MITTEILUNGEN DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN INSTITUTES IN FLORENZ

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HEFT I

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1 Giotto, *Crucifixion*,
detail, 1304/05.
Padua, Scrovegni Chapel

MARY MAGDALENE AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS
ICONOGRAPHY AND THE SEMANTICS OF PLACE

Daniela Bohde

Why is Mary Magdalene depicted so frequently at the foot of the cross in Crucifixion scenes? The question hardly seems worth thinking about. Mary Magdalene was one of Jesus's closest followers, and she is mentioned in the gospels as a witness to the Crucifixion. As the great mourner and penitent, she belongs beneath the cross. So, actually, everything seems to be clear. However, a closer look shows that neither the gospels and the texts building on them, nor the early visual representations put her *sub cruce*. Instead, she finds her way there by crooked paths. A retracing of those paths also offers an opportunity to examine the iconographic method and raises questions about the relationship between image and text.

Iconography today can no longer be considered an influential and trendsetting art-historical method; it seems that it has been demoted to a helpful tool which students must learn how to use. Christian iconography in particular is a field of research that has declined in significance, as it apparently no longer offers fertile ground for innovative research queries. Only a few monographs have appeared on the Passion of Christ over the past decades, for example. What is it that makes Christian iconography seem so boring? Its results are probably too predictable, in terms of how image and text are linked. The text is seen as the source, the image as a kind of illustration. This seems to be inevitable when the main text is the most authoritative text in the Christian world, the Bible. Yet how can we then deal with new iconographies? Do we have to explain them with other texts? This was the approach James Marrow adopted in his important study *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, released back in 1979, the heyday of iconographical study.[1]

[1] James Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative*, Kortrijk 1979. The book is based on the author's doctoral thesis delivered at Columbia University, New York, in 1975.

2 Martin Schongauer, *Crucifixion* (from the *Passion of Christ* series), ca. 1475. Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung

He succeeded in tracing Passion iconographies – entirely unknown additional agonies of Christ, for example being trodden upon or tormented with the spike block – back to the so-called *Secret Passion*. The latter consisted of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century writings that elaborated on the Passion as described in the Bible and very imaginatively concluded from the Psalms that Christ must have been tormented far more than is related by the gospels in their often very terse style. In other words, Marrow ultimately put the new iconographies down to texts. In 1981, on the other hand, Hans Belting published his book *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter: Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion*, taking precisely the path from iconography to *Bildwissenschaft* or visual studies, which led him first to issues of function.[2] You could almost say that, after Belting, no one with respectable methodological ambitions dared to write a book about the iconography of the Passion anymore, although of course there are exceptions. One of these is Frank Büttner, who in 1983 published *Imitatio Pietatis: Motive der christlichen Ikonographie als Modelle zur Verähnlichung*.[3] Büttner's aim was to demonstrate that motives related to the life of Christ and Mary, and especially to the Passion, served as role models for devotees. Notably the shaping of the iconography of Saint Magdalene beneath the cross cannot be understood without considering its relation to the pious beholder. Another important exception is Anne Derbes' *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy – Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant* from 1996.[4] It is a book that shows how many arbitrary factors went into shaping the iconography of the Passion, which is far more than the visual translation of authoritative texts.

My intention is to continue that approach, because it is the discrepancies between text and image that appear to be remarkable for the art-historical perspective. It is precisely in those discrepancies that we can detect the interests and needs that shaped the imagery. After all, it would have taken a very strong motivation to depart from such an authoritative text as the Bible. An iconographic analysis that takes the specifics of the image into account is still relevant, because there is absolutely no question that the content of the depiction – the motif – held the utmost significance for the client and contemporary beholder of pre-modern art.

[2] Hans Belting, *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter: Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion*, Berlin 1981. See also the English translation: *The Image and Its Public in the Middle Ages: Form and Function of Early Paintings of the Passion*, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1990.

[3] Frank O. Büttner, *Imitatio pietatis: Motive der christlichen Ikonographie als Modelle zur Verähnlichung*, Berlin 1983.

[4] Anne Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant*, Cambridge 1996.

While iconography is criticized as too text-oriented, it is quite conspicuous that other methodological approaches clearly approve of taking the text as an orientation. When, for example, the relationship between an artwork and the art theory of its time is studied, the correspondence between image and text is frequently established with great satisfaction. For more than twenty-five years, for instance, we have tirelessly combed Renaissance art for whether it can be retraced to ancient rhetoric or contemporary art literature. When Vasari's description fits a painting by Parmigianino like a glove, for example, and when we can justify everything Vasari does not explain by citing Alberti, Aretino or Armenini, then we consider ourselves especially good art historians and very knowledgeable about our sources. Yet we sometimes lose sight of the fact that, for the most part, the theories responded to art production and not the other way around. What is more, the wealth and sophistication of the art-theoretical writings sometimes mislead us to presuppose that their categories were shared by the majority of contemporary recipients and to assign too little significance to the meanings of the motifs depicted. So, in both methodological approaches, what is not reflected in texts gives us trouble – but it is especially worth that trouble.

Naturally, the return to the motif proposed here does not mean a return to traditional iconography and a search for a given and immutable meaning, or to abandon all new questions about the body, space, visual media, and how people used images. We can no longer search for the corresponding text source and then, once we have found it, think we have the key in our hands. Rather, it means finding new ways of taking the genuinely visual dimension of iconographies into account. In the case study presented here, it has proved useful to integrate the semantics of spatial structures into the analysis of motifs. This is because, even if place and space are important categories in verbal communication, the specific location of figures in the pictorial space has a different relevance to that of their location in verbal descriptions, as can be shown in the case of Crucifixion depictions. In this paper, I will therefore focus on the placement of the figures represented. My methodological concern is with the semantics of placements or, more generally, an iconography of the place. While traditional iconography sees the figure – and the text behind it – as the producer of meaning, I try to take into account the semantic potential of the place, which is then filled with a figure. This approach permits reflection on the dynamics of producing meaning. When I am searching in what follows for the genesis of the Magdalene *sub cruce* motif, I do not look for the original meaning but for the continuing process of semanticizing and re-semanticizing.

3 Hans Baldung Grien, *Crucifixion*, 1514. Washington, National Gallery of Art

A New Iconography: The Magdalene *sub cruce*

So how did Mary Magdalene find her place under the cross? What conflicts, interests, and strategies does this placement reflect, and what needs did it meet? Just how ubiquitous Mary Magdalene is at the foot of the cross is perhaps most evident in the influential works of printmaking from the period around 1500. Martin Schongauer, for example, in the *Crucifixion* of his Passion cycle, dating from around 1475 (Fig. 2), has Mary Magdalene embracing the cross from behind. Hans Baldung Grien developed this position further, showing her kneeling behind the cross and weeping (Fig. 3). In the *Crucifixion* of his Small Woodcut Passion, Albrecht Dürer has her creep under the cross and kiss Christ's feet. In Grünewald's, Albrecht Altdorfer's, and Jerg Ratgeb's altarpieces, the saint appears under the cross, fervently praying and mourning.[5] Her position and gestures vary: she sits, kneels, or crawls, clings to the cross from in front or behind, wrings her hands or stretches them upward to her Redeemer, veils her face or presses it onto the wood of the cross, stares at the pierced feet or gazes upward to the crucified Christ. Obviously this is a case of a long-established convention of which artists around 1500 availed themselves quite as a matter of course. In the case of such strong conventionalization, the concern cannot simply lie with the classical art-historical question – who founded this convention with an original innovation and when? – but also, and just as importantly: what factors made this iconography so successful?

Its success is all the more astonishing if we recall the accounts of the Crucifixion in the gospels. They mention Mary of Magdala very much in passing. Luke does not call her by name, Matthew states only that the women "inter quas erat Maria Magdalene" were there ("ibi"), while according to Mark the women look on only from a distance ("de longe aspicientes").[6] A later author of the ilk of Ludolph of Saxony was disturbed by the idea that the Virgin Mary should have stood at a distance from her son and not directly in front of him.[7] Yet from the point of view of Biblical scholarship it is quite plausible that, in the historical situation, Christ's followers would have stayed away from the execution site. Therefore, John's account, according to which the women stood near the cross – "stabant autem iuxta crucem Iesu mater eius et soror matris eius Maria Cleopae et Maria Magdalene" (John 19:25) –, is less plausible.

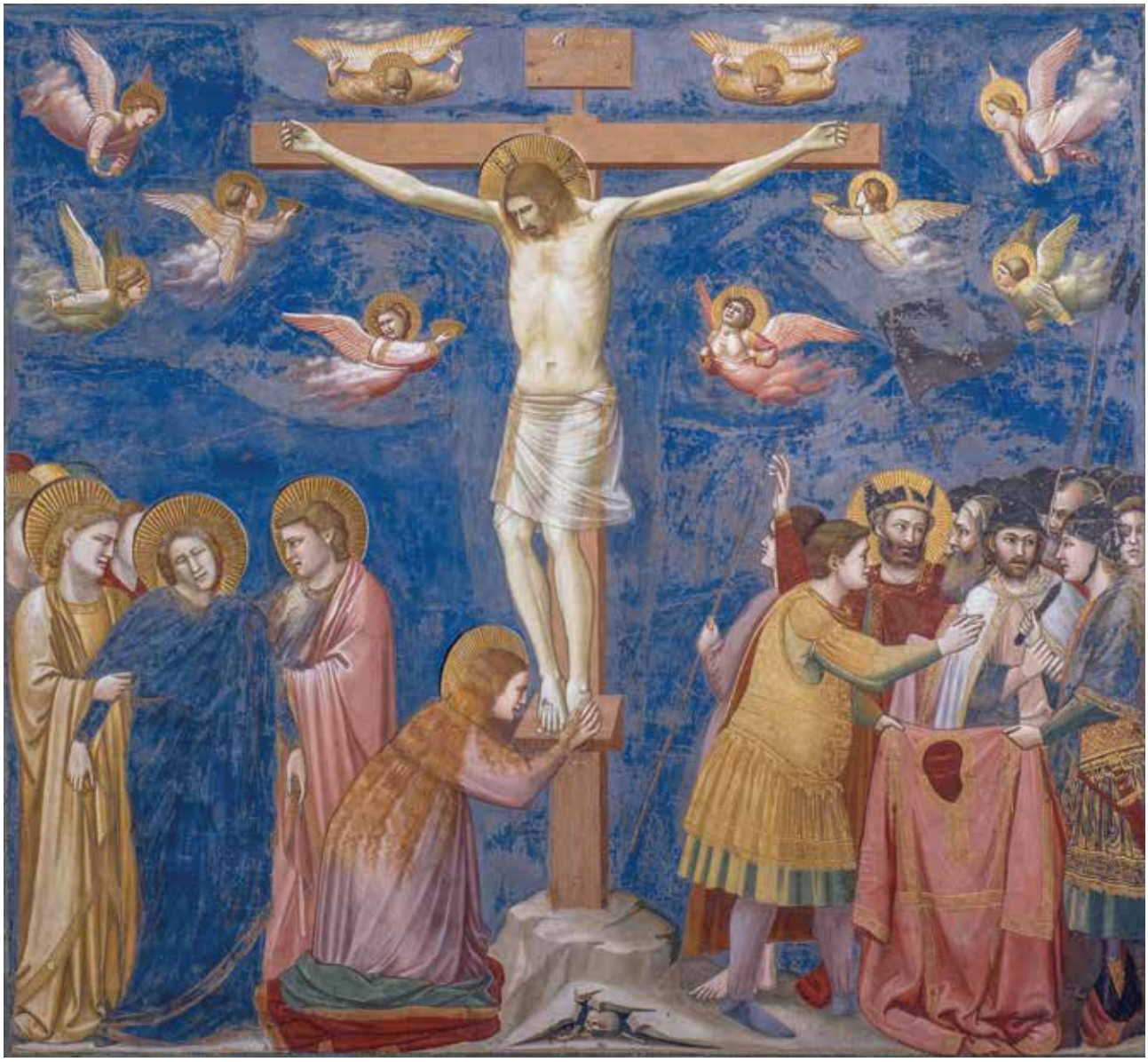
But why are the artists so convinced that the Magdalene kneeled at the foot of the cross?[8] If we set out in search of the origins, we very soon find ourselves in the Italian Trecento and in front of a canonical work: Giotto's *Crucifixion* of 1304/05 in the Scrovegni Chapel (Fig. 4). Here, Mary Magdalene is the only figure directly at the foot of the cross. Christ's followers, Mary and Saint John, stand to the left with other women; the soldiers stand to the right, quibbling so heatedly over Christ's seamless robe that they do not hear their centurion's confession of newfound faith. The Magdalene has shed her splendid red mantle and kneels on it, wearing only a simple purple chemise. Her blond and curly hair falls loosely down her back. She looks directly at the nail in Christ's foot (Fig. 1). With her right hand she very tenderly touches the

[5] Cf. Grünewald's Isenheim altarpiece from 1512–1516 in the Musée Unterlinden in Colmar, Altdorfer's Saint Florian altarpiece, dated 1518 (and earlier), in Saint Florian, and Jerg Ratgeb's Herrenberg altarpiece from ca. 1519 in the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.

[6] Matthew 27:55f.: "erant autem ibi mulieres multae a longe quae secutae erant Iesum a Galilaea ministrantes ei inter quas erat Maria Magdalene et Maria Iacobi et Ioseph mater et mater filiorum Zebedaei." Mark 15:40: "erant autem et mulieres de longe aspicientes inter quas et Maria Magdalene et Maria Iacobi minoris et Ioseph mater et Salome".

[7] Ludolph of Saxony, *Vita Jesu Christi e quatuor Evangeliis et scriptoribus orthodoxis concinnata*, ed. by A. Clovis Bolard/Louis-Marie Rigollot/Jean Carnandet, Paris 1865, IV, ch. LXIII: "De Sexta, in Passione Domini", p. 660.

[8] The first one to comment on the discrepancy between text and image in this context was Frank O. Büttner (note 3). See his profound discussion of the sources of the iconography of the Magdalene embracing the foot of the cross, pp. 142–157, especially p. 143. Cf. also *La Maddalena tra sacro e profano: da Giotto a De Chirico*, exh. cat., ed. by Marilena Mosco, Florence *et al.* 1986, pp. 102–117.



4 Giotto, *Crucifixion*, 1304/05. Padua, Scrovegni Chapel

5 Diotisalvi di Speme or workshop of Guido da Siena, *Crucifixion*, ca 1270. Yale, University Art Gallery

other foot on the suppedaneum and dries Christ's blood with her hair. At the same time, her hand helps Giotto conceal the fact that he is not yet accustomed to the three-nail version and has not yet figured out how one nail can pierce both feet.

Giotto is, however, not the very first to place the Magdalene at the foot of the cross: a gabled Sienese panel from around 1270, attributed to the workshop of Guido da Siena or to Diotisalvi di Speme, shows her in the same place (Fig. 5).[9] Here, she crouches beneath the crucified Christ, which follows the type established by Giunta Pisano, nestles her head at his feet and reaches out to the blood dripping down from the foot wound. The panel, probably a pediment crowning a now lost larger composition, possibly a Madonna with Child, has been in the Yale University Art Gallery since the 1870s; before that time, it was located in a church near Siena. The artist's – or probably rather the patron's – interest in the Magdalene is extraordinary: she is not only placed close to Christ, but her drapery is also highlighted with gold, which is not even granted to the Virgin.

[9] The panel is generally attributed to Guido or his workshop, the date varies from 1260 to the late 1280s; see Clay Dean, *A Selection of Early Italian Paintings from the Yale University Art Gallery*, New Haven 2001, p. 18, no. 2. I am most grateful for an intense and very helpful email exchange with the curator Laurence Kanter, who proposed an attribution to Diotisalvi di Speme and dates the panel to ca. 1270. Millard Meiss, "Italian Primitives at Konopiště", in: *The Art Bulletin*, XXVIII (1946), pp. 1–16: 10f., note 81, had already observed that the first Magdalene at the foot of the cross dates back to this panel and not to Giotto, but his finding was quickly forgotten.

Although no direct reception of this composition is known, the motif might not have been as unique as it seems today. This is proven by a little panel from the second half of the thirteenth century now in Princeton with a female saint kneeling to the right of the cross, touching the foot of Christ. She is probably the Magdalene, although she wears a light blue cloak (Fig. 6).[10] A third preserved example also seems to adhere to the same iconographic pattern: a bipartite panel from the Sterbini collection with a stigmatized Saint Francis in the lower part and a Magdalene under the cross in the upper part.[11] However, the many trecento artists who placed the Magdalene beneath the cross referred to Giotto's solution and not to the older pattern documented in these three panels, whose sway must have been very limited, even considering the many losses. In pre-1300 *Crucifixions* in general, little emphasis is placed on the Magdalene. We find a typical solution in the late eleventh-century fresco of Sant'Angelo in Formis (Fig. 7): rather than individualizing her, the *Crucifixion* shows a group of female followers, entirely in keeping with the accounts of Matthew and Mark. Also in the thirteenth century, the three women accompanying

6 Santa Primerana Master (attr.), *Crucifixion*, wing of a portable triptych, second half of the thirteenth century. Princeton, University Art Museum

[10] The *Crucifixion* is the right wing of a small portable triptych. Edward B. Garrison, "Post-War Discoveries: Early Italian Paintings. IV", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, LXXXIX (1947), pp. 299–303, ascribed the Tuscan panel to the Santa Primerana Master and dated it – perhaps a bit too early – to 1255–1265. The iconography of the tiny (34.2 × 13 cm) and somewhat crude panel is not very clear. I would like to express my gratitude to Betsy J. Rosasco, curator at Princeton University Art Museum, for very kindly helping me in the research on the panel and Laurence Kanter again for discussing it with me.

