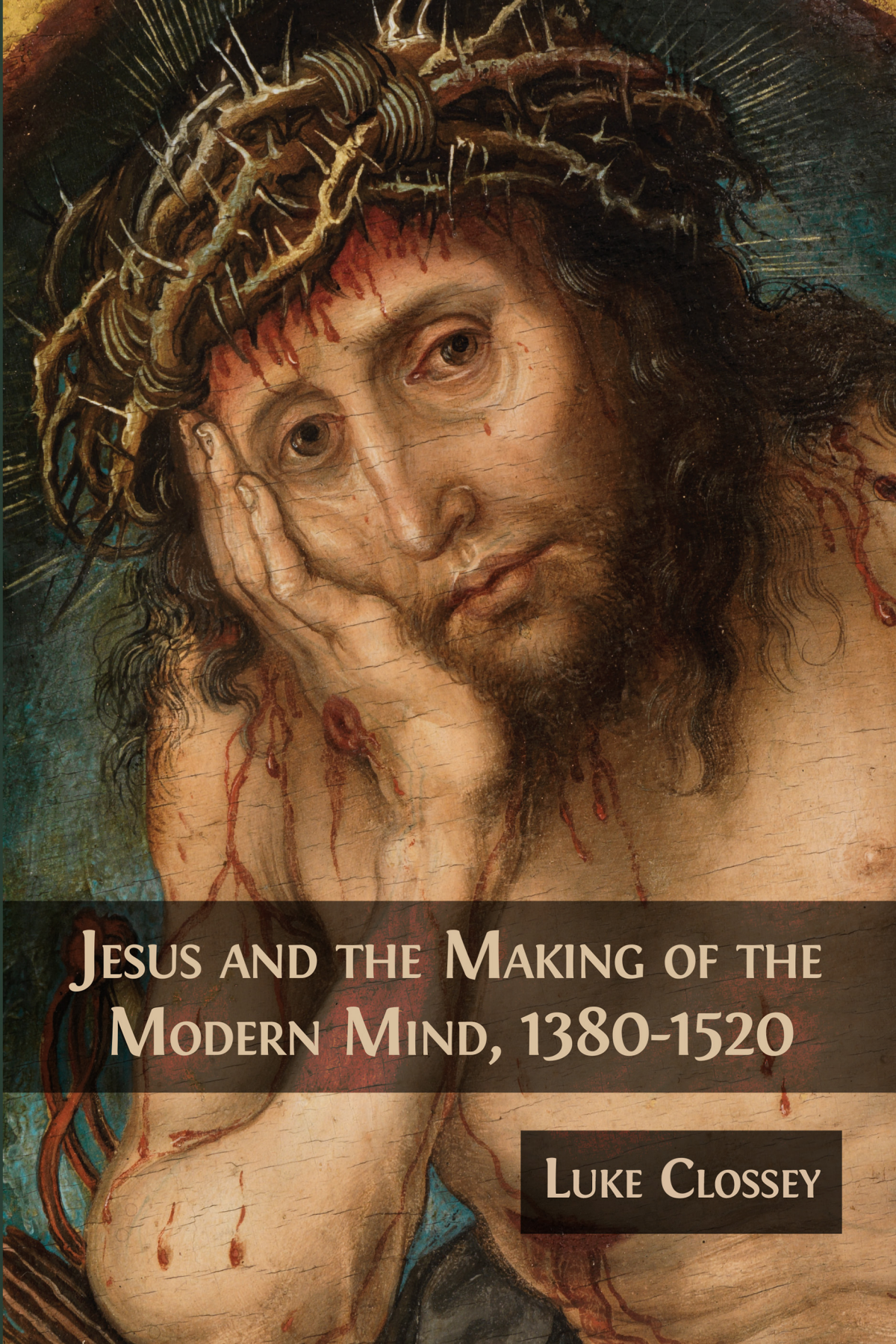

Jesus and the Making of the Modern Mind, 1380-1520

Luke Clossey

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19. Resembling Jesus

On his 1483–84 pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Felix Fabri (1441–1502) took advantage of a local wall to measure himself, literally, against Jesus: on the Mount of Olives, during his arrest, Jesus had fallen back with his arms out against a wall, leaving an imprint on the rock as if it were wax. Fabri and his party "laid our bodies, as far as we could, in the holy imprint, putting our arms, hands, face and breast into the hollow, and measuring it by our own figures."[1]

