cross was aimed at perceived enemies of Catholicism, principally Jews and heretics. The inscriptions from the Carthusian mural ally it with this insidious invective and give a particular inflection to the quotation from Lamentations 3:65 that provides part of the gloss on the miniature of the Crucifixion ("Thou shalt render them a recompense, O Lord, according to the works of their hands"). The Living Cross, however, was also a strongly penitential image. This may have been especially true of the Carthusian example, which, as its inscriptions clearly indicate, combined the iconography of the Living Cross with that of Christ crucified by the Virtues. Only one other extant example combines these two equally rare iconographic types, a drawing in the so-called "spiritual encyclopedia" in Rome (Biblioteca Casanatense, Ms. 1404, fol. 28v).

Like the allegation of the Living Cross, the conceit of Christ crucified by the Virtues was also variable, be it in the number and disposition of Virtues or in the inscriptions that defined their actions. To judge from the inscriptions, in the mural from St. Margaret in Basel, Mercy perseveringly drove the nail into Christ's right hand [Misericordia infinges clavum manu dextree], saying [sic loquitur], as she did so, "Iram dei patris alligo / Christo quem cenafigo" [I shake the anger of God the Father, I transfix with Christ]. Justice nails Christ's left hand, fastening the nail lightly [Iusticia clavum infigens leve sic inquit; Christus pro pectore torquitur]; Christ was tortured on account of sin. Inspired by the same verse in the Song of Songs 4:9 in the manuscript's miniature of the Crucifixion [Vulnerasti cor meum], Charity thrusts the lance into Christ's side [Charitas latus eius perforans. Irigens hec Jesu tua charitas / Qua sanguinem pro nobis sudexas (Charity piercing his side, O Jesus, your charity flooding this / With the blood that you perspired for us)]. Hope appears to have beaten Christ's body [Spes Crucifixum trecumplectens. Iste meus processor / Quem modo complector (Hope beating the crucified)]. Patience nailed

41. Ibid.
42. Witness its kinship with the image of the "Mönch am Kreuz," based, in part, on an exemplum in Caesarius of Heisterbach, Dialogus miraculorum (as in note 30), vol. 2, bk. VIII, chap. 19 (De crucifixione religiosorum), 96-97; which, based on Galatians 2:19 ("Christo confixi sumus cruci"), defines the virtues that constitute adherence to the monastic rule as a form of imitatio Christi. See K. Dziatzko, "Bibliographische Untersuchungen, t: "Mönch am Kreuz" (Einblattdruck)," in Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Schrift-, Buch- und Bibliothekswesens 3 (Leipzig, 1896), 1-8; L. Krettenbacher, "Der Mönch am Kreuz: Ein Meditationsbild der frühen Mönchszeit in Ost und West," in Bilder und Legenden: Erwundertes und erlebtes Bilder-Denken und Bild-Erzählen zwischen Byzanz und dem Abendlande, Aus Forschung und Kunst 13 (Klagenfurt, 1971), 129-49; and P. Eissermann, "Medienwechsel-Medi-
44. See Fuglister in Das Lehende Kreuz (as in note 96), 32-35 and plate VI. For the localization of the manuscript in Rome to Erfurt ca. 1440-1450, see Nigel F. Palmer and Klaus Speckenbach, Träume und Kräsur: Studien zur Petronellerk, Circa instanti-Handschrift und zu den deutschen Traumbüchern des Mittelalters. Pictura et Poesis, vol. 4 (Cologne and Vienna 1990), 24-28.
Christ's feet to the cross [Patientia clavum pedibus infingen. Ihesu vinea patientia / Peccatori datur venia (Patience driving the nail into the feet)], while Humility held Christ tightly [Humilitas tenens Iesum stipatis. Christus humilitate sua grandi / Pro nobis dignabatur pati (Humility holding Jesus by the trunk / he was worthy to suffer on our account)]. The German verses and the Latin tags to which they are attached characterize these actions and would have been supplemented further still by devotional texts such as those found in the Passion miscellany.