[11] The small Tuscan panel, part of a diptych and now in the Museo di Palazzo Venezia, Rome, was dated by Venturi to 1318 (Adolfo Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, V: *La pittura del Trecento e le sue origini*, Milan 1907, pp. 114–118). As in the Sienese panel, the Magdalene in a red robe kneels at the left side of the cross, but now presses her face to the thigh of a very small Christ. The panel is linked to the Yale and Princeton panels also by the layout of the background: a windowed wall, a typical element in Tuscan painting from the second half of the thirteenth century. A further panel with the Magdalene *sub cruce* in the Martello collection in Fiesole has been dated to 1300–1305, that is shortly before or in the same years as Giotto's Scrovegni frescoes (*Dipinti romani tra Giotto e Cavallini*, exh. cat. Rome 2004, ed. by Tommaso Strinati/Angelo Tartuferi, Milan 2004, p. 64, no. 5). However, it is quite clearly a later adaption of Giottesque compositions from the 1310s or 1320s; see below, pp. 30–37.

7 *Crucifixion*, ca. 1080. Sant'Angelo in Formis, central nave, northern wall

the Virgin at the cross were often not individualized. Sometimes one of them was dressed in red, probably in order to create some variation among the three similar figures. The few artists interested in singling out the Magdalene could build on that usage.[12] Contrary to what is sometimes said, written sources did not recommend a red gown for the Magdalene.[13]

No earlier painting than the Sienese panel with a Magdalene at the foot of the cross is known, although in the course of the Duecento, the Passion iconography became increasingly multifarious and emotionalized. Did the Sienese artist or Giotto have access to other text sources? For example, one of the new Franciscan Passion meditations? There are no indications that they did. Even the most influential of those texts – the *Meditaciones vite Christi* by Pseudo-Bonaventura (presumably Johannes de Caulibus) dating from the period around 1300 – conforms to the Bible in not emphasizing the Magdalene's position. Taking the Gospel of Saint John as his point of departure, in his long "meditacio passionis in sexta et hora nona" the author describes that four faithful followers sit down on the ground near the cross: "Remanet mestissima mater cum illis quattuor; ponunt se ad sedendum prope crucem."[14] Yet this joint act of sitting and waiting of the four by the cross was very rarely adopted by painters. The sitting Virgin and

[12] For a female mourner in red see the *Crucifixion* by the Master of Saint Francis in the Lower Church in Assisi, ca. 1260, and the *Crucifixion* fresco in the nave of the Upper Church, ca. 1288/89. However, in Duccio's *Crucifixion* from the *Maestà* finished by 1308 (Siena, Museo dell'Opera) we can identify the figure clad in red as the Magdalene, because she is the only one with a strand of hair coming out of her scarf. A very early Magdalene in red, identified by an inscription below her figure, is the one on the cross from San Damiano, now in Santa Chiara, Assisi. For the Myrrophore in red and her identification with Mary Magdalene in Byzantine iconography, cf. Vassiliki A. Foskolou, "Mary Magdalene between East and West: Cult and Image, Relics and Politics in the Late Thirteenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean", in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, LXV/LXVI (2011–2012), pp. 271-296.

[13] Viviana Vannucci, *Maria Maddalena: storia e iconografia nel Medioevo dal III al XIV secolo*, Rome 2012, p. 89, writes that the homily *In festo beatae Mariae Magdalenae* by Thomas Aquinas recommends red as the colour for Mary Magdalene's clothing as a sign of her faith. She refers to a Venetian edition of Thomas' works from 1787. The indicated volume LXXV, however, does not exist. In the modern edition of the homily, the text is no longer attributed to Thomas and her vesture is not mentioned at all. We find instead an exegesis of all the colours of the rainbow, including the interpretation of red as the colour of *caritas*, which is related to the Magdalene. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia ut sunt in indice thomistico [. . .]*, ed. by Roberto Busa, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1980, VII: Aldobrandino de' Cavalcanti, *Sermones pro dominicis diebus et sanctorum solemnitatibus*, pars 2, no. 53, p. 84.

[14] Johannes de Caulibus, *Meditaciones vite Christi*, ed. by Mary Stalling-Taney, Turnhout 1997, ch. LXXVIII, p. 275. Cf. also in ch. LXXIX, p. 277: "Iohannes vero et Magdalena et sorores matris Domini stabant genuflexi cum ea et amarissime omnes flebant." Kurt Ruh, *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik*, Munich 1990–1999, II, pp. 439–441, questions the attribution of the *Meditaciones* to Johannes de Caulibus. For the date of the *Meditaciones* cf. Tobias

8 Workshop of Giotto, *Feast in the house of Simon*, detail, ca. 1305–1308. Assisi, San Francesco, Lower Church, Magdalene Chapel

Saint John, however, were depicted beneath the cross even before de Caulibus wrote his *Meditaciones*.[15] Thus, the entire development of the Magdalene-*sub-cruce* iconography is not based on any text but is genuinely visual. The first – very general – argument in favour of this proposition is that visual artists necessarily had to decide on their figures' positions; the authors of descriptions of the Passion, however, did not.

The paradox of the insertion of the Magdalene at the foot of the cross is that art historians did not really notice that such a lasting change had come about in the iconography of the Crucifixion – presumably because the Magdalene looks so right in that position. After all, she is known as the repentant sinner who – according to Luke 7:38 – anoints Christ's feet at the feast in the house of Simon the Pharisee.[16] As is known, Mary Magdalene is a synthetic figure uniting various women mentioned in the gospels: Mary of Magdala, Mary of Bethany, and the great sinner at the feast in the house of Simon the Pharisee.[17] This synthetic biography is the theme of the Magdalene Chapel in Assisi, whose frescoes were painted by the workshop of Giotto.[18] An important scene here and in many Magdalene cycles is her conversion at Christ's feet during the feast in Simon's house (Fig. 8). Giotto's workshop could draw on an already long-established iconography showing

A. Kemper, *Die Kreuzigung Christi: Motivgeschichtliche Studien zu lateinischen und deutschen Passionstraktaten des Spätmittelalters*, Tübingen 2006, pp. 93–107, who refutes Sarah McNamer's thesis of a later date between 1336 and 1364. Unfortunately, in her publication from 2009 ("The Origins of the Meditationes Vitae Christi", in: *Speculum*, LXXXIV [2009], pp. 905–955) McNamer does not react to Kemper's arguments. There is a Byzantine text dated 1280 to 1328 which describes the Magdalene standing beneath the cross and kissing Christ's feet: *Sermo in Sanctam et Apostolis aequalem unguentieram Mariam Magdalenam*, attributed to Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, in: *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, 1857–1866, CXLVII, cols. 539–576. It is however highly questionable if this homily was known in the West, especially since it did not even have any recognizable impact on the Byzantine Crucifixion iconography. Foskolou (note 12), pp. 280–294, points out to the specific Eastern notion of the Magdalene, which in contrast to the Latin tradition does not identify her with the sinner at the feast of Simon. For enhancing the status of the saint, Xanthopoulos assimilates her role under the cross to that of the Virgin, described already by George of Nicomedea; cf. below, pp. 39f.

[15] Cf. Silvia Colucci, "L'iconografia del Crocefisso con i dolenti in umiltà: una questione aperta", in: *Il* Crocifisso con i dolenti in umiltà *di Paolo di Giovanni Fei: un capolavoro riscoperto*, exh. cat., ed. by Alessandro Bagnoli/Silvia Colucci/Veronica Randon, Siena 2005, pp. 35–48, who points out a drawing with the Virgin and Saint John sitting from around 1280.

[16] Luke 7:37f. Cf. Matthew 26:6f., Mark 14:3 (a woman in the house of Simon in Bethany), and John 12:3 (Mary from Bethany).

[17] Gregory the Great was the first to merge the three different persons into one: see his *Homiliae in Evangelia/Evangelienhomilien*, trans. and ed. by Michael Fiedrowicz, Freiburg i. Br./Basel 1997/98, II, homily 33, pp. 616–639.

[18] For these, see Lorraine Schwartz, "Patronage and Franciscan Iconography in the Magdalen Chapel at Assisi", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXXIII (1991), pp. 32–36.

9 Gospel-Book of Judith of Flanders, *Crucifixion*, ca. 1063–1065. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum, ms. M.709, fol. 1v

the Magdalene anointing and kissing Christ's feet and drying them with her hair.[19] A place next to Christ's feet was given to the Magdalene also in some *Lamentations* of the late thirteenth century.[20]

Although these other scenes involving Mary Magdalene offered a firm basis for her representation at the foot of the cross and although this seems such an obvious step, it did not arouse much interest before Giotto's work in the Scrovegni Chapel. The rapid acceptance of his solution in Italy (Figs. 29, 31–35, 37) and far beyond (Figs. 36, 38, 41) shows that it really struck a chord – and not only for the devotional desires of his direct client, Enrico Scrovegni. My concern is therefore to understand what pictorial needs it fulfilled, turning it so rapidly from an innovation into a convention. The Magdalene at the foot of the cross was soon commonplace – not only for subsequent generations of painters, but also for later art historians, who antedated its invention or did not even realize that it had had to be invented.

The *Crucifixion* in the Gospel-Book of Judith of Flanders (Fig. 9), dating from around 1063–1065, is sometimes considered the first to show the Magdalene beneath the cross.[21] It is highly unlikely, however, that the female figure in a gold shimmering gown touching the stem of the cross is the Magdalene. Not only the absence of a halo but also her smaller scale distinguishes her from the Virgin and Saint John. Therefore, it is much more probable that she is the donor and not the Magdalene.[22] Clearly, no tradition was established by this image. The same applies to the shrine of Saint Alban of approximately one hundred years later, cited by Viviana Vannucci in her 2012 book on the Magdalene as the first example of the saint under the cross.[23] Here, not only the absence of a halo casts doubt on the identification of the reclining short-haired figure as the saint, but also the presence of three haloed women to one side of the cross.

Precisely these two examples lead us to the question of which figures were depicted kneeling or reclin-

[19] This scene was represented early on in book illumination such as the Codex Egberti from the late tenth century and mural decorations in Sant'Angelo in Formis and Monreale. It also figures prominently in the Magdalene panel by the Master of the Magdalene from the 1280s, now in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence.

[20] Cf. below, p. 27.

[21] Gertrud Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, Gütersloh 1966–1991, II, p. 128.

[22] Barbara C. Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography and the Art of the Monastic Revival*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 159–161, proposes that the figure is the donor in the guise of the Magdalene. However, no Magdalene *sub cruce* iconography existed in the eleventh century but only a large tradition of donors beneath the cross, as will be argued in this article; cf. especially the further discussion of Judith's gospel-book below, p. 21. Yet, one interesting conflation of a female donor and Mary Magdalene is known in the Anglo-Saxon context. Goscelin described that Edith of Wilton had herself represented on an embroidered alb in the guise of the Magdalene, but at the banquette scene in the house of Simon (*Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's* Legend of Edith *and*

10 Cimabue, *Crucifixion*, ca. 1277–1280. Assisi, San Francesco, Upper Church, south transept

ing beneath the cross before Mary Magdalene and which other pictorial traditions Giotto could have built on. His direct model will undoubtedly have been one of the most prominent Crucifixion scenes of his time – that by Cimabue in the Upper Church of Assisi from circa 1277–1280 (Fig. 10), in which someone else is seen at the feet of the crucified Christ: Saint Francis, himself a stigmatized figure. Cimabue's placement of Francis at the foot of the cross is the very first one in the context of a narrative depiction. One of the most influential books on Mary Magdalene – *The Making of the Magdalen* by Katherine Jansen in 2000 – claims that Francis replaces the Magdalene: "Saint Francis occupies the Magdalene's traditional place in countless altarpieces, panel paintings, and frescoes." "There are endless examples", Jansen adds, then go-

Liber confortatorius, ed. by Stephanie Hollis, Turnhout 2004, p. 48). A case quite similar to Judith's gospel-book is a *Crucifixion* from a South Italian Exultet Roll, dated vaguely to the thirteenth century (cf. Myrtilla Avery, *The Exultet Rolls of South Italy*, Princeton 1936, pl. 160). Here, a female figure clings to the foot of the cross beneath the suppedaneum. In contrast to the Virgin and Saint John, the woman is not haloed but wears a bright veil. She is identified as Magdalene by Elisabetta Lucchesi-Palli, *s.v.* Kreuzigung, in: *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. by Engelbert Kirschbaum/Wolfgang Braunfels/Günter Bandmann, Rome *et al.* 1968–1976, II, cols. 606–642: 616. Yet nothing suggests that she is a saint or especially Mary Magdalene, and unlike early examples of the Magdalene *sub cruce* she demonstrates no special relationship with the feet of Christ.

[23] Vannucci (note 13), p. 80, even believes that this figure is the model for the representation of Saint Francis adoring Christ's feet in the cross of the Master of Saint Francis (Fig. 23). Schiller (note 21), II, p. 166, had already identified the prostrate figure on the shrine as the donor. Cf. Anton Legner, *Kölner Heilige und Heiligtümer: Ein Jahrtausend europäischer Reliquienkultur*, Cologne 2003, p. 165.

ing on to cite instances of Francis's presence under the cross.[24] What Jansen does not consider as requiring proof is the Magdalene's "traditional place". Instead she develops a major hypothesis about how the Franciscans identified with the Magdalene, supposedly in conjunction with the construction of a female identity in contrast to that of the papal Church of Saint Peter. She regards the replacement of Mary Magdalene by Francis as an instance of this female gendering,[25] but without taking into account that Cimabue's fresco is located in the Upper Church and thus in the chapel of the pope, and moreover in the vicinity of a programme focusing on Saints Peter and Paul.[26] What is more, she refers to various text sources intended to show the Franciscans' identification with Mary Magdalene. In the *Lignum vitae*, written in the middle of the thirteenth century, Bonaventura praises the compassion of the Virgin Mary or the Magdalene during the Crucifixion and desires to experience it himself.[27] Such identificatory piety, however, is not limited to female figures, as is evident in Ubertino da Casale's *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu Christi* from around 1300. The Franciscan Spiritual envisages himself present at the scene of the Crucifixion and transformed into the Magdalene, Saint John, the Mother, the Good Thief, and finally Christ himself.[28]

The two sources are remarkable testimonies of how the Franciscans developed a form of identificatory Passion piety in the thirteenth century. It could very well have been the prerequisite for the Magdalene's pictorial replacement by Francis and the Franciscans – if only Mary Magdalene had been the first one under the cross. What is of crucial importance here is the chronology, which has actually been clear since Gertrud Schiller – that is, since 1968: first Francis, then the Magdalene.[29] However, the suggestive force of the images seems to have led some researchers to different conclusions, which is quite remarkable. Thus, the *making* of the Magdalene has still to be explored, at least the making of her image.

The Semantics of a Place: Images of the Donor

While Cimabue's fresco is the first depiction of Francis at the foot of the cross in a multi-figural narrative scene, it is not the first to place him at the cross. The first assignment of this place *appiè della croce* in the Franciscan context is known to us only from written sources. The work itself – a large painted cross by Giunta Pisano – has not survived. Brother Elias, the Minister General of the order and the driving force behind the church's construction, the canonization of Saint Francis and the recognition of his stigmata af-

[24] Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton, N.J., 2000, p. 95.

[25] *Ibidem*, p. 85.

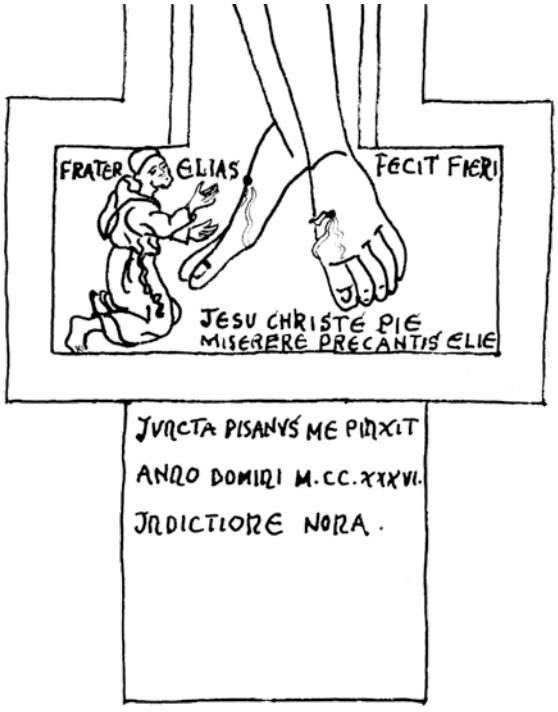
[26] On the importance of Pope Nicholas IV for the Upper Church and its decoration, cf. Donal Cooper/Janet Robson, *The Making of Assisi: The Pope, the Franciscans and the Painting of the Basilica*, New Haven 2013.