This chapter looks at less literal examples of imitation of, and proximity to, Jesus. Some cultists moved closer to Jesus by imitating him, and others found deep-ken significance in parallels between Jesus and their notable contemporaries. Some, on a continuum from actors to kings, behaved—or were seen to behave—in ways that created a deep-ken consonance between themselves and Jesus. For a generation now, scholars have delighted in labelling activities as "performative," and kings certainly acted in performative ways.[2] We can also look to the other end, and understand actors' performances as performative, and sacred in ways not unlike their kings'. Some of the imitators imitated Jesus's poverty through nudity, and his Passion through flagellation, practices which became intimate, and sexual, in the eyes of some authorities.

Imitation is a form of consonance. A king who imitates Jesus is an octave away from Jesus. Imitating a deep-ken action recreates the meaning of the original. This chapter divides imitation in another way, by looking at who was doing the imitation. Among the Jesus cult's masses, the surviving sources give us the best understanding of actors, rulers, and mystics, alongside other nudists and masochists.

1 Felix Fabri, *The Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, 2 vols. (London: Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1892), I, 476–79.

2 Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986); Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

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Actors

Perhaps the form of Jesus imitation that is least alien to our understanding was theatre. For centuries, some aspects of the mass, especially around Easter and Christmas, were acted out as liturgical drama. Various details elevated these performances, which consonated with aspects of the mass already consonating more widely. The texts were usually sung in Latin, not spoken or in a vernacular. As with the mass, members of the clergy performed the roles, and the drama was itself performed in a church. Some of the music was secular in its origins, but so too was the music of the mass itself (see Chapter 18). Liturgical dramas served as a kind of ornament before and on the mass. Processions and masses could involve *tableaux vivant* of biblical scenes, as when children in Paris (1424) performed a play of New Testament scenes "without speaking or making gestures, as if they were images lifted onto a wall."[3] Historians tend to stress that, by this time, this liturgical drama was a dying form: it survived into the sixteenth century, but in our period lacked originality. The performers themselves would have been surprised by the criticism. Their goal was not to break with tradition, but to consonate with it. A Passion Play is the Passion recreated, transposed into the here and now. Through consonance, the action accesses deep-ken power.[4]

Many actors were selected not through audition, but because their off-stage life resonated with their on-stage roles or with the dignity of the production as a whole. In fifteenth-century Corpus Christi plays in England, actors would be chosen from guilds that resonated with some aspect of the scene. Winemakers might perform the Cana wedding miracle, sailors the Flood, and goldsmiths the Adoration of the Magi.[5] In the town of Chester, when the hospitality industry dramatized the Harrowing of Hell, Jesus left behind the soul of an alewife who had allied with Muhammad to cheat her customers by using undersized glasses.[6] In 1490, the Gonfalone confraternity, established in Rome in the thirteenth century, produced a Passion Play, in Italian verse, in the Colosseum. It was so successful that they printed a version of it in 1501. Soon, they preceded it with a flagellant procession, and gave it an encore in the form of a Resurrection play on the Easter weekend. Some years it was cancelled, because expenses outran

3 *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris, 1405–1449*, ed. Alexandre Tuetey (Paris: Champion, 1881), 200.

4 Richard H. Hoppin, *Medieval Music* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 179, 185–86; Sven Hakon Rossel, *History of Danish Literature* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 41; Albert Seay, *Music in the Medieval World* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 1991), 57; Richard Taruskin, *Music from the Earliest Notation to the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009), 93–94.

5 Paul Murray Kendall, *The Yorkist Age* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 43.

6 Geoffrey Hindley, *England in the Age of Caxton* (London: Granada, 1979), 159.

available funds, or, as in 1522–24, because of concerns about riots. One fifteenth-century German visitor to Rome observed that the Colosseum Passion Play, including the Crucifixion and Judas's hanging, was done "by living people… They were all rich people's children, and so it went orderly and expensively."[7]

