



Cordelia Warr

Stigmatics and Visual Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy

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Press

Stigmatics and Visual Culture in
Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy

Visual and Material Culture, 1300-1700

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77. Carlo Crivelli, *Saint Francis*, detail from the *Ascoli-Piceno Altarpiece*, circa 1476, tempera on poplar, National Gallery, London, NG788.6. Image © The National Gallery, London. 273

1. Introduction: Stigmata and Visual Culture

Abstract

By expanding the discussion of stigmata to focus on visual culture, it is possible to deepen our understanding of contemporary visuality as well as our awareness of debates concerning images and image making between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) and Catherine of Siena (d. 1380) are important to this debate as the two saints most frequently depicted with miraculous stigmata. However, limiting considerations to representations of these two saints prevents a full understanding of the role of gender in the visual culture of stigmata. By placing Saints Francis and Catherine within the wider context of stigmatic visuality, it is possible to broaden our understanding of issues relating to gender, miracles, and the representation of knowledge.

Keywords: stigmata, visual culture, female stigmatics, Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, miracles

Within the context of the late medieval and early modern Catholic Church, stigmata are often understood as miraculous bodily marks echoing the wounds received by Christ on the cross. The most famous were those received by Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) after a vision when he was staying at a hermitage on Mount La Verna, north of Arezzo, in 1224. In the life of Saint Francis, accepted as the official version at the general chapter of the Franciscan Order held in Pisa in 1263, Saint Bonaventure (d. 1274) described their appearance: nail-like protuberances in the centre of the hands and feet, and a bleeding side wound.¹ The wounds were miraculous, their placement on Francis's body was clearly significant, and the Franciscans promoted them as unique.²

¹ Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', p. 633 (Chapter 13). This text is generally known and referred to as the *Legenda Maior*. As noted by Frugoni, after the destruction of early *vitae* ordered by the General Chapter held at Paris in 1266, Bonaventure's text became definitive. However, early sources were not in agreement on the physical appearance of the stigmata. See Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, pp. 25, 33, 51.

² See, for example, Thomas of Celano, 'The Life of Saint Francis', p. 281 (Book 2, Chapter 9). This text is generally known and referred to as the *Vita Prima*.

However, the marks on Francis's body did not appear *ex nihilo* and the history of stigmata is a long one. Body markings referred to as stigmata had been known since Antiquity.³ It was only in the century following the death of Saint Francis that the definition of stigmata as miraculous marks, mirroring those received by Christ on the cross, gained ground. It was not uncontested and a wider definition of stigmata was actively promoted in some quarters, particularly by the Dominicans.

Francis's stigmata appeared within a culture of affective piety, one that the order he founded did much to propagate, but which was already embedded in the religious practices of the previous century.⁴ It is now over twenty-five years since Giles Constable, in his 'The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ' published as part of his *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (1995), re-focused attention on the fact that stigmata could be understood in a much wider sense than that represented by Francis of Assisi. Constable pointed out that Francis 'was not an isolated example of an otherwise unknown and unprecedented phenomenon'.⁵ Constable was followed by Richard Trexler who emphasized that 'the roots of the stigmata phenomenon lay in the slow but inexorable growth, well before Francis, of a self-mutilating or -mortifying sub-culture'.⁶ This culture of affective piety encompassed the performance of suffering with Christ, literal compassion. Many lives of holy people recorded that they used their physical sufferings as an attempt to understand those of Christ during the Passion. These afflictions could result in marks on the body. They ranged from those due to medical conditions such as leprosy, through to the results of self-mortification, and miraculous imposition of wounds often as the result of the fervent prayers of the recipient. Work by scholars such as Constable and Trexler helped to demonstrate that placing too much weight on Saint Francis has been detrimental to an understanding of an overall view of stigmata.

Significant research has since taken place into medieval and early modern stigmatic experiences, redressing this aspect of the imbalance in scholarship on stigmatization in the Middle Ages and early modern period. Caroline Muessig, Gábor Klaniczay, Tamar Herzig, and Susan Rodgers and Joanna Ziegler, for example, have all done groundbreaking research on aspects of the history of stigmatization within the Christian tradition,⁷ on stigmatization in the Hungarian royal family,⁸ on female stigmatics in the fifteenth century,⁹ and on the performance aspects of stigmata.¹⁰

3 Muessig, 'Signs of Salvation'.

4 McNamer, *Affective Meditation*.

5 Constable, *Three Studies*, p. 217.

6 Trexler, 'The Stigmatized Body', p. 466.

7 See, for example, Muessig, 'The Stigmata Debate'.

8 Klaniczay, 'On the Stigmatization of Saint Margaret of Hungary'.

9 Herzig, *Christ Transformed into a Virgin Woman*.

10 Rodgers and Ziegler, 'Elisabeth of Spalbeek's Trance Dance of Faith'.

In 2012 Klaniczay hosted a conference at the Institut d'études avancées de Paris on stigmatics and stigmatization, which resulted in a special volume of the *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà* 26 (2013) on stigmata. Muessig's important book *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (2020) traced stigmatic theology through to the early seventeenth century.¹¹ Work by these scholars, amongst many others, has helped to focus attention on stigmatics other than Saint Francis and to re-draw the lines of enquiry.

One aspect of this expanded equation is the way in which women experienced the stigmata and were, in turn, experienced as stigmatics. Both Caroline Walker Bynum (1988) and John Coakley (2006), for example, recognized stigmatization as a particularly female phenomenon,¹² and some of the holy women investigated by Gabriella Zarri in her *Le sante vive* (1990) were stigmatics.¹³ That the majority of stigmatics between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries were female was first noted in the work of Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre (1818–1912), a professor of medicine in Clermont-Ferrand. His *La Stigmatisation* remains the only attempt at a comprehensive overview.¹⁴ Imbert-Gourbeyre's interest in stigmatics resulted from his political and religious beliefs, his meeting with the Belgian stigmatic Louise Lateau (1850–1883) in 1868,¹⁵ and his medical training. His working definition of stigmata, despite his claims to the contrary, appears to have been far-reaching and to have included those who had a wide range of stigmatic symptoms but who were not necessarily identified as stigmatics during their lifetime or immediately afterwards.¹⁶ He listed over three hundred stigmatics between the death of Saint Francis of Assisi and the end of the nineteenth century. Of these, about two-thirds lived in Italy and a minority, around 13 percent, were male.¹⁷ The majority of stigmatics who lived between the beginning of the thirteenth and the end of the sixteenth centuries were also Dominican or closely associated with the Dominican Order. Despite evidence for the earlier examples having been taken mainly from material available in large seventeenth- and eighteenth-century religious compilations,

11 Muessig, *The Stigmata*.

12 Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 200–201, 273–275; Coakley, *Women, Men and Spiritual Power*, pp. 10–11.

13 Zarri, *Le sante vive*.

14 Imbert-Gourbeyre, *La Stigmatisation, l'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes*. See also Imbert-Gourbeyre with Bouflet, *La Stigmatisation*, a reprint of the first volume with a critical introduction and additions to the text by Joachim Bouflet published in 1996.

15 Among the many publications on Louise Lateau see Klaniczay, 'Louise Lateau et les stigmatisées du XIXième siècle'; Lachapelle, 'Between Miracle and Sickness: Louise Lateau'.

16 For basic biographical details of each stigmatic see Imbert-Gourbeyre with Bouflet, *La Stigmatisation*, pp. 41–56. For a brief overview of Imbert-Gourbeyre's work see Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 9–12.

17 The statistics given in Wilson, *The Bleeding Mind*, and in Biot, *L'Énigme des stigmatisés*, are both derived from the analysis of Imbert-Gourbeyre.

rather than being rigorously authenticated through primary source material, the breadth of Imbert-Gourbeyre's work has ensured that *La Stigmatisation* remains an important publication.

Female stigmatics raised deep and troubling questions for many churchmen, something that has been investigated by Herzig in her work on the Dominican tertiary Lucia Brocadelli of Narni (d. 1544) and the German Dominican inquisitor Heinrich Kramer (d. 1505), best known for his *Malleus Maleficarum* (*Hammer of the Witches*) of 1486.¹⁸ Kramer's views were notable for the negative significance given to female sexuality.¹⁹ His career and the *Malleus Maleficarum* have led to him being characterized as a woman-hater. As Herzig has argued, like many of his contemporaries, Kramer viewed women as the inferior sex, more vulnerable than men to the overtures of the devil, but women's susceptibility could also make them more sensitive to God's will.²⁰ Thus Kramer supported Lucia Brocadelli's claims to have received the stigmata, although the idea of women receiving Christ's wounds was disconcerting to others precisely because women were inferior,²¹ so much so that some deemed it impossible for women to receive stigmata.²²

Francis's stigmata mirrored the wounds that Christ received on the cross, but others had stigmata that manifested in a variety of different ways and this seems to have been particularly so for women: Rita of Cascia (d. 1457) received a wound on her forehead, which her supporters linked to the crown of thorns;²³ others had their hearts physically changed;²⁴ yet others 'performed' their stigmata whilst in ecstasy.²⁵ Miraculous stigmata were sometimes imposed incrementally, something experienced by Osanna Andreasi (d. 1505).²⁶ For others, their stigmata disappeared as miraculously as they had appeared.²⁷ Stigmata also manifested themselves through pain, rather than through externally visible imprints, wounds, or scars, as

18 Herzig, *Christ Transformed into a Virgin Woman*.

19 Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft*, p. 24; Stephens, 'Witches Who Steal Penises'.

20 Herzig, 'Fear and Devotion in the Writings of Heinrich Institoris'.

21 Herzig, 'Stigmatized Holy Women as Female Christs'.

22 For example, the Observant Franciscan friar Samuele Cassini (d. after 1510). For a short discussion see Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 9–10, 141–142.

23 On representations of Rita of Cascia see Cuccini, 'Iconografia ritiana antica'.

24 These included Clare of Montefalco and Margaret of Città di Castello. See Warr, 'Re-reading the Relationship'.

25 See, for example, Muessig, 'Performance of the Passion'.

26 Silvestri, *La vita e stupea di miracoli*, folios 279v–282v (Book 3, Chapters 4–6). The book is unpaginated but page numbers have been marked in the copy in the Vatican Library.

27 According to her biographers, the wounds in the feet and hands of Lucia Brocadelli, for example, were rendered invisible at her request. See Herzig, *Christ Transformed into a Virgin Woman*, pp. 197–198.

was the case for the foremost Dominican stigmatic of the later Middle Ages, Saint Catherine of Siena (d. 1380).

The expansion of research into stigmata that were received in the late Middle Ages and early modern period has thus instigated new and significant lines of enquiry, which have improved our knowledge about the physical manifestations of historic stigmata, how they were defined, and who received them. They have also placed Saint Francis within a wider, largely female, context. One area that has not yet received sufficient attention is the visual culture of stigmata and stigmatization. In this area, in particular, the figure of Saint Francis as the pre-eminent stigmatic casts a long shadow. It has skewed research into the picturing and visualization of stigmata.

There is an extensive literature dealing with Saint Francis's stigmata in visual art. In the late 1960s André Vauchez had already noted the unease surrounding the miracle of Francis's stigmatization and how early representations of Francis with the stigmata gave rise to anxiety and ire, often centred on the perception that these representations showed Francis as a rival, rather than a follower, of Christ.²⁸ As a stigmatic, Francis became a living image of Christ, something that was explored by Paroma Chatterjee in her 2012 article on 'Francis's Secret Stigmata'. Chatterjee focused on what she characterized as 'a crisis in visual representation', one which pushed 'the ethics of mimesis to their very limits'. Through his reception of the stigmata, Francis became 'a human being transformed into an *acheiropoietos*',²⁹ an icon of Christ made by God. As Chatterjee cogently argued, there were numerous difficulties attendant on the representation in paint of Francis, who himself could already be classed as a representation through the transformative experience of the stigmatization.

At the heart of these issues is a series of questions that congregate around visualization. Saint Francis's stigmata were a prompt to consider the body of the saint as, in some way, a reliquary, a representation, or a visualization of the body of Christ. How, then, should painted images of Saint Francis with the stigmata be categorized? In a seminal article on 'St. Francis of Assisi as a Second Christ in Early Italian Painting' (1974), Henk Van Os explored instances where Francis was shown 'primarily as the bearer of the stigmata'.³⁰ He drew attention to the figure of Saint Francis with arms outstretched in the form of a cross in Sassetta's panel from the altarpiece originally in San Francesco, Borgo San Sepolcro (Berenson Collection, Villa I Tatti, Florence).³¹ Here, the display of the saint directly linked his

28 Vauchez, 'Les stigmates de Saint François et leurs détracteurs'.

29 Chatterjee, 'Francis's Secret Stigmata', p. 40.

30 Van Os, 'St. Francis of Assisi as a Second Christ'.

31 Van Os, 'St. Francis of Assisi as a Second Christ', p. 119. On the Borgo San Sepolcro altarpiece see Israëls, *Sassetta: The Borgo San Sepolcro Altarpiece*.



1. Sassetta (Stefano di Giovanni), *Ecstasy of Saint Francis*, 1437–1444, tempera on wood, 190 x 122 cm, Villa I Tatti, Florence.

wounds to Christ's crucifixion and it did so outside the context of the narration of the stigmatization (fig. 1). In this instance, the claim that Francis's stigmata were unique was communicated through painted imagery by a visual conflation: the recollection of the physical shape of the cross or position of Christ crucified with the figure of the stigmatized Francis.

Although there was no immediate causal link between the vision which Francis received on La Verna and his reception of the stigmata, the presentation of the stigmatization in visual art soon evolved to show a connection, most often in the form of golden rays, between the vision of the seraph and the imposition of the stigmata.³² Painted images of the stigmatization show the apparently contemporaneous appearance of vision and stigmata. The arguments put forward by Vauchez, Van Os, Arnold Davidson, and Chatterjee, amongst the multitude of discussions relating to the representation of Saint Francis as a stigmatic, demonstrate the centrality of visualization to stigmata and stigmatization. They reveal some of the complexities of the issues involved, from debates about the physical appearance of the stigmata, to questions about how and whether they should be depicted, and the effect of images on the viewer.

The expansion of the Franciscan Order helped to ensure that knowledge of Francis's stigmata was rapidly disseminated.³³ The legacy of his affective spirituality, one that was focused through emotional connection, also contributed towards significant changes in the visual arts. As Anne Derbes has shown, in the thirteenth century the Franciscans were at the forefront of developments in the representation of the Passion of Christ that included an increased emphasis on Christ's suffering.³⁴ The shift to a distressed, tortured, and anguished Christ demonstrated reciprocity between images of Christ and Francis's lived suffering with Christ. Francis responded to paintings and images or visions and his affective piety informed subsequent visual art. Francis also became the subject of art that showed his *compassion*, his suffering with Christ, and was the stigmatic most depicted in the visual arts in Italy between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Many cycles of his life, such as that in the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce, Florence, privileged the portrayal of the stigmatization, and non-narrative images of Francis on altarpieces and other panels began to be painted showing him with the stigmata from shortly after his death.³⁵ The importance ascribed to Francis's reception of miraculous stigmata and the prevalence of images showing those wounds has resulted in studies on the representation of stigmata in visual art being dominated by Saint Francis. His

32 Davidson, 'Miracles of Bodily Transformation', pp. 460–468.

33 On the expansion of the order see, for example, Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, pp. 62–74, 155–176.

34 Derbes, *Picturing the Passion*, pp. 16–24.

35 See the examples in Cook, *Images of Saint Francis of Assisi*.

reception of the stigmata, the stigmata themselves, and the ways in which they were visually promoted have become the touchstone against which others are compared.

Representations of Francis's stigmata have most often been juxtaposed with those of the Dominican Catherine of Siena, a natural consequence of the early polemic about her stigmata, which were invisible during her lifetime. Catherine's contemporaries and those who pushed for her canonization lauded her reception of the stigmata as the equal of the miracle accorded Francis.³⁶ She is, after Francis, the saint most represented at the moment of stigmatization or with stigmata, as shown in Lidia Bianchi and Diega Giunta's encyclopaedic *Iconografia di Santa Caterina da Siena* (1988).³⁷ David Ganz has recently drawn attention to the tensions involved in representing Catherine's invisible stigmata.³⁸ His work prompts questions about the contested visual presence of stigmata, which existed in a liminal space between the visible and the invisible.

Miraculous stigmata were an exceptional sign of God's favour yet recipients often attempted to hide their physical manifestation, since to show their stigmata to others would have reeked of pride. Saints such as Francis resolutely concealed their stigmata during their lifetimes, masking their materiality and preventing visual access. They could be physically screened from sight by being covered with clothing, or could be miraculously hidden, usually at the request of the recipient, present only to the stigmatic through the pain that they caused, as was the case with Catherine of Siena. Stigmata were thus both visible (they could be seen, even if only partially and at certain times) and invisible (or hidden from view). To further complicate matters, the marks were not always permanent. Non-miraculous stigmata, those that were inflicted in the course of religious self-mortification for example, healed, perhaps leaving a scar but perhaps not. Miraculous stigmata could also disappear. Opportunities to see stigmata were, therefore, severely restricted such that only a very few witnesses could claim to have seen them during the life of the holy person.

It was precisely this preoccupation with shielding the stigmata from sight that signalled the importance of their visual presence. Hidden stigmata had strong visual elements. Though they could not be seen, they were known, and knowing was intimately related to seeing. Intellectual knowledge of a holy person's stigmata required an act of mental visualization. The mention or description of stigmata set up visual images in the mind of the listener/reader. Stigmata, even those that could not be seen in life, were also depicted in manuscripts and monumental art. They existed visually in several different ways: most obviously as marks on the body, as word-visualizations on the page, and as depictions in painting and

36 See the discussion in Chapter 4.

37 Bianchi and Giunta, *Iconografia di Santa Caterina da Siena*.

38 Ganz, 'The Dilemma of a Saint's Portrait'.

sculpture. Although each was linked through the category stigmata, there were varying expectations within and across the groups, which made the visual culture of stigmata complex and multi-faceted.

The term 'visual culture' is an important one for this book, but it is also a much-debated one. It is difficult – and often perilous – to attempt a definition.³⁹ Some of the major scholars in the field associate visual culture with modernity.⁴⁰ However, it has always had strong links to earlier periods and scholars have argued that aspects of its genesis can convincingly be traced back to Michael Baxandall's publication, in 1972, of *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* and Svetlana Alpers's *The Art of Describing* in 1983.⁴¹ For many, visual culture is intimately linked to what Nicholas Mirzoeff has called 'visual technology', which can range from computer and television screens to oil paintings.⁴² Important here is the way in which visual culture is expressed or, more accurately, materialized, for it is frequently understood as embodied in material form, albeit perhaps one which is fleeting. It must be captured in such a way that it can be seen on screen or on canvas. Thus, the 'visual' of 'visual culture' is concerned, either explicitly or implicitly, with actual images/objects and with the physical act of seeing. Others have contested that 'seeing' should not be narrowly defined and that it can include the practice of visualizing, including mental visualization.⁴³ Visual culture that is not purely object-based is particularly relevant during the period discussed in this book. Visualization was closely linked to memory, for example, and preachers used words to engender images in the minds of their audience, something that has been explored by, amongst others, Lina Bolzoni.⁴⁴ In the words of W.J.T. Mitchell, the study of visual culture is intrinsically linked to the 'invisible, the unseen, the unseeable'.⁴⁵

An investigation into stigmatics can raise important issues about seeing and knowing, and how perception is used in order to judge truth. The problematic nature of visual perception in relation to knowledge is recognized in visual culture studies yet this is often in the context of contemporary modes of vision. In the

39 Bal, 'Visual Essentialism and the Object of Visual Culture'. Mieke Bal's article was published in the *Journal of Visual Culture* 2:1 in 2003. Responses to the article were published in the following issue: Norman Bryson, pp. 229–232; James Elkins, pp. 232–237; Michael Ann Holly, pp. 238–242; Peter Leech, pp. 242–246; Nicholas Mirzoeff, pp. 247–249; W.J.T. Mitchell, pp. 249–252; Griselda Pollock, pp. 253–260; as well as Bal's reply, pp. 260–268. See *Journal of Visual Culture* 2:2. Authors writing in a number of textbooks since the 1990s have provided short and helpful discussions. See, for example, Herbert, 'Visual Culture/Visual Studies'.

40 See, for example, Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*.

41 Morra and Smith, 'Introduction', pp. 10–11. See also Cherry, 'Art History and Visual Culture', p. 481.

42 Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, p. 3.

43 Bal, 'Visual Essentialism and the Object of Visual Culture', p. 9.

44 Bolzoni, *The Web of Images*.

45 Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture', p. 170.

late Middle Ages and early modern period, visualizations, real and imagined, played a significant role in the dynamics of perception and judgment. Acts of visualization – the imagining of the ‘invisible, the unseen, the unseeable’, as well as physical representations captured in painting or on and in the human body – are central to the investigations undertaken in this book. Seeing and knowing were linked to aspect blindness and aspect perception,⁴⁶ something exemplified in the reactions of those who saw the heart of Clare of Montefalco (d. 1308) which had been extracted and sliced open by her sister nuns after her death. Some, indeed most, were able to see the instruments of Christ’s Passion sculpted in relief within her heart, but at least one person stated that he could see no such thing.⁴⁷ A similar phenomenon was recorded in the case of Stefana Quinzani (d. 1530) whose regular performances of the Passion were attended by an audience who appear to have interacted with her ecstatic body. Marks that appeared on her skin during these events were attested to by some as showing her Christ-like suffering, but others claimed not to have seen them. In a curious play on the biblical narration of doubting Thomas (John 20:24–29) those who saw, believed. Indeed, such information served to distinguish between those who believed and those who did not. In contradistinction to those who processed what they saw as part of a religious experience rooted in Christ’s suffering, others were unable to reconcile their beliefs with the visual material presented to them. The difference was not one based in Christian belief but one linked to thinking about visual perception and judgment, to visualizing and picturing practices and how these were both used in evidence and argument.

The polemic surrounding whether and how the stigmata of Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena could be depicted showed the extent of the perceived power of images and the ways in which churchmen chose to deal with them in relation to issues of seeing and knowing. In both instances, visual literacy was at play: in the expectation that viewers would recognize Francis as a second Christ through the arrangement of his limbs and the display of his wounds, or in the idea that they might misconstrue the nature of Catherine’s (invisible) stigmata when they saw them painted. Although ‘visual literacy’ may be a problematic term,⁴⁸ I use it here in the sense of the ability to understand dominant cultural symbols such as when the shape of the cross, the transcendent Christian religious symbol, was imposed on Saint Francis. Such images of the saint were controversial because they went over and above the idea of *imitatio Christi* as bodily suffering experienced in order

46 Hester, ‘Metaphor and Aspect Seeing’; Batkin, ‘Aesthetic Analogies’.

47 Béranger de Saint-Affrique, who wrote Clare’s *vita*, noted that some of those who saw Clare’s heart were not able to see the instruments of the Passion. For a full discussion see Warr, ‘Re-reading the Relationship’, p. 20.

48 Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, p. 47.

to follow Christ. They depicted something beyond the wide range of behaviours and activities through which it was possible to live like Jesus and which could also be understood as *imitatio Christi*. These included ministering to the sick and renouncing possessions and, to varying levels, were attainable by many of the faithful. Stigmata were at the extreme end of the range of what was possible. In hagiography and visual art they were configured not just as the end product of a lifetime of *imitatio Christi*, as the visual evidence of Francis's affective suffering with and like Christ, but as signs of the saint's transformation into another Christ. The power of the image here was dependent on an understanding of the link between the way Francis was portrayed and the depiction of Christ on the cross. The viewer's response was, at least partially, conditioned by a knowledge of the iconography of Christ crucified.⁴⁹

In this book, my aim is to expand the discussion surrounding the visualization of stigmata to include questions about the legitimacy of, and rationale for, certain types of representation and what these may tell us about how people used images. Francis of Assisi and, particularly, Catherine of Siena are important to this debate, but I also consider other holy people, particularly women, in order to gain a wider understanding of the issues. The inclusion of these lesser-known stigmatics, who lived between the thirteenth and the end of the sixteenth century, allows an exploration of questions relating to the visual culture of stigmata that go significantly beyond those which have been associated with Saints Francis and Catherine. Within the nexus of seeing and knowing, the contribution of women was frequently underestimated or downplayed, despite an acknowledgement that women had a particularly strong response to visual material. By investigating alternative examples, this book expands our understanding to include questions relating to gender and the representation of knowledge.

Since I am concerned with debates about images, representation, and visualization in relation to stigmata, my focus is also on those who wrote texts that either engaged directly with the question of representing stigmatics in the visual arts or were relevant to the surrounding debates, of whom many were churchmen. Importantly, texts described the appearance of stigmata, often drawing on analogies with different types of visual art. The relationship between art and the words that attempt to describe it is complex and has been eloquently examined and analysed by scholars such as Michael Baxandall, James Elkins, Jàs Elsner and W.J.T. Mitchell.⁵⁰ In *Patterns of Intention*, Baxandall noted that 'language is not very well equipped to offer a notation of a particular picture'.⁵¹ With reference to the stigmatics whom

49 Freedberg, *The Power of Images*. See also David Freedberg's response to John Nash's review of his book in Freedberg, 'Reply to John Nash'.

50 See Elsner, 'Art History as Ekphrasis'; Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them*.

51 Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*, p. 3.

I discuss in this book, language was used to describe their wounds in ways that provided the reader with a means through which to consider and understand them. The details were often not intended only as a record of appearance but as a signal of value.

The texts and art that I consider in this book enable me to demonstrate that some of those involved in these issues had a sophisticated understanding of visual culture, which developed and mutated in the context of institutional rivalries and debates. They also allow an examination of aspects of the visual literacy of patrons and audiences in Italy, and the ways in which artists supported and contributed to complex and varied visual interpretations of stigmata. As such, the book takes part in the debate about visual culture as 'the field of study that refuses to take vision for granted'.⁵² As I demonstrate, those who wrote on the subject of the representation of stigmatics, such as the Dominicans Tommaso Caffarini (d. circa 1434) and Gregorio Lombardelli (d. 1613), wrestled with crucial questions about the purposes of art. A discussion of works by key artists – including Giovanni di Paolo (circa 1403–1482), the Dominicans Fra Angelico (circa 1395–1455) and Plautilla Nelli (1524–1588), the sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) – adds to our knowledge of their work by showing their use of sophisticated means of conveying important aspects of stigmatic experience.

I start with a chapter focusing on three miracle stories from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that deal with the depiction of Francis's stigmata in order to question the expectations that people had of the picturing of the miraculous. These examples allow a discussion of the links between truth and representation, and between presence and painting that are important for the third chapter, which discusses the depiction of the stigmatization of Catherine of Siena through the images in the manuscripts of the Dominican Tommaso Caffarini's *Libellus de Supplemento* (*Supplement to the Life of Catherine of Siena*) and Giovanni di Paolo's *Pizzicaiuolo Altarpiece*. The representation of Catherine's stigmata raises specific issues about the relationship between seeing and knowing since the stigmata did not appear visibly on Catherine's body. The fourth chapter continues a discussion of the *Libellus de Supplemento* and Caffarini's arguments for an expanded definition of stigmata, which went against a narrow Franciscan understanding of the term. I contend that this was consciously developed in some Dominican panel paintings of the fifteenth century. The following chapter returns to Catherine of Siena through a detailed discussion of the writings of the Sienese Gregorio Lombardelli who claimed that it was legitimate to show her with visible stigmata. Lombardelli's arguments built on those of Caffarini. Although his main aim was to support recognition of Catherine as a stigmatic, his discussion of images of her

⁵² Mitchell, 'There Are No Visual Media', p. 262.

with visible stigmata can be placed within the expansion of discussions about the purposes of art in the post-Tridentine period. In the sixth chapter I move on to examples of stigmatics and stigmata associated with performance. The display of bodily movements associated with Christ's Passion required participants to put their visual literacy to use in interpreting them. At the same time, some of the performances appeared to be instigated or supported by paintings or sculptures. The ways in which stigmata were understood through the emphasis of their visual nature in texts, including hagiographies, is the subject of Chapter 7. I suggest that knowledge of, and comparisons with, various visual arts were central to an appreciation of stigmatic identity. I end with a consideration of the tension that appears to have existed between the excess of some stigmatic behaviours and the emphatic visuality of their description, on the one hand, and the restraint of their depiction, on the other, something which underscores the dangers perceived in physical images, particularly those of stigmatics.

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2. Saint Francis of Assisi as Image

Abstract

Lauded as unique by Franciscan writers, the stigmata defined Francis as part of a narrative event and as an attribute. They were also extremely disquieting, making Francis both another Christ and an image of Christ. The insistence that the stigmata were miraculous and unprecedented provoked angry reactions. Some responses were focused on images, considered particularly problematic because of the perceived link between truth and representation. In this chapter, I investigate three miracle stories from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that focus on the depiction of stigmata in paintings of Saint Francis. They provide insights into the expectations that people had of images and of picturing the miraculous, allowing us to question the responses to the visual representation of stigmata.

Keywords: stigmata, miracles, painting, wounds, bleeding, *alter Christus*

This chapter focuses on three miracle stories from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that deal with the depiction of stigmata on painted images of Saint Francis of Assisi (d. 1226). The paintings in the narratives both depicted the miraculous and were themselves miraculous or conduits for the miraculous. It is possible that the specific images to which the sources referred never existed except as written constructs designed to make a particular point about Francis's miraculous stigmata. Nonetheless, the stories allow an interrogation of the, sometimes visceral, responses to the visual representation of stigmata and, in doing so, provide insights into the expectations that people had of the tasks of art and, in particular, of picturing the miraculous.

In the *Legenda Maior* (*Major Legend*), the official life of Francis written by Saint Bonaventure (1221–1274) and presented to the general chapter of the Franciscan Order at Pisa in 1263, the stigmatization was described as having taken place on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September) in 1224. While fasting and praying on Mount La Verna, Francis received a vision of a seraph and, after the vision disappeared, nail-like protuberances appeared in his hands and feet

and a red wound on his right side.¹ During the remaining two years of his life, he kept the stigmata a close secret. Only those nearest to him knew of them or had the opportunity to see them.² In keeping with the *topos* that demands holy people should be humble, writings about Francis emphasized that he did not want anyone to know that he had been the recipient of these miraculous signs. In the *Vita Prima* (*First Life*), completed in 1229, Thomas of Celano (d. circa 1264) referred to Francis's stigmata as his 'great secret' and said of Francis that 'in every way possible he tried to hide these marks', indeed 'even the brothers at his side and his most devoted followers for a long time did not know about them'.³

Such reticence was dispensed with after his death, although not without a certain amount of hesitancy. Thomas of Celano described the stigmatization in detail in the *Vita Prima* but the first official papal acknowledgement of the stigmata was not until 1237. In sermons, *vitae*, and visual art, the side wound in particular was problematic since it was the wound of the lance, as related in John 19:34–37, that revealed Christ as the Messiah.⁴ Gregory IX harboured doubts about it that were only assuaged when he experienced a dream in which Francis filled a vial with blood from his side wound, as related by Bonaventure in the *Legenda Maior* and subsequently depicted in the fresco cycle of Francis's life in the Upper Church at Assisi.⁵ Chiara Frugoni has argued that the iconography of Francis with an opening in his tunic to show the side wound can be dated to the 1250s,⁶ although two enamel reliquaries from Limoges, now in the Louvre and the Musée de Cluny, have been dated as early as 1230 (fig. 2).⁷ It is perhaps possible that Francis was represented in visual art with the stigmata by the year of his canonization in 1228, but the evidence for this is not conclusive.⁸

1 Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', pp. 632–633 (Chapter 13). For a discussion of some of the issues surrounding Francis's stigmata, with further bibliography, see Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 60–90.

2 House, *Francis of Assisi*, pp. 258–259. The friars who saw the stigmata while Francis was alive were Leo, Angelo, Rufino, Pacifico, and Elias.

3 Thomas of Celano, 'The Life of Saint Francis', pp. 264–265 (Book 2, Chapter 3).

4 Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, pp. 54–55.

5 Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', p. 651 (Chapter 1 of 'The Miracles').

6 Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, pp. 209, 293–296.

7 Davidson, 'Miracles of Bodily Transformation', pp. 461–462. See also Taburet-Delahaye and Boehm, *L'Oeuvre de Limoges*, p. 308; Matrod, *Les Stigmatés de Saint François*, p. 516.

8 The depiction of Francis with the stigmata may date back to the year of Francis's canonization in a relief carving of Saint Francis in the cloister of the Benedictine abbey of Mont Saint-Michel. The figure and accompanying inscription are now almost illegible but an early nineteenth-century drawing recorded the inscription, which included the date. The hands appear to have been destroyed by the time the drawing was made, but from the position of the arms it seems most likely that they would have been raised. See Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of Saint Francis*, p. 161; Christopher N.L. Brooke and W. Swaan, *The Monastic World*, pp. 210–218.



2. *Reliquary of Saint Francis of Assisi*, circa 1330, Limoges enamel (gilded copper, champlevé enamel on gilded copper, crystals), Louvre, Paris, inv. OA 4083.

The stigmata came to define Francis, constructed and changing in response to catalysts from within and without the Franciscan Order.⁹ As the result of a particular event they were included in painted cycles of his life as directly linked to the appearance of the seraph, thus forming a narrative.¹⁰ They also transcended that event and became an attribute represented on images of Francis removed from the context of the narrative of the stigmatization. Both stigmata and stigmatization were lauded as unique by Franciscan writers and were a means of setting Francis apart from other holy people. Belief in them was promoted through writings about Francis, through sermons and through images. However, Francis's stigmata were also extremely disquieting, making him both another Christ (*alter Christus*) and an image of Christ.¹¹ The insistence

9 As Chiara Frugoni has argued, it was Bonaventure who transformed Francis into 'il santo delle stimmate'. See Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, p. 26. Ideas about the stigmata changed in line with the re-envisioning of Francis's life to respond to Franciscan thinking in the decades after his death. See also Warr, 'Changing Stigmata'.

10 See the discussion in Davidson, 'Miracles of Bodily Transformation'.

11 For a discussion of Francis as *alter Christus* see Van Os, 'St. Francis of Assisi as a Second Christ', pp. 115–117; Trembinski, '*Non alter Christus*', esp. pp. 85–86.

that the stigmata were miraculous, that they were an unprecedented miracle, that Francis appeared as though crucified, and that he had received the same wounds that Christ had received on the cross provoked angry reactions in some quarters with Francis labelled an usurper and a fraud.¹² Images of Francis as a stigmatic were considered particularly problematic because of the perceived link between truth and representation, between presence and painting. Despite – or perhaps because of – this, representations of Francis receiving the stigmata or with the stigmata grew in number during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A brief perusal of George Kaftal's four-volume *Iconography of the Saints in Italian Art*, published between 1952 and 1985, demonstrates the popularity of Francis in visual art.¹³ Images of Francis and of cycles of his life are notably more numerous than those of any other saint.

It seems likely that the type of images of Saint Francis referred to in the miracle stories which I discuss in this chapter were ones where the stigmata were divorced from the narrative of the stigmatization. Two of the stories were included in Thomas of Celano's *Tractatus de miraculis* (*Treatise on the Miracles*), completed around 1253,¹⁴ and were later also related by Bonaventure in his *Legenda Maior*,¹⁵ which was to a large extent based on material already presented in Thomas of Celano's writings on the saint.¹⁶ The third was found in an early manuscript in the library of the Pontificia Università Antonianum, Rome.¹⁷ It clearly continued to have relevance and longer versions, with significant additions and differences, can be found in the fourteenth century in the Latin *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius* (*Deeds of the Blessed Francis and his Companions*),¹⁸ in the Italian *Fioretti* (*Little Flowers [of Saint Francis]*), where it forms part of additional material on the stigmata,¹⁹ and in the *Avignon Compilation*.²⁰

12 Vauchez, 'Les Stigmates de Saint François et leurs détracteurs'.

13 Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting*; Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in the Central and South Italian Schools of Painting*; Kaftal with Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North East Italy*; Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy*.

14 Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, p. 283.

15 On Bonaventure and the *Legenda Maior* see Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of Saint Francis*, pp. 242–268.

16 Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, pp. 286–287. Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, pp. 25–26, comments on Bonaventure's reliance on Thomas of Celano's works. She also notes how thoroughly his works were expunged from Franciscan convents after the General Chapter at Paris in 1266 ordered that all *vitae* of Francis previous to that of Bonaventure should be destroyed.

17 Oligier, 'Descriptio codicis S. Antonii de Urbe unacumque appendice textuum de S. Francesco', pp. 363–365. A translation of the relevant section of the text is given in Gardner, 'The Louvre Stigmatization', p. 222.

18 'The Deeds of the Blessed Francis', pp. 559–561.

19 On the *Fioretti* see the brief discussions in Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, pp. 288–289 and in Raphael Brown, 'Introduction to the *Fioretti*'. Most recently see Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi. Vol. 3: The Prophet*, pp. 432–434.

20 Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi. Vol. 3: The Prophet*, p. 662. The Latin text is given in Doelle, 'De institutione festi SS. Stigmatum', p. 169.

The first of the three examples is the tale of a cleric called Ruggero, a canon in the southern Italian city of Potenza (Basilicata), who had been suffering from a long drawn-out illness.²¹ According to Thomas of Celano, he entered a church, we are not told which, where he saw a painting of Francis with the stigmata. Ruggero was a good man and he knelt before the image hoping that his prayers would prove efficacious and his health would improve. In doing this, the canon was following a well-trodden path. The vast majority of miracles performed through the intercession of saints at this time involved healing. Francis's power to heal was stressed in the earliest panel paintings of the saint where over fifty per cent of the narrative scenes showed posthumous miracles.²² Four of the six scenes in Bonaventura Berlinghieri's *Pescia Dossal* of 1235 were miracles all of which showed some type of healing: the cure of the girl with the twisted neck, the healing of cripples and a leper, the healing of Bartholomew of Narni, and a scene showing exorcisms.²³ The six scenes in the *Pisa Dossal*, which has been dated to the early 1250s, all showed posthumous miracles. They included the four which were depicted in Berlinghieri's panel plus the cure of a blind girl and the cure of a woman with a goitre.²⁴ Such images would have encouraged the local population to turn to Francis when they were ill or suffering, just as Ruggero did.²⁵ However, although Ruggero had approached the painting in the right state of mind and had 'knelt down before the image and prayed with sincere devotion', he was soon distracted from his original intentions and started to fixate on the depiction of the stigmata. He began to question the miracle:

'Could this be true, that this saint was singled out for such a miracle, or was this a pious fraud of his followers? Was this' he asked 'a sham discovery, or perhaps a deception invented by the brothers?'²⁶

The image had provoked unease, concern, and doubt. It had incited a reaction. Images had and have the capacity to evoke strong emotions. Faced with certain imagery or subject matter viewers may cry.²⁷ They may be moved to anger and destructive energy. Images wield power.²⁸ In responding physically to images the

21 Thomas of Celano, 'The Treatise on the Miracles', pp. 404–405 (Chapter 2).

22 Ahlquist and Cook, 'The Representation of the Posthumous Miracles of Saint Francis', p. 212.

23 For an extended discussion see Ahlquist and Cook, 'The Representation of the Posthumous Miracles of Saint Francis'; Cook, *Images of Saint Francis of Assisi*, pp. 165–168, cat. 141.

24 Cook, *Images of Saint Francis of Assisi*, pp. 169–171, cat. 143.

25 Franco, 'The Functions of Early Franciscan Art'.

26 Thomas of Celano, 'The Treatise on the Miracles', p. 404 (Chapter 2).

27 Elkins, *Pictures and Tears*.

28 Freedberg, *The Power of Images*.

viewer acknowledges that power. Indeed, the response may be, in a certain sense, what the image wants.²⁹ W.J.T. Mitchell has cautioned that personifying images ‘flirts with a regressive, superstitious attitude towards images’.³⁰ However, to ask, as Mitchell did, what the picture wants, acknowledges the ways in which images can, and should, affect us, indeed are designed to affect us. Appropriate reactions to images were the subject of significant discussion during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and miracle-working images were seen both to channel religious power and to require certain actions from the viewer/supplicant.³¹ Over the last thirty years a number of scholars have explored the power of images to evoke a response and sought to re-instate our understanding and acceptance that strong emotions can be an appropriate reaction to ‘art’. They have also focused attention on images that were believed to move and speak, making us think not only about what images want but what they do, how they express that want.³²

For those who believed in Francis’s stigmata, the need to see that belief physically manifested was instantiated through the image. The viewer/believer wanted or needed something from the image at the same time as the image required or prompted a change in the behaviour or belief of the viewer/believer. Some of these images fall into the category of what Mitchell has termed ‘offending images’, ones that provoke violence or some other type of resistance.³³ Ruggero resisted belief. His doubt did not result in violence towards the image but in violence that, apparently, came from or was incited by the image. In his text, Thomas of Celano berated Ruggero as mad and a fool for not believing. He went on to describe how Ruggero had been brought to believe in the miracle of the stigmata:

He was instantly struck in the palm of his left hand (he was left-handed) as he heard a noise like an arrow shot from a bow. Instantly [...] he took the glove from his hand, since he was wearing gloves. Though there had previously been no mark in his palm, he now saw a wound in mid-hand, as if struck by an arrow.³⁴

The wound was extraordinarily painful and Ruggero did not suffer in silence but by crying out and screaming for two days. During this time he let everyone know that he now believed that Francis really had received miraculous stigmata and he prayed to Saint Francis to come to his aid ‘through his sacred stigmata’.³⁵ Having

29 Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*.

30 Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, p. 29.

31 For an authoritative discussion of miraculous images in Florence see Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*.

32 See, for example, Garnett and Rosser, *Spectacular Images*; Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*.

33 Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, p. 125.

34 Thomas of Celano, ‘The Treatise on the Miracles’, p. 404 (Chapter 2).

35 Thomas of Celano, ‘The Treatise on the Miracles’, p. 405 (Chapter 2).

been cured of his disbelief, a physical cure soon followed and the wound in his left hand disappeared completely.

Saint Bonaventure's version in the *Legenda Maior* was very slightly shorter but contained essentially the same information. The doubts with which Ruggero wrestled in front of the image were not as detailed as in Thomas of Celano's version. Bonaventure was more restrained, saying simply that Ruggero 'began to doubt that exalted miracle, thinking it was an altogether unprecedented and impossible thing'.³⁶ Bonaventure did not relate any sense that Ruggero impugned the motives of the Franciscans in promoting the stigmata, limiting himself to a comment on the novelty of the miracle. He also emphasized the link between Ruggero's 'wounded mind' and the miraculous physical wound that he had received in his left hand. Like Thomas of Celano, Bonaventure noted that the wound looked as though it had been caused by an arrow.³⁷

In the story as told by both Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure, Ruggero's doubts were sparked by the sight of Francis's stigmata painted on the image of the saint. Thomas of Celano's more detailed version talked about a 'pious fraud' or 'deception'. He did not make the link but the 'deception' was also there in the painting, which by its nature deceived, showing something or someone but not being that thing or that person.³⁸ As a pious deception, we understand that the [fraudulent] stigmata were used to promote religious belief, as was the representation of the stigmata in the painting. The Friars Minor could be accused of promoting an untruth, as could paintings, but the effect of viewing the painting and doubting what it represented had been to elicit a very real, and miraculous, wound in Ruggero himself. Its miraculous nature was affirmed by the wound that had appeared in Ruggero's hand yet not accompanied by a corresponding tear in his glove. The representation of stigmata in the painting in Potenza had provoked a miracle in which Ruggero received a wound clearly differentiated from but connected to Francis's stigmata. Francis's stigmata and the wound in Ruggero's hand were linked by the image of the stigmata in the painting which acted as a catalyst. Ruggero's wound had proved Francis's stigmata and, in doing so, had then healed and disappeared. As a catalyst, the image itself had not changed, but this was not the case in the other tale featuring an image of Francis that was related by both Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure.

In this second miracle story, Thomas of Celano told of a wealthy Roman woman who had a painting of Saint Francis in a small room set aside for prayer. As the woman prayed in front of the image she searched for the stigmata but, as the

36 Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', p. 654 (Chapter 1 of 'The Miracles').

37 Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', pp. 654–655 (Chapter 1 of 'The Miracles'). For a brief discussion of this miracle see Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of Saint Francis*, pp. 165–166.

38 Trexler, 'Being and Non-being. Parameters of the Miraculous', pp. 15–28.

painter had not included them, they were not there.³⁹ We cannot be sure how common it was for Saint Francis to be painted without the stigmata in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. There is evidence that some patrons specified the inclusion of stigmata. Such was the case in France in 1250 when a woman called Alays made her will leaving funds for stained glass in the Benedictine Abbey of Allois, near Limoges.⁴⁰ However, William Cook's catalogue of over two hundred surviving images of Saint Francis in Italy made before 1320 contains fewer than five per cent without stigmata.⁴¹

The Roman woman did not own a painting with the stigmata included. Rather than letting anyone know about the lack of stigmata on the painting she had continued to gaze at it until eventually the 'wonderful signs appeared in the hands, just as they are usually painted in other images'.⁴² On one level, it was as though the woman had willed the painting to show what she knew to be true and the painting had responded. On another, the woman's prayers had been answered through a miraculous change in the painting, a change which echoed the miraculous changes made to Francis's physical body following the apparition of the seraph. The woman asked her daughter to corroborate the change in the painting, which the younger woman did. Soon after this, she began to doubt that the painting had originally lacked the stigmata and the stigmata on the painting disappeared. Slightly shorter, Bonaventure's version was the same in all but minor details.⁴³

Rosalind Brooke noted that the 'so-called miraculous element here may fail to impress'.⁴⁴ Indeed, if we imagine the Roman woman telling anyone outside her family about this we can see the immediate problem. Before the first miracle the image showed Francis without stigmata. After the second miracle the image showed Francis without stigmata. There was no evidence, apart from the testimony provided by the woman and her daughter, that the image had undergone any transformation at all. What, therefore, can this miracle concerning a mutating image tell us? Paroma Chatterjee has characterized the main theme as doubt.⁴⁵ The story must have reflected and attempted to respond to the difficulties which many encountered in believing that Francis had received miraculous stigmata. Yet the Roman woman in the story did not doubt the stigmata. She was described

39 Thomas of Celano, 'The Treatise on the Miracles', pp. 405–406 (Chapter 2). Thomas of Celano told this story after that of the canon Ruggero, but Bonaventure reversed the order.

40 Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of Saint Francis*, p. 165.

41 Cook, *Images of Saint Francis of Assisi*. At least eight do not show the stigmata (cat. numbers 4, 40, 59, 103, 108, 128, 134, 193). It is probable that none is of Franciscan provenance.

42 Thomas of Celano, 'The Treatise on the Miracles', p. 405 (Chapter 2).

43 Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', p. 652 ('The Miracles Shown after His Death', Chapter 1, Section 4).

44 Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of Saint Francis*, p. 165.

45 Chatterjee, *The Living Icon*, pp. 163–164; Chatterjee, 'Francis's Secret Stigmata', pp. 39–40.

as 'sad and very surprised' that they were not depicted on the painting but she did not doubt them.⁴⁶ Her sadness sprang from the painter's omission. What the painter had not supplied was supplied miraculously. Francis received miraculous stigmata; the painting received miraculous stigmata.

The stories of Ruggero and the Roman woman re-affirmed the truth of Francis's stigmata and demonstrated that it was right to depict them, at least in part so that others should know about them and believe in them. More than this, in the episode of the Roman matron the painting was described as miraculously marked, not just Francis. Chatterjee called the story 'a gnomic meditation on the role of human agency in visual representation'.⁴⁷ It was certainly that, and as part of that it was also a tale of divine agency, one in which the painting became important as a piece of evidence. Both Francis and the painting were marked by God. There was an unspoken conflation here between Francis and the image of Francis, between God and the painter, although God was clearly more accurate than the painter since it was through his agency, answering the prolonged gaze of the woman, that the stigmata had appeared on the painting. As well as confirming the veracity of the stigmata, both stories established the evidentiary importance of the image. In the case of the painting owned by the Roman woman, God as painter had provided unassailable evidence. The miraculous wound received by Ruggero had proved that the painting in the church in Potenza was truthful in its inclusion of the stigmata and should not have been the subject of doubt.

The link between subject and painting is at the heart of the third example of a miracle relating to a painted image of Francis with the stigmata that I will discuss. In what follows, I will concentrate on the text in the fourteenth-century *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, commenting on the text in a 1343 manuscript of the *Avignon Compilation* where there are notable differences.⁴⁸ The story in the *Actus Beati Francisci* took place in a Dominican convent and its protagonists were Dominican friars. One of these friars hated Francis so much that nothing would convince him of the miracle of the stigmata. In the refectory of a convent in which this friar was staying there was a picture of Saint Francis with the stigmata. The friar, pushed by lack of faith and hatred, 'secretly went and, with a knife, scratched the sacred stigmata off the picture of the holy father so thoroughly that they could not be seen'.⁴⁹

46 Thomas of Celano, 'The Treatise on the Miracles', p. 405 (Chapter 2).

47 Chatterjee, *The Living Icon*, p. 164.

48 For a short introduction to the *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius* see Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi. Vol. 3: The Prophet*, pp. 429–434.

49 *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, p. 130 (Chapter 40): '(3) [...] accessit occulte et cum cultello sacra stigmata de pictura sancti patris abrasit ita quod penitus nil parebant'. A slightly different English translation is given in 'The Deeds of the Blessed Francis', pp. 559–561, where the friar 'secretly went and scratched the sacred stigmata off the picture of our holy Father so that they were in no way visible'. Unless

Scratching into the paint and stone with a knife is a reminder of the possibilities of how the stigmata might have been inflicted on Saint Francis without miraculous intervention. This was something dealt with by Saint Bonaventure in a sermon given in Paris on 4 October 1255. Bonaventure specified that Francis's 'hands had no open wounds nor were they injured, which would have been the case had iron or wooden instruments been used'.⁵⁰ He did not impose the same limits on the side wound from which, he said, 'holy blood flowed'. It was this bleeding that was accounted miraculous since Francis was able to continue travelling and preaching despite what should have been an incapacitating wound.

The friar who scratched at the painting of Francis on the refectory wall with his knife had not only destroyed the representation of the stigmata, his stated aim, he had also made stigmata, inflicting wounds through human agency. Subtle plays of making and unmaking pervaded the story. Readers or audience were led to think about different types of stigmata, about different types of visual representation, and about faking or forgery.⁵¹ The friar did not believe Francis had been 'marked with the holy stigmata'. He set out to 'correct' the image so that it conformed to his beliefs. However, this was not the end of the story for when the friar returned to the refectory for a meal the following day the stigmata had returned and, what was more, they looked 'more recent than before'. The friar thought that he had not been thorough enough and he waited until no one else was around and then returned to finish the job. Importantly for the story however, 'he did not destroy the stone on which the picture was painted'.⁵² Finally, on the third day, the friar saw that the stigmata had appeared once again, 'more beautiful and new than they had ever appeared before'.⁵³ This made him so angry that he swore that he would remove the stigmata on the painting permanently. Again he waited until no one else was around and in a furious attack, 'cutting out the colour and the stone', he used his knife to excise both the pigment of the painted stigmata and the stone on which they were painted.⁵⁴

As soon as he finished his gouging, blood began to flow, and with the blood violently spurting forth, it began to stain with blood the brother's hands, face,

otherwise noted, I have used the English translation in 'The Deeds of the Blessed Francis'. I have been unable to consult the most up to date Latin edition: Jacques Cambell, Marino Bigaroni, and Giovanni M. Boccali, eds., *Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, Assisi: Porziuncula, 1988.

50 Bonaventure, 'The Morning Sermon', p. 514.

51 Constable, 'Forgery and Plagiarism in the Middle Ages'.

52 'The Deeds of the Blessed Francis', p. 560; *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, p. 130 (Chapter 40): '(5) [...] ita tamen quod caementum non destruxit picturae substratum'.

53 'The Deeds of the Blessed Francis', p. 560; *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, pp. 130–131 (Chapter 40): '(6) [...] et ecce vidit illa sacra stigmata tam pulchra et nova quod nunquam apparuerunt ita recentia'.

54 'The Deeds of the Blessed Francis', p. 560; *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, p. 131 (Chapter 40): '(8) [...] colorem effodiens et caementum'.

and tunic. Terrified, he fell down as though he were dead. Like a stream that blood flowed down the wall from that sacred stigmata which were gouged by that miserable man.⁵⁵

Inflicting scratches onto specific parts of the painting of Saint Francis was intended to create a visible and palpable, since the friar eventually had cut into the stone, sign of power.⁵⁶ In destroying something the friar provoked something else as even erasure is the creation of something. The friar had focused on the stigmata and on the erasure of the part of the image which he found particularly hateful. He had sought to offend the image which he himself found so offensive. Mitchell has argued that there are two defining convictions at work when people seek to 'offend' images: that the image is 'immediately linked to what it represents' and that the image is 'capable of feeling what is done to it'.⁵⁷ Not only are images capable of sensation and have some type of consciousness, they are also able to react.⁵⁸

The effect of the blood that spurting from the wall was to shock and horrify. The friar had attacked someone making him bleed badly. The issue of blood made clear the identification of the painting and its subject, Saint Francis. As modern readers, we might understand spurting blood as an arterial bleed. Had the friar attacked the stigmata in Francis's hands and feet accurately he would not have damaged any arteries, but stabbing indiscriminately in frustrated rage he could have done so. Of course, neither the thirteenth-century friar nor the person who wrote this episode would have known of arterial bleeding, although both may have known that certain wounds spurting bright red blood and that this indicated a serious and possibly life-threatening wound. Importantly, the blood did not just drip or run down the wall, although it did this as well. It did not remain 'within' or even 'on' the painting. With the appearance of the blood the division between the two-dimensional painting and those who viewed it was elided. In a sense, the friar had entered the painting since he was covered by the blood which came from it. This interaction, albeit unwanted, recalled the use of a painting as an object of meditation which allowed the viewer to use it as a stepping-off point to imagining her/himself as an eye-witness to a scene, something recommended in the late-thirteenth-century Franciscan text *Meditationes vitae Christi* (*Meditations*

55 'The Deeds of the Blessed Francis', p. 560; *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, p. 131 (Chapter 40): '(9) Statim vero quum perfecit effodere, inceptit sanguis de ipsis effossionibus emanare, et faciem, et manus, et tunicam dicti fratris, sanguis ille impetuose prosiliens, cruentare. Ille vero territus quasi mortuus cecidit. (10) Sanguis ille fluebat per murum de illis sacris stigmatibus ab illo misero effossis, ut rivus'.

56 Plesch, 'Memory on the Wall'.

57 Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, p. 127. See also Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. 16.

58 Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. 1.

on the Life of Christ).⁵⁹ By cutting into the wall where the stigmata were painted as part of the image of Francis, the unfortunate friar had discovered a link between the painting and Francis. The painting, which was 'just' a painting, albeit one which made claims for the importance of Francis far beyond what the friar was prepared to tolerate, suddenly acted in some way as though Francis was present. The attack had provoked bleeding, just as it would have done had the friar attacked a real person.

According to the testimony gathered by his companions in the *Scripta Leonis, Rufini et Angeli* (*Writings of Leo, Rufino and Angelo*), Francis recognized that paintings did not have, in and of themselves, any value. Their value resided in the way in which they could prompt the viewer to honour God and the Virgin, for 'the wood and the painting ascribe nothing to themselves, because they are just wood and paint'.⁶⁰ Francis's statement echoed accepted arguments for the use of images, which were not to be adored for themselves but venerated in such a way that they would lead the mind to God.⁶¹ In the story of the Dominican friar and the refectory painting, however, 'just' stone and paint had appeared to react as though they were flesh and blood. They lacked the passivity we might expect of the elements of a painting. Even if there was an understanding that it was not the image that had reacted to the stimulus, but that the image was a conduit for a supernatural revelation of truth, the physicality of demonstrating the veracity of Francis's stigmata through an image painted on a stone wall remained deeply disturbing, upsetting divisions between natural expectations of the properties of stone and flesh.

In the same passage from the *Scripta Leonis*, Francis went on to say that:

the servant of God is a kind of painting, that is a creature of God in which God is honoured for the sake of his benefits. But he ought to ascribe nothing to himself, just like the wood or the painting, but should render honour and glory to God alone.⁶²

Francis's view of the holy person as a type of painting, a representation through which the viewer could honour God, or through which God could manifest his power, opened up a link between the saint and the painting of him. On one level this was a matter of adoring God through his saints, but by allowing us to think of Francis as a painting it also made it possible to see him, in some way, as a representation of God, and paintings of Francis as also intimately connected to God. In attacking

59 *Meditations on the Life of Christ*. The text contains numerous injunctions to the reader to 'imagine' and 'behold'. See, for example, in Chapter 23, pp. 136–137: 'And then behold your Lord, how disfigured he is [...]'.
 60 *Scripta Leonis*, pp. 272–273.
 61 Gilbert, *The Saints' Three Reasons for Paintings in Churches*.
 62 *Scripta Leonis*, pp. 272–273.

an image of Francis the friar had attacked a painting [on stone] of a painting [the holy person] of God.