[27] Jansen (note 24), p. 90; Bonaventura, "Lignum vitae", in: *idem*, *Opera Omnia*, Quaracchi 1882–1902, VIII, pp. 68–87: 80: "Deus meus, bone Iesu, concede mihi, quamquam per omnem modum immerito et indigno, ut qui corpore his interesse non merui, fideli tamen haec eadem mente pertractans, illum ad te Deum meum pro me crucifixum et mortuum compassionis affectum experiar, quem innocens Mater tua et poenitens Magdalena in ipsa passionis tuae hora senserunt."

[28] Ubertino da Casale, *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu Christi*, Venice 1485, [fol. 1r]: "Tandem iuxta suae passionis supplicia sic me transformative sibi faciebat assistere: ut nunc mihi viderer magdalena peccatrix: nunc quedam ab ipso electa sponsa: nunc frater et discipulus electus ioannes ille: nunc pia mi [mulier] lamentans quae ipsum genuit: nunc latro dexter sibi confixus: nunc ipse purus iesus in ligno crucis clamans: et in dolore expirans." Cf. for Ubertino Anselm Rau, *Das Modell Franziskus: Bildstruktur und Affektsteuerung in monastischer Meditations- und Gebetspraxis*, Berlin 2019, pp. 373f. (in print). Other examples of Franciscan identification with the Magdalene are by Margaret of Cortona, who imagines herself standing "come la Maddalena [...] alli pie' della Croce" (Luigi Mori, *S. Margherita da Cortona, terziaria penitente francescana, Luigi – Lodovico IX, re di Francia, S. Elisabetta d'Ungheria, langravia di Turingia*, Turin 1929, pp. 57f.); and in the *Fioretti di San Francesco*, where brother Giovanni crying at the feet of Christ is compared to the Magdalene at the feast in the house of Simon (*Fioretti di San Francesco*, ed. by Luciano Canonici, Assisi 1985, pp. 209f.).

[29] Cf. Schiller (note 21), II, pp. 166f. According to Schiller, p. 128, there is one singular exception for an early Magdalene at the cross: the Gospel-Book of Judith of Flanders. For the correct chronology see also Marga Anstett-Janßen, *s.v.* Maria Magdalena, in: *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* (note 22), VII, cols. 516–541: 525. In an important article, Ketti Neil confirms explicitly that no representation of the Magdalene *sub cruce* can be dated before images of

11 Francesco Providoni (?), *Brother Elias kneeling before the Crucifix*. Present whereabouts unknown



12 Reconstruction of the foot of the Elias cross (by Silvestro Nessi, 2005)

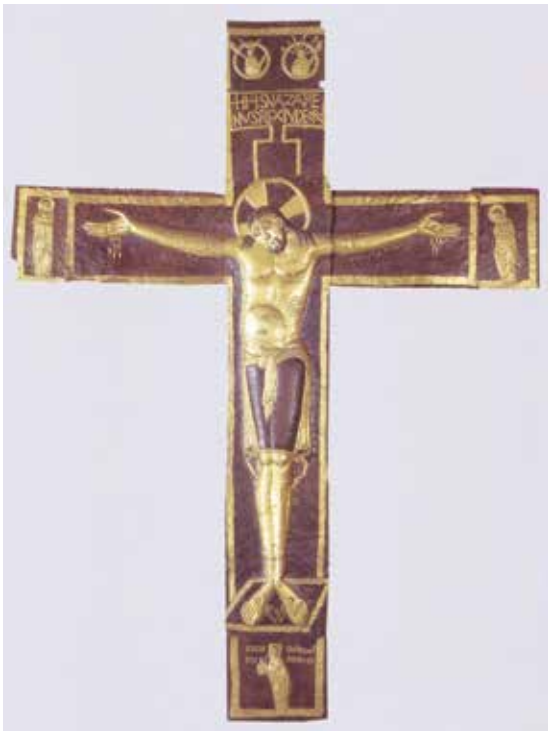
ter Francis's death in 1226, donated this cross to the basilica of San Francesco in Assisi in 1236.[30] The unusual thing about Elias's cross was that he had himself depicted at its foot – as the donor, with an inscription to that effect. The inscription has come down to us; it cites Elias as the person who commissioned the cross and gives the name of the painter and the date: FRATER ELIAS FECIT FIERI / JESU CHRISTE PIE / MISERERE PRECANTIS ELIAE / JUNCTA PISANUS ME PINXIT / ANNO DOMINI MCCXXXVI / INDICTIONE NONA. As Donal Cooper and Janet Robson have convincingly demonstrated, the cross was originally placed on the *tramezzo* beam of the Upper Church, where it was still seen by Vasari. It must have been one of the few pictorial elements in the church when the altar was consecrated by Pope Innocent IV in 1253.[31] The cross was taken down in 1622 because it blocked the view in the choir. It was on that occasion that the inscription and the figure of the donor were rediscovered. Several sources describe the kneeling friar with raised hands at the foot of Giunta's cross.[32] This is confirmed by a number of depictions of the donor from the seventeenth century, apparently

Saint Francis adoring Christ at the foot of the cross (Ketti Neil, "St. Francis of Assisi, the Penitent Magdalen, and the Patron at the Foot of the Cross", in: *Rutgers Art Review*, 9/10 [1988/89], pp. 83–109, especially pp. 83 and 90).

[30] Cf. John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517*, Oxford 1968, pp. 96–104. On Elias and other devotee figures at the foot of a cross as a model for the iconography of the Magdalene *sub cruce* cf. Büttner (note 3), pp. 143–145.

[31] Cooper/Robson (note 26), pp. 63–69. Not only are the consoles of the beam still existent, the *giornate* of the Saint Francis fresco cycle (ca. 1290–1296) also took account of them. Cf. further Silvestro Nessi, "La grande croce dipinta da Giunta Pisano per la basilica di San Francesco in Assisi", in: *Il Santo*, XLV (2005), pp. 691–721, and Elvio Lunghi, *Il crocefisso di Giunta Pisano e l'icona del 'Maestro di San Francesco' alla Porziuncola*, Assisi 1995, pp. 54–59.

[32] Cf. Nessi (note 31), pp. 700–703.



13, 14 Aribert Cross, ca. 1037–1040, overall view and detail. Milan, Museo del Duomo

copied from the cross (Fig. 11). One of these, a painting stolen from the Capuchin convent in Rome, shows Elias in his habit, kneeling in front of a small, modernized crucifix. Based on the pictorial and written sources, Silvestro Nessi offers a convincing reconstruction of the lower part of Giunta's cross (Fig. 12).[33]

Elias's place at the bottom of the cross might appear humble, but it is the position of the wealthy donor, and this is exactly how Elias saw himself. As Minister General he searched to wield power over the order and to form it according to his own ideas. After entering into conflict with the pope and allying himself with Emperor Frederick II, he was ultimately expelled from the order and excommunicated in 1244.[34] Cooper and Robson have recently stressed that, in his donation policies, Elias took the builders of great cloisters and churches as his orientation: for example Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino, who commissioned a portrait of himself as a donor in Sant'Angelo in Formis around 1080, or Abbot Suger, who donated a large cross to Saint-Denis in 1147, having himself portrayed – or so it is thought – at its foot.[35] That he acted like a powerful abbot and not as a humble friar was the claim of Elias' opponents in the Franciscan order, which led to his dismissal.[36] As Cooper and Robson themselves point out it is, however, not very likely that Elias knew of Suger's cross directly. He must have gained his knowledge of this type of donor image by a different route, which was certainly possible, because the type was considerably older than Suger's use of it. Most importantly, it was not limited to abbots, but had its origins with even higher-ranking personages. This circumstance is a clear indication of the tremendous claim Elias formulated with his depiction *appiè della croce*.

[33] *Ibidem*, pp. 702 and 710.
[34] Moorman (note 30), pp. 101f.
[35] Cooper/Robson (note 26), pp. 70–72.
[36] Moorman (note 30), pp. 100 and 104; Giulia Barone, *Da frate Elia agli spirituali*, Milan 1999, pp. 53, 56.

Presumably the most prominent donation of a crucifix anywhere in Italy was made by Aribert, the archbishop of Milan, who around 1037–1040 donated a two-and-a-half-metre-high, originally silver-plated metal cross to the church of San Dionigi (Fig. 13).[37] At its foot, he had himself represented as the donor, holding the model of his church of San Dionigi (Fig. 14). The inscription refers to him as "Aribertus indignus archiepiscopus". The position at the foot of the cross, beneath the feet of Christ, was undoubtedly the least dignified place possible; but to place oneself on the Holy Cross at all was a gesture anything but modest. Nor was modesty one of Aribert's main virtues: the archbishop was an ambitious politician who cultivated the closest possible contact with the Ottonian and Salian rulers. He crowned Conrad II Italian king. Owing to political conflicts, however, Conrad himself imposed the imperial ban on him ten years later, and the pope likewise excommunicated him. In this threatening situation, Aribert succeeded in once again rallying the support of Milan. He developed an elaborate politics of symbols, and it was in this phase that he founded the church of San Dionigi and donated the cross. This pious deed virtually earned him the rank of a saint, as we are informed by the angular halo.[38] So even if Aribert described himself as unworthy in the inscription, in the image he assumed that his gift would be accepted by God.

15, 16 Cross of Otto and Mathilde, ca. 985-990, overall view and detail. Essen, Domschatz

[37] On the Aribert Cross, see Katharina Christa Schüppel, "Fede e iconografia: le croci di Ariberto", in: *Ariberto da Intimiano: fede, potere e cultura a Milano nel secolo XI*, ed. by Ettore Bianchi *et al.*, Cinisello Balsamo 2007, pp. 289–307. Lunghi (note 31), pp. 55f., already discusses the Aribert Cross as a model for Elias' cross.

[38] In his study on the Ottonian donor image, Klaus Gereon Beuckers ("Das Ottonische Stifterbild: Bildtypen, Handlungsmotive und Stifterstatus in ottonischen und frühsalischen Stifterdarstellungen", in: *Die Ottonen: Kunst, Architektur, Geschichte*, ed. by *idem et al.*, Petersberg 2002, pp. 63–102: 64) explains that the donation has to be considered a saint-like deed. Cf. the ninth-century apse mosaic in Santa Maria in Domnica in Rome: Pope Pascal I with an angular halo kneels before the enthroned Virgin and touches her foot. Cf. also the halo of Abbot Epiphanius depicted in *proskynesis* before the crucified Christ in the crypt of San Vincenzo al Volturno.

17 Basel Antependium, ca. 1020.
Paris, Musée de Cluny –
Musée national du Moyen Âge

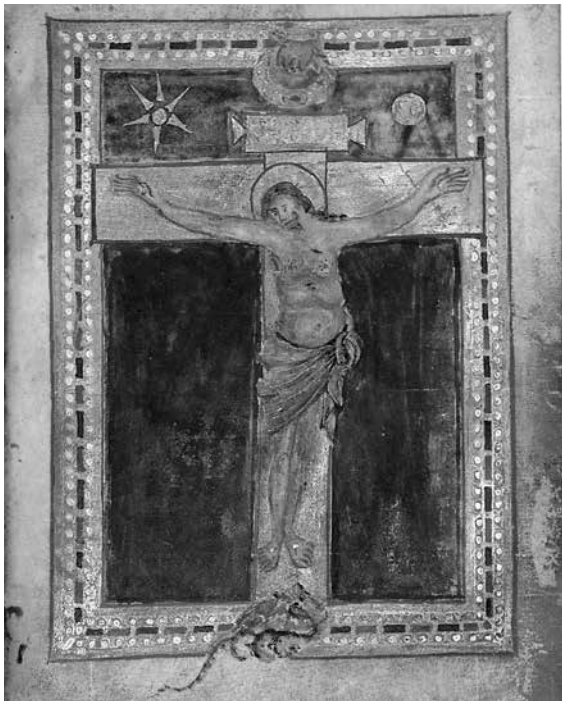
Aribert clearly took as his model Ottonian crosses where the donor was shown in a pictorial field at the foot of the cross. An early example is the Cross of Otto and Mathilde, dated to circa 985–990 (Fig. 15).[39] At the foot of this small processional cross is a pictorial field in which the two donors appear: Otto, duke of Swabia, and his sister, Abbess Mathilde of Essen, together holding their donation in a gesture of presentation (Fig. 15). The similarities in the depictions of the donors with their gifts are unmistakable. In both cases, they are visually separated from Christ. But while in the older example the two donors are located in a pictorial field of their own, made of a different material and with a different colouration from the rest of the cross, Aribert is depicted on the cross itself and separated from Christ only by the suppedaneum – and thus equated with Mary and Saint John at the ends of the cross arms. Yet as a dedicatory image, the depiction of Aribert is a far cry from the Franciscan devotional image that shows a figure venerating the feet of Christ.

The Ottonian donor image draws on the *proskynesis* iconography and its political context developed at the Byzantine court: the imperial family or the emperor alone are shown prostrate before the Virgin or the Pantocrator.[40] This scheme was also elaborated in the West, for example in a Milanese ivory from 983 showing Emperor Otto II along with Empress Theophanu and his already crowned son Otto III kneeling at Christ's feet.[41] The emperor touches the right foot of the Saviour as if he wanted to kiss it. In the Basel Antependium too (Fig. 17) the place at Christ's feet becomes the stage for humiliation as well as imperial self-presentation. Emperor Henry II, who donated the golden antependium to the cathedral of Basel, represented himself and his wife Cunigunde bowing over the feet of Christ.[42] These

[39] Cf. Ulrike Bergmann, "*Prior omnibus autor*: An höchster Stelle aber steht der Stifter", in: *Ornamenta Ecclesiae: Kunst und Künstler der Romanik*, ed. by Anton Legner, Cologne 1985, I, pp. 117–148 and *eadem*, *ibidem*, p. 150, no. B1; Klaus Gereon Beuckers, "Das Otto-Mathilden-Kreuz im Essener Domschatz: Überlegungen zu Charakter und Funktion des Stifterbildes", in: *Herrschaft, Liturgie und Raum: Studien zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte des Frauenstifts Essen*, ed. by Katrinette Bodarwé/Thomas Schilp, Essen 2002, pp. 51–80.

[40] For the *proskynesis* iconography see Anthony Cutler, *Transfigurations: Studies in the Dynamics of Byzantine Iconography*, University Park, Pa., 1975, pp. 63–110.

[41] Milan, Castello Sforzesco, Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Applicata; cf. Beuckers (note 38), pp. 68f.



18a, b Prayer Book of Charles the Bald, 846–869. Munich, Residenz München, Schatzkammer, ResMü.Schk0004-WL, fols. 38v and 39r

images of the imperial *adoratio* differ from dedicatory images in that, rather than separating the worshippers from Christ, they place them right at his feet.[43]

The *proskynesis* before the cross is found less frequently. The first cases in the High Middle Ages suggest a prevalence with the higher clergy. Bishops and abbots are shown prostrate before the empty cross or the crucified Christ.[44] In the Carolingian period, book illumination was the main medium for representations of the *proskynesis* before the cross. The first known example is the self-representation of Rabanus Maurus in the twenty-eighth *carmen figuratum* of his *Liber de laudibus sanctae crucis* from the early ninth century.[45] The following illuminations do not place a cleric beneath the cross but a king: King Charles the Bald was the first Carolingian ruler to show himself adoring the crucified Christ in his prayer book from circa 846–869 (Fig. 18).[46] In the double illustration of the

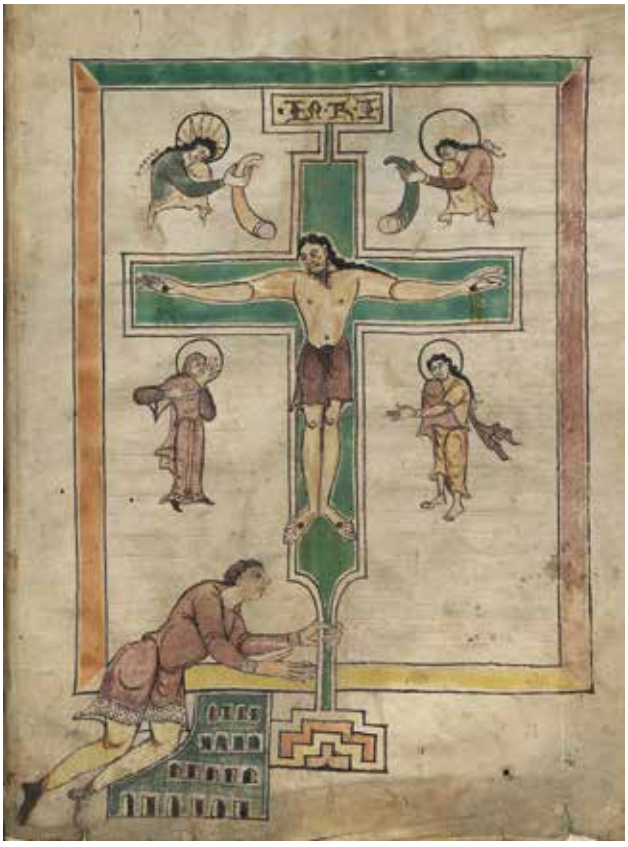
[42] For the Basel Antependium, see Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, "Goldener Schmuck für Kirche und Kaiser", in: *Kaiser Heinrich II.: 1002–1024*, exh. cat., ed. by Josef Kirmeier *et al.*, Bamberg 2002, pp. 78–92: 85–87. Cf. also the depiction of Emperor Conrad and Empress Gisela at the feet of the Majestas Domini in the Speyer Gospel-Book, ca. 1045/46 (El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Cod. Vitrinas 17, fol. 2v).

