

WICKED CHILDREN ON CALVARY AND THE BALDNESS OF ST. FRANCIS

by Amy Neff

Wicked children

In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, Italian artists often included children among the crowds who witness the central event of a narrative. As genre, these children serve to enlarge the artist's range of character types and enhance the naturalism of the scene.¹ But in at least one case, the children are more than genre. In some of the earliest instances of children in scenes from Christ's Passion, the children also provide a commentary by means of allegory.

A miniature in a late thirteenth-century manuscript shows five children standing and watching as Christ carries the Cross to Calvary. Four more children perch in the branches of leafless trees (Fig. 1). On the facing page, in the scene of *Christ Ascending to the Cross*, two of the boys again quietly watch (Fig. 2). Their posture and costumes exactly repeat those of two of the boys of the previous page: they are drawn in rear view, arms bent at the elbow, faces barely visible in lost profile.

The two miniatures are part of a narrative series of full-page drawings in the *Supplicationes variae*, a finely decorated manuscript dated 1293 and made for use in Genoa.² No Passion images with children are known earlier than those of the *Supplicationes*, even though the development of richly crowded Passion scenes was already well under way by the 1260's.³ For several centuries thereafter, however, often depicted in poses related to those in the *Supplicationes*, children can be found in both Italian and Northern images of the Passion.

These children most frequently are placed in the scene of the *Via Crucis*. Luke 32.28 describes Christ on the way to Calvary turning to the women who follow him, saying, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." While possibly justifying the presence of children on the way to Calvary, this text does little to explain the actions of the children in the *Supplicationes* or in many later examples. Nor does it help to explain why children began to appear in Passion scenes only at a particular time and place in history, i.e., late thirteenth-century Italy.

The master of the *Supplicationes variae* repeated the same pair of children four times: in *Christ Teaching in the Temple* (Fig. 3), the *Entry into Jerusalem* (Fig. 4), the *Via Crucis* and *Christ Ascending to the Cross*. In the *Entry into Jerusalem* and the *Via Crucis*, the children suggest a simple comparison: the painful journey to Calvary is paralleled and contrasted with the triumphant procession.⁴ The contrast is emphasized by the trees, green and palm-leaved in the *Entry*, bare in the *Via Crucis*, while the shape that served as a palm-frond in the *Entry* becomes a whip in the hand of one of Christ's tormentors. Children and trees are not standard elements of the *Via Crucis* but are intended to heighten the emotion of the scene by alluding to the *Entry into Jerusalem*, where they are part of the normal iconography.

More subtly, the children in both *Supplicationes* Passion scenes are also typological allusions: they are the children who mocked the prophet Elisha in the Book of Kings (IV Kings 2.23-24).⁵ The children are not neutral onlookers. They are placed in dry, barren trees, and one child points at Christ while his other hand is clenched in a fist. These children are part of an exegetical tradition that goes back to Augustine, linking the mocking of Elisha with the mocking of Christ.

The comparison between Christ and Elisha mocked hinges on a play of words: *calve*, bald, and Calvary. For Elisha was bald, and as he climbed to the mountain of Bethel, small children shouted after him, "Ascende, calve, ascende, calve." "Go up, thou baldhead, go up, thou baldhead!" Elisha then turned to curse the children, and obligingly, bears came out from the woods and ate forty-two of them. To St. Augustine,

Significavit hoc factum prophetia quadam, futurum Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum. Ille enim a Judaeis iridentibus velut calvus irrisus est, quia in Calvariae loco crucifixus est.

This event, as if by some prophecy, signified our future Lord Jesus Christ. For he was mocked as if bald by the jeering Jews because he was crucified in the place of Calvary.⁶

The Elisha-Christ analogy persisted in several widely read medieval authors, such as, from the seventh century, Isidore of Seville; from the ninth, Rabanus Maurus and Walafriid Strabo; from the twelfth, Rupert of Deutz, Honorius Augustodunensis, and St. Bernard of Clairvaux; and from the early fourteenth, Nicholas of Lyra.⁷

Isidore of Seville's commentary was the source for many later texts. He elaborates on the simple analogy presented by Augustine as follows:

Elisha himself also is the figure of Christ. For his very name means the "salvation of God". And who else is the salvation of God if not his Son, who most specially is called Savior. In truth, those small children mocking the salvation of God, that is, Elisha, are the Jews, because they mocked the cross of the Lord. They say, Go up, thou baldhead, go up, thou baldhead, because in the place of Calvary Christ was to be raised on the Cross.

The fact that Elisha turned and cursed them, so that two bears came out from the forest and killed forty-two blaspheming children means that Christ after his Passion and Resurrection from the dead turned and cursed the Jews, after which he ascended to God. And in the forty-second year after his Ascension he unleashed two bears from the forest of the gentiles, namely Titus and Vespasian, who killed the Jews in a cruel massacre.⁸

Other texts describe the Jews as *puerili sensu* or foolish as children, lacking the wisdom to recognize Christ.⁹ Elisha's mocking and ascent to Bethel are most frequently likened to Christ's ascent to the Cross and Ascension to heaven, but some commentaries include all Passion episodes in which Christ was derided as New Testament equivalents to the mocking of Elisha. Thus Rupert of Deutz, in answer to the question, why were the mocking children and the Jews killed, explains:

They were punished clearly because the children jeered at Elisha, because the Jews are foolish, and their princes [are] children a hundred years old (Is. 65.20) and for that they were cursed; they ridiculed our Lord, and spit upon him, veiled his face, dressed him in purple, crowned him with thorns, whipped him and finally said: "Go up, thou baldhead, go up, thou baldhead." Where? Go up in the place of the bald hill Calvary, to the Cross.¹⁰

St. Bernard even calls Christ "*calvus noster*", "our bald one".¹¹

In the visual arts, Elisha mocked by the children is juxtaposed with scenes from Christ's Passion by the late twelfth century, the earliest date from which extensive typological cycles survive. The episode is one of many Old Testament types for the Crucifixion illustrated in



1 *Via Crucis*. Miniature in the *Supplicationes variae*. Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana, Plut. 25.3, fol. 375v.

the *De laudibus sancte crucis*, a Regensburg manuscript of ca. 1170-1180 (Fig. 5).¹² The drawing shows bald Elisha starting up a hill, turning back to curse the boys. The boys point their fingers at Elisha in derision, even as the bears begin their attack. Between children and prophet, the Cross indicates the Christological significance of the event, which is briefly amplified in an accompanying text.

From the thirteenth century, typological representations of Elisha mocked are known from England, southern Germany (Bavaria or Austria), and France. In England a manual written



2 *Christ Ascending the Cross*. Miniature in the *Supplicationes variae*. Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana, Plut. 25.3, fol. 376.

ca. 1200 as a guide for artists, the *Pictor in Carmine*, lists the mocking of Elisha as one of four Old Testament types for the episodes of Christ crowned with thorns, blindfolded and mocked.¹³ Actual monuments in England show, however, Elisha paired with the Flagellation, as at Canterbury and at Peterborough, in examples which are documented but no longer survive. The one extant example is a typological miniature of the early fourteenth-century Peterborough Psalter, where, although the Elisha scene is placed under the Blindfolding of Christ, as Lucy Freeman Sandler explains, it is actually a type for the Flagellation, transposed in order



3 *Christ Teaching in the Temple*. Miniature in the *Supplicationes variae*. Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana, Plut. 25.3, fol. 369v.

to fit the requirements of a four-part page composition.¹⁴ The Psalter's scene of Elisha is very close to that in the Regensburg drawing. Bald Elisha walks away from the children, whose faces are neutral but whose gestures indicate mocking. One child's arm is tensely bent at the elbow, the hand held up with outstretched fingers.

Much the same iconography of Elisha mocked can be found in numerous copies of the so-called *Biblia pauperum*, a typological picture-book written in Bavaria or Austria probably ca. 1240.¹⁵ For example, one of the earliest surviving manuscripts shows only slight variation



4 *Entry into Jerusalem*. Miniature in the *Supplicationes variae*. Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana, Plut. 25.3, fol. 372.

from the standard, as Elisha faces the children rather than walking away (Fig. 6). Insulted by a pointing finger and an outstretched hand, Elisha in this image serves as a type for the Mocking of Christ.

In France, the scene of Elisha and the children appears in manuscripts of the *Bible moralisée*, that vast encyclopedic endeavor begun in Paris in the 1220's.¹⁶ The textual tradition of Augustine and Isidore of Seville is more closely followed; instead of paralleling the Flagellation or the Mocking of Christ, Elisha mocked is a type for the Crucifixion. For example, the Oxford