An additional inscription, placed along the horizontal ruling line at the bottom of folio 75v [Semper a peccatoris mundi nos fons pietatis], identifies itself as the prayer of the priest who authored the typological verses [praecatio sacerdotis et authoris huius typi] and further suggests that the image may also have incorporated elements of yet another iconographic type, that of the cross as a fons pietatis. Images of this kind usually showed the cross emerging from a fountain, rather like a baptismal font, which identified the cross as the source of salvation. Finally, the mural appears to have included around the base of the cross portraits of the patron's family, praying for their salvation [Rythmi parentum D. Petri Wolfers circa pedem Crucifixi praecantium. Durch dins todes bitterkeit / Gib vnns Christ ewig selikeit]. To the extent that the arrangement of the transcriptions on folios 75v–76r reflects their original disposition within the mural, they provide a guide to its layout and organization. Nonetheless, just how all these elements were combined in a single image is difficult to imagine.

The transcriptions stem from the same hand that glossed the miniature of the Crucifixion. On the basis of comparison with other manuscripts from the library of the Carthusians in Basel, the scribe can be identified as Georg Zimmermann of Bruges, or Georgius Carpentarius, as he referred to himself in his Latin works, which include the continuation of the chronicle commenced by Heinrich Arnoldi (Continuatio chronicorum Carthusiae in Basilea minori) and a separate account of the fate of the monastery during the Reformation (Narratio rerum, quae reformationis tempore Basileae et in circumjacentibus regionibus gestae sunt). Born about 1487 and trained at the University of Basel, Carpentarius entered the monastery in 1509, remaining until 1528, during which time he wrote numerous books, many of which, as he himself records, entered the public collection of the city, where they can still be found today [plurimos libros scrisit, quos cist exsistentes in bibliotheca Carthus., numeris suis; jam forsar sunt in nostra publica]. His will, written in 1510, the year in which he offered up his vow and hence died to the world, lists a great many titles, most, but hardly all, in theology, that he brought with him on his entry into the community. Carpentarius was also an assiduous translator, inter alia, of Erasmus, and, like many other members of the Carthusian community, collaborated with printers in Basel. Carpentarius's role as librarian and in-house historian may explain why he took such care in recording the inscriptions from the mural. It appears that he acted not only out of reverence for the donor, but also as part of his effort to preserve the historical record...
of his institution, which, within his lifetime, was dissolved, along with its library. Murals, miniature and inscriptions, as well as the miscellany that records their existence, all form part of a close-knit scribal and textual community in which text and image are seen as part of a continuum that extends from the objects to those that commission and produce them.

Both the miniature and the transcriptions represent separate, yet related, recordings of large-scale wall paintings from within the monastic precinct, a subject about which all too little is known, at least as far as northern Europe is concerned, precisely because so little has survived. If, in addition to the lost mural, the miniature offers a visual record of a lost panel painting in oil, it would add to the already considerable corpus of important paintings associated with Carthusian patronage, above all, in Burgundy, the Netherlands, and the Rhineland. Rogier van der Weyden's monumental Crucifixion, now in the Escorial, which appears to have been among those that he painted for the Carthusian monastery of Scheut and which hung in the community's choir, at least in the sixteenth century, offers a point of comparison (fig. 4). The kinship is more of type than of style, although in the miniature, the figures' statuesque qualities, in particular, their angular, faceted drapery, and the elegant, even sinuous, elongation of their fingers, suggest a relationship at several removes from a Crucifixion by the Flemish painter. The relevant context, however, should not be construed too narrowly. Given that the lost mural of the Living Cross incorporated elements of the iconographic type known as Christ crucified by the Virtues, it can be connected to a work that has always seemed anomalous in its own immediate context, the fresco of Christ crucified by the Virtues in cell 23 at San Marco in Florence, painted by an assistant to the Dominican Fra Angelico. This mural has been invoked as a possible source, not only for the composition, but also for the coloration, of Rogier's Carthusian Crucifixions. The miniature in Basel should not be construed as a reflection of a missing link, even if the Councils of Constance and Basel, with which the Carthusians of Basel were closely involved, brought together clerics and artists from all over Europe, north and south of the Alps. It does suggest, however, that the works of these artists be considered apart from their affiliation with a particular order and within the broader context of monastic patronage and piety in which painting and prayer were closely connected.