[43] Concerning the relation of *adoratio* and *proskynesis*, cf. Joanna Cannon, "Kissing the Virgin's Foot: Adoratio Before the Madonna and Child Enacted, Depicted, Imagined", in: *Studies in Iconography*, 31 (2010), pp. 1–50: 4f. For the placement of the worshipper at Christ's feet, see Beuckers (note 38), pp. 66–68.

[44] Cf. Robert Deshman, "The Exalted Servant: The Ruler Theology of the Prayerbook of Charles the Bald", in: *Viator*, 11 (1980), pp. 385–417, especially pp. 386–390.

[45] Cf. Ulrich Ernst, Carmen figuratum*: Geschichte des Figurengedichts von den antiken Ursprüngen bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Cologne 1991, pp. 222–332, especially pp. 289–292. Ernst dates the first manuscript of the *Liber de laudibus sanctae crucis* to between 806 and 814.

[46] For this miniature, see Deshman (note 44), pp. 387–404.



19 Psalter of Louis the German, *Crucifixion*, ca. 887–899. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. theol. lat. fol. 58, fol. 120r

prayer for the veneration of the Holy Cross, however, the ruler and the cross are placed separately on opposite pages. Charles kneels on the floor and stretches his hands towards Christ in adoration but remains in his own pictorial field. An illustration following the *Oratio ante crucem dicenda* (Fig. 19) added to the Psalter of Louis the German in the late ninth century is different in this respect. The figure, identified as Louis's grandson King Arnulf of Carinthia,[47] protrudes into the crucifix field, which is enclosed in a four-coloured frame. The king kneels on a prayer bench outside that frame and embraces the foot of the cross. The cross itself is construed quite ambiguously: through the addition of Mary and Saint John as well as Sol and Luna, it is part of a narrative Crucifixion scene. At the same time, however, it is depicted as an oversized *Steckkreuz* whose stand is in the sphere of the praying king. This suggests that he, the king, is spiritually in Christ's vicinity only through prayer, but not truly part of the Crucifixion scene.

An illustration from a missal in Halberstadt, dating from before 975, shows a more direct integration of the donor into the Crucifixion scene: he kneels before the crucified Christ.[48] This formula spread rapidly in the eleventh century. One example is the donor image in the Gundold Gospel-Book of the Cologne school dated around 1020–1040 (Fig. 20). As in the Halberstadt missal the male donor is kneeling next to the cross on the side of the Virgin. Both donors are wearing a maniple, a strip of cloth draped over the left arm that signifies their status as high-ranking clergymen while at the same time serving a special function in the liturgy of Good Friday.[49] At around the same time, in the so-called Eberhard Psalter a tonsured donor had himself depicted in extremely close proximity to the foot stigma. In the multi-figural Crucifixion scene, he is almost lying on the suppedaneum and looking at the bleeding wound on Christ's foot.[50]

Over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the depiction of the donor in various poses – lying, kneeling or crouching – under the cross

[47] Fabrizio Crivello, "Ein Name für das Herrscherbild des Ludwigspsalters", in: *Kunstchronik*, LX (2007), pp. 216–219; Beuckers (note 38), pp. 71f.

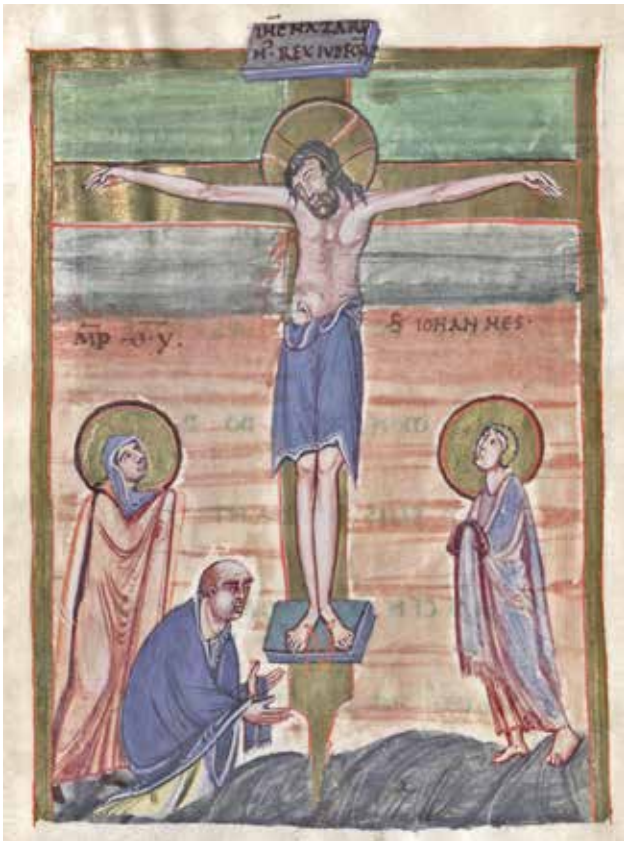
[48] *Ibidem*, p. 71, note 40. The illustration follows a scheme already in use in the ninth-century fresco in the crypt of San Vincenzo al Volturno showing Abbot Epiphanius in *proskynesis* before the crucified Christ; see above, note 38, and Deshman (note 44), p. 389.

[49] Cf. Beuckers (note 38), p. 69.

[50] Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, BSB Clm 7355, fol. 6r, Bavaria, first quarter of the eleventh century; cf. Beuckers (note 38), p. 71, note 40. A similar example is the *Graduale et Missale Bambergense* from the twelfth or thirteenth century, Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, Msc. Lit. 11, fol. 149v; cf. Büttner (note 3), p. 144 and fig. 158.

spread in a wide range of media.[51] Considering the currency of this scheme, it becomes evident that the aforementioned prostrate figure on the shrine of Saint Alban is not the Magdalene, as proposed by Vannucci, but most probably the Abbot Henry of Saint Pantaleon, who had the new shrine made for the relics of Saint Alban.[52] Likewise, the Crucifixion scene in the Pierpont Morgan Gospel-Book of Judith of Flanders (Fig. 9) represents at the foot of the cross not the *apostola apostolorum*, but Judith, Countess of Northumbria, who commissioned a total of four gospel-books.[53] She was not the only female donor to demonstrate her intimacy with the cross and the crucified Christ.[54] The Lombardic Abbess Raingarda also had herself depicted at the foot of a silver crucifix of Saint Teodote in Pavia.[55]

Therefore, by the early twelfth century, the well-travelled Brother Elias could draw on a rich tradition of depictions of high-ranking donors at the feet of Christ and several impressive metal crosses with donor depictions at their foot. With the size of his cross, the Minister General outdid them all – it must have been some five metres high. The only thing modest about it was the material: painted wood. For the figure representing himself, he chose not the classical dedicatory gesture of Aribert, who appears as the donor of a church, but the venerating gesture with slightly open hands found in many depictions of donors at the feet of Christ, for example in the Prayer Book of Charles



20 Gundold Gospel-Book, *Crucifixion*, 1020–1040. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod.bibl.qt.2,a–b, fol. 9r

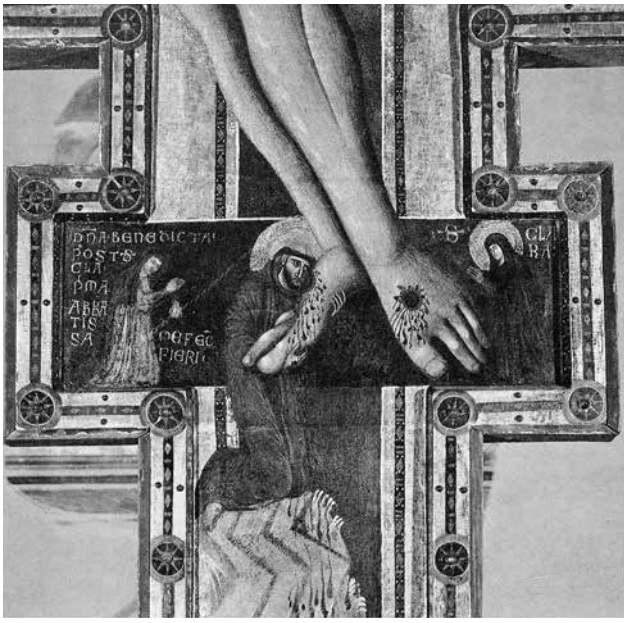
[51] Cf. Petra Marx, "Im Glanze Gottes und der Heiligen: Stifterbilder in der mittelalterlichen Goldschmiedekunst", in: *Westfalen*, 91 (2013), pp. 107–164; cf. especially the Heriman-Ida-Kreuz (fig. 8), an altar cross from cloister Liesborn (fig. 9), a semicircular reliquary from Hildesheim (fig. 10), an altar cross from Saint Alban in Mayence (fig. 11), and further examples mentioned by Marx, p. 122.

[52] Cf. Bergmann (note 39), p. 129, and above p. 12.

[53] For the identification with the Magdalene, see above p. 12. Judith also had herself represented on the frontispiece in the gospel-book in Fulda (Hessische Landesbibliothek, ms. Aa 21, fol. 2v, ca. 1065).

[54] With her art patronage and her portraits, Judith, sister-in-law of King Harold of England, drew on the example of her equally self-assured great-aunt, Queen Emma. Together with her husband, King Cnut, Emma donated a jewelled cross to New Minster, represented in the frontispiece of the New Minster *Liber vitae* from around 1031 (London, British Library, Stow 944, fol. 6r). Judith was not able to realize similar endowments. Instead of showing herself next to a costly cross, she placed herself at the foot of the cross on Golgotha. See Jane E. Rosenthal, "An Unprecedented Image of Love and Devotion: The Crucifixion in Judith of Flanders's Gospel Book", in: *Tributes to Lucy Freeman Sandler: Studies in Illuminated Manuscripts*, ed. by Kathryn A. Smith/Carol Krinsky/Herselle Krinsky, London 2008, pp. 21–36: 21, and Mary Dockray-Miller, *The Books and Life of Judith of Flanders*, Farnham 2015, pp. 49–64.

[55] Cf. Katharina Christa Schüppel, *Silberne und goldene Monumentalkruzifixe: Ein Beitrag zur mittelalterlichen Liturgie- und Kulturgeschichte*, Weimar 2005. Abbess Raingarda is documented in 963 and 965, thus a date in the second half of the tenth century is probable. Lunghi (note 31), p. 55, mentions her cross as a model for the one commissioned by Elias.



21, 22 Master of Saint Clare, Cross of Abbess Benedetta, overall view and detail, ca. 1255–1260. Assisi, Santa Chiara

23 Master of Saint Francis, painted cross, 1272. Perugia, Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria

the Bald (Fig. 18a), the Basel Antependium (Fig. 17), and the Gundold Gospels (Fig. 20).[56]

Transforming the Semantics – The Veneration of the Stigmatized Feet

Yet even if it is clear which traditions Elias and Giunta Pisano drew on for the depiction of the Minister General, we still have to consider the later pictorial invention of Francis venerating the stigmata. This motif is found from around 1270 onwards on various Franciscan painted crosses. For a long time, the earliest cross with a Francis depicted on the suppedaneum was believed to be the Benedetta cross from the Assisian monastery of Santa Chiara, which is mostly dated to around 1260 (Fig. 21).[57]

At the bottom of the painted cross appears not only the kneeling Francis, who embraces the right foot of his Redeemer and almost puts his head into

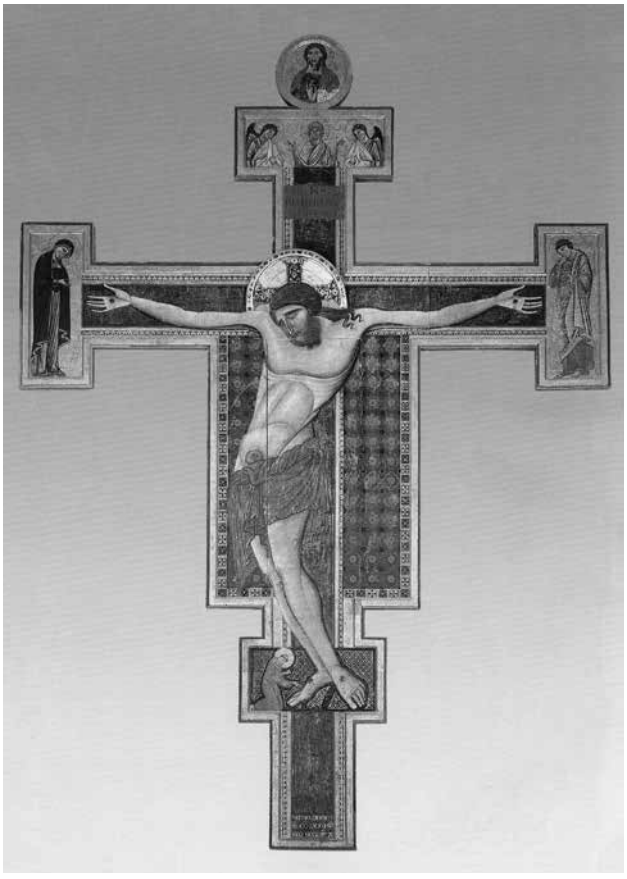
[56] This adoring gesture was already displayed by the kneeling emperor before Christ in the mosaic of the Hagia Sophia, the donors Rabanus Maurus, Abbess Raingarda, Gundold, and the cleric from the Halberstadt missal. The conformity of the gesture is a further proof that the seventeenth-century image made after the Elias cross (Fig. 11) is truthful.

[57] A much-accepted date for the donation of the cross is the year of Clare's canonization, 1255. A later option would be 1265, when the new-built church of Santa Chiara was consecrated; see Elvio Lunghi, "La decorazione pittorica della Chiesa", in: *La basilica di S. Chiara in Assisi*, ed. by. Marino Bigaroni/Hans-Rudolf Meier/Elvio Lunghi, Perugia 1994, pp. 137–282: 151–155. Other scholars date the cross later: cf. Evelyn Sandberg-Vavalà, *La croce dipinta italiana e l'iconografia della passione*, Verona 1929, pp. 841f. and figs. 528 and 529, and Andrea De Marchi, "*Cum dictum opus sit magnum*: il documento pistoiese del 1274 e l'allestimento trionfale dei tramezzi in Umbria e Toscana fra Due e Trecento", in: *Medioevo: immagine e memoria*, conference proceedings Parma 2008, ed. by Arturo Carlo Quintavalle, Milan 2009, pp. 603–621: 609f.

the bleeding foot wound, but also Clare and the donor, the Abbess Benedetta (Fig. 22). As demonstrated by Chiara Frugoni, however, the cross in its present appearance is the result of a series of restorations in the early twentieth century.[58] What is more, it cannot be excluded that the female figures are an addition dating back to an earlier restoration from the seventeenth century.[59]

A securely dated example is instead the large cross by the Master of Saint Francis for San Francesco al Prato in Perugia from 1272 (Fig. 23).[60] Here, Francis kneels in front of Christ's right foot, touching it with one hand and pointing to the stigma with the other one. As in the Benedetta cross he himself is stigmatized. This iconographic scheme becomes a strong pattern, as proven by the cross in San Francesco in Arezzo from circa 1280–1290 with a larger Saint Francis venerating the foot stigma and strongly resembling the one on the Benedetta cross. The chronology of the early Franciscan crosses is difficult to determine at present.[61] What is certain, though, is that in Franciscan contexts, the iconography of Francis at the bottom of painted crosses was established at the latest after 1272. All kinds of gestures are explored: he bows to the feet, points to the wound, places his head on it, and kisses the foot or the nail.