Some plays moved beyond the Bible narrative even while elaborating on Biblical themes, and drew from both kens. The mid-fifteenth century saw several plays using the personification of virtues to work out the logic of salvation. The ca. 1447 Dutch play *Die eerst Blijschap van Onzer Vrouwen* [The First Joy of Our Women] has the three sisters Mercy, Justice, and Faith debating how to save humanity. Their plea to the angels to sacrifice themselves wins no volunteers. They next ask for a similar sacrifice from the Trinity, to the bewilderment of the Father trying to dodge the request ("What shall I do without annoying one of the sisters?"). Mercy appeals directly to Jesus, noting that only he can save them. Jesus does not welcome this, and God the Father regrets creating the three virtues in the first place: "I'm sorry that I made them." Eventually, Jesus assents to his Father's will and sacrifices himself for us.[8] In some French Passion Plays, Mercy and Justice, assisted respectively by Peace and Truth, are in formal litigation against each other, and only the sacrifice of Jesus can reconcile the feuding parties.[9] All these plays were vernacular, and situated allegorical figures, with their deep-ken resonance, in decidedly plain-ken ways, for a strikingly human psychology motivates their behaviour.

Other plays were less dignified, even as they explored the theme of dignity. In the 1510s, at the Swiss town of Vevey on the north shore of Lake Geneva, a play was performed, a variation on a medieval French farce called the *Prêtre Crucifié* [Crucified Priest]. In it, a priest ordered a life-size cross from a sculptor, and then, when the latter goes to town, has an affair with the sculptor's wife. The action of this Swiss version is not clear—only fragments are intact—but in the traditional version the sculptor returns early, and the naked priest hides in plain sight on the cross, hoping to pass himself as a sculpted Jesus. The sculptor, who knows exactly what is going on, remarks that he must have been drunk when he sculpted this corpus, and in the interest of decorum hacks off the priest's

7 Arnold von Harff, *Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff* (Cologne: Heberle, 1860), 31.

8 H. J. E. Endepols, ed., *Viif geestelijke toneelspelen der middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1940), 112.

9 Peter Meredith and Lynette Muir, "The Trial in Heaven in the 'Eerste Bliscap' and other European Plays," *Dutch Crossing* 8 (1984): 84–92; Lynette R. Muir, *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1995), 87–88; Lynette R. Muir, "The Trinity in Drama," *Comparative Drama* 10 (1976): 116–29.

genitals.[10] Jesus was great, and great people hide their genitals, and so no genitals could be displayed. This reflects the difficulties of representing the deep ken in a plain-ken world, as well as a comment on how poorly the adulterous priest was imitating Jesus. This sculpture, like scripture, was a plain-ken representation of the deep ken, created by a human in a human environment, who in the struggle to preserve decorum sexually mutilated a rival.

We lack sources to know how realistically performances of the *Prêtre Crucifié* portrayed the nudity and its mutilation, but more mainstream dramatics achieved innovations in stagecraft that astonished contemporaries. In particular, stagehands sought new heights in treating the performance area as a volume in space, with three dimensions to perform sleight of hand. When Sigismund returned to Constance in 1417, he was welcomed with a dramatic performance of the Adoration of the Magi, who had followed a golden star dangling from an iron lead, so slight as to be nearly invisible.[11] In 1462, at Viterbo a young man representing the Saviour filled a chalice with blood apparently flowing from a side wound.[12] In one 1481 Passion drama in Ferrara, a mechanical serpent was large enough that Jesus's command could force it to disgorge fourteen singers from within.[13]

The Ascension of Jesus required the greatest feats of engineering. In the fourteenth century, Jesus had risen slowly. The poet Franco Sacchetti (ca. 1332–1400) recalled one friar who complained that while the actual Jesus went up with a sonic boom, in the play of Florence's Santa Maria del Carmine Church the Jesus ascended so slowly that "if he went any more slowly he would still be on his way"[14]—a plain-ken continuity between Jesus's time and his own even in what was likely a joke. Technical improvements gave the stagehands more control, especially in Florence. Through the magic of pulleys and counterweights, perhaps similar to those invented by Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446) to build the cathedral, ropes could pull up a leather harness holding Jesus.[15] Abraham

10 P. Aebischer, "Quelques Textes du XVIe siècle en patois fribourgeois," *Archivum Romanicum* 4 (1920): 342–61; 7 (1923): 288–336; 15 (1931): 512–40; Graham A. Runnalls, "The Medieval Actors' Roles found in the Fribourg Archives," *Pluteus* 4–5 (1986–87): 5–67.