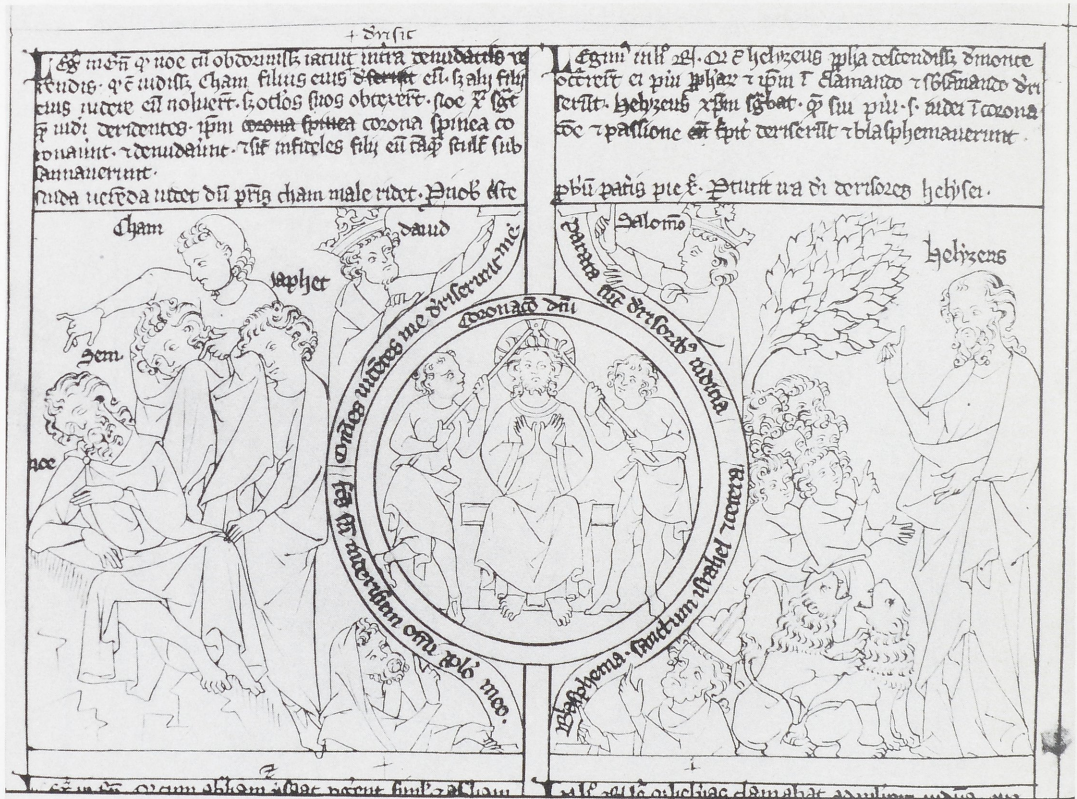
5 *Elisha mocked*. Miniature in the *The Laudibus sancte crucis*. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibl., cgm. 14159, fol. 4 (detail).

Bible moralisée shows Elisha turning to curse the children, who insult him with outstretched hands (Fig. 7). In the roundel below, the Jews at the Crucifixion repeat the children's gesture.

In all these representations of Elisha mocked, the formal iconography of the scene is constant despite differing typological juxtapositions and widely separate places of manufacture. No doubt, all ultimately derive from one prototype, probably an early Bible illustration. Indeed, closely related scenes of Elisha and the children can be found in a series of Mozarabic and Spanish Bibles, in the late twelfth-century Gumperts Bible, and in the Arsenal Bible of ca. 1260.¹⁷ The prototype most likely was Byzantine. A similar scene of Elisha and the children can be found in the ninth-century *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* in Milan, which also probably derived its illustration from an illuminated Bible.¹⁸

There is, then, an established tradition in theological literature and in the visual arts for the Mocking of Elisha as a type for events of the Passion. The precise New Testament antitype may vary, but the children consistently signify the Jews who deride Christ. The act of derision is depicted by a pointing finger or a raised, outstretched hand.

The miniatures of the *Supplicationes variae* are part of this tradition. What is different, however, in the *Supplicationes* is that the mocking children occur not in a typological or exegetical work but as part of a chronologically arranged narrative cycle. For the first time, the chil-



6 Mocking of Christ, with Old Testament types. Miniature in the *Biblia Pauperum*. St. Florian, Augustiner-Chorherrenstift, col. III. 2073, fol. 6v (detail).

dren are shown actually present on Calvary. The Jews of childish understanding have become children. This is not only a new formal iconography but also a new mode of symbolic expression.

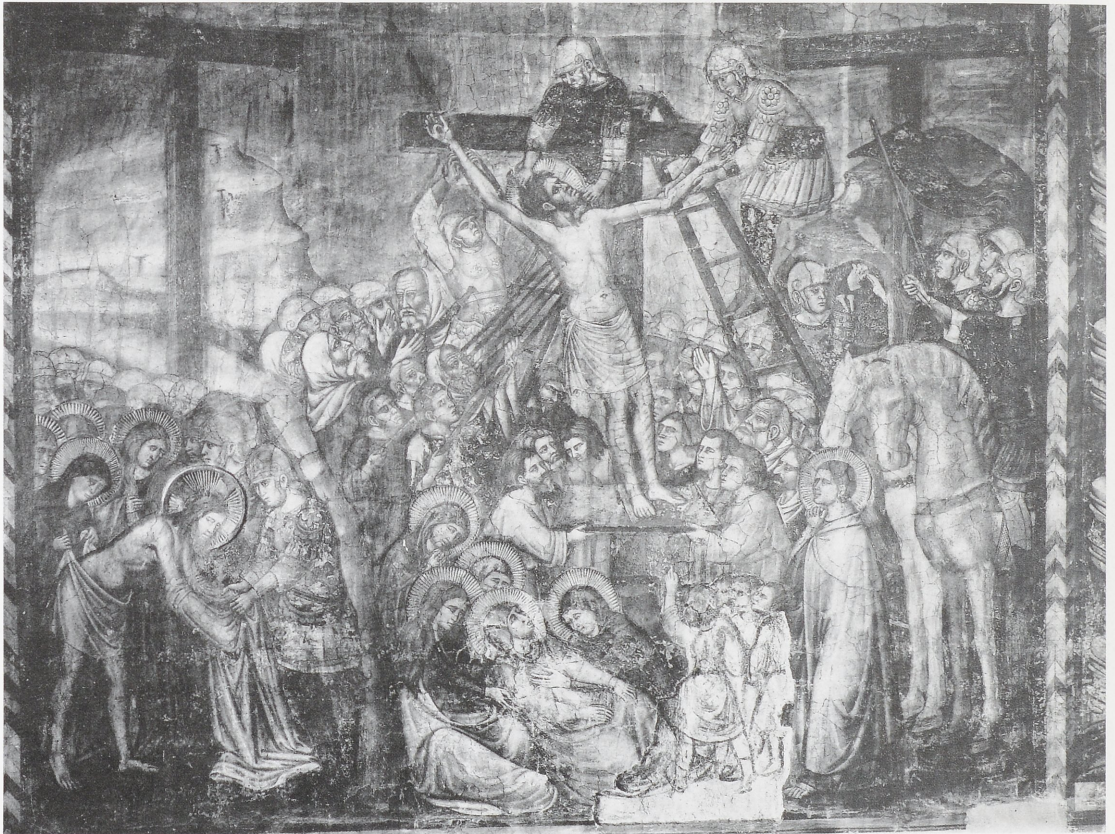
The theologian or patron who first directed that children be placed in a Passion scene was certainly familiar with the exegetical tradition of Elisha mocked. But the artist of the *Supplicationes variae* may never have seen models of the Northern European type, with their typical configuration of Elisha and the children. Instead, in the *Supplicationes variae* mocking children stand either as a group or pair, with one or two children viewed from the rear, their faces in lost profile.¹⁹ The pair of boys in so-called dorsal view must have been fairly common in motif or iconographic model books available to Italian Trecento artists, as several later paintings of Calvary include children in similar poses. For example, in the *Preparation of the Cross* from S. Maria Donnaregina in Naples, a group of four children stand at the foot of the cross (Figs. 8, 9).²⁰ As in the *Supplicationes variae*, one is seen from behind, stretching his arm up to point at Christ. This fresco at S. Maria Donnaregina is unusually rich in Scriptural allusions: the pulling of Christ's hair and beard refer to passages in Isaiah and perhaps also to shaved Samson and bald Elisha. The many spears poked at Christ's side look as if they number his bones, a reference to Psalm 21.19.²¹ The designer of the fresco surely was also aware of the exegetical significance of the children.

The malicious intent of the children becomes more explicit in the S. Maria Donnaregina fresco of the *Via Crucis* (Fig. 10). While one child bends to pick up something from the ground, the other readies his arm to throw. This is possibly the earliest depiction of children throwing mud or stones at Christ, a motif that can be found frequently in paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, principally north of the Alps. However, the motif probably did not travel North in direct copies of the S. Maria Donnaregina fresco. It is one of the many iconographic types that Northern artists learned from the work of Simone Martini and later Sieneese or Sieneese-influenced artists such as Altichiero.

An important and controversial work by Simone is the polyptych of the Passion, painted for a member of the Orsini family.²² Children figure in two of these panels: the *Via Crucis* in the Louvre and the *Crucifixion* in Antwerp (Figs. 11, 12). On the Way to Calvary, three children walk before Christ. The first is barely visible, much of his body cut off by the edge of the panel.²³ The other two children, however, are mockers of Christ inspired by the mock-



7 *Elisha mocked and Crucifixion*. Miniature in the *Bible moralisée*. Oxford, Bodleian Library, cod. 270b, fol. 175v (detail).



8 Naples, S. Maria Donnaregina. Fresco of the *Preparation of the Cross*.



9 Detail of fig. 8.



10 Naples, S. Maria Donnaregina. Fresco of the *Via Crucis*.

ers of Elisha. Like the children in the S. Maria Donnaregina *Via Crucis*, these throw stones. The larger child holds a small, long, hard object, while the other holds up his apron as if to carry something, although no objects are actually painted there. The implication of physical tormenting is more muted than in later Northern paintings but nonetheless present.