The way in which the other friars reacted when they came upon the bloody scene emphasized the elision between the painting and that which it represented. The friar had collapsed 'as though he were dead' and the other brothers, seeing that the blood continued to flow from the 'wounds' tried to stop the bleeding. They did this by treating the image as a person and using 'cotton and bandages'.⁶³ Such remedies did not work for, although it was acting in certain respects as a wounded human, the image was not a wounded human. The actions of the iconoclast friar did not result, as he had intended, in the destruction of the image, just as the subsequent actions of the other friars did not manage to put the genie back in the bottle; the blood continued to pour out, refusing to allow the image-being either to bleed out or the wounds to form scabs as the blood coagulated. This, in the definition given by Bruno Latour, is 'iconoclash', when it is not immediately possible to ascertain the destructiveness or constructiveness of a certain action.⁶⁴ The friar had aimed to destroy the offending parts of the painting but, as will become clear below, his actions had a completely different outcome to that which he had envisioned.

Unable to stem the bleeding using bandages, the friars then had recourse to another means of stopping the blood. Everyone in the convent, including the prior, removed their habits and knelt in front of the still bleeding painting. Praying, 'they applied the discipline to their backs'.⁶⁵ We are not told, but it is implicit that the friars caused their own blood to flow and that, as it did, the blood ceased to pour out from the image of Saint Francis. This action accompanied by prayer was associated with penitence in the mid-thirteenth-century Dominican text *De modo orandi* (known in English as *The Nine Ways of Prayer of Saint Dominic*), probably written to instruct novices.⁶⁶ Representations of this type of prayer, from the fifteenth century in a manuscript in the Vatican Library (MS Lat. Rossianus 3) and in Cell 20 in San Marco, Florence, showed Saint Dominic (1170–1221) stripped to the waist in front of a crucifix whipping himself.⁶⁷ In the Vatican manuscript, Dominic is shown clearly bleeding (fig. 3). The blood has run down his back and onto his lowered tunic. In

63 'The Deeds of the Blessed Francis', p. 560; *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, p. 131 (Chapter 40): '(11) [...] petiis et bombace [...]'.
64 Latour, 'What is Iconoclash?', p. 16.

65 'The Deeds of the Blessed Francis', p. 560; *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius*, p. 131 (Chapter 40): 'Et prior cum omnibus de conventu se expoliantes, ante imaginem sancti Francisci, et se disciplinantes, et cum lacrymis orantes, rogaverunt beatum Franciscum quod offensam dicti fratris miseratus dimitteret, [...]'.
66 Hood, 'Saint Dominic's Manners of Praying', p. 198. See also Schmitt, 'Between Text and Image'. English translations of *De modo orandi* have been published by Francis C. Lehner and Simon Tugwell.

67 Most recently, MS Lat. Rossianus 3 has been discussed in Shaneyfelt, 'Catalogue 20: *De modo orandi*'. On the fresco in Cell 20 in San Marco see Hood, 'Saint Dominic's Manners of Praying', pp. 201, 205.



3. Penitence, the third way of praying, from *De modo orandi*, folio 7r, MS Lat. Rossianus 3, fifteenth century, Vatican Apostolic Library, Vatican City, Rome.

both representations the crucifix bleeds. Like the description of the painting of Francis on the refectory wall, blood spurts from the wounds of Christ blurring the distinction between image and reality. In the Vatican image, the crucifix is placed clearly on an altar and depicted as a sculpture come to life. In shedding their own blood the Dominicans, in the convent where the image of Francis was attacked, had succeeded in stopping the image bleeding. Their actions demonstrated their willingness to suffer for Christ but, significantly in this Franciscan text, not as Francis did. Indeed, it was important that the friars did not and could not directly imitate Francis whose experience as a stigmatic was deliberately promoted as beyond the reach of others.⁶⁸

A different version of the story included in a mid-fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Avignon Compilation* is somewhat shorter and has been edited to provide a supportive background for the celebration of the Feast of the Stigmata of Saint Francis, which had been recently instituted for the Franciscan Order in 1340.⁶⁹ In this rendering, set in Avignon, the bleeding stopped when Pope Benedict XII (1334–1342) knelt in front of the image, begged Saint Francis's forgiveness for the damage done, and promised to order the celebration of a feast day dedicated to the stigmata. There were other significant changes. The image of Saint Francis was no longer in the refectory of a Dominican convent but rather in a church attached to a Franciscan convent. The damage was done by one of two visiting friars 'belonging to a different order'. The reason for the damage was also expressed differently. The friar who attacked the painting said '[t]hose Lesser [Brothers] want to make their saint resemble Christ'. This was the cue for him to bring out his knife with the words: 'I want to gouge out those stigmata from this image, so he won't look similar to Christ'. The friar then proceeded to remove the five stigmata from the painting and, having done so, 'they started to drip blood profusely'. Unsure what to do, the friar asked advice from his companion who counselled him that he had committed a mortal sin and that he should confess immediately. The confessor, in turn, told the friar to tell the pope. This shorter version of the story was clear that the major problem with the depiction of Saint Francis with the stigmata was that he appeared to have been set up to look like Christ, something which was unspoken in the version in the *Actus Beati Francisci*.⁷⁰

The stories of the Dominican friar in the *Avignon Compilation* and that of the canon Ruggero had similarities to an event recorded in inquisitorial documents from 1361 concerning a Silvestrine monk named Leonardo Mathioli of Foligno. According to witnesses, Leonardo claimed that Francis had deliberately fallen from

68 Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, p. 26.

69 Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi. Vol. 3: The Prophet*, p. 662.

70 I have used the translation in Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi. Vol. 3: The Prophet*, p. 662.



4. Master of the Dossal of Saint John the Baptist, *Saint Francis with Stories of His Life (Orte Dossal)*, circa 1260, tempera and gold on wood, 173 x 83 cm, Museo di Arte Sacra, Orte.

an olive tree in order to wound himself.⁷¹ The abbess of the Poor Clare convent of San Nicola, just outside Assisi, testified that Leonardo complained that others had tried to make Francis into a 'new God', a statement reminiscent of the claims of the friar in the *Avignon Compilation*.⁷² Several of the nuns who gave evidence also stated that Leonardo had asserted that despite the fact that Francis had never had stigmata, his followers still had him painted with them.⁷³ His punishment was to whip himself in public and to renounce his allegations in such a way that all nearby could hear, echoing Ruggero's loud affirmations to the people of Potenza, and the acts of the self-flagellating friars in the *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius*.⁷⁴

The investigation into Leonardo Mathioli demonstrated that concerns expressed in miracle stories relating to the depiction of Francis's stigmata were rooted in recorded events. It also showed that issues surrounding belief in the stigmata were inextricably linked to their visual expression in painting. It is possible that this is referenced in the thirteenth-century *Orte Dossal* (circa 1260) originally from the church of San Francesco in Orte, a town to the east of Viterbo (fig. 4).⁷⁵ The central figure of Saint Francis in the dossal is surrounded by four small narrative scenes. The two at the top are the *Stigmatization* (left) and *Saint Francis Preaching to the Birds* (right). The scene at the bottom left has been identified as the *Miracle of the Sermon in Alessandria (Lombardy)*. A story related by Thomas of Celano in his mid-thirteenth century *Vita Secunda* of Saint Francis, it tells of a heretic who had attempted to denounce Francis for eating meat.⁷⁶ The episode at the bottom right is more problematical and has been variously recognized as the *Canonization of Francis*, the *Miracle of the Painting belonging to the Roman Woman*, the *Miracle of Canon Ruggero*, or the *Conversion of a Heretic* (fig. 5).⁷⁷ William Cook argued for the *Conversion* and, therefore, for the scenes at the base of the panel to be linked through this theme, which is also central to the *Sermon in Alessandria*. However, as Cook acknowledged, the *Conversion* cannot be linked to a written source.⁷⁸

71 The incident is discussed in Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 74–75, and mentioned by Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, p. 55. The documents are included in Oliger, 'Acta inquisitoris umbriae', pp. 63–90.

72 Oliger, 'Acta inquisitoris umbriae', p. 70: 'deus novus'.

73 Oliger, 'Acta inquisitoris umbriae', pp. 70–72.

74 Oliger, 'Acta inquisitoris umbriae', p. 74.

75 For the dating of the dossal, see Ahlquist and Cook, 'The Representation of the Posthumous Miracles of Saint Francis', p. 246; and, in more detail, Cook, 'The Orte Dossal'.

76 Thomas of Celano, 'The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul', pp. 298–299 (Book 2, Chapter 78). This text is generally known and referred to as the *Vita Secunda*, Thomas of Celano's second written life of Saint Francis.

77 Zuppante, 'L'eresia nella Tuscia', pp. 17–18, gives an overview of the identifications. I am grateful to Dr. Abbondio Zuppante for sending me a copy of his article.

78 Cook, *Images of Saint Francis of Assisi*, pp. 141–142 (cat. 115). See also Cook, 'The Orte Dossal'. Zuppante provided further evidence to support the importance of the conversion of heretics for the Franciscans in Orte. See Zuppante, 'L'eresia nella Tuscia', pp. 19–37.



5. Master of the Dossal of Saint John the Baptist, *Saint Francis with Stories of His Life (Orte Dossal)*, detail showing the episode with Canon Ruggero, circa 1260, tempera and gold on wood, Museo di Arte Sacra, Orte.

It may never be possible to identify the bottom right scene of the *Orte Dossal* beyond doubt. However, there are other links between the scenes that could prove instructive. The top right and bottom left stories are connected through the act of preaching. In both, the figure of Francis faces inwards toward his audience

and towards the central figure. Because they both face towards the centre of the dossal, there is a further acknowledgement that the two figures of Francis, placed diagonally opposite one another, are connected.

I propose another association between the top left and bottom right scenes, that of stigmatization. The figure of Francis in the image-within-an-image at the bottom right has stigmata on his hands.⁷⁹ The vertical line of the composition leads down from Francis's hands to the hands of the figure on the right wearing a blue cloak. This person is set apart from the other protagonists through his outstretched arms and hands placed centrally within the composition. It is impossible to be certain but there may be a wound in his left hand. The wound, the centrality of the figure's hands and their compositional link to Francis's wounded hands in the painting-within-a-painting all point to an identification of the figure as Ruggero. If this is correct, then each of the four scenes on the dossal can be traced to surviving written sources and, in particular, to the work of Thomas of Celano. The painting-within-a-painting, referencing a miracle instigated by questions aroused by that painting, created a triple link emphasizing the material importance of painting Francis with the stigmata and thus demonstrating their veracity.⁸⁰ There is no glove to be seen.⁸¹ The wound in Ruggero's left hand could not be seen whilst he wore the glove so he is necessarily shown without it. It is possible that a glove was originally painted at the bottom of the composition but this area of the dossal has been so badly damaged that none of the original paint surface survives.

I have discussed these stories at length because they bring a number of issues relating to the miracle of the stigmata into sharp relief and also because of the questions they raise about the visual culture of stigmata, the responsibility of art to picture – and thus provide evidence for – the miraculous, and the relationship between the image and the viewer. As the actions of the vandal friar in the *Actus Beati Francisci* demonstrated, depiction of the stigmata was not easily accepted.⁸² In monumental painting it aroused considerable controversy. The texts alluded, more or less strongly, to a number of reasons for this. Many in society experienced difficulty in giving credence to such an unusual miracle. Some objected to the perceived intention on the part of the Franciscans to have a saint who conformed more closely to Christ than any other saint. In recording different versions of these

79 Cook, *Images of Saint Francis of Assisi*, p. 141 (cat. 115).

80 Péter Bokody has pointed to the way the image-within-image is used to 'emphasize the authenticity of the stigmata'. See Bokody, *Images-within-Images*, pp. 27–28.

81 Ahlquist and Cook, 'The Representation of the Posthumous Miracles of Saint Francis', p. 247, argue that the scene cannot represent the miracle experienced by Ruggero 'because the most prominent person in the scene does not wear a glove or have a wound in his hand or even have his left hand visible'.

82 See, for example, Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of Saint Francis*, p. 165; Cook, 'Margarito d'Arezzo's Images of Saint Francis', p. 84.

stories, the Franciscans signalled the importance which they attached to Francis's stigmata despite the objections levelled against the miracle. In the second version of the vandal friar story, the truth of the miracle was acknowledged and an official commemoration instituted by the pope, Christ's vicar on earth. The story served to remind its audience that there was no longer any room for doubt. As noted above, this second story had not identified the friar who 'wounded' the painting of Francis except to say that he belonged to another religious order. The narrator of the first story, however, was not so circumspect: the perpetrator of the evil deed was a Dominican friar, a member of a rival order which had been set up at the same time as the Franciscans and which had had similar success.

Nonetheless, this is not a simple narrative. The story did not tar all, or even most, Dominicans with the same brush. The painting which the hate-filled brother attempted to deface was on the wall of the convent refectory and would have been seen by the brothers every day. Its location within the convent buildings, rather than in the nave of the church attached to the convent, indicated that it was not placed there in response to the preferences of the congregation. Rather, it was intended mainly for Dominican eyes. Such a painting had been either commissioned or actively accepted by those brothers responsible for the fabric of the buildings, or the author of the miracle story wanted those who read or heard it to believe that it had been, and that, therefore, many, perhaps most, Dominicans accepted the stigmatized Francis. There was no hint that other members of the community had applauded or even tacitly approved the actions of the renegade friar; the brother had to go about his business secretly. This may have indicated some amount of tact on the part of the writer. Another explanation may have been that it reflected differing views amongst members of the Dominican Order with regard to stigmata and their representation in visual art, something to which I will return in the following chapters.

The three miracle stories discussed here provide an insight into some of the ways in which visual art was utilized by the Franciscans to demonstrate the veracity of their founder's stigmata. They attested to the importance of picturing the miraculous and, particularly in the third example, showed how paintings could be perceived within an evidentiary context and used to establish Francis as having received the marks of the stigmata in the same places as the wounds received by Christ at his crucifixion. This was central to the Franciscan claim for the unique nature of the miracle of their founder's stigmata.

In the final part of this chapter, I place my consideration of the three miracle stories within the context of Franciscan claims for the unique nature of their founder's stigmata, the reactions to early images of the saint as a stigmatic, and the associated issues of the mistreatment of religious images and fraudulent 'miraculous' images, which were made to bleed through human agency. This discussion highlights

the perceived importance of the role of images and, therefore, their threat. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, in the case of Saint Francis the visualization of the stigmata in painted images was particularly complex since it involved Francis as another Christ and as an image of Christ, further blurring the boundaries between image and subject.

Although the encyclical letter believed to have been sent by Brother Elias (d. 1253) immediately after Francis's death on 3 October 1226, which proclaimed the stigmata as 'a great joy and novelty among miracles' and stressed that 'such a sign has not been heard of, except in the Son of God, who is Christ the Lord',⁸³ is without manuscript evidence, it was certainly not long before Francis's stigmata were being referred to as unique.⁸⁴ Thomas of Celano, in the *Vita Prima*, said that the stigmata were:

a unique gift, / a sign of special love: / to decorate the soldier with the same arms
of glory / that in their dignity belong to the King alone!⁸⁵

In the second half of the thirteenth century, some outside the Franciscan Order were also talking about the stigmata as a unique miracle. A German Benedictine monk wrote a summary of the life of Francis that has been dated to around 1275.⁸⁶ He was aware of Thomas of Celano's works and of Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior*, as well as an account of Francis's life by another Franciscan, Julian of Speyer (d. 1250).⁸⁷ In his description of the stigmata, as seen after the saint's death, the monk said:

Anyone would rejoice that the greatest favour was shown to him if he could approach to see or kiss the sacred marks of Christ, which Saint Francis was exhibiting in his body. For who would be so dull-witted or stupid that by this obvious truth he would not understand that just as this holy man has been honoured by a unique miracle on earth, so also he has been raised on high to heaven by an eminent glory?⁸⁸

83 I have used the English translation given in Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of Saint Francis*, p. 34. For the Latin text see Elias, 'A Letter on the Passing of Saint Francis'.

84 The text was first published in 1620 making it a problematic source, one that may represent a significant re-writing of an original text, or a text composed at some time after Francis's death. For an overview of the issues and a bibliography see the 'Introduction' to 'A Letter on the Passing of Saint Francis' in Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi. Vol. 2: The Founder*, pp. 485–488. Also Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 60–61, with further bibliography.

85 Thomas of Celano, 'The Life of Saint Francis', p. 281 (Book 2, Chapter 9).

86 'A Life of Saint Francis by an Anonymous Monk', p. 837.

87 Julian of Speyer, 'The Life of Saint Francis'. On Julian of Speyer see the 'Introduction' to his 'Life of Saint Francis' in Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi. Vol. 1: The Saint*, pp. 363–367.

88 'A Life of Saint Francis by an Anonymous Monk', p. 870 (Chapter 30).

However, not all were convinced. For some, claims of the miraculous and unique reception of the wounds of Christ amounted to blasphemy. Francis was usurping Christ. No wonder, then, that images of Francis with the stigmata were defaced or destroyed. Pope Alexander IV (1254–1261), a supporter of the Franciscans who had been made Protector of the Order under the pontificate of his uncle Gregory IX (1227–1241), had to write to Gualtiero da Vezzano, Archbishop of Genoa, asking him to punish those who had effaced the stigmata in the paintings of Saint Francis in the church of Santa Maria della Vigna in Venice, and in the church of San Sisto.⁸⁹ On 28 July 1259, the pope also sent a bull addressed to all the bishops of Castille and Leon, *Quia longum esset*, in which he excommunicated all those who, in the areas under their jurisdiction, erased the representations of Saint Francis and his stigmata, or who ordered others to do so:

These same men demonstrate folly in so much, that with regard to the image of that same confessor [Saint Francis] wherever they find that he has been painted, they culpably destroy or have destroyed those very stigmata: prohibiting painters from painting the aforementioned confessor with the stigmata: for which reason is taken away from that confessor the honour and devotion of many of the faithful, and is most gravely diminished the venerable religion of our beloved sons of the order of [Friars] Minor.⁹⁰

Previously, in a bull of 11 April 1237, *Usque ad terminos*, Gregory IX had upbraided the Cistercian Robert the English, Bishop of Olomouc (now in the Czech Republic), who had, amongst other things, forbidden the representation of the stigmata in visual images. According to the text of the bull, the bishop had stated:

That since only the son of the eternal father was crucified for the salvation of the human race, so therefore the Christian religion should adore those same wounds with humble devotion. Neither the Blessed Francis nor other saints should be painted with stigmata in the house of God, and he who asserts otherwise sins.⁹¹

89 Mencherini, *Codice diplomatico della Verna*, pp. 689–690; Vauchez, 'Les Stigmates de Saint François et leurs détracteurs', p. 603. I am indebted to Vauchez's article for the information in these paragraphs.

90 Vauchez, 'Les Stigmates de Saint François et leurs détracteurs', p. 603; Mencherini, *Codice diplomatico della Verna*, pp. 32–34: 'Ipsi etiam in tantam prorumpunt insaniam, quod de imagine confessoris eiusdem ubicumque illam depictam inveniunt, Stigmata ipsa damnabiliter abolent et faciunt aboleri: prohibentes pictoribus, ne prefatum confessorem cum Stigmatibus depingant eisdem: propter quod ipsius confessoris honori eet devotioni fidelium multum adimitur, ac venerande religioni dilectorum filiorum fratrum de ordine Minorum gravissime derogatur'.

91 Vauchez, 'Les Stigmates de Saint François et leurs détracteurs', p. 601; Mencherini, *Codice diplomatico della Verna*, pp. 8–10: '[Q]uod (cum solus Patris aeterni Filius fuerit pro humano salute crucifixus, et ipsius dumtaxat vulnera devotione supplici adorare debeat religio christiana) nec Beatus Franciscus nec sanctorum aliquis cum Stigmatibus in ecclesia Dei depingendus: et quod peccat contrarium asserens'.

These examples have shown that, despite papal support, images of Francis with his wounds were contentious and, furthermore, those at the rank of bishop, with responsibility for guiding and educating their flock, had, in some areas of Europe, responded to the depiction of the new saint, or indeed any saint, with stigmata by declaring their representation contrary to the Christian religion. When bishops destroyed the stigmata in images of Saint Francis, they sent out a very strong message. Just how strong can be gauged from stories about images of Francis and the stigmata in early Franciscan literature discussed above.

The bulls of Gregory IX and Alexander IV call to mind the famous correspondence between Pope Gregory I (590–604) and Bishop Serenus of Marseilles at the end of the sixth century.⁹² Like the mid-thirteenth-century bishops addressed by Alexander IV, Serenus had ordered painted images in his diocese to be destroyed. One of the things at issue in the thirteenth century, according to Gregory IX's bull, was the adoration of Christ crucified and the possibility that images of Francis with the stigmata would encourage a transferral of this adoration. Likewise, in Gregory I's first letter, written to Serenus in July 599, he noted that he had heard that images had been broken and thrown from the churches because people had been adoring them.⁹³ The distinction between images and that which they represented and, consequently, appropriate behaviours in relation to images, were discussed by a number of theologians during the Middle Ages, as were the closely interlinked rationales for the use of images in religious settings.⁹⁴ Such discussions attested to the complexities of how people dealt with images, some of which were believed to interact with the viewer. Saint Francis was famously instructed by a speaking image in the church of San Damiano.⁹⁵ According to Thomas of Celano the image, which still exists, had not only spoken to Francis, it had also moved its lips in order to do so. Francis had not heard a disembodied voice but, rather, one which was manifested specifically through the figure of Christ on the cross, something made clear by Thomas of Celano detailing that 'with the lips of the painting, the image of Christ crucified spoke to him'.⁹⁶

We are now accustomed to seeing images from a distance, roped off in museums and galleries, or invisibly protected by motion detectors. Our respect for the painting

92 Chazelle, 'Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate'.

93 Chazelle, 'Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate', p. 139.

94 Gilbert, *The Saints' Three Reasons for Paintings in Churches*. See also Endrődi, 'The Chancellor's Three Reasons for Paintings'.

95 On miraculous and speaking crucifixes see Jansen, 'Miraculous Crucifixes'. Megan Holmes has argued that miraculous transfiguration of images was increasingly widespread in Italy during the later Middle Ages, citing Francis's encounter with the crucifix at San Damiano as the best known of such transfigurations. See Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*, p. 170.

96 Thomas of Celano, 'The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul', pp. 249–250 (Book 1, Chapter 6).



6. *Crucifix of San Damiano*, twelfth century, tempera on wood, 190 x 120 cm, Santa Chiara, Assisi.

qua painting is increased by its literal intangibility. To attempt to touch it is to incur the sounds of a warning alarm. The painting is isolated, distanced, removed from its original cultural context.⁹⁷ The image which talked to Saint Francis was probably at a distance from him. It was pictured as such in the fresco of the episode in the upper church of San Francesco in Assisi, and the surviving crucifix of San Damiano, with its almost life-size Christ, now housed in Santa Chiara in Assisi, is of the type that would have been suspended above head height (fig. 6). Yet, although it was physically distanced from Francis, it was not distanced by 'the museum effect', one which creates an invisible barrier between art and viewer making paintings distant items that can be gazed at without necessitating any interaction between beholder and object, any investment of emotion or action.⁹⁸ Instead, Francis was able to receive instructions from the image through speech. There were also many instances where the image and the viewer attained physical contact. Rupert of Deutz, in Book 12 of his *Commentary on Matthew*, written in 1127, described a vision that he had experienced almost twenty years previously. In it he had embraced and kissed the figure of Christ which he had seen on a cross on the altar. The figure of Christ was not a passive recipient of the kiss. He had responded. According to Rupert, 'as he [the figure of Christ] was being kissed he opened his mouth, that I might kiss him more deeply'.⁹⁹ Sara Lipton has argued convincingly that, although Rupert was describing a vision, his interaction with the crucified Christ was linked to 'the physical act of seeing'.¹⁰⁰

In other instances figures in images detached themselves from their 'background' or support.¹⁰¹ Many images were physically close to viewers and the kissing of images was an accepted way of showing veneration in Byzantium.¹⁰² It was acknowledged in the decrees of the Council of Trent (1545–1563),¹⁰³ and certainly practised during the Middle Ages.¹⁰⁴ Images were thus, as Caroline Walker Bynum and others have argued, part of a material, tactile culture, one in which physical communication with the image was a familiar occurrence.¹⁰⁵ As we have seen, not all such interactions were, at least initially, positive.

97 Alpers, 'The Museum as a Way of Seeing', pp. 25–32.

98 Alpers, 'The Museum as a Way of Seeing', pp. 26–27.

99 I have used the translation in Lipton, "'The Sweet Lean of His Head": Writing about Looking at the Crucifix', p. 1176.

100 Lipton, "'The Sweet Lean of His Head": Writing about Looking at the Crucifix', p. 1176. The text is discussed by Lipton on pp. 1175–1182.

101 Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, pp. 283–316.

102 Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, pp. 172, 183, 225.

103 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, pp. 774–776.

104 On kissing images see, for example, Lang, 'Kissing the Image of Christ in the Medieval Mass'; Rudy, 'Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls'; Cannon, 'Kissing the Virgin's Foot', pp. 23–28.

105 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 65.

The figure of Francis in the refectory suffered from the negative reaction to it of the friar, at first as a passive victim. Bits of the pigment were scratched out. Mitchell has described this as 'the image giving away its own body in the encounter'.¹⁰⁶ Eventually the image had reacted but even so it had not detached itself from its support. The details provided in the text would seem to indicate that it could not because Francis was painted onto the stone wall of the refectory. The friar had tried for the biblically significant three times to remove the stigmata. He had denied Francis as Saint Peter had denied Christ after his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:33–35, Mark 14:29–31, Luke 22:33–34, and John 18:15–17), further stressing both the similarities between Francis and Christ, and Francis as another Christ. When the friar had attempted to erase the stigmata for the third time he was described as 'cutting out the colour and the stone' whereas in the second and, it was implied, in the first attempt he did not harm the stone. Although the image did not incline its head or reach out, it did bleed and, significantly, the bleeding had started when the friar used his knife to gouge into the stone. He had achieved the impossible: getting blood out of a stone. Although the image exhibited signs of life through bleeding, there was no indication that the figure of Francis had moved, only that blood had spurting from the stigmata. This, then, was a different type of image to those that detached themselves from their supports. It was the support of this painting, the stone, that 'proved' its alive-ness. The pigment placed on the wall acted as a skin.

Mistreatment of religious images could be considered a serious crime. One well-known early-sixteenth-century case involved an image of the Virgin Mary in Florence which had horse dung thrown at it. The culprit, Antonio Rinaldeschi, who had been upset at gambling losses sustained earlier in the day, attempted to escape but was caught and hanged from the windows of the Bargello, having been convicted of blasphemy.¹⁰⁷ Another example, which can be dated to before 1320, recorded a gambler who had aimed a dagger at an image of the Virgin. Attacking and defacing images took various forms. Bartholomew of Trent's *Liber Miraculorum Beatae Virginiae Mariae* (*Book of Miracles of the Virgin Mary*), from the second quarter of the thirteenth century, told of a gambler in Trent who, like Rinaldeschi, had had a bad run of luck and used his knife to attack an image of the Crucifixion.¹⁰⁸ In his assault upon the image the gambler had caused 'more wounds than the crucifiers'.¹⁰⁹ Defacing images of the Virgin and Christ was blasphemous, but other

106 Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*, p. 39.

107 Connell and Constable, *Sacrilege and Redemption in Renaissance Florence*. A shorter version, 'Sacrilege and Redemption in Renaissance Florence', was previously published in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. See also Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*, pp. 99–102.

108 Both examples are given by Connell and Constable, 'Sacrilege and Redemption in Renaissance Florence', p. 36. See Dondaine, 'Barthélemy de Trente O.P.', p. 98.

109 Quoted in Connell and Constable, 'Sacrilege and Redemption in Renaissance Florence', p. 36.

figures in images were also defaced.¹¹⁰ There are examples of images where the soldiers who crucified Christ and the bad thief have been deliberately disfigured, their eyes gouged out. People engaged with the figures in images. For the Church authorities this was a recognized problem, particularly with miracle-working images where the figure in a painting could come to have a 'life' independent of the person it represented.¹¹¹ Thus, the image of Saint Francis attacked by the friar was not alone in certain aspects of its behaviour, in the way in which it changed in response to stimulus, nor were the actions of the friar and his fellow religious. The recalcitrant friar had acted almost as one of Christ's executioners, whilst his co-religionists demonstrated their awareness of the criminality of his actions by their penitential self-flagellation.

Miraculous bleeding images, particularly those which showed Christ crucified, existed in a number of places, and stories about them were recorded. Jacopo da Voragine (d. 1298) narrated instances in his *Legenda Aurea* (*Golden Legend*) in the section on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. These included a Jew who had used his sword to cut the throat of an image of Christ in Santa Sophia in Constantinople. Blood had gushed out and covered the head and face of the offender. Another story concerned a painted crucifix in Beirut which had been mistreated by a group of Jews who, amongst other things, pierced the side of the image of Christ with a spear, wounding the image as Christ had been wounded at his crucifixion. Again, the amount of blood, and water, that came from the image was considerable, so much so that a container set under the image was completely filled.¹¹² In Italy, as well, images were alleged to have bled miraculously following mistreatment. A painted cross in Venice was stabbed in 1290.¹¹³ Actual damage to the image was not always necessary. In some instances the crucifix bled spontaneously. This was the case in 1536 when a crucifix in San Jacopo tra' Fossi in Florence started to sweat blood, an event which quickly became associated with the assassination of Alessandro de' Medici at the beginning of 1537.¹¹⁴ As Megan Holmes has pointed out, stories about transfigured images were widely disseminated in religious texts by the mid-thirteenth century and secular stories about such images started to occur in Italy in the second half of the fourteenth century.¹¹⁵ The narration, by Thomas of Celano, Bonaventure, and others of stories about the representation of the stigmata formed part of this wider output.

In almost all these cases, the wounded or bleeding image served to make a point and to inspire belief. As David Freedberg has put it: 'The motive is usually

110 For other examples of defaced images see Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*, pp. 189–190.

111 For a discussion of 'live' images see Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, pp. 283–316.

112 Jacopo da Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, Vol. 2, pp. 170–171.

113 Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. 197; Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*, p. 249.

114 Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*, p. 54.

115 Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*, pp. 168–177.

very clear'.¹¹⁶ However, reactions to these miraculous images were complicated by cases of fraud. At the end of the fourteenth century, a sculpted crucifix that had been at the head of a procession of penitential Bianchi marching into Rome produced blood. The subsequent investigation showed that the crucifix was hollow and had a hidden leather pouch filled with blood and water.¹¹⁷ According to the chronicle of Luca Dominici, those called in to test the crucifix were 'masters of woodworking, carvers and painters' since they were thought best qualified to assess the work of another and to distinguish art from miracle.¹¹⁸ These masters had ascertained that the sculpture was just that: a sculpture. Yet, as we have seen, the distinction was not always so easy. Images that miraculously bled were also 'just' images. They were transfigured in that their appearance changed – through movement, for example – but they were still made of wood, paint, plaster.¹¹⁹ There was a complexity in the ways in which viewers understood and interacted with these images that can appear deeply contradictory.

Transfigured images of the stigmatized Francis were a particular case since Francis's wounds were themselves configured as the mark of God as artist. Francis was already a support onto which God had made his mark in the form of the five wounds received by Christ on the cross. Two centuries after the principal images which I have discussed in this chapter, the link between painting and stigmatization was made explicit in a satirical woodcut attributed to Tobias Stimmer in Johann Fischart's *Der Barfüßer Secten und Kuttenstriet* (*Barefoot Sects and the Dispute of the Monk's Habit*) printed in Strasbourg at the beginning of the 1570s.¹²⁰ The Dominican stigmatic Catherine of Siena was shown with a large paintbrush in her left hand (figs. 60 and 61). With her right hand she lifts Saint Francis's left hand in order, according to the accompanying text, 'to paint away his wounds'.¹²¹ In this anti-Catholic woodcut, a saint with invisible stigmata sought to conceal the stigmata of another saint by painting. Stigmata, painting, and forgery were elided, something which will be considered in Chapter 7. Pigment was used to hide and to erase. In the miracle stories discussed in this chapter, by contrast, pigment was used to proclaim the unique nature of Francis's stigmata, and pigment and blood were elided.

My concentration in this chapter has been on the ways in which miracles associated with the portrayal of Saint Francis of Assisi's stigmata in visual art were dealt with

¹¹⁶ Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, p. 311.

¹¹⁷ Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*, p. 174.

¹¹⁸ Dominici, *Cronache di Ser Luca Dominici*, Vol. 1, pp. 204–205. I have used the translation in Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*, p. 174.

¹¹⁹ For a discussion of image transfiguration see Holmes, *The Miraculous Image*, pp. 168–177.

¹²⁰ Fischart, *Der Barfüßer Secten*, Vol. 1, pp. 106–125. See the discussion by Ganz, 'The Dilemma of a Saint's Portrait', pp. 241–242.

¹²¹ Ganz, 'The Dilemma of a Saint's Portrait', p. 242.

in Franciscan texts. These three miracles testified to the perceived power of images, their function, and the ways in which people were expected to respond. The bleeding painting of Francis in the third example indicated a fear of images, something intrinsically identified with power.¹²² Both fear and power were linked to an understanding, not always articulated, of Saint Francis as somehow present in the image and thus to the link between visual culture and embodiment. The attempted destruction of the painting not only proved Francis's stigmata; it also allowed an insight into the ways in which painted images functioned within a particular social structure.¹²³ The painting became an active agent instigating specific embodied actions on the part of the friars.¹²⁴ It participated in the sacred, as did those who acted upon it or reacted to it. In the *Actus Beati Francisci* version the self-flagellation of the friars in front of the bleeding figure of Francis was embodied evidence of their wish to follow Christ through suffering. Significantly, their actions were ones that made them bleed like the painting but which, at the same time, set them apart from it. Their wounds were self-inflicted in contrast to those of Francis, which were received through the miracle of the stigmatization, depicted through the skill of the painter, and tangibly and physically inflicted through the actions of the iconoclast executioner friar, who in attempting to remove them succeeded only in an intensification of their physical manifestation. The work of the image was thus more than a reflection or depiction of appearance, or even of knowledge; it acted as proof. By challenging the viewer to action it provided a clear relationship between seeing and knowing through experiencing. In all three examples discussed picturing practices were shown to be fundamental to the experience of the miraculous. Miracle and image existed in a symbiotic relationship. It was through miracles associated with images that the depiction of Francis's miraculous stigmata was justified and, conversely, it was the depiction of the stigmata that was miraculous or which elicited the miraculous.

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122 Freedberg, 'The Power of Art', pp. 70–76.

123 Freedberg, 'The Power of Art', p. 67.

124 Michelle O'Malley has published an illuminating discussion of art and agency using Alfred Gell's concept of agency and an altarpiece by Benozzo Gozzoli as a case study in order to investigate the altarpiece as 'dynamic'. Michelle O'Malley, 'Altarpieces and Agency'; Gell, *Art and Agency*.

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3. Representing the Invisible: Saint Catherine of Siena's Stigmatization

Abstract

Representations of Catherine of Siena's stigmatization raised questions about the relationship between seeing and knowing. Catherine's stigmata were challenging. They did not appear visibly on her body, were the result of a series of separate events, and, it could be argued, were transient. The episodes associated with the stigmatization were detailed in Raymond of Capua's *Legenda Maior*, whilst in the *Libellus de Supplemento* Tommaso Caffarini discussed its representation. In this chapter, visual examples in the two extant illustrated manuscripts of the *Libellus*, together with Giovanni di Paolo's painting of the *Stigmatization*, are used as a basis from which to consider problems surrounding the depiction of Catherine's stigmatization and the ways in which these were articulated in the fifteenth century.

Keywords: invisibility, Dominicans, Tommaso Caffarini, Giovanni di Paolo, Raymond of Capua, transience

As discussed in the last chapter, the representation of Saint Francis of Assisi's (d. 1226) stigmata in visual art was contentious: not only was the miracle disputed but painting Francis with the stigmata was interpreted by some as showing the saint in a way that should have been reserved for Christ. For those who accepted the miracle, however, there was no question that Francis had visible marks on his body. The depiction of Francis with the stigmata, therefore, had a clear connection to his physical appearance after the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in 1224, even if the specifics of the appearance of those stigmata were not always faithful to the descriptions in Francis's *vitae*. The case was different for Saint Catherine of Siena (d. 1380), the pre-eminent Dominican stigmatic.¹ It had been

¹ The literature on Catherine of Siena is vast. See, for example, Vauchez, *Catherine of Siena*; Muessig, Ferzoco, and Kienzle, *A Companion to Saint Catherine of Siena*; Hamburger and Signori, *Catherine of Siena: The Creation of a Cult*.

difficult for some to accept Francis as a stigmatic but, for many, it was even more problematic to accept a woman as having miraculously received the wounds of Christ.² Furthermore, Catherine's wounds were invisible and were part of a series of miraculous stigmatic events that happened at different times marking her in ways that went beyond Francis's stigmata. Catherine's miraculous stigmatic experiences, for her Dominican supporters, helped to re-define stigmata in a way that made Francis part of a larger phenomenon, something I will discuss in the next chapter.³ The depiction of her stigmata was energetically debated.⁴ Depicting the invisible was a crucial task of religious art but one that was fraught with problems. Representing Catherine with stigmata raised issues about the relationship between seeing and knowing. A discussion of the debates surrounding the depiction of Catherine's stigmata is, therefore, important in contributing to an understanding of the representation of the miraculous invisible in art. Closely connected to this are the issues that surrounded the depiction of stigmata as a temporal phenomenon, received over a period of time and changed over time yet still part of a coherent stigmatic experience.

In this chapter, my focus on the representation of Catherine's stigmatization pays particular attention to the writings of the Dominicans Raymond of Capua (d. 1399), author of the *Legenda Maior* (*Major Legend*), and Catherine's disciple Tommaso Nacci 'Caffarini' (d. circa 1434). The *Legenda Maior* detailed Catherine's life, spirituality, and miracles. In his *Libellus de Supplemento* (*Supplement to the Life of Catherine of Siena*) Caffarini added to Raymond's *Legenda Maior* and included his own views on how stigmatics should be represented.⁵ Through a consideration of these texts, together with a detailed discussion of the *Stigmatization of Saint Catherine* by the Siennese painter Giovanni di Paolo (d. 1482), and depictions of Catherine's stigmatization in the two extant illustrated manuscripts of the *Libellus* (Siena and Bologna), I demonstrate how the expanding visual culture of stigmata prompted an articulation of issues surrounding the representation of the invisible in art in the fifteenth century.

I start with a cautionary narrative published by Gregorio Lombardelli (d. circa 1613), another Dominican devoted to Catherine who strongly supported her representation as a stigmatic at the beginning of the seventeenth century and whose writings will be the focus of a later chapter. Just as there were stories of images of

2 Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 141–142.

3 See the discussion in Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 138–188.

4 For an encyclopaedic survey of the representation of Catherine of Siena in visual art see Bianchi and Giunta, *Iconografia di Santa Caterina da Siena*. Diega Giunta has also dealt specifically with the representation of Catherine's stigmata. See Giunta, 'La questione delle stimmate'; and an updated English translation, Giunta, 'The Iconography of Catherine of Siena's Stigmata'.

5 Muessig, *The Stigmata*, p. 149.

Saint Francis being defaced so a similar tale was told of Catherine. In his *Sommario della disputa a difesa delle sacre stimate di Santa Caterina da Siena* (*A Summary of the dispute in defence of the sacred stigmata of Saint Catherine of Siena*), published in 1601, Lombardelli related the tale of two young men who:

one day, pushed by the Devil, took knives and went to the church of Saint Eustace in Paris, where Saint Catherine was painted with the stigmata, and without any respect or fear, they erased them [the stigmata], giving themselves to believe that they were making a sacrifice to God, when they were sacrificing to the Devil, and they went back to their houses happy, and celebrating, but the unfortunates, encouraged by the heat, went to the river Seine in order to wash themselves. There was not so much water there that could, according to the natural course [of things], have drowned someone; and [yet] they were submerged. Everyone judged that it was a miracle [...].⁶

This episode has strong similarities to one that I discussed in the previous chapter: the stigmata in the image were erased with knives and the perpetrators were punished, although in a much harsher manner than the friar who defaced the image of Francis, for the young men died without the opportunity to repent or make any recompense for their sin. However, unlike the case of the Roman woman with the image of Francis or the friar who cut into the stigmata painted on the figure of Francis in the refectory, the image did not respond; we are not told that the stigmata returned or that the painting started to bleed.

The fact that the stigmata did not reappear on the painting in the church of Saint Eustace may reflect the complex arguments that surrounded the representation of the invisible. The young men were clearly in the wrong and were punished for this, thus proving that Catherine had received miraculous stigmata, but by removing the painted stigmata they unwittingly emphasized their invisible nature. The story encapsulated the main issues at stake in the representation of Catherine with stigmata. Whereas Francis's stigmata were visible on his body and were witnessed by a select few during his lifetime and more immediately following his death, those of Catherine were invisible and, it could be argued, transient. Aspects of the visual and temporal were and are central to discussions of representations of Catherine's stigmata in art.

6 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 67: 'Questi, vessati dal Diavolo, un giorno, presi i coltelli, andarano nella Chiesa di S. Eustachio di Parigi, ove era dipinta S. Caterina co[n] le stimate, e senza alcun rispetto, ò timore, le rasero, dandosi a creder di far sacrificio a Idio, mentre sacrificarono al Diavolo, anda[n]dosene alle lor case lieti, e festeggianti, ma gli infelici, invitati dal caldo, andarono al fiume Sequana, per lavarsi, là dove non era tant'acqua, che potesse, per corso naturale, annegare alcuno; e si sommersero; giudicando ognuno, che fusse stato miracolo [...].'

Raymond of Capua, Catherine's spiritual director in the last years of her life, described her reception of the stigmata.⁷ In the *Legenda Maior*, started in 1385, he related that at the moment when Catherine received the stigmata the saint had successfully requested that they remain invisible.⁸ Raymond himself, together with several other people, saw Catherine receiving the stigmata. Catherine had received communion, officiated by Raymond, in the church of Santa Cristina in Pisa. Afterwards, Raymond related, Catherine remained in a state of ecstasy. He continued:

Suddenly, before our eyes, her emaciated body, which had been prostrate on the ground, rose up to a kneeling position; she stretched out her arms and hands to their full length; her face grew radiant. For a long time she knelt like that, bolt upright, her eyes closed. Then, whilst we still looked on, of a sudden she pitched forward on the ground as if she had received a mortal wound. A few minutes later she returned to her senses.⁹

At the time, the witnesses were unaware of the significance of what they had seen but Catherine explained to her confessor a short time later, echoing the words of Saint Paul in his letter to the Galatians (6:17): 'I must tell you that, by his mercy, I now bear the stigmata of the Lord Jesus in my body'.¹⁰

Catherine's life was one in which she was constantly monitored. Her admission as a Dominican tertiary had been fraught with difficulties because she was considerably younger than was usual, a virgin rather than a widow.¹¹ At the time of her stigmatization in 1375 she had begun to travel extensively and this, especially, required that she be chaperoned at all times. There were witnesses to many of her actions. Raymond, convinced of her holiness, was already, it seems, documenting what she did and said. After Catherine said that she had received the stigmata, he told her that he had been 'taking careful note of the attitudes and movements of her body, endeavouring to fathom their significance'.¹² Catherine responded by describing what she had experienced:

I saw Our Lord, fastened to the cross, coming down upon me in a blaze of light. With that, as my spirit leaped to meet its Creator, this poor body was pulled upright. Then I saw, springing from the marks of his most sacred wounds, five

7 For a brief discussion of Raymond of Capua and his *Legenda Maior* see Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 142–145.

8 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 186 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 195).

9 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 186 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 195).

10 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 186 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 195).

11 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 65 (Part 1, Chapter 7, Section 71).

12 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 186 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 195).

blood-red rays coming down upon me, directed towards my hands and feet and heart. Realizing the meaning of this mystery, I promptly cried out: 'Ah, Lord, my God, I implore you not to let the marks show outwardly on my body.' Whilst these words were still upon my lips, before the rays had reached me, their blood-red colour changed to radiant brightness, and it was in the form of clearest light that they fell upon the five parts of my body – hands, feet, and heart.¹³

Raymond then questioned Catherine about the ray which had fallen upon her heart, asking her whether it had, in fact, come down upon her left side, to which Catherine replied that 'the shining ray that sprang from his right side did not strike me diagonally but straight forward'. He asked Catherine about whether she had suffered any pain and Catherine replied she had felt such extreme pain, particularly in her heart, that she did not think she would be able to live much longer.¹⁴ The following Sunday, after concerted prayers by her followers and companions, Catherine appeared to be gaining strength and soon after this Raymond asked her whether she still felt the pain she had previously described to him. Catherine explained that she suffered in her soul but that the wounds now gave her 'force and vigour' and that she could 'feel strength flowing' into her.¹⁵

The evidence for Catherine having received the stigmata was thus that which came from her statements to Raymond corroborated, to a certain extent, by the witnesses who had seen her actions at Santa Cristina. Catherine's reception of the stigmata was described by Bartolomeo Dominici, her second confessor, in the *Processo Castellano*, the enquiry into Catherine's life held in Venice between 1411 and 1416, in terms of paintings that he had seen of Saint Francis receiving the stigmata:

[I]t seemed to the bystanders that she stretched out her hands and feet, just as Saint Francis is usually depicted when it is written that he received the sacred stigmata.¹⁶

It is notable that Dominici chose to describe what he saw by making a direct comparison with images of Saint Francis.¹⁷ Chiara Frugoni has discussed the way

13 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 186 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 195).

14 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 186 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 195).

15 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 188 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 198).

16 *Il Processo Castellano*, ed. Laurent, p. 314: 'visa est a circumstantibus manus et pedes extendere, sicut depingi consuevit B. Franciscus cum sacra stigmata scribitur recepisse'. An Italian translation is provided in *Il Processo Castellano*, eds. Centi and Belloni, p. 274. On the *Processo Castellano* see Ferzoco, 'The *Processo Castellano*'.

17 Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, pp. 219–220.

in which visions and images affected one another.¹⁸ This understanding of the bodily manifestation of the moment of Catherine's reception of the stigmata in terms of visual images was a shorthand in terms of description; a way of showing that there was an acknowledged precedent for this type of bodily movement and, therefore, a way of interpreting it; and a signal that the moment of Catherine's stigmatization would be represented in visual art in ways similar to the stigmatization of Saint Francis.

As has been discussed by Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli, the comparison between the ways in which Catherine of Siena and Francis of Assisi received the stigmata brought out tensions between the 'wish to know and the wish to hide'.¹⁹ Whilst Francis had striven to maintain maximum secrecy about the stigmata during his lifetime, Catherine was either unable or did not want to do so. In terms of the physical expression of the stigmata the roles were almost completely reversed. Francis's stigmata were visible and, although few knew about them during his lifetime, they were attested to after his death. Catherine's stigmata were invisible, although some claimed that they had manifested themselves on her body after her death. As noted above, even the pain, which she had suffered originally, morphed, within a week of their reception, into a sensation that the stigmata were providing Catherine with strength. Her stigmatic body was treated very differently to that of Saint Francis, which had been quickly removed to safety in Assisi and buried securely in secrecy.²⁰ After she died in Rome on 29 April 1380, Catherine was buried in the Dominican church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Her body did not remain undisturbed. In 1385 her head was severed and sent to Siena and later, in 1430, her headless body was placed in a new stone sarcophagus.²¹ This, too, was opened and, over the course of several centuries, a hand, foot, rib, and shoulder blade, amongst others, were removed. The Dominican sisters of SS Domenico e Sisto in Rome received the left hand and the left foot was taken to the church of SS Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, both in 1487.²² In the sixteenth century, the stigmata in the hand and foot were reputed to have become visible.²³

The appearance of the stigmata in the relics of Catherine's hand and foot answered a need for visible physical evidence. Seeing the stigmata allowed for verification

18 Frugoni, 'Female Mystics, Visions, and Iconography'; Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, pp. 216–218.

19 Bartolomei Romagnoli, 'La disputa sulle stimmate', p. 413.

20 For a discussion of Francis of Assisi's tomb see Cooper, "'In loco tutissimo et firmissimo': The Tomb of Saint Francis'.

21 On the history of the tomb of Catherine of Siena see Barclay Lloyd, 'Saint Catherine of Siena's Tomb'.

22 McFarland, 'Relics, Reinvention, and Reform in Renaissance Venice', p. 282.

23 See the discussion in Hohlstein, "'Sacra lipsana': The Relics of Catherine of Siena'. See also McFarland, 'Relics, Reinvention, and Reform in Renaissance Venice'.

that was not dependent on the testimony of one person: Catherine. Lack of this external authentication in life had led to questions about the validity of depicting Catherine with the stigmata and many, particularly Franciscans, were vehemently opposed. There were two main issues at stake: whether Catherine had received the stigmata, and whether she should be represented with stigmata. Although the two questions were plainly linked, the way in which the answers to them impacted on visual art was distinct. In a narrative scene it was possible to indicate that Catherine had received invisible stigmata. When Catherine was shown without any narrative apparatus the stigmata needed to be visualized in some way, through red marks or gold rays emanating from her hands, feet, and side.

In Catherine's bull of canonization in 1461 Pope Pius II (1458–1464) had avoided the question of the stigmata.²⁴ Some commentators actively denied that Catherine had stigmata. The Franciscan preacher Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce (d. 1495)²⁵ was in Rome at the time of the canonization and noted that:

No mention was made then about the stigmata either in the life or the miracles of Catherine, no picture with the stigmata was reported, moreover no mention was made about the stigmata in the bull [of canonization ...].²⁶

Roberto Caracciolo's use of the bull of canonization as evidence that Catherine did not have stigmata was disingenuous. It was highly unlikely that he did not know that the same was the case for Saint Francis, founder of his Order.²⁷ It is possible that he was equally disingenuous when mentioning the lack of images showing Catherine with the stigmata. Such images certainly existed by this time.²⁸ By claiming that they did not, Roberto Caracciolo removed another form of proof and in doing so tacitly acknowledged the importance of visual material in proving sanctity.

Roberto Caracciolo's stance demonstrates that visual images were at the heart of the debate surrounding Catherine's stigmata. To the extent that they were expected to show knowledge, not depicting the stigmata could be taken to indicate that

24 An Italian translation of the bull of canonization is published in Capecehatro, *Storia di Santa Caterina e del papato del suo tempo*, pp. 477–486.

25 For a short biography of Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce see Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures*, pp. 566–567.

26 Quoted in Mencherini, *Codice diplomatico della Verna*, pp. 94–95: 'Nulla tunc a referentibus et vitam et miracula Catherinae de Stigmatibus facta est mentio; nulla pictura cum Stigmatibus fuit delata; nulla insuper in Bulla [...] de Stigmatibus mentio habita est'. Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce's sermon is discussed in Giunta, 'La questione delle stimmate', pp. 319–322. See also Muessig, 'Saint Catherine of Siena in Late Medieval Sermons', pp. 220–221; Muessig, *The Stigmata*, p. 184.

27 For an English translation of the bull of canonization of Saint Francis see Armstrong et al., *Francis of Assisi. Vol. 1: The Saint*, pp. 565–569.

28 See the catalogue in Bianchi and Giunta, *Iconografia di Santa Caterina da Siena*.

Catherine had not received stigmata; to the extent that they were expected to reflect what was visible to the human eye, depicting the stigmata could be considered inaccurate or misleading.

Tommaso Caffarini wrestled with the problems of depicting the miraculous invisible, prompted by his desire to see Catherine promoted in art in a way that was faithful to her experience of the stigmata, in his *Libellus de Supplemento*. Born in Siena, Caffarini had met Catherine. He had entered the Dominican Order around 1364 and was the author of a number of hagiographical works in addition to his writings on Catherine.²⁹ From 1394 until his death he resided in Venice and was prior of SS Giovanni e Paolo from 1409 to 1411.³⁰ The *Libellus de Supplemento*, which contained information about Catherine's life and visions, and functioned as an addition to Raymond of Capua's *Legenda Maior*, was written in the first decades of the fifteenth century, possibly between 1412 and 1418.³¹ It was divided into three parts with *Tractatus VII* (*Treatise 7*) of the second part concerning 'the stigmata of the virgin, and of all types of stigmata, and all the properties or forms of them'.³² This section was by far the longest of part two. It was probably originally composed as a separate work, possibly before 1412,³³ and may have been based on a series of sermons which Caffarini had given in Venice between 1394 and 1396.³⁴ The length of the treatise on the stigmata indicates that even at this stage, within thirty or so years after Catherine's death, there was already considerable discussion on the subject.

Caffarini's stated over-riding guide in the sections of the *Libellus* dealing with visual imagery was that 'truth conquers over everything'.³⁵ He reasoned that stigmatics should be represented as such even where this might cause scandal.³⁶ However, where the image was not accurate, for whatever reason, it should be removed. Truthfulness and accuracy in visual images were not simple concepts. In order to elucidate his point Caffarini referred both to specific images and to relevant texts. The texts took precedence. Images had to follow accepted written accounts and

29 Sorelli, 'La Production hagiographique du dominicain Tommaso Caffarini'.

30 For brief biographical details see the introduction to Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. vi–xii; Freuler, 'Andrea di Bartolo', pp. 571–573.

31 For information on the possible dates for the composition of the *Libellus*, with further bibliography, see Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. xxiii–xl. An Italian translation of the *Libellus* has been published in Caffarini, *Supplemento alla vita*.

32 For *Tractatus VII* see Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 121–266; Caffarini, *Supplemento alla vita*, pp. 91–135. For the quoted phrase which opens the treatise see Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 121: 'de stigmatibus huius virginis et de omnibus speciebus stigmatum et proprietatibus sive conditionibus eorundem'.

33 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. xxx–xxxii.

34 Freuler, 'Andrea di Bartolo', p. 575.

35 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 156: 'veritas super omnia vincit'.

36 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 156, citing Pope Gregory I's stance against truth not being relinquished in the face of scandal: 'propter scandalum veritas non est relinquenda'.

where the images were lacking or had 'defects' this was considered to be due to lack of care in accurately interpreting the texts.³⁷ In line with this, Caffarini criticized images showing Catherine's stigmatization with five visible stigmata and 'with a seraphic apparition'.³⁸ He was referring to his knowledge of how Catherine received the stigmata but was seeking, also, to differentiate Catherine's reception of the stigmata from that of Saint Francis. This was particularly apparent in the reference to the seraph. Whilst Bartolomeo Dominici had rationalized Catherine's movements in Santa Cristina by comparing them to images of Francis receiving the stigmata, Catherine's reception of the stigmata was not preceded or accompanied by the vision of a seraph, as had been the case for Saint Francis. Catherine saw 'our Lord, fastened to the cross',³⁹ a vision that was later associated with a particular crucifix.⁴⁰ The *Crucifix of the Stigmata of Saint Catherine of Siena* (fig. 7), now in the Santa Casa di Santa Caterina in Siena, was a twelfth-century *Christus triumphans*, similar in this respect to the crucifix that had spoken to Saint Francis at San Damiano.⁴¹ In later paintings of Catherine receiving the stigmata, such as that by Rutilio Manetti, dated to 1630 (fig. 8), this image was referred to specifically.

Earlier images, such as that by Giovanni di Paolo, indicated that Christ on the cross was a vision (fig. 9). The crucified Christ is shown hovering above Catherine and leaning towards her. In later versions of the stigmatization, painters also demonstrated the communication between Catherine and the crucified Christ by showing the cross leaning forward. However, they conveyed that the cross was a physical item by placing it firmly on the altar, embedded in a base most often in the shape of a rocky outcrop (see figs. 13, 14, 17). This was a solution also used by Giovanni di Paolo in his *Saint Francis investing Saint Clare of Assisi with her Habit* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin-Dahlem) where the upright cross on the altar is fixed into a rock-shaped support. By contrast in his *Stigmatization*, Giovanni di Paolo placed Catherine in front of an altar on which there is a centrally placed golden cross, thus prompting the viewer to distinguish between the physical and visionary crosses.