Yet a passionate veneration of the stigmata is not known for Francis. Although in his *Legenda sancti Francisci* Bonaventura casts the image of Francis as a



protagonist of Passion piety, there are no indications of any such leaning in the saint's own texts. This is confirmed by the development of the Franciscan crucifixes. The *Crucifix* of San Damiano, which, as legend has it, demanded of Francis that he renovate the church, corresponds to the iconography of

[58] Chiara Frugoni, *Una solitudine abitata: Chiara d'Assisi*, Rome 2016, pp. 145–153. As can be seen in archival photographs, certain peculiar features of Abbess Benedetta such as her money-bag, her short veil, and her bright dress emerged only after the restorations.

[59] Frugoni, *ibidem*, p. 152, refers to a restoration commissioned by Bishop Marcello Crescenzi in 1606. The faces of Benedetta and Clare do not correspond to the sharp features of the ducentesque Francis. For Frugoni the placement of the figures and the wording of the inscription ("Donna Benedicta post Sancta Clara prima abbatissa me fecit fieri") cast doubts on the authenticity of the figures. Possibly the two Poor Clares were not invented but only overpainted in the seventeenth century, but this is difficult to ascertain.

[60] Dillian Gordon, "A Perugian Provenance for the Franciscan Double-sided Altar-Piece by the Maestro di S. Francesco", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXIV (1982), pp. 70–77: 70 and 76.

[61] Cf. Neil (note 29) and Klaus Krüger, *Der frühe Bildkult des Franziskus in Italien: Gestalt- und Funktionswandel des Tafelbildes im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1992, pp. 155–161. For the dating of the Arezzo cross see Edward B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index*, Florence 1949, no. 540, fig. 550 (late thirteenth century), and Krüger, p. 160, fig. 304 (1280–1290). Only in the Arezzo cross does Christ wear a crown of thorns, and for Sandberg-Vavalà (note 57), p. 874, this indicates that it was executed towards the end of the thirteenth century. On the relationship between the Benedetta cross and the Arezzo cross see De Marchi (note 57), p. 610.

24 Painted cross, around 1280.
Riglione (Pisa), Santi Ippolito
e Cassiano martiri

Christus triumphans, who does not exhibit any signs of suffering but triumphs with open eyes over death.[62] The *Christus patiens* type, with conspicuous features of suffering, only came to prevail among the Franciscans after the saint's death – precisely in the works Elias commissioned from Giunta Pisano. It cannot be said with certainty, however, whether the Elias cross was really the first one by Giunta to show the Redeemer dead.[63] Yet it is certain that the cross in the Upper Church of Assisi was the point of departure for the establishment of the *patiens* type. Elias, who had been provincial minister in the Holy Land for three years, must have been familiar with the Middle Byzantine *patiens* iconography showing Christ with his head bowed to one side, his eyes closed, and the characteristic belly shape.[64] Elias was also a key figure in the development of Franciscan Passion piety on account of the fact that, by discovering and publicizing the stigmatization of Francis, he linked the latter so permanently to Christ's Passion. And with the depiction of himself as the donor he paved the way for the new iconography of Francis adoring the foot stigma.

In the years that followed, various figures began to populate the bases of painted crosses; among them we find members of the clergy and laypersons who appear as supplicants but were presumably also donors. Thanks to an inscription, the earliest example of such a lay donation, a painted cross now in Palazzo Barberini in Rome, can be dated to 1257; the donor, who had herself depicted on the cross, was a certain "Domina Maria".[65] The last quarter of the thirteenth century yielded a large number of crosses with supplicants beneath Christ's feet. The high proportion of women and Dominicans among them is conspicuous.[66] Many of these crosses are much smaller than the early crosses for the Francis-

[62] For this cross from the middle or end of the twelfth century see Miklós Boskovits, "Immagine e preghiera nel tardo Medioevo: osservazioni preliminari", in: *Arte Cristiana*, n.s., LXXVI (1988), pp. 93–104: 102, note 18.

[63] Giunta might have executed the painted cross for the Dominicans in Bologna somewhat earlier; but since the *patiens* type was known in Umbria even before Giunta worked there, it seems more probable that he conceived his *Christus patiens* for Assisi. Cf. Sandberg-Vavalà (note 57), p. 736; Lunghi (note 57), pp. 158f.; Marcello Gaeta, *Giotto und die* croci dipinte *des Trecento: Studien zu Typus, Genese und Rezeption. Mit einem Katalog der monumentalen Tafelkreuze des Trecento (ca. 1290–ca. 1400)*, Münster 2013, pp. 34–47.

[64] Cf. Lunghi (note 57), p. 160.

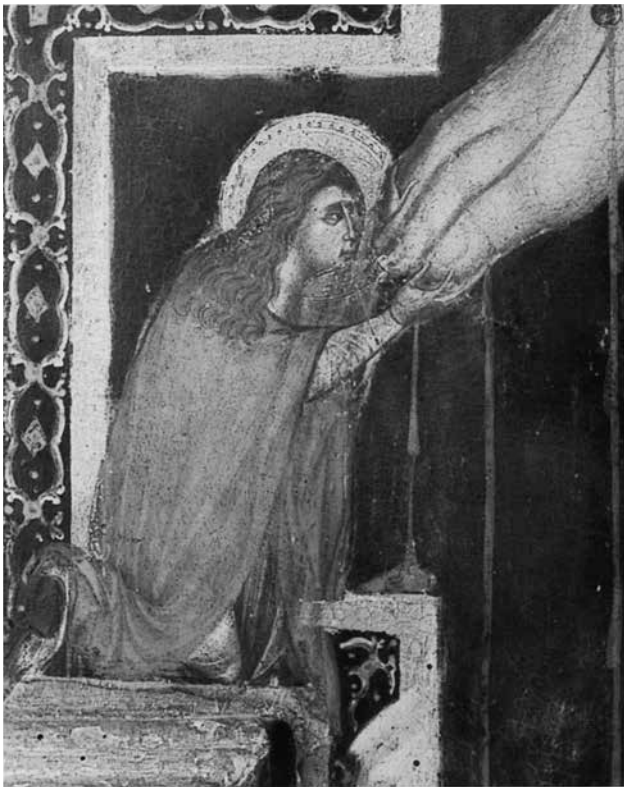
[65] The inscription of the painted cross also names the painters: SIMEON ET MACHILOS PINSERUNT HOC OPUS ANNO DOMINI MCCLVII DOMINA MARIA FECIT FIERI. Cf. Sandberg-Vavalà (note 57), pp. 737–740.

[66] Cf. Neil (note 29), pp. 96–99, and Gaeta (note 63), pp. 178–186. Examples of crosses with supplicants are: a cross with a kneeling Dominican supplicant, north Umbrian, Giuntesque, ca. 1255–1265, Todi, cathedral (Garrison [note 61], no. 585; Sandberg-Vavalà [note 57], pp. 862f., fig. 542); a cross with four kneeling supplicants, Roman with Tuscan features, third quarter of thirteenth century, Rome, Collegio Angelico (Garrison [note 61], no. 488; Sandberg-Vavalà [note 57], p. 805); a cross with

can churches, which are often longer than four or five metres.

Besides lay donors, mendicants as well as Saint Francis, Mary Magdalene also sometimes appears at the bottom of these painted crosses. Previously she could be conceived of only occasionally on the apron of the cross, above all in Umbrian examples, where she served as a companion to the swooning Virgin.[67] As far as we know at present, the Magdalene was first given a place at the feet of Christ around 1280. One early example is a cross in Riglione near Pisa (Fig. 24).[68] A second cross that shows her in the same position, today in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence (Fig. 25), is presumably to be dated just a short time later. Of Florentine origins, it likewise displays the Magdalene with her head nestling up to the tip of Christ's foot.[69]

Thus, we have a Magdalene *sub cruce* on a very small number of *croci dipinte* predating Giotto's frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel. The reason for her appearance in this position is also to be found in the specific structure of the painted cross. The lower section of such a cross could also feature a narrative scene, for example the Anastasis or the denial of Saint Peter. What is more, the other two witnesses to the Crucifixion, the Virgin Mary and Saint John, had already long been present at the ends of the crossarms as icons of mourning. One could say that Mary Magdalene had already long been missing here. Evidently, however, no one thought so until 1280, and then only sporadically, although it was an iconography that would have also suited the Dominicans quite well, who placed donor figures at the feet of painted crosses just as the Franciscans did and also held the Magdalene in high esteem.



25 Painted cross, detail, 1285–1290. Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia

To all appearances, however, in the late thirteenth century the Franciscans did not show much interest

kneeling Dominican supplicant, north Umbrian, distant follower of the Master of Saint Francis, fourth quarter of thirteenth century, formerly on the Florentine art market (Garrison [note 61], no. 457); a cross with three supplicants, circle of the Magdalene Master, ca. 1275–1286, Worcester Art Museum (*ibidem*, no. 497; Gaeta [note 63], no. 263); a cross with kneeling female supplicant, Florentine, end of thirteenth century, ca. 1290–1295, Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Art Museum (Garrison [note 61], no. 465, Sandberg-Vavalà [note 57], pp. 791–793, fig. 495; Gaeta [note 63], fig. 262); a cross with supplicant, ca. 1295, San Gimignano, Museo Civico (Krüger [note 61], fig. 288).

[67] Cf. the *Crucifix* of San Damiano in Santa Chiara, Assisi, and the Romanesque cross in the *tesoro* of the same church; the cross in Cambridge, Fogg Art Museum, or the cross of the Master of Saint Francis in London, National Gallery.

[68] Cf. Gaeta (note 63), fig. 160 (with a dating to ca. 1275–1285); Garrison (note 61), no. 484.

[69] Cf. Sonia Chiodo, in: *Dal Duecento a Giovanni da Milano*, ed. by Miklós Boskovits/Angelo Tartuferi, Florence/Milan 2003 (*Cataloghi della Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze: Dipinti*, I), pp. 222–228, no. 42, who dates it to the end of the thirteenth century. See further Sandberg-Vavalà (note 57), pp. 783f.; Garrison (note 61), no. 562 (1280–1290); Gaeta (note 63), no. 140 (ca. 1285–1290). The painted cross in Castiglion Fiorentino

in placing the Magdalene at the foot of the cross in narrative depictions: an arch-Franciscan artist such as the Master of Saint Francis did not depict a Magdalene *sub cruce* in the *Crucifixion* fresco of circa 1250 in the Lower Church in Assisi. Some twenty years later, in Cimabue's Upper Church *Crucifixion* (Fig. 10), an isolated haloed female figure with dramatically upstretched arms was placed under the cross, but her identity today is difficult to determine; perhaps the artist did not even have a specific person in mind. The *Crucifixion* of circa 1288/89 on the southern nave wall, for its part, does not pursue the new motif. There, the place beneath the cross is empty.

Although the figure of the Magdalene beneath the cross had already been introduced occasionally, such as in the Yale panel described above, Giotto was the first artist who fully recognized the potential of this motif and made the saint clearly identifiable.[70] Giotto, then, was responsible for transforming the devotional figure of the venerating Francis into an acting protagonist: the Magdalene. Although her placement beneath the cross was the consequence of a multifarious transformation process, in Giotto's depiction it seems as natural as if she had always been there and as if the innovation was nothing but a direct visualization of the account of the Crucifixion in the gospels. It is very remarkable that in this process it is the place that is semanticized first: it is the place of the donor, initially of high-ranking persons such as kings and bishops. For them it is a place of debasement, but at the same time of exaltation. Through the iconography of Saint Francis, the place is imbued with a new meaning, that of adoring the stigmatized body of Christ. By giving that place to the Magdalene Giotto turns it into a stage for the drama of the Passion of Christ.

The Scrovegni Chapel: The Invention of the Magdalene as an Acting Protagonist

A remarkable and hardly noticed aspect is that this promotion of the Magdalene did not take place in the Franciscan context. Even the chapel dedicated to her in the Lower Church, frescoed by the Giotto workshop around 1305–1308 and clearly indicating her relevance for the order, has no Crucifixion scene. For the programme's authors, that event was evidently not a significant part of her vita.[71] Scholars have frequently and aptly stressed the close relationship between the Magdalene cult and the Franciscan order.[72] Yet it is no coincidence that the solution that was so formative for the further development was invented for the private chapel of Enrico Scrovegni. In the Passion cycle there, Mary Magdalene is unusually prominent. She stands out quite conspicuously in the three neighbouring scenes of the *Crucifixion* (Fig. 4), the *Lamentation* (Fig. 26) and the *Resurrection* (Fig. 27). Through the combination of the Resurrection scene with the *Noli me tangere*, Giotto makes the presence of the Magdalene beneath the cross unambiguous: we have to identify that figure with the *apostola apostolorum*. In addition, Giotto also refers to the other important Magdalene scene during the life of Christ: the conversion at the feast of Simon, as will be shown.

The composition of the Noli me tangere scene, which emphasizes her eminent role as a witness to Christ's resurrection, is relatively conventional. Her

(north Umbrian, ca. 1280–1290) was believed to show a Magdalene at the foot of the cross. However, after the restoration it is difficult to identify the figure as the saint; cf. *Restauri nell'Aretino: croci dipinte tra Due e Trecento*, ed. by Paola Refice, Florence 2008, p. 67. For later depictions of the Magdalene on painted crosses, see Gaeta (note 63), no. 14 (Simone dei Crocefissi, 1370, Bologna, San Giacomo Maggiore), no. 76 (ca. 1320–1330, Misano Adriatico, Chiesa dell'Immacolata Concezione), no. 77 (ca. 1320–1340, Mombaroccio, Santuario del Beato Sante).

[70] Cf. Nurith Kenaan-Kedar, "Emotion, Beauty and Franciscan Piety: A New Reading of the Magdalene Chapel in the Lower Church of Assisi", in: *Studi medievali*, XXVI (1985), pp. 699–710: 701 and 710.

[71] The same holds true for the vita panel by the Magdalene Master from ca. 1280 (Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia), which does not contain a Crucifixion.

[72] Schiller (note 21), pp. 166f.; Neil (note 29); Jansen (note 24), pp. 82–99.

position in the *Lamentation* (Fig. 26) is more remarkable: here, she holds Christ's feet. This motif can already be observed early on in Franciscan contexts, for example in the dossal of circa 1272 by the Master of Saint Francis for the church of San Francesco in Prato (now in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia) or in the Upper Church fresco in Assisi of around 1288/89.[73] This new iconography is reflected in the description of the Entombment in the *Meditaciones vite Christi* from around 1300: the author explains that the Magdalene chose the place at Christ's feet because that is where she had found mercy.[74] A reference to the forgiveness of her sins at the feet of Christ during the feast of Simon was also extremely appropriate for the frescoes in Padua. Mercy seems to have been a foremost concern for the donor Enrico Scrovegni, who was a moneylender and very much in fear of eternal damnation.[75] This could also explain the unusual presence of the Magdalene and the way Giotto represented her. With his frescoes, the red mantle becomes the distinctive mark of the Magdalene. He repeats it in all three scenes. After him, few Italian artists chose a different colour for her. At the same time, Giotto directs us to look carefully at how the Magdalene handles her red mantle. In the *Crucifixion* she has taken the mantle off to kneel on it and wears only a purple chemise. Giotto used the same purple for the gown of Enrico Scrovegni in the *Last Judgement*, where he is also kneeling *sub cruce* and presenting the chapel to the Virgin. Derbes and Sandona explain the colour by its function in penitential liturgy and understand the donation as a penitential act.[76] The proximity of Enrico to the condemned usurers in the right-hand section of the Hell makes it quite plausible that he hopes the donation will spare him the punishments they have to suffer. The dedication of his chapel to Santa Maria della Carità claims Enrico's conversion: instead of enjoying the profit from

[73] The Master of Saint Francis may have already placed the Magdalene at the feet of Christ in the badly damaged *Lamentation* fresco in the Lower Church of Assisi. In Byzantine representations of the Lamentation, the Magdalene did not have a special relationship with Christ's feet; cf. the *Lamentation* in Saint Panteleimon in Nerezi from 1164. Cf. also the *Deposition* in Sant'Angelo in Formis (ca. 1080) or the *Lamentation* on the painted cross by Coppo di Marcovaldo in the Museo Civico, San Gimignano (ca. 1261).

[74] Johannes de Caulibus (note 14), ch. LXXX, "Meditacio passionis in hora completorii", pp. 281f.: "Domina tamen semper tenebat capud ipsius in gremio suo quod sibi reseruauit aptandum et Magdalena pedes. Cum ergo uenerunt ad crura prope pedes, dicit Magdalena: Rogo uos ut permittatis me aptare pedes apud quos sum misericordiam consecuta. Quibus permittentibus, illa pedes ipsos tenebat et uidebatur deficere pre dolore. Et quos alias lacrimis compunccionis rigauit, nunc multo magis undis lacrimarum doloris et compassionis largiter lauit. Aspiciebat pedes sic uulneratos et perforatos, desiccatos et sanguinatos; et amarissime flebat."