James Marrow has explained the motif of children throwing stones as a typological allusion, identifying the Old Testament type for the stoning of Christ as an episode from the Book of Kings, the stoning of David by Semei or Shimei, son of Gera (II Samuel 16.5-13).²⁴ As evidence for this interpretation, Marrow cites one text, the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, often attributed to Ludolph of Saxony, ca. 1320-1325. In the *Speculum*, the *patientia*, or endurance through suffering, of David is compared to that of Christ. David suffers Semei's casting of stones, pieces of wood, and mud, while Christ endures the Synagogue's palms, thorns, and spittle.²⁵ Illustrations of the *Speculum* generally parallel the episode of Semei with *Christ's Crowning with Thorns*, but one fourteenth-century example, a fresco in the Emmaus Cloister of Prague, is known to have included David and Semei as a type for the *Via Crucis*.²⁶

Although the Prague fresco supports Marrow's thesis, on the whole, the Semei incident seems to have played a minor role in medieval exegesis. No early tradition of typological representations of Semei is known, even though the *Pictor in Carmine* lists Semei stoning David as a



11 Simone Martini, *Via Crucis*. Paris, Louvre.

type for Christ stoned by the Jews in the Temple, at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 8.59).²⁷ That the stoning of David may be related to the iconography of children stoning Christ is witnessed by a rare illustration of the episode in the splendid Old Testament Picture book most probably made in Paris, ca. 1240 (Fig. 13).²⁸ Semei, a bearded adult, aims to throw a stone at David who climbs a hill, a configuration that could call to mind Christ's climb to Calvary. Semei's pose, rear-view, striding and looking back over one shoulder, is similar enough



12 Simone Martini, *Crucifixion*. Antwerp, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

to the pose of one of the children in Simone's *Via Crucis* to suggest perhaps some indirect connection. But the primary motivation, I believe, for the appearance of children throwing stones in the frescoes of S. Maria Donnaregina and in Simone's *Orsini polyptych* was not to refer to an Old Testament type. There is a more plausible explanation for the children, which will also reveal why mocking children, insulting Christ with either words or stones, were earliest depicted in late thirteenth-century Italy.



13 *Semei casts stones at David*. Detached page from the Old Testament Picture Book, New York, Morgan MS 638 (detail). Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum.

The Baldness of St. Francis

In the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, mocking children appear in art works commissioned by varying types of patrons. The earliest instances, however, are predominantly Franciscan. Although the *Supplicationes variae* is not a Franciscan liturgical manuscript, several of its offices and devotional texts are clearly Franciscan. S. Maria Donnaregina housed a community following the Rule of St. Clare, and the church was rebuilt and decorated under the patronage of Maria of Hungary, a close relative of two Franciscan saints, Elizabeth of Hungary and Louis of Toulouse.²⁹ The patronage of the *Orsini polyptych* is more problematic, but one of the two most likely original owners is Cardinal Napoleone Orsini, whose affairs were much involved with those of the Franciscan Order.³⁰

The earliest known text that describes children throwing stones at Christ is probably also Franciscan. Although the *Dialogus de Passione Domini* was commonly attributed to St. Anselm in the Middle Ages, it was actually written after 1240 and is influenced by Franciscan hagiography.³¹ In the *Dialogus*, the Virgin describes to “Anselm” the procession to Calvary:

The whole crowd converged, as when thieves are led to their punishment. Therefore Luke writes: “And there followed Him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him” (Luke 23.27). Children also followed throwing mud and stones at Him. But my son Jesus turning to the women said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children” (*ibid.*, 23.28), who throw mud and stones at me, knowing not what they do.³²

In this text, children and stones are described within a narrative that does not explicitly refer to an Old Testament typology. Neither Elisha nor Semei nor any other Old Testament



14 Giotto, *St. Francis Renouncing his Earthly Goods*. Florence, S. Croce, Bardi Chapel.

figure is mentioned. This omission of Scriptural source illustrates the process that Marrow has termed “the transformation of metaphor into narrative”: the original Scriptural allegory is not cited but leaves its mark on what poses as straightforward narrative.³³ Similarly, pictorial images of children at the Passion contain no overt references to allegorical sources, no prophets in the borders or juxtaposed vignettes to explain the significance of narrative incidents.

In early Trecento cycles of the Life of St. Francis, children again appear throwing stones, in the scene of *St. Francis Renouncing his Earthly Goods*. The earliest unequivocal example is Giotto’s fresco in the Bardi Chapel, ca. 1315, where, from either side of the lunette, a child is forcibly restrained from attacking the saint (Figs. 14, 15, 16).³⁴ The child at the left holds a large stone, which a woman holds in check, while in his other hand is a satchel for more ammunition. At the right, another child cries out and holds up the skirt of his tunic to hold, presumably, stones.

Two children figure also in the same scene in the cycle of the Upper Church of S. Francesco, Assisi (Fig. 17).³⁵ These stand together at the left of the scene, as if in conversation, gesturing without any sign of violence toward the saint. The closely related Bardi Chapel fresco, however, allows us to suspect that their skirts may possibly be held up to carry stones.

Both the Assisi and Bardi Chapel frescoes depend in iconography almost exclusively on the official biography of St. Francis written by St. Bonaventure after 1260. The secondary texts drawn upon were Thomas of Celano’s two earlier Lives of St. Francis, which, even though officially banned and superseded by Bonaventure’s account, nevertheless continued to exert influence, indeed providing the source material for much of Bonaventure’s text.³⁶



15 Detail of fig. 14.

Celano and Bonaventure agree in their accounts of the events preceding Francis's decisive renunciation of his earthly father and all earthly possessions. After having hidden from his enraged father, Francis fasted, prayed for deliverance, and then returned to Assisi to face his tormentors. In Bonaventure's *Legenda maior*:

When the townspeople saw his haggard looks and the change which had come over him, they thought that he had gone mad, and they threw stones and mud from the street, shouting insults after him as if he were a lunatic. But Francis was deaf to it all and no insult could break or change him.³⁷

Celano's earlier text reads similarly but gives more emphasis to Francis's patience and endurance through his revilement.

In his century, the most crucial fact about St. Francis was that he conformed to Christ as the *alter Christus*.³⁸ As early as ca. 1260-1265, in the nave frescoes of the Lower Church of



16 Detail of fig. 14.

Assisi, Francis was paralleled to Christ.³⁹ Five scenes of Francis's life face five corresponding scenes from the life of Christ painted on the opposite nave wall. The fresco of Francis's *Renunciation* has survived only in part, and there is no evidence whether mockers, either children or townspeople, were included. No Christological scenes of this series include children. But it is certainly significant that Francis's *Renunciation* is paired with the *Preparation of the Cross*, in which Christ disrobes before climbing a ladder to the Cross.

Francis in his *Renunciation* sheds his clothes like Christ, casting aside the secular world, going naked to follow Christ. Bonaventure writes of this:

Thus the servant of the Most High King was left naked so that he might follow his naked crucified Lord, whom he loved.⁴⁰

The appearance of stone-throwing, mocking children in contemporary images of Francis's *Renunciation* and the *Passion* cannot be fortuitous. Where the children were first depicted can-



17 Assisi, Upper Church of S. Francesco. Fresco of *St. Francis Renouncing his Earthly Goods*.



18 Taddeo Gaddi, *St. Francis Renouncing his Earthly Goods*. Florence, Accademia (from the Sacristy of S. Croce).

not be determined, but it seems clear that the significance of the motif to the Franciscans motivated contemporary depictions in Passion scenes.

Francis, like Christ, is naked and mocked. He is stoned, and the Quaracchi editors of Celano's *Vita prima* note that the hagiographical stoning of Francis quotes the stoning of Christ by the Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 8.59).⁴¹ David, stoned by Semei, is also listed as one of several Old Testament prophets who endured persecution as did Christ and Francis in Bartholomew of Pisa's *De Conformitate Beati Francisci ad Vitam Domini Iesu*, a detailed and ingenious typological work of the late fourteenth century.⁴² Semei's stoning, then, is a relevant type, but surely the stoning of St. Francis was the most important factor in the development of the iconographic motif.

We are still left with the question: why is Francis mocked by children? The answer is that Francis is typologically also a new Elisha.

Bonaventure himself compared St. Francis to Elisha, who received the double-spirit of understanding and prophecy.⁴³ Like Elisha and like Christ, Francis once multiplied provisions so that a small amount fed many.⁴⁴ Bartholomew of Pisa paralleled Francis to Elisha specifically

in his rejection of the world, “*in mundi contemptu*”, referring to the episode that describes how Elisha became Elijah’s successor (III Kings 19.19-21).⁴⁵ The biblical text reads:

So he (Elijah) departed ... and found Elisha the son of Shapat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him ... Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again; for what have I done to you?” And he returned from following him, and took the yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh ... and gave it to the people ... Then he arose and went after Elijah, and ministered to him.

Two critical points accord with Francis’s Renunciation: Elisha’s denial of his earthly parents and his rejection of earthly goods — for Elisha, represented by the oxen. The motif of the mantle also links the two renunciations: the mantle thrown on Elisha designates him as Elisha’s successor, while St. Francis enters the religious life sheltered in the mantle of the bishop of Assisi. Elisha is a particularly apt prototype for the very event in which there are mocking children, Francis’s renunciation of his father and all possessions.⁴⁶

A richly allegorical Franciscan text ties all the threads together: Elisha of the double-spirit, Francis, and Christ; the mocking of bald Elisha, Francis’s renunciation, and Christ on Calvary; stone-throwing and verbal insults, all placed within an Apocalyptic framework. Writing ca. 1280, the unknown author of the *Meditatio pauperis in solitudine* explains why Francis, who is the “*alter angelus*” of the Apocalyptic Sixth Seal, ascends and does not descend from the place of the sun, the Orient:

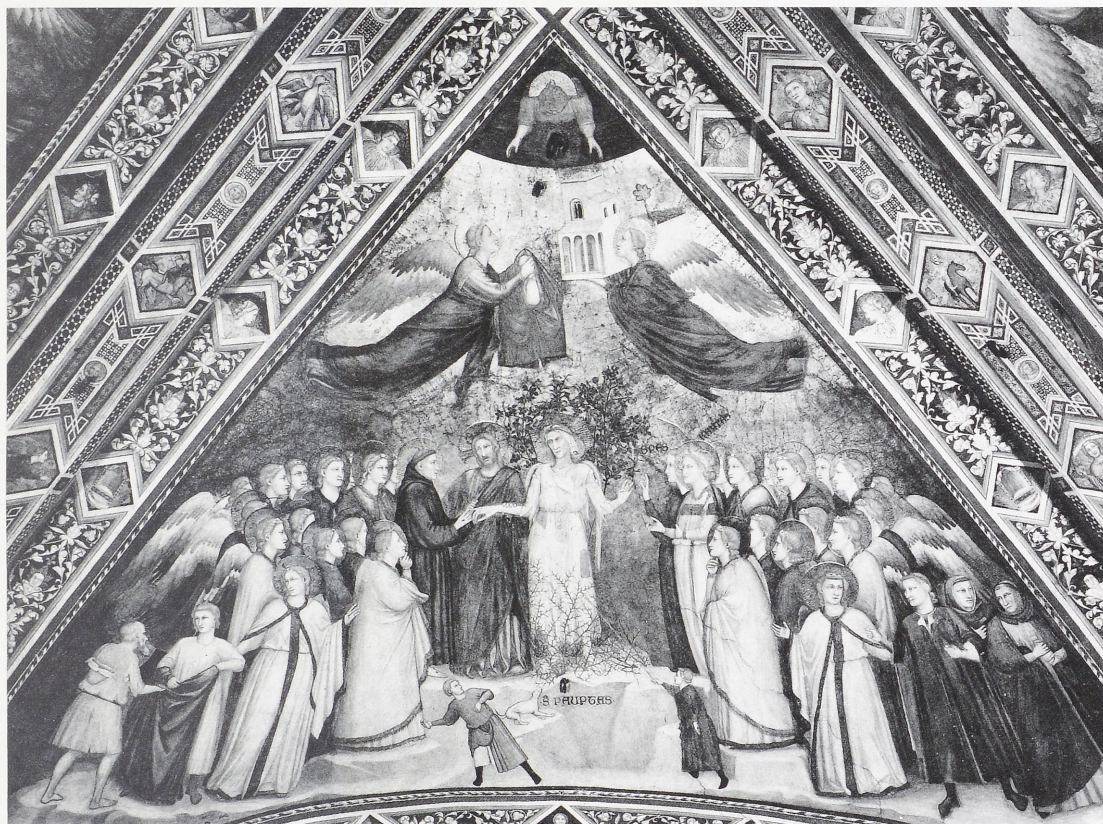
(The angel) truly typifies blessed Francis who “leaves the Orient” freely to devote himself to God, rejecting all the riches of the world. For he is Elisha himself over whom the “double-spirit” of Elijah “came to rest” (IV Kings 2, 9); and “who went up” from the rising of the sun “to Bethel” (IV Kings 2, 23), that is, into the Order of the Friars Minor, which truly is the home of God ...; the boys mocked his baldness, which is the poverty of the Crucified on Calvary; shouting they cried in derision, “Go up, thou baldhead, go up, thou baldhead,” as it is said in IV Kings 2, 23. Truly he too is “bald”, he too is without hair, he too is denuded of all things of the world, because, literally, at the beginning of the conversion of blessed Francis youths mocked him not only with words but even “throwing mud of the streets and stones”, as is written in his *Legend*.

These are the boys of worldly sense, on whom “wisdom from above has not descended, but (instead) earthly, animal, and diabolic (wisdom)” as is said in James 3, 15, earthly in avarice, animal in sensual pleasure, diabolic in pride ...

Because of this “the bears came out from the woods and tore forty-two of the boys” (IV Kings 2, 24). This is the number of the power of the beast, to whom “is given a mouth speaking blasphemy” as it is said in Apoc. 13, 5 ...

Therefore (Francis) truly is bald, he who came especially to call (us) to “weeping and baldness and girding with sackcloth”, as is said in Isaiah 22, 12: who took for himself “a rope instead of a girdle”, “baldness instead of coiffeured hair”, and assumed “a hair-shirt instead of clothing with decorated bands”, as is described in Isaiah 3, 24 ...⁴⁷

Like Elisha and Christ, Francis is *calvus*. Baldness signifies renunciation of the world and the poverty of Christ. In light of this emphasis on baldness, it cannot be insignificant that in the Bardi Chapel fresco of *St. Francis’s Renunciation*, each child is held back by a hand grasping his hair (Fig. 14). The children’s hair is carefully dressed in tight waves or curls, recalling



19 Assisi, Lower Church of S. Francesco. Fresco of the *Allegory of Poverty*.

Isaiah's phrase quoted in the *Meditatio pauperis*, "instead of coiffeured hair, baldness" (Figs. 15, 16). In contrast, the figures restraining the children are spiritually bald, a tonsured monk and a woman whose head is covered by a simple veil.

Mocking children are depicted in only a few later scenes of *St. Francis Renouncing his Earthly Goods*, and these are largely dependant on the Assisi and Bardi Chapel frescoes in iconography. Taddeo Gaddi's version painted for the Sacristy of S. Croce, Florence (Fig. 18), abbreviates the Bardi Chapel scene, while more than a century later at Montefalco (Perugia), Benozzo Gozzoli based his scene of *St. Francis's Renunciation* on the earlier fresco at Assisi.⁴⁸ In Benozzo's fresco, as at Assisi, two children stand inactive at the left of the composition, but one carries a large, full sack, suggesting that it may hold stones.

The *Allegory of Poverty* frescoed in the Lower Church at Assisi is more innovative in iconography (Fig. 19).⁴⁹ Its central theme is the Marriage of St. Francis to Lady Poverty, their hands joined by Christ. In the *Allegory*, the boy about to hurl a stone at Lady Poverty is nearly identical in pose to the child on the left in the Bardi Chapel *Renunciation*. The artist certainly had a first-hand knowledge of models used in Giotto's workshop.⁵⁰ The other child in the fresco pokes a long stick at Lady Poverty.

The marriage of St. Francis and Poverty was inspired by Dante's panegyric of Francis in Canto XI of the *Paradiso*. The children, however, are not in Dante's poem but derive from

the other most important iconographic source for the fresco, the *Sacrum commercium beati Francisci cum domina Paupertate*.⁵¹ There Lady Poverty complains of those who have forsaken her, wealthy friars whom she calls “the children of foolish and base men ...” Reproaching them, she quotes Isaiah 1.2: “I have brought up my children, and exalted them; but they have despised me.”⁵²

Moreover, in Dante, the marriage to Lady Poverty allegorically is Francis’s Renunciation:

And unto her he pledged his wedded faith / In spiritual court and *coram patre* too ...⁵³

In the Assisi *Allegory of Poverty*, the child throwing stones is not merely a formal quotation; he reminds the alert viewer of Francis’s historical life, specifically of the Renunciation, the temporal equivalent of the mystical wedding.

Innocent Children

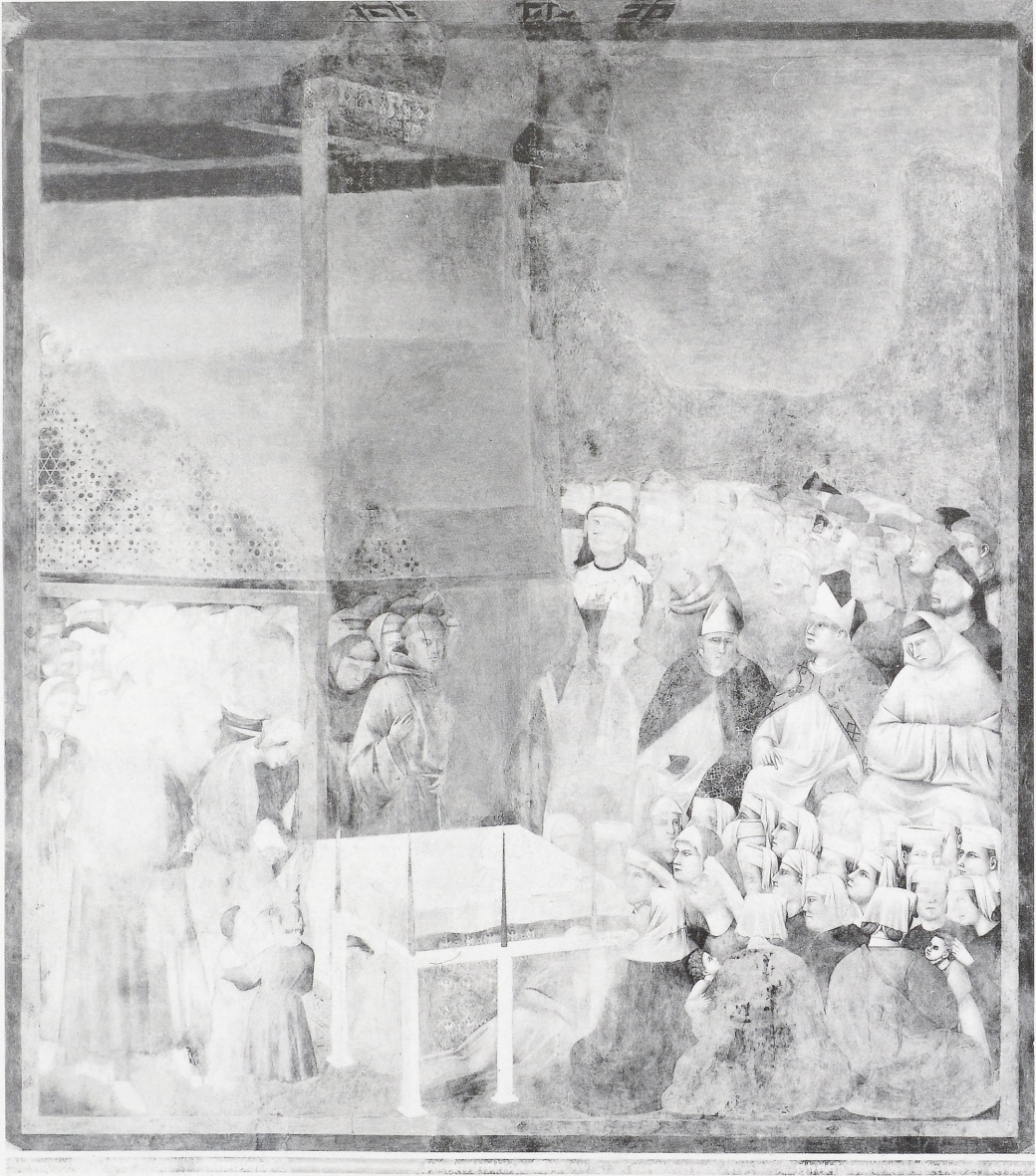
One other fresco in the Upper Church of Assisi contains a pair of children, the *Canonization of St. Francis*, which is directly across the nave from *Francis’s Renunciation* (Fig. 20). That two facing scenes include children, while none appear elsewhere, hints that these children too may be more than genre.