Giovanni di Paolo's *Stigmatization* was one from a series showing ten episodes from Catherine's life: *Catherine receiving the Dominican Habit*, the *Mystic Marriage*

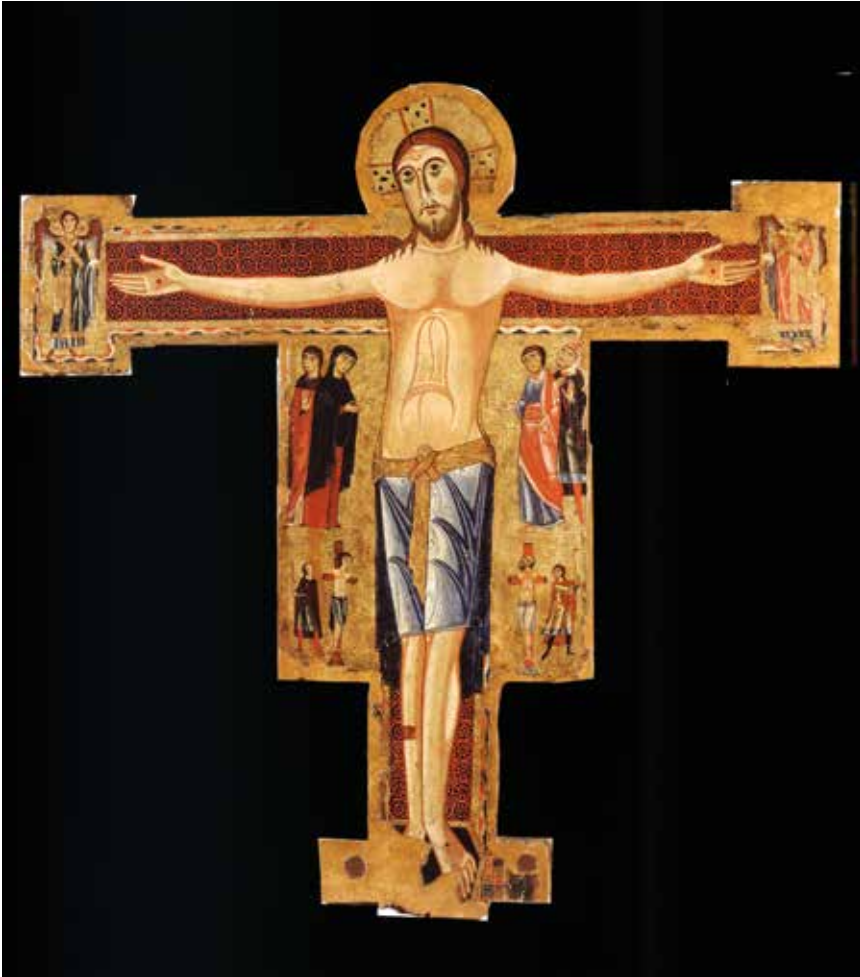
37 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 181. Caffarini stated that the depictions should follow the texts: 'iuxta supradicta scripta de eisdem'.

38 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 156.

39 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 186 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 195).

40 Parsons, *The Cult of Saint Catherine of Siena*, pp. 37–38. See also Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, p. 221. Katherine Jansen has noted finding only one example where Catherine of Siena interacted with a miraculous crucifix and that this was shortly after Catherine had joined the Dominican tertiaries. See Jansen, 'Miraculous Crucifixes', pp. 222–226.

41 See Giunta, 'The Iconography of Catherine of Siena's Stigmata', p. 277; Giunta, 'La questione delle stimmate', p. 434, fig. 206.



7. *Crucifix of the Stigmata of Saint Catherine of Siena*, twelfth century, tempera on wood, Oratory of the Crucifix, Sanctuary of Saint Catherine, Siena.

of Catherine (fig. 10), *Catherine and the Beggar*, *Catherine exchanging her Heart with Christ*, *Catherine receiving the Stigmata*, *Catherine's Prayer* and *Christ resuscitating her Mother* (fig. 11), the *Miraculous Communion of Catherine* (fig. 12), *Catherine dictating her Dialogues*, *Catherine before the Pope*, and the *Death of Catherine*.⁴² The

42 *Catherine receiving the Dominican Habit* and *Catherine and the Beggar* are in the Cleveland Museum of Art. *Catherine dictating her Dialogues* is held by the Detroit Institute of Arts. *Catherine before the Pope* is in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Lugano, and the *Death of Catherine* is in a private collection. The other panels are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The scenes from the life of Catherine are discussed individually by Carl Brandon Strehlke in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena*, pp. 224–239, cat. 38a–j.



8. Rutilio Manetti, *Saint Catherine Receiving the Stigmata*, 1630, oil on canvas, Oratory of the Crucifix, Sanctuary of Saint Catherine, Siena.

scenes have been associated with a central altarpiece panel of the *Purification of the Virgin* commissioned by the guild of the Pizzicaiuoli in 1447 for the church of the Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala in Siena. However, the original appearance of the altarpiece cannot be reconstructed with any certainty. The association of



9. Giovanni di Paolo, *Saint Catherine Receiving the Stigmata*, circa 1447–1465, tempera and gold on wood, 27.9 x 20 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975, 1975.1.34.



10. Giovanni di Paolo, *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*, circa 1447–1465, tempera and gold on wood, painted surface 28.9 x 28.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Lore Heinemann, in memory of her husband, Dr. Rudolf J. Heinemann, 1996, 1997.112.2.

the narrative of Catherine's life with the main *Purification* panel is not secure – it is possible that the episodes were designed to surround a central figure of Saint Catherine – and the scenes may not have been painted until the time of Catherine's canonization in 1461.⁴³ Despite the uncertainties surrounding them, the scenes are important in that they were the first substantial painted representation of

43 A critical discussion of the theories is provided by Strehlke in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena*, pp. 218–224, cat. 38. See also the overview by Christiansen, 'Catalogue Entry: Pizzicaiuolo Altarpiece'; Van Os, 'Giovanni di Paolo's Pizzicaiuolo Altarpiece'; Zeri, assisted by Elizabeth E. Gardner, *Italian Paintings*, pp. 24–27.



11. Giovanni di Paolo, *Saint Catherine's Prayer and Christ resuscitating her Mother*, circa 1447–1465, tempera and gold on wood, painted surface 27.9 x 21.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975, 1975.1.33.

Catherine's life, were clearly intended to promote her within the city of her birth, and are closely related to Raymond of Capua's *Legenda Maior*.⁴⁴

The way in which Giovanni di Paolo approached the challenges of representing Catherine's stigmatization is instructive, as it dealt both with the invisible and

44 Strehlke in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena*, p. 223, cat. 38.



12. Giovanni di Paolo, *Miraculous Communion of Saint Catherine*, circa 1447–1465, tempera and gold on wood, 28.9 x 22.2 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931, 32.100.95.

with events that happened across a period of time. The painting was one that encouraged the viewer to question what s/he saw. It was, emphatically, not a representation of what Raymond of Capua or Bartolomeo Dominici saw in the church of Santa Cristina in Pisa. Neither saw the vision of the crucified Christ.



13. Giacomo Pacchiarotti (attrib.), *Saint Catherine of Siena receiving the Stigmata*, early-sixteenth century, fresco, Oratorio della Tintoria, Sanctuary of Saint Catherine, Siena.

That was reserved solely for Catherine. The composition can usefully be considered using some of the theses on the representation of visionary experience that were presented by Victor Stoichita at the conclusion of his *Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art* (1995).⁴⁵ Stoichita argued that paintings that represented visions presented an issue centred on ‘the painting’s status in relation to its “object”’.⁴⁶ Such paintings depicted the visionary, who was visible to others, and the vision, shown only to its recipient but made visible to others through the painting. In Giovanni di Paolo’s painting Catherine is the privileged person portrayed at the moment of visionary abstraction whilst the viewer becomes a witness to the vision. Yet the painting does not show blood-red rays coming towards Catherine from Christ’s wounds or the point at which they changed to radiant brightness. The viewer, therefore, does not experience Catherine’s vision completely.

Many painters chose, or were instructed, to include rays reaching from the vision of Christ crucified to Catherine, making clear the connection between Christ’s wounds on the cross and Catherine’s internal stigmata.⁴⁷ An early sixteenth-century painting of Catherine receiving the stigmata, sometimes attributed to Giacomo Pacchiarotti, in the Oratorio della Tintoria in the Santa Casa di Santa

45 Stoichita, *Visionary Experience*, pp. 198–199.

46 Stoichita, *Visionary Experience*, p. 198.

47 See the comments and information provided in Pike Gordley, ‘A Dominican Saint for the Benedictines’, p. 398, note 15.



14. Domenico Beccafumi, *Saint Catherine of Siena receiving the Stigmata*, 1513–1515, oil and gold leaf on wood, 28.6 x 41.6 cm, Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 97.PB.25.

Caterina in Siena, contained golden rays stretching from Christ's wounds to Catherine (fig. 13). The tips of four of the rays, as they reach Catherine's body, can be seen. The artist has given them points, as though they were arrows aimed from Christ. Domenico Beccafumi painted a small image of the stigmatization, dated to circa 1513–1515 and probably part of a predella for an altarpiece, in which golden rays reach from the vision of Christ to Catherine (fig. 14).⁴⁸ A predella attributed to Matteo Balducci or Giacomo Pacchiarotti (Siena, Pinacoteca no. 406) also shows golden rays between Catherine and the vision of Christ crucified (fig. 15).⁴⁹ This image was one of three on the predella depicting, from left to right, the 'Stigmatization of Saint Francis', the 'Pietà', and the 'Stigmatization of Saint Catherine'. By placing Catherine and Francis to either side of the dead Christ a clear point was made not only about the link between these stigmatized saints and the crucified Christ, but also about the equivalence between Catherine's stigmata and those of Saint Francis.

48 Flora, 'Catalogue 53: *Saint Catherine of Siena Receiving the Stigmata*', pp. 214–215.

49 Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena*, p. 338. Torriti identified these panels as the predella to the *Assumption of the Virgin Altarpiece* from the Augustinian church of Santo Spirito, Siena, on which the Virgin of the Assumption is shown between Saints Francis and Catherine.



15. Matteo Balducci or Giacomo Pacchiarotti (attrib.), *Stigmatization of Saint Francis, Pietà, Saint Catherine of Siena Receiving the Stigmata*, sixteenth century, tempera on panel, 37 x 193.5 cm, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, n. inv. 406.



16. Andrea di Bartolo, *Five Dominican Beatae*, 1394–1398, tempera on wood, 56 x 97 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

Other paintings of the stigmatization of Saint Catherine omitted the rays. The central predella image from Andrea di Bartolo's *Five Dominican Beatae* (1394–1398) shows Catherine kneeling in front of a hovering vision of Christ crucified in an attitude indicating the reception of the stigmata, but no lines connect Catherine with Christ (fig. 16).⁵⁰ Neither Bernardino Fungai's version in the Oratory of the Confraternity of Santa Caterina in Fontebranda (1495–1497) (fig. 17),⁵¹ nor Domenico Beccafumi's *Stigmatization* (1514–1515), painted for the Olivetan Benedictine monastery of San Benedetto in Siena (now in the Pinacoteca, Siena)

⁵⁰ Freuler, 'Andrea di Bartolo'.

⁵¹ Bacci, *Bernardino Fungai*, pp. 51–54.



17. Bernardino Fungai, *Stigmatization of Saint Catherine of Siena*, 1495–1497, Oratory of the Confraternity of Santa Caterina in Fontebranda (Oratorio della Cucina), Sanctuary of Saint Catherine, Siena.

(fig. 18),⁵² contain rays reaching from the vision of Christ crucified to the body of Catherine.

52 Pike Gordley, 'A Dominican Saint for the Benedictines', p. 396.



18. Domenico Beccafumi, *Stigmatization of Saint Catherine of Siena*, 1514–1515, oil on wood, 208 x 156 cm, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, n. inv. 420.

Giovanni di Paolo's apparent omission of the rays, therefore, was not unusual. The position of Catherine's outstretched arms, reflecting those of the vision of the crucified Christ before her, and her complex stance, with its echoes of representations of Saint Francis's stigmatization, made the subject of the panel clear. Viewers would

have used their knowledge to make the interviusal links necessary to interpret the image.⁵³

Other aspects of the image give rise to questions about what, exactly, was being shown and how that can be evaluated when placed against Tommaso Caffarini's stated requirement for 'truth' in the representation of stigmatics. The inclusion of rays may be understood to have fixed the narrative at or near the point at which Christ acceded to Catherine's request that the marks not be visible on her body. Giovanni di Paolo's painting did not contain either blood-red rays, before Catherine implored Christ that the stigmata remain invisible and before the rays reached her body, or pure light rays, or a combination of the two. Although there are traces of mordant gilding coming from Christ's feet and the pink floor tiles and Catherine's habit from her left knee downwards have been repainted, making it impossible to be certain, the direction of the rays indicates that they were not intended to reach the figure of Catherine.⁵⁴ Thus, the link between Catherine and Christ crucified was not visible to the eyes of the viewer as it was visible to those of Catherine. Yet the viewer was able to see other things that only Catherine saw such as the crucified Christ.

There is another link between Catherine and Christ visible in the panel that may have aided in its interpretation. On 18 August 1370 in Siena, five years previous to the episode in Santa Cristina, Catherine had been praying for the eternal life of her companions. She stretched out her right hand asking for a sign that Christ had acceded to her wishes and was ordered to give him her hand. Catherine told her confessor at the time, Tommaso della Fonte (d. 1390), that Christ:

took a nail, rested the point of it in the centre of the palm of my hand, and pressed it into my hand with such force that it seemed to pierce right through it, and I felt agony as if an iron nail had been driven through it with a hammer.⁵⁵

Catherine further related that, as a result, she suffered from incessant pain in her right hand although there was no visible sign of the stigma. In Giovanni di Paolo's painting Catherine has a nail through the palm of her left hand. It is unclear whether this was an error on the part of the artist. The images in the Sieneese manuscript of the *Libellus de Supplemento*, discussed below and in the next chapter, include one (fig. 28) showing Catherine receiving the nail from Christ who uses it to pierce her left hand. For Giovanni di Paolo, depicting the nail going through the left hand

53 See, for example, the definition of intervisuality in Karkov, *Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 17–18.

54 Strehlke in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena*, pp. 230–233, cat. 38e.

55 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 185 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 193).



19. Giovanni di Paolo, detail of *Saint Catherine Receiving the Stigmata*, circa 1447–1465, tempera and gold on wood, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975, 1975.1.34.

results in it being placed more centrally in the composition. The nail appears to be an original part of the work (fig. 19). As noted above, the painted surface has suffered considerable damage but this part of the painting appears relatively intact. Carl Brandon Strehlke noted that the ‘wounds in Catherine’s hands are indicated by bits of red pigment and traces of gold’.⁵⁶ The stigmata are present and visible. The nail painted in the left hand is markedly different from the indications of the stigma on the right palm making it unlikely that the nail should be interpreted as part of the stigmata received in Santa Cristina. The presence of the red pigment on the right hand and the single nail in the left hand imbued this painting with

⁵⁶ Strehlke in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena*, pp. 230–233, cat. 38e.



20. Giovanni di Paolo, *Saint Catherine and the Beggar*, circa 1447–1465, tempera and gold on wood, 28.7 x 28.9 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Gift of the John Huntington Art and Polytechnic Trust, 1966.3.

some aspects of continuous narrative. The viewer saw both the embedded nail of 1370 and the stigmata of 1375. Time had collapsed.

The use of collapsed time was not new in art of this period. Continuous narrative, although not strictly speaking collapsed time, placed different, generally linked, events in one landscape or architectural background.⁵⁷ Collapsing time into the body of one person was less common but, as Arnold Davidson has shown, the depiction of the stigmatization of Saint Francis did just this.⁵⁸ Both Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure related a time lapse between Francis's vision of the seraph and his

57 Andrews, *Story and Space in Renaissance Art*; Andrews, 'Ordering Space in Renaissance Times'.

58 Davidson, 'Miracles of Bodily Transformation', pp. 463–464, 470.

reception of the stigmata,⁵⁹ something removed in visual images where, from a very early stage, Francis was shown receiving his stigmata directly from the seraphic vision.⁶⁰ The idea of a single painted image of Catherine undergoing events that were not simultaneous, indeed that were five years apart and took place in two different cities, would not have been alien to a fifteenth-century viewer accustomed to continuous narrative, something that Giovanni di Paolo had used, for example, in his predella panel of *Saint John the Baptist retiring to the Desert* (1454), now in the National Gallery, London.⁶¹ He also used it in *Catherine and the Beggar* (fig. 20), from the Saint Catherine series. Here, the saint gives some of the clothes she was wearing to a supplicant, depicted to the far right of the panel. Subsequently, on the left of the panel, she is rewarded. Jesus appears to her and returns an item of clothing, now covered with jewels and pearls.⁶²

Focusing on Giovanni di Paolo's painting of the *Stigmatization*, the viewer could reflect and meditate on the series of events which Raymond of Capua grouped together in the *Legenda Maior*, taking them out of strict narrative sequence as he did so. In Chapter 6 of Part 2 of the *Legenda Maior* Raymond related how Christ had taken Catherine's heart and, later, replaced it with his own, something represented in a separate panel from Giovanni di Paolo's series (fig. 21), as well as how Christ had driven the nail into Catherine's hand and how she had received the stigmata. Thus, Chapter 6 focused on Catherine's ecstasies and the 'sublime revelations made to her by our Lord'. When Raymond came to relate the stigmatization in Santa Cristina, he justified it by saying that 'in order to show the consummation of what was begun in this way, I must anticipate an incident that took place at a much later date'.⁶³ Raymond chose not to follow a strict chronological telling of Catherine's life in order to group together events that were related through type rather than chronology. He organized thematically, but not temporally, related events in the same chapter.

Issues such as the use of continuous narrative, the telescoping of time, and through whose eyes the viewer saw the events presented in images complicated the ideas of accuracy and truth that Caffarini claimed to hold so dear. In the *Libellus*, he gave some examples of what he considered to be inaccurate:

[W]henver the Blessed Catherine of Siena is depicted with five visible stigmata on her hands and on her feet and with the seraphic apparition it was not done

59 Thomas of Celano, 'The Life of Saint Francis', pp. 263–264 (Book 2, Chapter 3); Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', pp. 622–633 (Chapter 13).

60 See the examples in Cook, *Images of Saint Francis of Assisi*.

61 For a discussion of the predella panel see Dunkerton et al., *Giotto to Dürer*, pp. 278–281.

62 The scene is discussed in Warr, 'Clothing, Charity, Salvation', pp. 187–188.

63 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, p. 185 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 194).



21. Giovanni di Paolo, *Saint Catherine of Siena Exchanging Her Heart with Christ*, circa 1447–1465, tempera and gold on wood, 29.8 x 24.1 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Lore Heinemann, in memory of her husband, Dr. Rudolf J. Heinemann, 1996, 1997.117.3.

well, since neither from her own legend nor from any other place can it be found that it was thus, and so similarly whenever the Blessed Francis is depicted with blood-stained stigmata on his hands and on his feet and with the appearance of blood-stained rays touching the five places of his body, also it does not seem to

have been done well, since mention is made regarding the said things neither in his legend nor elsewhere.⁶⁴

Paul Barolsky has argued that writers 'tell' but painters and sculptors 'show' and that often the narrative in 'narrative art' is subordinated to composition so that, although the story is told through visual images, the viewer may sometimes need to look carefully to discern what s/he already expects to be there because s/he already knows the story. We are misled, argues Barolsky, if we succumb too easily to the age-old comparison 'between literary composition and pictorial composition'. The work of the writer is temporal, and that of the visual artist is spatial.⁶⁵ Yet, despite all this, there is an almost unbreakable link between text and image. This is not to say that the two are directly comparable, or that there are not considerable difficulties contained within the text-image link, but images are used to 'tell'.⁶⁶

One of the ways in which images 'told' in the Middle Ages and Renaissance was through the use of continuous narrative. This allowed painters to link events, sometimes thematically, just as Raymond of Capua had done in his *Legenda Maior*, consciously playing with chronology. Because Giovanni di Paolo's *Stigmatization of Saint Catherine* did not show the figure of the saint more than once, it was not obviously an example of continuous narrative. Nonetheless, it was not a purely spatial piece of work; it was also temporal. Yet it did not tell a story from the beginning to the end. It revolved around a theme, which included elements that happened at different times, in a way that was significantly different from the usual solutions provided by continuous narrative. Everything was focused on the single figure of Catherine and yet this figure was experiencing things that had happened at distinctly different times. Looking at the painting, the viewer was free to glance briefly, to look closely at an area of her/his choice, to take in the entire composition. The painting could act as a prompt to meditation, allowing the viewer to call to mind different aspects of Catherine's life. In part, therefore, it functioned as a mnemonic image. An overview of the painting showed an approximation of the stigmatization of Saint Catherine but, by looking at separate parts of the painting, it was possible to focus on specific aspects of what Raymond of Capua thought of as part of one movement towards Christ.

64 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 156: '[...] quod quemadmodum ubi beata Catherina de Senis depingeretur cum quinque stigmatibus visibilibus in manibus et in pedibus et cum apparitione seraphica non esset bene factum, cum nec ex legenda sua aut ex alio quod ita fuerit reperiat, ita consimiliter ubi beatus Franciscus depingatur cum stigmatibus sanguinolentis in manibus et in pedibus et apparitione radiorum sanguinolentorum ad quinque sui coporis loca pertingentium, etiam non videtur bene factum, pro quanto de dictis nec in legenda nec alibi fit aliqua mentio'.

65 Barolsky, 'There is No Such Thing as Narrative Art', p. 49.

66 See Lubbock, *Storytelling in Christian Art from Giotto to Donatello*.

It is certainly possible to speed read or skim texts, or use an index, if there is one, to focus in on an area of a book which is particularly interesting but, despite these strategies, texts invite the reader to start at the beginning and work towards the end, even if only a paragraph at a time, far more than do visual images. I argue that by including the nail in Catherine's hand Giovanni di Paolo collapsed time in a way that is only possible within the visual image and, by doing so, he showed what Raymond of Capua could only tell sequentially, despite his movement of the stigmatization out of chronological order so as to place it immediately after other events which demonstrated Catherine's increasing closeness to Christ, and her suffering with him. In his panel, Giovanni di Paolo took advantage of what Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood have described as art's 'competence for thinking through time in flexible and associative ways'.⁶⁷ By putting together events that happened at different times, the artist encouraged the viewer to meditate on Catherine's life in terms of diverse stigmatic experiences rather than one transformative event.

The use of perspective and the likening of the picture to an open window promoted by Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) in his *Della Pittura* (*On Painting*, 1435–1436) have been considered to work against continuous narrative. This was not necessarily the case.⁶⁸ Equally, the collapse of time, in the way seen in Giovanni di Paolo's *Stigmatization of Saint Catherine* was not a rejection of Alberti's 'window' but rather can be argued to have followed some of the advice in *Della Pittura*. Alberti famously used the example of the fifth-century BCE Greek painter Zeuxis and the maidens of Croton. Following the account given by Cicero (d. 43 BCE), Alberti related how Zeuxis had chosen five different models in order to paint one woman so that he could show 'whatever feature of feminine beauty was most praiseworthy in each of them'.⁶⁹ Giovanni di Paolo has taken different aspects of Catherine's life in order to show various aspects of her desire to suffer with Christ in one image.

The identification of the nail in Catherine's hand, and its link to an ecstatic experience in 1370, allows us further to question ideas about what it meant to be faithful to the text. Caffarini's argument in the *Libellus* was that the text was the primary source. If the text – legend or other writings – did not contain the information, then the painting should not. Visual art followed text. In the *Libellus*, Caffarini claimed to have ensured, where possible, that only those who genuinely were stigmatics, as evidenced in authoritative texts, were represented as such.⁷⁰ He made use of the case of Margaret of Hungary, whose cult in Italy included a belief in

67 Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, p. 32.

68 See the discussion by Andrews, *Story and Space in Renaissance Art*, pp. 1–8.

69 Alberti, *On Painting*, p. 93.

70 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 403–404, 409. See Freuler, 'Andrea di Bartolo', p. 573.

her stigmatization, to demonstrate his point.⁷¹ Caffarini had received information from the Prior Provincial of the Hungarian Dominicans that, in fact, Margaret was not a stigmatic, rather it was her older contemporary Helen of Hungary.⁷² Because of this, he opposed the representation of Margaret of Hungary as a stigmatic and, he said, had taken steps to ensure that any such images were removed from churches in Venice, including SS Giovanni e Paolo.⁷³ He was not, as he himself admitted, entirely successful. Depicting Margaret of Hungary with stigmata had taken on a life of its own and Caffarini had found an image of her as a stigmatic on an altarpiece in SS Giovanni e Paolo and was also aware of another image in the same church, which appeared to have been painted after his campaign to ensure that Margaret was not depicted as a stigmatic in Venice.⁷⁴

The adherence to the text that Caffarini purported to espouse was not consistently in evidence in his own manuscripts.⁷⁵ Caffarini stated in the *Libellus* that he had arranged for four stigmatics – Helen of Hungary, Walter of Strasbourg, Catherine of Siena, and Francis of Assisi – to be depicted ‘here’ so that the reader could see demonstrated the correct way of depicting them:

[I]t can be revealed, amongst other things, that, when the aforementioned four persons have to be depicted with the said stigmata, and how they received them, they ought to be depicted according to the aforementioned writings about them, for with the truth of the aforementioned writings on those persons standing by, I have seen some images of the aforementioned persons, depicted with stigmata, not without some defect. And therefore, so the appropriate manner of depicting might be more clear, joined to the aforementioned writings on the same, immediately afterwards, I caused these aforementioned four blessed persons to be depicted here in this very way [the appropriate one], for the greater evidence of truth.⁷⁶

There are two surviving illustrated manuscripts of the *Libellus*: one in the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati in Siena (MS Segn. T.I.2), and a copy made shortly

71 For Margaret of Hungary’s cult in Italy see Klaniczay, ‘Le stigmate di santa Margherita d’Ungheria’, pp. 16–18. A brief overview is given in Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 160–164.

72 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 172. See Klaniczay, ‘Le stigmate di santa Margherita d’Ungheria’, p. 16.

73 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 156–157.

74 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 157.

75 See Bisogni, ‘Il “Libellus” di Tommaso d’Antonio Caffarini’, p. 262.

76 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 181: ‘Ex supradictis autem omnibus inter alia patere potest quod, quando supradicte quattuor persone beate haberent depingi, cum dictis stigmatibus et qualiter illa receperunt depingi deberent, iuxta supradicta scripta de eis, nam stante veritate supradictorum de ispis scriptorum, non sine aliquo defectu vidi aliquas ymagines prefatorum cum stigmatibus depictas. Et ideo, ut pateat modus decens depingendi iuxta supradicta scripta de eisdem, immediate post, has prefatas quattuor personas beatas duxi modo prefato hic depingendas, pro maiori evidentia veritatis’.



22. Cristoforo Cortese (attrib.), *Stigmatizations of Francis of Assisi, Helen of Hungary, Walter of Strasbourg, Catherine of Siena*, from Tommaso Caffarini, *Libellus de Supplemento*, p. 81, MS Segn. T.I.2, fifteenth century, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

afterwards which is now in the Biblioteca Universitaria in Bologna (cod. Lat. 1574). Both were completed in Caffarini's scriptorium in SS Giovanni e Paolo in Venice.⁷⁷ The full-page illustrations relevant to this section of the text in both the Siena and Bologna manuscripts were divided into four showing Helen, Walter, Catherine, and Francis at the moment of their stigmatizations. In both manuscripts rays emanating from the seraph linked Francis with Christ crucified.⁷⁸ The earlier Siena manuscript shows rays leading from the seraph to Francis who has red-coloured marks on his hands, feet, and side (fig. 22). The Bologna manuscript has red rays leading from the seraph to Francis and the stigmata are also red. There are also rays leading from the envisioned Christ to Catherine in this manuscript (fig. 23). They hit Catherine's raised hands and her torso, where they appear to refract with shorter rays emanating out. Two, lower, rays are shown meeting her cloak and are to be understood as those that wounded her feet. The rays that strike Catherine's hands appear to result in marks on her palms, although it is possible that they are the result of the congruence of multiple lines of ink rather than a representation of stigmatic wounds.⁷⁹ These rays are not present in the Siena manuscript which has dark ink marks on Catherine's hands indicating the stigmata and a centrally placed ink mark on her torso that has been identified as the side wound.⁸⁰ Some of these details directly contravened Caffarini's statements that Francis should not be depicted with red wounds, that red rays should not lead from the seraph to Francis, and that Catherine's stigmata should not be visible.⁸¹

There were a number of possible reasons as to why the images completed in Caffarini's scriptorium did not conform to the instructions in his text. Although the earlier manuscript now in Siena has marginal notes that have been identified as having been made by Caffarini and, therefore, provide evidence as to his close involvement, it was possible that he did not have sufficient control over the images.⁸² Cristoforo Cortese, to whom the images in the Siena manuscript have been attributed, and his workshop, which was responsible for the images in the manuscript now in Bologna, could have been inadequately instructed.⁸³ It is also

77 Moerer, 'The Visual Hagiography of a Stigmatic Saint'. The article is based on Emily Moerer's unpublished doctoral thesis: Moerer, 'Catherine of Siena and the Use of Images'. See also Mongini, 'Il ruolo dell'immagine nei due codici del *Libellus de supplemento*'. For a discussion of Caffarini's scriptorium see Nacentini, 'Lo "scriptorium" di Tommaso Caffarini'.

78 Bisogni, 'Il "Libellus" di Tommaso d'Antonio Caffarini', p. 262.

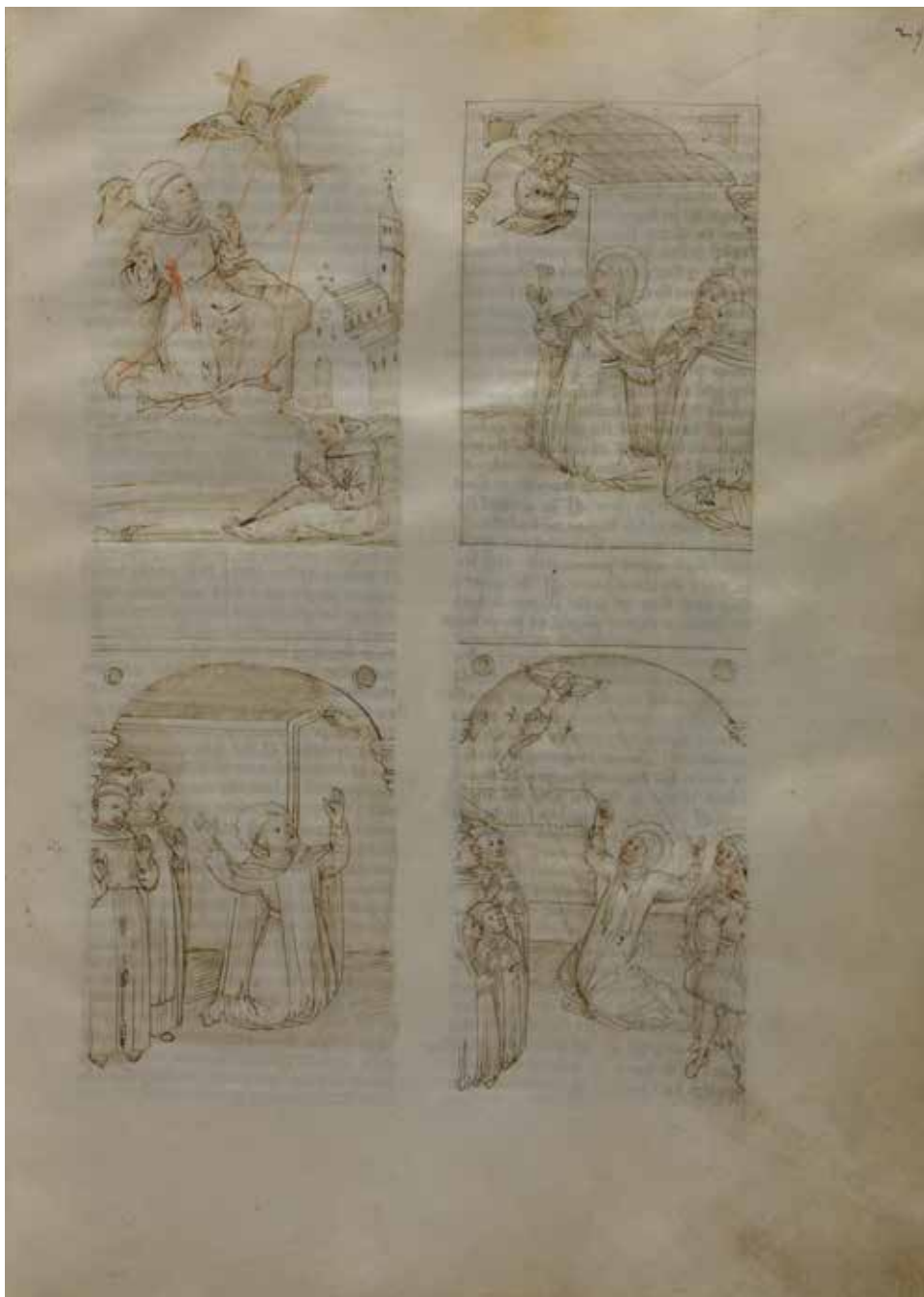
79 Giunta, 'La questione delle stimmate', pp. 329–330.

80 Moerer, 'The Visual Hagiography of a Stigmatic Saint', p. 98.

81 See the discussion in Bisogni, 'Il "Libellus" di Tommaso d'Antonio Caffarini', p. 262; Warr, 'Visualizing Stigmata', pp. 237–238; Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 157–160.

82 For the dating of the Siena manuscript see Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. lxii–lxv.

83 Bisogni, 'Il "Libellus" di Tommaso d'Antonio Caffarini', p. 256, note 12. For more details of the various artists to whom the Bologna manuscript images have been attributed see Moerer, 'The Visual Hagiography



23. Cristoforo Cortese (attrib.), *Stigmatizations of Francis of Assisi, Helen of Hungary, Walter of Strasbourg, Catherine of Siena*, from Tommaso Caffarini, *Libellus de Supplemento*, folio 29r, cod. Lat. 1574, fifteenth century, Biblioteca Universitaria, Bologna.

possible that the details on these images were added at a different time by someone who had not read or was not aware of the accompanying text, but this scenario would need some further explanation given that the texts were in Dominican hands in Dominican convents.

Whatever the reason for the disjunction between text and image apparent in the manuscripts, it reflected the complexity surrounding the representation of miraculous stigmatization, dependent as it was on depicting visionary experiences, events that in some cases happened over time, and making the invisible visible. Caffarini completed the *Libellus* about twenty years before Alberti's *Della Pittura*. Alberti, as has been noted by a number of scholars, struggled with the link between painting and the invisible.⁸⁴ The representation of the invisible, according to Alberti, was not something with which painters should engage.⁸⁵ He stated that '[n]o one would deny that the painter has nothing to do with things that are not visible. The painter is solely concerned with representing what can be seen'.⁸⁶ He further stated that 'painting strives to represent things seen'.⁸⁷ Yet his famous example of the 'Calumny' of Apelles in Book 3 relied on the personification of Calumny, Treachery, Deceit, Ignorance, Suspicion.⁸⁸ Painting, in this instance, was not a depiction of something that could be seen – we do not see 'ideas' – but of something that was made to appear in the guise of things that the eye understood. Painting was transformative. It transformed ideas into images and, in turn, images could transform the viewer.

Neither Alberti, within *Della Pittura*, or Caffarini, in the *Libellus*, were able to resolve completely the link between painting and the invisible. Unlike Alberti, Caffarini had not set out to write a book on art practice but, rather, one which both promoted Catherine of Siena and helped to widen the understanding of stigmatization so that it was not purely associated with Saint Francis of Assisi. The religious context within which Caffarini was writing, and the particular issue of Catherine of Siena's stigmata, required a consideration of the invisible and how it could be made to play a part in an understanding of the miraculous through visual art. The importance of religion within the history of painting was acknowledged by Alberti, although he made no explicit link between painting and the representation of the religious or miraculous invisible. In Book 2 of *Della Pittura*, Alberti had noted that 'Trismegistus, an ancient writer, judged that painting and sculpture were born at

of a Stigmatic Saint', p. 100, note 7.

84 See, for example, Heffernan, 'Alberti on Apelles'.

85 Hoff, 'The Visibility of the Invisible', p. 65.

86 Alberti, *On Painting*, p. 43.

87 Alberti, *On Painting*, p. 68.

88 Alberti, *On Painting*, pp. 90–91.

the same time as religion'.⁸⁹ Cennino Cennini (circa 1360–before 1427),⁹⁰ writing only a few years before Alberti, and with a much stronger religious imperative, had not considered the realm of painting as purely that of the visible.⁹¹ In *Il libro dell'arte* (*The Craftsman's Handbook*) Cennini claimed that 'Painting calls for imagination, and skill of hand, in order to discover things not seen [...] presenting to plain sight what does not actually exist'.⁹² Marco Ruffini has noted that 'Cennino's definition of the invisible as the subject of painting is consistent with the theological function Cennini [...] attributed to this art'.⁹³ Similar concerns were articulated in the Counter Reformation, within discussions on the representation of visions.⁹⁴ Stoichita has reminded us, in relation to late-sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish art, that '[t]he visionary experience is an experience of pictures'.⁹⁵ As a depiction of the receipt of a vision, Giovanni di Paolo's *Stigmatization of Saint Catherine* made witnesses of the viewers, as Bartolomeo Dominici had himself been a witness understanding Catherine's actions through reference to paintings. Thus, the painting itself became documentary evidence and a type of witness.⁹⁶ It was evidence predicated on sight and paradoxically represented the invisible. It was also complex, layered and yet partial evidence that – as noted above – played knowingly with time and with sight, with who saw what.

It was his awareness of the importance of art within a religious context that led Caffarini to discuss, and provide, images in the *Libellus*. Despite this recognition he was not fully able to articulate its potential contradictions when called on to represent visionary experiences. Byzantine iconoclasts of the eighth century had claimed that the nature of God could not, and should not, be represented.⁹⁷ Pope Hadrian I (772–795) had countered by defending the use of the images to make present the invisible, arguing that God could be known through the physical appearance of his Son.⁹⁸ Caffarini was not dealing with the appearance of God but the conundrum he struggled with was closely related: making visible God's miraculous interventions on earth. When Caffarini arranged to have Helen of Hungary, Walter of Strasbourg, Catherine of Siena, and Francis of Assisi depicted correctly in the

89 Alberti, *On Painting*, p. 65.

90 On Cennino Cennini see Tarr, 'Cennino Cennini'. See also Skaug, 'Cenniniana: Notes on Cennino Cennini and his Treatise'.

91 Bredin, 'Medieval Art Theory', p. 37.

92 Cennini, *The Craftsman's Handbook*, p. 1. Roger Tarr has dated *Il libro dell'arte* to circa 1400. See Tarr, 'Cennino Cennini', p. 37.

93 Ruffini, 'Alberti on the Surface', unpaginated, note 4.

94 See the discussion in Stoichita, *Visionary Experience*, pp. 78–89.

95 Stoichita, *Visionary Experience*, p. 198.

96 Stoichita, *Visionary Experience*, pp. 198–199.

97 Bredin, 'Medieval Art Theory', p. 30.

98 See the discussion in Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians*, pp. 149–156.

Libellus, none of the four images emerged without 'defect'. In interpreting the text in a way that made an image 'readable', certain, inescapable, demands were made on the image.

In the case of Helen of Hungary, she was shown with a lily growing from her right hand and from the centre of her chest as she knelt before a floating half-figure of the blessing Christ. This was manifestly not an image of the stigmatization of Helen of Hungary, for Caffarini maintained that the lilies grew at separate times. Furthermore, Helen, according to Caffarini, had visible stigmata which formed scars on both hands, both feet and on her chest, and which were granted to her at different times. Helen's feet cannot be seen but there is no scar on her left hand, although Caffarini stated that Helen had 'bloody stigmata'.⁹⁹ The image of the Dominican Walter of Strasbourg in the Siena manuscript showed the hand of God blessing Walter. This was a means of demonstrating God's acknowledgement of the focus of his prayers, but it is not a reflection of the text, which Caffarini stated used information that he had found in a written life of Walter.¹⁰⁰

Caffarini was on the horns of a dilemma and perhaps it was this that came across in the images of the stigmatizations of Helen, Walter, Catherine, and Francis in the manuscripts in Siena and Bologna. Whilst he may have strongly subscribed to the view that 'truth conquers all' and that images should follow accepted texts, when he tried to demonstrate this, it simply was not possible. The truth was contested, with texts giving conflicting information. Religious images frequently had recourse to standard visual shorthand, such as the hand of God blessing Walter of Strasbourg. Caffarini did not mention it, perhaps because he had unconsciously accepted such a well-worn pictorial strategy, which allowed the viewer to understand God's acceptance of Walter's meditations on the Passion, just as the rays between the seraph and Francis allowed a comprehension of the link between Francis's vision and his stigmata, and the marks on Catherine's hands and on her chest – visible on top of her habit – confirmed her stigmata.

Michael Baxandall, in his *Giotto and the Orators* (1971), demonstrated that whilst Renaissance writing about art had achieved much, it also had its constraints.¹⁰¹ For Baxandall, these had to do with the limited capacity of language at the time to engage with art.¹⁰² The impossibility of describing pictures has been discussed eloquently by James Elkins in his *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them* (1998).¹⁰³ Words cannot describe images because images contain elements – marks – that

99 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 171.

100 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 176–177: 'in scriptis de Vita fratrum primitivorum eiusdem ordinis, parte quarta capitulo ultimo'.

101 Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*.

102 Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, p. 6.

103 Elkins, *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them*.

defy language, something that may be addressed in various ways but which can never be fully reconciled. Equally, images cannot remain totally faithful to words. The tension between words and images, and appropriate use of both, is something that comes to the fore in representations of stigmatizations from the fourteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century. The dissemination of knowledge about Catherine of Siena's stigmatization through text and image was problematical, but images were a particular locus of controversy for a number of reasons which centred around the role visual art was understood to play in the representation of the invisible, but which also had to do with the definition of stigmata, the frequently temporal nature of the reception of stigmata, and, therefore, the visual representation of accepted knowledge. The following two chapters will continue to explore these issues through the lenses of representations of, and writing about, stigmata within a Dominican context.

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4. The Stigmatic Spectrum and the Visual Arts

Abstract

Tommaso Caffarini's *Libellus de Supplemento* supported and promoted Catherine of Siena's cult by discussing Catherine as a stigmatic, advocating the correct way of representing her stigmatization, and placing her within the context of the phenomenon of stigmata. In *Tractatus VII* Caffarini argued for an expanded interpretation of stigmata. This chapter explores his discussion of what I term a spectrum of stigmatic symptoms and behaviours and how these were represented in the manuscript of the *Libellus* in Siena. I argue that the stigmatic spectrum was consciously promoted in some fifteenth-century Dominican panel paintings and that particular images were also reflexive in their use of the depiction of paintings and sculptures, focusing attention on the interconnectivity of stigmatic experience and visual culture.

Keywords: stigmatic spectrum, Catherine of Siena, Tommaso Caffarini, Dominicans, *Libellus de Supplemento*

In his *Libellus de Supplemento* (*Supplement to the Life of Catherine of Siena*), Tommaso Caffarini placed Catherine of Siena within the wider context of stigmatization, providing an extended discussion of stigmata and how they could be defined.¹ Countering claims that Saint Francis of Assisi was the only true stigmatic, he argued for an expanded understanding of stigmata in direct opposition to the restricted Franciscan definition of the term. Caffarini stressed that it could relate to the reception of all or some of the wounds received by Christ during his Passion, not just the wounds received on the cross, and that true stigmatization was not purely a miraculous phenomenon.² His argument was accompanied in the manuscripts, now held in Siena and Bologna, by a series of ink illustrations, in addition to the full-page image of four stigmatics discussed in the previous chapter. Following an exploration of Caffarini's discussion of what I term a spectrum of stigmatic symptoms and behaviours, and how these were represented in the Siena manuscript of the *Libellus* (Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, MS Segn. T.I.2), this chapter considers some Dominican panel paintings of

1 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 121–266.

2 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 147, 174–177.

the fifteenth century. I argue that these consciously promoted the stigmatic spectrum, encouraging the viewer to consider the different ways in which it was possible to participate in Christ's suffering. The advancement of an expanded understanding of stigmata through images was possible because Caffarini's scrutiny of Catherine's stigmata marked a critical point in thinking about the phenomenon. Catherine's experience became a paradigm for change, prompting Caffarini to focus on widening definitions of stigmata through image and text. The explicit acknowledgement of the importance of visual art in Caffarini's text, as well as its practical recognition through the images in the manuscripts, demonstrated how essential visuality was in the debate about the function of stigmata in salvational history. Some images emphasized this in their reflexive use of the depiction of paintings and sculptures, focusing attention on the interconnectivity of stigmatic experience and visual culture.

The different types of stigmata represented in depictions of the saints in the Siena manuscript of the *Libellus* referred back to a wide understanding of the term, which the Franciscans had attempted to suppress by fashioning their founder as the recipient of a unique miracle.³ Amongst the Greeks and Romans of Antiquity the term 'stigmata' normally referred to tattoos, irreversible and indelible marks on the body.⁴ Permanent marks on the body/skin – including scarification, piercing, and branding – were made for many reasons. They could be signs of slavery or initiation, they could be used to mark or identify prisoners, and they could also have religious connotations. Procopius of Gaza (circa 465–528), in his *Commentary on Isaiah* (Isaiah 44:5), had commented on the Christians' practice of marking their arms with a religious symbol.⁵ The early-seventh-century Byzantine historian Theophylact Simocatta told the story of a group of Scythians, handed over to the Emperor Maurice towards the end of the sixth century, who had crosses on their foreheads. When the emperor asked about the mark, he was told that some Christians had recommended that the Scythian young should be marked in this way as a protection from plague.⁶

Most famously, Saint Paul, in his letter to the Galatians (Galatians 6:17), had said: 'I bear on my body the brand-marks (*stigmata*) of Jesus'.⁷ This was later taken up by

3 Constable, *Three Studies*, p. 199.

4 C.P. Jones, 'Stigma and Tattoo', p. 2. Carolyn Muessig has provided an in-depth analysis of different conceptions of stigmata in a series of important publications: Muessig, 'The Stigmata Debate'; Muessig, 'Evoluzione della spiritualità delle stimmate'; Muessig, 'Signs of Salvation'; and, most recently, Muessig, *The Stigmata*, particularly Chapters 2 and 3.

5 Gustafson, 'The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire', p. 29. See also, with further bibliography, Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 23–29.

6 Quoted in Gustafson, 'The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire', p. 29. Simocatta, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*, pp. 146–147.

7 The Latin Vulgate gives this as: 'ego enim stigmata Iesu in super corpore meo porto'. See *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum*. For an informative discussion of commentaries on Galatians 6:17 see Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 25–37.

the Franciscans as they argued for the unique nature of their founder's stigmata, and it was also the text that Catherine of Siena echoed, at least according to Raymond of Capua, when she informed him of the result of her experience in the church of Santa Cristina in Pisa, as discussed in the previous chapter. Paul's text characterized him as the slave of Christ,⁸ but in early Christian references there was no certainty about the meaning or appearance of stigmata and up until the twelfth century the term was not associated specifically with Christ's wounds.⁹ In Wibert of Toul's eleventh-century life of Pope Leo IX (1049–1054), Wibert related that the future pontiff was covered with 'stigmata' of tiny crosses in his infancy. Two accounts of events leading up to and during the First Crusade (1096–1099) also referred to stigmata on the bodies of the crusaders.¹⁰ These were not marks which mirrored the wounds on Christ's body at his crucifixion. They were crosses on people's foreheads or clothes,¹¹ or on their shoulders.¹² Moreover, they were not necessarily miraculous.

It was only following the death of Francis of Assisi in 1226 that there was a concerted effort, spearheaded by the Franciscans, to limit dramatically the definition of stigmata. Franciscan writers vigorously defended their founder as the only saint to have received true stigmata, but they were not completely successful in overturning more long-standing interpretations of the term. Dominican writers and preachers were prominent in rebuffing attempts to restrict a range of understandings of stigmata. In the late thirteenth century, Thomas of Aversa, for example, declared that it was the Dominican Peter Martyr (Peter of Verona, d. 1253), and not Saint Francis, who had received the true stigmata of the Passion. The five rivulets of blood which sprang from the wound inflicted by his assassin were equated to the wounds of Christ on the cross.¹³ Thomas was quickly silenced by the Franciscan Pope Nicholas IV (1288–1292) who, in 1291, forbade him from preaching or teaching for seven years.¹⁴

In the *Libellus*, Caffarini set out various types of stigmata, dividing them into different categories and emphasizing their heterogeneity. He stated, for example, that stigmata could be received with suffering and pain, and that they could be visible or invisible, self-inflicted or imposed by someone else. They could come about purely through desire or as a result of extreme emotion, they could be physically

8 Gustafson, 'The Tattoo in the Later Roman Empire', p. 29. See also Constable, *Three Studies*, p. 195.

9 Constable, *Three Studies*, p. 199.

10 Purkis, 'Stigmata on the First Crusade', p. 102.

11 Purkis, 'Stigmata on the First Crusade', p. 101. The episode, related by Ekkehard of Aura, concerned the miraculous events that encouraged the Germans to become crusaders.

12 Purkis, 'Stigmata on the First Crusade', p. 100. The story was related by Guibert of Nogent (d. 1124). See also Constable, *Three Studies*, p. 200.

13 Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, p. 92, note 63. See also Dondaine, 'Saint Pierre Martyr', p. 104; Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 72–73; Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor*, pp. 118–123.

14 Vauchez, 'Les Stigmates de Saint François et leurs détracteurs', p. 604; Mencherini, *Codice diplomatica della Verna*, pp. 44–45.

inflicted, or they could appear as a result of a congruence of desire and physical action.¹⁵ Caffarini was careful to note that because stigmata could be imposed by human action it was possible for ‘sinners’ to receive them.¹⁶ Within the groupings, he gave examples of holy men and women whose stigmata had been self-inflicted. They included the founder of his Order, Saint Dominic (1170–1221), who beat himself three times daily with an iron scourge and, also, continuously wore a chain which left a permanent mark on his skin that was found after his death.¹⁷ Caffarini also discussed ‘Johannes Theutonicus’ (Henry Suso, d. 1366), author of the *Horologium Sapientiae* (*Clock of Wisdom*), who carved the name of Jesus into the flesh above his heart.¹⁸ Catherine of Siena was named as having the same type of stigmata as Saint Dominic and Henry Suso since she, imitating Dominic, beat herself with an iron scourge and used an iron band around her body.¹⁹ Raymond of Capua had stated in his *Legenda Maior* that Catherine wore ‘an iron chain which she fastened about her body directly onto her flesh, and so tightly that it sank in and abraded her skin’, and went on to explain that Catherine followed ‘the example of her holy Father Dominic [...] by taking the discipline three times daily with an iron chain’.²⁰ Other examples given by Caffarini included Saint Bridget of Sweden (circa 1304–1373) who poured hot wax onto her flesh once a week and ensured that the wound did not heal by removing any scabs that formed.²¹ He also noted Saint Mark the Evangelist who was alleged to have cut off his thumb, and was included by Jacopo de Voragine in his late-thirteenth-century *Legenda Aurea*,²² and the Carthusian Blessed Pietro Petroni of Siena (d. 1361), another who cut into his thumb.²³

In a separate passage Caffarini went on to consider marks inflicted by others, including angels or God.²⁴ These marks could be visible and exterior or they could be interior. Caffarini started with the example of Saint Jerome (circa 347–420) whose shoulders were left black and blue after being repeatedly struck in a vision.²⁵ He compared this to Catherine’s experience when Christ had appeared to her and

15 On the variety of stigmatic experiences see Warr, ‘Visualizing Stigmata’, pp. 234–235; Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 11–12, 149–157.

16 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 122–123.

17 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 123.

18 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 123–124. See Rozenski, ‘Henry Suso’s *Horologium Sapientiae*’, p. 365. For an English translation of the *Horologium Sapientiae* see Suso, *Wisdom’s Watch upon the Hours*.

19 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 124.

20 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, pp. 57–58 (Part 1, Chapter 6, Sections 61 and 63).

21 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 124–125; *Acta Sanctorum*, October 8, Vol. 4, pp. 491, 511.

22 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 125. Jacopo da Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, Vol. 1, p. 244. For a brief discussion of the origin of the idea that Saint Mark removed his thumb see MacRory, ‘St. Mark’.

23 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 125. On Pietro Petroni see Pellegrini, ‘Petroni, Pietro’.

24 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 126.

25 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 126.

offered two crowns, one of gold and the other of thorns. As related by Raymond of Capua, Catherine had taken the crown of thorns in preference to the gold crown, signifying her willingness to suffer for Christ.²⁶ Caffarini specified that, after placing the crown of thorns on her head, Catherine's skin was marked and she had felt pain in her head for several days after the vision.²⁷

In each section Caffarini took care to note that Catherine of Siena had experienced the particular type of stigmata being discussed. She had self-inflicted marks like Saint Dominic. She also had marks given to her, effectively, by Christ and these came in various forms. One was from when she had chosen the crown of thorns. Another was the internal one from when Christ had placed a nail through her right hand, as discussed in the previous chapter.²⁸

Yet another mark was the scar on Catherine's side which indicated where, in a vision, Christ had removed her heart and replaced it with his own.²⁹ Caffarini compared this to a number of other stigmata on, or connected to, the heart. He cited an incident in the *Vitae Patrum* (*The Lives of the Desert Fathers*) in which the heart of one of the fathers was removed by an angel, purified, and then replaced, with a scar remaining as a physical reminder.³⁰ He also made comparisons with alterations of the heart experienced by other holy women such as Clare of Montefalco (d. 1308) and Margaret of Città di Castello (d. 1320).³¹ He went on to discuss Boland, a Dominican friar from Strasbourg, who had died in Mainz and been buried in the Franciscan convent of the city. When, sometime later, the Dominicans had retrieved his bones and taken them back to Strasbourg they found an elaborate cross on the chest bone.³² There were subsequent examples of a girl who had meditated so deeply on the Passion that she developed a bleeding wound in her side and of a martyr whose heart was found to have an image of the crucified Christ inside it,³³ sourced from Thomas of Cantimpré's (d. 1272) *Bonum universale de apibus* (*The Common Good as taught by Bees*).³⁴ These examples were used by Caffarini to demonstrate the wide range of people whose faith had led to bodily change.

26 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, pp. 151–152 (Part 2, Chapter 4, Section 158).

27 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 126.

28 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 127. Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, pp. 184–185 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 193).

29 Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, pp. 174–175 (Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 180). See the discussion in Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 143–144, where she places Catherine's stigmatic experiences within the context of her 'quasi-sacerdotal' roles.

30 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 127.

31 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 129–130. On Clare of Montefalco and Margaret of Città di Castello, with further bibliography, see Warr, 'Re-reading the Relationship'.

32 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 131.

33 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 131–133.

34 Thomas of Cantimpré, *Bonum universale de apibus*, pp. 105–106 (Book 1, Chapter 25).

After discussing changes to the heart, Caffarini moved on to other types of stigmata including marks resulting from beatings given by men or demons. Amongst those who had been beaten by demons were Saint Anthony, Saint Eufrasia, and others mentioned in the *Vitae Patrum*, as well as Clare of Montefalco.³⁵ Those who had been beaten by other people included Elizabeth of Hungary (d. 1231) and Catherine of Siena who, consequent to the beatings, had bruises and marks upon her flesh.³⁶ This passage on beatings administered by others was followed by a long section in which Caffarini explored the marks of martyrdom, including those of the proto-martyr Stephen and of Peter Martyr.³⁷

Caffarini then proceeded to invisible stigmata, arguing that one demonstration of their veracity was that recipients of invisible stigmata experienced real pain. As an example he cited the pain suffered by the Virgin Mary who:

in five places on her own body, perceived and felt to excess the pains of the five principal wounds of Christ, albeit invisibly, and how the sword of such pain crossed through into her soul, but she also underwent in the whole of her own body the other pains of his body and Passion, since the body of Christ was precisely from her own body and was flesh of her flesh, so that in a certain way the limbs of the Virgin Mary can be called the limbs of Christ [...].³⁸

In setting Mary up as a stigmatic, Caffarini took direct issue with the Franciscan Bartholomew of Pisa (d. circa 1401).³⁹ In his late-fourteenth-century *Liber de conformitate vitae Beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Jesu* (*Book of the Correspondence of the Life of Saint Francis to the Life of Lord Jesus*), which had been instrumental in promoting Saint Francis as a second Christ, Bartholomew had specifically said that Mary was not a stigmatic. He had gone on to make the point that since stigmatization was not granted to Christ's mother, it would not be granted to any other women.⁴⁰

Caffarini concluded this section of *Tractatus VII*, which dealt specifically with stigmata and stigmatics, with an overview of 'the types and differences of all

35 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 139.

36 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 140–141.

37 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 142–143.

38 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 147–148: '[...] beata Virgo Maria que nedum in quinque locis proprii corporis dolores quinque principalium vulnere Christi per excessum percepit et sensit, licet invisibiliter, et in anima quam gladius tanti doloris pertransivit, sed etiam in toto suo corpore alios dolores corporis et passionis perpessa est, eo quod corpus Christi precise de corpore suo fuit et caro de carne sua, ut ita quodammodo membra corporis Christi dici possent corporis Matris Virginis membra [...]'].

39 On the *Liber de conformitate* see Erickson, 'Bartholomew of Pisa, Francis Exalted: *De Conformitate*', pp. 253–274. Bartholomew of Pisa's work is also discussed, with particular reference to the stigmata of Saint Francis, by Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 138–142.