To painting and prayer one should add placement as well. Fra Angelico's paintings for San Marco cannot be adequately understood without taking into account their location within the larger monastic complex, the local liturgy, the inscriptions found in the corridors, and, not least, the prayer gestures and corporeal attitudes of the friars who provided their primary audience. The

50. For records of paintings from the monastery, none of which, however, offer close comparisons in terms of style, see R. Rüggenbach, "Die Wandbilder der Kartause," in C. H. Baer, Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Basel-Stadt, vol. 3, no. 1, Die Kirche, Klöster, und Kapellen (St. Alban bis Kartause), Die Kunstdenkmäler der Schweiz (Basel, 1941), 577–94; Rüggenbach, however, makes no mention of the paintings referred to in the manuscript under discussion. The principal paintings consisted of a cycle devoted to the history of the founding of the Grande Chartreuse, a cycle similar to that found, e.g., in the Belles Heures de Jean, duc de Berry. Rüggenbach also reproduces remnants of a Crucifixion and an Annunciation from the choir screen, attributed to Niklaus Rüsch, gen. Lawlin, painted in 1458 (fig. 335).


53. For Fra Angelico's painting, see W. Hood, Fra Angelico at San Marco (New Haven, 1993), 224, fig. 223; and for the proposed relationship to Rogier, P. H. Jolly, "Rogier van der Weyden's Escorial and Philadelphia Crucifixions and Their Relation to Fra Angelico at San Marco," Oud Holland 95 (1984): 133–26.
lost mural in Basel also acquires greater resonance once one reconstructs its original setting. A document entitled De cellis Carthusiae Basiliensis allows one to identify and locate the cell donated by the same Peter Wolfer recorded in the inscriptions as having commissioned the painting.\(^5^4\) The document records that cell M, which formed part of the larger of the monastery’s two cloisters, was founded by Ulrich Eberhart, a citizen and merchant of the city of Basel, and that it was completed by his blood relative (cognatus), the cloth merchant Peter Wolfer, who was buried in the monastery (figs. 5, 6).\(^5^6\) Wolfer’s tomb is lost, but its appearance is recorded in a drawing by Emanuel Büchel of about 1770 (fig. 7).\(^5^7\) The tomb records the date of Wolfer’s death as January 3, 1483.\(^5^8\)

As a patron of the community, Wolfer would have found himself in good company. Among the other donors whose generosity was commemorated in images was Isabella, duchess of Burgundy and wife of Philip the Good, who paid for cells E and F, in addition to various liturgical furnishings.\(^5^9\) A handsome bronze plaque records her donations, which it dates to the year 1438 (fig. 8).\(^6^0\) The plaque, which originally was located in the church on the northern section of the west wall near the choir screen, resembles another recorded as having come from the Chartreuse de Champmol and portrays Philip the Good and Isabella to either side of a Pietà.\(^6^1\) The duke is accompanied by Andrew, the patron of the Burgundian house, and his eventual heir, Charles the Bold; Isabella, by her patron saint, Elizabeth of Hungary, as well as her two deceased sons, Anthony (d. 1431) and Josse (d. 1433). Undoubtedly a Burgundian import, the plaque testifies to the artistic com-

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55. Basler Chroniken (as in note 5), 496-98. The documents provide the principal support for the chronology provided by Riggenbach, "Die Wandbilder der Kartause" (as in note 49), 449-594.

56. Basler Chroniken (as in note 5), 498: "Fundavit dominus Ulricus Eberhart civis et mercator Basiliensis, quam dominus Petrus Wolfer cognatus ipsius ac haeres, prope ipsum seplitus, completiv.

57. Riggenbach, "Die Wandbilder der Kartause" (as in note 50), 549.

58. According to a note on a slip of paper added to the manuscript between folios 77v and 78r by L. Sieber, dated February 28, 1877, which refers to Büchel’s drawing, the inscription on the tombstone reads: "Hic quiescit corpus honesti uiri petri wolfer ciuis Basiliensis cuiis anima requiescat in pace. ob. anno Domini MCCCLXXXIII. tertia mensis. ianuar."

59. See Basler Chroniken (as in note 5), 597, and Riggenbach, "Die Wandbilder der Kartause" (as in note 50), 480 and 531-35.

60. For a complete description, see Riggenbach, "Die Wandbilder der Kartause" (as in note 50), 531-35; also P. Quarré, "Plaques de fondations d’Isabelle de Portugal, duchesse de Bourgogne, aux Chartreuse de Bâle et de Champmol-les-Dijon," Historisches Museum Basel: Jahresbericht und Rechnungen 1959, 29-38; and L. Souzna-Leitich, "Burgund als Quelle höfischen Prestiges und Hort avantgardistischer Kunstfertigkeit: Zur Entfaltung der ‘ars nova’ am Oberrhein," in Zwischen Habsburg und Burgund: Der Oberrhein als europäische Landschaft im 15. Jahrhundert, ed. K. Krimm and R. Brüning, Oberrheinische Studien 21 (Ostfildern, 2003), 61-93, esp. 80-81.