[75] It is much debated whether the money lending of the Scrovegni family represents a key to understanding the chapel's programme. This was first proposed by Ursula Schlegel in a lecture from 1955, published as "On the Picture Program of the Arena Chapel", in: *The Arena Chapel and the Genius of Giotto*, ed. by Andrew Ladis, Padua 1998, pp. 42–64. The argument is much expanded and elaborated in Anne Derbes/Mark Sandona, *The Usurer's Heart: Giotto, Enrico Scrovegni, and the Arena Chapel in Padua*, University Park, Pa., 2008, but strongly contested by Laura Jacobus in her review "Derbes and Sandona, The Usurer's Heart" in: *The Medieval Review*, 09.07.18, https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/16841 (accessed on 12.3.2019). Indeed, the two authors cannot prove by documents that Enrico's chapel was a form of restitution of the money he gained through usury to the Church; however, the evidence supplied by Derbes and Sandona that usury was behind the decoration programme is very strong. It is controversional whether Enrico should be called an 'usurer': the interest rates he took were allowed under Paduan law; however, from a strictly religious point of view, no interest at all was legitimate. Cf. Benjamin G. Kohl, "Giotto and His Lay Patrons", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, ed. by Anne Derbes/Mark Sandona, Cambridge 2004, pp. 176–196; Silvana Collodo, "Origini e fortuna della famiglia Scrovegni", in: *Il secolo di Giotto nel Veneto*, ed. by Giovanna Valenzano/Federica Toniolo, Venice 2007, pp. 47–80; Derbes/Sandona, pp. 19–44. Laura Jacobus, *Giotto and the Arena Chapel: Art, Architecture and Experience*, London 2008, and Chiara Frugoni, *L'affare migliore di Enrico: Giotto e la Cappella Scrovegni*, Turin 2008, point out that neither usury nor self-accusation were the main topics of the frescoes, but Enrico's belonging to the Paduan elite and their values. This, however, is a false dichotomy; it is certainly unlikely that Enrico wanted to be remembered as an usurer but rather as a pious and generous man. The mélange of penitence and charity becomes most obvious in his self-image as the donor of the chapel at the foot of the cross in the *Last Judgement*.

[76] Derbes/Sandona (note 75), p. 158, note 22. It is difficult to find precise information on the use of purple in Paduan liturgy. In general, the colour could be used in the context of penitence and mourning; cf. Renate Kroos/Friedrich Kobler, *s.v.* Farbe, liturgisch: In der kath. Kirche, in: *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, VII, Munich 1974, cols. 54–121. No adaption of Giotto's Magdalene *sub cruce* shows her wearing a purple underdress, so it is plausible to assume that the colour indeed had a specific meaning.

26 Giotto, *Lamentation*, 1304/05. Padua, Scrovegni Chapel

money lending, he is giving his wealth to the Church, inspired by *caritas*.[77]

Sin, repentance and conversion are alike of utmost importance in the vita of the Magdalene, Bonaventura even calls her a notorious and wicked sinner.[78] Giotto alludes to her conversion from sinfulness with subtle means. The purple underdress is sober and covers her decently, but at the same time reveals the outlines of her body, which in other scenes, such as the *Noli me tangere*, are cloaked by her red gown. Likewise, the two early panels in Yale and Princeton with the pre-Giottesque Magdalenes *sub cruce* (Figs. 5, 6) have the saint's body thoroughly covered.

It is remarkable how little attention these painters pay to the Magdalene's hair: in the Sienese panel in Yale (Fig. 5) only three strands of hair come out from her headscarf, and in the Princeton panel (Fig. 6) no hair at all is visible. This is consistent with the older iconography of Mary Magdalene as one of the women standing beside the Virgin and witnessing the Crucifixion. The *Crucifix* of San Damiano for example, which is one of the first to distinguish her among the women, shows her with her hair well covered.[79] The two painted crosses with a small Magdalene mourning and adoring the wounds in Christ's feet do however display some hair: on the Riglione cross (Fig. 24) it is

[77] Derbes/Sandona (note 75) highlight the importance of *caritas* for the whole programme of the chapel.

[78] Bonaventura, "Soliloquium", in: *idem*, Bonaventura (note 27), VIII, pp. 28–67: 38.

[79] For the San Damiano cross see above, note 62. A similar female saint clad in red on the London cross of the Master of Saint Francis also has her hair covered; this applies to the female mourner under the cross in Cimabue's Assisi *Crucifixion* (Fig. 10) as well.

27 Giotto, *Resurrection of Christ*, 1304/05. Padua, Scrovegni Chapel

half covered, on the cross in Florence (Fig. 25) it falls unrestrained on her shoulders. Thus, in these exceptional *croci dipinte* with the Magdalene, her former life as a sinner is decently alluded to. Yet Giotto makes her uncovered hair her main trait, depicting it as falling in long reddish locks down to her hips (Fig. 1). He thereby connects the new motif of the Magdalene at the foot of the cross with older iconographies such as that of the sinner at the feast in the house of Simon, who dried Christ's feet with her hair.

In Giotto's representation, the hair is imbued with explicit penitential meaning, since here she dries Christ's feet with a strand of her hair like the sinner at the feast.[80] The artists of the Yale and Princeton *Crucifixions* did not imagine any contact between her hair and his feet. Through Giotto's invention the gesture of adoring the wound popularized through Saint Francis now also refers to conversion and repentance.

Another aspect of the hair of Giotto's Magdalene is important: it is exceptionally long and covers her like a cloak. Giotto thereby evokes the Magdalene's life as a hermit. Following the model of Maria Aegyptiaca, the continuously expanded vita of Magdalene contains an episode of her penitential life in the desert. The *Golden Legend* describes how the once luxuriously dressed sinner refrained from wearing any clothes and was clad only by her long hair.[81] Thus, as of the thirteenth century, the Magdalene was rep-

[80] Cf. Derbes/Sandona (note 75), p. 75. This refers also to Pseudo-Bonaventura's comment on the feast of Simon.

[81] Cf. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea – Goldene Legende*, ed. and trans. by Bruno W. Häuptli, Freiburg i. Br. *et al.* 2014, pp. 1234–1259.

resented in her coat of hair, most prominently in the saint's vita panel by the Magdalene Master from circa 1280 in the Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence.[82] Thus, in Giotto's long-haired Magdalene associations of repentance override residues of erotic attraction linked to unrestrained female hair. With the image of the Magdalene *sub cruce*, Giotto conceived a perfect image of the repentant sinner. It is thus, in addition to the Franciscan veneration of the wounds, the penitential piety of the laymen that conveyed the image of the Magdalene at the foot of the cross. Once again, the *sub cruce* position was further developed within the context of a donation.

Becoming a Convention: The Magdalene *sub cruce* in Images and Texts in Italy and in the North

After having been developed in the visual arts, the idea of the Magdalene beneath the cross also gained importance in texts, especially monastic Passion meditations. As we have seen, in the earliest examples, Bonaventura's *Lignum vitae* and Ubertino da Casale's *Arbor vitae*, she is alluded to rather briefly and among other figures.[83] In a Good Friday laud from the early fourteenth century as well, the Magdalene is merely one of various witnesses to the Crucifixion, although here she is given quite a remarkable voice. She describes how Christ was nailed to the cross before its erection and makes special mention of his feet: "And I, sad Magdalene, cast myself upon his feet, from which I made great profit and cleansed my sins: 'Nail me to them and ne'er take me forth from them'."[84] The laud has not yet been precisely dated, but it presumably builds on the *Meditaciones vite Christi* from circa 1300, which not only describe how the Magdalene finds her place at Christ's feet for the Lamentation, but also wishes to die there.[85]

The first text to describe in detail how the Magdalene acted at the foot of the cross is a novel-like vita of the saint often ascribed to Domenico Cavalca, who in the 1330s wrote *Le vite dei santi Padri*, a vernacular compilation of lives of the saints. The Magdalene vita, however, was not written by Cavalca, but added to an edition of *Le vite dei santi Padri* in the eighteenth century, thereby creating a great deal of confusion.[86]

[82] Silke Tammen, "Eine gemalte Magdalenenvita um 1280: Bild und Text, Sehen und Hören auf der Florentiner Pala des Magdalenenmeisters", in: *Hagiographie im Kontext*, ed. by Dieter R. Bauer/Klaus Herbers, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 130–154. For the hair of the Magdalene cf. Roberta Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks: An Iconology of Hair in Medieval Art and Literature*, Jefferson 2012, pp. 185-212.

[83] See above, p. 14.

[84] "E io, Madalena trista / Me gettai su ne' suoi piei, / a' quali feci grande aquista / che purgò i peccati mei: / Su en issi me chiavate / e giammaio non men levate", in: Vincenzo De Bartholomaeis, *Laude drammatiche e rappresentazioni sacre*, Florence 1967 (¹1943), I, p. 325; cf. also pp. 321–333. Cf. Kenaan-Kedar (note 70), p. 703; Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor*, London 1993, p. 202; Jansen (note 24), p. 91. The laud is very often ascribed to Jacopone da Todi, without indicating a reason why.

[85] See note 74 above.

[86] The text gained some prominence in the newer literature on Mary Magdalene as it diverges in major aspects from the *Golden Legend*. Very often scholars refer to an English translation by the writer Valentina Hawtrey, *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalen Translated from the Italian of an Unknown Fourteenth Century Writer*, London/New York 1904. The foreword by Vernon Lee, a pseudonym for the Victorian writer Violet Paget, provides some enigmatic information about an original manuscript allegedly found in a box. This did not deter scholars from using it as a source (cf. Kenaan-Kedar [note 70], p. 703; Haskins [note 84]; Barbara Baert, "The Gaze in the Garden: Mary Magdalene in Noli Me Tangere", in: *Mary Magdalene: Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, ed. by Michelle A. Erhardt/Amy M. Morris, Leiden 2012, pp. 189–221: 203, note 30). Jansen (note 24), p. 61, maintains that the English text of 286 pages is only an "incomplete" version. Cavalca's authorship is in her view confirmed by Delcorno's article in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, XXII, Rome 1979, pp. 577–586; however, Delcorno, p. 580, clearly explains that book four, which contains the Magdalene vita, was added by a later writer. The Italian text only entered the scene with the studies by Eliana Corbari and Joanne Anderson, but they do not discuss the origin of the text either; cf. Eliana Corbari, *Vernacular Theology: Dominican Sermons and Audience in Late Medieval Italy*, Berlin/Boston 2013, and Joanne M. Anderson, "Mary Magdalene and Her Dear Sister: Innovation in the Late Medieval Mural Cycle of Santa Maddalena in Rencio (Bolzano)", in: *Mary Magdalene*, pp. 45–73. They use a nineteenth-century edition which includes the Magdalene vita (Domenico Cavalca, *Vite de' santi padri*, ed. by Bartolomeo Sorio, Trieste 1858, pp. 329–386) and do not consider that the latter has been eliminated in the new philological edition by Carlo Delcorno (Domenico Cavalca, *Vite dei Santi Padri*, ed. by Carlo Delcorno, Florence 2009). Carlo Delcorno very kindly explained to me by email (13 December 2017) that the anonymous *Vita di S. Maria Maddalena* was added in the 1730s by Domenico Maria Manni in his edition of *Le vite dei santi Padri*. This corpus was then republished by Sorio under a title suggesting that all texts were by Cavalca.

The anonymous text can be dated to the fourteenth century,[87] but differs radically from the traditional form of a saint's life: the text is very detailed and therefore approximately ten times longer than the Magdalene's life in the *Golden Legend*. A characteristic of the *Vita di S. Maria Maddalena* is a strong interest in actions and emotions. While the usual references to religious authorities and canonical texts are more than sparse, the *Vita* offers a multitude of interactions and dialogues. In the long description of the Crucifixion and the Deposition, the Magdalene's commitment to Christ's feet is highlighted: when the Virgin, Saint John and the Magdalene are sitting *appiè della croce*, she gets up and stretches her arms towards his feet nailed on the cross and out of her reach. After the Deposition, she washes his bloody feet with her tears. Finally, she declares that she wants to be buried in Christ's sarcophagus and to die at his feet. In all three instances, the text emphasizes that it was his feet where she once found mercy, thus elaborating on the *Meditaciones vite Christi*.[88]

Despite this textual tradition, which became richer over the course of the fourteenth century, it was primarily the visual arts that shaped the image of the Magdalene *sub cruce*. The spread of the motif clearly had its origins in Giotto's Paduan frescoes. However, it was disseminated through later variations by the Giotto workshop. In the well-known Lower Church fresco in Assisi, executed by the workshop circa 1310–1313 (Fig. 28),[89] a paradigmatic reversal has taken place: the Magdalene kneeling at the left side of the cross sets an example to Francis and the Franciscans, who approach from the right. With this second Magdalene invention, Giotto establishes a new narrative: the Magdalene at the cross is the role model for Saint Francis. Small but significant changes affect the figure of the Magdalene in comparison to the Paduan fresco. She still is the figure closest to Christ, a role that according to the textual tradition belongs to the Virgin. In the Lower Church, Giotto provides a better reason as to why the Magdalene could take Mary's place: the Mother of God has fainted and is recovering on the ground. While giving the Magdalene such a prominent position, Giotto at the same time reduces the corporeal relationship between the Magdalene and Christ. She does not touch his feet, which in Padua she had dried with her hair, but rests her hand on the suppedaneum. In addition, she does not wear the purple chemise but is cloaked in her traditional red mantle which hides her body. Thus, references to her formerly sinful body are avoided. The new composition with the Magdalene and Francis was elaborated on in contexts influenced by the Franciscans, such as San Rufino in Assisi.[90]

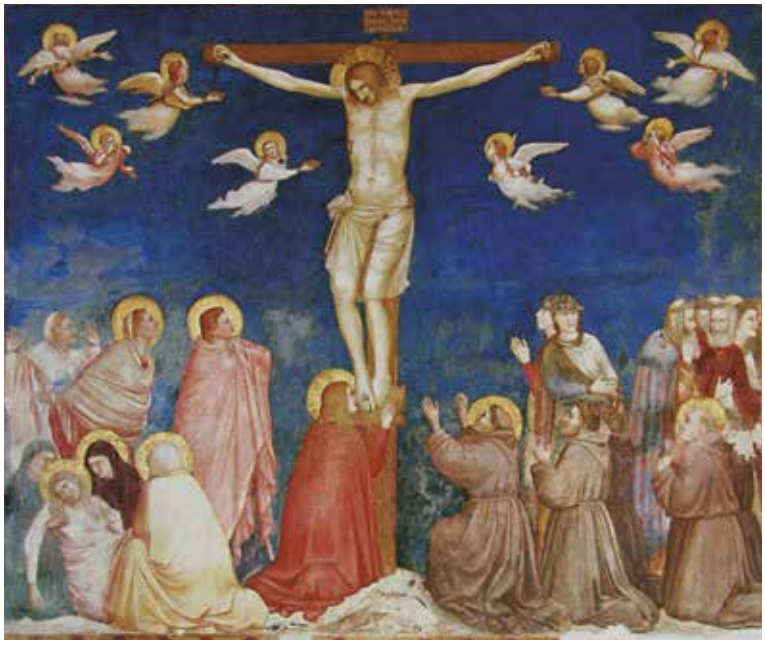
Small panels from the Giotto workshop were decisive for the popularization of the Magdalene *sub cruce*. The finest example, sometimes attributed to Giotto

[87] According to the Cavalca expert Carlo Delcorno (communication by email, see note 86 above), who follows Manni's dating. I could not find any information on early manuscripts or printed editions including the *Vita di S. Maria Maddalena.*

[88] "Vita di S. Maria Maddalena", in: Cavalca (note 86), p. 367: "E la Maddalena si levò suso e appiccossi alla croce e stendeva le braccia per voler toccare que' santi piedi, dov' ella trovava tanta misericordia." Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 371 and 373. Cf. the text of the *Meditaciones* quoted in note 74 above.

[89] For the decoration of the north transept of the Lower Church cf. Janet Robson, "The Pilgrim's Progress: Reinterpreting the Trecento Fresco Programme in the Lower Church at Assisi", in: *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, ed. by William R. Cook, Leiden/Boston 2005, pp. 39–70. For the date of the fresco: Serena Romano, "Per la data della 'Crocifissione' nel transetto nord della chiesa inferiore di Assisi", in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, LXXVIII (2015), pp. 345–355.

[90] See Puccio Capanna's *Crucifixion* fresco with the Magdalene and Saint Francis, formerly at San Rufino, now in the Museo Diocesano di Assisi (cf. *Giotto e il Trecento: "il piu sovrano maestro stato in dipintura"*, exh. cat. Rome 2009, ed. by Alessandro Tomei, Milan 2009, p. 187, no. 31). The Giotto workshop also produced a *Crucifixion* with only Francis and two donors beneath the cross today in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, which was part of a larger ensemble, probably a dossal with seven small panels. It might have been made for San Francesco in Rimini as early as 1311/12, as suggested by Dillian Gordon, "A Dossal by Giotto and His Workshop: Some Problems of Attribution, Provenance and Patronage", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXXI (1989), pp. 524–531. For a later dating of the



28 Workshop of Giotto, *Crucifixion*, ca. 1310–1313.
Assisi, San Francesco, Lower Church, north transept

29 *Crucifixion*, 1310s.
Pomposa abbey, chapterhouse

himself, is the gabled panel in the Berlin Gemäldegalerie, mostly dated to between 1315 and 1320 (Fig. 30).[91] Here, a tall cross dominates a crowded Calvary. In the foreground, the mother's fainting is again highlighted. She is still upright, assisted by Saint John, but has left her place at the cross to the Magdalene, who is embracing its stem. Christ is nailed so far up on the cross that his feet are out of the saint's reach. All that remains to her is the wood and the blood trickling down the stem of the cross and onto the ground.