40 Muessig, *The Stigmata*, p. 141.

stigmata pertaining to devout and sacred persons'.⁴¹ The main categories demonstrated a spectrum of experiences: marks as a result of self-inflicted beatings or similar; marks as a result of beatings by demons; marks as a result of beatings by like-minded people; marks as a result of beatings by enemies or infidels; marks inflicted miraculously but without any supernatural apparition, either interior or exterior, either painful or comforting; visible marks inflicted through the apparition of God or an angel; marks inflicted by God which are also painful; and marks inflicted by Christ and which correspond to His five stigmata. Caffarini subdivided these last into four different types: how Christ had appeared to the person receiving the stigmata; the form in which the stigmata had been impressed, which could, of course, be invisibly; the 'solace reported from the receipt of the stigmata'; and the type of pain which had accompanied the reception of the stigmata.⁴² The subdivision then continued further as Caffarini insisted that both women and men could receive stigmata, something which his earlier description of the Virgin Mary as a stigmatic, capable of participating fully in Christ's suffering, had introduced.⁴³

Many of Caffarini's claims were linked to Catherine of Siena's experiences, as detailed by Raymond of Capua, and were aimed at consolidating Catherine's position as a stigmatic.⁴⁴ It was for this reason that Caffarini singled out those who had received stigmata which corresponded to Christ's five wounds: Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Walter of Strasbourg, and Helen of Hungary who, as discussed in the last chapter, were represented in the two illustrated manuscripts of the *Libellus* now in Siena and Bologna. Caffarini argued that Catherine had received the same type of stigmata as Francis.⁴⁵ Yet, at the same time, by including as many examples as possible, he consciously placed Francis of Assisi within a wide stigmatic context. This had the effect of diminishing his individual importance and, by also demonstrating that Catherine of Siena had experienced many different types of stigmata, he effectively promoted her above Francis.⁴⁶

Caffarini's text was accompanied, in the manuscripts in Siena and Bologna, by numerous illustrations. The images demonstrated the wide range of stigmatic experience which Caffarini promoted in the text. They also made it clear that

41 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 148: 'Ex his autem hic supradictis elici possunt omnium stigmatum ad personas devotas et sanctas pertinentium species et diversitates...'

42 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 149–151. For the quoted phrase see Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 151: 'solatium quod ex receptione stigmatum reportatur [...]'.
43 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 152.

44 As noted by Muessig, *The Stigmata*, p. 151, 'most stigmatic practices he [Caffarini] identifies resonate with and lead back to Catherine of Siena'.
45 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 177.

46 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 181. Referring to Francis of Assisi, Helen of Hungary, and Walter of Strasbourg, Caffarini wrote that 'beata Catherina habuit plures stigmatum species quam aliquis dictorum trium [...]'.
47 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 181.



24. Cristoforo Cortese (attrib.), *Saint Dominic*, from Tommaso Caffarini, *Libellus de Supplemento*, p. 56, MS Segn. T.I.2, fifteenth century, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.



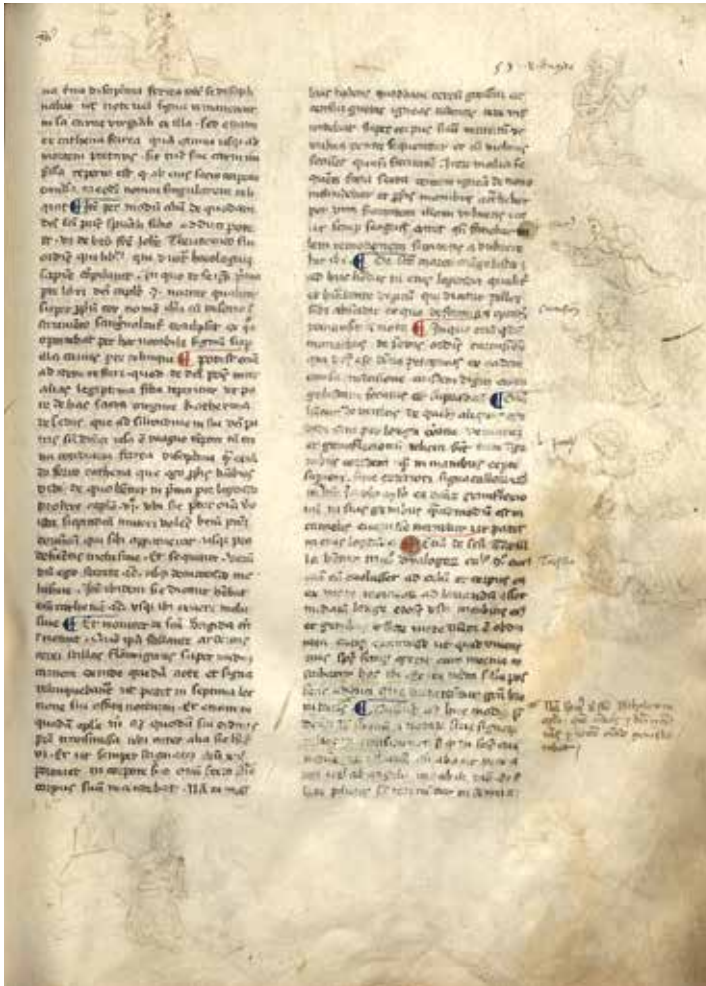
25. Cristoforo Cortese (attrib.), *Catherine of Siena*, from Tommaso Caffarini, *Libellus de Supplemento*, p. 57, MS Segn. T.I.2, fifteenth century, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

visual representation was an integral part of a complex understanding of stigmata. In the following discussion, I shall concentrate on the manuscript in Siena where the images were placed in the margins around the two columns of script.⁴⁷ Most of the ink drawings were monochromatic with some having had a red wash added to accentuate a selected aspect. The first image in the manuscript, which has been paginated, is on page 56 and shows, below the second column, Saint Dominic conducting the discipline (fig. 24). Dominic is stripped to the waist for this purpose. His hood and cloak are lying behind him to the right of the image and the left arm of Dominic's tunic is seen hanging from his waist, as he has pushed down the top of his tunic. Opposite him, below the first column on page 57, is Saint Catherine who, like Dominic, has an iron chain with which she whips herself (fig. 25). Catherine also appears to have removed some clothing in order to use the chain. Her outer garment is bunched around her waist. The similarities in the representations of Catherine and Dominic served to ensure their comparison and demonstrated the point made by Caffarini, citing Raymond of Capua, that Catherine's use of the iron discipline was done in imitation of Dominic.⁴⁸ Six other holy people are depicted on page 57 (fig. 26).⁴⁹ At the top of the first column is Henry Suso. Like Dominic he

47 The images have been identified with the relevant section of Caffarini's text printed to accompany them by Emily Moerer. See Moerer, 'Catherine of Siena and the Use of Images'.

48 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 124. Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Saint Catherine of Siena*, p. 58 (Part 1, Chapter 6, Section 63).

49 Moerer, 'Catherine of Siena and the Use of Images', pp. 178–179. Moerer has identified Henry Suso and Saint Bridget as 'conducting the discipline' but the items they hold in their hands, together with

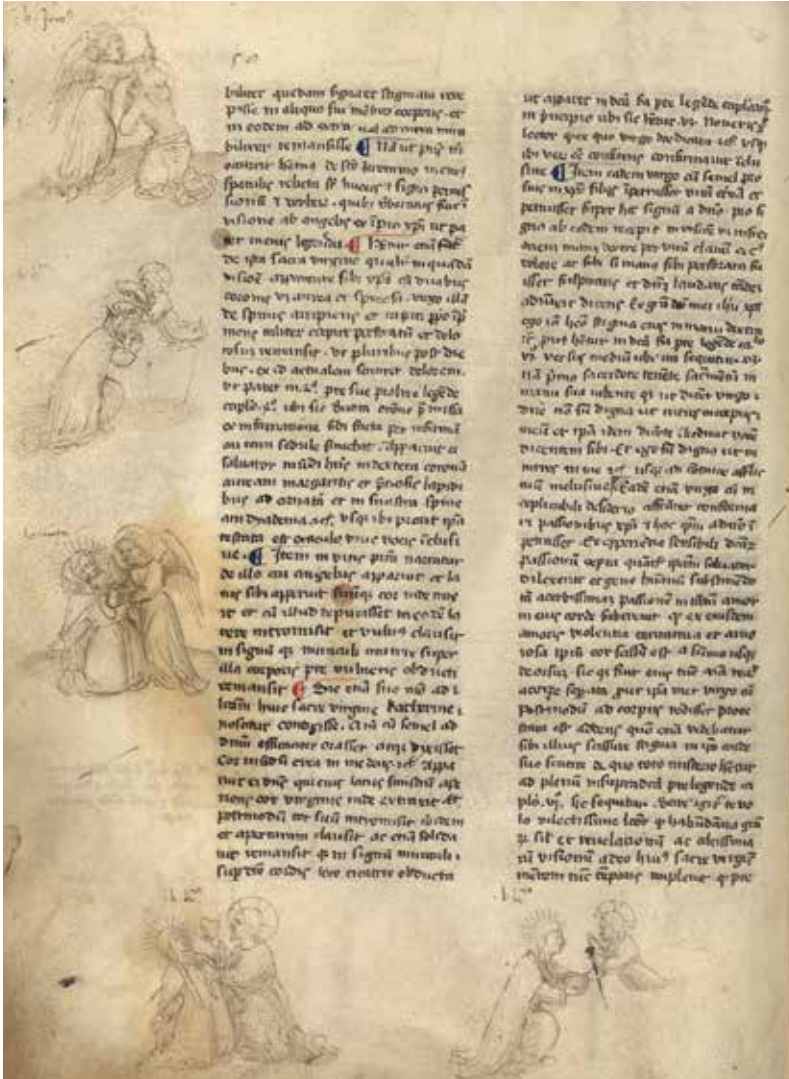


26. Cristoforo Cortese (attrib.), *Henry Suso, Bridget, Mark, Pietro Petroni, James, Tarsilla, and Catherine of Siena*, from Tommaso Caffarini, *Libellus de Supplemento*, p. 57, MS Segn. T.I.2, fifteenth century, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

kneels stripped to the waist in front of an altar on which is a free-standing cross. In his right hand he holds a knife with which to incise the name of Jesus into the skin above his heart, which the viewer would have understood from Caffarini's text that cited the *Horologium Sapientiae*.⁵⁰ Five holy people are ranged down the right-hand margin of the manuscript. From top to bottom these are: Saint Bridget

Caffarini's text, argue against this.

⁵⁰ Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 123–124. Suso, *Wisdom's Watch upon the Hours*, p. 321 (Book 2, Chapter 7, Paragraph 113).



27. Cristoforo Cortese (attrib.), *Saint Jerome beaten by an Angel, Catherine of Siena receives the Crown of Thorns from Christ, an Angel removes the Heart of a Hermit, Christ exchanges his Heart with that of Catherine of Siena, Christ transfixes Catherine's Left Hand with a Nail*, from Tommaso Caffarini, *Libellus de Supplemento*, p. 58, MS Segn. T.I.2, fifteenth century, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

of Sweden, Saint Mark the Evangelist, the Blessed Pietro Petroni, Saint James the Great and Saint Tarsilla (d. 581). All are shown demonstrating their different types of stigmata. Saint Bridget holds a large lighted candle in her right hand. Below her, Saint Mark genuflects and holds out his right hand so that it can be seen clearly that

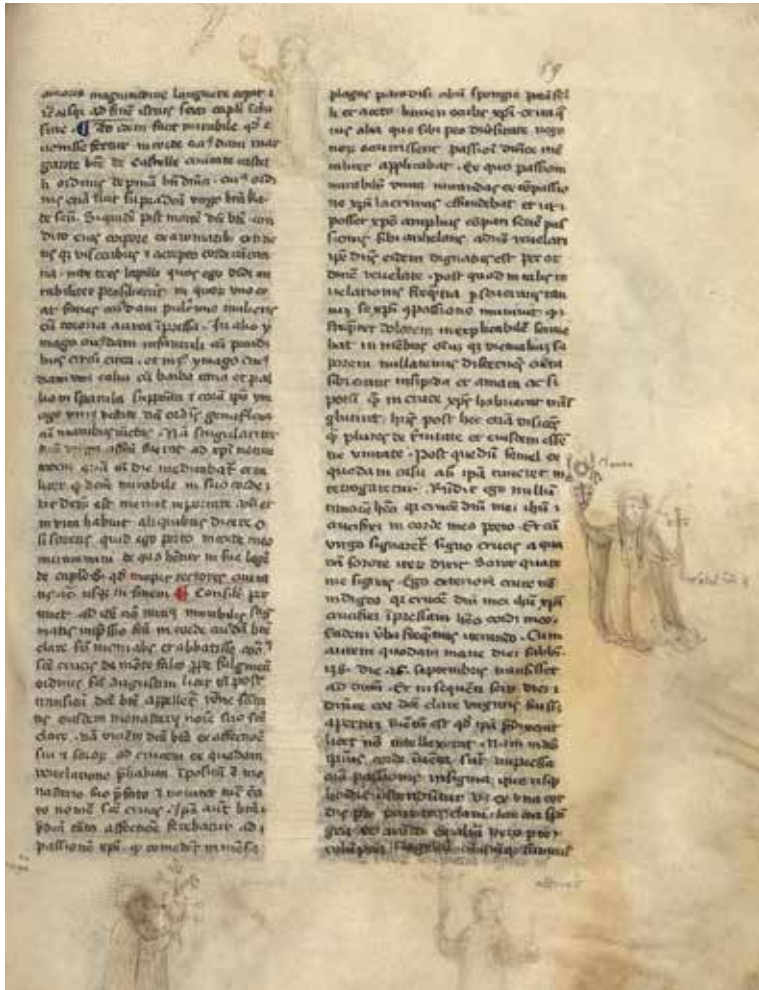


28. Cristoforo Cortese (attrib.), *Christ exchanges his Heart with that of Catherine of Siena, Christ transfixes Catherine's Left Hand with a Nail*, from Tommaso Caffarini, *Libellus de Supplemento*, p. 58, MS Segn. T.I.2, fifteenth century, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

his thumb has been removed. Further down the page, the Blessed Pietro Petroni extends his right arm showing his mutilated hand that is missing a thumb. Below are Saint James and Saint Tarsilla who both spent large amounts of time praying on their hands and knees leading to calluses, which Caffarini included in his wide-ranging definition of stigmata.

The following page 58 contains images of holy people who had received their stigmata through the actions of Christ or an angel (fig. 27). To the top of the left-hand margin an angel beats Saint Jerome. Below this, Christ uses his left hand to place the crown of thorns on Catherine of Siena's head, whilst with his right hand he supports the golden crown that she has refused. Further down, an angel removes the heart of a hermit. At the bottom of the page Christ exchanges his heart with that of Catherine of Siena, next to which we see Christ transfixing Catherine's left hand with a large nail (fig. 28). Page 59 shows holy people whose heart had been altered in some way. At the top of the page Catherine of Siena offers her heart to Christ. At the bottom we see Margaret of Città di Castello and in the right-hand margin is Clare of Montefalco (fig. 29). This theme continued on the next page with images of the Blessed Boland, a young girl holding a vessel of her blood that has come from a wound in her side, and a martyr holding his heart within which is an image of the crucified Christ. The manuscript continued with more images illustrating the different types of stigmata which Caffarini explained in the text. In this way the reader was provided with a visual guide to different types of stigmata and one in which Catherine was accorded a privileged position through the frequency of her representation.

The first illustrations show stigmatics represented in front of images. Saint Dominic, Saint Catherine of Siena and Henry Suso each perform their self-imposed stigmata before an altar with either a two- or three-dimensional image on it.



29. Cristoforo Cortese (attrib.), *Catherine of Siena, Clare of Montefalco, and Margaret of Città di Castello*, from Tommaso Caffarini, *Libellus de Supplemento*, p. 59, MS Segn. T.I.2, fifteenth century, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

Dominic kneels facing a triptych with a simple cross on its central panel, which was shorthand for the Crucifixion and an indication that Dominic was contemplating Christ's Passion. Catherine also whips herself before a painting, in this case a single-gabled panel with three crockets and a half-length figure of Christ blessing. Henry Suso kneels before an altar, on which is a roughly illustrated three-dimensional cross, as he cuts into his skin with a knife. These indications of paintings and sculptures at the beginning of the sequence of illustrations in the manuscript demonstrate the importance of images in disseminating a wide understanding of stigmata. They served to establish the interconnectedness of image and experience, with paintings

and sculptures as the lenses through which stigmatic participation and devotion were focused. In effect, they acted as exemplars showing the viewer/reader of the manuscript and, by extension, the viewer of images, how such images could be used in order to promote participation in Christ's suffering, suffering with Christ.

Although not completely consistent, it is as though most of the illustrated pages or sections of the *Libellus* manuscript in Siena have been designed to show a different type of stigmata. Pages 56 and 57 show those who had inflicted stigmata on themselves. Page 58 shows those with marks which had been imposed miraculously through the apparition of God or an angel, while page 59 depicts those whose heart had been physically changed through their faith, and this continued onto page 60. Page 61 shows two miracles whereby bread had been miraculously inscribed with the sign of the cross. The first image was of Clare of Assisi (1194–1253) blessing the bread as instructed by Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254).⁵¹ The second represented a miracle, which Caffarini sourced from the first book of the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory I, whereby a monk named Martirius had been able to place the sign of the cross on bread by making the sign against the hot coals under which it was being cooked.⁵² Page 64 shows a series of saints and holy people tormented by demons: Saint Anthony, Saint Eufrasia, Clare of Montefalco, and Catherine of Siena, who is depicted twice. Also on page 64 are examples of those that had been beaten by servants or fellow religious: Elizabeth of Hungary, Margaret of Hungary, Thomas of Canterbury, and, again, Catherine of Siena.

On page 65 the ink drawings are of those who had been martyred. Caffarini argued that the marks from martyrdoms were stigmata. At the top of the page Christ is placed centrally, above the break between the two columns, holding up his hands. His wounds, highlighted through the use of red ink, can be seen. To his left is the Virgin Mary, with a bloody sword buried in her chest, holding out her heart to Christ. The blood running between the wound in Christ's left hand and Mary's heart emphasizes the point, made by Caffarini in his text, that the two shared the same flesh.

The saints at the top of the page had suffered different types of martyrdom: stoning for some and a saw for another. The martyrs shown at the bottom of page 65 were distinguished by all having received the five wounds which Christ had received on the cross. To the bottom left is Saint Peter at the centre of a group of martyrs all holding crosses, the symbol of their martyrdoms, and those at the front of the group have their wounds clearly visible on their hands. These saints cannot be individually identified from the text. Caffarini merely stated that:

⁵¹ 'The Little Flowers of Saint Francis', p. 624.

⁵² Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, pp. 49–50.



30. Cristoforo Cortese (attrib.), *Crucified Saints, the Ten Thousand Martyrs, Saint Peter Martyr*, from Tommaso Caffarini, *Libellus de Supplemento*, p. 65, MS Segn. T.I.2, fifteenth century, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena.

Indeed, in speaking of martyrs, there have been many who, going beyond other tortures, have even been fixed to the cross, and on account of this, like Christ, have had marks and stigmata on their hands and feet. One of these was Saint Peter, the successor of Christ, and many others of both sexes, as appears in the legends of the saints.⁵³

Here, as elsewhere, Caffarini was careful to state that women were also able to bear stigmata, something that was important as part of his strategy to promote Catherine of Siena as a stigmatic. One of the saints represented under the text, immediately to Saint Peter's right, is clearly female, a visual reminder that saints such as Eulalia of Barcelona (d. 303) and Julia of Corsica (d. circa 439) were believed to have been crucified.⁵⁴ The central group of figures, under the right column of text, also holding crosses, have been shown gathered around Christ, rather than Saint Peter. In contrast to the crosses of those around Peter, the crosses of those around Christ still have nails embedded in them. These represent the ten thousand martyrs, a group of converted Roman soldiers (fig. 30).⁵⁵ To these groups of martyrs was added, at the bottom right corner of the page, Saint Peter Martyr, kneeling and looking up towards the blessing hand of God. He has been represented with the hilt of a sword projecting from his chest and a curved knife embedded in his head. Behind him, his companion, Dominic, is shown praying. Caffarini took pains to note that:

53 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 142: 'Item, de martiribus loquendo, fuerunt quam plures qui, aliquando ultra alia tormenta etiam fuerunt cruci affixi propter quod, uti Christus, signa et stigmata tam in manibus quam in pedibus habuerunt, quorum unus fuit sanctus Petrus, Christi vicarius, et plures alii, utriusque sexus, ut in legendis sanctorum apparet'.

54 Friesen, *The Female Crucifix*, pp. 19–34.

55 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 142–143. For information on the ten thousand martyrs see Mershman, 'The Ten Thousand Martyrs'.

the most recent of the martyrs in the church of most solemnly canonized men seems to have been holy brother Peter of Verona, of the Order of Preachers, who lived miraculously stigmatized and taking pleasure in his own blood.⁵⁶

Placing Peter Martyr immediately next to Christ and others who had suffered crucifixion demonstrated his importance as a stigmatized saint whilst also drawing attention to stigmata which did not echo the wounds received by Christ on the cross.

A similar message is put forward on page 66 by placing Saint Paul as the final image in the margins. Paul is shown kneeling with two men standing behind him, one of whom has raised a rock with which he is about to hit the saint. As previously noted, it was Paul whom the Franciscans had placed as the direct antecedent of Saint Francis, specifically claiming that Francis had been the first since Paul to have experienced miraculous stigmata. Caffarini's text at this point deliberately expanded Paul's experience of stigmata. He did not deny that Saint Paul had marks on his body corresponding to Christ's wounds on the cross, but he was careful to state that these may not have been received in the same way as Christ received his wounds or Francis his stigmata.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Caffarini also catalogued the other types of stigmata which arose, for example, from beatings endured by Saint Paul, and it was these that were chosen as the focus of the ink drawing. In the manuscript image Saint Paul is not portrayed as the recipient of a miracle only equalled by Saint Francis but as an exemplar of someone who had experienced some of the different types of stigmata enumerated by Caffarini, something that went back to early Christian understanding of Paul's sufferings.⁵⁸

The ink drawings in the Siena manuscript of the *Libellus* form a pictorial demonstration of stigmatic diversity. They also testify to some of the issues involved in representing various types of stigmata and stigmatic experience. In a number of cases stigmatics are shown with their stigmata as attributes, something that I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter 5. Some representations revealed a close link between visual art and stigmatic spirituality. In doing this they evinced a level of reflexivity that pointed to the potential use of visual art for others wishing to follow Christ by participating in his suffering.

In the next section of this chapter, I will explore visual art associated with the Dominican Order that, I argue, engaged with Caffarini's wide definition of

56 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 143: 'Item ultimus martirum in ecclesia solemniter canonizatorum videtur fuisse sanctus frater Petrus veronensis, ordinis predicatorum, qui mirabiliter extitit stigmatizatus et in proprio sanguine voluptatus'.

57 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 145.

58 In her discussion of Marcus Victorinus's (d. circa 365) commentary on Galatians 6:17, Muessig has shown that there was an early understanding that Pauline stigmata referred to the sufferings Paul underwent in following Christ. See Muessig, *The Stigmata*, p. 26.

stigmata in order to encourage various levels of involvement with the Passion of Christ. Andrea di Bartolo's late-fourteenth-century *Five Dominican Beatae* is one example (fig. 16). The rectangular panel is divided into two registers. Standing figures set into fictive niches in the top register are, from left to right: Giovanna of Florence, Vanna of Orvieto, Catherine of Siena, Margaret of Città di Castello, and Daniella of Orvieto. The same women are shown in the lower register all kneeling in various aspects of prayer. The painting has been associated with the Venetian Dominican *mantellate* convent of Corpus Domini during the time that Caffarini was in charge. Gaudenz Freuler argued that it was commissioned by Caffarini and, furthermore, that the three central images of the lower register draw attention to the stigmatic spirituality of Vanna, Catherine, and Margaret.⁵⁹ As we have seen, Margaret of Città di Castello, who is shown holding her heart in which images of the Holy Family were found after her death, was considered by Caffarini to be a stigmatic.⁶⁰

Vanna (Giovanna) of Orvieto (d. 1306), who 'performed' the Crucifixion when she contemplated Christ's death, could also be regarded as a stigmatic. Born at Carnaiola near Orvieto, Vanna had been orphaned at a young age and subsequently became a Dominican tertiary.⁶¹ According to her fourteenth-century *vita*, each Good Friday 'her body was extended in the shape of the cross. Her body remained rigid, pale, and insensible in the same way that the body of the Lord had been when it was attached to the cross for ridicule'. This happened every Good Friday 'during the last ten years of her life, except once, when she was suffering from a high fever'.⁶² Vanna was not mentioned by name by Caffarini in his section on stigmatics, although he did mention Orvieto when discussing the ten thousand crucified martyrs.⁶³ This was despite his having translated her *vita* in 1400 before compiling the *Libellus*.⁶⁴ There is therefore a question as to whether she was intended to be understood as a stigmatic in this painting. Another rationale for her inclusion was that Caffarini had arranged for relics of Vanna, Catherine, and Margaret to be brought to Venice.⁶⁵ Yet the image of Vanna on the lower register of the painting clearly alludes to the way in which her stigmatic spirituality was expressed through her ecstatic experiences and links this to visual art. Muessig has defined stigmatic spirituality as a 'willingness to suffer in order to spread Christian teaching, or to

59 Freuler, 'Andrea di Bartolo', pp. 573–577.

60 Caffarini had translated Margaret of Città di Castello's life from Latin into Italian. See Tylus, *Reclaiming Catherine of Siena*, p. 220.

61 Pozzo and Leonardi, *Scrittrici mistiche italiane*, pp. 193–194.

62 I have used the translation in Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 68.

63 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 143. See Tylus, *Reclaiming Catherine of Siena*, p. 220.

64 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 261, note 6.

65 Freuler, 'Andrea di Bartolo', p. 572, note 21.

conform oneself directly to the wounded Christ'.⁶⁶ In Andrea di Bartolo's panel this is shown through the position of the women's bodies and their relationship to visual art. Vanna kneels, as do Catherine of Siena and Margaret of Città di Castello, in front of an altar. On the altars of Vanna and Margaret is a sculpture, a freestanding crucifix. As in the Siena manuscript of the *Libellus*, visual art was demonstrably important, both indicating how it was used to effect a compassionate response and showing a relationship between it and the religiosity of these women. Those who viewed Vanna and Margaret in the lower register of Andrea di Bartolo's painting were before an image of women themselves kneeling before an image, and it was through these (represented) women, in their imitation of Christ's suffering, that the viewer could learn to gain access to Him.

Visual experiences, which included visions and viewing paintings, could set off a sequence of action and re-action. These included imitation and the commissioning of further images commemorating, reflecting, and building on the first experience. The Blessed Aldobrandesca of Siena (d. 1309) ordered a painting designed as a reminder of an incident that occurred when she was meditating in front of a crucifix and tasted a drop of blood from the wound in Christ's side.⁶⁷ The *vita* of Maria Sturion of Venice (d. 1399), written by Tommaso Caffarini, recounts that she came across an image of Catherine of Siena in a painter's shop and persuaded the painter to allow her to have it even though he had intended it for Caffarini. She then started to wear a white tunic just as Catherine had, and this progressed to her commissioning a painting in which she was shown wearing the Dominican habit, together with saints belonging to the same order, 'before the image of the crucified Jesus, holding her heart in her hand and offering it always and in every way to the Lord Jesus'.⁶⁸ The painting of Catherine affected Maria's behaviour and choice of clothing and this, in turn, was reflected in the painting that she ordered. That painting precipitated a further change in Maria who 'sank into holy sorrow because the painter had not portrayed her offering her heart to Christ Crucified with both hands'.⁶⁹

In the case of Maria Sturion it is clear that paintings formed an integral part of her spiritual life and that she interacted with them, affected by certain images and, in turn, affecting others. That Tommaso Caffarini, someone deeply attuned to the importance of visual imagery, recorded these episodes is not coincidental. Others might not have been so sensitive to the use of art in Maria's life nor have seen in it an opportunity to promote its use. Caffarini's *vita* of Maria

66 Muessig, 'Signs of Salvation', p. 68.

67 Frugoni, 'Female Mystics, Visions, and Iconography', p. 127.

68 I have used Bornstein's translation in Caffarini, 'The Legend of Maria of Venice', p. 139. Fernanda Sorelli has published the original version. See Caffarini, *La santità imitabile*, pp. 181–182.

69 Caffarini, 'The Legend of Maria of Venice', p. 144; Caffarini, *La santità imitabile*, p. 188.

demonstrates how it was possible for particular types of iconography quickly to pervade sections of Venetian society, through items ranging from altarpieces to small private panel paintings.⁷⁰ Valentina Baradel has argued that Catherine of Siena in Andrea di Bartolo's *Five Dominican Beatae* can provide a useful idea of the type of figure Maria saw in the painter's shop. She has further drawn a comparison between the figure of Margaret of Città di Castello in the lower register of the panel, offering up her heart to Christ crucified with both hands and the painted figure of Maria in the painting she commissioned and which so upset her for its indecisive gesture.⁷¹ The ways in which Maria encountered paintings allow us some understanding of how intertwined they were with her spiritual life and the agency they exerted.

To return to Andrea di Bartolo's *Five Dominican Beatae*: while Vanna and the blind Margaret both kneel before a crucifix in the lower register, the central figure of Catherine is distinguished by her vision of the crucified Christ hovering above the altar, perhaps showing her at the moment of her stigmatization in Santa Cristina, Pisa. Vanna's arms are shown spread out wide like those of Christ on the cross, referencing her actions on Good Friday. As well as Vanna's bodily transformations each Good Friday, the gesture can be linked to the sixth mode of praying in the thirteenth-century Dominican text *De modo orandi*.⁷² This mode involved standing with outstretched arms to implore divine power.⁷³ Dominic was seen thus in a fifteenth-century illustration in MS Lat. Rossianus 3, folio 10, in the Vatican Library (fig. 31).⁷⁴ Vanna does not stand. Like all the *mantellate* in the lower register of Andrea di Bartolo's painting, she kneels, distinguishing her stance from that recommended in *De modo orandi*. The extension of her arms is emphasized as she is the only one of the *mantellate* whose black cloak falls to the ground behind her. Catherine of Siena, instead, raises up her hands from the elbows. Her cloak does not fall to the ground and the position of her body contains echoes of the way in which Francis is shown at the moment of his stigmatization. In the main register, the standing Catherine does hold out her arms, making her body into the shape of a cross.

It was not necessary for there to be a clear identification of Vanna of Orvieto as a stigmatic in order to be able to read Andrea di Bartolo's painting as a celebration of

70 Baradel, 'Immagini per "muover divozione" a Venezia', p. 179.

71 Baradel, 'Immagini per "muover divozione" a Venezia', pp. 178–180.

72 Freuler, 'Andrea di Bartolo', pp. 575–576; *De modo orandi*, pp. 154–155.

73 Hood, 'Saint Dominic's Manners of Praying', p. 205.

74 The dating of MS Lat. Rossianus 3 is difficult. There is general agreement that the section containing *De modo orandi* was completed in the fifteenth century but, as has been noted by Sheri Shaneyfelt, different parts of the manuscript may have come from different places and have been written at different times. See Shaneyfelt, 'Catalogue 20: *De modo orandi*', p. 135, note 3.



31. *Imploring Divine Power*, the sixth way of praying, from *De modo orandi*, folio 10r, MS Lat. Rossianus 3, fifteenth century, Vatican Apostolic Library, Vatican City, Rome.



32. Fra Angelico, *Fiesole Altarpiece (Madonna and Child with Angels and Saints Thomas Aquinas, Barnabas, Dominic and Peter Martyr)*, 1419–1425, tempera and gold on wood, 212 x 237 cm, San Domenico, Fiesole.

stigmatic spirituality. Rather, her inclusion underscored Caffarini's arguments that stigmata, stigmatic behaviour, and stigmatic spirituality existed on a sliding scale. This understanding of stigmata, not as a singular gift, but as a range of experience to which many people could aspire, enhances our understanding of other paintings for Dominican churches or with a Dominican provenance.

Fra Angelico (1400–1455) depicted numerous saints in the predella for the high altarpiece of the *Virgin and Child with Saints Thomas Aquinas, Barnabas, Dominic and Peter Martyr* (fig. 32) for his convent of San Domenico in Fiesole.⁷⁵ The painting has been dated to circa 1419–1425, shortly after Caffarini completed the *Libellus*.⁷⁶ At the beginning of the sixteenth century the main panel was updated by Lorenzo di Credi (d. 1537). The original pinnacles were removed and it was provided with a unified landscape background.⁷⁷ The altarpiece, one of three painted by Fra Angelico for the church, was placed behind the choir screen and its primary audience was the Dominican friars of the convent. As argued by Patricia Lee Rubin, this was a factor in

⁷⁵ Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, pp. 66–72.

⁷⁶ For a discussion of the altarpiece see Gordon, *The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*, pp. 2–25.

⁷⁷ For more information see Kanter and Palladino, *Fra Angelico*, pp. 59–72, with the chapter on the Fiesole Altarpiece by Anneke de Vries (pp. 59–63) and the catalogue entry by Laurence Kanter (pp. 64–72).



33. Fra Angelico (attrib.), *Christ Glorified in the Court of Heaven*, central predella panel from the *Fiesole Altarpiece*, circa 1423–1424, egg tempera and gold on wood, 31.7 x 73 cm, National Gallery, London, NG633.1.



34. Fra Angelico (attrib.), *Virgin Mary with the Apostles and Other Saints*, left predella panel from the *Fiesole Altarpiece*, circa 1423–1424, egg tempera and gold on wood, 32 x 64 cm, National Gallery, London, NG633.2.

the atypical choices made for the predella panels which focus on the ‘holy heritage of the Order’.⁷⁸ The central predella panel shows *Christ Glorified in the Court of Heaven* (fig. 33), with the *Virgin Mary with the Apostles and Other Saints* (fig. 34) and the *Forerunners of Christ with Saints and Martyrs* (fig. 35) to the left and right respectively. The smaller panels to the far left and right show the ranks of the *Dominican Blessed* (figs. 36 and 37). The Dominicans in these panels can be identified through inscriptions in addition to their attributes. In the left-hand panel of the *Dominican Blessed*, Margaret of Hungary (1242–1271), clearly shown as a stigmatic with gold rays shining

78 Patricia Lee Rubin, *Images and Identity*, pp. 200–201, with bibliographic notes at p. 355.



35. Fra Angelico (attrib.), *Forerunners of Christ with Saints and Martyrs*, right predella panel from the *Fiesole Altarpiece*, circa 1423–1424, egg tempera and gold on wood, 31.9 x 63.5 cm, National Gallery, London, NG633.3.

from her hands, is prominent at the bottom with Catherine of Siena facing her on the opposite right-hand panel, although without visible stigmata. No account appeared to have been taken by the artist of Caffarini's reservations, as discussed in the previous chapter, if they were known.⁷⁹ More important was that Margaret's cult in Italy included a belief in her stigmatization, something which had been documented in art in Florence from the first half of the fourteenth century when she was shown as a stigmatic in the panel of *Christ and the Virgin Mary with Dominican Saints and Blessed*s in Santa Maria Novella, Florence, ascribed to the Master of the Dominican Effigies and dated to circa 1340 (fig. 38).⁸⁰ Margaret was also shown as a stigmatic in a fresco from the second half of the fourteenth century in San Nicolò, Treviso (fig. 39); in a fourteenth-century fresco in San Domenico, Perugia; and in a fresco from the first half of the fifteenth century in San Domenico in Città di Castello.⁸¹

Fra Angelico's predella panels show a number of other saints and blesseds who had experienced various types of stigmata. In the far right-hand panel of the *Dominican Blessed* Walter of Strasbourg is shown with his stigmata clearly visible.⁸² The right centrally-flanking panel of the *Forerunners of Christ with Saints*

79 For the cult of Margaret of Hungary in Italy see Klaniczay, 'Le stimate di santa Margherita d'Ungheria', pp. 16–18. See also Klaniczay, 'On the Stigmatization of Saint Margaret of Hungary'. A brief overview is given in Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 160–164.

80 On the Master of the Dominican Effigies see Offner with Steinweg, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting*, pp. 271–348. For the panel in Santa Maria Novella see pp. 292–297.

81 Klaniczay, 'On the Stigmatization of Saint Margaret of Hungary', pp. 277–278.

82 For the identification of the figures on the outer panels see Gordon, *The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*, pp. 8–11.



36. Fra Angelico (attrib.), *The Dominican Blessed*, far left predella panel from the *Fiesole Altarpiece*, circa 1423–1424, egg tempera and gold on wood, 31.8 x 21.9 cm, National Gallery, London, NG633.4.



37. Fra Angelico (attrib.), *The Dominican Blessed*, far right predella panel from the *Fiesole Altarpiece*, circa 1423–1424, egg tempera and gold on wood, 31.6 x 21.9 cm, National Gallery, London, NG633.5.



38. Master of the Dominican Effigies, *Christ and the Virgin Mary with Dominican Saints and Blesseds*, circa 1340, tempera and gold leaf on panel, 117.8 x 56 cm, Museo e Chiostrì Monumentali di Santa Maria Novella, Florence.



39. Unknown painter from the Veneto, *Saint Margaret of Hungary*, San Nicolò, Treviso, second half of the fourteenth century, fresco.

and Martyrs includes Saint Peter Martyr who is placed conspicuously near the centre of the panel with blood dripping from his head wound onto his habit. He complements the less prestigiously placed figure of Saint Francis to the top left of the left centrally-flanking panel of the *Virgin Mary with the Apostles and Other Saints*. The early-Christian martyr Saint Ignatius of Antioch, represented in the panel of *Forerunners of Christ*, had said during torture that the name of Christ was written on his heart. After his martyrdom, his heart had been cut open and his claim was verified.⁸³ Caffarini specifically named him as a stigmatic in the *Libellus*.⁸⁴ The far left-hand panel showing the *Dominican Blessed* includes a figure using some type of pointed instrument to carve the name of Jesus onto his bare breast and whose inscription identifies him as '*b.jachob*'.⁸⁵ It is possible that this figure had been incorrectly labelled and should be identified as Henry Suso.⁸⁶ Also on this panel is the figure of the Blessed Buoninsegna (d. circa 1268) who was martyred in Antioch and who is shown with a double-handed saw through his head making his appearance very similar to that of Saint Peter Martyr.⁸⁷ The far right-hand panel includes a certain Jacopo (*b.iacob*) holding a heart inscribed with the name of Jesus.⁸⁸

The suffering which these holy people underwent for Christ coalesced in the central panel of the predella showing *Christ Glorified*. Christ, the translucence of his skin set off by his white robes, holds the red and white banner of the Resurrection. He is presented against a gilded background incised with rays which radiate out towards the surrounding angels. Christ holds up his right hand where a golden 'wound' can be seen clearly and the lance wound in his side is also golden. For viewers, these shining 'wounds' linked to the wounds of the stigmatics in the side panels of the predella, demonstrating a shift from pain to celestial reward. In one interpretation the range of stigmatic saints and blessed on this altarpiece could be explained away as merely the natural result of placing so many Dominicans together on one predella. Yet it could also be understood as a means by which to question the Franciscan hegemony over stigmatic saints, to widen the understanding of stigmata and stigmatic spirituality, and to put forward an argument for Dominican ascendancy.

This was taken further in the iconography of the altarpiece of the *Virgin and Child with Saints* now in the church of Sant'Agostino in San Gimignano (fig. 40).⁸⁹

83 Gordon, *The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*, p. 7 and p. 22, note 25.

84 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 138.

85 Gordon, *The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*, p. 8.

86 Suggested in Gordon, *The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*, p. 23, note 43.

87 Gordon, *The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*, p. 9 and p. 23, note 48.

88 It has not been possible to relate this figure securely to a known Dominican *beatus*. See Gordon, *The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*, p. 23, note 56.

89 I have explored this altarpiece at greater length in Warr, 'Pierfrancesco Fiorentino's Altarpiece'.



40. Pier Francesco Fiorentino, *Virgin and Child with Saints*, 1494, tempera on panel, Sant'Agostino, San Gimignano.

This late-fifteenth-century panel was signed and dated by the Florentine artist Pier Francesco Fiorentino (1444/1445–after 1497) who spent much of his career working for patrons in San Gimignano and the Val d'Elsa.⁹⁰ When it was completed, in 1494, it would have been an impressive commission; with the main panel flanked by pilasters containing full-length figures of saints and placed above a predella with narrative scenes and half-length figures of saints. The subject matter poses a number of interesting questions about the climate in which it was commissioned.

⁹⁰ Padoa Rizzo, 'Piero Francesco Fiorentino'.

In attempting to answer these questions it may be possible to shed some light on the spirituality that informed the iconography.

The central panel shows the Virgin and Child with three standing saints to either side. These are, from the viewer's left to right: Stephen, Peter Martyr, Bartholomew, Andrew, Vincent Ferrer (d. 1419), and Lawrence. Kneeling before the Virgin are Saints Martin of Tours and Augustine. All of the saints are identified by inscriptions in their haloes. Between them and slightly to the viewer's right of the Virgin, depicted on a much smaller scale, is the commissioner, identified by the inscription at the base of the main panel as Fra Lorenzo di Bartolo.⁹¹ This inscription also gives the name of the painter and the date. Another inscription within the frieze, below the cornice at the top of the panel, contains the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation: 'AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS TEC[UM]' ('Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you'). Below the main panel of the altarpiece the predella is divided into seven compartments. From left to right these show: *Blessed Bartolo Buonpedoni of San Gimignano* (1228–1300) (fig. 41), *Saint Catherine of Siena* (fig. 42), the *Ascension*, *Christ as Man of Sorrows* (fig. 43), the *Resurrection*, *Saint Margaret of Hungary* (fig. 44), and *Saint Fina of San Gimignano* (1238–1253) (fig. 45). Pilasters frame the main panel and these pilasters contain representations of standing saints, four to either side. On the left pilaster, from top to bottom, are: an angel with a sword and carrying an orb (possibly Saint Michael), and Saints Francis of Assisi, Mary Magdalen, and Nicholas of Bari. On the right pilaster, again from top to bottom, are: Tobias and the angel, Saint Jerome, a Dominican bishop holding a book, and Saint Margaret of Antioch. The donor, Fra Lorenzo di Bartolo, appears to have been a member of the Dominican Order. His habit is black and white and the inscription below the main panel which refers to him as the commissioner gives a dedication to Saint Dominic: 'DIVO D[OME]NICO F[RATE]R LAURENTI[US] BARTHOLI DICAVIT' ('Brother Lorenzo di Bartolo dedicated [this] to Saint Dominic'). Five Dominican saints are represented on the altarpiece. Furthermore, Saint Augustine, nominal founder of the Augustinians and placed in a prominent position on the main panel, was often represented as the saint whose rule the Dominican Order followed. Also, the coat of arms placed at the top of the left pilaster was one of those used by the Dominican Order.

Given the number of Dominican saints represented, the dedication to Saint Dominic given in the inscription, and the presence of the Dominican coat of arms forming part of the capital at the top of the pilaster on the left-hand side of the main panel, it seems likely that the painting came originally from the Dominican

91 Padoa Rizzo, 'Il percorso di Pier Francesco Fiorentino', p. 175, note 30.



41. Pier Francesco Fiorentino, *Blessed Bartolo Buonpedoni of San Gimignano*, detail of the predella panel of *Virgin and Child with Saints*, 1494, tempera on panel, Sant'Agostino, San Gimignano.



44. Pier Francesco Fiorentino, *Margaret of Hungary*, detail of the predella panel of *Virgin and Child with Saints*, 1494, tempera on panel, Sant'Agostino, San Gimignano.



42. Pier Francesco Fiorentino, *Saint Catherine of Siena*, detail of the predella panel of *Virgin and Child with Saints*, 1494, tempera on panel, Sant'Agostino, San Gimignano.



45. Pier Francesco Fiorentino, *Fina of San Gimignano*, detail of the predella panel of *Virgin and Child with Saints*, 1494, tempera on panel, Sant'Agostino, San Gimignano.



43. Pier Francesco Fiorentino, *Christ as Man of Sorrows*, detail of the predella panel of *Virgin and Child with Saints*, 1494, tempera on panel, Sant'Agostino, San Gimignano.

church of the Santissima Annunziata in San Gimignano.⁹² A consideration of the choices made within the painting further helps to understand certain aspects of the spirituality that informed this commission. An initial glance suggests possible reasons for the choice of individual figures based on the commissioner and location: Lawrence and Bartholomew were the commissioner's name saints; Fina and Bartolo Buonpedoni came from San Gimignano; Saint Augustine wrote the rule followed by the Dominican Order; the Dominicans Peter Martyr and Vincent Ferrer were placed to either side of the Virgin and Child; Saints Catherine of Siena and Margaret of Hungary, representing the Second and Third Dominican Orders respectively, were placed in the predella; and there was a Dominican bishop on the right-hand pilaster. Thus, the altarpiece ticked the boxes of civic, religious, and personal interests. However, to reduce the choice of saints in the painting to a series of reflections of such interests is to diminish the whole. Throughout the altarpiece, it is possible to discern a complex meditation on Christ's Passion, and its reflection in the lives and bodies of the saints.

Christ's body after the Passion was central to the altarpiece. *Christ as Man of Sorrows* claimed the central position on the predella. Looking at the image (fig. 43), the half-length figure of Jesus is shown upright in the sepulchre with his hands placed forwards and palms towards the viewer showing clearly the wounds where they had been pierced by nails on the cross. Blood drips from the wound in Christ's side. In the distance, at the bottom of a group of hills, is a city characterized by the number of towers it contains. As discussed by both Joanna Cannon and Henk Van Os, the subject of the Man of Sorrows was one which had a particular significance within Dominican spirituality.⁹³ It brought to mind the feast of *Corpus Christi* celebrated throughout the Dominican Order from 1318 onwards.⁹⁴ The placement of the Man of Sorrows in the centre of the predella went back to Simone Martini's altarpiece of 1319 for the church of Santa Caterina in Pisa.⁹⁵ It recognized the position of the priest during the mass at the point of consecration. Turning to the altar, before lifting the chalice, the priest would have been faced with a compelling visual reminder of the miracle of the eucharist.

Placing the *Man of Sorrows* at the centre of the predella appears to have been common practice on the part of patrons and painters in this region in the second half of the fifteenth century. A number of examples of altarpieces by Benozzo Gozzoli (1420–1497) survive where this was the case: a frescoed polyptych in the Saint Jerome chapel in the ex-church of San Francesco, Montefalco (1452);⁹⁶ a

92 For a discussion of its provenance see Warr, 'Pierfrancesco Fiorentino's Altarpiece', pp. 126–134.

93 Cannon, 'Simone Martini', p. 73; Van Os, 'The Discovery of an Early Man of Sorrows'.

94 Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, p. 244.

95 Cannon, 'Simone Martini', p. 73.

96 Cole Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli*, p. 68, plate 76.

Madonna of Humility with Saints in the Galleria Nazionale d'Umbria, Perugia (1456);⁹⁷ and the fictive altarpiece from the tabernacle of the Madonna delle Tosse in Castelfiorentino (1484).⁹⁸ The cross behind Christ in Fiorentino's depiction may also have been intended to recall the relic of the true cross that had been presented to the Dominicans of San Gimignano by Fra Francesco d'Andrea Fiorentino in 1492 and which was probably placed within a panel of the *Virgin and Child* given to the convent of the Santissima Annunziata by the Ridolfi family, thus linking the *Man of Sorrows* to the relics within the convent and so strengthening the possibility that the *Virgin and Child Altarpiece* was originally placed within the church.⁹⁹ The towers of the city in the background allowed a link between the image, and the focus on Christ's wounds which went with it, and the town of San Gimignano, even though the city in the image is in a valley.

Representations of San Gimignano as a city of towers had a strong pedigree by the end of the fifteenth century and were included in Domenico Ghirlandaio's (1449–1494) fresco of the *Funeral of Saint Fina* from the Saint Fina chapel in the Collegiata (circa 1477–1478),¹⁰⁰ Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco of *San Gimignano* on the inside of the upper-left pilaster flanking the choir of Sant'Agostino (1464),¹⁰¹ the central panel of Taddeo di Bartolo's *San Gimignano and Scenes from his Life* (circa 1401–1403, Pinacoteca Civica, San Gimignano),¹⁰² and the figure of *Saint Fina* from Lorenzo di Niccolò di Pietro Gerini's early-fifteenth-century *Reliquary Tabernacle with Scenes from the Life of Fina* (fig. 46).¹⁰³ The visual reminder of the buildings of San Gimignano contained in the *Man of Sorrows* enabled viewers to imagine the location of Christ's Passion within a familiar landscape. That the type of devotional literature encouraging such visualization is often characterized as Franciscan does not mean that we should dismiss this evaluation of the impact of the *Man of Sorrows*. The divide between Franciscan and Dominican spirituality is, perhaps, over-emphasized. In any case, it seems reasonable to assume that access to the altarpiece would not have been limited to Dominican friars and that the painting was intended to address a variety of San Gimignanese viewers whose devotional practices were likely to have had heterogeneous influences.

Mitchell Merback has argued that representations of the Man of Sorrows functioned as 'a visual call to penance'.¹⁰⁴ The impact of the representation of Christ's

97 Cole Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli*, p. 79, plate 96.

98 Cole Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli*, pp. 212–213, plates 271, 273.

99 Biblioteca Comunale, San Gimignano, ms. 82, 'Ristretto', folio 23r.

100 Cadogan, *Domenico Ghirlandaio*, pp. 48–55, 203–207.

101 Cole Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli*, pp. 121–142.

102 Norman, 'The Case of the Beata Simona', pp. 154–155.

103 Cadogan, *Domenico Ghirlandaio*, pp. 205–206, plate 198.

104 Merback, 'Reverberations of Guilt and Violence', p. 40.



46. Lorenzo di Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *Reliquary Tabernacle with Scenes from the Life of Fina*, early-fifteenth century, tempera on panel, Civic Museums, San Gimignano.

wounds served as a reminder to the viewer of the need to atone for her/his sins, to suffer as Christ had done for the sins of mankind. Penance was, as Katherine Jansen has pointed out, ‘at the heart of Dominican preaching’.¹⁰⁵ It was also central to Dominican practice: as noted above, the author of the Dominican text on prayer *De modo orandi* recognized that self-flagellation could induce a penitential state of mind.¹⁰⁶ Flagellation formed an integral part of Dominican life, as it did that of a number of other religious orders. It was used both in monastic discipline, during the chapter of faults,¹⁰⁷ and during prayer. Images of Dominic self-flagellating were used to educate novice friars, as can be seen in the fresco in cell 20 in the Florentine convent of San Marco, painted by a follower of Fra Angelico in the 1450s.¹⁰⁸ In turn, the penitential state of mind encouraged by flagellation left marks or scars on the body of the penitent, a permanent reminder of sin, of the will to atone, of Christ’s flagellation and suffering during the Passion.

Marks on the body inflicted in the course of following Christ were a leitmotif of Pier Francesco Fiorentino’s altarpiece. On the main panel we see the early Christian martyrs Stephen and Lawrence who suffered the wounds inflicted by stones and fire respectively, Bartholomew whose skin was separated from his body by his tormentors, Andrew who received the marks of his crucifixion, and Peter Martyr

105 Jansen, ‘Mary Magdalen and the Mendicants’, p. 4.

106 Hood, ‘Saint Dominic’s Manners of Praying’, p. 198.

107 Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, p. 168.

108 Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, pp. 205–206.

from whose head issued blood from the wound inflicted by the assassin's axe, blood which he then used to write the 'Credo' in the ground before him as he was dying. On the predella are Bartolo Buonpedoni who suffered the deformities of skin and limb which were the result of contracting leprosy; Catherine of Siena who received invisible and painful wounds in her hands, feet, and side, as well as marks from self-flagellation; Margaret of Hungary who also received wounds reflecting those suffered by Christ at the crucifixion; and Fina of San Gimignano whose flesh had partially rotted away. On the pilasters: Saint Francis was shown with the stigmata and Saint Jerome beat his own breast with a rock causing blood to flow.

Many altarpieces showed just such a selection of martyrs and others who suffered for Christ and whose bodies bore witness to this suffering. Yet, just as with Fra Angelico's *Fiesole Altarpiece*, when this altarpiece is considered within the context of Dominican stigmatic spirituality the emphasis on bodily suffering in imitation of Christ becomes more focused. Saints Catherine of Siena and Margaret of Hungary are placed to either side of the three Christological scenes in the centre of the predella. Saint Margaret, to the right, is shown receiving the stigmata, whilst Saint Catherine, to the left, is shown standing in an urban setting. Five golden rays, emanating from a golden-winged seraph, pierce Margaret's hands, feet, and right side (or we assume they do, since we cannot see where the lower two rays hit her body). Hovering at her shoulder is a tiny figure of Christ on the cross. This may refer to the legend of her stigmatization found in some manuscripts of the fourteenth-century *Specchio delle anime semplici* (*Mirror of Simple Souls*).¹⁰⁹ Catherine is not represented with visible stigmata, perhaps in deference to the bulls promulgated in the 1470s by Sixtus IV, which I discuss in Chapter 5.¹¹⁰ Her status, however, is made clear by her pairing with Margaret. As we have seen, Caffarini had argued against Margaret of Hungary as a stigmatic in the *Libellus de Supplemento*, but although he said that he had removed images showing her as such, he also admitted that some sources did claim that she had received stigmata.

The wide definition of stigmata espoused by Caffarini may help to shed light on some of the choices made in Lorenzo di Bartolo's commission. It is possible that a significant number of copies of the *Libellus* were made and circulated in the fifteenth century, even though only those in Siena and Bologna have survived.¹¹¹ The manuscript now in the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati in Siena was kept in the Dominican convent of San Domenico di Camporegio until 1785, the date of the suppression of the convent, although the date at which it arrived in Siena is

109 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princes*, pp. 376–377.

110 *Bullarium Franciscanum*, documents 331 (6 September 1472), 758 (6 July 1475), 769 (25 July 1475), 838 (5 February 1476), 1064 (10 April 1478), 1106 (3 October 1478), 1342 (19 October 1480).

111 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. liv. See also Moerer, 'The Visual Hagiography of a Stigmatic Saint', pp. 89–102.

unknown.¹¹² The other manuscript may have arrived in Bologna by the end of the fifteenth century.¹¹³ The convent of the Santissima Annunziata in San Gimignano had strong links with both San Domenico in Camporegio in Siena and San Domenico in Bologna. At the time of its foundation, the nearest Dominican convent was that of San Domenico in Camporegio and many of the early priors came from the Sienese convent, such as Giovanni of San Gimignano who became prior of the Santissima Annunziata in 1329 having previously been prior of San Domenico in Camporegio.¹¹⁴ Dominicans from other convents also came to San Gimignano and would have brought current ideas and discussions with them as well as a knowledge of some of the manuscripts held in their convent libraries. In the last quarter of the fifteenth century members of the Dominican Order frequently preached in the Collegiata during Lent. Some of these friars came from Bologna.¹¹⁵ The proximity of the Sienese convent of Camporegio and the preaching links with the Dominicans of Bologna in the 1470s and 1480s provided two potential conduits for knowledge of Caffarini's *Libellus* and/or the discussion about the potential definitions of stigmata contained within it.

If Caffarini's definitions of stigmata were followed, then Stephen, Bartholomew, and Lawrence joined the ranks of the stigmatics on the altarpiece, as did Fina of San Gimignano, Bartolo Buonpedoni, Jerome and Peter Martyr. All had marks on their bodies that could be directly associated with their faith. According to her legend, written by the Dominican Giovanni di Coppo at the beginning of the fourteenth century, Fina had lain for six years on an oak board unable even to turn from one side to the other. Due to this the flesh on one side of her body had begun to rot.¹¹⁶ Thus, by Caffarini's definition, her Christian suffering left marks – stigmata – on her body. Bartolo Buonpedoni, originally from San Gimignano, had suffered for the last twenty years of his life from leprosy.¹¹⁷ His life was written by an Augustinian, Fra Giunta, at the beginning of the fourteenth century and a Tuscan translation was published in Florence in 1575.¹¹⁸ Fra Giunta related that Bartolo had been considering taking the Benedictine habit at the monastery of San Vito in Pisa when, whilst sleeping, he received a vision of Christ who appeared to him naked, wounded, whipped over all his body, full of bruises and beatings, and with a whip in his hand. Christ told Bartolo that the crown prepared for him in the eternal life would be achieved not through the monastic habit but through the beatings,

112 Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. xvi.

113 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. lix–lxi.

114 Mulcahey, *First the Bow is Bent in Study ...: Dominican Education*, pp. 429–430.

115 Verde, "'Et andando a San Gimignano a predicarvi': La predicazione del Savonarola", pp. 27–29.

116 *Acta Sanctorum*, March 12, Vol. 2, p. 233; Giovanni di Coppo, *The Legend of the Holy Fina*, p. 11.