While the iconography of most of the Assisi life of Francis depends on Bonaventure, the brevity of Bonaventure’s description of the canonization apparently prompted a use of Thomas of Celano’s *Vita prima*, despite official suppression of this text.⁵⁴ Celano vividly describes the celebration attended by churchmen and laity of all stations in life, of “every age”, “the small and the great”.⁵⁵

As in Celano’s text, the children in the fresco diversify and enliven the crowd. In addition, although any complex symbolic meaning is doubtful, these children provide a contrast to those in the *Renunciation*. Facing frescoes of the north and south walls of the Assisi cycle were frequently correlated with parallel or contrasting themes.⁵⁶ Both events took place in Assisi, but at the Renunciation, the citizens were hostile and incredulous: at the Canonization, they were reverent devotees of the saint. In late medieval Italian imagery, children could be depicted as good or as evil.

This brings us back to Simone Martini’s *Orsini polyptych* (Figs. 11, 12). I have delayed discussion of the children in the *Crucifixion* panel because they are not all Elisha’s mockers. The children who stand in the foreground of the *Crucifixion* scene are not the same as those of the *Via Crucis*. Richly dressed with bright red boots and with bangles, patterned borders, fringes, sash, and girdle on their clothes, the children who walk to Calvary wear the finery condemned in Isaiah 3.18-24, the passage quoted in part in the Franciscan *Meditatio pauperis in solitudine*. In contrast, the two children at the lower right of the *Crucifixion* panel are dressed in gowns unadorned save for a simple gold double-line at neck, wrists and shoulder. One child points to the women who aid the swooning Virgin. In the iconography of Elisha mocked, pointing indicates verbal insults, but here, the gesture of the other child proves that these children are not blasphemous: he clasps his hands in prayer as he looks up to Christ.

One other child in Simone’s panel is also devout. Placed next to St. John, he bends reverently in concern for the Virgin. The three children behind John, however, seem not so innocent, compositionally grouped with the Jews and the centurion. Although the centurion is now healed of his spiritual blindness, the two behind him are set apart by scowling and distinctly Semitic faces. One guides the centurion’s hand holding the lance, thereby taking the responsibility and guilt upon himself. One child’s gesture of bent elbow and taut, stretched-out hand is familiar from the iconography of Elisha. Along with frowning and taunting faces, this insulting gesture probably identifies these children, too, as wicked mockers.



20 Assisi, Upper Church of S. Francesco. Fresco of the *Canonization of St. Francis*.

As far as I can determine, the devout children of Passion scenes do not carry a precise typological reference as do the children who mock. Several Biblical passages, however, characterize children as good and innocent, and these were cited in medieval lore, even in the same texts which desecrate the child as foolish and wicked. Rabanus Maurus, for example, defines *puer* both as Christ who leads as a little child (Isaiah 11.6) and as the Jewish people “*sensu puerilis*”, of childish understanding. *Pueri* are both innocents, the inhabitants of the heavenly city, and

the Jews who mocked and were destroyed.⁵⁷ The description of Calvary in St. Bernard's *De Laude Novae Militiae*, which may have influenced Simone's and other pictorial representations of the Passion, preserves this ambivalent Scriptural image of the child:

Also he went out to the place of Calvary, where the true Elisha (i.e., Christ), when laughed at by the senseless children, bestowed on his own (children) an eternal smile; of whom he says, "Behold, I and my children, whom the Lord has given to me" (Isaiah 8.18). Opposite the maliciousness of the others, these are the good children, whom the Psalmist roused to praise saying, "Praise the Lord, children, praise the name of the Lord" (Psalm. 112.1), so that in the mouths of holy infants, praise is brought to perfection, which is lacking in the mouths of the hostile children, especially those of whom he complained as follows: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they scorn me" (Isaiah 1.2). Thus our baldhead climbed up the Cross ...⁵⁸

As in Simone's *Via Crucis* and *Crucifixion* panels, St. Bernard's passage describes innocent children whose prayers contrast to the jeers of Elisha's mockers.

Conclusion

Rooted in Patristic exegesis, the tradition of children on Calvary continued in the visual arts at least through the early sixteenth century. The formal types earliest seen in the *Supplicationes variae* and the *Orsini polyptych* proved quite popular in late medieval painting both in Italy and the North.⁵⁹ Whether the allegorical connotations of the children persisted along with the poses, however, is open to question. Marrow argues for an interpretation of the children in Northern Passion scenes as wicked mockers, and their sometimes violent actions support his thesis. The children in Italian Trecento and Quattrocento examples are generally more restrained in gestures and facial expression, and interpretation can be difficult. In each case, the broader historical context of program and patronage must be considered before the children can be judged innocent, evil, or merely neutral bystanders. In both Italy and the North, as we move farther from the context of Franciscan patronage, even when the children may be seen as evil, the original Franciscan parallel was probably forgotten.

The formative and most significant period, however, in the conception of wicked children on Calvary was late medieval Italy, in a Franciscan context. Before that, the earliest images of mocking children had been discrete and separate; the children who jeered at Elisha had been explicitly a typological commentary on a New Testament scene. In composition, this relationship was usually expressed by a juxtaposition of two related scenes, as in the *Biblia pauperum* or the *Bible moralisée*. But in the *Supplicationes variae* and in the *Life of St. Francis* in the Upper Church at Assisi, there was a fundamental change. The mocking children entered historical narrative; they were embedded within a naturalistic image. Correspondingly, the children have always been read as genre. Instead, they transmit and transform an age-old tradition of typological lore.

APPENDIX: *Children on Calvary in Italian Painting*

1. The *Supplicationes variae* (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Plut. 25.3), *Via Crucis*, *Christ Climbs to the Cross*. Miniatures, 1293.
2. Giotto, *Crucifixion* (Berlin-Dahlem, State Museums). Panel, ca. 1300-1315. Two children, grieving.
3. *Via Crucis*, *Preparation of the Cross*, in S. Maria di Donnaregina, Naples. Frescoes, ca. 1320.
4. Follower of Duccio, *Crucifixion* (Leningrad, Hermitage). Panel, ca. 1330? Two pairs of children, one at either side of the Cross. Perhaps innocent children on the side of the Virgin, mockers with the soldiers and priests. One of the latter children gestures with his hand stretched open and wears a decorated tunic, recalling the condemned finery of Isaiah 3.24.
5. Follower of Francesco Traini, *Crucifixion*, in the Camposanto, Pisa. Fresco, ca. 1330. Several children, some grouped with the Daughters of Jerusalem, apparently innocent. At the left, a pair of boys: one points at Christ; the other is held by the hair on top of his head.
6. Andrea Orcagna and Nardo di Cione, *Crucifixion with Via Crucis*, in the former Refectory of S. Spirito, Florence. Fresco, ca. 1340. Two children, frontal pose, approach the Crucifixion as part of a procession.
7. Simone Martini, *Via Crucis* (Paris, Louvre), *Crucifixion* (Antwerp, Musée des Beaux-Arts). Panels, 1335-1340.
8. Maestro del Louvre (recently identified as Roberto d'Oderisio, in *Leone de Castris* [n. 20], pp. 380, 416), *Crucifixion* (Paris, Louvre, N. 1665-A). Panel, ca. 1330-1360. Four pairs of children, one pair in rear-view.
9. Naddo Ceccarelli, *Crucifixion* (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery). Panel, ca. 1350. Two pairs of children, one with the Maries, one with the soldiers.
10. Barna da Siena (so-called), *Crucifixion*, in the Collegiata of San Gimignano. Fresco, ca. 1340-1355. Three children watch the swooning Virgin; two boys, rear-view, stand near the foot of the Cross; two others are grouped with the soldiers dividing Christ's tunic. As in the *Supplicationes variae*, a pair of boys in rear view are also in the *Entry into Jerusalem* of the same cycle, by an assistant of Barna.
11. Geri di Lapo, *Crucifixion*. Manresa Cathedral. Embroidered altar hanging, ca. 1325-1375. Pair of children immediately to the left of the Cross.
12. Maestro di Paciano, *Via Crucis* (Perugia, Galleria nazionale). Panel, 14th century. Four children, some may hold stones.
13. Andrea di Firenze, *Crucifixion with Via Crucis*, in the Spanish Chapel, S. Maria Novella, Florence. Fresco, ca. 1365-1367. Two boys walk in the *Via Crucis* processions; two others stand apart from the procession as it bends around the city of Jerusalem. They watch, pointing. At the foot of the Cross, another pair, in rear view, faces in lost profile. One holds his hand up in a gesture of derision.
14. Altichiero, *Crucifixion*, in the Cappella di S. Giacomo, Basilica del Santo, Padua. Fresco, 1374. One child, rear-view, lost profile, stands near the foot of the Cross.
15. Andrea di Bartolo, *Via Crucis* (Lugano, Coll. Thyssen-Bornemisza) and *Crucifixion* (New York, Metropolitan Museum). Panels, from a predella, ca. 1390. In the *Via Crucis*, a pair of boys gesture at Christ. In the *Crucifixion*, following Barna, several children are clustered around the group with the swooning Virgin, while two boys, rear-view, are near the foot of the Cross; two watch the dividing of Christ's robe.
16. Spinello Aretino? Niccolò di Pietro Gerini? *Via Crucis*, in the Sacristy of S. Croce, Florence. Fresco, ca. 1390-1395. Three boys stand in the landscape above the procession, watching.
17. Antonio Veneziano, *Crucifixion*, in the Cappella di San Blas of the Cathedral, Toledo. Fresco, ca. 1395-1399. Pair of rear-view boys.
18. Maestro dell'Incoronazione di Urbino, *Crucifixion* (Urbino, Galleria nazionale). Panel, 14th century. One child stands near the cross, rear view, lost profile.