11 Ulrich Richental, *Die Chronik des Konzils von Konstanz*, ed. Thomas Martin Buck (2019), A-Version, K-Version, and G-Version c. 200, https://edition.mgh.de/001/html/edition.html

12 Pius II, *Commentarii rerum memorabilium* (Frankfurt: Avbriana, 1614), 209 (book 8).

13 Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400–1505* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), 152.

14 Franco Sacchetti, *Le novelle di F. Sacchetti*, 2 vols. (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1860), I, 174.

15 Cyrilla Barr, "Music and Spectacle in Confraternity Drama of Fifteenth-Century Florence," in *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the*

of Suzdal, a Russian bishop at the Council of Florence in 1439, was astonished by the Ascension play at Santa Maria del Carmine. In 1466, when the ascending Jesus entered the fake cloud, light dazzled from the "new star" made of wood and enhanced with hidden fireworks with a copper lantern in each ray. This could be dangerous: in 1485, an accident killed two parishioners, and the church had to be reconsecrated after the bodies were removed.[16] Special effects could, sometimes, be an impressive way of representing the deep ken in a plain-ken way, giving the illusion that beings mostly restricted to two dimensions could also achieve a third. Just as linear perspective represented three dimensions in a two-dimensional space, so such special effects allowed three dimensions to be represented in three-dimensional space, liberating gravity-bound actors from a flat earth.

Rulers

The height of actor-role consonance occurred at the highest level of society; there the deep ken almost entirely eclipsed the plain. John Wycliffe (ca. 1328–84) underlined the importance of this, noting that we must obey rulers who imitate Jesus[17]—even the kings whose imitation remained symbolic, avoiding the need to step into the messy world. Perhaps taking a cue from their monarchs, contemporaries adopted a deep ken to see consonance and dissonance between royal lives and Jesus's.

Take Castile's House of Trastámara, for example, which understood, and understood itself, as actively and passively imitating Jesus. In 1467, Henry IV of Castile (1425–74) had the governor of Madrid's Alcázar fortress arrested for treachery, but then forgave him: "Greater was the evil of Judas, who sold our lord and savior," and if Jesus had not executed Judas, the king remarked, he

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Quattrocento, ed. Timothy Verdon (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University School of Visual Arts, 1985), 376–404 (382).

16 Barr, "Music and Spectacle," 377–78, 381–86; Alessandro D'Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, 3 vols. (Turin: Ermanno Loescher, 1891), I, 246–47; Santi Mattei, *Ragionamento intorno all'antica chiesa del Carmine di Firenze* (Florence: Antonio Giuntini, 1869), 15–16; Alexander Wesselovsky, "Italienische Mysterien in einem russischen Reisebericht des XV Jahrhunderts," *Russische Revue* 10 (1877): 425–41.

17 John Wycliffe, *Tractatus de potestate pape*, ed. Johann Loserth (London: Trübner, 1907), 63–65 (ch. 4). It is tempting to use Azfar Moin and Alan Strathern's transcendental-immanent distinction to this analysis of rulers, but I cannot match that distinction up with the kens, and conclude that we are talking about fundamentally different issues. See A. Azfar Moin and Alan Strathern, ed., *Sacred Kingship in World History: Between Immanence and Transcendence* (New York: Columbia UP, 2022), https://doi.org/10.7312/moin20416

could not execute the governor.[18] In the 1460s, Henry's half-brother Alfonso, Prince of Asturias (1453–68), was linked with Jesus, as both were described as sacrificial lambs. In 1478, Henry's half-sister Isabella gave birth to a son John, the new Prince of Asturias (1478–97). The *converso* chronicler Hernando del Pulgar (ca. 1436–92) connected John with the birth of Jesus, noting the parallels between his mother Isabella—Spanish for Elizabeth—and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Another chronicler found an analogy between the newborn prince and Spain on the one hand, and Jesus and the Church on the other.[19]

A popular inspiration for social elites keen to imitate Jesus was his washing of his disciples' feet, for centuries a ritual practiced by popes and kings alike. In John's Gospel, Jesus himself had framed this action as inspirational and socially subversive. "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet," he urged, "you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master" (Jn 13:14–16).