61. See R. Prochno, Die Kartause von Champmol: Grabmale der burgundischen Herzöge, 1364-1477 (Berlin, 2002), 63, fig. 29. The plaques are major works of art worthy of a study in themselves.
As one of the wealthiest cloth merchants of the city of Basel, with agents in both Italy and Bruges, Peter Wolfer participated in the same cosmopolitan web of commerce and artistic exchange. As one of the wealthiest cloth merchants of the city of Basel, with agents in both Italy and Bruges, Peter Wolfer participated in the same cosmopolitan web of commerce and artistic exchange.  

Cell M itself was built about 1432–34, as part of a construction campaign on the large cloister that began in 1429 and continued until 1441. The painting commissioned by Wolfer came later, but it must have been completed prior to his death in 1483. The inscription recording his donation formed part of a much denser textual fabric, as each of the sixteen cells in the large cloister was identified, not only by a letter, but also by a record of its donor and a quotation from Scripture. In the case of cell M, the inscription over the lintel came from John 13:34: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another," a message that would have complemented the maxim from John 15:13 inscribed on the miniature of the Crucifixion in the miscellany: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The inscriptions on the mural made clear that this spirit of charity did not extend to the Jews: "Die Judischeit wirt gehûnet /


63. For reconstruction of chronology of buildings, see Riggenbach, "Die Wandbilder der Kartause" (as in note 50).
Die Christenheit wirt gekrönet." Constructed in terms of binary opposites, the mural showed Charity acting, if not with a double-edged sword, then with a lance that conveyed a message that was poisoned as well as pointed. Miscellanies, murals, and other forms of inscription combined to form part of a dense discursive fabric that structured the monks' daily routines in ways that were anything but abstract.64

By the late Middle Ages, the incorporation of texts into images was so commonplace that in some contexts the exclusion of writing for the sake of purely pictorial communication can be what is most striking about an image. Pictures were like books, not just in the sense elaborated by Gregory the Great, that is, as a substitute and supplement for those who could not read, but most literally in that they too offered the onlooker a great deal of reading matter.65 The miscellany from the Carthusian monastery of St. Margaretha in Basel not only records an interesting and otherwise lost monument of late medieval mural painting, it also offers a textbook example of how such an image was read by the monks who lived with it.

64. For discussion of the evolution of cells and their role in shaping subjectivity in the cloister, but with relatively little discussion of images, see T. Lentes, "Vita perfecta zwischen Vita communis und Vita privata: Eine Skizze zur klösterlichen Einzelzelle," in Das Öffentliche und Private in der Vormoderne, ed. G. Melville and P. von Moos (Cologne, 1998), 123–64.

day in and day out. In addition to providing images and reading matter, it offers explicit instructions not only on what to look at, but also on how to look. In this instance, what has, in reference to modern art and film, come rather awkwardly to be called “intermediality” takes on anything but a seamless character.\textsuperscript{66} As indicated by the anxious musings of the tract placed at the head of the miscellany in Basel, in which the author speculates about the dangers of meditating on the image of a naked man on the cross, inscriptions served, not only to stimulate, but also to channel and check the viewer’s imagination. Whoever added the inscriptions to the manuscript’s sole miniature would no doubt have agreed with Paulinus of Nola, who, in his own words, provided paintings with “inscriptions, so that the script may make clear what the hand has exhibited.”\textsuperscript{67} The texts in the manuscript, however, offer anything but a clear-cut commentary on the images it includes and describes. They not only seek to explain the images, they also attempt to direct the ways in which their viewers responded. More than a mere assemblage, the miscellany represents a self-conscious construction that, to paraphrase one of James Marrow’s most memorable formulations, was designed, like the images it describes and seeks to control, to “structure experience and interpretation.”\textsuperscript{68}