19. Giacomo Salimbeni, *Crucifixion*, in the Oratorio di San Giovanni, Urbino. Fresco, 1416. At the foot of the Cross, one child kicks another; a third child cries, posed like the child at the right of the Bardi Chapel *Renunciation*.
20. Giovanni di Paolo, *Via Crucis* and *Deposition* (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery). Panels, from the predella of the Polittico Pecci, 1426. *Via Crucis*: three children follow Christ. *Deposition*: a pair of boys, rear-view, stand near the Cross.
21. Vecchietta, *Via Crucis*, in the Baptistery of the Cathedral, Siena. Fresco, ca. 1450-1453. Two children are in the procession; one holds his tunic up to carry stones. A third child perches above the procession in a tree.
22. Jacopo Bellini, *Christ Led to Pilate, Flagellation, Preparation of the Cross, Crucifixion, Deposition and Lamentation*, in the Louvre Album (fols. 35, 8, 7, 37, 35). Drawings, ca. 1430-1460. Pairs of children are in several scenes, one or both rear-view. The *Deposition and Lamentation* includes enigmatic children playing music, holding a falcon, urinating into a well.
23. Ercole de' Roberti, *The Way to Calvary* (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie). Predella panel, ca. 1480-1490. Two children walk along with the procession. One is nude from the waist down and holds a stone.

NOTES

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- ¹ See, for example, the mosaic on the facade of San Marco, Venice, ca. 1265-1270, where children accompany the citizens witnessing the translation of St. Mark. O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco*, Chicago 1984, Vol. II-1, pp. 201 ff., Vol. II-2, pl. 351.
- ² Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Plut. 25.3; see A. Ciaranfi, *Disegni e miniature nel codice Laurenziano "Supplicationes variae"*, in: *Rivista del Reale Istituto d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte*, I, 1929, pp. 325-348 (reprinted in *Id.*, *Scelta di scritti per la storia dell'arte*, Florence 1988, pp. 7-40); *Degenhart-Schmitt*, Vol. I-1, pp. 7-16; Vol. I-3, pls. 7-18; A. Neff, *A New Interpretation of the Supplicationes variae Miniatures*, in: *Il Medio Oriente e l'Occidente nell'arte del XIII secolo* (Atti del XXIV Congresso Internazionale di Storia dell'Arte, II), ed. H. Belting, Bologna 1982, pp. 173-179.
- ³ The enrichment of Late Medieval Passion scenes is described by E. Mâle, *L'Art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France*, 2nd ed., Paris 1949; E. Roth, *Der Volkreiche Kalvarienberg in Literatur und Kunst des Spätmittelalters*, Berlin 1958; G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, Vol. II, Greenwich, Conn. 1972, pp. 164 ff. Discussion on a philological basis can be found in F.P. Pickering, *Literature and Art in the Middle Ages*, Coral Gables, Florida 1970, especially pp. 223 ff.; *id.*, *The Gothic Image of Christ*, in: *Essays in Medieval German Literature and Iconography*, Cambridge/New York 1980, pp. 3-45 (trans. and revised from: *Das gotische Christusbild*, in: *Euphorion*, XLVII, 1953, pp. 16-37); and J. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study on the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative*, Kontrijk, Belgium 1979, especially pp. I-32, 190-205.
- ⁴ The children in the Temple are discussed below, note 42. B. Wilk, *Die Darstellung der Kreuztragung Christi und verwandter Szenen bis um 1300*, diss. Tübingen, 1969, p. 176, notes the linking of the *Via Crucis* and *Entry into Jerusalem* in the *Supplicationes* and an analogous pairing of the same scenes in a thirteenth-century leaf from a Psalter, probably from Strasbourg, published in H. Swarzenski, *Die lateinischen illuminierten Handschriften des XIII. Jahrhunderts in den Ländern an Rhein, Main und Donau*, Berlin 1936, p. 121, figs. 498, 499.
- ⁵ Biblical references follow the nomenclature and numbering of the Vulgate. Other authors to recognize the typological meaning of the children include Pickering 1980 (n. 3), p. 14; Roth (n. 3), pp. 52 ff., 133 f.; Wilk (n. 4), pp. 11 f.; and Marrow (n. 3), pp. 69 f., 145 ff., who significantly enlarges Pickering's analysis. With the exception of Wilk, none of these authors mention the representations of children in the *Supplicationes* Passion scenes, the earliest known examples.

- ⁶ *St. Augustine*, Enarrationes in Psalmos, In Psalmum LXXIV, in: PL, Vol. XXXVII, col. 1069. Citation and translation from *Marrow* (n. 3), p. 69 and p. 276 nt. 274.
- ⁷ *Isidore of Seville*, Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum, in: PL, Vol. LXXXIII, cols. 419-420; *Id.*, Allegoriae quaedam Sacrae Scripturae, *ibid.*, col. 113; *Rabanus Maurus*, Commentaria in Libros IV Regum, in: PL, Vol. CIX, col. 225; *Walafrid Strabo*, Glossa ordinaria, in: PL, Vol. CXIII, col. 612; *Rupert of Deutz*, In Libros Regum, in: PL, Vol. CLXVII, cols. 1259 f.; *id.*, De divinis officiis libri XII, in: PL, Vol. CLXX, cols. 54-56, translation in *Marrow* (n. 3), p. 277 nt. 275; *Honorius Augustodunensis*, Speculum Ecclesiae, in: PL, Vol. CLXXII, col. 1052; *Bernard of Clairvaux*, Ad Milites Templi de laude novae militiae, in: PL, Vol. CLXXXII, col. 932; Italian translation *F. Cardini*, Ai Cavalieri del Tempio in lode della nuova milizia, Rome, 1976/1977, p. 137; *Nicholas of Lyra*, *Biblia Sacrorum cum glossa ordinaria*, *Postilla Nicolai Lyrani*, Vol. II, Venice 1603, pp. 871 f. Also, *Hugo of St. Victor (dubia)*, Allegoriae in Vetus Testamentum, in: PL, Vol. CLXXV, col. 715.
- ⁸ *Isidore of Seville*, Quaestiones, cols. 419 f.
- ⁹ For example, in works by *Rabanus Maurus*, *Rupert of Deutz*, and *Hugo of St. Victor* (n. 7).
- ¹⁰ *Rupert of Deutz*, In Libros Regum (n. 7), col. 1259.
- ¹¹ *Bernard of Clairvaux* (n. 7), col. 932.
- ¹² Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm. 14159, fol. 4; *A. Boeckler*, Die Regensburger-Prüfeninge Buchmalerei des XII. und XIII. Jahrhunderts, Munich 1924, pp. 33 ff.; *F. Mutherich* and *K. Dachs*, Regensburger Buchmalerei. Von frühkarolingischer Zeit bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters, Munich 1987, pp. 52-53, with bibliography.
- ¹³ *M.R. James*, 'Pictor in Carmine', in: *Archaeologia*, XCIV, 1951, p. 161.
- ¹⁴ *M.H. Caviness*, The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury (Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevii, Great Britain, Vol. I), London 1981; *M.R. James*, On the Paintings formerly in the Choir at Peterborough, in: Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, IX, 1897, pp. 178-194; *L. Freeman Sandler*, The Peterborough Psalter in Brussels, London 1974, pp. 110 ff. As Sandler explains, in the Peterborough Psalter, 85 Old Testament types were matched with 38 New Testament antitypes. Two, three, or four types corresponded to each antitype. The difficulty of arranging these irregular groupings in a constant four-part page design sometimes resulted in misleading juxtapositions of images.
- ¹⁵ *G. Schmidt*, Die Armenbibeln des XIV. Jahrhunderts, Graz/Cologne 1959; *Pickering* 1970 (n. 3), pp. 265 f.
- ¹⁶ *R. Haussberr*, Bible moralisée, Faksimile-Ausgabe in Originalformat des Codex Vindobonensis 2554 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Commentarium, Graz/Paris 1973, and *R. Branner*, Manuscript Painting in Paris during the Reign of St. Louis, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1977, pp. 32-57, 64 f. Also, *A. de Laborde*, Étude sur la Bible moralisée illustrée, Paris 1927.
- ¹⁷ On the Gumperts Bible (Erlangen, Universitätsbibl., Cod. 121, fol. 117v), see *G. Swarzenski*, Die Salzburger Malerei, Leipzig 1913, pp. 129 ff., fig. 122. The Mozarabic and Spanish Bibles include two León Bibles (Colegiata de San Isidoro, Cod. 2, fol. 146v, and Cod. 3, fol. 156), the Pamplona Bibles (Amiens, Bibl. de la ville, Ms. lat. 108, fols. 122, 122v; Harburg, Oettingen-Wallerstein Coll., Ms. I, 2, lat. 4°, 15, fols. 142v, 143), and their early fourteenth-century copy (New York, Public Library, Spencer Coll., Ms. 22, fol. 87). *J. Williams*, The Illustrations of the León Bible of 960, diss. University of Michigan, 1962; *F. Bucher*, The Pamplona Bibles, New Haven/London 1970, Vol. I, fig. 24b; Vol. II, pls. 289, 290. For the Arsenal Bible (Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, 5211, fol. 220v), see *H. Buchthal*, Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, Oxford 1957, pp. 54 ff., pl. 72.
- ¹⁸ Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, E. 49-50 inf., pl. 596; *A. Grabar*, Miniatures du Grégoire de Naziance de l'Ambrosienne, Paris 1943, pl. XLV. *Buchthal* (n. 17), p. 61 nt. 5, suggests a provincial Byzantine prototype.
- ¹⁹ For the history of the rear-view figure in medieval art, see *M. Koch*, Die Rückenfigur im Bild von der Antike bis zu Giotto, Recklinghausen 1965, and *W. Dynes*, The Illuminations of the Stavelot Bible, New York/London 1978, pp. 255-272. Most likely the *Supplicationes variae* master copied the pair of boys from a model or motif book, a common means by which formal and iconographical motifs were collected and transmitted in the Middle Ages. The pair of boys posed in rear-view derive from an antique type that can be found in a variety of classical and early Christian monuments, including, for example, Trajan's Column, the Vienna Genesis, and the fifth-century mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore, Rome. Another possible source could have been a Byzantine intermediary; the antique pose is also revived in Palaeologan art. For illustrations, see *K. Lehmann-Hartleben*, Die Trajanssäule, Berlin/Leipzig 1926, pl. 39; *H. Gerstinger*, Die Wiener Genesis, 2 vols., Vienna 1931, pp. 105 f.; *H. Karpp*, Die Frühchristliche Mosaiken in Santa Maria Maggiore zu Rom, Baden-Baden 1966, fig. 82; in Palaeologan art, *I. Hutter*, Paläologische Übermalungen im Oktateuch Vaticanus Graecus 747, in: Jb. der Österreichische Byzantinische Gesellschaft, XXI, 1972, pp. 139 ff. On the use of model books in the Middle Ages, see *R.W. Scheller*, A Survey of Medieval Model Books, Haarlem 1963.
- ²⁰ *E. Bertaux*, S. Maria di Donna Regina e l'arte Senese a Napoli, Naples 1899. Recently, *P. Leone de Castris*, Arte di corte nella Napoli angioina, Florence 1986, pp. 286 ff., with extensive bibliography.