Thus, each year the doge of Venice washed the feet of twelve poor citizens. The resonance was made obvious: in the doge's chapel, now St. Mark's Basilica, a thirteenth-century mosaic of the Washing of the Feet was prominent under another one, of the Last Supper. The dukes of Ferrara also washed the feet of the poor on Maundy Thursday,[20] as did the English kings. Measures were taken to minimize the risk to and discomfort of the king—which reminds us that the deep-ken meaning was more important than the plain ken's: the poor feet were scrubbed repeatedly beforehand, to present the king an abstract and odourless poverty. During outbreaks of plague, a representative would replace the king entirely. The deep ken saw the transitivity of consonance: if the king consonated with the representative, and the representative with Jesus, then the king, too, consonated with Jesus. Outside the plain ken, there was no expectation to be anything more than a performative ally to the poor.[21]

18 Diego Enriquez del Castillo, *Cronica del rey D. Enrique el quarto de este nombre*, ed. Josef Miguel de Flores (Madrid: Antonio de Sancha, 1787), 221.

19 Peggy K. Liss, "Isabel, Myth and History," in *Isabel La Catolica, Queen of Castile*, ed. David A. Boruchoff (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 57–78 (61); Peggy K. Liss, *Isabel the Queen* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 155; Gutierre de Palma, *Divina Retribución sobre la Caída de España en tiempo del noble rey Don Juan el Primero*, ed. José María Escudero de la Peña (Madrid: Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles, 1879), 78–79.

20 Antonio Beccadelli, *De dictis et factis Alphonsi Regis Aragonum* (Rostock: Myliandrinis, 1589), 93 (4.1); Sabadino degli Arienti Giovanni, *Art and Life at the Court of Ercole I d'Este*, ed. Werner L. Gundersheimer (Geneva: Droz, 1972), 88–92.

21 Anne Bagnall Yardley, *Performing Piety: Musical Culture in Medieval English Nunneries* (New York, 2006), 130–33, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-05733-4

Multiple kinds of royal imitation of Jesus recurred in the life of Richard II of England (1367–99). Richard impressed himself with, and highlighted, the parallels between his own life and Jesus's.[22] Three kings (or "Magi") attended his birth: that of Spain, of Navarre, and of Portugal. Thus, Epiphany was important to him.[23] Later in his life, Parliament informed Richard that they had desired his rule as they desired the arrival of Baby Jesus.[24] On 21 August 1392, Richard and his wife Anne of Bohemia (1366–94) entered London,[25] the king having forgiven the city for its abandonment of him in 1387, when he had lost control of his government. This formal entrance expressed both Richard's authority and London's loyalty. London presented itself as the heavenly Jerusalem, to motivate Richard towards a Jesus-like forgiving peace. One report has him announce before entering, "They're all my people now, and now I'll be their king," a parallel with the New Testament vision of Jesus's entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem being hailed" with "They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:3). Before the king entered, a condemned murderer carrying a wooden cross asked forgiveness. At the end of the procession the citizens gave the royal couple an image on wood of the Crucifixion.[26]

The triumphal return was short-lived, and Richard was deposed in 1399 by Henry Bolingbroke (ca. 1367–1413), who became Henry IV (rl. 1399–1413). Imprisoned at Flint Castle, Richard looked down on the army gathering around and began to pray, explicitly comparing his situation to Jesus's, "Good Lord God! I commend myself into thy holy keeping, and cry thee mercy, that thou mayest pardon all my sins; since it is thy pleasure that I should be delivered into the hands of mine enemies; and if they cause me to die, I will take death patiently

22 Dillian Gordon, L. Monnas, and C. Elam, ed., *The Regal Image of Richard II and the Wilton Diptych* (London: Harvey Miller, 1997); Nigel Saul, "Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship," *English Historical Review* 110 (1995): 854–77.

23 William Thorne, *Chronicle of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury*, trans. A. H. Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1934), 591.

24 *Rotuli Parliamentorum: ut et petitiones et placita inparliamento*, ed. John Strachey, 6 vols. (London: n.p., 1767–77), II, 362.

25 Christopher Fletcher, *Richard II: Manhood, Youth, and Politics, 1377–99* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 213–20; Gordon Kipling, "Richard II's 'Sumptuous Pageants' and the Idea of Civic Triumph," in *Pageantry in the Shakespearean Theater*, ed. David M. Bergeron (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 83–103 (88–89).