\textsuperscript{68} I borrow this trenchant formulation from James Marrow’s seminal article, “Symbol and Meaning in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance,” \textit{Simiolus} 16 (1986): 157–69, esp. 168.
tempore passionis eius assistens cruci, qua hoc erat fixum quod ipsa peperat, maternorum viscerum dolore confixa est. et animam illius illa, quae eius secundum carnem filium, ipsa spectante, confederat, crucis rhomphaea penetrabat. [Paulinus of Nola, Epistola 50, chap. 2, Quaestiones ad apostolos, PL 61, col. 415B]

[LOWER MARGIN]

Sic adimpleuit illud 2o regum xxiii o ubi dicit Cantor undique nimis Et illud paral. 1o libro capitulo xxi o Ex omni parte angustiae me premunt sed melius et cetera [cf. 1 Chron. 21:13] subter et supra circum et sicut unde Ys. 1o A planta pedis usque ad verticem non est in eo sanitas [Isaiah 1:6] O vos omnes qui transitis per viam ad tendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus [Lam. 1:12] Da mihi scutum cordis domine. Laborem tuum quem passus es in cruce [Lam. 3:65] Crucifixi memoria. crucifiigit omnia vitia. Folio 75v

| Typus Crucifixi iuxta Cellam Monachus per quendam sacerdotem secularem s. dominum Petrum Wolfer illic depingi procuratus insinuans hec mysteria. | Subtus manus typus est hominis mortui cum his versibus |
| Sursum versus depicta est manus gerens clavem erectam sanctum titulum crucis. | Domine vim patior responde pro me. Isaiae 38. [Isaiah 38:14] |
| Sursurversus depicta est manus gerais clavem erectam sanctum titulum crucis. | Sagittae domini in me sunt quatum indignatio ebit spiritum meum et terrores Domini militant contra me. Job 6. [Job 64] |
| Fides coronans caput christi. | Et dabo clavem domus David super umerum eius et aperi et non erit qui claudat Isias 22. [Isaiah 22:22] |
| cum hec sunt verba ex Interpretatione lingue germanice | Tanquam sponsam secorawit me corona. Isaiae 61. [Isaiah 61] Vel sicut textus huius quasi solum decoratum corona [Isaiah 61:10] |
| Judaismo cassatur. Christianismus coronatur. | Dextra beneficencis |
| Misericordia infagens clavum manu dextree. sic loquatur | Venite benedicti patris mei [Matt. 25:34] |
| Apud Dominum misericordia et copiosa apud eum redemptio. psalmus 129 [Ps. 29:7] | Qui non accipit crucem suam et sequitur me non est me dignus. Mattheus 10 [Matt. 10:38] |
| Justicia clavum infagens leve sic inquit. | Cum patetur non comminabatur 1 Petrus 2 [1 Peter 2:23] |
| Hoc justiciae debetare. R. Christus pro pectore torquitur. | In humiliududium eius sublatus est. Secundum LXX [Cf. Isaiah 53:8] |
| In iusticia tua Libera me et eripe me. psalmus 70. | Adtritus est propter scelera nostra. Ibidem. [Isaiah 53:5] |
| Sinister iminans et vibens gladium vel. Item mal. 2 | praecatio sacerdotis et authoris huius typi. Semper a peccatoris mundi nos fons pietatis. [added in a later hand] |
Folio 76r

| Idem typus sub rythmis  |
| Linguae vernaculae      |
| Fides coronans          |
| Die Judischeit wirt gehônet / Die Christenheit wirt gekrönet. |
| Misericordia            |
| Gottes Zorn ich bind / Am Jesu Christi Gottes kind. |
| Justicia                |
| Das ex fine den sunder leid / Schüß Gottes gerechtikeit. |
| Charitas latus perforans |
| Jesu din lieb was gôt / Da du vom vns vergoßt din blüt. |
| Spees Complectens       |
| Er hat mir vorgegangen / Nün han ich in umfangyn. |
| Patientia clavis infugens pedibus |
| Jesus mit gantz gedult / Ließ ab dem sünd sin schuld. |
| Humilitas               |
| Christus von rechten Demùttikeit / Durch vnnis sin bitter marters leid. |
| Rythmi parentum D. Petri Wolfers circa pedem Crucifixi praecantum |
| Durch dins todes bitterkeit / Gib vnnis Christ ewig seliket. |
| Des vatters wort Marie kind / Löß ab hie all vnser sünd. |

Appendix 2a. Text of Basel, Öffentliche- und Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. A VIII 37, Folio 3r–3v