- ²¹ *Pickering* 1970 (n. 3), pp. 240 ff.; *id.* 1980 (n. 3), pp. 15 ff.; *Marrow* (n. 3), pp. 68 ff.
- ²² For a summary of opinions on the controversial date, see R. *Brandl*, *Die Tafelbilder des Simone Martini*, Frankfurt am Main 1985, pp. 98-117; and M. *Boskovits* (ed.), *Gemäldegalerie Berlin. Katalog der Gemälde. Frühe italienische Malerei*, Berlin 1988, pp. 155-159.
- ²³ According to the measurements in J. *Brink*, *Simone Martini's Orsini Polyptych*, in: *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten-Antwerpen*, 1976, nt. 7, the panel has not been trimmed.
- ²⁴ *Marrow* (n. 3), pp. 145 ff.
- ²⁵ Critical text in J. *Lutz* and P. *Perdrizet* (eds.), *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, Leipzig 1907, Vol. I, p. 45.
- ²⁶ For illustrations paralleling the Semei incident with Christ's Crowning with Thorns, see *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 170; Vol. II, pls. 41, 42, 107. On the Emmaus Cloister, see *Marrow* (n. 3), p. 47.
- ²⁷ *James* 1951 (n. 14), p. 159.
- ²⁸ S.C. *Cockereil* and J. *Plummer*, *Old Testament Miniatures*, New York 1969; H. *Stabl*, *Old Testament Illustration during the reign of St. Louis: the Morgan Picture Book and the New Biblical Cycles*, in: *Belting* (n. 2), pp. 79 ff. — I know of no other illustrations of *David cursed by Semei* from before ca. 1400 that show either a visual likeness or a typological juxtaposition to any scene from Christ's Passion. Illustrations of the episode usually occur in Psalters or in commentaries on the Psalms. One typological example of *David cursed by Semei* is in a mid-fourteenth-century manuscript of Ulrich of Lilienfeld's *Concordantiae Caritatis*, where Semei's cursing is placed not with an event from the Passion, but with *Christ Teaching the Apostles*. My thanks to Robert Melzak of the Index of Christian Art, Princeton, for supplying me with xeroxes of these scenes.
- ²⁹ *Bertaux* (n. 20), pp. 10 ff.
- ³⁰ *Brink* (n. 23), pp. 16 ff. Brink unconvincingly suggests that Ubertino da Casale, for a time Napoleone Orsini's chaplain, influenced the iconography of Simone's panels. The argument for Napoleone's patronage, however, is still strong: see, e.g., I. *Hueck*, *Il Cardinale Napoleone Orsini e la cappella di S. Nicola nella basilica francescana ad Assisi*, in: *Roma Anno 1300 (Atti della IV Settimana di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Medievale dell'Università di Roma)*, ed. A.M. *Romanini*, Rome 1983, p. 187, and J. *Polzer*, *Concerning the Origin of the Virgin of Humility Theme in Art of the Italian Proto-Renaissance*, in: *Le Rayonnement de l'art siennois du Trecento en Europe* (in press). A recent, dissenting view can be found in *Brandl* (n. 22), pp. 107 f.
- ³¹ PL, Vol. CLIX, cols. 271-290. H. *Barré*, *Le 'Planctus Mariae' attribué a Saint Bernard*, in: *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, XXVIII, 1952, pp. 243-266, attributes the text to a follower of Ogerius of Trino (d. 1214). K. *Chr. J.W. de Vries* convincingly argues for a date after 1240, in: *De Mariaklachten*, Zwolle 1964, pp. 59 ff., 277-292, 388 f. On the Franciscan authorship of the text, see A. *Neff*, *The Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi de Passione Domini: Toward an Attribution*, in: *Miscellanea Francescana*, LXXXVI, 1986, pp. 105-108.
- ³² PL, Vol. CLIX, col. 281.
- ³³ *Marrow* (n. 3), *passim*, especially pp. 195 f. The germ of Marrow's exposition can be found in *Pickering* 1980 (n. 3).
- ³⁴ For summaries of critical opinion, especially on the controversial dating, with bibliography, see E. *Baccheschi*, in: *L'Opera completa di Giotto*, ed. G. *Vigorelli*, Milan 1974, pp. 116 ff.; and E. *Borsook*, *The Mural Painters of Tuscany*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1980, p. 18 nt. 31. The most recent comprehensive study is R. *Goffen*, *Spirituality in Conflict: Saint Francis and Giotto's Bardi Chapel*, University Park, Pa./London 1988.
- ³⁵ On the Upper Church frescoes, see H. *Belting*, *Die Oberkirche von San Francesco in Assisi*, Berlin 1977, with extensive bibliography; the more recent citations in M. *Boskovits*, *Studi recenti sulla Basilica di Assisi*, in: *Arte cristiana*, LXXI, 1983, pp. 206 ff., and J. *Poeschke*, *Die Kirche San Francesco in Assisi und ihre Wandmalereien*, Munich 1985, pp. 34 ff., 84 ff.
- ³⁶ For the relationship of the Assisi frescoes to Bonaventure's and other Franciscan texts, see especially C. *Mitchell*, *The Imagery of the Upper Church at Assisi*, in: *Giotto e il suo tempo (Atti del Congresso Internazionale per la celebrazione della nascita di Giotto)*, Rome 1971, pp. 113-134; A. *Smart*, *The Assisi Problem and the Art of Giotto*, Oxford 1979, *passim*; and *Belting* 1977 (n. 35), pp. 82 ff.
- ³⁷ *St. Bonaventure*, *Legenda Maior*, in: *Analecta Franciscana*, Vol. X, Quaracchi 1941, Chap. II.2; translation from M.A. *Habig* (ed.), *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, 3rd ed., Chicago 1973, p. 641.
- ³⁸ See especially S. *da Campagnola*, *L'angelo del sesto sigillo e l'"alter Christus"*, Rome 1971. Also, H. *van Os*, *St. Francis of Assisi as a second Christ in early Italian painting*, in: *Simiolus*, VII, 1974, pp. 115-132; J. *Fleming*, *An Introduction to the Franciscan Literature of the Middle Ages*, Chicago 1977, pp. 66 ff.; and A. *Rave*, *Christiformitas: Studien zur franziskanischen Ikonographie des florentiner Trecento am Beispiel des ehemaligen Sakristeischrankzyklus von Taddeo Gaddi in Santa Croce*, Worms 1984, pp. 218 ff., 242 ff.