The Giotto workshop produced at least two further variants, a simplified one now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Strasbourg, dated circa 1315–1320, and a badly preserved panel in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Troyes from circa 1325.[92] In the latter, the Berlin scheme is combined with the one from the Lower Church by introducing Saint Francis. The gabled Berlin panel, which is more than half a metre high, may have been part of a triptych, while the two smaller rectangular panels from Troyes and Strasbourg could have each belonged to a diptych.

The first reception of this iconography outside the Giotto workshop is probably in a fresco in the chapterhouse of the Benedictine abbey of Pomposa from the 1310s (Fig. 29). Here again the Virgin is fainting and the Magdalene is kneeling *sub cruce*. Because of the limited space on the wall, she is now placed to the right of the cross, close to the centurion. This highlights her role as a converted sinner, which was especially appropriate for the rituals taking place in the chapterhouse. During

Munich panel, see Giorgio Bonsanti, in: *Giotto: bilancio critico di sessant'anni di studi e ricerche*, exh. cat., ed. by Angelo Tartuferi, Florence 2000, pp. 174–177, no. 23.

[91] Cf. *Gemäldegalerie Berlin: Katalog der Gemälde. Frühe italienische Malerei*, ed. by Miklós Boskovits, Berlin 1987, pp. 62–64, no. 25. Boskovits attributes the panel to Giotto himself and proposes a date around 1315.

[92] Cf. Angelo Tartuferi, in: *Giotto: bilancio critico* (note 90), pp. 164f., no. 20, and Daniela Parenti, *ibidem*, pp. 170–173, no. 22.

30 Giotto or workshop, *Crucifixion*, 1315-1320. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie

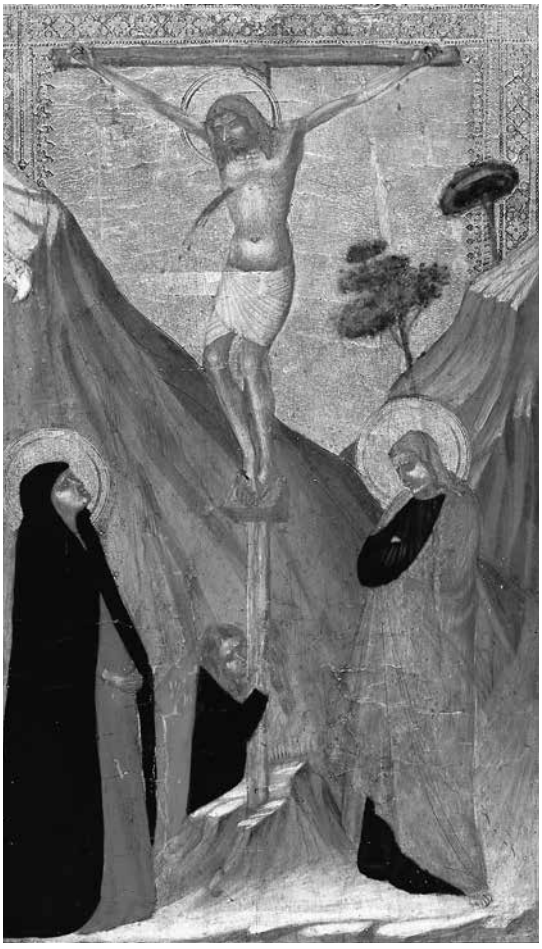
31 Pietro Lorenzetti, *Crucifixion*, ca. 1322-1325/26. Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale

the daily meetings of the convent, the abbot would sit just in front of the *Crucifixion*. One of the monks had to lie down before the abbot – and the crucified Christ on the wall – in order to confess his sins.[93] Thus, the person who conceived the frescoes in the chapterhouse understood very well the penitential meaning of Giotto's composition for Enrico Scrovegni.

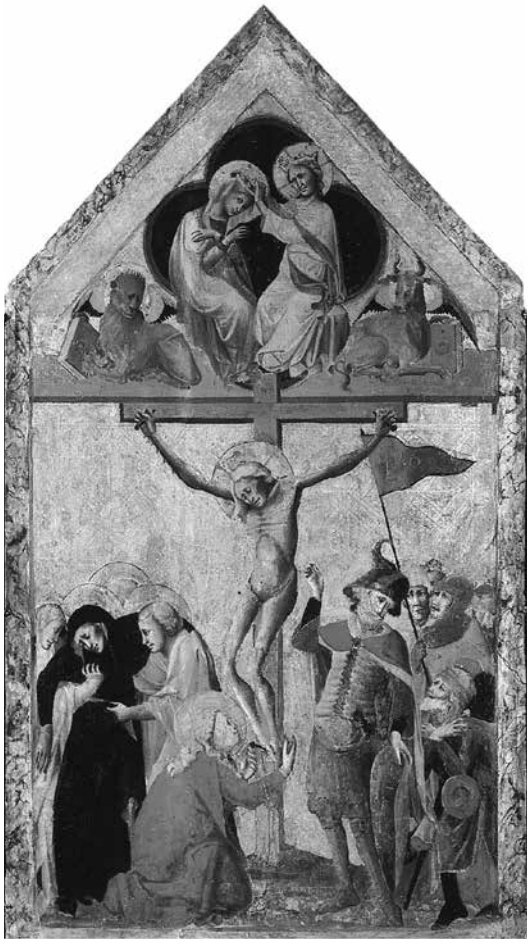
Besides Pomposa, the quickest and strongest reception of Giotto's *sub cruce* motif took place in Tuscany. Most of the relevant images are small panels, some of these fragments of larger polyptychs, others part of portable diptychs or triptychs. In Florence, a very close and productive follower of the Giottesque model was Bernardo Daddi.[94] In Siena,

[93] Stefanie Hauer, *Erneuerung im Bild: Die Benediktinerabtei von Pomposa und ihre Wandmalereien des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1998, pp. 21–26.

[94] Among Daddi's small *Crucifixions* with a Magdalene, the first reliably dated panel is the one in the University Art Museums, Harvard (1334);



32 Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Crucifixion, Nativity, and saints*, detail, ca. 1320–1330. Frankfurt, Städel Museum



33 *Crucifixion and Coronation of the Virgin*, 1333. Paris, Musée du Louvre

Pietro Lorenzetti quickly took up the new placement of the Magdalene.[95] From around 1330 onward the new iconography spread in Italy like wildfire: a Giottesque Christ on the cross with the Magdalene at his feet now became the standard. Two different types can be distinguished: multi-figure compositions with a fainting Virgin, as popularized by the panels from Giotto's workshop, and a reduced scheme with four figures – the crucified Christ, the Virgin and Saint John at his sides, and the Magdalene kneeling beneath him – developed by Pietro Lorenzetti in the panel from the 1320s in Siena (Fig. 31). Like the one by the Giotto workshop in the Lower Church, Lorenzetti's Magdalene

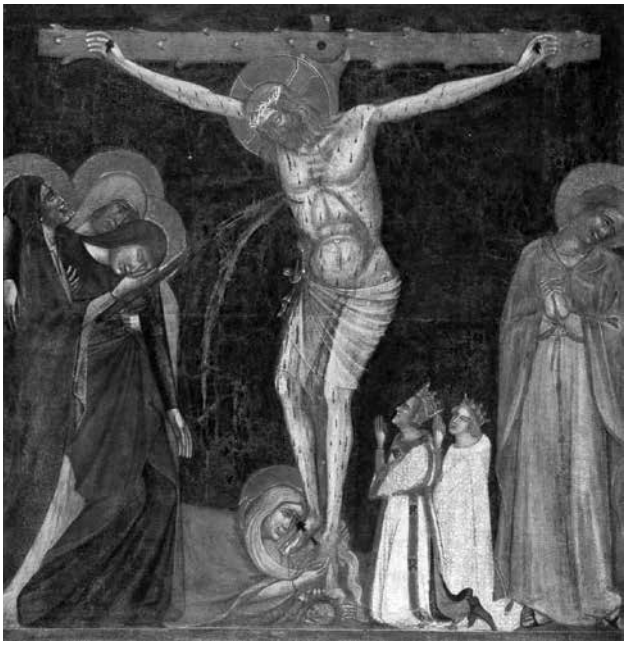
other examples are in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence (ca. 1330–1335), the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid (ca. 1330–1335), and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (ca. 1335).

[95] Pietro Lorenzetti's first panel of this type in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena (Fig. 31) might have been produced around 1325/26 (cf. Piero Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena*, I: *I dipinti dal XII al XV secolo*, Genoa 1980, p. 96, no. 147) or even earlier, as proposed by Marilena Mosco in *La Maddalena tra sacro e profano* (note 8), p. 105, no. 26 (1322–1325). Cf. also

is completely hidden in a bright red cloak. The Assisian fresco could very well have been Lorenzetti's model, as he worked there too. He likewise rotated the Magdalene into a position more in front of the cross so that we see her from behind and look with her to the Saviour.

Very few compositions highlight the Magdalene's hair. One of these exceptions is Ambrogio Lorenzetti's panel in Frankfurt probably from the 1320s (Fig. 32).[96] In the middle of the panel, the Magdalene kisses the bloody stem of the cross and wipes it with her long hair. Other artists lowered the suppedaneum and thus enabled the Magdalene to touch the nail in Christ's feet, as did an anonymous Bolognese artist in 1333 (Fig. 33).[97] Around 1342, the Maestro delle Tempere Francescane had her lying on the ground, from where she can sorrowfully contemplate the large nail piercing both of Christ's feet (Fig. 34).[98] Vitale da Bologna instead had Christ nailed on a very high cross, making it impossible for the kneeling Magdalene to touch him (Fig. 35). Furthermore, Vitale expanded the composition by introducing the crosses of the two thieves.[99] Regarding her position, trecentesque artists made the Magdalene rotate around the cross: she could approach it from both sides, from the front and also from behind.

As already mentioned, some artists highlighted the Magdalene's relation to Christ's blood. At the feast of Simon, she is associated with two other liquids: ointment and tears. Beneath the cross, she is connected to the bleeding foot wound, which promises redemption to the penitent sinner. The foot stigma thus turns into a kind of alternative to the nobler wound in Christ's side. This becomes evident in the composition of the Maestro delle Tempere Francescane (Fig. 34): the Magdalene is oriented towards Christ's bleeding feet, yet from his side wound gushes a blood stream that directly hits the breast of the Virgin. A second blood stream flows down in a curve onto the back of the Magdalene as if it were a form of reward for her fondness of Christ's feet. In the Trecento, the contact with Christ's blood be-



34 Maestro delle Tempere Francescane, *Crucifixion*, ca. 1342. Milan, private collection

panels by his followers, such as the *Crucifixion* also in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena, dated around 1340–1345, and the panel with different scenes in the Städel Museum, Frankfurt (before 1345).

[96] For the attribution to Ambrogio and not to the workshop, see Rudolf Hiller von Gaertringen, *Italienische Gemälde im Städel 1300–1550: Toskana und Umbrien*, Mainz 2004, pp. 28–40.

[97] Cf. *Catalogue des peintures italiennes du musée du Louvre: catalogue sommaire*, ed. by Élisabeth Foucart-Walter, Paris 2007, p. 38, inv. 20197.

[98] See Vannucci (note 13), pp. 85f. and note 66, with the older dating of 1330–1334, which, however, does not take into account the article by Adrian S. Hoch, "Pictures of Penitence from a Trecento Neapolitan Nunnery", in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, LXI (1998), pp. 206–226, who proposes a date of 1342.

[99] For this panel, see Miklós Boskovits, *Early Italian Painting, 1290–1470: The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection*, Stuttgart 1990, pp. 204–211, no. 32, who dates it to ca. 1335. The fresco in the nave of the abbey of Pomposa by Vitale or his workshop also represents the crosses with the thieves. Few other Giottesque panels with three crosses can be found; one exception is

35 Vitale da Bologna, *Crucifixion*, ca. 1335. Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza

came characteristic for the Magdalene. Catherine of Siena pointed out her act of embracing the cross and bathing herself in the blood of Christ as a model of piety.[100]

Small panels of this kind and book illustration were also the means of transmission outside Italy. The Giottesque type of the crucified Christ with the Magdalene embracing the cross proved very popular with artists north of the Alps as well. As early as 1340–1350, the Bohemian or Austrian artist of the *Kaufmann Crucifixion* (Fig. 36) adopted the new iconography.[101] He seems to have known of a composition with three crosses like the one by Vitale da Bologna (Fig. 35). His Magdalene hugs the stem tightly with both arms. Her pose corresponds bizarrely – but not meaninglessly – to the manner in which the broken limbs of the thieves are wrapped around their crosses. Blood spurts everywhere – from the wounds of the thieves, but also from the wound in Christ's hand into the mouth of the repentant thief and, naturally, from those in Christ's side and feet. Possibly a little later, the Master of Vyšší Brod also took up the Magdalene *sub cruce* with her arms slung around the stem of the cross and a Giottesque Christ type.[102] In these two cases, the immediate Italian prototypes and their paths to the North are unknown; the story of a *Crucifixion* by Simone Martini is, however, quite well known.

Simone too was acquainted with the Giottesque composition and used it in his Antwerp *Crucifixion*, dated varyingly to the 1320s and the 1330s, for a

the Kaufmann panel in Berlin, see below, Fig. 36. Expanded *Calvaries* with three crosses are more common in fresco painting.

[100] *Le lettere di S. Caterina da Siena*, ed. by Niccolò Tommaseo, Florence 1860, I, no. 61, and II, no. 164.

[101] Cf. Stephan Kemperdick/Beatrix Graf, *Deutsche und böhmische Gemälde 1230–1430: Kritischer Bestandskatalog*, Petersberg 2010, pp. 68–77, no. 8. A book illumination could also have been a model for the panel; cf. the *Crucifixion* from ca. 1346 by a Bolognese artist in the Missal of Bertrand de Deux (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Cap. 63B, fol. 189r; cf. Kemperdick/Graf, fig. 79). For the quick adaption of the new iconography even in insular book illumination cf. the Gorleston Psalter, British Library, Add. MS 49622, fol. 7r, from ca. 1310–1320 (Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385*, London *et al.* 1986 [*A survey of manuscripts illuminated in the British Isles*, 5], II, no. 50, ill. 122).

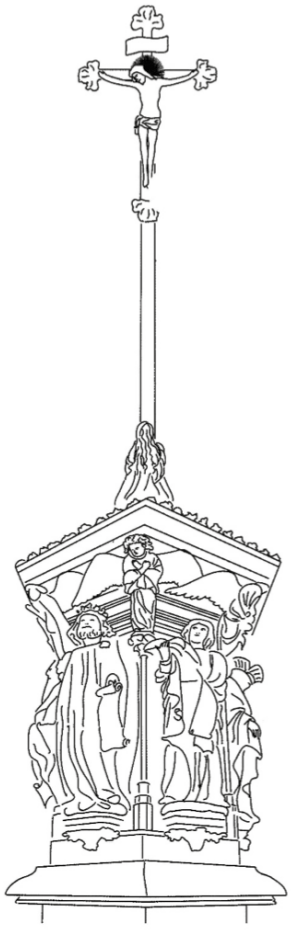
[102] On the panels from Vyšší Brod today in the National Gallery in Prague, see Kemperdick (note 101), p. 73 and fig. 77. Cf. also Jaroslav Pešina, *Der Hohenfurther Meister*, Hanau 1982; Hana J. Hlaváčková, "Panel Paintings in the Cycle of the Life of Christ from Vyšší Brod (Hohenfurth)", in: *King John of Luxembourg and the Art of His Era (1296–1346)*, conference proceedings Prague 1996, ed. by Klára Benešovská, Prague 1998, pp. 244–255.