Et ne uideatur impossibiliter totaliter, licet apparent inexperitis difficile aliquiliter, id quod dicius, sumamus exemplum de uenerabili sacramento dominici corporis. Quod tu uideamus in manibus sacerdotis oculis corporis adoramus deute, sicut rerum deum et hominem, humani generis redemptorem angelorum domini et demonum expugnatorem, propter hoc quod ibi uidemus oculus cordis. Nec moramur cum cogitatu nostro diu ciurca illud quod exterioribus appareat. Oculis ut pote circa albedinem, rotunditatem, et paruitatem sacre huius hostie, sed cogimus quasi violenter cognitionem nostrum, ut ab illis usibilibus speciebus se auertat, et considerat se ad inuisibilia que oculus mentis persperat, quasi direremus cogitacionibus nostris. Id quod oculo corporis ubis cernitur non est deus noster, sed id quod ibi oculo cordis cernitur, est dominus deus noster. Hier ergo cogitate, et in hoc uos figite. Aliud exemplum prout applicari de puero extra patriam postum, qui nunquam uidit pater suum, et icio pater mittit victum et amictum, et ali- [3v] a necessaria, salutatque dulciter sepius per medios nuncios eundem. Non dubium quin puer iste, licet presentia? suum non uideat, moucatur naturaliter quodam amoroso affectu ad diligendum hunc presentium, et ad cogitandum sepius cordialiter de eo, et qui libenter esset apud eundem, ad uideandum ipsum sicuti est. Quia nescit an sit longus aut breuis, an albus aut niger, et sic de aliis corporalibus circumstantiis, ergo eciam in cogitando patrem suum, qualescumque humaniori corporeae imaginaciones occurrerint, non in eis quisceit, sed repellit, tamquam deceptiones et inutiles.
numquam a sanctis cogitationibus ad execrande blasphemie cogitaciones. Prout nonnullis deuotis personis in hiis incautis conpertem quoque est in ipsa ueneranda etiam ymagine crucifixi ex nimis fix consideratione circa corporis dominici nuditatem, eiusque femoralia et cetera. Qui casus sicut mulierculis est ualde possibilis, sic uice uersa poterit rasus iste et uiris esse non impossiblis si nimis figantur eorum cogitatus, erga [sic] sanctarum uirginum etiam ipsius uirginis uirginum que tamen puritatis mater est. Ymagines corporeas prout etiam experientia nonnullus docuit. Caueamus igitur dum cogitare uolumus nudum crucifixum ne incaute id fiat. Alioquin contingere poterit, domini memoria crucifixum de cruce nobis euanescere, nosque cum latronibus non tantum hiis qui cum domino crucifixi sunt. Sed et illis inuisibili illic insidiose contra nos latitantibus solos remanere, qui et despoliantes cogitationibus et affectionibus puris et sanctis et plagis turpium et execrandarum inpositis vix femininos nos sub scruce reliquant. Demiuiuos et feminmortuos namque nonnumque deuoti simplices se putant. Cum ex humaniori corporalium speciorum incuta et nimia ymaginatione ueniunt a sanctis cogitationibus in suis meditacionibus et oracionibus ad cogitaciones nefarias spiritu nequam sepius cooperante estimantes cum quadam desperatione, se a deo derelictos et reprobatos propter humaniori turpitudines cogitatu eorum occurrentes et per consequens, se in anima a dei grata mortuos fore et unde uita corporis uiuere quod tamen falsissimum est. Ecce ad quamta peruenitur pericula ex nimio forti ymaginum corporalium rerum fantasia et ex antiqui hostis cooperationem malitiosa. Nemo tamen propter promissa credat sanctorum ymagine sicut quidam heretici senserunt esse contenendas, sed sunt potius reuenerenter tractandi et ea intentione qua ecclesia dei eas instituit, digne honorande. Et discamus ab hiis uisibili mente transire ad inuisibilia, a corporalibus ad spiritualia. Ille namque est finis ymarine.

For help on various fronts, I am grateful to Volker Honemann and Nigel Palmer. Above all, my thanks go to lim Marrow, whose teaching first introduced me to the art of the Middle Ages and whose inspiring example made a convert out of me. Having exchanged drafts with him over decades, it was with real regret that in this one instance I was compelled to do without his criticism and insight.