26 Quotation in Richard Maidstone, *Concordia* (*The Reconciliation of Richard II with London*), trans. A. G. Rigg, ed. David R. Carlson (Kalamazoo, MI: Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages, 2003), line 217. See Helen Suggett, "A Letter Describing Richard II's Reconciliation with the City of London, 1392," *English Historical Review* 62 (1947), 209–13.

as thou didst take it for us all."[27] Contemporary sources followed Richard in seeing a Jesus connection. One remembered Richard, anticipating his execution, asking "beloved Jesus," "What do these people want with me?" He then called on Charles VI of France (1368–1422) to help Isabella of Valois (1389–1409), Richard's second wife and Charles's daughter, "for that same love for which our Saviour Jesus Christ descended in the blessed Virgin Mary to take upon himself human nature." Calming the king, the Bishop of Carlisle advised him that "if we must die, let us accept death willingly, and call to mind the passion of our Saviour."[28] Finally, Richard agreed to abdicate, but asked to be allowed to keep certain real estate he would use to fund a priest to do memorial masses for him at Westminster. The French chronicler Jean Creton (fl. 1386–1420) explicitly made the comparison between Henry's refusals to take responsibility for the execution of Richard with Pilate's washing his hands of Jesus's death. Ironically, after his abdication, one chronicler mocked the ex-King for the gap between his wealthy clothes and Jesus's more modest attire.[29]

Henry IV had taken the throne from Richard II in 1399. In 1460, Richard of York (1411–60), a once-removed cousin of Richard II, attempted to take the throne back from Henry IV's grandson. The new Richard fared little better than the old, and his defeat was again framed to resonate with Jesus's. One account of the death of the pretender Richard of York after the battle of Wakefield (1460) included a Passion-like mockery, made explicit in the text: they stood him on a small anthill, and crowned him with "a worthless wreath made of marshgrass," in a way "not different than the Jews before the Lord." They called out to him, "Hail king without kingdom! Hail king without inheritance! Hail leader and prince, utterly without people and possession!" Then they executed him.[30]

A particularly deep-ken consonance between ruler and Jesus developed as word of the conversion of the Lithuanians (see Chapter 7) reached the Far West. At Constance, the once polytropic Prince Vytautas (ca. 1350–1430) acquired recognition as a Christian prince, a good reputation he maintained even while building harmonious relations with the Turks and the Hussites. The Bavarian

27 John Webb, ed., "Translation of a French Metrical History of King Richard II [by Jean Creton]," *Archaeologia* 20 (1824): 1–423 (162–63), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261340900025789

28 Benjamin Williams, ed., *Chronicque de la Traïson et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre* (London: n.p., 1846), 202–06.

29 George B. Stow, Jr., ed., *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 156, lines 3761–65. See Ian Mortimer, *The Fears of Henry IV: The Life of England's Self-made King* (London: Vintage Books, 2007), 189; Webb, ed., "Translation," 150, 179.

30 John Whethamstede, *Registra abbatiae Johannis Whethamstede, Abbatis monasterii sancti albani*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley (London: Longman, 1872), 382.

Dominican Johannes von Wünschelberg (1385–1483) promoted an ambiguous Latin prophecy popular in England, known as "The Lily, the Lion, and the Son of Man."[31] In this, the Son of Man—a title Jesus applies to himself in the Gospels—would come to the Land of the Lion to defeat the ruling Lily; then, amidst devastating warfare, the pope would lose his power. The Son of Man role had been linked to Edward III (1312–77) and to later English rulers. One version had the Son going to the Holy Land, which resonated with Henry IV's pilgrimage.[32] If it had not yet come true in western Europe, perhaps it was meant to apply to Bohemia: it made sense if one saw Hungary as the Lily, Bohemia as the Lion, and Vytautas as the Son of Man.[33]

John Cantius of Kraków (1390–1473) wrote a memorial sermon for the deceased Vytautas that, with the deep ken, associated his body parts with those of the crucified Jesus: "Jesus told his disciples that his hands, feet, and chest represented his works, paths, and love. Similarly, one might think of the invincible Grand Duke, a man who shared the common Catholic faith and was a special friend of Poland's." The Grand Duke's "hands were trained for battle and his fingers for war," protecting both Lithuania and Poland "incursions by infidels" while widening their borders. His feet were highlighted by the fact that he "travelled widely and accumulated great wealth such as was permitted only to Christian kings," for the benefit of his people. Here, John pointedly commented that it was prayers, not wealth, that assisted the dead. Jesus's chest, in turn, corresponded to Vytautas's soul, and that soul now needed your help, financial help, to achieve salvation.[34]