117 Pratesi, 'Bartolo da San Gimignano', cols 845–848.

118 Fra Giunta, *La historia, vita, et morte*.

wounds and ulcers which he would suffer for the love of Christ for twenty years. The advice of the abbot of San Vito to Bartolo was that it was Christ's nature always to flagellate his elect.¹¹⁹ After contracting leprosy Bartolo moved to the leper hospital at Cellole, a little over a mile away from San Gimignano. His suffering was extreme:

We may with reason say that he [Bartolo] was another Job; it was painful to see him wounded from his feet right up to the top of his head with ulcers, in which he always felt a biting pain because of the multitude of certain white worms which, in the shape of ants, continually came out of the ulcers. Furthermore, all of his nails, both in his hands and his feet, fell off; his skin fell off; in a short time he became blind and his nose fell off; but he never felt sorry for himself [...].¹²⁰

Jerome, second from the top on the right pilaster, complemented Francis of Assisi on the left pilaster. His cardinal's hat lying at his feet, the partially clad saint has beaten himself bloody with a stone held in his right hand. In his devotion to the Passion he has been shown suffering in imitation of Christ.¹²¹

The possible link with Caffarini's *Libellus de Supplemento*, and the parallels between Fra Angelico's *Fiesole Altarpiece* predella and the subject matter of Pier Francesco Fiorentino's painting may indicate the influence of the Dominican reform movement, which was strongly supported by Caffarini. The presence of Vincent Ferrer, canonized in 1455, on the main panel of the altarpiece in San Gimignano supports such an hypothesis: he has been characterized by William Hood as the 'Observant Dominican counterpart of his contemporary the Observant Franciscan Saint Bernardino of Siena'.¹²² His presence took on greater significance here because of the lack of Saint Dominic, mentioned only in the dedicatory inscription. During the second half of the fifteenth century the convent at San Gimignano was caught up in the changes in the Dominican Congregations triggered by the reform movement. The Santissima Annunziata had formed part of the Congregation of Lombardy but in 1496 there were plans for it to become part of the new Congregation of San Marco. Observant reform had probably already made its mark in San Gimignano a decade earlier with Girolamo Savonarola preaching in the town during Lent in both 1485 and

119 Fra Giunta, *La historia, vita, et morte*, Chapter 9.

120 Fra Giunta, *La historia, vita, et morte*, Chapter 21: 'possiamo meritamente inferire esser stato un'altro Iob, era una compassione a vederlo piagato de'piedi insino alla sommità del capo d[i] ulcere, nelle quali sempre sentiva un dolor pungitivo per la moltitudine di certi vermini biachi, quali a guisa di formiche del continuo di quelle uscivano in oltre tutte l'unghe cosi delle mani, come de'piedi di gli casorno, tutto si pelò, in breve tempo accieco il naso gli casco, ne mai si dolse [...]'.
121 The link between Jerome and stigmatic suffering can be seen in a number of Sienese paintings where the saint complements Catherine of Siena. See Pike Gordley, 'A Dominican Saint for the Benedictines', pp. 404–408.

122 Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, p. 201.

1486.¹²³ Hood has noted a tendency amongst some Dominicans from the Observant reform movement to think of themselves, their actions, and the events which affected them in terms of Christ's Passion. At the heart of the Observant movement was the return to the primitive Dominican constitutions and a greater emphasis on the example provided by Saint Dominic. As Hood has shown, one of the ways through which Dominic's example was channelled was through the text of *De modo orandi* in which Dominic focused his prayer through meditation on different elements of the Passion which, in turn, were reflected in his bodily stance during prayer.¹²⁴ There was a strong link between this way of praying and the spirituality which encouraged holy people, such as Clare of Montefalco, to equate their daily actions with parts of the Passion, and which suggested that nuns mentally transform their surroundings into the loci of Christ's suffering. Meditation on the Passion was frequently active, involving bodily movement and, often, bodily harm. Christ's Passion left marks on his body, signs of his sacrifice for mankind. Imitating, or following, Christ involved going some way towards a physical understanding of his suffering.

The *Libellus de Supplemento*, Andrea di Bartolo's *Five Dominican Beatae*, Fra Angelico's altarpiece for San Domenico in Fiesole, and Pier Francesco Fiorentino's altarpiece in San Gimignano all reflected ongoing debates about the nature of bodily suffering in imitation of Christ. The stigmatics in Fra Angelico's altarpiece in Fiesole and Pier Francesco Fiorentino's altarpiece in San Gimignano expressed the development of the debate about stigmata during the fifteenth century. They promoted the importance of a wide spectrum of experiences, miraculous and non-miraculous, which demonstrated that the subject had followed Christ and, in doing so, had experienced physical suffering. It was this active meditation on the Passion, one that merged into physical imitation and reflected the wide-ranging Dominican definitions of stigmata, that, I argue, was advocated in the altarpieces, particularly those from Fiesole and San Gimignano. The inclusion of so many holy people who could be regarded as part of a stigmatic spectrum surrounding a central wound-bearing Christ – the risen Christ in the Fiesole altarpiece and Christ as Man of Sorrows in the San Gimignano altarpiece – proposed a 'democratization' of stigmatization. Stigmata were not to be viewed as solely associated with Saint Francis. Instead different stigmatic forms of spirituality were to be viewed along a continuum. The use of visual imagery was a means of furthering a wide understanding of stigmata and of stimulating stigmatic behaviours in a virtuous circle whereby viewing and experiencing Christ's suffering were inextricably linked.

123 Gensini, 'La società sangimignese al tempo di Savonarola', p. 1; Verde, 'Girolamo Savonarola: il quaresimale di S. Gimignano'.

124 Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco*, pp. 200–206.

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5. Gregorio Lombardelli, Invisibility, and the Representation of Saint Catherine of Siena's Stigmata

Abstract

The promotion of Catherine of Siena's stigmata through their visual representation was strongly contested by the Franciscans supported, towards the end of the fifteenth century, by a pope from their own order, Sixtus IV. In response, Dominican apologists of the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries made arguments supporting images of Catherine with stigmata. This chapter concentrates on the Sieneese Dominican Gregorio Lombardelli whose views on the tasks of art were informed by discussions about the rationale for picturing the sacred and miraculous in the period following the Council of Trent. By placing Lombardelli's arguments within the context of post-Tridentine writings on art, this chapter contributes to scholarship on the plurality of discussions about the purposes of art during this period.

Keywords: Council of Trent, Gabriele Paleotti, Gregorio Lombardelli, saints' attributes, art writing

The promotion of Catherine of Siena's (d. 1380) stigmata through their representation in the visual arts was strongly contested by the Franciscans who were supported, towards the end of the fifteenth century, by a pope from their own order, Sixtus IV (1471–1484). In response, and as part of an ongoing debate, Dominican apologists of the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries made arguments designed to support images of Catherine with stigmata. This chapter concentrates on the writings of the Sieneese Dominican Gregorio Lombardelli (d. circa 1613) whose views on the tasks of art were informed by discussions about the rationale for picturing the sacred and miraculous in the period following the Council of Trent (1545–1563). By placing Lombardelli's arguments about the representation of stigmata within the context of post-Tridentine writings on art, this chapter

contributes to scholarship on the plurality of discussions about the purposes of art during this period.¹

Gregorio Lombardelli was a native of Siena who had trained as a doctor of theology and served as consultor to the Siennese Inquisition. He was also a prolific author of hagiographical literature and wrote lives of a number of Siennese holy people including the ninth-century shoemaker Blessed Sorore, reputedly the founder of the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala; Saint Galgano (d. 1180/1181); and Aldobrandesca Ponzi (d. 1309). He paid particular attention to recording the lives of those who had joined or been influenced by the Dominican Order such as Franco da Grotti (d. 1291) who, before joining the Carmelite Order, had been inspired by the preaching of the Dominican Ambrogio Sansedoni (d. 1286), and Bonaventura Tolomei (d. 1348).² Lombardelli's *De stigmatibus Divae Catherinae Senensis* (*On the Stigmata of Saint Catherine of Siena*), the unpublished manuscript of which is now in the Vatican Library (Vat. Lat. 5461), was the result of Pope Clement VIII's (1592–1605) institution of a commission of cardinals, on 27 November 1599, to make a decision on whether Saint Catherine of Siena could be painted with the stigmata.³ It was in this work that he turned to issues surrounding religious art. Lombardelli's extended argument in support of painting Catherine with stigmata in this manuscript was followed by a short vernacular version, the *Sommario della disputa a difesa delle sacre stimate di Santa Caterina da Siena* (*A Summary of the dispute in defence of the sacred stigmata of Saint Catherine of Siena*) published in Siena in 1601, which allowed Lombardelli to widen his audience to those literate only in Italian.

At the end of the sixteenth century, when Lombardelli was writing, there was a considerable and fraught history relating to Catherine's representation with stigmata. This had evolved in the nearly two centuries after Tommaso Caffarini had composed his *Libellus de Supplemento*, discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Lombardelli adhered closely to Caffarini's definition of different types of stigmata.⁴ He took care to note that, according to Caffarini, both Catherine of Siena and Francis of Assisi had received the same type of stigmata, thus claiming for Catherine the most prestigious type of

1 Since the authors on whom I focus in this chapter wrote mainly in the period after the Council of Trent I have referred to them as post-Tridentine. I have preferred this to 'Counter Reformation' as the concerns were ones that were of much longer standing. For the issues surrounding terminology, see John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That*, pp. 1–15.

2 For information on Gregorio Lombardelli see Échard and Quétif, *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum recensiti*, Vol. 2, pp. 384–385. For a list of Lombardelli's works on Siennese saints see Moreni, *Bibliografia storico-ragionata della Toscana*, Vol. 1, pp. 522–524.

3 Giunta, 'La questione delle stimmate', pp. 322–324.

4 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, pp. 63–64; and, for example, the discussion in Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 67r–68r.

miraculous wounds.⁵ Yet despite Lombardelli's reliance on Caffarini in the matter of definitions of stigmata, the two texts are significantly different, something which is evident in the development of arguments relating to the depiction of stigmatics. Whereas Caffarini had clearly said that it was not acceptable to paint Catherine with visible stigmata, although she could be shown at the moment of stigmatization, Lombardelli supported representations showing visibly in art what had been invisible in life. In order to support this view, he was led to consider and develop specific issues about the function of art and the ways in which viewers understood and interacted with it. His discussions showed a nuanced understanding of the purpose of visual images within the context of religious belief and the promotion of sanctity. It was one that drew on a sound theological training and an awareness of post-Tridentine thought but which was also part of a polemical discourse in which Lombardelli made use of stinging invective and irony. His writings demonstrate some of the ways in which Dominican supporters of Catherine justified representations in which her stigmata were shown, specifically around the issue of attributes. Embodied attributes created a highly problematic blurring of attribute versus actual bodily experience. They provided evidence of long-running crises of representation with regards to the relationship of what was known and what was seen to what was represented, thus drawing attention to the essence of art as artifice.

The decrees of the Council of Trent had dealt relatively briefly with art, stressing the pedagogical importance of religious images and the central role of the bishops in ensuring that none were allowed 'which give occasion of dangerous error to the unlettered'.⁶ The subject of images was addressed only at the very end of the third and final session of the Council, and the decree was not debated.⁷ Although 'On the invocation, veneration, and relics of saints, and on sacred images' was short, its shadow was long.⁸ Writers who dealt with images in the latter part of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century, particularly churchmen, referred to it as a basis or justification for their arguments. Their expositions on appropriate art can be seen in the context of a series of 'negotiations' prompted by a range of motivations, including the need to provide regulation and guidance, to respond to various types of image and commission, and to acknowledge the needs of distinct viewers.⁹ Each author filtered the decree through a different lens. Indeed, the

5 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, pp. 50–51; Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 114v–115r; Caffarini, *Libellus*, p. 177.

6 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, pp. 774–776.

7 John W. O'Malley, 'Trent, Sacred Images, and Catholics' Senses of the Sensuous', pp. 32, 36. Much of the material is also available in John W. O'Malley, 'Art, Trent, and Michelangelo's "Last Judgement"'.
8 John W. O'Malley, 'Trent, Sacred Images, and Catholics' Senses of the Sensuous', p. 38.

9 On 'negotiation' in Counter-Reformation scholarship, with further bibliography, see the brief discussion in Hall, 'Introduction', p. 4. See also Cochrane, 'New Light on Post-Tridentine Italy' for a call to move away

differences were such that sometimes they expressed almost diametrically opposed views, something evident in the polemic which surrounded the representation of Catherine of Siena with stigmata.

The Council of Trent's instructions made it clear that sacred images were not only permissible but important. There were proper and legitimate ways of employing images and it was the responsibility of the bishops to ensure correct usage. This included educating their congregations so that they were aware of the dangers of idolatry and understood that images represented *prototypa* (prototypes), which were to be honoured and were not deserving of adoration in and of themselves.¹⁰ It also involved the avoidance of *lascivia* (lasciviousness) and the use of appropriate decorum.¹¹ The issue of lasciviousness in painting had been the focus of writers and educators before the period of the Council, and continued to be a topic for discussion in its wake. Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) had criticized those painters who modelled a holy figure after 'a lascivious little whore'.¹² Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* (1536–1541) was criticized for excessive nudity,¹³ and churchmen such as Johannes Molanus (Jan Vermeulen, 1533–1585) railed against the use of the nude.¹⁴

Molanus's *De Picturis et Imaginibus Sacris* (*Concerning Holy Pictures and Images*), published in 1570,¹⁵ was just one in what has been described as 'a veritable explosion of treatises on art theory and reform' published in the wake of the Council of Trent.¹⁶ The authors engaged not only with the Council's decree on images but also with Protestant arguments and one another's views as they sought to establish parameters for religious art. Writers of treatises on art such as the Archbishop of Milan Federico Borromeo (d. 1631),¹⁷ the poet Gregorio Comanini (d. 1607), and the painter Gian Paolo Lomazzo (d. 1592) were all influenced, for example, by Giovanni Andrea Gilio's (d. 1584) *Dialogo secondo, ne quale si ragiona degli errori, e degli abusi de' pittori circa l'istorie* (*Dialogue on the Errors and Abuses of Painters*, 1564),¹⁸ a work

from the top-down mode of studying the Counter Reformation, which was later taken up by a number of scholars, and acknowledged in Laven, 'Legacies of the Counter Reformation', p. 453.

10 As John O'Malley has pointed out, this is something that went back to the Council of Nicaea (787). See John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council*, p. 244.

11 This was influenced by a document written for the Colloquy of Saint-Germain in 1563. See John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council*, p. 244; and, in more detail, John W. O'Malley, 'Trent, Sacred Images, and Catholics' Senses of the Sensuous'.

12 Quoted in Panofsky, 'Erasmus and the Visual Arts', p. 208.

13 John W. O'Malley, 'The Council of Trent'.

14 See, for example, Freedberg, 'Johannes Molanus on Provocative Paintings'.

15 Molanus, *De picturis et imaginibus sacris*.

16 Noyes, 'Post-Tridentine Image Reform' p. 242. In her article Ruth Noyes has provided an appendix with publication details of relevant works. See Noyes, 'Post-Tridentine Image Reform', pp. 257–261.

17 On Federico Borromeo's art patronage see Pamela M. Jones, *Federico Borromeo and the Ambrosiana*.

18 Gilio, *Dialogue on the Errors and Abuses of Painters*.

that is well-known to scholars of Michelangelo because of its assessment of his *Last Judgment*.¹⁹ Others, such as the Jesuit Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (d. 1621), in his *De Reliquiis et Imaginibus Sanctorum* (*Concerning the Relics and Images of the Saints*) specifically sought to refute the opinions of Protestant reformers such as John Calvin (1509–1564) on images.²⁰

The Council of Trent's decree on images was pertinent to depictions of those things, like Catherine's stigmata, that were invisible. It had stressed that, in teaching the uneducated:

if there are sometimes stories and narrations of the holy Scriptures pictured and represented because they are useful for the instruction of the ignorant, the people should be taught that this does not mean that the divinity can be pictured, as though it could be seen with bodily eyes, or be represented with colours or forms.²¹

The implications of this sentence in relation to a bishop's duty to instruct his flock in legitimate doctrine and belief were complex. There was a responsibility to use art to represent the lives of the saints in as accurate a fashion as possible in order to ensure correct belief. However, this was circumscribed by a number of other considerations. Federico Borromeo, in Chapter 10 of Book 2 of his *De pictura sacra* (*Sacred Painting*, 1624), said that in the case of Saint Lucy, 'no one should show exactly how the executioners dug the virgin Lucy's eyes out'.²² Such a depiction would have been distressing to the viewer. Hagiographic convention was often to refer to female saints as being beautiful because of, or made beautiful by, their faith and this was carried over into visual art. To depict Lucy as maimed by her torturers could have prevented a viewer from being 'excited to adore and love God', in the words of the Tridentine decree.²³ Borromeo went on to acknowledge that 'this means being selective with the historical truth of the account'.²⁴ Some things that departed from historical accuracy were acceptable in art in the service of decorum and the greater good.

Painters also had a duty to demonstrate aspects of faith that were intangible or invisible. In support, writers had recourse to the view that it was through images, physical and mental, that people could gain and remember knowledge.²⁵ The

19 Bury, 'Gilio on Painters of Sacred Images', pp. 8–9.

20 Viladesau, *The Triumph of the Cross*, pp. 211–215.

21 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, pp. 774–776.

22 Borromeo, *Sacred Painting*, pp. 116–117.

23 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, pp. 774–776.

24 Borromeo, *Sacred Painting*, pp. 116–117.

25 See, for example, the discussion of Robert Bellarmine's position by Viladesau, *The Triumph of the Cross*, p. 212.

Council of Trent had recognized that this necessitated that viewers were educated to engage with images without falling into errors of faith. The faithful needed to see in order to learn, but they also needed to be instructed in order to see correctly and to understand that an image was not purely or necessarily a reflection of physical appearance. It was this conundrum that Gregorio Lombardelli addressed in his defence of and justification for the representation of Catherine of Siena with stigmata.

Clement VIII's attempt to solve the issue of representing Catherine of Siena with stigmata came after a papally instigated moratorium. Although Catherine had been canonized by the Sienese Pope Pius II Piccolomini in 1461, this had not prevented continuing controversy on the issue. Pope Sixtus IV had strongly supported his brother Franciscans making it clear that Saint Francis's stigmata were unique and issuing instructions that prevented Catherine from being shown with stigmata. A bull to this effect was promulgated on 6 September 1472 with excommunication as the penalty for those who disobeyed. It was reiterated in 1475 and followed by letters to the Dominican Order in 1478 and in 1480.²⁶ The Sistine prohibitions were central to the Franciscan attempts to ensure that only Francis was accepted and represented as a stigmatic. They also demonstrated that the Order acknowledged the importance of visual art in the dissemination of knowledge and belief.

In the first bull, 'Spectat ad Romani', Sixtus IV cited the claim that Saint Catherine and other female saints were painted with stigmata in northern Europe and various other areas like Saint Francis and that there were those who preached in public that Saint Catherine received stigmata from Christ more truly than Saint Francis.²⁷ He then made the argument that if Catherine had indeed had stigmata Pius II would have mentioned this in the bull of canonization.²⁸ Sixtus went on to order that within a year all paintings showing Saint Catherine with stigmata should be removed and that no one in the future should paint the saint with stigmata.

Within three years (6 July 1475) the Pope had issued a much longer bull. It repeated the arguments and instructions of the previous bull and dealt explicitly with other 'alleged' stigmatics. Sixtus ordered that:

[N]o male or female saint, or male or female blessed should be depicted with the stigmata, or in any way in which it could be understood that s/he had [stigmata];

26 The bulls are published in *Bullarium Franciscanum*, documents 331, 758, 769, 838, 1064, 1106, 1342.

27 Quoted in Vauchez, 'Les Stigmates de Saint François et leurs détracteurs', pp. 611–612.

28 The bull of canonization was published by M.-H. Laurent in the appendix to *Il Processo Castellano*, ed. Laurent, pp. 521–530.

and no one can claim through writing, or through words, or by preaching, or through discussion, or in any other way, that any male or female saint, or male or female blessed has stigmata, except only Saint Francis.²⁹

Following representation from the Dominicans, Sixtus suspended the penalties imposed in the previous bulls but did not revoke the prohibitions contained in them. The Dominicans, under pressure from the Holy See, agreed not to preach about Catherine of Siena with stigmata or to paint her with stigmata at the general chapter of the Dominican Order in Perugia in 1478.³⁰ Evidently, however, images of Catherine with the stigmata continued to be produced. On 19 October 1480, Sixtus IV was forced to clarify the position on his previous suspension of the penalties to be imposed if anyone preached Catherine's stigmata or painted her with stigmata by saying that this did not mean that the prohibition itself had been either revoked or suspended. It has been claimed that Alexander VI (1492–1503) moderated Sixtus IV's complete ban on the painting of Catherine with stigmata.³¹ However, it was not until the seventeenth century that the matter was formally put to rest by Pope Urban VIII (1623–1644) on 22 May 1638.³²

For Lombardelli, central to his argument was a demonstration that a number of authoritative writers had accepted Catherine's stigmata. The first section in both the Latin manuscript and the Italian printed edition, therefore, was dedicated to proving the fact of Catherine's stigmata. Lombardelli listed and commented on the sources he knew where, for example, the authors had used Raymond of Capua's description of Catherine's reception of the stigmata. In the first section of the manuscript, comprising forty-seven chapters,³³ he began by demonstrating that

29 *Bullarium Franciscanum*, p. 758: '[...] statuimus et ordinamus, quod nullius sancti aut sanctae, beati aut beatae figura aliqua cum predictis Stigmatibus, aut quovis modo, quo existimari posit vel credi illum vel illam huiusmodi Stigmata habuisse, per aliquem depingi possit, nec aliquis in praedicationibus ad populum vel alias scriptura aut verbo, aliquem sanctum seu sanctam, beatum vel beatam Stigmata huiusmodi habuisse, asserere vel affirmare praesumat, praefati B. Francisci [...] figurae dumtaxat excepta'.

30 *Acta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Praedicatorum*, Vol. 3, p. 342.

31 See, for example, Pike Gordley, 'A Dominican Saint for the Benedictines', p. 398; Bianchi and Giunta, *Iconografia di Santa Caterina da Siena*, p. 80; Wegner, 'The Rise of Saint Catherine of Siena as an Intercessor', p. 177. All these sources cite other secondary sources. Alessandra Bartolomei Romagnoli has noted that Pope Alexander VI's consent was not formalized. See Bartolomei Romagnoli, 'Un trattatello cinquecentesco', p. 194.

32 See Venchi, 'Santa Caterina da Siena nel giudizio dei Papi'. This was celebrated by Francesco Buoninsegni in Buoninsegni, *Il trionfo delle stimmate di Santa Caterina da Siena*. For a good overview of the move towards official recognition see Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 183–188.

33 Although the final chapter in the first section is labelled 48, there is no Chapter 4. In the *Sommario*, Lombardelli claimed that there were 50 chapters in the first section of the manuscript, to which he made frequent reference, see Lombardelli, *Sommario*, pp. 16–17.

Catherine's stigmata were testified to in the canonization process, the *Processo Castellano*, for which witnesses gave information between 1411 and 1416. It is clear that Lombardelli had access to a manuscript of the canonization process.³⁴ There are two manuscripts of the *Processo Castellano* currently in Siena that might have been available to him: that now in San Domenico was in Venice in 1494 but had been transferred to the archives of San Domenico di Camporegio by the end of the seventeenth century, whilst that now in the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati in Siena was in the convent of Camporegio from the fifteenth century until its suppression in 1785.³⁵ It is probable that Lombardelli composed the manuscript of *De stigmatibus* in Siena; the letter addressed to the city of Siena prefacing the Vatican manuscript is dated from San Domenico di Camporegio on 2 February 1600.

After dealing with the canonization process, Lombardelli went on to show that the stigmata had been recognized by Pope Pius II, who had canonized Catherine in 1461.³⁶ Finally, and for the majority of the first section of the manuscript, he discussed a long list of those who had also recognized Catherine's stigmata. He allowed most a chapter to themselves, albeit short ones: thirty-five named authorities received individual chapters. In a number of cases the religious order to which these men belonged was clearly identified. Whilst many were Dominicans, Lombardelli took care to include those from other religious orders. They included the Dominican Saint Antoninus, Bishop of Florence (d. 1459);³⁷ Stefano Maconi (d. 1424), who became prior of the Carthusian monastery of Santa Maria Gratiis near Pavia in 1411, and who was instrumental in spreading Catherine's cult;³⁸ Tommaso Caffarini;³⁹ and the Franciscan preacher Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce (d. 1495), despite the fact that later in the manuscript Lombardelli had to deal with Roberto Caracciolo's objection to images of Catherine which included the stigmata.⁴⁰

34 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 4r–5v. On the *Processo Castellano* see Ferzoco, 'The *Processo Castellano*'; Krafft, 'Many Strategies and One Goal'.

35 For a discussion of the manuscripts of the *Processo Castellano* see *Il Processo Castellano*, ed. Laurent, pp. lxx–cii. For the manuscript now in San Domenico see *Il Processo Castellano*, ed. Laurent, pp. lxxv–lxxvi. For that now in the Biblioteca Comunale in Siena see *Il Processo Castellano*, ed. Laurent, pp. lxxxviii–xc. An abbreviated version of Laurent's discussion is provided, in Italian translation, in *Il Processo Castellano*, eds. Centi and Belloni, pp. 9–25.

36 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 6r–8r.

37 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 12v–13v. On Antoninus see Cornelison, *Art and the Relic Cult of St. Antoninus*, pp. 11–45.

38 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 13v–14v. On Stefano Maconi see Leoncini, 'Un certosino nel tardo medioevo'.

39 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 14v–16r.

40 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 21r–22r, 53r–53v.

It was in the second section of his work, in both the manuscript and the printed versions, that Lombardelli began his main discussion about the representation of Catherine with stigmata.⁴¹ In this section, he took as his starting point the work of Roberto Caracciolo who, as discussed in Chapter 3, had claimed correctly that there was no mention in the bull of her canonization of Catherine's stigmata and, also, that on the day of her canonization there was no mention of the stigmata and no images of Catherine with the stigmata were to be seen.⁴² The issue of legitimately showing the invisible was something discussed by a number of the early sources cited by Lombardelli and can be traced back to eighth-century arguments against iconoclasm.⁴³ In Chapter 2 of the second section of the *Sommario*, Lombardelli engaged with the question of what it was reasonable for the viewer to expect to see, and to understand, in an image.⁴⁴ Using a number of different comparisons, he argued that viewers did not expect to see a 're-presentation' of what those who had seen Saint Catherine during her life had observed, thus opening up the question of the relation of visual art to the depiction of knowledge and its connection to sight, raising art to a different level and necessitating an informed and inquiring mind, one equipped to use images as types of memory aids for complex ideas.⁴⁵

The pitfall for images showing Catherine with stigmata was that they were not obviously composites, such as Saint Barbara with her tower, put together to prompt the memory, but could be perceived as 'realistic' representations, blurring the distinction between something which mirrored what was visible to the eye and something which demonstrated knowledge of that which could not be seen but which was, nonetheless, real. In his *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (*Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*) published in 1582, Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597), Cardinal-Archbishop of Bologna, had noted the danger of 'life-like images, which practically catch the senses off guard and overwhelm them'.⁴⁶ Paleotti was making the point that artists had a particular responsibility since their works had the potential to change the lives of those who saw them. The power of art was such that images that could be considered to be misleading were particularly dangerous. Paleotti's work had a relatively small circulation, and Lombardelli may

41 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, pp. 30–68; Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 53r–134v.

42 Quoted in Mencherini, *Codice diplomatico della Verna*, pp. 94–95.

43 Thunø, *Image and Relic*, p. 140.

44 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, pp. 32–34.

45 This is similar to the use of complex images in the training of memory during the Middle Ages. See Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*; Bolzoni, *The Web of Images*.

46 Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, p. 121.

not have been familiar with it.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the point that images were compelling channels for religious information was one that was widely accepted. Yet images could also evade regulation.⁴⁸ Aware of this, Lombardelli stressed that they were conduits for learning, recalling to the mind knowledge already gathered, or used in the process of teaching.

The majority of the third and final part of Lombardelli's *De stigmatibus* and his *Sommario* was taken up with a refutation of the work of the Capuchin Gregorio Napoletano (Gregorio Tolosa da Napoli, d. 1601),⁴⁹ which formed part of his *Epitome di Privilegii estratto dal Compendio di Privilegii della Religione di San Francesco* (*Summary of Privileges taken from the Compendium of Privileges of the Order of Saint Francis*) published in 1594.⁵⁰ It was for Gregorio Napoletano and Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce that Lombardelli reserved his greatest disdain, and, of the two, it was Gregorio Napoletano who was at the receiving end of the most stinging invective.⁵¹ Napoletano was a near contemporary of Lombardelli. His birth date is unknown, as is the date of his entry into the Capuchin Order, but it is certain that he was a friar by 1570 and his date of death was recorded as 26 October 1601.⁵² Lombardelli may have found it difficult to maintain sufficient distance when writing about Napoletano's recently published claims. He replied to a short section of printed text in the *Epitome* with much larger sections of the Vatican manuscript (folios 136r–199r) and his *Sommario* (pages 70–103). In the shorter *Sommario* he toned down his denunciations slightly but still made the point that everyone to whom he had shown the arguments in the *Epitome* was nauseated and angered by its contents.⁵³ He went on to quote from Napoletano in order to then refute each section of the work quoted.

Lombardelli sought to make clear why he found some of Gregorio Napoletano's opinions so incendiary by stressing that the Capuchin had departed from fact- and document-based arguments and had turned to ones that imputed the direct intervention of the devil. Napoletano claimed that the devil, because he was jealous of Saint Francis, had sown the seeds of dissent and, working through a number of women, had persuaded them to lie, claiming that they had received visible stigmata,

47 The circulation of Paleotti's work, both in Italian and in Latin, has been discussed in Noyes, 'Post-Tridentine Image Reform', pp. 246–248.

48 Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, p. 141.

49 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, pp. 69–103; Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 136r–179v.

50 Napoletano, *Epitome di privilegii*, pp. 103–105.

51 For a brief discussion see Mouchel, *Les Femmes de douleur*, pp. 84–85.

52 On Gregorio Napoletano see Pietro Zarrella's introduction in Napoletano, *Insedimenti cappuccini in Napoli*, pp. 13–24.

53 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 70: 'e tutti si stomacarono a leggere, e si provocarono ad ira [...]'. See also Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 136v–137r.

like those of Saint Francis.⁵⁴ According to Napoletano, the devil had persuaded Sixtus IV to suspend the penalties for painting Saint Catherine with the stigmata, thus clearing the way for more visual images.⁵⁵ In return Lombardelli labelled his adversary mendacious. One chapter in his Vatican manuscript was titled: 'A monstrous lie of the Capuchin laid bare'.⁵⁶ He was also quick to impugn Napoletano's scholarship and his understanding of the issues. Napoletano had cited the Council of Trent to which Lombardelli responded by claiming that he had not understood or interpreted the decisions of the Council correctly.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Lombardelli continued, it could not be said that images showing Catherine with the stigmata were *insolita* (unusual) since Catherine had been shown with stigmata in visual art from the time of her death until the point at which Lombardelli was writing.⁵⁸ The recourse to Trent was an attempt to demonstrate that he had conciliar decree on his side. By making reference to the Council, he positioned his writings within the range of texts published by churchmen during this period that had attempted to expand on what the decree 'On the invocation, veneration, and relics of saints, and on sacred images' meant for religious art. Importantly for Lombardelli, the decree had referred to the representation of those things that could not be seen by the human eye.

Franciscan authors such as Gregorio Napoletano were not under the same pressures experienced by Dominican apologists forced to engage with questions about the representation of the invisible in art. This was evident in more measured publications than Napoletano's *Epitome*. Part of Antonio Daza's (d. 1640) *Descrizione delle stimmate del nostro serafico padre San Francesco (Description of the Stigmata of our Seraphic Father Saint Francis)*, published in Florence in 1621, having originally been written in Spanish and published in 1617, specifically interrogated the representation of Catherine with stigmata from the Franciscan viewpoint.⁵⁹ Daza, a Franciscan Observant, used sections of his book as an opportunity to reply to Lombardelli. He claimed to have been open to the Dominican arguments for representing Catherine with stigmata, citing the Spanish Dominican Vincente Justiniano Antist's (d. 1599) argument in his *Pro Divae Caterinae Senensis imaginibus*

54 Napoletano, *Epitome di privilegii*, p. 104; Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 70.

55 Napoletano, *Epitome di privilegii*, p. 104. Referred to by Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folio 177v; Lombardelli, *Sommario*, pp. 72–74.

56 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folio 181v: 'Insanum Capuccini mendacium detegitur'.

57 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folio 190v; Lombardelli, *Sommario*, pp. 95–96.

58 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folio 191r; Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 96.

59 Daza, *Descrizione delle stimmate*; Daza, *Historia de las llagas*.

disputatio (*A Debate in Favour of Images of Saint Catherine of Siena*), composed in 1583.⁶⁰ Antist, who had taught theology in Valencia, had claimed that it was not possible to teach the faithful about Catherine's invisible stigmata without showing the stigmata visually and had used the example of angels, who do not have a bodily presence but yet were represented as having bodies.⁶¹ Lombardelli used Antist's work for both the Latin manuscript and printed Italian versions of his arguments in favour of Catherine being shown with stigmata. Rather than engaging in personalized diatribes, Daza side-stepped the arguments and instead focused on the necessity of obeying papal instructions in the shape of the bulls promulgated by Pope Sixtus IV, which forbade anyone except Saint Francis from being represented with the stigmata. On this basis he refuted Antist's claims that showing Catherine's stigmata as rays of light to express the pain that Catherine suffered, without implying that she had physical, and visible, bleeding wounds, was acceptable.⁶²

Debates about the representation of the invisible demonstrated the importance of visual images as a part of religious experience and were entered into by Lombardelli in Chapter 5 of the third section of his manuscript.⁶³ Lombardelli argued that to paint Saint Catherine with stigmata was to express through visual art that she had invisible stigmata. With heavy-handed sarcasm, he claimed that this was something which the whole Christian world could understand, with the notable exception of Gregorio Napoletano.⁶⁴ This demonstrated the strength of feeling surrounding representations of Catherine showing her stigmata. However, it was in his arguments about the representation of the invisible that Lombardelli contributed to discussions about the purpose of sacred art. Even if it was accepted that Catherine had received sensations of extreme pain in her hands, feet, and side, it could still be objected that it was not possible to show the stigmata in the visual arts in such a way as to avoid any misunderstanding, since those who saw Catherine during her lifetime did not see any physical evidence and it was, indeed, accepted by Dominican writers that Catherine's stigmata had remained invisible during her lifetime. Yet without representations of the stigmata, it could be argued that they did not exist and that the miracle had not occurred. Such issues were closely bound into questions of seeing and knowing. Painting the stigmata was a necessary demonstration of art

60 Vincente Justiniano Antist's work, *Pro Divae Caterinae Senensis imaginibus disputatio*, was published in Valencia in 1597 and in Antwerp in 1611. I will refer to the 1611 edition. A version translated and expanded by Serafino Razzi in 1596 has been published in Bartolomei Romagnoli, 'Un trattatello cinquecentesco'. On Antist see Bartolomei Romagnoli, 'Un trattatello cinquecentesco', pp. 179–180.

61 Antist, *Pro Divae Caterinae Senensis imaginibus disputatio*, p. 448.

62 Daza, *Descrizione delle stimmate*, pp. 188–189.

63 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folio 139r.

64 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 140v–141r.

as artifice revealing a larger truth in the service of religion. It was crucial to give Catherine's stigmata visible form in order to share the knowledge she embodied with those who would otherwise be without it or would not believe. Seeing was a biblically acknowledged route to belief and one which was open to the many rather than the implicitly few who 'have not seen and yet have believed' (John 20:29).⁶⁵ It had not been possible to see Catherine of Siena's stigmata on her body during her lifetime yet, for Lombardelli and other Dominicans, it was necessary to instantiate them in painting in order both to demonstrate and to promote belief in their existence.

Lombardelli used a number of strategies to prove that it was acceptable to paint Catherine with visible stigmata. In the first instance, he resorted to an argument based on custom and practice. Near the end of the first part of the Vatican manuscript, in Chapter 47, Lombardelli claimed that:

All printers, painters, sculptors, engravers, modellers, and other craftsmen of that sort, express and represent those same stigmata through their works, to the approbation of the people, so that if one were to do anything else they would reckon it [the representation] a monster. Hence, where you should choose throughout the power of the people, you might see, you might wonder at things which have been struck, painted, sculpted, engraved, on paper, marble, wood, wax, brimstone, clay, gypsum, alum, ivory, silver, gold, copper, brass, tin, lead, glass, and every kind of matter inside and outside churches, on altars, on columns, in the vaults, in paintings, on holy vestments, on holy pyxes, on coins, on rings, which I know [of]! I would run out of time, if I were to chase down all of these things; neither the hand nor the pen would suffice.⁶⁶

In this short section, Lombardelli employed a similar strategy to the one that he had used when listing authorities who, he claimed, had supported the existence of Catherine's stigmata in their writing. However, rather than citing specific artists, he listed different media thus drawing attention to the multi-sensory nature of

65 See the discussion in Most, *Doubting Thomas*, pp. 3–7, 31–34.

66 Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 46v–47r: 'Omnes typographi, pictores, sculptores, coelatores, plastae, atq[ue] id genus artifices alij eadem stigmata suis operibus exprimunt, ac representant, eo Populorum plausu, ut, si quis aliter faciat, monstrum putent hinc ubi vis gentium passim legas, videas, admirere cusa, picta, insculpta, coelata, chartis, marmore, ligno, cera, sulphure, creta, gypso, alumine, ebore, argento, auro, aurichalco, aere, stanno, plumbo, vitro, omni demum materia, intra, et extra templa, in altaribus, super columnas, in fornicibus, in tabulis, in sacris vestibus, in sacris pixidibus, in numis, in annulis, quid ego scio! Dies me deficiat, si omnia eiusmodi persequar; nec manus, nec calamus sufficiat'. I am grateful to Dr. Edward Wouk for his advice on this text.



47. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (il Sodoma), *Swooning of Saint Catherine of Siena after the Stigmatization*, 1526, fresco, Chapel of Saint Catherine, San Domenico, Siena.

Christian art. Catherine's stigmata were visualized through precious shining metals and through different processes resulting in images in relief and on flat surfaces. By stressing the different techniques used, Lombardelli showed both that representations of Catherine with the stigmata were widely accepted and called attention to the range of possibilities in their visualization.

In the Italian *Sommario*, Lombardelli mentioned specific images:

[I]mmmediately after her death, Saint Catherine was painted with the stigmata; and in our church of San Domenico di Camporegio in Siena, one can find her painted like this, in the [following] years: 1392, 1426, 1475, 1492, 1508, and 1526, and in more recent times; and above the choir of the aforementioned church there is a very old wooden statue [which shows her] stigmatized, about which there is no knowledge about when it was done; but one believes [that it was executed] immediately after her death, since she is in the habit which she wore when she was alive [...].⁶⁷

It is very difficult to be clear about the images to which Lombardelli referred. The details, although they included specific dates and locations, may not have been accurate. There was no mention of the artists, and little in the way of description. However, it is possible to attempt an identification for an image painted in 1526. This is the date when il Sodoma (Antonio Bazzi, d. 1549) painted frescoes for the Chapel of Saint Catherine in San Domenico, which had been constructed between 1466 and 1475.⁶⁸ The *Swooning of Saint Catherine of Siena after the Stigmatization* (fig. 47) and the *Vision of Saint Catherine of Siena after the Stigmatization* (fig. 48) were placed to either side of the fifteenth-century marble tabernacle containing Catherine's head in a silver reliquary.⁶⁹ Both images show Catherine with rays emanating from the bloody wounds on her hands and it is this latter aspect of them that was of importance for Lombardelli as he sought to legitimize representations of Catherine that included the stigmata. More than golden rays, wounds demonstrated the reality of the stigmata and made it clear that they were the equal of those of Saint Francis. Blood is also a central aspect of another fresco in the chapel placed on the wall to the left of the altar, the *Execution of Niccolò di Tuldo* (fig. 49). Niccolò, a political prisoner from Perugia, was probably executed in 1375, his head

67 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 80: '[...] a pena era morta S. Caterina, che si dipigneva con le Stimata; e nella Chiesa nostra di S. Domenico di Camporeggi di Siena, si trova così dipinta, l'Anno 1392. 1426. 1475. 1492. 1508. e 1526. e ne' più vicini tempi; e sopra il Coro di detta Chiesa v'è in statua di legno stimatizata antichissima, che non si trova memoria, quando fusse fatta; ma si crede, doppo la morte subito, per essere nell'Abito, che vivendo portava [...]']

68 On the date of the chapel see Parsons, *The Cult of Saint Catherine of Siena*, p. 29.

69 Hayum, *Giovanni Antonio Bazzi*, pp. 196–201.



48. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (il Sodoma), *Vision of Saint Catherine of Siena after the Stigmatization*, 1526, fresco, Chapel of Saint Catherine, San Domenico, Siena.



49. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (il Sodoma), *The Execution of Niccolò di Tuldo*, 1526, fresco, Chapel of Saint Catherine, San Domenico, Siena.

falling into Catherine's hands and his blood staining her clothes.⁷⁰ In the fresco, Catherine, with the stigmata clearly visible on her right hand, is placed to the left of the composition. The centre is taken up by the decapitated body of Niccolò. His

70 On Niccolò di Tuldo (or Toldo) see Luongo, *The Saintly Politics of Catherine of Siena*, pp. 92–99.

neck, blood pooling on the ground below it, confronts the viewer whilst his head, also dripping blood, is held up above his body by a figure dressed in white. The emphasis on Niccolò's blood serves to remind the viewer of Catherine's stigmata and, in turn, Christ's crucifixion.⁷¹ Thus Niccolò's head, Catherine's head, and the blood of martyrdom were linked in the design of the chapel.⁷²

Lombardelli clearly intended to demonstrate precedent; a two-hundred-year tradition of representing Catherine with stigmata could not easily be overturned. However, this alone was not sufficient. He also needed to be certain that he had fully demonstrated the rationale for visualizing the invisible. In the *Sommario*, he stated that the Dominicans:

wanted her [Catherine] to be depicted with them [the stigmata] in order to express the pain which she felt, and in order to show that, if indeed the wounds were not seen by everyone, it does not follow on account of this that she did not have the wounds; because Balaam did not see the angel, and yet the angel was there, and the ass saw the angel.⁷³

In drawing analogy with the biblical story of Balaam and the angel, Lombardelli sought to show not only that the invisible existed but also that the invisible could be seen. He attempted to show a similarity between the fact that Balaam could not at first see the angel of the Lord (Numbers 22:21–39) and the fact that Catherine's 'wounds were not seen by everyone'. The comparison was somewhat forced since no one had seen Catherine's stigmata during her lifetime. It was only after her death that it was claimed that the stigmata in one of her hands and in her left foot had become visible.

In the *Sommario*, Lombardelli went on to cite the argument that pictures aided the memory of the literate and the teaching of the illiterate. He argued that:

[P]ainting is a book for the learned because through painting they may recall what they have read, and for the uneducated because they may learn through it that which they do not know how to read in books [...].⁷⁴

71 Rattazi Papka, 'The Written Woman Writes', p. 139.

72 See the discussions in Smith, 'Queer Fragments'; Webb, "'The Lake of my Heart": Blood, Containment', pp. 35–39.

73 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 31: 'voglion, che si dipinga con esse, ad esprimere il dolor, ch'Ella sentiva, & a manifestar, che, se bene non eran da tutti vedute le Piaghe, non per questo vale la conseguenza, adunque non haveva la Piaghe; perche Balaam non vedeva l'Angelo, e pur v'era l'Angelo, e lo vedeva il Somaro'. Caffarini had also dealt with the issue of painful invisible stigmata but had not gone on to link this into any argument about their representation. See 'Caffarini', *Libellus*, p. 147.

74 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 32: 'essendo la pittura un libro de i Dotti, acciò per essa si ricordin di quel, che hanno letto: e de gli Ignoranti, acciò in essa imparino quel, che no[n] sanno legger ne i libri [...]'.

The comparison between books and pictures was a commonplace in the justifications for religious art.⁷⁵ Writers such as Bede (d. 735)⁷⁶ and Saint Bonaventure (d. 1274),⁷⁷ both cited by Lombardelli, had addressed the issue of painting as an aid to memory but had not explicitly linked this to the ways in which the educated used painting. Nonetheless, Lombardelli went on to ascribe this view, with greater or lesser accuracy, to a long list of individuals and councils, as would have been expected in order to substantiate his argument. These included John of Damascus (d. circa 750) and Saint Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274). Thomas Aquinas's *Scriptum super sententiis magistri Petri Lombardi* (*Commentaries on the 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard*) were likely to have formed part of Lombardelli's formal Dominican education.⁷⁸ John of Damascus's treatises *On the Divine Images* were the subject of renewed interest when Lombardelli was writing, with nine editions published during the sixteenth century.⁷⁹ However, it is likely that he was referring to John of Damascus's *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, which dealt with the arguments for allowing images in Chapter 15 of Book 4 ('Concerning Images'), since this source was specifically mentioned by some of the sixteenth-century writers to whom Lombardelli referred.⁸⁰

Amongst more recent sources cited by Lombardelli were a number of Dominicans including Giovanni Cagnazzi da Taggia (d. 1521),⁸¹ Silvestro da Prierio (d. 1527),⁸² and Bartolomeo Fumo (d. 1545).⁸³ Lombardelli's sixteenth-century sources were notably Dominican, and Spanish or Italian, including his fellow Sienese Constantino Ghini author of *Dell'immagini sacre* (*On Holy Images*), published in 1595. There were exceptions, such as the inclusion of the Spanish Franciscan theologian Alfonso de Castro (d. 1558)⁸⁴ and the exclusion of Ambrosius Catharinus, born Lancelotto

75 See the discussion in Duggan, 'Was Art Really the "Book of the Illiterate"?'.

76 Bede, *Opera historica*, Vol. 2, pp. 405–407. For a discussion of Bede see Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians*, pp. 111–116.

77 Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, Vol. 3, pp. 203–204.

78 Lombardelli described himself as a master of theology on the title page of the *Sommario*. William Hinnebusch has discussed the evolution of the curriculum for degrees in theology. See Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order*, Vol. 2, pp. 58–71.

79 Louth, *St John Damascene*, pp. 198–199.

80 See, for example, Ghini, *Dell'immagini sacre*, pp. 78–79; John of Damascus, 'Exposition of the Orthodox Faith', p. 88.

81 On Giovanni Cagnazzi da Taggia see Échard and Quétif, *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum recensiti*, Vol. 2, p. 47.

82 Lombardelli was probably referring to Silvestro Mazzolino [da Prierio], *Summa Summarium*, pp. 327–328. On Silvestro Mazzolino da Prierio see Tavuzzi, *Prierias: The Life and Works*.

83 Fumo, *Summa casuum conscientiae*. On Bartolomeo Fumo see Échard and Quétif, *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum recensiti*, Vol. 2, p. 123.

84 Alfonso de Castro, *Adversus omnes haereses*. For the section on images see Book 8, Chapters 138–139. On Alfonso de Castro see Olarte, *Alfonso de Castro*.

Politi (d. 1553), a fellow Dominican and native of Siena who had contributed to the first round of Counter-Reformation publications supporting religious art.⁸⁵ Lombardelli, as a rule, did not cite those authors who had produced the first works of the Counter Reformation defending religious images such as Nicholas Hartsfield or Nicholas Sanders,⁸⁶ nor did he cite those who had used these publications in their own, later, publications on images, such as Johannes Molanus.⁸⁷ However, the similarity of Lombardelli's concerns to those of other churchmen who wrote on art during this period was indicative of widespread discussion about certain aspects of the purposes of art during this period.

The roll call of theologians in the *Sommario* occasioned by the argument that pictures were the books of the uneducated, as well as of the educated, ended with a further extrapolation that:

just as in books one reads things that teach the invisible through the visible; just so the visible wounds of Saint Catherine, in images, teach [about] the invisible [wounds] which she carried whilst alive; and therefore it is no error to paint her with the stigmata.⁸⁸

Lombardelli recognized the need to move beyond the idea that images were the books of the illiterate in the sense that they showed events that happened just as, for example, the gospels described them, in order to argue that images could also function in a very different way by making visible an invisible truth.

An important part of this argument was the issue of time, as discussed in relation to Giovanni di Paolo's painting of the *Stigmatization of Saint Catherine* in Chapter 3. Lombardelli touched on this when he questioned:

Why is it an error to paint Saint Catherine with visible wounds, which may represent invisible [wounds], or indeed may represent visible [wounds], which now in the aforementioned foot and hand can still be seen?⁸⁹

85 Catharinus, *De certa gloria invocatione ac veneratione sanctorum*. On Lancelotto Politi see Échard and Quétif, *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum recensiti*, Vol. 2, p. 144.

86 Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy*, p. 107.

87 Molanus, *De picturis et imaginibus sacris*.

88 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 32: 'come ne i libri, si leggono le cose, che insegnano l'invisibili per le visibili; così le visibil Piaghe di S. Caterina, nelle pitture, insegnano l'invisibili, che portò vivendo: e però, non è error nessuno a dipingerla con le Stimate'.

89 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, pp. 33–34: 'perche è errore il dipigner S. Caterina con le visibili Piaghe, le quali rappresentino l'invisibili, ò vero che rappresentino le visibili, che ora in detto piede, e mano si vedon tuttavia?'

He referred here to the relics of Saint Catherine. As already mentioned, the stigmata became visible, at least partially, after Catherine's death and Lombardelli, therefore, used sight as evidential proof.⁹⁰ He recounted that on 10 June 1600, having gone to Rome, he touched the hand of Saint Catherine:

I saw, touched, looked at, and looked again at the aforementioned most holy hand, kept in that monastery; and I saw sculpted, clear, and beautiful the aforementioned stigmata, and wound [...].⁹¹

To assume that viewers cannot make a distinction between what can be seen with the eye at a single point in time and what is known to exist and must therefore be represented was, according to Lombardelli, incorrect and, moreover, insultingly simplistic. He made this clear in the opening sentences of Chapter 2 of Section 2 of the *Sommario*, which explicitly countered the opinions of Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce:

No one, with any common sense, and in their right mind, will make the mistake of maintaining, as Roberto tacitly implies, when they see an image of Saint Catherine with visible stigmata that it affirms that she received them in visible form, just as no one is deceived when they see the divine persons, the Father in the form of an old man; the Son crucified on the cross, or flagellated at the column, or crowned with thorns; or the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, or a cloud, or fire, or of tongues; because no-one would dare to say that the Holy Trinity appear thus in glory.⁹²

For Lombardelli, Catherine's stigmata were her attribute and, as such, they did not obey any strictures about the co-occurrence of time, place or sight. They were the means through which she had suffered with and for Christ, just as earlier martyrs had suffered for Christ through torture on the wheel or martyrdom on the grid-iron. The depiction of the attributes of the saints was something that exercised other post-Tridentine writers on art such as Borromeo and Paleotti. It was a complex issue because standing saints with attributes were outside the parameters of

90 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 51. About the stigmata, Lombardelli wrote: '... nella morte furono vedute, e toccate; si come infin' oggi con mano si tocca, e si vede co[n] gli occhi questa verità'.

91 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 52: '[...] viddi, toccai, guardai, e riguardai la predetta santissima Mano, serbata in quel Monasterio; e viddi scolpita, chiara, e bella la prefata Stimata, e Piaga [...]'].

92 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 32: 'Nessuno, che sia di giudizio, e di mente sana, piglierà mai errore, come tacitamente inserisce Roberto, mentre vede l'immagine di S. Caterina con le Stimata visibili, si ch'affermi, che visibilme[n]te le ricevesse, come non lo prende chi vede dipinte le Persone Divine, il Padre in forma di Vecchio; il Figlio in Croce co[n]fitto, ò alla Colonna Flagellato, ò Incoronato di Spine; ò lo Spirito Santo in forma di Colomba, du Nube, di Fuoco, ò di Lingue; poiche nessuno ardisce dir, che così in Gloria sia la Trinità Santissima'.

narrative art and this made the post-Tridentine emphasis on ‘historical accuracy’ difficult to implement. Paleotti did not question the representation of attributes as thoroughly as Borromeo was to do, but he did note in Chapter 29 of Book 2 of his *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (*Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*), ‘On imperfect pictures’, that a picture of a martyr or confessor without his or her ‘customary attributes’ would be ‘imperfect’.⁹³ The reason for this was that the attributes identified the saints but, more importantly, they showed how each saint had attained heavenly glory and triumphed over worldly temptations.⁹⁴

Federico Borromeo used several examples, including that of the early Christian martyr Lucy where her eyes, which had been gouged out, were duplicated. His opinion in Chapter 10 of Book 2 (‘In which various knotty problems concerning portraits of the saints are solved’) of his *Sacred Painting* touched on issues regarding the impossibility of temporal isolation in painting. Although Borromeo did not agree with representations of Lucy with her eyes in her hands or presented on a platter, he raised the question of whether when she was shown thus she should have ‘her eyelids closed or with the eye sockets open and maimed by the executioners’.⁹⁵ His opinion was that the eye sockets should not be shown. Although the stated alternative was to show the saint with her eyelids closed meaning that the eyeballs could be seen only once, paintings of Saint Lucy often showed her with undamaged open eyes as well as her eyes on a plate. Borromeo argued that Saint Lucy’s eyes were not symbolic attributes of her martyrdom and were thus different to the grid-iron of Saint Lawrence or the arrows of Saint Sebastian. Lucy had not died because her eyes were removed but by the sword. The grid-iron was the means through which Lawrence had been martyred. However, Sebastian had not died because of the arrows but because he was beaten to death and his body thrown into a sewer. It is possible that Borromeo objected to the use of the eyes as Lucy’s symbol of martyrdom because he was aware that this had been a late addition to her legend and that this was what he referred to when he said that there was no ‘tradition of depicting her with her eyes held in her hands’.⁹⁶ Another explanation would be that he was uncomfortable with Lucy being shown with four eyes. Unlike his other examples – Lawrence, Sebastian, Peter Martyr – when Lucy was depicted holding her eyes there was a very obvious time disconnection. Borromeo was, perhaps, ill at ease with something that clearly opposed normal rules of temporality within the body of one person, in some respects a similar issue to the one with which Lombardelli had grappled in his defence of the representation of Catherine of Siena with visible stigmata.

93 Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, pp. 232–234.

94 Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, p. 232.

95 Borromeo, *Sacred Painting*, pp. 116–117.

96 Borromeo, *Sacred Painting*, pp. 116–117.

Yet, in the same chapter, Borromeo argued that:

It does not violate historical accuracy to show saints with their attributes, even if those attributes only arose from the nature of their martyrdom and the final hour of their lives.⁹⁷

He used the example of Saint Peter Martyr, the Dominican inquisitor killed by heretics in 1252 as he was travelling from Como to Milan and acclaimed, by some, as a stigmatic.⁹⁸ His assassin had attacked Peter by striking his head with an axe. When Peter was shown outside a narrative context he was frequently depicted with an axe or large scimitar-like knife embedded in his head. He was painted like this by Carlo Crivelli in the *Ascoli-Piceno Altarpiece* (circa 1476) now in the National Gallery, London (fig. 50),⁹⁹ and by Cima da Conegliano in his *Saint Peter Martyr with Saints Nicholas and Benedict* (1505–1506) now in the Brera, Milan (fig. 51).¹⁰⁰ Borromeo stated that ‘it will not violate historical accuracy if the sword is shown thrust into his [Peter Martyr’s] head’.¹⁰¹ Cima da Conegliano’s painting in the Brera shows the saint at the centre of the altarpiece standing on a plinth, holding a martyr’s palm in his left hand and pointing towards the heavens with the forefinger of his right hand. The gesture was one that was intended to draw the viewer’s attention towards heaven, but it was also one that was redolent of the preaching for which Peter was famous.¹⁰² Contained within this representation were references to Peter’s martyrdom, to his status as a saint and as a Dominican friar, and to his preaching. All of these were accurate, but represented together they did not reflect Peter’s visual appearance at a particular moment in time.

However, the example of Saint Peter Martyr is also different from that of Catherine of Siena. When the saint is shown with an axe or sword embedded in his head the viewer is primed to question this as a depiction of how he appeared in life and thus to consider these items as attributes referring to his martyrdom. The issue of the representation of an attribute, which was often dependent on an aspect of a saint’s life or means of death, as opposed to the physical appearance of a saint during their life is problematized in the figure of Catherine. Paintings of Peter Martyr where he is shown with a large wound across the top of his head, such as that by Bartolomeo Bulgarini (d. 1378) from his *San Gimignano Polyptych*, form a

97 Borromeo, *Sacred Painting*, p. 121.

98 See the discussion in Chapter 4.

99 On the *Ascoli-Piceno Altarpiece* see Lightbown, *Carlo Crivelli*, pp. 217–225.

100 See Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, pp. 121–122.

101 Borromeo, *Sacred Painting*, pp. 120–121.

102 On gestures used in sermons see Berardini, ‘Discovering Performance Indicators in Late Medieval Sermons’.



50. Carlo Crivelli, *Saint Peter Martyr*, detail from the *Ascoli-Piceno Altarpiece*, circa 1476, tempera on poplar, 90.5 x 26.5 cm, National Gallery, London, NG788.13.



51. Cima da Conegliano, *Saint Peter Martyr with Saints Nicholas and Benedict*, 1505–1506, oil on wood, 330 x 216 cm, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, inv. 177.