36 *Kaufmann Crucifixion*, around 1340–1350. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie

37 Simone Martini, *Crucifixion*, between 1320 and 1340. Antwerp, Museum voor Schone Kunsten

comprehensive narration (Fig. 37). The fainted Virgin lies on the soil, while the Magdalene embraces the cross from the right side. Here again, blood runs down the stem, but also, via the lance, into the eye of the blind Longinus, who thus becomes able to see again. The *Crucifixion* was part of a foldable quadriptych, also including the *Road to Calvary*, the *Deposition*, and the *Entombment*, and commissioned by a member of the Roman Orsini family who had himself depicted at the foot of the cross in the *Deposition*, thus maintaining the traditional position of the donor.[103]

[103] Cf. Joseph Polzer, "Simone Martini's Orsini Folding Polyptych: Place of Origin and Date and Its Relation to the 1333 Uffizi Annunciation", in: *Arte cristiana*, XCVIII (2010), pp. 321–330 and 401–408; Victor M. Schmidt, "Portable Polyptychs with Narrative Scenes: Fourteenth-Century *de luxe* Objects between Italian Panel Painting and French *arts somptuaires*", in: *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. by *idem*, New Haven/London 2002, pp. 395–425.



38 Reconstruction of Claus Sluter's *Great Cross* in the cross-coat of the charterhouse of Champmol, ca. 1395-1404 (by Susie Nash, 2005)

The reception of the Orsini panels in the North is especially well documented. In the eighteenth century, Simone Martini's *Crucifixion* was in the prior's cell at the Carthusian monastery of Champmol; presumably, the entire quadriptych had been in Burgundy since the late fourteenth century.[104] Susie Nash has shown that there was a specific Carthusian reception of the Magdalene at the foot of the cross in the monastery of Champmol – in Claus Sluter's so-called *Well of Moses* or better *Great Cross*. Nash has plausibly demonstrated that the ensemble, which has come down to us only in parts, was crowned by a monumental cross under which Mary Magdalene alone was kneeling, unaccompanied by the standing figures of Saint John and the Virgin Mary hitherto thought to be present there as well (Fig. 38).[105]

Even if references to Simone Martini's small panel are quite evident in the *Great Cross* – its Magdalene embraced the stem with crossed arms and was wearing a red dress, as preserved fragments with traces of paint prove[106] –, Sluter's work is not a reduced narration of a Crucifixion but an expansion of a crucifix, according to Nash.[107] Naturally, the placement of a single figure at the foot of the cross once again harks back to the tradition of the donor in this position and is especially reminiscent of Abbot Suger's cross. Here, however, a specifically Carthusian veneration of the Magdalene finds expression. The Carthusian Ludolph of Saxony had already declared the Magdalene an example. It was not only the eremitic life she led after Christ's death that made her a suitable model for the withdrawn Carthusians, but also the fact that, according to Luke 10:39, she sat at the Lord's feet at Bethany to hear his words: "Maria quae etiam sedens secus pedes Domini audiebat verbum illius".[108] Hugh of Balma explicitly ascribes two of seven recommend-

[104] Renate Prochno, *Die Kartause von Champmol: Grablege der burgundischen Herzöge 1364–1477*, Berlin 2002, pp. 195–198. On the reception of the Orsini *Crucifixion* by the Limbourg brothers see Victor M. Schmidt, "Die Gebrüder Limburg und die italienische Kunst", in: *Die Brüder van Limburg: Nijmegener Meister am französischen Hof (1400–1416)*, exh. cat. Nijmegen 2005, ed. by Rob Dückers/Pieter Roelfs, Stuttgart 2005, pp. 179–189: 185. Other Italian Crucifixion panels adhering to the Giottesque scheme must also have reached Burgundy: Jean de Beaumetz' panel of *Christ on the cross with a Carthusian monk* in the Cleveland Museum of Art shows the typical figures of the Giottesque *Crucifixions*.

[105] Susie Nash, "Claus Sluter's 'Well of Moses' for the Chartreuse de Champmol Reconsidered, part I", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXLVII (2005), pp. 798–809: 799.

[106] *Eadem*, "Claus Sluter's 'Well of Moses' for the Chartreuse de Champmol Reconsidered, part III", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CL (2008), pp. 724–741: 729.

[107] *Ibidem*, pp. 728f.

[108] Ludolph of Saxony (note 7), II, ch. LXI: "De ministerio Marthae, et otio Mariae Magdalenae", pp. 264–269, esp. p. 269. For Ludolph of Saxony, see Kemper (note 14), pp. 136–140.

ed prayer poses to the Magdalene: one is derived from the seated saint at Bethany and the other from the prostrate sinner.[109] In the Carthusian context as well, there were pictorial sources that established the link between devotional praxis and the iconography of the cross. Burgundian panels of the late fourteenth century from the workshop of Jean de Beaumetz show Carthusian monks kneeling beneath the cross.[110] Thanks to the *Très Riches Heures* of the Limbourg brothers and the *Great Cross*, Mary Magdalene *sub cruce* is a firmly established element of the Netherlandish Passion iconography. The importance she came to hold for the Carthusians is evident in the dedication of the Leuven Charterhouse to "beatae Mariae Magdalenae sub Cruce in monte Calvariae".[111]

The Exception: No Magdalene *sub cruce* and the Orthodoxy of Rogier van der Weyden

Yet one artist refused to place the Magdalene beneath the cross despite his close ties to the Carthusian order: Rogier van der Weyden. Conspicuously, the Magdalene is not granted an intimate relationship with Christ in any of the *Crucifixions* associated with Rogier or his workshop, for example the one on the Abbegg triptych; the Vienna triptych and the Escorial and Philadelphia *Crucifixions* even get along without any depiction of the Magdalene at all.[112] The most interesting Rogier *Crucifixion* in this context is that in Berlin (Fig. 39). The attribution of this work is extremely controversial and vacillates between Robert Campin, Rogier himself, and his later followers.[113] In my view, the composition would fit Rogier's oeuvre well. At least there is a firm piece of evidence for the work's dating: the panel was made from a tree cut around 1419. The painting today makes a strange impression because the original golden background has been overpainted.

In the Berlin panel, the figure in the Magdalene's 'traditional place' is none other than the Virgin Mary in a blue dress. This is explicitly confirmed by the inscription that winds its way up from the mouth of the Mother to the crucified Christ: "O fili[us] dignare me attrahere et crucis in pedem manus figere. Bernhardus" ("Oh son, let me draw close and take the foot of the cross in my hands. Bernard"). The Magdalene to the left is assigned the mere role of accompanying the Mother of God. The seated woman could be either Mary Salome or Cleophas, while the third figure, wearing an elegant golden gown, a turban and her hair loose, is reminiscent of a sibyl of the kind known from Jan van Eyck's *Crucifixion* in New York.

Why does the Virgin Mary here occupy the place at the foot of the cross? The inscription points us to Bernard of Clairvaux, providing an exemplary footnote, as it were. Today, however, the Marian lamentation it refers to is no longer attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux but to a Cistercian by the name of Oglerius (1136–1214), who later became the abbot of Santa Maria di Lucedio near Trino, Vercelli. He is the author or compiler of a *Planctus Mariae* that must have been written before 1205. It contains a description of how Mary cannot reach her son nailed high on the cross, falls to the ground,

[109] Hugues de Balma, *Théologie mystique*, ed. and trans. by Francis Ruello, Paris 1995/96, II, pp. 102f. See also Nash (note 106), p. 731, who points out that the reference to the Magdalene is specific for the Carthusians and cannot be found in the Dominican *De modo orandi*.

[110] Cf. the panel in the Cleveland Museum of Art from ca. 1389–1395 (*ibidem*, p. 732 and fig. 7) and a similar panel in the Louvre from the same years.

[111] Nash (note 106), p. 730.

[112] Cf. Stephan Kemperdick, *Ein Kreuzigungstriptychon von Rogier van der Weyden*, Riggisberg 2014; Anne D. Hedeman, "Roger van der Weyden's Escorial *Crucifixion* and Carthusian Devotional Practice", in: *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. by Robert Ousterhout/Leslie Brubaker, Urbana *et al.* 1995, pp. 191–203.

[113] Dirk De Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden: Das Gesamtwerk*, Munich 1999, pp. 175–178, attributes the panel to Rogier; Stephen Kemperdick, in: *Der Meister von Flémalle und Rogier van der Weyden*, exh. cat. Frankfurt am Main/Berlin 2008/09, ed. by *idem*/Jochen Sander, pp. 291–296, no. 23, argues for a member of Rogier's workshop.

39 Rogier van der Weyden (?), *Crucifixion*, ca. 1438–1440. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie

rises again, and in the end is spotted with blood.[114] This image of the bloodstained Mary stretching her arms up to Christ was adopted by the *Interrogatio Sancti Anselmi de Passione Domini*, to be dated to shortly after 1238. From that time forward, it was an important element of Marian lamentations in Latin and the vernacular alike.[115] Before Oglerius, Byzantine theologians had already reflected on the Mother's physical relationship with Christ. George of Nicomedea described how she kissed his feet: "She kissed the undefiled feet and embraced the wounds made by the nails and clasped them to eyes and breast, drinking in the streams of flowing blood."[116] In other words, he regarded the kissing of the feet as an act of the Mother and not the Magdalene.[117] Yet, despite the extremely old and strong text tradition, this notion of Mary was not elaborated in the Passion meditations by Johannes de Caulibus or Ludolph of Saxony. Pictorial depictions too are extremely rare: before 1300, there was evidently no need for them, and after 1300 the Magdalene successfully performed this role. Even depictions of the Mother of God spotted with blood are surprisingly uncommon; most of them can be found in Bohemian art.[118] The most striking representation of the blood-spattered Mary is the one of the Ber-

[114] Ogier of Locedio, *In Praise of God's Holy Mother; On Our Lord's Words to His Disciples at the Last Supper*, trans. by Donald Jenni, Kalamazoo, Mich., 2006, pp. 145–156. Cf. Gerd Seewald, *Die Marienklage im mittellateinischen Schrifttum und in den germanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, Hamburg 1952, repr. in: Edgar Büttner, *Die Überlieferung von "Unser vrouwen klage" und des "Spiegel"*, Erlangen 1987, pp. 185–199; Georg Satzinger/Hans-Joachim Ziegeler, "Marienklagen und Pietà", in: *Die Passion Christi in Literatur und Kunst des Spätmittelalters*, ed. by Walter Haug/Burghart Wachinger, Tübingen 1993, pp. 241–276; Büttner (note 3), pp. 90–92.

[115] Cf. Rolf Bergmann, *Katalog der deutschsprachigen geistlichen Spiele und Marienklagen des Mittelalters*, Munich 1986, and note 114 above.

[116] Quoted from Raw (note 22), p. 159. Cf. George of Nicomedea, "Oratio VIII: Oratio in illud 'stabant autem iuxta crucem Jesu Mater eius et soror Matris eius' […]", in: *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca* (note 14), C, cols. 1457–1490: 1470: "Osculabatur intermeratos pedes, quasque clavi cicatrices fecissent complexabatur; ac sanguinis decurrentis rivulos hauries, oculis ac pectori adhibebat." An earlier text such as the first known biography of the Virgin by Maximus the Confessor describes her also sprinkled with blood, not from touching the bleeding body of Christ, however, but from being bathed by the water and blood coming out of the side wound (Maximus the Confessor, *The Life of the Virgin: Translation of the Earliest Life of the Virgin from the Old Georgian with Corrections to the Edition*, trans. by Stephen J. Shoemaker, New Haven 2012, ch. 85, p. 112). Cf. also Stephen J. Shoemaker, "A Mother's Passion: Mary's Role in the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the Earliest Life of the Virgin and Its Influence on George of Nicomedia's Passion Homilies", in: *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, ed. by Leslie Brubaker/Mary Cunningham, Aldershot 2011, pp. 53–67.

[117] In the early Eastern tradition, it was the Mother of God who performed all the tasks later assigned to the Magdalene. For Maximus the Confessor (note 116), ch. 92, p. 119, the first witness of the Resurrection was the Virgin and not Mary of Magdala.

[118] Cf. the *Crucifixion* from Vyšší Brod, for which see Pešina (note 102), pp. 33f. and 41. Emperor Charles IV acquired the bloodstained gown of the Virgin for his collection of relics.

lin *Crucifixion* (Fig. 40): she wraps her arms around the bloodstained cross in the manner familiar to us from the Magdalene. Blood has dripped onto her headscarf and face, where it blends with her tears. Her mouth is smeared with blood: she must have kissed her son's feet. Rogier, however, apparently saw no cause to adopt in his oeuvre the new iconography of the Magdalene *sub cruce*. It almost seems as if he was insisting that the figure who mourns the most deeply and is closest to Christ must be his mother.

Rogier's faithfulness towards the textual tradition and the role of the Virgin did not have a strong impact on his successors. A close follower such as Dirk Bouts adopted figures and formulas from Rogier's compositions, but for example in his Passion triptych in the Museo de la Capilla Real in Granada it is again the Magdalene who mourns beneath the cross and not the Virgin.[119] The reception of Rogier's *Crucifixion* in Philadelphia is very instructive. A painter from Cologne adopted its asymmetrical composition with Mary and Saint John on one side and Christ on the cross on the other, but 'smuggled' a Magdalene into the scene (Fig. 41).[120] He placed her behind the cross, a position seldom chosen until then,[121] but quickly embraced and spread by Schongauer in his engraved Passion cycle from around 1475 (Fig. 2). A new convention was thus born, to which after 1500 Hans Baldung Grien (Fig. 3), Grünewald, and others subscribed. This placement of the Magdalene vis-à-vis the beholder took both the affective appeal and the conception of the pictorial space to a whole new dimension.[122]

40 Rogier van der Weyden (?), *Crucifixion*, detail of Fig. 39.

Thus, the placing of the Magdalene was again instrumental in the re-formulation of the Crucifixion and its meaning.

When Rogier reunited the visual representation with the orthodox text tradition he did not have long-lasting success because the image of the Magdalene *sub cruce* corresponded too well to the expectations and needs of the beholder. A vast range of emotions and psychic states – sinfulness, contrition, redemption, love, sadness, and despair – were embodied in the Magdalene at the feet of the crucified Christ and invited the beholder to identify with

[119] See Catheline Périer D'Ieteren, *Dieric Bouts: The Complete Works*, Brussels 2006, pp. 240–250, no. 6.

[120] Originally, the panel from ca. 1465–1470, attributed to the Master of the Life of the Virgin or the Master of the Lyversberg Passion, was a diptych with the Virgin and Saint John on the left and the crucified Christ and the Magdalene on the right wing; for the reconstruction see Frank Günter Zehnder, *Katalog der Altkölner Malerei*, Cologne 1990 (*Kataloge des Wallraf-Richartz-Museums*, 11), pp. 467–471, no. 125.

[121] An example is the *Crucifixion* from ca. 1350 by Nardo di Cione in the Uffizi, for which see Mina Gregori, *Uffizien und Palazzo Pitti: Die Gemäldesammlungen von Florenz*, Munich 1994, p. 35, no. 23.

[122] Cf. Daniela Bohde, "Blickräume: Der Raum des Betrachters in Passionsdarstellungen von Schongauer, Baldung und Altdorfer", in: *Räume der Passion: Raumvisionen, Erinnerungsorte und Topographien des Leidens Christi in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. by *eadem*/Hans Aurenhammer, Bern *et al.* 2015, pp. 377–411.

41 Master of the Life of the Virgin or Master of the Lyversberg Passion, *Crucifixion*, about 1465–1470. Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum

her. This role of the *apostola apostolorum* is far removed from the one sketched in the Bible. The gospels were merely concerned with mentioning the women witnessing the Crucifixion, one of whom was a certain Mary of Magdala. Although her cult developed strongly in the twelfth century, it did just fine without her special role at the cross until 1300; neither images nor texts paid her special attention. It took the depiction of the donor – as political as it was religious in content – to pave her way to the foot of the cross. The prerequisite, however, was the transformation of the donor's position into an expression of Franciscan humility and stigma veneration. A semantically charged place had thus been created that could be occupied by the Magdalene. Yet it took Giotto to legitimize this usurpation, which was at odds with the text tradition. His solution was so felicitous that it robbed the Mother of God of what would have actually been her rightful place and fooled art historians to this day.

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Abstract

This paper investigates the discrepancies between text and image in a case study on the iconography of Mary Magdalene beneath the cross, which developed around 1300. It argues that no textual source accounts for this new iconography, which instead depended on the emergence of a place charged with meaning. In the Ottonian period, the place at the foot of the cross was the position of the devout donor. Then, in the thirteenth century, it was often occupied by Saint Francis adoring Christ's foot stigmata, until this position was finally taken over by the penitent Magdalene, who even kept the Virgin at a distance from her crucified Son. Thus, the semantics of a place shaped the narrative, and every new figure in that place entailed a different connotation. With this focus on placement, the paper urges for an iconography that takes into account the visuality of artworks. Instead of searching for the 'original meaning' it highlights the process of semanticizing and re-semanticizing. It asks for the agents of change: what enables a new iconography and what induces a novelty to become a convention? Therefore, the paper elaborates not only on Giotto's *Crucifixion* in the Scrovegni Chapel as the paradigmatic composition that places the Magdalene beneath the cross, but also on the little known earlier Magdalene *sub cruce* compositions – which, however, had no enduring impact on Crucifixion iconography – and especially on the many Giottesque panels. These latter examples spread the new iconography in Italy as well as north of the Alps and shaped our image of the Crucifixion until today.

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