- ³⁹ See the recent summary of scholarship in S. Romano, *Pittura ad Assisi 1260-1280: Lo stato degli studi*, in: *Arte Medievale*, II, 1984, pp. 110 ff., with arguments for a date of 1260/61-1263 and extensive bibliography.
- ⁴⁰ *St. Bonaventure* (n. 37), Chap. II.4; translation from E. Cousins, in *Bonaventure, The Soul's Journey into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis*, New York 1978, p. 194. Also, *ibid.*, Chap. XIV.4; translation: Cousins, p. 318. — The concept of stripping oneself naked in order to follow the naked Christ goes back to the early Church Fathers. It then found full development in the evangelical movements of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. See especially M. Bernards, *Nudus nudum Christum sequi*, in: *Wissenschaft und Weisheit*, XIV, 1951, pp. 148-151; O. von Rieden, *O.F.M. Cap.*, *Das Leiden Christi im Leben des hl. Franziskus*, Rome 1968, p. 68; K. Esser, *O.F.M.*, *Origins of the Franciscan Order*, Chicago 1970, p. 229 and p. 261 nt. 136. Art historians try to recognize the relevance of the concept to the iconography of Francis's *Renunciatio* include H. Schrader, *Franz von Assisi und Giotto*, Cologne 1964, pp. 35 f.; *Rave* (n. 38), pp. 117 f.; and W.B. Miller, *The Franciscan Legend in Italian Painting in the Thirteenth Century*, diss., Columbia University, 1961, pp. 46 f., 137 f., 210, who emphasizes analogies between Francis's *Renunciatio* and rites of entrance into a religious community.
- ⁴¹ *Thomas de Celano, Vita Prima Sancti Francisci* (cited hereafter as *I Celano*), in: *Analecta Franciscana*, Vol. X, Quaracchi 1941, p. 12. The *Pictor in Carmine* had listed David stoning Semei as a type for this same Christological episode. See text, above, and nt. 13.
- ⁴² *Bartholomaeo de Pisis, De Conformitate Vitae Beati Francisci ad Vitam Domini Iesu*, in: *Analecta Franciscana*, Vols. IV, V, Quaracchi 1906-1912, Vol. IV, p. 114. On Bartholomew, see M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study of Joachimism*, Oxford 1969, pp. 181 ff.; *Fleming* (n. 38), pp. 68 ff.; M. D'Alatri, *L'immagine di San Francesco nell 'de conformitate' di Bartolomeo da Pisa*, in: *Francesco d'Assisi nella storia: secoli XIII-XIV*, Rome 1983, pp. 227-237. — Incidentally, Bartholomew helps to explain the pair of children in the *Supplicationes* scene of *Christ in the Temple* (Fig. 3). As an example of "*Iesu abjectus cernitur*", Jesus seen as contemptible, Bartholomew lists the episode of the young Jesus teaching in the Temple. Although themselves passive, the boys in the *Supplicationes* drawing are placed among gesticulating disbelievers. Bartholomew also states that this episode in the Temple has the significance of rejection of the world, since Christ then deserted his earthly parents. The chapter "*Iesu abjectus cernitur*" is paired with the chapter "*Franciscus separatur*", which describes Francis's *Renunciatio*. *Bartholomaeo*, Vol. IV, pp. 125 ff., 143, 149.
- ⁴³ *St. Bonaventure* (n. 37), Chap. IX 6; translation, Cousins (n. 40), p. 285.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Chap. VII.13; translation, Cousins (n. 40), p. 248.
- ⁴⁵ *Bartholomaeo* (n. 42), Vol. IV, p. 34.
- ⁴⁶ Other medieval authors also use Elisha as an exemplar of leaving the secular world. For example, the Franciscan Salimbene cites Elisha as a model when telling the story of students who wished to renounce the world: *Salimbene de Adam*, *Cronica*, nuova edizione critica, ed. G. Scalia, Bari 1966, p. 837. In the twelfth century, Joachim de Fiore, whose prophetic thought was greatly influential on many Franciscans, had placed Elisha at the initiation of the third status of history, that of monastic orders. See Reeves (n. 42), pp. 18, 138, 142; on Joachimism and the Franciscans, *ibid.*, pp. 175 ff.; J. Fleming, *From Bonaventure to Bellini: An Essay in Franciscan Exegesis*, Princeton 1982, pp. 20 ff., 116, 130 ff., 140 ff.
- ⁴⁷ F.M. Delorme (ed.), *Meditatio pauperis in solitudine auctore anonymo saec. xiii*, Quaracchi 1929, pp. 146-148. I owe knowledge of this text to Fleming 1982 (n. 46), who cites it, pp. 138 ff. For a discussion of the text, see *Campagnola* (n. 38), pp. 205-213.
- ⁴⁸ A. Ladis, Taddeo Gaddi, Columbia, Missouri/London 1982, pp. 114-120, Illus. 6c-1, with extensive bibliography; and *Rave* (n. 38), pp. 114 ff., 257 ff.; A.P. Rizzo, Benozzo Gozzoli, *Pittore Fiorentino*, Florence 1972, pp. 39 ff., 115 f., pl. 58.
- ⁴⁹ The iconography of the *Allegory of Poverty* has been studied by R. Schumacher-Wolfgarten, 'Dextrarum iunctio' bei Giotto, in: E. Dasman and K. Suso Frank (eds.), *Pietas, Fs. für Bernhard Kötting* (Jb. für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsbd. VIII), Münster Westfalen 1980, pp. 584-593. For extensive bibliography on the Assisi *Allegories*, see G. Previtali, *Giotto e la sua bottega*, 1st ed., Milan 1967, pp. 141 f.; and *Poeschke* (n. 35), pp. 45 ff., 105 f.
- ⁵⁰ The Bardi Chapel has been assigned to various dates from ca. 1310 to ca. 1325, while dates for the Franciscan *Allegories* range from ca. 1317 to ca. 1335. For summaries of the controversy on the Bardi Chapel, see *Borsook* (n. 34), p. 18 nt. 31, and *Goffen* (n. 34), pp. 55-59. For the *Allegories*, see *Previtali* (n. 49), pp. 96 f.; *Poeschke* (n. 35), pp. 47 f., 105 f.
- ⁵¹ *Campagnola* (n. 38), p. 291. *Schumacher-Wolfgarten* (n. 49), objects that the *Sacrum commercium* dates too late to have influenced the iconography of the Assisi fresco, but recent Franciscan scholarship dates the text as early as 1227; see P. Hermann, *O.F.M.*, in: *Habig* (n. 37), pp. 1533 f.; and *Esser* (n. 40), p. 8.
- ⁵² *Anonymous*, *Sacrum commercium beati Francisci cum domina Paupertate*, Quaracchi 1929, IV.50 and III.34; translations, *Habig* (n. 37), pp. 1583, 1571.

- ⁵³ Paradiso XI. 58-63. In these verses, St. Francis woos Lady Poverty by opposing his father, then weds her (renounces all possessions) *coram patre*, in the presence of his father, and before the episcopal court of Assisi. Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia*, trans. and ed. D. Sayers, New York 1962, pp. 150, 155 nt.
- ⁵⁴ See above, n. 36; on the use of *I Celano* in this scene, see Miller (n. 40), pp. 319 f. and Smart (n. 36), pp. 217, 221.
- ⁵⁵ *I Celano*, III.124; translation, Habig (n. 37), p. 338.
- ⁵⁶ Smart (n. 36), pp. 19 ff.; on the Canonization, p. 25: "the setting is once more Assisi, but mockery has given way to reverence, and anger to joy, and the children no longer throw stones."
- ⁵⁷ Rabanus Maurus, *Allegoriae in Sacram Scripturam*, Puer, in: PL, Vol. CXII, cols. 1032 f. Cf. P. Watson's apt description of the "absolute contrasts" of children in Andrea da Firenze's Spanish Chapel frescoes: "greedy children, child-like blessed", in *The Garden of Love in Tuscan Art of the early Renaissance*, Philadelphia 1979, pp. 58 f., 60. — For actual practices of child-raising and attitudes toward children in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, see M.M. McLaughlin, *Survivors and Surrogates*, in: *The History of Childhood*, ed. L. de Mause, New York 1975, pp. 101-182; and J.B. Ross, *The Middle-Class Child in Urban Italy*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 183-228. These social historians describe ambivalences toward the child analogous to those I have found in religious literature and art.
- ⁵⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux (n. 7).
- ⁵⁹ Italian examples are briefly described in an Appendix. For Northern examples, see Marrow (n. 3), pp. 145 ff.

RIASSUNTO

I fanciulli, che vediamo in numerose rappresentazioni della Passione, sia italiane che nordiche, in atto di deridere Cristo, sono stati correttamente interpretati come allegoria: si riferiscono infatti a quelli che, nel *Libro dei Re*, scherniscono il profeta calvo Eliseo. Nel presente articolo si delinea la tradizione esegetica di Eliseo ed i fanciulli sia nella letteratura che nelle arti visive. Nell'arte romanica e gotica dell'Europa del nord scene di Eliseo con i fanciulli vengono tipologicamente contrapposte a scene della Passione; troviamo però i primi dipinti che includono fanciulli nella Passione solo nell'Italia del tardo Duecento. Si tratta di una miniatura delle *Supplicationes variae*, di un affresco di S. Maria Donnaregina, Napoli, e di una tavoletta del *Polittico della Passione* di Simone Martini. L'analisi di tali dipinti mostra che l'origine dei fanciulli che scherniscono può interpretarsi solo in un contesto francescano: l'esegesi francescana collegava infatti Francesco ad Eliseo ed a Cristo, tutti e tre 'calvi' e dileggiati dai fanciulli. In dipinti del tardo Duecento e del primo Trecento i fanciulli compaiono quindi sia nella vita di Francesco — specialmente nella *Rinuncia ai beni terreni* —, sia in cicli della Passione.

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Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana: Figs. 1-4. - Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibl.: Fig. 5. - St. Florian, Diözesanbildstelle: Fig. 6. - From De Laborde (n. 16): Fig. 7. - Alinari: Figs. 8-10, 18. - Paris, Musées Nationaux: Fig. 11. - Antwerp, Musée des Beaux-Arts: Fig. 12. - Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum: Fig. 13. - Florence, Soprintendenza BBAASS: Figs. 14-16. - De Giovanni: Figs. 17, 19, 20.