52. Bartolomeo Bulgarini, *Saint Peter Martyr*, detail of the *San Gimignano Polyptych*, circa 1353–1355, tempera on panel, Asciano, Salini Collection.

closer analogy (fig. 52) but without the important issue of the invisible since Peter was wounded by a mortal assailant and blood physically ran from his head for his companion and assassins to see.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ For the polyptych, see Steinhoff, 'A Trecento Altarpiece Rediscovered'. Since Steinhoff published her article, the polyptych has moved to the Collezione Salini, Asciano. See Bellosi, ed., *La collezione Salini*, pp. 104–113.

Lombardelli's discussion of the representation of saints with their symbols – Peter with his keys, John the Evangelist with the chalice and serpent, Bartholomew with the knife was, therefore, problematic when used as a rationale for the use of Catherine's stigmata as attributes. He pointed out how ridiculous it would be for anyone to infer from this that, for example, Peter was the custodian of a house.¹⁰⁴ In using accepted iconographical formulae to make his point, Lombardelli attempted to show that visual art both should not have been and was not understood as a representation of what could be seen with the physical eye and that those who asserted otherwise were being disingenuous. Furthermore, although it was necessary to learn certain conventions, these were not beyond the comprehension of anyone with a modicum of intelligence.

One relevant example was the representation of the Virgin of Sorrows. Lombardelli argued that:

Neither does [s/he] who sees the Queen of Heaven painted with a sword passing through her from one side to the other, or more swords which wound her, judge that she was treated like this in the World [that is, during her life].¹⁰⁵

The representation of the Virgin Mary with one or more swords running through her was popular in northern Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹⁰⁶ A single sword piercing Mary, shown at the foot of the cross, represented the pain she had suffered with her son at his death, pain that was the equivalent of the pain of childbirth as she suffered with Christ in order to redeem sinners. Referencing Simeon's prophecy of a sword piercing Mary's soul, given at the time of her Purification (Luke 2:35), it provided a visible representation of Mary's mental anguish.¹⁰⁷ In the same way, Lombardelli argued, visible stigmata showed the pain that Catherine of Siena had suffered in the immediate aftermath of the episode in Santa Cristina, Pisa.

The emphasis in this section of Lombardelli's text on the attributes of the saints – Matthias with an axe, John the Evangelist with a chalice and serpent, Simon with a saw – demonstrated that the saints were not shown in art as they had been seen in life. Lombardelli's suggestions were intentionally absurd: Matthias was not a woodsman, John the Evangelist was not a quack or swindler, and Simon was not a sawyer.¹⁰⁸ However, the points made were serious ones: Catherine's stigmata could

104 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 33; Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 57r–58r.

105 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 32: 'Nè chi vede la REGINA de'Cieli dipinta, ch'una spada la passi da banda e banda, ò piu spade la ferischino, guidica, che fusse cosi tratatta nel Mondo'.

106 See Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin'.

107 See Hamburgh, 'The Problems of *Lo Spasimo* of the Virgin'.

108 Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 33; Lombardelli, *De stigmatibus*, Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 5461, folios 57r–58r.

be understood as attributes and those who viewed art could make such distinctions. Just as the items held by Matthias, John the Evangelist and Simon related to their martyrdoms or attempted martyrdom (John had survived the poison proffered by a pagan priest), so Catherine's stigmata referred to her suffering for Christ. They had a direct relationship to her experience and to the viewer's knowledge, but an image of Catherine with the stigmata did not show her as she had appeared to others during her life. Viewing the saints and their attributes involved an understanding that what was seen did not represent a single moment in time and did not aim to show appearance but to evoke knowledge within the context of salvation. Although Lombardelli poured scorn on the idea that viewers might not be able to understand this, the questions indicated that art was intended to puzzle and to inspire questioning, to make the viewer work in order to reach understanding. In order to make his point Lombardelli, perhaps deliberately, did not directly address the conventions of viewing that made attributes legible. Attributes held by saints were, it could be argued, easier to understand as such compared to those shown as part of a saint's body.

The representation of the stigmata was important in so far as it demonstrated that Catherine had stigmata and this brought Lombardelli to another point, one in which he continued to argue for images of saints not as a reconstruction of their appearance in life but as a way of imparting knowledge about them. He pointed out that the Dominicans were not scandalized when they saw:

an image of Saint Francis with red wounds on his feet and hands from which blood flows, even though blood did not flow from them, neither was he seen to have wounds: but he had nails made out of his own flesh [...].¹⁰⁹

In an ingenious inversion of Caffarini's insistence on close adherence to the written sources, Lombardelli argued that if the Franciscans had no objection to representations of their founder that did not show the stigmata as they were described, then why should they object to Saint Catherine's stigmata being visualized in images? Both saints were acknowledged to have had stigmata. Neither saint was represented with the stigmata as they had appeared (or had not appeared) during their lifetime. Lombardelli went on to claim that he had never seen Francis's stigmata, as they were described in the main sources, represented in images. He criticized the Franciscans for, on the one hand, advocating the view that images were no more than a re-presentation of what is seen by the eye and, on the other, for not taking note of their own advice on what should be represented in paintings commissioned

¹⁰⁹ Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 33: 'l'immagine di S. Francesco con le Piaghe de'piedi, e mani rubiconde, e versanti sangue, benche esse non versassero sangue, né si vedesser le Piaghe: ma della propria carne vi havesse i chiodi [...].'

by them. Again, he made a comparison with instances where invisible things, or those without form, were legitimately described or painted:

[A]nd if it is permitted for doctors and painters to describe a soul, or to paint it separated from the body, or in the form of some animal, or of a star [...] why may one not paint her [Catherine] with them [the stigmata], when form is given to things which do not have any material form and for no other reason if not to express the properties and conditions which they had whilst they were alive?¹¹⁰

As we have seen, Lombardelli's arguments were not without contradiction. In seeking to engage with the opinions of multiple different authors in order to justify the representation of Catherine of Siena with stigmata, he failed to ensure consistency. His main contentions were that images showed amassed knowledge, the result of different types of sight, and, also, that they ordered knowledge, bringing it together across spatial and temporal barriers. This implied that the viewer had to be equipped to understand the difference between what was seen and what was represented, and, also, to understand the different components of representation, to understand art as artifice. The arguments formulated by Lombardelli were forged within the context of post-Tridentine discussions on the purposes of art and the necessity of putting forward a justification for the representation of the invisible.

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¹¹⁰ Lombardelli, *Sommario*, p. 34: 'e se è lecito a' Dottori, & a' Pittori descriver' un'Anima, ò dipignerla separata dal corpo, in forma di qualche Animale, ò di Stella [...] perche non si può Essa dipigner con esse, mentre che alle cose, che no[n] hanno nessuna material forma, è data forma, e non per altra cagione, se non per esprimer le proprietà, e co[n]dizioni, che havevan coloro, mentre vivevano?'

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6. Performing Stigmata

Abstract

Some stigmatics performed their stigmata, presenting living or moving images to viewers who could interact with the re-presentation of the Passion. They could also make use of visual art, which acted as catalyst or prop. Interactions between the performer and audience demonstrated the importance of visual culture within stigmatic spirituality through multiple reciprocities across the visual arts. Members of the audience were engaged in ways that allowed them to see and reflect on the evidence presented, and to use their visual observations to inform their acceptance, or otherwise, of the validity of the display. This chapter considers how the visual nature of performing stigmata can deepen our understanding of the ways in which people perceived the miraculous through the visual.

Keywords: performance, stigmata, audience, dance, mysticism, Christ's Passion

The definitions of stigmata espoused by the Dominicans Tommaso Caffarini (d. circa 1434) and Gregorio Lombardelli (d. circa 1613) and discussed in previous chapters demonstrate the acknowledgement of a spectrum of experience that could include performance. Some stigmatics presented a living or moving image to their viewers who could interact with the re-presentation of the Passion, which could be verbally glossed by the performer. These events were highly visual and depended for their impact on the ability of eyewitnesses to interpret what they saw. Those present tried to make sense of their experience through their knowledge of the gospel narratives and by reference to paintings and sculpture. At the same time, some of the performers made use of visual art, which acted as catalyst or prop. The interactions between the repetitive and yet constantly reinterpreted nature of the performance, the performer, and the audience demonstrated multiple reciprocities across the visual arts and the importance of visual culture within stigmatic spirituality. Performing the stigmata engaged members of the audience in ways that allowed them to see and reflect on the evidence before them, and to use their visual observations to inform their acceptance, or otherwise, of the validity of the display. This chapter considers how the visual nature of performing stigmata

can deepen our understanding of the ways in which people came to perceive the miraculous through the visual.

The Italian holy women on whom this chapter focuses are Stefana Quinzani (1457–1530), Caterina de'Ricci (1522–1590), and Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi (1566–1607). Two of the three, Stefana and Caterina, were Dominican tertiaries. Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi entered the Carmelite convent of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence in 1582. She remained there until her death, during which time she held the offices of sacristan, mistress of the novices and sub-prioress.¹ She was the only one of the three to have undergone her religious formation in the period following the deliberations of the Council of Trent. The life of her older contemporary Caterina de'Ricci spanned the period during which the Council met and she experienced the effects of its decrees when her community was enclosed. The fame of Caterina's ecstasies had spread beyond her convent of San Vincenzo in Prato before her death and they were well known in nearby Florence.² Both Caterina and Maria Maddalena came from wealthy families in contrast to the modest circumstances of Stefana Quinzani who was born at Orzinuovi, near Brescia, and who spent most of her life in Soncino and nearby Crema, between Brescia and Milan, where she earned her living as a servant.³ All were believed by some to be stigmatics and all were witnessed performing the Passion.

The performances of all three women involved different types of visuality that went beyond the actions themselves to include the physical use of sculpture and reference to visual art, something which had a history going back to medieval Passion performances. Carolyn Muessig has emphasized that the use of Christ's image indicated 'the depth and meaning that the visual played in shaping religious sentiment'.⁴ This was dependent on active employment of what scholars such as Michael Camille and Mitchell Merback have termed *intervisuality*, the ability to deploy and recognize visual cues across different media.⁵ The stigmatics discussed in this chapter used physical images, became like images, and their performances and bodily postures were interpreted through the lens of visual art. Those privileged to see these women used their visual knowledge in order to make sense of

1 For brief details of Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi's life see Pozzo and Leonardi, *Scrittrici mistiche italiane*, pp. 419–422. Most recently, see Copeland, *Maria Maddalena dei'Pazzi*.

2 On Caterina de'Ricci see Scattigno, *Sposa di Cristo*.

3 For brief details of Stefana Quinzani's life see Zarri, 'Living Saints: A Typology of Female Sanctity', p. 228; Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, pp. 192–193. For a more detailed biography see Herzog, *Savonarola's Women*, pp. 146–149. For a brief discussion of the primary sources see Warr, 'Performing the Passion', pp. 218–220.

4 Muessig, 'Performance of the Passion', p. 137.

5 On medieval *intervisuality* see, for example, Camille, 'Gothic Signs and the Surplus'; Hahn, 'Interpictoriality in the Limoges Chasses'; Caviness, *Visualising Women in the Middle Ages*; and, particularly, Merback, 'Living Image of Pity', especially pp. 158–159.

their experience. They observed actively, bringing their own knowledge to the performance in front of them, generating the potential for complex and varied understandings.

Holy women had presented or staged aspects of the Passion, often in a state of abstraction or ecstasy, from the late-thirteenth century. Margaret of Cortona (d. 1297) underwent the pains of the Passion in the church of San Francesco in Cortona.⁶ As noted in Chapter 4, according to the fourteenth-century *vita* of Giovanna of Orvieto (d. 1306), on Good Friday her body 'was extended in the shape of the cross'.⁷ Giovanna underwent these ecstasies in the last decade of her life.⁸ In the case of Margaret of Cortona, her biographer, Giunta Bevegnati, related that the news spread quickly and all the townsfolk assembled in the church to see her.⁹ The experiences of Christina of Stommeln (d. 1312) had also played out in the presence of an audience. Her ecstasies often resulted in visible changes to her body, wounds that bled. The Dominican Peter of Dacia (d. 1289), who wrote her *vita*, witnessed some of Christina's raptures and subsequent stigmatizations.¹⁰ Dorothy of Montau (d. 1394) had performed the Crucifixion and burial of Christ by stretching out her arms and praying before a cross, and by lying face down with her body weight pressing down on only her forehead, nose and toes,¹¹ according to her confessor John Marienwerder.¹² Margarita Agullona (d. 1600), a Franciscan tertiary from Jàtiva in Valencia, for many years before her death felt the pains of Christ's Passion each Friday.¹³ She was seen with her arms outstretched as though on the cross and, at the hour of Christ's death, she too appeared to be dead and no doctor could revive her.¹⁴

6 Elliott, 'The Physiology of Rapture', p. 163. On Margaret of Cortona see Doyno, 'The Creation of a Franciscan Lay Saint'. Mary Doyno has described Margaret's actions as 'public' and 'dramatic', although, as far as can be ascertained, they were not repetitive, pp. 72–73, 80.

7 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 68. The Italian text of the *vita* has been published by Emore Paoli and Luigi Ricci. See *La 'legenda' di Vanna da Orvieto*.

8 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 68.

9 Bevegnati, *Legenda de vita et miraculis beatae Margaritae de Cortona*, pp. 116, 245. The *legenda*, finished in 1308, contains eleven chapters, including 'De passionis Christi meditatione et patientia' (Chapter 5) dedicated to Margaret's meditation on Christ's Passion and her patience. For a translation of the *legenda* in English see Bevegnati, *The Life and Miracles*. See also Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power*, pp. 132–133, 139.

10 Aviad Kleinberg has discussed Peter of Dacia's accounts of Christina's torments and those who witnessed them. See Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country*, pp. 71–98. See also Coakley, 'A Marriage and its Observer'; Coakley, 'Friars as Confidants of Holy Women', pp. 229–233.

11 Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 210.

12 On the relationship between Dorothy of Montau and John Marienwerder see Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power*, pp. 193–210; Elliott, 'Authorizing a Life'. A translation of the *vita* has been published in Marienwerder, *The Life of Dorothea von Montau*.

13 For an overview of Margarita Agullona, see Ehlers, 'Negotiating Reform', pp. 197–202.

14 Sanchez, *Relacion breve de la vida*, pp. 228–240.

The religious enactments of Stefana, Caterina, and Maria Maddalena can be placed within this history of performance. They had significant differences but all fall within a definition that demonstrated one or more of the following three components: regularity, repetition, and the presence of an audience.¹⁵ Some women experienced the Passion through stigmatic performance whilst in church,¹⁶ others in a private setting but with an invited audience.¹⁷ Stigmatic or Passion performances could also be linked to liturgical ritual in that their repetitive actions took place during days and times that had a particular relevance for Christ's Passion and crucifixion. Performance and ritual were closely associated in these enactments. Whereas liturgical ritual was normative and highly influential in mandating societal behaviour, performance allowed for more fluid power relationships. Liturgy as 'the public, organized worship of the Church'¹⁸ was dominated by men, whereas the performances investigated in this chapter were controlled by the women who presented them in a state of ecstasy. This enabled them to perform against the grain and to challenge Church control by providing their own structures and critiquing the observances of the Church. Despite significant elements of repetition, this type of performance resisted standardization. It drew on recognizable elements but was specific to the woman who staged it.

Performances of Christ's suffering were not exclusive to female stigmatics. The flagellant movements of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries featured ritualized displays of penitential scourging aimed at recalling the Passion.¹⁹ These were large public manifestations in which groups of male flagellants travelled from town to town.²⁰ Men also undertook self-imposed torments privately. For example, according to the Dominican Stephen of Bourbon (d. 1261), Robert of Auvergne (d. 1234):

bore on his body for many years before his death the stigmata of the Lord Jesus in memory of His passion and fidelity. Together with other penances which he

15 On repetition see Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology*, p. 37, quoted in Rodgers and Ziegler, 'Elisabeth of Spalbeek's Trance Dance of Faith', p. 323. On the presence of an audience see Suydam, 'Visionaries in the Public Eye', p. 132.

16 Mary Suydam has pointed out that the majority of the most important spiritual experiences of the beguines in the Low Countries took place in 'communal spaces'. See Suydam, 'Visionaries in the Public Eye', p. 132.

17 See my discussion of Stefana Quinzani, Caterina de' Ricci, and Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, below.

18 Salisbury, *Medieval Latin Liturgy in English Translation*, p. 1.

19 Merback, 'Living Image of Pity', pp. 160–162.

20 Some women did attach themselves to the flagellant movement, for example in Italy in the 1260s, but they generally undertook their penitential self-punishment out of the public eye. See Merback, 'Living Image of Pity', p. 154.

made in memory of the passion of the Lord, he transfixed his flesh every Friday with certain nails up to the point where blood flowed.²¹

The act is presented as a personal act of penance rather than a public performance. Unlike many of the performances by holy women, neither Robert of Auvergne's penitential suffering nor that of the flagellants took place whilst they were in ecstasy. The ecstatic portrayal of the Passion in front of an audience was an overwhelmingly female experience with ecstasy a vital element in its credibility. Passion performances and the subsequent appearance of stigmata would not have been regarded as of such importance had they been guided by the conscious mind. It was because they were channelled through a woman due to her holiness that they came to have significance. Women who were in a state of ecstasy were believed to be 'elevated to a supernatural level by the divine spirit, with abstraction from the senses'.²² It was still necessary to test ecstasy-performances since there was always the possibility that they resulted from demonic possession.²³ This was one of the reasons for the importance of the presence and participation, active or passive, of an audience. Those assembled, sometimes high-ranking members of the clergy or legal professionals, could use their expertise to determine the validity of what they witnessed.

Before considering the intervisuality of the stigmatic performances of Stefana Quinzani, Caterina de' Ricci, and Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, the earlier case of Elizabeth of Spalbeek (d. 1304) provides a useful comparative example that helps to delineate some of the issues involved. Elizabeth has been the subject of a number of studies that have sought to consider her actions in relation to performance and dance.²⁴ A lay woman from the Limbourg region of northern Europe, aspects of Elizabeth's life were recorded by the Cistercian Philip of Clairvaux (d. 1273).²⁵ Philip visited Elizabeth between 1267 and 1272 and was so struck with what he encountered that he focused in his writing on her stigmata and ecstasy-performances.²⁶ His text is important in giving a detailed description of a Passion performance in the late-thirteenth century and in demonstrating how it was understood by a certain

21 Quoted in Constable, *Three Studies*, p. 217. See also Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 56–57.

22 Thomas Aquinas, quoted in Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, p. 33.

23 Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, pp. 15, 47.

24 See, for example, Njus, 'What Did It Mean to Act in the Middle Ages?'; Jennifer N. Brown, 'Elizabeth of Spalbeek's Body'; Rodgers and Ziegler, 'Elisabeth of Spalbeek's Trance Dance of Faith'; Visconsi, 'She Represents the Person of Our Lord'; Silen, 'Elisabeth of Spalbeek: Dancing the Passion'. See also the discussion by Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 91–137.

25 A partial translation of the *vita* has been published by Peterson. See Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth'.

26 Goodich, 'The Contours of Female Piety', p. 31.

type of viewer – namely, a well-educated member of a religious order who could place what he saw within the context of his knowledge – the type of viewer most likely to write about his experiences. Many of the behavioural or performance patterns Philip described were paralleled in the lives of Italian holy women who also performed elements of the Passion.

Philip of Clairvaux's text was, in effect, a composite description of the performances he saw.²⁷ Elizabeth's stigmata manifested themselves periodically. They bled 'frequently and mostly on the sixth day of the week [Friday] with blood flowing forth'.²⁸ The Passion performances were also repeated each Friday.²⁹ They were part of a performed identity described with such minute care by Philip that Joanna Ziegler, in 1992, was able to commission a production of Elizabeth's Passion ecstasy on the basis of his text.³⁰ The actions that Philip described were violent and frightening in their intensity. Elizabeth divided her representation according to the monastic hours, resting between sections. During each section she repeatedly struck herself: on the jaw, on the back of the head, between the shoulder blades, and on the neck. She also banged her head on the ground.³¹ Philip attached meaning to some of her movements by relating them to gospel texts.³² At prime, Elizabeth walked around with her hands behind her back as though she was being 'led from Annas to Caiphias, from Caiphias to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and then again to Pilate'.³³ During terce,³⁴ she placed her arms together in front of her in the way that Jesus's arms had been placed when he was bound to the column; and through the hours of sext, none, and vespers she held her body upright with her arms outstretched to form the shape of the cross.³⁵ Philip described Elizabeth as being in a state of rapture or ecstasy from which she then recovered before the beginning of the next monastic hour. During the raptures, Elizabeth did not appear to feel any pain despite the injuries she inflicted on herself. However, between each ecstasy she suffered greatly, so much so that Philip related how 'among all of the dying whom

27 As has been pointed out by Jesse Njus, drawing on the work of Dyan Elliott, Philip's text is essentially a record of a *probatio* or test. See Njus, 'The Politics of Mysticism', p. 292.

28 Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', p. 22.

29 Ziegler, 'On the Artistic Nature', p. 182.

30 Ziegler, 'On the Artistic Nature', p. 188.

31 Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', p. 24.

32 For example, Philip explained that Elizabeth dragging herself across the room by her clothes was 'so that she may represent that: "You are come out as it were to a robber"'. Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', p. 23 and p. 42, note 10 referencing Matthew 26:55 and Mark 14:48, which describe the betrayal of Jesus.

33 Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', p. 29.

34 Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', p. 30 and p. 43, note 28.

35 Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', pp. 30–31. Karen Silen has provided a table with the timings for her performances. See Silen, 'Elisabeth of Spalbeek: Dancing the Passion', p. 214.

I have seen or witnessed in death, I remember to have seen none crucified with such cruel pains'.³⁶

Philip's interpretation of what he saw through gospel texts was a means of making sense of the moving visual images provided by Elizabeth during her ecstasy-performance. In turn, Elizabeth's raptures were sometimes instigated by painted images. According to Philip 'a painted panel is offered to her, excellently depicting a certain image of the crucified Lord. [...]. [S]he often sweetly kisses the feet on the image of the Lord'. This image invoked a rapture in which '[s]he slips away from the consideration of the image to the contemplation of the truth'.³⁷ During the whole of lauds, Elizabeth could not be dragged away from the image.³⁸

The description moved from the painted panel to Elizabeth's performance in a way that acknowledged the use of images as devotional aids for women, who were perceived to have a strong response to visual stimuli due to their lack of education and difficulty in rising above corporeal vision.³⁹ Philip explained Elizabeth's use of the image of Christ crucified as a stepping-stone leading her from corporeal vision to spiritual and then intellectual vision ('the contemplation of the truth'), following an Augustinian interpretation of the three kinds of vision: corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual.⁴⁰ It is striking that whilst Elizabeth used a painted image as a catalyst for her ecstasy-performance, Philip, in turn, interpreted the performance, which was inherently visual, using his knowledge of text. Just as Elizabeth used images so, according to Philip, she was an image. He maintained that those who could not read would be able to understand Christ's sacrifice through their observation of Elizabeth's body:

[The] illiterate man or woman can read, not in parchment or in documents, but in the members and the body of this girl, as a vivid and unmistakable Veronica, a living image and an animated history of redemption, as if he or she were literate.⁴¹

In describing Elizabeth as a *Veronica*, Philip understood her as someone upon whom Christ had been imprinted, a true likeness of Jesus.

36 Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', p. 26.

37 Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', p. 27.

38 Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', pp. 28–29.

39 See Warr, 'Re-reading the Relationship', pp. 218–219.

40 Warr, 'Re-reading the Relationship', p. 218.

41 Noted in Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, p. 196.

Philip of Clairvaux's description of Elizabeth's actions demonstrated the central elements of female Passion or stigmatic performances. Apart from being regular, repeated, and taking place in front of an audience,⁴² they also involved: self-induced or apparently miraculous wounds; being in an ecstatic or rapturous state during the re-enactment; props in the form of painted or sculpted images, or the use of the surrounding architecture and furniture; and careful timing which related to the liturgical hours and/or Christ's Passion.

The observable elements of the performances were linked into contemporary visual culture in a variety of ways, both for the performer and for the audience. As noted in Chapter 3, when Bartolomeo Dominici gave his evidence on the stigmatization of Catherine of Siena in the *Processo Castellano*, he had explained his understanding of what he had witnessed at the church of Santa Cristina in Pisa in terms of painted images of the stigmatization of Saint Francis with which he was familiar.⁴³ By testifying as he did, Dominici made the link between Catherine and Francis clear. Implicitly in Dominici's evidence, but explicitly in Caffarini's *Libellus*, Francis and Catherine were equals in their stigmata. Catherine received her stigmata as Francis had received his. For Dominici, the understanding of this came via a comparison of painted images of Francis with the physical actions of Catherine. Action and painted image achieved a measure of reciprocity. Having received her stigmata with physical actions reminiscent of depictions of Francis receiving the stigmata, Catherine was, in turn, represented in a similar fashion.

Pictorial representations of holy women with the wounds of Christ in frescoes, panel paintings, and sculpture were uncommon with the major, and problematic, exception of Catherine of Siena. Performance of the Passion became a way in which women could show their Christ-like suffering and, in some cases, the accompanying wounds in the presence of an audience. The audience used various means, including their knowledge of visual arts, to understand what they saw unfolding in front of them. Although these women sometimes also used a limited number of words, members of the audience were reliant on visual cues for their understanding.

The ways in which stigmatic performances were intertwined with visual art can be seen in the case of Stefana Quinzani. Stefana's connection with the embodied experience of Christ's wounds went back to her childhood when her father, Lorenzo, became a Dominican tertiary and placed himself under the direction of the Blessed Matteo Carreri (circa 1420–1470) who suffered with physical pain as a result of his

42 In addition to Philip of Clairvaux, Elizabeth's 'audience' consisted of her family and local clergy. See Philip of Clairvaux, 'The Life of Elizabeth', pp. 28, 33–34.

43 *Il Processo Castellano*, ed. Laurent, p. 314; *Il Processo Castellano*, eds. Centi and Belloni, p. 274.

devotion to the Passion.⁴⁴ Carreri predicted that Stefana would be his heir and specified that he would bequeath to her a nail hammered into her heart.⁴⁵ When he died in 1470 Stefana felt an acute pain in her chest and blood flowed from a wound in her side.⁴⁶ Soon after, she was orphaned and moved to Crema where she worked first for Giovanni Sabbadini, a doctor, and then for Gian Francesco Verdello.⁴⁷ Stefana frequently received visions,⁴⁸ amongst them one in which Saint Dominic appeared to her to claim her as a tertiary.⁴⁹ In 1500 she joined the Dominican Order and, later, founded a community of tertiaries dedicated to San Paolo e Santa Caterina da Siena in Soncino.⁵⁰

One of Stefana's ecstatic Passion performances took place on 17 February 1489 when she was in Verdello's house. The notarial document recording it was signed by a number of witnesses.⁵¹ It ostensibly recorded a particular performance, although it would appear either that the notary had been present for at least one other ecstasy, or that one or more of the witnesses had been present on other occasions and had informed the notary of what normally transpired. In this way the notarial document is a composite with similarities to Philip of Clairvaux's text recording the performances of Elizabeth of Spalbeek. The introductory section of the document noted that visions and revelations were granted to Stefana 'every Friday'. They did not always take place in the same physical environment. Stefana also performed the Passion on 16 July 1500 in the house of Paola Carrara in Mantua. Present were Isabella d'Este (1474–1539), the Dominican tertiary and stigmatic Osanna Andreasi (1449–1505), and other women from Mantua.⁵² It was likely that Stefana's spoken words during her ecstasy-performance were not the same in each instance. Apart from a natural tendency to change words without altering meaning, the prayers described towards the end of the account of the ecstasy of 17 February 1497 contained

44 On Blessed Matteo Carreri see Cerri, 'Vita del Beato Matteo Carreri'; and Andreolli and Zagnoli, *Il beato Matteo Carreri*.

45 Simonetti, 'Le vite e gli agiografi della beata Stefana Quinzani', p. 193; Guerrini, *La prima 'legenda volgare' de la beata Stefana Quinzani*, p. 92 (Chapter 1).

46 Guerrini, *La prima 'legenda volgare' de la beata Stefana Quinzani*, p. 92 (Chapter 1).

47 Simonetti, 'Le vite e gli agiografi della beata Stefana Quinzani', p. 194; Pozzi and Leonardi, *Scrittici mistiche italiane*, p. 287.

48 Simonetti, 'Le vite e gli agiografi della beata Stefana Quinzani', p. 193.

49 Guerrini, *La prima 'legenda volgare' de la beata Stefana Quinzani*, p. 99.

50 Herzig, *Savonarola's Women*, pp. 149–153. See also Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, pp. 192–193.

51 I have used the translation in Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, pp. 192–197. The Italian text was published in Brunati, *Leggendario o vite di santi Bresciani*, pp. 145–153, with the witness comments, in Latin, on pp. 149–153. These are not included in Lehmijoki-Gardner's translation.

52 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, pp. 294–295, note 15. See also Brunati, *Leggendario o vite di santi Bresciani*, pp. 153–156.

some elements that appeared to be specific to the religious and political situation at the time.⁵³

Stefana's performance of the Passion comprised a number of elements. The sequence began before dawn when she was tempted by the devil who accused her of arrogance and presumption manifested through her actions, which showed that she wanted people to acclaim her as a saint. The devil also taunted Stefana with claims that she would not be able to withstand the torments of the Passion. Knowledge of what happened at this point appears to have been gleaned from Stefana's words rather than her actions. After this, the movements of her body became the main mode through which the audience received information. This started with a representation of the Flagellation. Through the stillness of her arms, which were raised above her head, and her feet the audience understood that Stefana had been bound with 'insoluble but invisible straps'.⁵⁴ She remained with her hands raised above her head for an hour and, for about half of this time, her body moved as though she was being whipped although her hands and feet remained still. The pain was such that she cried out. The notary documented that 'it would not be possible to think or to comprehend such pain unless one witnesses it with one's own eyes'.⁵⁵ The Flagellation was followed by a brief interval during which the audience were given to understand that Christ had appeared to Stefana in order to give her strength and to encourage her to bear the pains of the Passion.

Stefana then enacted Christ's crowning with thorns and, again, was seen to experience intense pain and suffering. This was followed by another interval, after which her body took on the pain and the accompanying movements of the Crucifixion. The notary recorded that:

her right arm is stretched on the side, and it is as if her hands were fixed with real nails. And, immediately, one sees how the joints are pulled and extended, the veins raised, and her hands become black.⁵⁶

The emphasis in the account on the stretching of Stefana's body so that her 'entire body curves out'⁵⁷ is reminiscent of the description in the *Meditationes vitae Christi* (*Meditations on the Life of Christ*), where Christ's left hand:

53 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 196 and p. 294, note 11. See also Warr, 'Performing the Passion'.

54 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 194.

55 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 194.

56 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 195.

57 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 195.

did not reach the hole they [the soldiers] had drilled for it. So these wicked men began to stretch it by force [...] And so violently did they pull the arm that all the ligaments were stretched [...].⁵⁸

Stefana remained 'on the cross' for about an hour, during which her body reacted to what the notary understood as a lance being pushed into her side. She then stayed as though dead for a short time, after which her body began to be freed from its position, first 'her right hand, then the left, then both feet'.⁵⁹ This concluded the main part of the performance and Stefana ended it with a series of prayers one of which was to ask Christ for her suffering to be private.

The *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, addressed to a Poor Clare, is often cited in relation to the increase in affective spirituality from the thirteenth century onwards.⁶⁰ Those with knowledge of the text were encouraged to imagine their presence at various events in Christ's life. The female addressee was not encouraged to imagine that she was Christ or that she suffered like Christ. Rather, she was to imagine Christ's sufferings. The text was scattered with admonitions to 'strive to make yourself present with your mind' and to 'imagine and watch [...] with the eye of the mind'.⁶¹ In addition, the text encouraged a certain level of participation such as the care of the Christ child, advising that the female addressee should 'take him in your arms and hold him until his mother comes'.⁶² The emphasis was on being present with Christ, on understanding his pain and suffering with him (*compassio*). As Mitchell has noted, the act of beholding involves a 'certain distance or detachment'.⁶³ The *Meditations* encouraged close viewing and a deep consideration of, for example, Christ's pain during the Passion through imagined presence, but imagining and watching did not involve the same levels of anguish as being. Holy women like Stefana who performed the Passion were distinguished from the type of women envisaged in the *Meditations* in that, in certain respects, they did act and suffer like Christ, and became a representation or true likeness of Christ.

The notarial document gave some idea of how the audience understood Stefana's performance, which lasted for around four hours. Those present would have drawn on their knowledge of visual images, sculpted and painted, as well as religious theatre. Stefana's ecstasy-performance can be placed in the context of Dominican

58 I have used Sarah McNamer's translation of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Canonici Italian 174. See *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, p. 141.

59 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 196.

60 See McNamer, 'Preface', in *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, p. xvii.

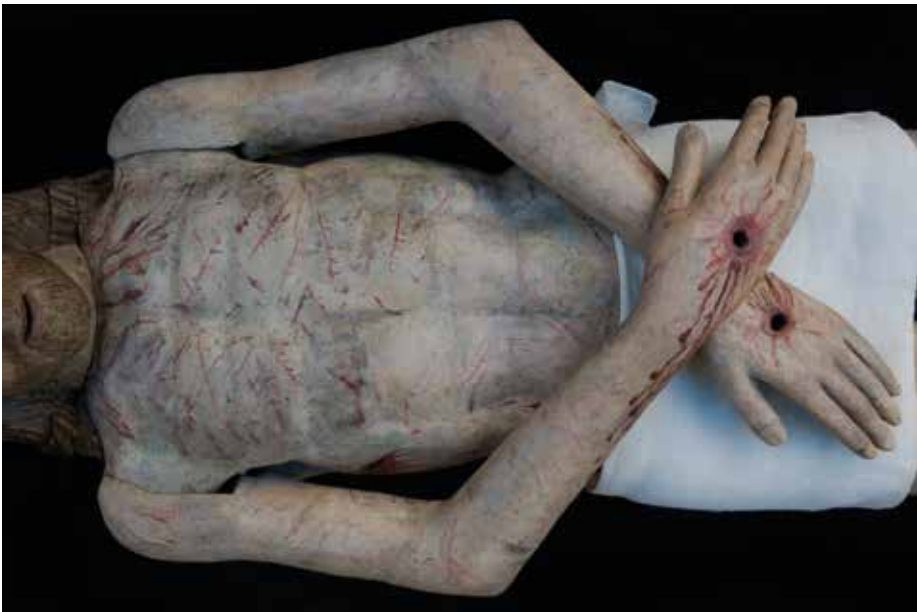
61 *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, pp. 7, 33.

62 *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, p. 53.

63 Mitchell, 'Foreword', p. xvii.



53. Giovanni Pietro and Giovanni Ambrogio De Donati, *Dead Christ*, 1490s, wooden articulated sculpture, Chapel 43 (The Holy Sepulchre), Sacro Monte di Varallo, Varallo, Piedmont.



54. Giovanni Pietro and Giovanni Ambrogio De Donati, detail of *Dead Christ*, 1490s, wooden articulated sculpture, Chapel 43 (The Holy Sepulchre), Sacro Monte di Varallo, Varallo, Piedmont.

corporeal prayer and the practice of following the stations of the cross.⁶⁴ They were enacted in the same years as the construction of the pilgrimage site of the

64 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 193. On the stations of the cross see Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross*; Kenzi, *The Stations of the Cross*.

Sacro Monte di Varallo to the north west of Milan.⁶⁵ Visitors to the Sacro Monte were encouraged to interact with the scenes of Christ's Passion.⁶⁶ The joints of the shoulders of Christ in the Sacro Monte depiction of the Holy Sepulchre are articulated, perhaps indicating that pilgrims could, in certain circumstances, alter Christ's position (figs. 53 and 54).⁶⁷ Articulated figures of the crucified Christ, removed from the cross at Easter, had been in use since the thirteenth century.⁶⁸ These wooden crucifixes were mostly more or less life-sized.⁶⁹ This, together with their polychromy, painted flesh and wounds, and, sometimes, real drapery and hair all conspired to ensure that there was an elision of art and flesh.⁷⁰ The figure of Christ could be manipulated so that it was shown crucified with arms outstretched, and with arms lowered in the process of being taken down from the cross or placed in the sepulchre. Extant examples in Italy include a figure of Christ by an Umbrian sculptor dated to the first quarter of the fourteenth century (Museo di Palazzo Santi, Cascia) made so that once the nails fixing the hands and feet in place were removed, the arms could be lowered.⁷¹ The use of articulated limbs was not the only way in which sculptures could be used to encourage participation. This could also be facilitated through the use of life size sculptural groups whose subjects included the Deposition of Christ and the Lamentation.⁷² As has been argued by a number of scholars, including John Paoletti and Francesca Flores d'Arcais, such groups formed part of a lived participatory religion.⁷³ They could be placed on the ground so that viewers could kneel directly before the figure of Christ.⁷⁴ By the fifteenth century, wooden sculptures of Christ crucified such as the Florentine *Santa Croce Crucifix* (circa 1406–1415) by Donatello, with its articulated shoulder

65 On the Sacro Monte di Varallo see Terry-Fritsch, 'Performing the Renaissance Body and Mind'; Nova, "'Popular' Art in Renaissance Italy'; Hood, 'The *Sacro Monte* of Varallo'. Most recently, see Simcox, *Jerusalem in the Alps*.

66 Bell, 'Image as Relic', p. 307.

67 Terry-Fritsch, 'Performing the Renaissance Body and Mind', p. 128.

68 Paoletti, 'Wooden Sculpture in Italy', p. 92.

69 Paoletti, 'Wooden Sculpture in Italy', p. 86.

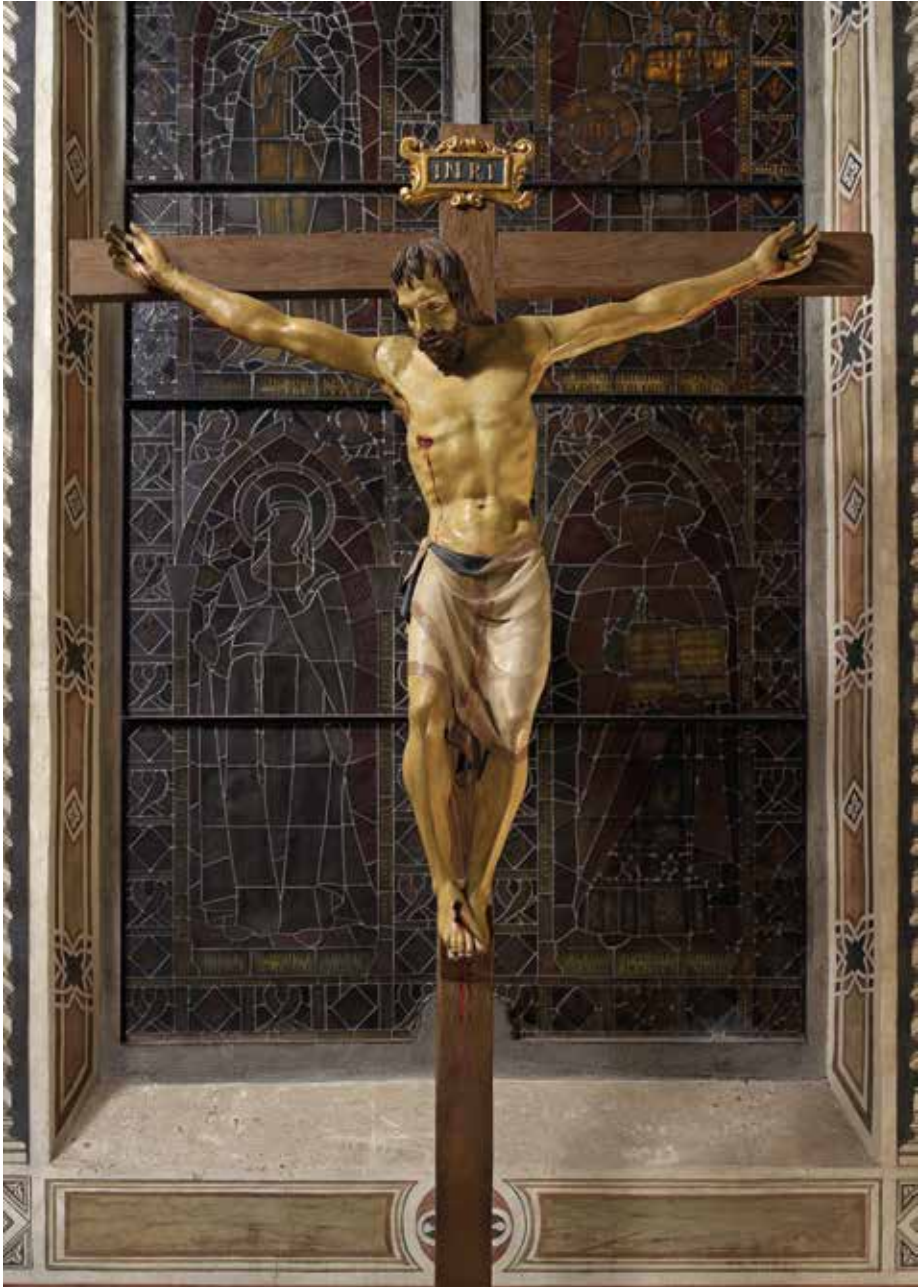
70 Paoletti, 'Wooden Sculpture in Italy', p. 86. See also Kalina, 'Giovanni Pisano'.

71 Elvio Lunghi, 'Cascia (Perugia), Museo di Palazzo Santi, *Deposto*', in Saponi and Toscano, *La eposizione lignea in Europa*, pp. 275–277.

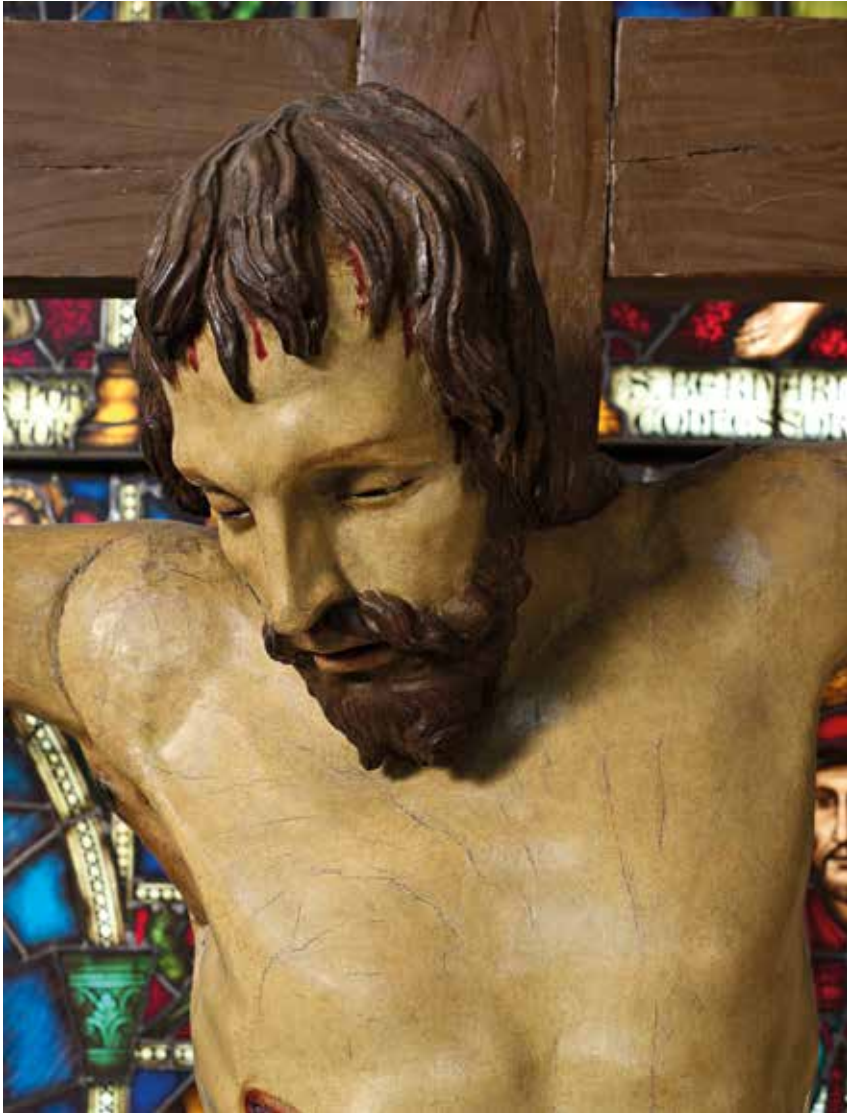
72 See Saponi and Toscano, *La Deposizione lignea in Europa*; Flores d'Arcais, *Il teatro delle statue*; Agostini et al., *Pietà, deposizioni e compianti a Verona e nel Veronese*. For an overview of surviving wooden sculptural groups of the Deposition in Italy, see Mor, 'Riepilogo dei gruppi lignei italiani di Deposizione'. Not all groups were carved from wood. See, for example, the fourteenth-century carved stone group showing Christ placed in the sepulchre discussed by Silvia d'Ambrosio, 'Caprino Veronese, Museo Civico, Maestro di Santa Anastasia, *Deposizione di Cristo nel sepolcro*', in Agostini, *Pietà, deposizioni e compianti a Verona e nel Veronese*, pp. 207–218.

73 Flores d'Arcais, *Il teatro delle statue*, p. 7; Paoletti, 'Wooden Sculpture in Italy', p. 92.

74 Paoletti, 'Wooden Sculpture in Italy', p. 89.



55. Donatello, *Crucifix with Articulated Arms*, circa 1412–1413, polychromed wood, 168 x 173 cm, Santa Croce, Florence.



56. Donatello, detail of *Crucifix with Articulated Arms*, circa 1412–1413, polychromed wood, Santa Croce, Florence.

joints, could, as Geraldine Johnson has proposed, promote ‘carefully choreographed tactile encounters with an anatomically convincing body’ (figs. 55 and 56).⁷⁵

Although convincing anatomy was important by the time Donatello completed his *Santa Croce Crucifix*, interaction with sculpture was not dependent on ‘lifelike’

⁷⁵ Johnson, ‘Embodying Devotion’, p. 1205.

representation but rather on other prompts which encouraged reciprocity across media. As noted above, this could be provoked by things like the use of real hair on the sculptures, but it could also be stimulated by factors including meditation on the Passion narrative. Meditation and prayer were capable of inducing a state of mind in which the believer envisioned the movement of sculptural figures of Christ crucified. Indeed, a significant number of medieval and Renaissance texts tell of crucifixes which speak, embrace, slap, or kiss the viewer.⁷⁶ Kamil Kopania has argued that animated sculptures of the crucified Christ should be examined in ways that broaden significantly from their use in *Depositio crucis* ceremonies.⁷⁷ They were sculptural representations of Christ but, at the same time, they could be made to function as actors in liturgical drama. Just as miracle stories made it clear that a sculpted figure of Christ crucified could move its arms, so, also, in liturgical drama it was possible for the figure of Christ to be both a sculpture and a person acting as Christ at different points in the performance.⁷⁸

Fluidity of movement across the boundaries of painting, sculpture, performance, and ecstasy was something that was recognized and utilized in a number of scenarios. One example is the use of 'holy dolls' by nuns.⁷⁹ Painters also experimented with this by showing patrons engaged in contemplative prayer, transposed bodily into a religious scene. A painting by Moretto (Alessandro Buonvicino, circa 1498–1554), now in the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo, shows the presumed commissioner in a landscape kneeling in front of the resurrected Christ with the cross. The book that he was reading has fallen to the ground as his prayer goes beyond words to mental visualization.⁸⁰ Although Moretto's composition, painted by an artist who worked mainly in the city of Stefana Quinzani's birth, was completed around 1518–1519 and thus significantly after her recorded rapturous experiences, it is one of many paintings demonstrating the ways in which people envisaged the movement between different states. Together with the close experience of articulated wooden sculptures of Christ crucified, this goes some way towards an understanding of how those who saw Stefana's performance were able to participate in it.

The notarial document stated that some of those present acted upon Stefana's body. When Stefana appeared to be tied to the pillar during her performance of the Flagellation they attempted to separate her hands. No one who tried – and the

76 For a discussion of crucifixes which talked to and kissed their viewers, with mostly northern European examples, see Lipton, "'The Sweet Lean of His Head': Writing about Looking at the Crucifix'. See also the examples in Coman, 'No Strings Attached'.

77 Kopania, 'Animated Sculptures'.

78 Tripps, 'The Joy of Automata', p. 18.

79 See, for example, Klapisch-Zuber, 'Holy Dolls: Play and Piety'.

80 See the discussion in Savy, 'Ritratto e pratiche di orazione mentale', pp. 282–284.

notary pointedly wrote that ‘many used great force’⁸¹ – was able to do so. Members of the audience also touched Stefana’s forehead after she had received the crown of thorns. Even a light touch made her cry out in pain. The physical action on the rapt body of Stefana served to demonstrate that she was truly in a state of ecstasy. Expected symptoms included rigidity in the limbs and not reacting to painful stimuli.⁸² Members of the audience who touched Stefana and attempted to move her limbs were also touching Christ through Stefana. Like Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Stefana had become a true image of Christ. This was a complex interaction. Stefana’s state of ecstasy, proved through the violence of those in the audience who unsuccessfully attempted to move her limbs, showed that she was not acting or faking. Yet, in the rigidity of her limbs, Stefana was not Christ. Their rigor was akin to that of the articulated limbs of wooden sculptures, which were moved only at liturgically significant times.

Towards the end of the document recording the Passion performance of 17 February 1497 the notary wrote: ‘And on the right foot that is placed on top of the left foot appears a red mark that looks like a *marcello*’.⁸³ *Marcelli*, coins named after Doge Niccolò Marcello (1472–1474),⁸⁴ could be around 25 mm in diameter. No indication was given of how such a mark might have appeared on Stefana’s foot nor of its exact placement. Although it was not referred to as a stigma, this was one piece of evidence that Stefana did undergo partial stigmatization. Four of the twenty-one witnesses who signed the 1497 document, representing lawyers and members of the clergy, specifically stated that they had not seen the mark: Andrea Martinengo, Carlo Benzono, Gratiadeo Bonafino, and Iacopo Figato.⁸⁵ Iacopo Figato saw Stefana’s ecstasy-performance more than once. When, in the nineteenth century, Giuseppe Brunati published the signed document he noted that Figato had annotated his signature and comment after having seen Stefana undergo the same experience on Good Friday of 1497. Figato stated that on Good Friday he also saw the red mark on Stefana’s foot that he had not been able to see in February.⁸⁶ It may have been that the mark was transient and had disappeared before the end of the ecstasy-performance. Alternatively, it may not have been

81 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 194.

82 For unresponsiveness to stimuli see some of the symptoms experienced by Giovanna of Orvieto, which included not blinking when flies landed on her eyes, in Elliott, ‘The Physiology of Rapture’, pp. 162–163. For some of the ‘tests’ undergone by Christina of Stommeln see Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country*, pp. 94–95.

83 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 196.

84 Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 294, note 10.

85 Brunati, *Leggendario o Vite di Santi Bresciani*, pp. 145–153.

86 Brunati, *Leggendario o Vite di Santi Bresciani*, pp. 151–152: ‘Iterum accessi ad prefatum domum in parasceve et accuratius omnia et singula vidi et presertim rubedinem pedum ad quam die decima februarii non adverteram’.

immediately distinguishable from other marks on Stefana's foot. Willingness to see a mark may have influenced the ability to see it.

The three-dimensional shapes found inside the heart of Clare of Montefalco after her death in 1308 were described by her biographer Bérenger de Saint-Affrique, the vicar of the Bishop of Spoleto, and identified as three-dimensional representations of the instruments of the Passion.⁸⁷ Clare's opened heart contained a three-dimensional representation of the *arma Christi*.⁸⁸ As Chiara Frugoni has noted, Bérenger de Saint-Affrique's description called to mind, deliberately, a well-known iconographic subject.⁸⁹ Clare's heart had become an image. Not everyone was willing or able to see that image. The heart was sent to Rome so that the cardinals there could assess it but not everyone saw what Bérenger believed he had seen.⁹⁰ Within the *vita*, this may have been a strategy to demonstrate that Bérenger, as author, was able to engage critically with his material. The high-ranking ecclesiastics who saw Clare's opened heart were likely to have owned small private pieces of devotional art and were probably patrons of larger works as well. They could have compared what they saw in Clare's heart with knowledge of painted or sculptured images of the *arma Christi*. Working by analogy, some were able to see miraculous relief sculptures in the heart. This required active observation. By seeking a visual comparison for the mark on Stefana's foot, the notary who recorded her performance demonstrated an interaction with the changes to the appearance of Stefana's body. Like the rest of the audience, he understood elements of the performance in relation to various types of visual art.

Both Bérenger de Saint-Affrique in his assessment of Clare of Montefalco and the audience assembled for Stefana's performance of 17 February 1497 tested what they saw through touch. Dyan Elliott has argued that the tests done on a saint's body 'need not arise from any particular doubts but were often engineered to exploit the spectacle value inherent in the enrapt female form'.⁹¹ Touch and sight thus worked together. Stefana's body was a ritualized body. By repeating the Passion sequence, she constituted herself through what Judith Butler has termed 'performative' acts.⁹² The identity which Stefana forged through these performances was not clear cut. She did not become Christ suffering on the cross, nor did her audience understand this to be the case. Nonetheless, in certain respects, like Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Stefana did become an image or likeness of Christ, suffering the pains that he suffered. Some of the audience acted the part

87 Berengario di Sant'Affricano, 'La vita', 1885, p. 235.

88 See the discussion in Warr, 'Re-reading the Relationship', pp. 235–236

89 Frugoni, "'Domine, in conspectu tuo omne desiderium meum': visioni e immagini", p. 171.

90 Berengario di Sant'Affricano, 'La vita', 1885, p. 251.

91 Elliott, 'The Physiology of Rapture', p. 162.

92 Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution', pp. 519–520.

of the apostle Thomas. According to the gospel of John, Thomas was not present when the rest of the apostles saw the resurrected Jesus. On being told what had happened he countered, 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe' (John 20:25).

John's gospel account did not specify that Thomas placed his hand in Christ's side, although his testing of Christ's body through touch is habitually shown in paintings.⁹³ By touching and testing Stefana's body, the witnesses made themselves a part of the narrative which she enacted. The need to touch was also part of a general belief in the body as a locus of sanctity (or evil). Those who had committed crimes were expected to evidence this through their bodies. This belief was the basis for trial by ordeal.⁹⁴ Holy people demonstrated their link to God through their miraculous bodies, something particularly true of women.⁹⁵ Stefana's body was a body to be tested and a holy body, a living relic, a body to be touched, and a body to be viewed.

The *marcello*-like stigma that appeared on Stefana's right foot during her performance of the Passion was available for those present to see and to inspect. According to the *vita* written by one of her confessors, Bartolomeo da Mantova, between 1506 and his death sometime around 1512, Stefana had other stigmata, which she attempted to hide.⁹⁶ The *vita* referred to these several times. In Chapter 18 we are told that the author wanted to see if Stefana had the stigmata. One day, as he was leaving her, he touched the middle of her hand causing her to cry out with pain. At another time, a sister from the convent of Santo Rafaele in Reggio Emilia had touched Stefana's hands so firmly that she:

fell down senseless because of the great pain, so much so that it was necessary to carry her to the house of a certain Madonna Constantia, where she was staying. She remained for a number of days with her hand bandaged.⁹⁷

93 See the discussion in Most, *Doubting Thomas*, pp. 51–55, 178–179.

94 On trial by ordeal see Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water*.

95 Bynum, 'The Female Body and Religious Practice', p. 186.

96 On Stefana Quinzani's *vitae* see Simonetti, 'Le vite e gli agiografi della beata Stefana Quinzani'. Two *vitae* were written, each by Dominicans who had acted as her confessor: Bartolomeo da Mantova and Battista di Salò. See Simonetti, 'Le vite e gli agiografi della beata Stefana Quinzani', pp. 203, 209. The *vita* by Bartolomeo da Mantova was later updated with details of Bartolomeo's life and other chronological information, and this version was published by Paolo Guerrini in 1930 (Guerrini, *La prima 'legenda volgare' de la beata Stefana Quinzani*). See Simonetti, 'Le vite e gli agiografi della beata Stefana Quinzani', p. 199.

97 Guerrini, *La prima 'legenda volgare' de la beata Stefana Quinzani*, p. 110–111 (Chapter 18): '... unde la poveretta madre per el grande dolore cascò stramortita talmente che fu necessario portarla a casa de una Madonna Constantia, dove era alogiata. Stete più giorni cum la mane ligata'.

The prior of Reggio Emilia, seeing the pain that Stefana suffered, asked her directly if she had the stigmata and she answered: 'My son, yes, but they do not appear although I often see them'.⁹⁸

Bartolomeo discussed the stigmata again in Chapter 27, entitled 'Of her great humility', where he recorded that although he had asked Stefana numerous times to allow him to see her stigmata, she always refused. This trope continued in Chapter 28 where we are told that one of the sisters in the convent of San Paolo e Santa Caterina da Siena spoke out when she saw blood on Stefana's hand and was swiftly admonished to keep quiet.⁹⁹ Stefana needed to be seen as a humble woman who did not seek fame or notoriety through her stigmata. At the same time, her performances were a public manifestation of her stigmatic spirituality. Allowing her suffering and her visibly marked body to be seen was necessary in order for her to maintain her spiritual influence. The manifestations of pain and its associated marks on the body before an audience expressed her power, showing that Stefana suffered as Christ did and blurring the distinction between following Christ and becoming Christ, something that could only be expressed publicly whilst she was in a state of rapture.

The association between visual art and ecstasy-performance of the Passion can also be traced in the life of Caterina de'Ricci. According to her contemporary the Bishop of Fiesole Francesco Cattani (1530–1595), Caterina's regular and repetitive ecstasies and enactments of the Passion began in February 1542. Her ordeal started on Thursday evening and lasted for over twenty-four hours, finishing late on Friday. Caterina enacted the Passion in real time, ending with the deposition from the cross and the placing of the body of Christ into the arms of Mary.¹⁰⁰ This happened each week and, according to the Florentine Dominican Filippo Guidi writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the ecstasies became so well-publicized that the number of people who came to the convent of San Vincenzo in the hope of witnessing them resulted in the nuns being unable to continue in their life of prayer. Such was the problem that they decided to pray for a cessation of these ecstasies, and their prayers were granted in 1554. After this, Caterina continued to meditate on the Passion on Thursdays and Fridays but was no longer in a state of ecstasy during all of that time. She had regular and frequent ecstasies, every day, but they were of three or four hours duration.¹⁰¹ The ecstasies before 1554 had lasted for twenty-eight hours, during which Caterina took on the actions of Christ

98 Guerrini, *La prima 'legenda volgare' de la beata Stefana Quinzani*, p. 111 (Chapter 18): 'filiol mio si, ma non apareno benchè però spesse volte io le veda'.

99 Guerrini, *La prima 'legenda volgare' de la beata Stefana Quinzani*, p. 126 (Chapter 28).

100 Cattani, *Breve raccolta della vita e costume di Suor Caterina de Ricci*, unpaginated. See also Guidi, *Vita della venerabile madre*, pp. 15–19.

101 Guidi, *Vita della venerabile madre*, pp. 63–65.

but was otherwise immobile. The reduction in Caterina's ecstatic experiences has also been linked to an increase in her responsibilities within the convent of San Vincenzo, first as sub-prioress in 1547 and then as prioress in 1552.¹⁰²

Caterina's Passion ecstasies had a connection to convent theatre. From the fifteenth century onwards, nuns regularly performed plays in convents in Italy and a tradition of convent theatre was especially vibrant in Prato.¹⁰³ Writing in the 1560s, Serafino Razzi (1531–1613), one of Caterina's biographers, noted his disappointment that the nuns of San Vincenzo had not staged *sacre rappresentazioni* there for about forty years and that these holy performances had been succeeded by comedies.¹⁰⁴ Caterina did take part in other religious dramatizations. In 1549 she represented Jesus carrying the cross in a procession.¹⁰⁵ During another procession, on the feast of Saint Agnes in 1553, Caterina was dressed as a twelve-year old Jesus.¹⁰⁶ Although the procession of 1549 was a set piece, Caterina was described as being in ecstasy throughout the performance. As with Stefana Quinzani, Elizabeth of Spalbeek, and others who performed stigmata, the ecstatic state was integral to an acceptance of the miraculous nature of Caterina's portrayal of the Passion and the associated markings on her body. According to Guidi:

In these ecstasies Suor Caterina did not only represent how much her bridegroom suffered with her gestures, but she also accompanied him in [her] suffering, and many times one saw her flesh bruised, and scratched, from which one knew that, meditating, she had suffered the pains of the flagellation, and one time her feet, which she kept one over the other as we see in images of the crucified, were seen to have been transfixed by a nail, and all of these were gifts which the Lord performed in order to render her more similar to himself.¹⁰⁷

In describing Caterina's actions and the marks on her body, Guidi, like others before him, had recourse to a comparison with visual art. It was a means of explaining the physical disposition of Caterina's body during her ecstasies and shows how closely the performance of the Passion was linked with visual art in the minds of

102 Scattigno, *Sposa di Cristo*, p. 41.

103 Weaver, *Convent Theatre*, pp. 1–2, 84.

104 Weaver, *Convent Theatre*, p. 53.

105 Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, pp. 191–192.

106 Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, pp. 194–196.

107 Guidi, *Vita della venerabile madre*, p. 18: 'In questi estasi non sola la Madre Suor Caterina con i gesti rappresentava, quanto pativa il suo sposi, ma l'acco[m]pagnava anco nel patire, e molte volte se le videro le carni livide, e scorticate, da che si conosceva che ella medita[n]do haveva patito i dolori della flagellazione, & una volta le furono veduti i piedi trapassati da un chiodo, il quale gli teneva sopraposticome veggiamo nelle immagini del crocifisso, e tutte erano grazie, le quali le faceva il Signore per re[n]derla più simile a se stesso'.

those who supported Caterina. During her ecstasies, Caterina became an image of Christ, one that blurred the line between being and representing, something that, as we have seen, was key in the understanding of some articulated sculptures and was also central to the functioning of miraculous painted images.

Guidi separated the marks that could be seen on Caterina's skin during her ecstasies from her reception of the stigmata, which merited a separate chapter in her *vita*.¹⁰⁸ In it, he explained that the witnesses privileged to see Caterina's stigmata did not all see the same thing. Only ten or twelve of the oldest nuns saw the wounds on her feet, but all of the nuns saw those on her hands. In addition, whilst Caterina could see the stigmata all the time, others were able to see them only when 'it pleased God'. Moreover, these witnesses did not always agree on what they had seen, with some saying the wounds were so bloody that it was difficult to believe they did not stain the things that Caterina touched.¹⁰⁹ The stigmata were also described in a collection put together in the convent of San Vincenzo in 1583 by sister Tommasa Martelli (Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms 2363).¹¹⁰ It recorded that a limited number, sixteen or twenty, of the older nuns saw the wounds on the feet running with blood, which gave rise to amazement and horror.¹¹¹ In this manuscript, a comparison with coins was used to describe the marks on Caterina's hands, which were swollen and red with a darkish centre like a small *quattrino*.¹¹² As already noted, reference to a coin in order to aid description was also used in the case of Stefana Quinzani. I discuss further the use of coins as visual referents in Chapter 7.

Visual art (Guidi's 'as we see in images of the crucified') and other visual media (the *quattrino* in Tommasa Martelli's manuscript) were mentioned almost in passing in descriptions of Caterina's stigmata and ecstasy-performances of the Passion. Emphasis in the *vite* and other records of Caterina's life was on the length and timings of her ecstatic experiences, the *ratti*.¹¹³ The incidental nature of the references to visual art reveal how embedded it was in an understanding of ecstatic embodied Passion experiences. In discussing Caterina's performances, Anna Scattigno has referred to

¹⁰⁸ Guidi, *Vita della venerabile madre*, pp. 39–40.

¹⁰⁹ Guidi, *Vita della venerabile madre*, p. 40: 'Queste sante piaghe da lei erano vedute del continuo, ma da gli altri si vedevano quando piaceva a Dio, e da quelle persone che egli voleva, ne da tutti si vedevano nella medesima forma. A me hanno detto persone degne di fede, che le viddono così sanguinose; che dubitarono, che ella non macchiasse di sangue alcune cose che ella toccava'.

¹¹⁰ Published in Scattigno, *Sposa di Cristo*, pp. 135–265.

¹¹¹ Scattigno, *Sposa di Cristo*, p. 151: '[...] quelle de' piedi 16 o 20 delle più antiche solo le viddono [...] et queste de' piedi generorno più stupor et horror per essere rialto e basso in diversi luoghi di tal piaghe et intra care e pelle rivi di sangue [...]'].

¹¹² Scattigno, *Sposa di Cristo*, p. 151: 'Quelle delle mani erano enfiate e rosse, et nel mezzo un poco di tondo nereggiante quanto un quattrino piccolo [...]'].

¹¹³ See, for example, the discussion in Franchi, 'Caterina de' Ricci'.

the 'closed theatre of the cell'.¹¹⁴ It was here that spectators such as the duchess of Florence Eleonora di Toledo (1522–1562) could come to view Caterina's representation of the Passion.¹¹⁵ Stigmata, spectacle, visions, and visual art were intertwined.¹¹⁶ One of Caterina's early visions of the crucified Christ, in 1541, gave an indication of how she may have been influenced by sculpture. The vision was focused on a crucifix that had been placed in the convent's garden. Serafino Razzi's description of what Caterina saw included details of Christ's hair dripping with blood; the size of the wound in his side, out of which blood poured like a fountain; his head seeming almost as though it was not attached to the rest of his body; his chest so raised that the ribs looked as though they were upright, the whole of his body covered with wounds, with bruises, and with fresh blood; and his hands placed much higher than his body.¹¹⁷ Although Razzi made it clear that it was a vision, the description could be that of a *crucifixus dolorosus*, a type closely connected with the Dominican Order.¹¹⁸

Like the other stigmatics discussed in this chapter, the Carmelite nun Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi, who received the stigmata on 15 April 1585, was subject to ecstasies in which she relived the Passion of Christ.¹¹⁹ Born after the conclusion of the Council of Trent, following which there was an attempt at stricter enforcement of claustration,¹²⁰ her spirituality has been differentiated from those Italian holy women of the early- to mid- sixteenth century, and described as 'intensely private'.¹²¹ Knowledge of her 'performances' was not widely known outside the convent during her lifetime.¹²² However, her actions were routinely followed by a group of at least three nuns who acted as an audience and who were charged with recording her words and actions by Agostino Campi, the confessor for the convent from 1563 to 1591.¹²³ Although her 'spirituality essentially belonged to the Counter-Reformation',¹²⁴

114 Scattigno, *Sposa di Cristo*, p. 27: 'chiuso teatro della cella'.

115 Scattigno, *Sposa di Cristo*, p. 27.

116 See the arguments in Merback, 'Living Image of Pity', pp. 136–137.

117 Razzi, *La vita della reverenda serva di Dio*, p. 60: 'vide come il capo di Giesù, quasi diccolato pendeva di maniera che il santo viso sopra del petto si posava. Et esso petto era cosi alzatosi nel mezzo, che le costole apparivano, come se fossero state ritte. Et i capegli di quà, e di là, e per mezzo del viso gli cadevano, e di sangue grondavano, e somigliante-mente la barba. L'apertura del petto era grandissima, e mandava fuori come un fonte di sangue: & il rimanente del corpo appariva egli ancora tutto lacero, di lividi, e di vivo sangue tinto: Le mani erano molto più alto del corpo'.

118 Kalina, 'Giovanni Pisano'.

119 For a discussion of the ecstasies see Copeland, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, pp. 42–60.

120 For an overview of the enclosure of female religious after the Council of Trent see Leonard, 'Female Religious Orders', pp. 238–243.

121 Maggi, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, p. 2.

122 Maggi, *Uttering the Word*, pp. 8–9; Copeland, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, p. 57.

123 Maggi, *Uttering the Word*, p. 7; Riccardi, 'The Mystic Humanism', p. 214 and p. 229, note 4; Copeland, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, pp. 54–57.

124 Maggi, *Uttering the Word*, p. 9.

her performance of her mystical experiences had similarities with those of earlier Italian holy women in its complex intervisual nature.

Maria Maddalena was also acquainted with some aspects of the convent theatre tradition.¹²⁵ Her ecstasy-performances contained elements of theatricality and of liturgical ritual,¹²⁶ of which processions and re-enactments of the Passion, particularly the Deposition and the Lamentation, were a part.¹²⁷ She moved from room to room in the convent, a practice that was sometimes used in convent theatre.¹²⁸ The nuns who followed Maria Maddalena recorded that:

She walked through the convent going from one room to another, according to the mysteries Jesus suffered, and she did this or that gesture.¹²⁹

Maria Maddalena chose separate places in which to meditate on various aspects of the Passion. This is evident from the descriptions in the 'dialogues' (*I colloqui*), the ecstasies that she experienced between the end of 1584 and the middle of 1585.¹³⁰ As recorded in 'Dialogue 36', which focused on the Passion and lasted from Maundy Thursday until Good Friday,¹³¹ Maria Maddalena used the scriptorium as the location for Jesus's farewell to the Virgin Mary. The highest room in the convent took the place of Mount Zion. The dormitory became the garden of Gethsemene. After reliving the arrest of Jesus, she 'went to another room close to the previous one' where she spoke about Judas and about Peter. The guest rooms were used as Pilate's palace and the choir was the place where Jesus was brought before Herod.¹³² Much of this ecstasy was taken up with two main types of speech: commentary on the events unfolding, and words spoken as if by the original 'actors' in those events, but the final acts of the Passion (the Flagellation, the reception of the crown of thorns, carrying the cross, and Crucifixion) were, according to the nun-scribes, shown 'more through her walking and external acts than through her actual words'.¹³³ During 'Dialogue 36' Maria Maddalena alternated between various personae, sometimes taking the part of Christ, at other times addressing him or his mother or one of the apostles. She also used sculptures and other devotional art from within the convent

125 Elissa Weaver has quoted a letter written by Maria Maddalena in which she refers to returning a copy of a play lent to her by a nun in the convent of San Giovannino delle Cavalieresse di Malta. See Weaver, *Convent Theatre*, p. 72.

126 Barzman, 'Gender, Religious Representation and Cultural Production', p. 223.

127 Paoletti, 'Wooden Sculpture in Italy'.

128 Weaver, *Convent Theatre*, pp. 76, 79.

129 I have used the translation in Maggi, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, p. 97.

130 Copeland, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, p. 47.

131 Maggi, *Uttering the Word*, pp. 29–30.

132 Maggi, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, pp. 97–123.

133 Maggi, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, p. 116.

as part of her 'performance'. Vincenzo Puccini, who acted as confessor to the nuns of Maria Maddalena's convent of Santa Maria degli Angeli and was in that position at the time of her death, related in her *vita* that on one occasion:

she ran quickly into the choir where there was the crucified on top of a cornice, and climbing up there she removed him/it from the cross with incredible agility. She then sat down holding it/him in her lap and, removing the veils from her head she used them to dry the sweat and the blood which appeared to her to run from her beloved bridegroom.¹³⁴

At another time Maria Maddalena:

went into the choir to a chapel of the Blessed Virgin and having opened the altar grill [...] took in her arms that devout image of Jesus, and having stripped it of some decorations, said: I want you naked, o my Jesus [...] I want your humanity naked, naked.¹³⁵

On 12 June 1584, during the 'forty days', as recorded by her sister nuns, Maria Maddalena:

jumped out of bed, took a small crucifix that she keeps on her altar and started to run around the room screaming 'Love love love'. [...] She stared at the crucifix often, looking as if she were in an excess of mind. Then she stood up, hugged it, and pressed it against her breast [...].¹³⁶

Running around the room with the crucifix 'pressed against her breast' happened a number of times during the 'forty days'.¹³⁷ By the time Maria Maddalena was using her 'props' they were an integral part of the ritual life of many convents. In his life

134 Puccini, *Vita della Madre Suor Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, p. 19: '[...] correva velocemente in coro dove sopra un cornicione era un Crocifisso, e quivi sagliendo, lo sconficava di Croce con incredibile agilità. Postasi poi a sedere lo teneva in grembo, e levatisi i veli di capo rasciugava con quelli il sudore, ed il sangue, che le pareva vedere spargere dall'amato Sposo'. I have quoted from the edition of the *vita* published in 1611, which was expanded from the original *vita* published in 1609. Clare Copeland has noted that the *vita* was a 'collaborative venture' with significant use of the nuns' transcriptions of Maria Maddalena's ecstasies. See Copeland, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, p. 85.

135 Puccini, *Vita della Madre Suor Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, p. 34: '[...] se n'andò in Coro ad una Cappella della Beata Vergine, e aperte le grate dell'Altare, [...] presa nelle sue braccia quella divota immagine di Giesù, e spogliandola d'alcuni ornamenti disse. Ti voglio nudo, ò Giesù mio [...] Voglio la tua umanità nuda, nuda'.

136 Maggi, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, p. 61.

137 For example, Maggi, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, pp. 65, 75.

of Caterina de'Ricci published in 1591, Serafino Razzi described some elements of the lives of the nuns in Caterina's convent of San Vincenzo. There were specific rituals which were appropriate to Good Friday, for instance. In the case of sister Maria da Reggio, Razzi tells us:

it sometimes happened that when the sisters dressed her up on Good Friday as a widowed Virgin, and placed dead Jesus in her arms to represent the day's mystery, she, because of her noble and pious contemplation, fainted.¹³⁸

Richard Trexler has noted here that, 'the pictorial Pietà motif seems to have been exactly reproduced'.¹³⁹ There is a slippage between re-living the event, re-enacting the event, re-presenting the event, and representing the event.

The agility with which it was reported that Maria Maddalena was able to remove the body of Christ from the cross in order to cradle it in her arms may indicate that this was something which she had done a number of times or it may have been a result of her ecstatic state. During the Crucifixion sequence, however, she acted *as* Christ more than *as* herself, repeating Christ's words with only a few of her own interspersed amongst them.¹⁴⁰

Maria Maddalena's performances led the nuns who acted as her amanuenses and chronicled her actions to believe that she had received invisible stigmata. In 'Dialogue 30', the nun-scribes recorded that, on Easter Monday, Maria Maddalena:

held her hands open, staring at a figure of Jesus that she had on top of her bedstead; she looked like Saint Catherine of Siena. So, we thought that at that point Jesus gave her his holy stigmata.¹⁴¹

Just as Bartolomeo Dominici had understood Catherine of Siena's movements in Santa Cristina in Pisa in relation to images of Saint Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata, so the Carmelite nuns of Santa Maria degli Angeli made sense of Maria Maddalena's movements in relation to images of Catherine of Siena.¹⁴²

Ziegler, in her work on northern European holy women, concluded that ecstatic mysticism was 'fundamentally artistic in nature' and should be considered in

138 This section of the *vita* is quoted in Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, p. 191.

139 Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, p. 47, note 15.

140 Maggi, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, pp. 120–122.

141 Maggi, *Uttering the Word*, p. 34.

142 Copeland has noted that in the *vita* Puccini chose to compare the position of Maria Maddalena's body when she received the stigmata to that of Saint Francis of Assisi. See Copeland, *Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi*, pp. 92–93.

'predominantly visual and artistic terms'.¹⁴³ The female stigmatics and their witnesses or followers discussed in this chapter engaged with a range of visual arts. The stigmatics performed their experiences in ways that demonstrated knowledge of religious theatre, used props, and interacted with painted or sculpted images; and were, in turn, acted upon by their audience: they reflected in their movements known images or types of imagery and were understood through this knowledge. References to visual art in the *vitae* of these women and other documents recording aspects of their stigmatic spirituality tend not to reflect on the visibility of their stigmatic performance but rather to note it almost in passing. This is indicative of the extent to which visual knowledge and the ability to use it in an intervisual manner was embedded in the lives of the holy women discussed here and their contemporaries.

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¹⁴³ Ziegler, 'On the Artistic Nature', p. 182.

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7. Painting, Printing, Sculpting, Forgery (and Washing)

Abstract

The display of stigmata in images was subject to scrutiny, debate, controversy, and censorship. Conversely, when stigmata were described or discussed in texts their visual qualities could be emphasized using multiple strategies. This chapter explores ways in which texts brought visibility to bear on contemporary understandings of female stigmatics, arguing that an emphasis on the visual and the use of comparisons and juxtapositions with visual art were crucial elements in the formulation, interrogation, and understanding of stigmatic identity, genuine or fraudulent. Ways of construing stigmata in textual material were related to the variety of stigmatic experience, the diversity of the physical appearance of the stigmata, and the number of stigmatics as well as understandings of images and image making.

Keywords: visibility, Veronica, coins, seals, fraud

The display of stigmata in images was subject to scrutiny, debate, controversy, and censorship. Conversely, when stigmata were described or discussed in texts, including hagiographies, their visual qualities could be emphasized using a variety of strategies. This chapter considers some of the ways in which texts brought visibility to bear on contemporary understandings of female stigmatics, arguing that an emphasis on the visual and the use of comparisons and juxtapositions with visual art – including painting, printing, and sculpting – were crucial elements in the formulation, interrogation, and understanding of stigmatic identity, genuine or fraudulent. The ways of construing stigmata in textual material were related to the variety of stigmatic experience, the diversity of the physical appearance of the stigmata, and the number of stigmatics as well as understandings of images and image making. This is, therefore, a messy subject that can appear to frustrate attempts to build a coherent narrative or trajectory.¹ Yet it is precisely within this

1 On mess and research methods see Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*.

mess that it is possible to discern the thread that demonstrates, in diverse ways, the importance of visuality and the visual arts in relation to attempts to understand and interpret stigmata.

The process of stigmatization was one in which the recipient became, in some sense, an image of Christ crucified, as discussed in relation to Saint Francis of Assisi in Chapter 2. Jeffrey Hamburger, referring to the stigmatic Cistercian nun Lukardis of Oberweimar (d. 1309), noted that she was 'not merely a living image of the triumphant Christ who will display his wounds at the second coming, she [was] a living cult image, visible to all the faithful, carved, like Christ, with the signs of the stigmata'.² There were many different ways in which men and women could become living images of Christ, and those who wrote on the subject, such as Tommaso Caffarini and Gregorio Lombardelli, recognized and itemized the typology and levels of stigmata. All made the holy person an image of Christ to the extent that her/his body changed through their faith and desire to experience Christ's suffering.

Where Christ had directly applied or imposed stigmata, he could be considered an artist marking bodies with incised wounds or forming wounds in an additive sculptural process. The idea of God the Father as Creator, and the supreme artist and image-maker, was echoed here but in a significantly different way.³ Whilst God had formed the world and its creatures out of an inchoate mass (Genesis 1:2), Christ miraculously imprinted his wounds onto his followers. He had not created things out of the 'formless and empty' earth. Rather, he had made alterations to something that already existed, changing or adding to it. Thus, the body used as a medium for a miracle could also be understood as a support for an image and as an image.⁴

As noted in previous chapters, stigmatics were not all granted the same wounds, and they were sometimes, as in the case of Lukardis of Oberweimar, imposed over a period of time.⁵ Nonetheless, all received marks that reflected in some way the wounds Christ had endured during his Passion. To that extent, those stigmatics who received miraculous marks formed a limited edition of imperfect or flawed impressions of Christ. They shared features with the *Veronica*, the veil that, according to legend, had received a miraculous impression of Christ's face.⁶ They were

2 Hamburger, 'Seeing and Believing', p. 55.

3 David Ganz has commented on God as 'the prime author or artist' of Francis's stigmata. See Ganz, 'The Dilemma of a Saint's Portrait', p. 243. I argue that for stigmatics of the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there was a differentiation between God as a creator who made something new and God/Christ as someone who im/prints an already existing image, of Christ, onto a holy person.

4 Belting, 'Saint Francis and the Body as Image', pp. 3–14.

5 For a brief discussion of Lukardis of Oberweimar see Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 121–123. Others whose stigmata appeared or were imposed over time included the Mantuan stigmatic Osanna Andreasi (1449–1505). See Muessig, *The Stigmata*, p. 200.

6 The history of the *Veronica* is complex. See Katherine T. Brown, *The Legend of the Veronica in Early Modern Art*; Kuryluk, *Veronica and Her Cloth*. See also Wolf, 'From Mandylyon to Veronica'.



57. Fabio Angelucci da Mevale, *Madonna and Child with Saints Joseph, Anthony of Padua, Francis of Assisi and the Archangel Gabriel*, 1577, fresco, San Francesco, Trevi, Perugia.

imprinted with Christ and yet also separate from Christ, since they did not take the full impression of the Saviour's body, just a part of it. The connection between the imprint of Christ's face on Veronica's veil and of his wounds on stigmatics has been alluded to rarely in visual art. However, a fresco from 1577 in the Franciscan church of San Francesco in Trevi in Perugia does appear to make this link (fig. 57). The *Madonna and Child with Saints* by Fabio Angelucci da Mevale (active 1568–1603) takes up the entirety of a niche near the counter-façade. The top register, in the lunette, shows Christ carrying the cross. As we look at the fresco, he faces to the right looking towards Saint Veronica, who kneels facing back towards him, carrying



58. Nikolaus Tzafouris, *The Diamond Triptych (Mandyllion, Saint George Slaying the Dragon, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Anthony of Padua, the Deësis)*, detail of open triptych with *Deësis* (middle), *Saint Francis* (left wing), *Saint Anthony of Padua* (right wing), after 1453, egg tempera on wood, central panel 27.3 x 22.2 cm, side panels 20.3 x 15.2 cm. Private collection.

her veil already imprinted with the image of his face. Below this, the main register of the fresco depicts the Virgin and Child with the Archangel Gabriel and Saint Joseph standing to either side of them, and Saints Francis of Assisi and Anthony of Padua kneeling in the foreground. Kneeling to the left, Saint Francis looks up towards both the Virgin and Child and, in the same line of sight, Saint Veronica. Thus, a link is established between Francis and Veronica's veil.

An earlier painting from Venetian-ruled Crete has a similar link between Francis and an image of Christ, in this case the *mandylion*, the imprinted image of Christ on cloth that had healed King Agbar of Edessa (d. circa 50) (figs. 58 and 59).⁷ The small triptych, painted in the second half of the fifteenth century (after 1453), has a central image of the Byzantine Deësis flanked by side panels of Francis of Assisi and Anthony of Padua. The left wing of the triptych is designed to close first so that the image on the back of the panel of Saint Francis, Saint George killing the dragon, is seen with the open panel of Anthony of Padua. With the triptych fully closed only the image on the reverse of the panel of Anthony of Padua can be seen, which is the *mandylion*.⁸ However, small, hinged paintings such as this could be

7 On the *mandylion* see the essays in Kessler and Wolf, *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, particularly that of Drijvers, 'The Image of Edessa in the Syriac Tradition'. Lymberopoulou, 'The Fogg Triptych', p. 63 notes that to Western eyes, the image could have functioned as a *Veronica*.

8 Lymberopoulou, 'The Fogg Triptych', pp. 60–63.



59. Nikolaus Tzafouris, *The Diamond Triptych* (*Mandylion, Saint George Slaying the Dragon, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Anthony of Padua, the Deësis*), detail of closed triptych with *Mandylion* (external right wing), after 1453, egg tempera on wood, 27.3 x 22.2 cm. Private collection.

opened and closed in different ways as aids to meditation and in one of the possible positions for the triptych Saint Francis faces toward the *mandylion*.

These two paintings help to demonstrate the link between the Veronica and the *mandylion*, as true images and relics of Christ made through contact with Christ's body, and Francis, as a true image of Christ by reason of his miraculous stigmata.⁹

⁹ The role of the Franciscans in incorporating Saint Veronica into the Stations of the Cross is investigated by Katherine T. Brown, *The Legend of the Veronica in Early Modern Art*.

In both cases, either on a textile support or on a living body as support, the result was an image not made by human hand.

An understanding of stigmatics as miraculous partial images of Christ was not solely reliant on a comparison to other miraculous images but was frequently achieved through reference to human craft. The Dominican Luís de Granada (1504–1588) described the wounds of the Portuguese stigmatic María de la Visitación (1551–after 1603) through a comparison with the work of painters.¹⁰ He detailed how, on the feast day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September) in 1584, María had received nails through her hands.¹¹ He went on to say that there was:

a circle like a rose the colour of a ruby around the nails, although lighter, and more beautiful. And this rose was in the palm of one hand and of the other; in the way that painters, after having painted a perfect image on a panel, adorn it with a trim of gold or something else with which to encircle the image.¹²

The description evoked the nails as sculptural. They transfixed María's hands, passing from one side to the other. At the same time, they were an image which it was appropriate to frame. The precious 'frame' recalled the ways in which some miraculous images were provided with silver or silver-gilt revetments that partially covered the painting beneath and, by doing so, drew attention to particular aspects of the picture.¹³ Luís de Granada's account demonstrated that, for him, there was a sense in which the stigmata functioned as images.

María de la Visitación's stigmata were later judged to be deceptions, self-imposed.¹⁴ The overlapping of miracle and image in Luís de Granada's text thus became problematical as her stigmata changed: from true relic with a 'frame', understood by analogy with the work of a painter, to forged relic. The differences between modern concepts of forgery and plagiarism and those of the Middle Ages have been skilfully discussed by Giles Constable. He noted that the attitude towards

10 On Luís de Granada and María de la Visitación, see Fernandez, *Anxieties of Inferiority and Dissection in Early Modern Spain*, pp. 59–66. Luís de Granada believed María's stigmata but was forced to revisit his opinion at the very end of his life.

11 Luís de Granada, *Historia de Sor María de la Visitación*, p. 122: 'comenzaron a nacerle clavos en medio de las manos y llagas que pasan de parte a parte, y han ido creciendo hasta agora'.

12 Luís de Granada, *Historia de Sor María de la Visitación*, pp. 122–123: 'un círculo como una rosa de color de un rubí, aunque más claro, que los hermosea. Y vese esta rosa de la banda de la mano y de otra; de modo que así como los pintores, después de haber pintado una perfecta imagen en una tabla, la adornan con una guranición de oro o de otra cosa con que está cercada la imagen'.

13 As noted by Kirstin Noreen, there is relatively little scholarship on metal revetments. See Noreen, 'Re-Covering Christ in Late Medieval Rome', p. 132, note 37.

14 MacInnes, 'Stigmata on Trial'.

false relics was the ‘closest medieval parallel to modern forgery of art’.¹⁵ Those who forge art claim credit for works that were, or should have been, the invention of another. Forgers not only gain profit from items that have been made to look like the work of another, they also take over aspects of the identity of the artist whose work or style they have copied. This type of deceit is a deliberate betrayal of trust. The art forger’s pre-meditated and purposeful telling of a lie has parallels to the medieval and early modern promotion of spurious relics.¹⁶ Bogus relics and counterfeit art lose their efficacy and value in a way that is not necessarily the case for other copied artefacts. This is because such items are intended to deceive rather than relay information.¹⁷ Many paintings, buildings, and sculptures of the Middle Ages and Renaissance maintained authority and meaning whilst the original material object was replaced. Nagel and Wood have described this as thinking “doubly” about artifacts’.¹⁸ However, relics cannot be substituted without negating their significance and power.¹⁹

In the case of stigmatics, there was an added layer of complexity in that recipients of miraculous stigmata could be images and relics at the same time. Their status as relics came from the imposition of the stigmata through direct contact with Christ (as ‘contact relics’). They were images in that they were a portrayal of Christ’s wounds on the support of the saint’s body (and so relayed knowledge). In view of the stigmatic’s status as a holy person and bearer of miraculous wounds, however, the issue of substitution did not arise, since he or she became, in effect, a venerated image, a demarcation that meant that there could be no substitution.²⁰

Miraculous stigmata on the body of a holy person could transform that person into a venerated image and, in turn, painted images of the holy man or woman were commissioned. These, too, could be miraculous, as discussed in Chapter 2, but many more were not. They relayed information about holy person’s stigmata and thus could be copied and substituted whilst also functioning to consolidate belief. This was necessary because the contested nature of stigmata meant that they were the focus of continuous doubt and emphatic trust: the miracle of the reception of the stigmata appeared to prove extraordinary faith and intimacy with Christ, yet at the same time provoked the need to ascertain their veracity. These were issues that had been the focus of discussions in relation to Saint Francis and were pertinent to all stigmatics but were particularly focused on women. Apart from the concerted effort,

15 Constable, ‘Forgery and Plagiarism in the Middle Ages’, pp. 6–7.

16 As noted by Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, p. 282, the concept of art forgery is linked to the development of markets in art and antiquities, in other words to value placed on specific items.

17 Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, p. 284, ‘deception [...] is the criterion of forgery’.

18 Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, p. 31.

19 On ‘substitution’ and meaning see Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, pp. 29–34.

20 Nagel and Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, p. 83.

on the part of the Franciscans, to claim that their founder's stigmata were unique, the argument was also put forward that women, *qua* women, were incapable of bearing stigmata: since Christ was a man, it was impossible for a woman to re-present Christ, an issue not only of corporeal dissimilarity but also of mental capacity.

Body modification, through human or divine means, in order to present with the symptoms of stigmatization gave what many considered could only be male characteristics since it was Christ, the son of God, whose crucified body they reflected. The link between Christ as a man and his crucifixion was indissoluble and women, therefore, were believed by some to be unable to bear Christ's wounds.²¹ For those who took this position, it was clear that any woman who claimed to have received miraculous stigmata must be accounted a fraud. Women's inability to take on Christ's wounds could be related to medical opinions influential in western Antiquity before and after Christ's time, such as those of Aristotle (384–322 BCE), and Galen (circa 129–200 CE), which construed women as imperfect males.²² The view that women were somehow inferior, weak, and less perfectly formed than men was advanced in the thirteenth century by Thomas Aquinas, who followed Aristotelian principles in stating that females were formed when there was some sort of flaw in the male creative force or the material on which it acted.²³ The idea within medical discourse that women were physiologically wanting survived into the Renaissance, for example in the *Fasciculus Medicinæ* (*Little Collection of Medicine*) published in Venice in 1491. This compilation of earlier medical texts made it clear that females were defective males and, as such, could be viewed as monstrous.²⁴ Such creatures were, physiologically, unsuitable vessels for stigmata, which could only be granted to men, formed like Christ.

Similar conclusions could be drawn from a theological standpoint. In the creation narrative at the beginning of the Old Testament, Eve had been formed from Adam's rib specifically as his companion (Genesis 2:18–22). She had come from the same matter as man, but Adam's naming of her had given him authority over her; that she was made from a part of Adam further emphasized her lesser status. In the New Testament, the letters of the apostle Paul also reinforced woman's subordinate status (1 Corinthians 14:34). These and other biblical and patristic texts enabled writers like the Franciscans Bartholomew of Pisa,²⁵ and Samuele Cassini (circa 1450–d. after 1510) to claim stigmatization as a miracle suitable only for men.²⁶

21 See the discussion in Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 198–199.

22 Thatcher, *God, Sex, and Gender*, pp. 9–10.

23 Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, pp. 7–9.

24 Johannes de Ketham, *The Fasciculus Medicinæ*, pp. 15, 54.

25 Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 138–142.

26 Samuele Cassini is discussed, with further bibliography, in Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 3–4. See also the discussion in Herzig, 'Genuine and Fraudulent Stigmatics in the Sixteenth Century'.

But there were also those who believed that, by following Christ, women could move towards a more perfect state and that this could include the reception of miraculous stigmata. The Dominican Francesco Silvestri (circa 1474–1528), a supporter and hagiographer of the Mantuan stigmatic Osanna Andreasi (1449–1505),²⁷ had planned to write a tract proving that women could receive stigmata.²⁸ His co-religionist, the Spanish Vincente Justiniano Antist (d. 1599), in his *Pro Divae Catharinae Senensis Imaginibus Disputatio*, pointed out the inclusivity in biblical precedents such as ‘with God, all things are possible’ (Matthew 19:26) and that there ‘is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (Galatians 3:28).²⁹ Such opinions chimed, in part, with the views of some medical experts. The French barber-surgeon Ambrose Paré (d. 1590) related several tales where girls had become men around the age of puberty. This ‘progression’ was possible because nature allowed females to move from their defective state to the more perfect male state. In Paré’s view it was not possible for a male to ‘deteriorate’ into a female since nature always worked to improve itself.³⁰

For those who believed that it was possible for women to receive miraculous stigmata it was important that the stigmata were verified. Church authorities frequently proceeded from a basis of guilty until proven innocent.³¹ The stakes were high since those who did receive miraculous stigmata became living relics and were esteemed as such. The desire to ‘own’ such a relic was evidenced in the efforts contemporary rulers made to entice or persuade some stigmatics to move within their jurisdiction.³² The Dominican tertiary Lucia Brocadelli da Narni (1476–1544) received her stigmata in Viterbo during Passion Week in 1496.³³ To entice her away, Ercole d’Este (d. 1505), Duke of Ferrara, invited her to lead a new convent that he planned to build especially for her. In order to reach Ferrara, Lucia had had to leave Viterbo in secret.³⁴ The Venetian authorities offered Stefana Quinzani (d. 1530), discussed in the previous chapter, the opportunity to go to Venice as the head of a convent there, but she declined.³⁵ Those who claimed miraculous stigmata but

27 Silvestri wrote *La vita e stupea di miraculi dela [sic] gloriosa virgine Osanna Mantuana del terzo Ordine de Frati Predicatori*, published in Milan in 1507. For a discussion of Osanna Andreasi with further bibliography see Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 196–204.

28 Ghirardi, ‘Osanna Andreasi e Isabella d’Este’, p. 71.

29 Antist, *Pro Divae Caterinae Senensis imaginibus disputatio*, pp. 452–453.

30 Paré, *The Works of that Famous Chirugion Ambrose Parey*, pp. 656–657.

31 Eliav-Feldon, *Renaissance Imposters and Proofs of Identity*, p. 150.

32 Zarri, *Le sante vive*, pp. 51–85. See also the discussion in Muessig, *The Stigmata*, pp. 196–205.

33 Herzog, ‘Stigmatized Holy Women as Female Christs’, p. 160.

34 Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara*, p. 176. The relationship between Ercole d’Este and Lucia Brocadelli da Narni has been considered by E. Ann Matter. See Matter, ‘Prophetic Patronage as Repression’.

35 Details of the invitation to direct a convent in Venice are given in the *vita* of Stefana Quinzani. See Guerrini, *La prima ‘legenda volgare’ de la beata Stefana Quinzani*, p. 125 (Chapter 27). For a discussion of

whose 'wounds' were self-imposed were censured and denounced. By claiming a miracle where none had occurred, false stigmatics attempted to procure power for which they had no divine mandate. Their stigmata were forgeries not made through the agency of Christ, who owned 'copyright' since the wounds were originally his, but through their own fraudulent actions.

This issue of potential fraud made the visual appearance of stigmata critical. With the notable exception of those of Saint Catherine of Siena, most stigmata could be seen with the viewer's bodily eyes. Their appearance and their description were important since what people saw was linked to knowledge and belief, both of which affected the interpretation of what was seen.³⁶ The changed appearance of women through stigmata enabled them to wield power normally reserved for men. However, this power would only be legitimate if the stigmata were genuinely miraculous, a demonstration of God's intervention in the affairs of humanity.³⁷ The relationship of sight to miracles was important not only in terms of verification, but also in relation to understanding.³⁸ What could be seen was evidence of the miraculous and, as such, was also a route to knowledge of God. This meant that stigmatics were frequently subjected to close visual inspections and to written descriptions that sought to delve into the epistemic power of the stigmata and embodied visualization. These investigations engaged with an understanding of the practice of art and used that awareness as a means through which to access and interpret types of stigmata. Thus, in considering the nature of women's stigmata within a visual regime, a number of issues came into play. Those who attempted to verify stigmata, or who considered their veracity through sight, engaged with a complex mesh of visuality, belief, and proof.

María de la Visitación's stigmata allowed her a central position in Spanish and Portuguese politics. She had blessed the flag before the Spanish Armada left, in May 1588, on its ill-fated expedition to facilitate an invasion of England, the Marquis of Santa Cruz having refused to allow its departure without her benediction.³⁹ Born in 1551 as María de Meneses, she came from a prominent Portuguese family and entered the Dominican convent of Nossa Senhora da Anunciada in Lisbon in 1562. In 1575, María began to receive visions and to become subject to ecstatic experiences. She also claimed to have received the stigmata over a number of years, starting with the

sources for Stefana Quinzani's life, see Chapter 6 'Performing Stigmata', note 96, with further details in Simonetti, 'Le vite e gli agiografi della beata Stefana Quinzani'.

36 See the discussion in Robert S. Nelson, 'Introduction: Descartes's Cow', p. 2.

37 For an overview of miracles see Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, pp. 335–339. Other useful discussions of miracles are found in Hardon, 'The Concept of Miracle'; Goodich, *Miracles and Wonders*, pp. 8–28.

38 Ward, 'Miracles in the Middle Ages', pp. 161–162.

39 MacInnes, 'Stigmata on Trial', p. 381.

crown of thorns and, later, wounds on her hands, feet, and side.⁴⁰ These wounds had given María spiritual and, potentially, temporal power but had also ensured a high level of surveillance. She survived an investigation that lasted from November 1577 to April 1588 but was not so fortunate when another investigation, begun in August 1588, ascertained that her wounds were fraudulent. It was alleged that the stigmata had been a plot, supported by the Dominicans, to end the Portuguese succession crisis by forcing Philip II of Spain to hand over Portugal to Don Antonio.⁴¹

The first investigation into the stigmata, which had involved María's confessor Gaspar de Aveiro, her biographer Luís de Granada, and the Master of the Dominicans in Portugal Sixto Fabri (1540–1594), did not uncover any deception. However, the inquiry that started in August 1588 found that María's wounds were faked, specifically that they were painted onto her body. The inquisitors had been able to wash them off with soap and water. According to the report the 'said signs of the wounds were painted with red colour and the nails with black colour'.⁴² María confessed that she had painted them herself and that, in order to make them more convincing, she had dabbed a little of her own blood onto the red pigment.⁴³ Her forged stigmata did not alter her body since she had applied paint to the body's surface. Not only were her 'wounds' not miraculous, they were not even wounds, nor were they nails as had been described by Luís de Granada. And yet María originally claimed that she had received the stigmata during a vision of Christ on the cross. In an echo of Catherine of Siena's reception of the stigmata, burning rays of fire had come from Christ's wounds to wound María's hands, feet, and side causing 'her so much pain that she thought she would die'.⁴⁴ That miraculous stigmata caused pain was acknowledged.⁴⁵ However, pain was not something that was immediately visible. Miraculous wounds and the distress associated with them could be better understood through visual signs and, whether or not the account of the vision was true, it was these signs that María had provided.

Other stigmatics and alleged stigmatics had their wounds tested through attempts to wash them. Water might be expected to remove pigments placed on the skin and to uncover any actual wounds beneath dried blood, or what was alleged to be

40 Hermann, 'Between Prophecy and Politics', pp. 115–119.

41 MacInnes, 'Stigmata on Trial', p. 381. On the Portuguese succession crisis see Cueto, '1580 and All That ...'.

42 Quoted in MacInnes, 'Stigmata on Trial', p. 384. See also Imirizaldu, *Monjas y beatas embaucadoras*, pp. 187–188.

43 Haliczzer, *Between Exaltation and Infamy*, p. 22.

44 Luís de Granada, *Historia de Sor María de la Visitación*, p. 122: '[...] y fue el dolor que sintió tan grande, que le pareció morir'.

45 Stephen Haliczzer has cited the case of a fraudulent stigmatic whose claims that he had received the stigmata in a pleasant way was reason to reject their veracity. See Haliczzer, *Between Exaltation and Infamy*, pp. 127–128.

dried blood. Benedetta Carlini (1591–1661), a Theatine nun in the convent of Santa Maria Madre di Dio in Pescia, claimed to have received miraculous stigmata in 1618. Her companion Bartolomea Crivelli, who had been present, described what she had seen:

And I lifted her and I saw that she had some red marks like small rosettes on her hands, feet, and side, and she had a deep red band around her head but it was bloodless.⁴⁶

When Benedetta was investigated by the provost of Pescia, Stefano Cecchi, in 1619, his most important task was to check on the veracity of the miraculous nature of the stigmata.⁴⁷ Like María de la Visitación, Benedetta had claimed that they had been imposed on her during the course of receiving a vision.⁴⁸ During his first examination of her head, hands, feet, and side, Cecchi saw dried blood. Warm water was used to wash the blood away, at which fresh blood oozed out.⁴⁹ The previous day, Benedetta, speaking as Christ, had asserted that the stigmata on her hands and head would turn into open wounds.⁵⁰ Cecchi returned ten days after the first inspection and once again his focus was on the stigmata, which were found to have changed in that there appeared to be signs of healing on the head and on the right hand, which did not bleed when washed.⁵¹ Throughout the investigation there was a concentration on the appearance of the alleged stigmata. The documents of the investigation, published by Judith Brown, stated that the stigmata were inspected time and again and each time their appearance was carefully noted. On 14 June 1619 the left hand and foot were found to have dried blood on them. When they were washed it was possible to see the wounds from which the blood had issued and they began to bleed again. On 8 July Benedetta's hands and feet were examined but not the wound in the side. On 23 July blood was seen to come out of the back of both of her hands. There was also a significant quantity of fresh blood that came from the wound in the side.⁵²

Another woman whose stigmata were tested by washing was the Dominican tertiary Lucia Brocadelli da Narni. According to the *vita* published by her fellow Dominican Giacomo Marcianese, Lucia had been accused of using acid (in this case

46 Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts*, p. 58.

47 Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts*, pp. 75–99.

48 Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts*, pp. 56–57.

49 Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts*, p. 76.

50 Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts*, p. 71.

51 Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts*, p. 77.

52 Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts*, pp. 142–148.

aqua forte or nitric acid) to fake her stigmata.⁵³ Marcianese was writing at a time when Lucia's reputation as a holy woman was being restored, after a period during which she had either faded into the background or had been actively denigrated.⁵⁴ He was at pains to record that what the nuns, who had spied on her, saw was an illusion perpetrated by the devil rather than an attempt by Lucia to delude her contemporaries. Nonetheless, his narrative reflected doubts that had been raised during Lucia's lifetime.

Lucia had powerful supporters and, unlike María de la Visitación and Benedetta Carlini, was never officially labelled a fraud. Letters by Ercole d'Este (1431–1505) and Ippolito d'Este (1479–1520) supporting the veracity of her stigmata were included in Heinrich Kramer's (c. 1430–1505) compilation, the *Stigmifere virginis Lucie de Narnia aliarumque spiritualium personarum feminei sexus facta admiracione digna (Deeds of the stigmatic Virgin Lucia of Narni and of other persons of the female sex that are worthy of admiration)* published in Wrocław (Breslau) in 1501.⁵⁵ The letters were also published in Valladolid and Seville in 1502, ensuring that support for the miraculous nature of her wounds was known across Europe.⁵⁶ Lucia's stigmata were inspected a number of times. According to Marcianese, after she received them in 1496, the Bishop of Castro and Lucia's confessor Fra Tommaso da Viterbo inspected the wounds and the bishop washed them with warm wine.⁵⁷ The wine may have served a dual purpose. If there had been an attempt to deceive through painting wounds onto the skin then the wine would have washed away any 'wound'. However, the bishop may have had some medical knowledge and subscribed to the view that bathing a wound with warm wine would have promoted its healing.⁵⁸ If this was the case, he must have suspected that the wounds were real, possibly self-inflicted, but not miraculous.⁵⁹

The types of washing undergone by María de la Visitación, Benedetta Carlini, and Lucia Brocadelli da Narni differed. María's alleged stigmata were tested with soap and water, Benedetta's with warm water, and Lucia's with warm wine. In the latter case this appeared to have been connected to contemporary medical practice in

53 Marcianese's work was first published as *Narratione della nascita, vita, e morte della B. Lucia da Narni dell'ordine di San Domenico, fondatrice del monastero di S. Caterina da Siena di Ferrara* in 1616. I reference the 1663 edition, *Vita della B. Lucia di Narni*, pp. 210–212.

54 There is some debate as to whether, after the death of Ercole d'Este in 1505, Lucia's reputation as a stigmatic had suffered in her lifetime as much as her seventeenth-century hagiographers suggested. See Herzig, *Savonarola's Women*, p. 138.

55 Herzig, *Christ Transformed into a Virgin Woman*, 158. I have used the translation of the title given by Herzig in 'Fear and Devotion in the Writings of Heinrich Institoris', p. 28.

56 Herzig, *Christ Transformed into a Virgin Woman*, p. 242.

57 Marcianese, *Vita della B. Lucia di Narni*, p. 112.

58 Herndon, 'A Note on Medieval Wound Treatment', pp. 215–217.

59 See the discussion in Warr, 'Changing Stigmata', pp. 55–57.

healing wounds. For Benedetta, washing the wounds with warm water had allowed those present to see whether there were real wounds underneath the caked blood on her skin. For María, the use of soap and water implied an expectation that the wounds had been painted on, that they were 'dirt' which needed to be removed. The case of María de la Visitación was unusual in its emphasis on fraud through the use of pigment rather than through some sort of self-harm.

The ability of pigment to deceive was connected to the desire of the women who used it, or were accused of using it, to change the appearance of their bodies. It is demonstrated most clearly in the case of María de la Visitación who acted as an artist-creator on her own body, using it as a canvas in order to fashion a powerful new identity. Her actions were connected to those women who used paint, that is to say cosmetics, to change their appearance in order to better attain contemporary ideas of beauty and thus to attain a measure of power through display.⁶⁰ Medieval and Renaissance commentators did not universally condemn women who wore make-up. Thomas Aquinas allowed women to use cosmetics in order to cover up signs of illness and to please their husbands, and this rationale was used by other authors.⁶¹ The justification survived into the sixteenth century.⁶² However, many opposed make-up under any circumstances. Juan Luis Vives (1493–1540), in his *De institutione feminae* (*The Education of a Christian Woman*), advised unmarried women not to use cosmetics in order to attract a husband. According to Vives, the use of 'white lead and purple pigment' was madness if it was applied for personal pleasure and was stupidity if it was applied to please the opposite sex. Make-up was a 'disguise', a 'mask' painted on to ensure that others were not aware of a person's true appearance.⁶³ Vives argued that:

God gave you a human face in the image of his Son [...] If the apostle Paul forbids a man to cover his head because it is the image of God, what do you think he would say of the image of God in a woman's face befouled by that muck?⁶⁴

For Vives and other writers of the period, women who used cosmetics insulted God's creation of them 'in His own image' (Genesis 1:27).⁶⁵ Women who faked stigmata

60 In this respect, the work of Phillippy, *Painting Women*, esp. pp. 7–14, is instructive.

61 See Brundage, 'Sumptuary Laws and Prostitution in Late Medieval Italy', p. 345.

62 Spicer, "'A fare bella': The Visual and Material Cultures of Cosmetics', pp. 46–47, and, more generally, the discussion in Chapter 1, 'Moralising Cosmetics', pp. 25–57.

63 Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, pp. 94–95.

64 Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, p. 96.

65 Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, p. 96. Vives cited Jerome. Cyprian of Carthage (circa 210–258) also viewed the use of cosmetics as an affront to God's work. See Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, p. 37.

through the application of coloured pigment used it in a way that made them appear physically similar to the crucified Christ. They became living paintings of Christ. Yet by doing so they disguised themselves, altering their appearance so that they were not as God had intended. Women who painted deceived.

This link between painting and deceiving is underscored by the Protestant critique of saints apparent in a satirical woodcut, attributed to Tobias Stimmer, showing Saint Francis's body being dissected by other saints and members of religious orders, which was printed in the early 1570s.⁶⁶ In it, Saint Catherine of Siena holds a large paintbrush (figs. 60 and 61). According to the lengthy text by Johann Fischart that accompanied the print:

But the nun, who stands there and takes Francis's hand in order to paint away his wounds with her brush, is Catherine of Siena, who once used to be the daughter of a cloth-dyer.⁶⁷

Dying cloth changed it from its natural state. Dying added an extra, and arguably unnecessary, process to the manufacture of clothing. Depending on the dye used, it was one that added cost and implied vanity. Wearing dyed cloth was disrespectful to God as supreme-maker, particularly for those who wished to follow a religious life. In Fischart's critique, Catherine of Siena was tainted with her knowledge of the deceptive practice of changing the colour of cloth. In the print, Catherine is shown as a painter and that, within the context of the print as a Protestant propaganda weapon, made her a deceiver.⁶⁸ That Catherine of Siena chose to remove, presumably by over-painting, Francis's stigmata with her brush alluded to the faking of stigmata by painting.

It was significant that it was Catherine who stopped the stigmata from being seen. Protestants of the sixteenth century, as some Catholics of the thirteenth century, accused Saint Francis of usurping Christ, something that was made clear in Erasmus Alber's (d. 1553) satirical *Alcoranus Franciscanorum* (*The Franciscan Qur'ān*). The *Alcoranus*, which appeared in numerous editions and languages in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,⁶⁹ took Bartholomew of Pisa's late-fourteenth-century *Liber de conformitate vitae Beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Jesu* and used it as the basis from which to attack Francis and his Order. Alber's address to readers, at the end of the *Alcoranus*, railed against the way in which he had perceived Francis to be ranked above Christ, noting that, according to the *Liber de conformitate*:

66 Ganz, 'The Dilemma of a Saint's Portrait', pp. 241–242.

67 I have used the translation given in Ganz, 'The Dilemma of a Saint's Portrait', p. 242.

68 Ganz, 'The Dilemma of a Saint's Portrait', p. 242.

69 Labrousse, 'Baile et Saint François', pp. 150–153.



60. Tobias, Stimmer (attrib.), *Saint Francis 'anatomized' by his Fellow Criminals*, circa 1570–1571, woodcut, 13.3 x 23.7 cm, from Johann Fischart, *Der Barafuesser Secten und Kuttenteit*, British Museum, London, 1880,0710.887.



61. Tobias, Stimmer (attrib.), detail of *Saint Catherine of Siena*, from *Saint Francis 'anatomized' by his Fellow Criminals*, circa 1570–1571, woodcut, from Johann Fischart, *Der Barafuesser Secten und Kuttenteit*, British Museum, London, 1880,0710.887.

Christ felt the pains of his wounds for a short time. But Francis suffered the pains of his wounds for a full two years. [...] And, to say it briefly, Christ did not do anything that Francis did not also do, and many more times.⁷⁰

Francis was contemptuous of Christ in his attempts, according to Alber, to outdo him.

In the text accompanying Stimmer's woodcut, the viewer was told that Catherine of Siena is painting away Francis's wounds. This could also link to the use of cosmetics to cover up deformity and to the issues explored in Chapter 2, where painted images of Saint Francis with stigmata were vandalized. The visual information in the image assumed an ability to engage in detail with its separate elements and with knowledge of the things that were satirized. That Catherine was able to paint over or paint away Francis's wounds led the viewer to consider several things. For those who were aware of the early descriptions of Francis's stigmata, in which both Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure stressed the three-dimensionality of the flesh-growths in his hands and feet, the painting away of the stigmata was a slur on Franciscan claims. In order to be able to accept painting over or painting away the wounds, it would be difficult to imagine that they could have stood proud of the surrounding flesh, as painting would not be sufficient to remove or disguise them. In the print, Catherine has turned Francis into a blank support robbed of the wounds, scars or nails which gave him pre-eminence. He has ceased to be a divine work of art, marked by the Creator, and has become, instead, a figure at the mercy of the Franciscans and Dominicans who have surrounded him prodding, poking, and inspecting. Furthermore, Catherine has reduced Francis to her level, a saint with stigmata without tangible or visible substance.

The link between painting and deceit was predicated on the fact that painting was external. It could cover without affecting what was beneath it. For this reason, many texts dealing with 'true' stigmata emphasized the changes to the body through growths, swelling, cuts, or incisions that altered more than its surface appearance. Touch, allied to sight, thus became important as a means of verifying miraculous stigmata. In his *vita* of Clare of Montefalco (d. 1308), Bérenger de Saint-Affrique related that he had touched and manipulated the relief images found in Clare's heart after her death and gave details of the sensations of touching them.⁷¹ As related in the text, the experience of visions was important to Clare, but these were visions that physically changed her body.⁷² Bérenger presented the change

70 Alber, *Alcoranus Franciscanorum*, unpaginated: 'Christus breve tempus dolores vulnerum suorum sensit. Franciscus vero dolorem vulnerum suorum per totum biennium passus est. [...] Et ut paucis dica[t], Christus nihil fecit, quod non item Franciscus fecerit, & longe plura etiam'.

71 Warr, 'Representation, Imitation, Rejection', p. 100. For the original text, see Berengario di Sant'Affricano, 'La vita', 1885, p. 235.

72 Warr, 'Re-reading the Relationship', pp. 221–225

that had been effected in Clare's heart as an interiorization of her visualizing of the Passion. According to Bérenger, Clare's thoughts were always turned towards Christ's final hours.⁷³ Through her affective piety Clare re-lived Christ's torments during the Passion and, eventually, received a vision of Christ implanting his cross into her heart.⁷⁴ In this way Bérenger proposed a causal link between Clare's visionary experience and the 'relief sculptures' of the symbols of the Passion that had been discovered in her heart after her death.

The episode was also related in the proceedings of the canonization process, most fully by Sister Giovanna, daughter of Egidio da Montefalco, who told Clare's brother, Francesco, about it.⁷⁵ According to Francesco, after experiencing the vision, Clare 'always felt a perceptible cross in her heart'.⁷⁶ He further related that Clare had said to Giovanna:

In what manner is that cross there? I want you to know and to hear that the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ has been impressed on my heart.⁷⁷

In order to make quite sure that she had been understood, Clare then repeated her statement. For Francesco and for Bérenger, it was important that Clare's body had been physically changed by her experience and that this change was palpable.

Clare of Montefalco's altered and stigmatized heart could only be seen, touched, and handled after her death. Other women's bodies underwent exterior changes resulting in visible and potentially tactile stigmata. As in the example of María de la Visitación, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, one way in which those who inspected and wrote about these stigmata chose to frame their descriptions was through comparisons with things that would have been visually familiar to readers. A relatively common strategy was to make an analogy with coins. For example, as discussed in Chapter 6, the stigma on Stefana Quinzani's foot was said to be the size of a Venetian *marcello*.⁷⁸ Coins are supremely tactile things designed to be used and handled. Describing stigmata in relation to coins enabled important

73 Berengario di Sant'Affricano, 'La vita', 1884, p. 599. See also Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 353.

74 Berengario di Sant'Affricano, 'La vita', 1884, p. 611.

75 *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, p. 70 (Giovanna's testimony) and pp. 294–295 (Francesco's testimony).

76 *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, pp. 294–295: 'in corde suo semper sensibilem cruce[m] sensit'.

77 *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, p. 295: 'Quomodo est ibi ista crux? Volo quod sciatis et audiatis quod crux Domini nostri Yhesu Christi est infix[a] in corde meo'.

78 See 'Stefana Quinzani's Ecstasy of the Passion' in Lehmijoki-Gardner, ed., *Dominican Penitent Women*, pp. 192–197, this reference on p. 196.

aspects of miraculous stigmata to be drawn out, allowing readers to meditate on their meaning using visual appearance and analogy as starting points.

The stigmata of Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534) were described in terms of currency. Juana Vázquez Gutiérrez had entered the *beaterio* of Franciscan tertiaries of Santa Maria de la Cruz, just outside the village of Cubas, between Madrid and Toledo, in 1496. She became its abbess in 1509.⁷⁹ When, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Franciscan Antonio Daza (d. 1640) wrote his *Historia, vida y milagros, éxtasis y revelaciones de la bienaventurada Virgen Santa Juana de la Cruz* (*History, Life, and Miracles, Ecstasies and Revelations of the Blessed Virgin Santa Juana de la Cruz*), he related that when she was forty-three years old, on Good Friday, Juana had received marks on her hands and feet in the places where Christ had been nailed to the cross.⁸⁰ The marks were round, ‘the size of a *real de plata*, of the colour of fresh roses, and red’, and they were like this both on the tops and soles of Juana’s feet and on the backs and palms of her hands.⁸¹ A fragrant smell emanated from them and they caused Juana great pain. In a reflection of the words spoken by the apostle Thomas about Christ’s wounds, the nuns saw ‘with their eyes and felt with their own hands’ (John 20:25). Daza intended these words, of course, to clear away doubt for the reader of the *vida*, but in referencing the *real da plata*, they also emphasized the visual and tactile nature of coins.

Other examples of stigmata being described in relation to coins include those of Lucia Brocadelli da Narni. Giacomo Marcianese compared the appearance of the wounds on Lucia’s hands with a contemporary coin. Lucia had been in an ecstatic state on Thursday 24 February 1496 and had begged Christ to be allowed to share the suffering he endured in his hands and feet at the Crucifixion. Later, the sister who had been with her during this time found that an area of flesh on the back of each of Lucia’s hands, described as being about the size of a *carlino*, was raised and livid.⁸² In another case, one of the confessors of the Dominican tertiary Maria Raggi (1552–1600), Miguel Lloth de Ribera (Michele Loth de Ribera, circa 1555–circa 1607), described how, on the evening before the feast of Saint James (24 July) in 1597, he

79 For brief details on the life of Juana de la Cruz see Boon, ‘Mother Juana de la Cruz’; Surtz, *The Guitar of God*, pp. 3–8; Lehfeltdt, *Religious Women in Golden Age Spain*, pp. 169–172; Warr, ‘Proving Stigmata’, pp. 283–297.

80 Daza, *Historia, vida y milagros*, folios 77r–77v. Daza originally published the *vida* in 1610 but later had to revise the work after a review by the Inquisition. See Haliczzer, *Between Exaltation and Infamy*, pp. 69–70. The different versions of the *vida* have been discussed in García de Andrés, *El Conhorte*, Vol. 1, pp. 28–41.

81 Daza, *Historia, vida y milagros*, folio 77v: ‘del tamaño de un real de plata, de color de rosas muy frescas, y coloradas; y de la propia figura y color correspondian igualmente en los empeines y plantas de los pies, y de las manos’.

82 Marcianese, *Vita della B. Lucia di Narni*, p. 112 (Chapter 24). For a brief history of the *carlino* see Cipolla, *Money in Sixteenth-Century Florence*, pp. 5–6.

saw round marks on the backs of Maria's hands that looked like shining *denari* the colour of blood.⁸³ He was not the only person to have seen them. A woman who sometimes visited Maria also saw the marks on her hands, which were the colour of blood and looked like a silver *denaro*.⁸⁴ The marks remained on Maria's hands after her death. On 15 January 1600 her body was moved to the place prepared for its interment in Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. When her wooden coffin had been opened and the friars had kissed her hands it was possible to see the red marks like silver *denari*.⁸⁵ These examples testify to the use of coinage to indicate both the size of stigmata and their relief qualities. They were understood through vision and touch, with the latter helping to make it clear that no deception had been practised through the application of pigment.

The use of the term *denaro* in the case of Maria Raggi may have been intended to prompt other associations. The *denarius* was a coin with a long history. It was the standard Roman silver coin for nearly five centuries, including during Christ's lifetime. The Carolingian *denarius* was the main coin in early medieval Europe.⁸⁶ Coins called *denari* continued to be struck in Italy into the later Middle Ages.⁸⁷ The Roman *denarius* and subsequent versions were silver coins and to that extent Michele Loth de Ribera described a physical coin. However, by the time that he was writing silver coinage had been widely debased. Silver had lost value, whilst the relative value of gold had increased. As a result, in many areas of Italy, the single *denarius* or *denaro* ceased to be used or was minted with the addition of base metal.⁸⁸ Indeed, by the sixteenth century the individual *denaro* was largely a money of account, because it was worth so little. By the beginning of the seventeenth century the *denaro* had already become a common term for money, rather than for a particular coin. That Maria Raggi's confessor referred to a shining silver *denarius*, therefore, was probably intended to link the coin with the *denarius* of the gospels.

83 Loth de Ribera, *Vita della venerabile suor Maria Raggi*, p. 68: 'Stando ella nella sua camera, & io ivi presente, viddi nelle sue mani dalla parte di sopra nel mezzo un certo segno rotondo à guisa d'un denaro grandemente risplendente, composto di colore di sangue'. Loth de Ribera, one of Maria Raggi's confessors, published his *vita* in Latin at the beginning of the seventeenth century. An Italian version, translated by Paolo Minerva da Bari (1560–1645), was published in 1609.

84 Loth de Ribera, *Vita della venerabile suor Maria Raggi*, p. 70: 'Ma à maggior corroboratione della verità queste istesse stimate del Signor le vidde nella Ven[erabile] sorella ancora una devota do[n]na: la quale freque[n]tava alle volte la camera della Ven[erabile] sorella. [...] vidde pur nelle sue mani certi segni fatti di color di sa[n]gue à guisa d'una denaro d'argento'.

85 Loth de Ribera, *Vita della venerabile suor Maria Raggi*, p. 163: 'un segno di color rosso, à guisa d'un denaro d'argento sopra le mani della Venerabile Suor Maria nel mezzo: essendo il restante delle mani bianchissimo; subito conobbimo quelli essere segni delle stimate del Signor Nostro Giesù Christo [...]'.
86 Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 609.

87 Day, 'Antiquity, Rome, and Florence: Coinage and Transmissions', p. 238.

88 Byrne, *The World of Renaissance Italy*, Vol. 1, pp. 92–95.

The specific use of *denaro* to describe Maria's stigmata did not just give a sense of the size of the marks on her skin. The *denari* that were seen on each of Maria's hands were described in her *vita* as silver. Maria Raggi's confessor did not seem to make much of the description. However, in linking the stigmata with a particular coin, he had called implicitly on a number of associations and complex visual analogies, the most obvious of which was that the *denarius* was the coin to which Matthew had referred in his gospel when the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus in a question on power and authority under the guise of taxes (Matthew 22:15–21). Thus the *denarius* had a specific link to an economy of salvation.⁸⁹

Such links were not always clear or consistent. The *vita* of Maria Raggi written by Leone Allacci (1586–1669), like her, a native of Chios, was published in 1655 and referred to the stigmata on her hands, visible during the translation of her body, as red and the size of a *quattrino*,⁹⁰ whilst the rest of her hands were utmost white.⁹¹ Sometimes coins were not used when a comparison seems to have been included purely to indicate the size of stigmata. Domenica Narducci da Paradiso (1477–1553) received the stigmata in around 1495.⁹² The lack of a stable religious affiliation had caused her some problems. Before coming to Florence from her home village of Paradiso in around 1499, she had been attached to the Augustinian convent of Santa Maria di Candeli, and subsequently became a beguine linked to the Brigittine convent of Santa Maria.⁹³ Domenica founded the convent of La Crocetta in Florence in 1511.⁹⁴ She identified herself as a follower of Saints Dominic and Catherine of Siena but had refused to be vested by the friars of San Marco, which would have given them power over her, claiming that her habit had been blessed in a vision.⁹⁵ When questioned in relation to accusations of heresy in 1501, Domenica decided not to admit to having received the stigmata and claimed that the marks on her palms were warts. In response to her prayers, God withdrew the permanent stigmata from

89 Nygren, 'Titian's *Christ with the Coin*'. For a very useful general discussion, see Deng 'Money, Ritual, and Religion'.

90 Allacci, *Vita della venerabile serva di Dio Maria Raggi da Scio*, p. 107: 'segno rosso a guisa di quattrino nelli mani [...]'. On the Florentine *quattrino* see Lane and Mueller, *Money and Banking*, pp. 447–459. According to Joseph Byrne, the *quattrino* was the smallest of the Renaissance coins. See Byrne, *The World of Renaissance Italy*, Vol. 1, p. 93.

91 Allacci, *Vita della venerabile serva di Dio Maria Raggi da Scio*, p. 107: 'bianchissime'.

92 Callahan, 'Suor Domenica da Paradiso as *alter Christus*', p. 330.

93 On Domenica Narducci da Paradiso see Gagliardi, *Sola con dio: la missione di Domenica da Paradiso*. Short overviews of her life are available in Valerio, 'Narducci da Paradiso, Domenica'; Valerio, 'Narducci, Domenica'.

94 On the foundation of the convent see Valerio, *Domenica da Paradiso*, pp. 106–113; Callahan, "'In Her Name and with Her Money": Suor Domenica da Paradiso's Convento of La Crocetta in Florence'.

95 Callahan, 'Suor Domenica da Paradiso as *alter Christus*', p. 331.

her hands and feet. Instead, the stigmata could be seen on Fridays 'in the form of a red oval about the size of an acorn'.⁹⁶

Coins could be used both to indicate the size of stigmata and to show that they were raised in relief above the rest of the skin, which possibly called to mind the most famous of stigmatic saints, Francis of Assisi, with the fleshy raised quality of his stigmata, through the associations involved with the making of coins, on which relief images were impressed through a process similar to the way in which a seal was placed on a document.⁹⁷ A number of Franciscan writers had linked Saint Francis's stigmata to seals. In the middle of the thirteenth century, Hugh of Digne (d. circa 1285), in his commentary on the Franciscan rule, had called Francis's stigmata an 'authentic seal'.⁹⁸ Bonaventure had made great play of the stigmata as a seal impressed onto Francis by Christ.⁹⁹ In the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (*Soul's Journey into God*), Bonaventure had given Francis a central salvific role by establishing him as the apocalyptic angel of the sixth seal.¹⁰⁰ However, it was in the *Legenda Minor* and the *Legenda Maior* that Bonaventure explicitly figured the stigmata as seal impressions. In the *Legenda Minor*, he said that the seraphic vision 'marked his [Francis's] flesh exteriorly with a likeness conformed to the Crucified; it was as if the liquefying power of fire preceded the impression of the seal'.¹⁰¹ Similarly in the *Legenda Maior*, he stressed that 'the stigmata of our Lord Jesus were imprinted upon him by the finger of the living God, as the seal of the Supreme Pontiff, Christ [...]'.¹⁰² Bonaventure did not restrict himself to the idea of the seal when writing about the stigmata. He also saw Francis's wounds as the marks of the divine artist and law-giver: 'the angelic man Francis / came down from the mountain, bearing with him / the likeness of the crucified, / depicted not on tablets of stone or on panels of wood / carved by hand, / but engraved on parts of his flesh / by the finger of the living God'.¹⁰³

Bonaventure's texts testified to the range of craft and art similes and metaphors used in the discussion of Francis's stigmata. Yet despite the potential parallels between coins and seals, the idea of associating Francis's stigmata with coins was problematic since Francis had emphatically rejected money during his lifetime, forcing one friar to pick up a coin with his teeth and deposit it on a dung heap.¹⁰⁴

96 Callahan, 'Suor Domenica da Paradiso as *alter Christus*', p. 330.

97 The accepted link between seals and coins has been noted by P.D.A. Harvey. See Harvey, 'This is a Seal', p. 3.

98 Wolff, 'The Sealed Saint', p. 94.

99 Wolff, 'The Sealed Saint', p. 94; Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, p. 28.

100 Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, p. 181.

101 Bonaventure, 'The Minor Legend', pp. 709–710.

102 Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', pp. 558–559 (Chapter 4).

103 Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', p. 634 (Chapter 13).

104 For a brief discussion of Francis's attitude towards coins in Thomas of Celano's *Vita Secunda* see Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of St Francis*, pp. 144–145.



62. Paolo Uccello, *Crucifixion Triptych*, mid-1450s, gold and tempera on wood, 45.7 x 55.5 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Lore Heinemann, in memory of her husband, Dr. Rudolf J. Heinemann, 1996, 1997.117.9.

Nonetheless, in other contexts coins did have religious uses and connotations.¹⁰⁵ The marks on coins could be referred to as ‘stigmata’ in the sense of sign or symbol.¹⁰⁶ Some coins even had images of Francis receiving the stigmata impressed on them: a *parpagliola* with the stigmatization was issued in Mantua in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.¹⁰⁷ Although Francis had rejected coins, their close link to seals and the existence of positive ideas surrounding coins within a religious context meant that they were appropriate examples to be used in the visual rhetoric of stigmata.

The use of wax in a seal made another contribution to the ways in which visuality and stigmata intersected. Coins were stamped onto metal whilst seals were made

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, Burström and Ingvardson, *Divina Moneta*.

¹⁰⁶ See the examples given in Travaini, ‘Coins and Identity’, p. 332.

¹⁰⁷ Cuhaj and Michael, *Standard Catalog of World Coins 1601–1700*, KM#20 and KM#24. An example is illustrated in Galst and van Alfen, *Ophthalmologia Optica*, p. 284.



63. Paolo Uccello, *Saint Bridget of Sweden*, detail of the left wing of the *Crucifixion Triptych*, mid-1450s, gold and tempera on wood, 45.7 x 14.3 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Lore Heinemann, in memory of her husband, Dr. Rudolf J. Heinemann, 1996, 1997.117.9.

of heated wax that acted as a pliant and ‘willing’ recipient of a seal matrix. The link between wax and marking on the body is pictured in Paolo Uccello’s (1397–1475) image of Saint Bridget of Sweden, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Saint Bridget (circa 1304–1373), on the left panel of a triptych, is represented wounding herself with a burning candle as she gazes at a monstrance with a host visible at its centre (figs. 62 and 63).¹⁰⁸ The small devotional triptych consists of a central panel of the Crucifixion with Bridget on the side-panel to the left, and the Virgin Mary and Christ on the side-panel to the right. Above Saint Bridget and the Virgin are the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin Annunciate. The painting can be associated with the Brigittine Convent of the Paradiso in Florence, founded in 1397 following a bequest by Antonio degli Alberti in 1392,¹⁰⁹ as it contains an image of one of the nuns from the convent kneeling in the central panel. She is named in

¹⁰⁸ Christiansen, ‘Recent Acquisitions’.

¹⁰⁹ Debby, ‘Reshaping Birgitta of Sweden’, p. 240.

the inscription and so can be identified with Felicità di Francesco da Casavecchia who took her vows in January 1455.¹¹⁰

Saint Bridget is more widely recognized when shown kneeling before the Nativity, according to the vision that she had received in Bethlehem in 1372.¹¹¹ The inclusion of a candle identified Bridget as a stigmatic. As noted in Chapter 4, Tommaso Caffarini referred to her pouring hot wax onto her flesh every week and removing any scabs so that the resulting wound would not heal.¹¹² Whilst the image in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is unusual in its graphic depiction of the saint burning her skin, less expressive images of Bridget holding a candle were produced. A later painting attributed to Maso da San Friano (1536–1571) shows the saint holding a dripping candle (fig. 64). Although by no means certain, the painting has also been associated with the Brigittine Convent of the Paradiso in Florence indicating that this iconography had particular value for its nuns.¹¹³

Bridget's stigmata were differentiated from those of Saint Francis on a number of levels. The wounds made with the hot wax were self-inflicted. There was no issue of fraud here, since Bridget did not claim them as miraculous. Furthermore, they were not placed in such a way as to imitate Christ's wounds bodily but were intended, rather, to enable Bridget to keep Christ's Passion constantly at the forefront of her mind. Although the language of seals was not used explicitly, as it was for Francis of Assisi, it seems clear that her use of melted wax prepared Bridget for the imprint of Christ in the sense that it encouraged her never to lose her focus on the Passion. For Francis, the seal of Christ, in the form of the stigmata, was an 'authoritative means of documentary validation'.¹¹⁴ The metaphor of the seal was central to an understanding of Francis as a stigmatic saint.¹¹⁵ The seal marked Francis. It assured authenticity. The wax, which received the seal, was no less important to Bridget of Sweden, although in a different fashion. Its depiction in the paintings by Uccello and by Maso da Friano demonstrated the potential for a high level of visual interconnectivity and association in relation to the visuality of stigmata.

The act of impressing onto a surface forms a link between wax, seals, coins, and communion wafers. To return to the example of Maria Raggi: by describing Maria's stigmata in terms of the Roman *denarius*, Michele Loth de Ribera was able to achieve several things. He linked Maria with the coin impressed with the image of Caesar and therefore to be given up to Caesar (Matthew 22:15–21). By extension, Maria was

110 Christiansen, 'Catalogue Entry: *The Crucifixion, Paolo Uccello*', accessed 27 January 2020 at <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/438028>.

111 See Oen, 'Iconography and Visions: St. Birgitta's Revelation'.

112 Caffarini, *Libellus*, pp. 124–125.

113 Cannon Brookes, 'Three Notes on Maso da San Friano', pp. 192–195.

114 Bedos-Rezak, 'In Search of a Semiotic Paradigm', p. 1.

115 Wolff, 'The Sealed Saint'.



64. Maso da San Friano (attrib.), *Saint Bridget of Sweden*, circa 1545–1585, oil on wood, 116.2 x 45.1 cm, York Art Gallery, York, presented by F.D. Lycett Green through The Art Fund, 1955.

impressed with the image of Christ crucified and therefore to be given up to Christ. Her stigmata marked her out as one of the elect. Maria became part of a spiritual economy in which she was transformed into legal tender minted by Christ. The *denarius*, as the coin used in Matthew 22, was employed by Gabriele Paleotti in his *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*, first published in 1582, as an example of how Christ accepted the use of images.¹¹⁶ Paleotti was writing shortly after a great surge of interest in numismatics across Europe.¹¹⁷ His use of the coin shown to Christ by the Pharisees demonstrated that images were an indication of the power of the person represented. Thus, the image of the ruler struck onto the coin and then impressed onto Maria made it clear that she had been marked by Christ and identified Christ as an artist-creator capable of altering and adding to the creative work of God who had made man in his own image. The impression of the stigmata onto Maria's body recalled the impression of the cross or other symbols of Christ's sacrifice onto communion wafers, which, in turn, were manufactured like coins.¹¹⁸

The visual and metaphorical similarities between coins, the host and the wounds of the Crucifixion are apparent in the paintings for the altar of the Corpus Domini in Urbino. Paolo Uccello's predella compositions (1467–1468) show the story of the profanation of the host. In the first scene the woman who has entered the premises of the Jewish moneylender holds up a small host the size of a coin (fig. 65).¹¹⁹ The enormous main panel of the altarpiece, completed by Joos van Ghent in 1473–1474, depicts the communion of the apostles (figs. 66 and 67).¹²⁰ Christ, acting as Eternal Priest,¹²¹ holds a host in one hand and a paten with a eucharistic wafer in it in the other, thus alluding to the wounds he would shortly receive in either hand when he was nailed to the cross. With his right hand he is about to place a wafer in the mouth of a kneeling apostle. To the far left of the scene, looking in, is Judas. He clasps with both hands a moneybag containing the thirty pieces of silver for which he has been persuaded to betray Christ. As a result of this betrayal, Judas has been excluded. The viewer does not see the thirty pieces of silver, although they clearly weigh heavily from the way in which Judas carries the money pouch. On the table behind Christ, and only slightly left of centre of the composition, the viewer's eyes are drawn to the pile of hosts placed in front of the chalice on the communion table. Slightly to the right of centre is the paten from which Christ distributes the

116 Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, p. 128.

117 Haskell, *History and Its Images*, p. 14.

118 For the link between communion wafers and coins see Shell, *Art and Money*, pp. 14–19.

119 Reid-Schwartz, 'Economies of Salvation', p. 8. Dana Katz has drawn attention to the fact that it was in Italian versions of the story that the Jew was described as a moneylender. See Katz, 'The Contours of Tolerance', p. 649.

120 Lavin, 'The Altar of Corpus Domini', pp. 10–19.

121 Lavin, 'The Altar of Corpus Domini', p. 13.



65. Paolo Uccello, *Profanation of the Host*, first scene from the predella of the *Communion of the Apostles*, 1467–1468, tempera on wood, 41 x 58.5 cm, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino.



66. Joos van Ghent, *Communion of the Apostles*, 1473–1475, oil on wood, 331 x 335 cm, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino.



67. Joos van Ghent, detail of the *Communion of the Apostles*, 1473–1475, oil on wood, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino.

unleavened wafers. The entire central area of the composition is dominated by the host. It is not possible to be sure of the number of hosts carefully piled on a white cloth, itself on top of the white cloth covering the whole table. Perhaps there is one for each apostle or perhaps the number of small round hosts should be understood as equalling, either literally or metaphorically, the pieces of silver.

The pieces of silver were evidence of Judas's rejection of Christ and ensured his damnation while the ingestion of the host was a literal acceptance of Christ's body into the body of the believer. The link between the pieces of silver and the host is also shown, although through a different visual strategy, in Luca Signorelli's (d. 1523) *Communion of the Apostles* (1512) now in the Museo Diocesano in Cortona (fig. 68). Rather than showing Judas as a marginalized, and soon to be totally rejected, figure, Signorelli places him at the front of the composition. Whilst his body is positioned towards Christ, Judas's arms and head show his repudiation of the salvation offered



68. Luca Signorelli, *Communion of the Apostles*, 1512, oil on wood, 232 x 220 cm, Museo Diocesano, Cortona.

to him. He holds a moneybag open towards the viewer. His right hand holds what appears to be a host, which he places into the bag, thus compounding his betrayal by mixing the host with the thirty pieces of silver.¹²²

¹²² Katz, 'The Contours of Tolerance', p. 655.

Sara Lipton has argued that ‘money was considered to be the diametric opposite of, and thus incompatible with, the Body of Christ’.¹²³ The unnatural reproduction of money was associated with usury and, thus, with Jewish moneylenders.¹²⁴ The host, on the other hand, was, in some places, popularly believed to help ensure crop fertility.¹²⁵ Yet it was precisely these differences that also linked the host and coins. For coins did reproduce, even if unnaturally. During the Middle Ages several writers articulated a link between coins and the host as Christ’s money. William Durandus (circa 1230–1296) said in his *Rationale divinarum officiorum* (*Rationale for the Divine Offices*) that, ‘... the name and image of our emperor is often written on this bread [the host] since through him [Christ] we are reformed in the image of God and our names are written in the book of life’.¹²⁶ Durandus made a specific link with the *denarius* saying that ‘the bread is thus formed in the manner of a denarius, first because the bread of life was betrayed for the sake of denarii, also because [the bread of life] ought to be given as a reward to those labouring in the vineyard [Matthew 20:1–15]’.¹²⁷ He was not alone in making these connections. In the twelfth century, Honorius Augustodunensis (circa 1080–1154) had made the same association.¹²⁸ Just as coins were minted with the relief profile of the ruler, so the unleavened bread of the host was often stamped with a symbol such as the cross. A fourteenth-century manuscript of Giovanni Villani’s *Cronica* shows a Christian woman exchanging a host in return for clothing. The host which she holds up is marked with a cross (fig. 69).¹²⁹ Host presses were used in order to place reliefs of the *agnus dei*, crucified Christ, alpha and omega, for example.¹³⁰ The host press could produce multiple hosts.¹³¹ The majority of research on host presses has focused on northern Europe.¹³² However, stamped or marked hosts were clearly used in Italy.¹³³ As Aden Kumler has noted, hosts were ‘mechanically produced multiples’.¹³⁴ As such it was possible for Christ to be present and visible simultaneously in different

123 Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, p. 37. Quoted in Katz, ‘The Contours of Tolerance’, p. 655. See also Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 115.

124 Derbes and Sandona, ‘Barren Metal and the Fruitful Womb’.

125 See Watkins, ‘“Folklore” and “Popular Religion” in Britain’, p. 140.

126 Quoted in Reynolds, ‘Christ’s Money’, pp. 1–2.

127 Quoted in Reynolds, ‘Christ’s Money’, p. 3.

128 Reynolds, ‘Christ’s Money’, p. 3. For discussion and translation of the texts see Kumler, ‘The Multiplication of the Species’.

129 Katz, ‘The Contours of Tolerance’, pp. 650–652.

130 On the host press see Leclercq, ‘Fer à hosties’. For more sources see Kumler, ‘The Multiplication of the Species’, pp. 184–185, notes 14 and 15.

131 See the examples reproduced in Kumler, ‘The Multiplication of the Species’, p. 185, figs. 7 and 8.

132 Kumler, ‘The Multiplication of the Species’, pp. 185–186.

133 See the example pictured in Rocca, *La Sostanza dell’Effimero*, p. 357 (figs. 96d–e).

134 Kumler, ‘The Multiplication of the Species’, p. 191.



69. *Woman exchanging the Host for her Garment*, from Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, folio 149v, MS Chigi L.VIII.296, late-fourteenth century, Vatican Apostolic Library, Vatican City, Rome.

locations.¹³⁵ Coins, which were also ‘mechanically produced multiples’, made the ruler visible in different locations. The seal matrix enabled multiple impressions. Stigmatics can be considered as another example in this vein. Although there were significant differences in the physical appearance of their stigmata, they could be understood, collectively, as impressed or marked with the image of Christ and as living evidence of Christ as ruler.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the complexities of the ways in which visual practices intersected with the phenomenon of stigmatization do not make for an easily definable or linear narrative. The issues are messy, intertwined, and can sometimes only be suggested. This does not make them any less useful in contributing towards an understanding of how these practices were utilized in relation to the understanding, verification, and promotion of stigmatics. Stigmata, as marks, were inherently visual, and textual descriptions utilized this in diverse ways. The vocabulary of stamping, impressing, and three-dimensionality became privileged, something which tacitly acknowledged that the discourse surrounding painting was problematic due to its association with deceit. This did not negate the importance of sight but emphasized it in conjunction with tactility and the ways in which it was believed that true stigmata could change the body of the recipient. In this chapter, I have explored how these discourses contributed towards the visibility of stigmata. By going beyond questions of how stigmatics were represented in the visual arts and interrogating stigmatic visibility in a wider socially constructed

¹³⁵ On the importance of seeing the host see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 289.

context, it is possible to move away from the overarching narratives associated with Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena and to consider the visual culture of stigmata as part of the larger expansion of stigmatic spirituality.

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8. Conclusion: The Timidity of the Visual Arts

Abstract

Descriptions of stigmata can be terse, but they often engender a strong visual image in the mind's eye. Again and again we are led to think about shining silver coins, unyielding flesh growths, rose-coloured areas of raised flesh, flowing blood repeatedly absorbed into pieces of linen cloth. Understanding stigmata was heavily dependent on visual references. Stigmatic behaviours could call to mind harrowing sculptures of Christ crucified and were influenced by those sculptures. By contrast, many paintings and sculptures of stigmatics appear restrained. They contained little sign of the physical suffering caused by the stigmata with the connection to Christ's agonies implied rather than explicit and the wounds minimised. The chapter explores this apparent paradox.

Keywords: Dominicans, meditation, nails, Council of Trent, stigmata

The descriptions of stigmata in *vitae* can be terse but they often engender a strong visual image in the mind's eye. Again and again we are led to think about shining silver coins, flesh growths which cannot be bent or squashed, rose-coloured areas of raised flesh, blood flowing to the extent that it can be collected by being absorbed, repeatedly, into pieces of linen cloth. The ways in which stigmata were understood were heavily dependent on visualization and on visual references. Stigmatic behaviours could call to mind harrowing sculptures of Christ crucified and were influenced by those sculptures. By contrast, some paintings and sculptures of stigmatics can appear restrained. They contained little sign of the physical suffering caused by the stigmata and the connection to Christ's agonies was implied rather than explicit.

One example of restraint in the visual representation of a stigmatic is the monument for Maria Raggi in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome (circa 1647–1653), by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680).¹ The ways in which the stigmata on Maria's hands were described in her *vitae* as shining like coins were discussed in the previous chapter. Bernini's sculpture is located on a pier in the nave and is made of marble

¹ Bernstock, 'Bernini's Memorial to Maria Raggi'.



70. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Monument to Maria Raggi*, circa 1647–1653, marble and gilt bronze, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome.



71. Workshop of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Model for the Monument to Maria Raggi*, circa 1647, papier-mâché, Palazzo Venezia, Rome, inv. PV 10374.

and bronze (fig. 70). The bust of Maria is presented in an oval medallion supported by two putti and placed against a black marble representation of hanging drapery surmounted by a cross and with an inscription placed at the bottom. A model and a drawing for the monument survive. The papier-mâché model in the Palazzo Venezia in Rome is generally considered to have come from Bernini's workshop (fig. 71).² In it, we see the backs of Maria's hands placed across her body, with the

² Bernstock, 'Bernini's Memorial to Maria Raggi', p. 249.



72. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Pen and Ink Sketch for the Monument to Maria Raggi*, circa 1647, Arch. Chigi, Cartella A, inv. 24910, Vatican Apostolic Library, Vatican City, Rome.

right hand above the left, the same way as her hands are shown in the completed monument. The left hand has a clear indentation in it, and this has been interpreted as a representation of one of Maria's stigmata. It is possible to see a similarly placed mark on Maria's right hand, although it is not so pronounced. The surviving pen and ink drawing for the monument is in the Vatican Library (Arch. Chigi, Cartella A, inv. 24910) (fig. 72). Just as in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Maria is shown in an oval medallion supported by putti against hanging drapery at the top of which is a cross, but there is a significant difference between the realized monument and the drawing in the placement of Maria's hands and the direction of her gaze. In the drawing Maria looks up towards the cross. Her hands are placed in an open *orans* position with the palms facing outwards. The stigmata are apparent as black marks in the centre of each hand.

It is clear that Bernini re-thought, or was asked to re-think, several things about the bust relief of Maria before the monument was completed. In Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Maria does not engage with the cross above her. Instead she appears to gaze out to the viewer's left. The backs rather than the palms of her hands are visible, and they are placed so as to give her a closed posture in contrast to the open one of the drawing. The stigmata have all but disappeared with only a very faint mark on the back of Maria's right hand, entirely lacking conviction. In the monument, the links between Maria and Christ's crucifixion have been erased. These were not the only differences between the sketch and the final monument. Bernini also removed the crown of thorns that pierced Maria's skin and were the first of the stigmata she received.³

The monument as finally realized in Santa Maria sopra Minerva eliminated any clear allusion to Maria's reception of the stigmata and downplayed the link between her and Christ's Passion on the cross. In his marble sculptures Bernini excelled at showing the way in which flesh reacted to touch. The fingers of Pluto's right hand digging into Proserpina's left thigh in the sculptural group in the Galleria Borghese (1621) are the example *par excellence*.⁴ In a multi-media sculpture such as Maria Raggi's monument, another type of work in which Bernini was pre-eminent, the shining coin-like marks on Maria's hands could have been a focus of his technical abilities. The monument is not one that depicts a particular episode in Maria's life.⁵ Indeed, the gilt bronze medallion, within which the bust of the holy woman is contained, has been understood as suggesting Maria's place in the afterlife.⁶ As

3 Loth de Ribera, *Vita della venerabile suor Maria Raggi*, pp. 60–65.

4 See, for example, the brief discussion by Barolsky, 'Bernini and Ovid'.

5 Judith Bernstock has suggested that Bernini used Michelangelo's *Risen Christ*, which was positioned close to the monument, to refer to Maria's deathbed vision of Christ. See Bernstock, 'Bernini's Memorial to Maria Raggi', p. 251.

6 Bernstock, 'Bernini's Memorial to Maria Raggi', p. 251.

such, the shining silver stigmata that became apparent during the translation of her body would have been entirely appropriate.

The restraint of the monument to Maria Raggi appears to be in clear contrast to Bernini's contemporaneous *Saint Teresa in Ecstasy* in the prestigious commission for the Cornaro Chapel of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome. The two works were on a very different scale. That in the Cornaro Chapel allowed Bernini opportunities to deploy a full range of theatrical effects.⁷ The Carmelite Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582) fitted Tommaso Caffarini's early-fifteenth-century definitions of stigmata. The transverberation, described so eloquently in *El Libro dela vida (The Book of her Life)*, written by Teresa at the request of her confessors and finished in 1565, was a vision resulting in spiritual pain. An angel inflicted a spiritual wound using a 'large golden dart', which he 'plunged [...] several times' into Teresa's heart.⁸ Some writers compared Teresa's experiences to the stigmatization of Saint Francis.⁹ But, as envisioned by Bernini, the focus in the sculpture is on Teresa's state of rapture. There is no attempt to demonstrate an interior change through external marks on the Carrara marble of the saint's body. Furthermore, it is an angel and not Christ who wounds Teresa's heart. Although this was within Caffarini's definition of stigmatic experience, it distances Teresa's ecstasy from the direct influence of the suffering Christ.

Restraint in visual art, particularly that which could have been visible to a large audience, seems most often important in relation to representations of those stigmata which echoed the wounds of Christ on the cross and, especially, those which showed female stigmatics. The Dominicans of Santa Maria sopra Minerva exercised increasing caution in this respect. As well as being the location of Maria Raggi's body, the church was the final resting place of Catherine of Siena and so had the privilege of housing the bodies of two female stigmatics. Catherine's coffin and effigy were below the altar of the Capranica Chapel, which is adjacent to the polygonal central apse.¹⁰ A series of three relief sculptures, with a central Saint Catherine shown as a stigmatic, had been above the altar in 1466 but were removed in 1579.¹¹ At the time that Bernini was completing his monument to Maria Raggi, the main reference to Catherine as a stigmatic in the Capranica Chapel would have been Giovanni de'Vecchi's (1536–1614) *Stigmatization*, part of a series of six paintings of Catherine's life showing fifteen episodes which can be dated between 1583 and

7 Warwick, *Bernini: Art as Theatre*, does not mention the monument to Maria Raggi.

8 Teresa of Ávila, *The Autobiography*, p. 252 (Chapter 29).

9 See the discussion by Jonathan Unglaub on Antonio Bruni's 'Loda di Santa Teresa' in Unglaub, "'Amorosa Contemplation": Bernini, Bruni and the Poetic Vision of Saint Teresa', pp. 43–53.

10 Barclay Lloyd, 'Saint Catherine of Siena's Tomb', pp. 143–146. On the tomb, see also Bianchi, 'Il sepolcro di S. Caterina da Siena', in Bianchi and Giunta, *Iconografia di Santa Caterina da Siena*, esp. pp. 23–39.

11 Barclay Lloyd, 'Saint Catherine of Siena's Tomb', pp. 142–143.

1586.¹² Thus, by the mid-seventeenth century neither Maria Raggi's stigmata nor those of Catherine of Siena were given particular emphasis in Santa Maria sopra Minerva. In the case of Catherine, the stigmatization was integrated with other episodes from her life where it had previously been demonstrated in the central relief above the altar. For Maria Raggi her stigmata were apparent only to those who brought knowledge to their careful observation of her monument.

The lack, or downplaying, of references to the stigmata of holy women in visual art, especially those which reflected Christ's wounds on the cross, was not universal and it changed in relation to specific circumstances. However, it was indicative of the deep unease surrounding their representation, something that continued throughout the period discussed in this book. Miraculous stigmata were controversial, even when given significant levels of official recognition. Their contentiousness was exacerbated when they were represented in visual art, as we have seen in relation to Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena. This was linked both to the miracle itself and contemporary debates about how viewers engaged with paintings and sculptures. Visual art showed stigmatics and their stigmatizations, as well as influencing other stigmatics and informing viewers' comprehension of stigmatic experiences. This was apparent in understandings of the link between the movements that Catherine of Siena made during her stigmatization and images of the same event in the life of Francis of Assisi. It was also clear in the ways that a connection was made between the so-called *Crucifix of the Stigmata of Saint Catherine of Siena* (fig. 7) and Catherine's stigmatization in 1375. By the sixteenth century Catherine was popularly believed to have experienced the stigmata before an actual crucifix that, itself, became an object of veneration since it was considered as a relic. The Sieneese had obtained the crucifix from the Pisan church of Santa Cristina in 1565 and it was installed in the newly built Sieneese Church of the Crucifix in 1623.¹³

Paintings or sculpture showing stigmata could thus be considered as a motivation or catalyst for problematic stigmatic behaviours, particularly in women. For this reason, reserve was necessary. Restraint in depiction of the stigmata went some way towards showing that miraculous wounds did not necessarily correlate with theatrical actions that drew attention to the individual who had received them. Rather, they could be understood as part of an apparently calm meditation on Christ's Passion. The control of what were considered to be excessive public outpourings of grief was something that Italian communes had legislated against since the thirteenth century.¹⁴ Women, especially, were expected to show self-control

12 See Tosini, 'New Documents'. For a full discussion of Giovanni de'Vecchi's paintings in the Capranica Chapel see Piperato, 'Saint Catherine of Siena in Three Italian Life Cycles, 1567–1600', pp. 66–127

13 Parsons, *The Cult of Saint Catherine of Siena*, pp. 38–40.

14 Lansing, *Passion and Order*.

in their department.¹⁵ This was all the more important for nuns whose modesty and seclusion from the secular world was increasingly emphasized in church legislation from Boniface VIII's bull *Periculoso* in 1298, to the decrees of the Council of Trent, and on into the Baroque period.¹⁶

Reserve can be seen in paintings by the Dominican Plautilla Nelli (1524–1588). Nelli was sufficiently well known as a painter of religious subjects to have been accorded a short section in the 1568 edition of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*.¹⁷ A member of the community of the observant convent of Santa Caterina da Siena in Florence, which had been founded under the auspices of Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498),¹⁸ she is now credited with painting a series of images identified as either Catherine of Siena or Caterina de' Ricci (1522–1590).¹⁹ Most are inscribed with the name of the subject, although in some the inscription has clearly been changed.²⁰ The majority show wounds in the hands and some make the side wound visible, revealed through a tear in the tunic.

One of the images, now in the Museo Diocesano San Rufino in Assisi, is inscribed with the name of Catherine of Siena around the base of the crucifix and the lily held in the subject's left hand (fig. 73). Catherine is shown with three short lines of red pigment radiating out and down from the centre of the back of each of her hands. Unlike other images with the same composition, there is no sign of the wound in the side although it is possible that this was covered by painting the black mantle, something else which is not present in all versions. Catherine looks at the crucifix with tears running down her face.²¹ Her profile image recalls the fifteenth-century Florentine 'portraits' discussed by Patricia Simons in her 1988 article 'Women in Frames'.²² The viewer is free to contemplate Catherine at leisure as a signifier of

15 Knox, 'Civility, Courtesy and Women in the Italian Renaissance'.

16 See Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women*, on enclosure up to the Council of Trent. A good example of reactions to the enforcement of the Tridentine decree on enclosure in Florence is given by Evangelisti, "'We Do Not Have It and We Do Not Want It': Women, Power and Convent Reform in Florence'. See also the work of Helen Hills, including 'The Veiled Body'.

17 Vasari, *Le opere di Giorgio Vasari*, Vol. 5, pp. 79–80. For a short overview of Plautilla Nelli see Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life*, pp. 165–166.

18 Polizotto, 'When Saints Fall Out', p. 513.

19 Navarro, *Plautilla Nelli*. See also Jonathan K. Nelson, *Suor Plautilla Nelli (1523–1588): The First Woman Painter of Florence*; Jonathan K. Nelson, *Plautilla Nelli (1524–1588): The Painter-Prioress*; and Sheila Ffolliott's review of Fausta Navarro's catalogue in Ffolliott, 'Review'.

20 This is apparent in the painting of *Saint Catherine with a Lily*, restored in 2013 and now in the Museo del Cenacolo di Andrea del Sarto in Florence. See 'Saint Catherine with a Lily', accessed 17 July 2021 at <http://advancingwomenartists.org/art-in-need/what-can-i-help-restore-now/saint-catherine-with-a-lily>. The paintings were brought together in an exhibition at the Uffizi in 2017 curated by Fausta Navarro. See Navarro, *Plautilla Nelli*.

21 On tears as part of an appropriate way to grieve, see Steinhoff, 'Weeping Women'.

22 Simons, 'Women in Frames'.



73. Plautilla Nelli (attrib.), *Saint Catherine of Siena with a Lily*, sixteenth century, oil on panel, 39 x 28.5 cm, Museo Diocesano San Rufino, Assisi.

a certain type of spirituality, able to consider her meditation on the crucifix, her calm tearful response and understated stigmata.

The use of the same cartoon as well as the employment of the profile ensured a lack of individuality thus necessitating the inscription. That the images could be identified either as Catherine of Siena or Caterina de' Ricci could have served several ends. Caterina de' Ricci was a direct contemporary of Plautilla Nelli and

was known as a stigmatic during her lifetime, beginning to experience stigmatic symptoms in 1542, as discussed in Chapter 6. Some of Catherine of Siena's followers had wished to prove her invisible stigmata through their own visible wounds.²³ Thus, a representation of Caterina de'Ricci was one that invited the viewer to think about Catherine of Siena, and vice versa.

The conscious decision to repeat the composition reflected the spirituality and lived experience of the Dominican community at Santa Caterina. Their daily life was a collective undertaking and their artistic enterprises did not conform to the narrative of individuality, albeit one that depended on a legacy handed down from teacher to pupil, which Vasari promulgated in his *Lives*.²⁴ Nuns were leaders in various types of art production and some convents depended on this work in order to support themselves. Indeed, nuns of the Dominican Order accounted for a third of recorded female artists in the Renaissance.²⁵ This built on a tradition of nuns working in scriptoria copying and illuminating manuscripts, or as embroiderers making church furnishings, both of which were activities that depended on working as part of a team.²⁶ The Dominican writer Serafino Razzi (1531–1611) discussed Plautilla Nelli in his *Istoria de gli huomini illustri* (*History of Illustrious People*) published in 1596, where he also named nuns, past and present, who were involved in making various types of art in the convent, one of whom was his sister, Maria Angelica Razzi.²⁷

The lack of individuality in the compositions used by Plautilla Nelli has been examined in relation to her *Lamentation* (288 × 192 cm, Museo di San Marco, Florence) completed for an altar in her convent's church. Fra Bartolommeo (circa 1472–1517), Andrea del Sarto (1486–1530), and Perugino (circa 1445–1523) have been claimed as models for Nelli's composition.²⁸ Vasari's view was that Nelli's strongest compositions were copies of other works, something forced upon her because her sex and religious profession made it impossible for her to work in the same way as professional male artists of the period.²⁹ Yet, as Mary D. Garrard has argued, what was important was 'devotional efficacy'.³⁰ The parameters within which Nelli and her sister nuns worked were not those that Vasari used to make his judgments.

23 This was the case for Lucia Brocadelli. Herzig, *Savonarola's Women*, p. 93.

24 See Wallace, 'The Artist as Genius'.

25 Jonathan K. Nelson, 'Sister Act – Plautilla Nelli'.

26 The convent of Le Murate in Florence had a flourishing scriptorium. See Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles*, pp. 288–299. For a discussion of textile production, embroidery, and manuscript production see the chapter on 'Invisible Hands: Renaissance Nuns at Work' in Strocchia, *Nuns and Nunneries*, pp. 111–151.

27 See the discussion in Quinn, 'Plautilla Nelli's Role'. Razzi, *Istoria de gli huomini illustri*, pp. 369–372.

28 Scudieri, 'The History, Sources, and Restoration of Plautilla Nelli's *Lamentation*'. However, Mary D. Garrard has argued that there is little evidence in Nelli's *Lamentation* of it deriving from these models. See Garrard, 'The Cloister and the Square', pp. 8–11.

29 Vasari, *Le opere di Giorgio Vasari*, Vol. 5, pp. 79–80.

30 Garrard, 'Repositioning Plautilla Nelli's *Lamentation*'.

The achievement of 'devotional efficacy' was dependent upon the community working towards a common aim with a common spirituality. In this respect the suggestion that Nelli may have used a wooden mannequin to help her with painting the figure of the dead Christ in the *Lamentation* may be instructive.³¹ The figure of Christ had been highlighted for comment in the nineteenth century by the Dominican Vincenzo Marchese (1808–1891) in his *Memorie dei piu insigni pittori, scultori e architetti domenicani* (*Memoirs of the Most Distinguished Dominican Painters, Sculptors and Architects*). Marchese recorded a traditional story that Nelli had wanted to study the nude in order to better represent the dead Christ. The best that she was able to do was to draw from the body of a recently deceased nun and for this reason the other nuns used to joke that Nelli painted female Christs and not male Christs.³²

The story, although I have not been able to trace its origins, is one that resonates on a number of levels. It fits neatly into Vasari's narrative of the necessity of working from a body-model in order to get the best results and describes Plautilla Nelli as functioning within this paradigm. But there is something else here: Nelli, and the nuns, are described as relating to Christ through a female body. The idea of the woman Christ had a long history, which grew out of identification with Christ's suffering.³³ In the early-sixteenth century, Cardinal Ippolito d'Este had claimed that Christ had transfigured himself into the stigmatic Lucia Brocadelli. As Tamar Herzig has explored, this reversal of the more usually stated desire of women that they wished to follow Christ through an experience of his suffering makes it possible to view women not only as followers of Christ but also as incarnations of Christ, sharing the same flesh. In this sense, the claim that the body of Christ in the *Lamentation* was modelled on that of a dead nun takes on further meaning.³⁴

If Marchese's story has any basis in fact; rather than demonstrating the only way in which Nelli could study the body, something which fits with a narrative focused on a Vasarian template, the nuns may have perceived using the body of one of their deceased co-religionists as a way of recognizing Saint Paul's text in Galatians 3:28 that there 'is neither [...] male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ'. Different manifestations of this slippage can be seen in the idea of Jesus as mother,³⁵ and in women stigmatics whose bodies provided evidence of their suffering with Christ. As such, the interchangeable nature of Nelli's representations of Catherine of Siena and Caterina de'Ricci demonstrate a collective understanding of Dominican stigmatic spirituality.

By contrast, the significance of stigmatization as a unique experience was of critical importance for the Franciscans. In visual art of the post-Tridentine

31 Jonathan K. Nelson, 'Sister Act – Plautilla Nelli'.

32 Marchese, *Memorie dei piu insigni pittori*, Vol. 2, p. 266.

33 See Newman, *From Virile Woman to Woman Christ*, p. 3.

34 Herzig, 'Stigmatized Holy Women as Female Christs', pp. 166–167.

35 This idea is explored in Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, especially Chapter 4 (pp. 110–169).

period this was often focused on graphic details of the 'nails' in his hands and feet responding to descriptions such as those of Thomas of Celano, in the *Vita Prima*, and Bonaventure, in the *Legenda Maior*. For Thomas, the stigmata were:

the heads of the nails showing in the palms of the hands and upper side of the feet, and their points showing on the other side; the heads of the nails were round and black in the hands and feet, while the points were long, bent, and as it were turned back, being formed of the flesh itself, and protruding therefrom.³⁶

Bonaventure wrote that the 'heads of the nails were inside his [Francis's] hands but on top of his feet with their points extending through to the opposite side'.³⁷

It was the Spanish artist Francisco Pacheco (d. 1644) who laid out some of the most detailed prescriptions for the correct painting of Saint Francis in his *Arte de la Pintura (On the Art of Painting)*. From 1616 he was the official overseer of images for the Inquisition of Seville, a job that involved ensuring that visual art accurately represented scripture.³⁸ In discussing the depiction of Saint Francis, Pacheco related what was known about the physical appearance of the saint, including his stigmata and his habit.³⁹ He described the stigmatization saying that once the vision of the seraph had disappeared:

there remained some [things] like nails [made] of hardened flesh, whose heads were round and black, and in the middle of the palms of the hands and the [top of the] instep of the feet and, the points which came out of the other side were long and twisted, and as though they had been hit with a hammer, and through the hollow of the points [of the nails] one could place a finger. And the right side was wounded with a spear and a recent open wound from which, almost always, blood flowed so abundantly that it stained his [Francis's] robe and underwear.⁴⁰

He then went on to discuss the actual painting of the stigmata, saying that they were 'painted [showing] blood around the nails'.⁴¹

36 Thomas of Celano, 'The Life of Saint Francis', p. 264 (Book 2, Chapter 3).

37 Bonaventure, 'The Major Legend', p. 633 (Chapter 13).

38 Jonathan Brown, 'Patronage and Piety', pp. 19–20.

39 Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura*, pp. 697–698.

40 Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura*, p. 700: 'habiendo desaparecido la celestial vision, quedaron unos como clavos de la misma carne dura, cuyas cabezas eran rotondas y negras, que se echaban de ver en las palmas de las manos y en los pies por le parte alta de empeine y, las puntas que salían a la otra parte eran largas y retorcidas, y como redobladas con martillo; y por el hueco de las puntas podia entrar un dedo. Y el costado derecho tenía herido con lanza y una llaga reciente abierta que, casi siempre, manaba sangre con tanta abundancia que manchaba la tunica y paños menores'.

41 Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura*, p. 700: 'Hase de pintar a la redonda de los clavos sangre [...]'.



74. Bartolomé Carducho, *Stigmatization of Saint Francis*, 1600, oil on canvas, 263 x 173 cm, Colegio Fundación de Santamarca, Madrid, inv. 228.

At the end of the section on Saint Francis, Pacheco specifically discussed artists who had painted the stigmatization such as Bartolomé Carducho (1560–1608) (also known as Carducci) who was born in Florence but later moved to Madrid.⁴² A painting by Carducho of the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* (fig. 74) shows Francis with the tips

⁴² Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura*, p. 700.



75. Camillo Procaccini, *Stigmatization of Saint Francis*, 1593, etching, 51 x 33.8 cm, British Museum, London, U,5.133.

of the nails coming through his hands and curled over as though they have been hit with a hammer such as to form a shape through which a finger could pass. The viewer sees the palms of Saint Francis's hands clearly and the tips of the nails are visible. Despite the efforts made to follow the early descriptions of the stigmata, Carducho has reversed the direction of the nails. The Bolognese painter Camillo Procaccini (1561–1629) did not fall into the same error in his late-sixteenth-century etching (fig. 75). Here, the point of a nail can be seen coming out from the back of Francis's left hand whilst the head of the nail in the palm of his right hand is also visible. These examples by Procaccini and Carducho are only two amongst many. They demonstrate a post-Tridentine emphasis on close reference to the texts, albeit that this is problematic in the case of Carducho's representation of the nails as entering the hands in the opposite direction from that described in the *vitae*.

Individual artists both before and after the Council of Trent were not always consistent in their representation of Francis's stigmata. In the fifteenth century Carlo Crivelli (d. circa 1494) utilized a variety of approaches. In the case of the *Virgin and Child with Saints Francis and Sebastian* (fig. 76) it may be possible to surmise that there was a particular instruction on the part of the donor or the Franciscans in whose church the painting was originally placed. Oradea Becchetti is shown kneeling in the position of honour to the right of the Virgin Mary. She had followed her husband Giovanni's wishes as laid down in his will by founding an altar dedicated to Santa Maria della Consolazione in the church of San Francesco at Fabriano in 1490.⁴³ Saint Francis presents the tiny figure, his body almost enveloping her in a gesture of protection. The stigmata, visible clearly on Francis's right hand but also identifiable on his left hand and left foot, adhere to Thomas of Celano's description of the points of the nails, both in the way that points turned back on themselves and in their flesh colour and could be due to Oradea's personal instructions or those of the Franciscans in whose church the altarpiece resided.

By contrast, in the polyptych for the high altar of San Domenico in Ascoli-Piceno, completed in 1476, most component parts of which are now in the National Gallery, London, the bulbous mass visible on the back of Saint Francis's right hand has no obvious relationship to either Thomas of Celano's or Bonaventure's texts (fig. 77).⁴⁴ Rather, it appears closer to some of the descriptions of stigmata as raised livid flesh that we have seen in the case of female stigmatics such as Stefana Quinzani. The convent of San Domenico formed part of the observant Lombard congregation under the leadership of the Blessed Costanzo di Meo di Servolo (circa 1410–1481). It is his features that were given to Saint Dominic in the main register of the altarpiece.⁴⁵ Ronald Lightbown

43 Lightbown, *Carlo Crivelli*, pp. 463–472.

44 For a history of the fortunes of the altarpiece see Lightbown, *Carlo Crivelli*, pp. 209–210.

45 Lightbown, *Carlo Crivelli*, p. 206.



76. Carlo Crivelli, *Virgin and Child with Saints Francis and Sebastian*, 1491, egg and oil on poplar, 175.3 x 151.1 cm, National Gallery, London, presented by Elizabeth Mary, widow of the second Marquess of Westminster, 1870, NG807.

argued that the prominent inclusion of Saint Francis in the altarpiece indicated a particular devotion on the part of the Blessed Costanzo.⁴⁶ If so, Costanzo did not see fit to insist on a representation of Francis's stigmata that adhered to the descriptions in the early *vitae*. Crivelli may have simply chosen to show the stigmata in a different

⁴⁶ Lightbown, *Carlo Crivelli*, p. 220.



77. Carlo Crivelli, *Saint Francis*, detail from the *Ascoli-Piceno Altarpiece*, circa 1476, tempera on poplar, National Gallery, London, NG788.6.

way, but it is also possible that this representation of the flesh growths attested to by Thomas of Celano and Bonaventure was calculated to fit within a Dominican understanding of stigmata that encompassed a range of marks, swellings and wounds.

Promoted by the Franciscans as unique, problematized within debates about Francis as a second Christ, Francis's stigmata made those who knew the texts work in order to reach an understanding of the miraculous wounds and what they signified. The variety of contexts and the range of ways in which Saint Francis's stigmata were represented in visual art is evidence both of their importance and of the puzzlement that surrounded them. Images of Francis's stigmata ranged from small red marks to large pointed nails, from restraint to emphasis. They often departed from the descriptions in the *vitae*, indicating the complex and problematic relationship that could exist between text and image. The range and the number of representations of Francis as a stigmatic overshadow those of women shown with stigmata and depictions of Francis with stigmata raised important questions about images, as we have seen in Chapter 2.

As this book has shown, however, it is only by exploring the experiences of female stigmatics and the ways in which others responded to them that it is possible to gauge the extent to which stigmata were embedded in visual culture. Not only did women make up the vast majority of stigmatics in the period between the death of Saint Francis and the early-seventeenth century, it was women whose response to visual imagery impacted so strongly on their experience and performance of stigmata, women whose stigmatic experiences influenced the ways in which their male hagiographers articulated the visuality of stigmata, and women who were the greatest contributors to the visual culture of stigmata. The restraint shown in images of female stigmatics and their relative lack of representation in painting and sculpture is a product, paradoxically, of the richness of their visual experience and the concomitant difficulty in expressing it in visual art. Whilst Francis is the stigmatic most represented in painting and sculpture, his part in the visual culture of stigmata must be placed within the context of the diverse visual experiences of female recipients of miraculous wounds.

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Stigmatics and Visual Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy places the discourse surrounding stigmata within the visual culture of the late medieval and early modern periods. Stigmata stimulated controversy by echoing, and sometimes seeming to recreate, the wounds and pain inflicted on Christ during his Passion. Disputes were magnified when, as in the majority of cases, the stigmatic was female. Critical to debates were issues deeply rooted in contemporary visual culture, such as how stigmata were described and performed and whether, or how, it was legitimate to represent them in visual art. Because of the contested nature of stigmata and because stigmata did not always manifest in the same form – sometimes invisible, sometimes visible only periodically, sometimes miraculous, and sometimes self-inflicted – they provoked complex questions and reflections intersecting with the nature and purpose of visual representation.

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