In contrast to Cantius's well-designed account, a ruler's consonance with Jesus could be complicated by multiple, post-mortem sources and indirect sources. Epic poetry in the Balkans saw Prince Lazar of Serbia (ca. 1329–89) as a Jesus-figure. On the eve of the Battle of Kosovo, where he would die, Lazar in a dream was given the choice between earthly and heavenly kingdoms. He chose the latter. A revelation that he would be betrayed in battle set the stage for a new Last Supper, with a new Judas-figure betraying the Prince. Significant variations

31 Luc D'Achery, ed., *Spicilegium sive collectio veterum aliquot scriptorum qui in Galliae bibliothecis delituerant*, 3 vols. (Paris: Montalant, 1723), III, 104; Friedrich Lauchert, "Materialien zur Geschichte der Kaiserprophetie im Mittelalter," *Historishes Jahrbuch* 19 (1898): 849–51; Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science: vols. 3–4, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia UP, 1934), 305–06. Prophecy ("Lilium in meliore parte…") at BL Arundel MS 66, fol. 291v.

32 Margaret Enid Griffiths, *Early Vaticination in Welsh with English Parallels*, ed. T. Gwynn Jones (Cardiff: Oxford UP, 1937), 170–72.

33 Giedrė Mickūnaitė, *Making a Great Ruler: Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania* (New York: Central European UP, 2005), 50–52.

34 Ibid., 120–21.

between the Serbian epics, poetry from the Adriatic coast, and Bosnian Muslim songs obscure the details. Sometimes, a Jesus-consonating Lazar is a "saviour" and a "good shepherd." By the end of the fifteenth century, sometimes deep-ken poetry instead saw consonance between Jesus and the traitor, identified with the Serbian knight Miloš Obilić (d. 1389), who sacrificed himself on a suicide mission to assassinate Sultan Murad I (1326–89).[35]

Further east, Shah Ismail I (1487–1524), founder of the Safavid dynasty of Iran, wrote verse under the pen name Khata'i, literally meaning "The Sinner," but perhaps also a reference to China ("Cathay"). In his *Diwan*, written to encourage his Turkomen followers to recognize his legitimacy, Ismail proclaimed that "My name is Shah Isma'il. I am God's mystery. I am the leader of all these *ghazis*… / I am the living Khidr and Jesus, son of Mary. I am the Alexander of (my) contemporaries." The Shah thus identified—which might be a strongly expressed consonance in a poetic idiom—with Jesus, alongside the great conqueror Alexander, as well as Khidr, the anonymous prophet described in Qur'an 18:65–82. This was in keeping with his ecumenical efforts, perhaps motivated by the need to build political bridges. His ancestors' Christianity might have inspired identification with Jesus: he was the son of the daughter of the daughter of Calo Johannes, the penultimate Emperor of Trebizond, and his Armenian Christian mother had hidden him on Aghtamar Island in Lake Van. Although the Shah did not identify specifically with Jesus in the way contemporary Christian rulers did, when he reached for names to people his boasts, Jesus made sense, in Islamic terms and beyond.[36]

35 Anna Di Lellio, *The Battle of Kosovo 1389: An Albanian Epic*, trans. Robert Elsie (London: I. B. Tauris 2009); Thomas Allan Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha: Kosovo 1389* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990); John V. A. Fine, Jr., *The Late Medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 409–13; Albert B. Lord, "The Battle of Kosovo in Albanian and Serbocroatian Oral Epic Songs," in *Studies on Kosova*, ed. Arshi Pipa and Sami Repishti (New York: Columbia UP, 1984), 65–83.

36 Christiane Gruber and Frederick Colby, ed., *The Prophet's Ascension: Cross-cultural Encounters with the Islamic Mi'rāj Tales* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2010), 315; V. Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shah Ismail I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10 (1942): 1006–53 (1042a). See Jean Aubin, "L'avènement des Safavides reconsidéré," *Moyen Orient & Océan Indien* 5 (1988): 4–16; Palmira Brummett, "The Myth of Shah Ismail Safavi: Political Rhetoric and 'Divine' Kingship," in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. John Victor Tolan (New York: Routledge, 1996), 331–59; Ferenc Csirkés, "A Messiah Untamed: Notes on the Philology of Shah Ismā'īl's Dīvān," *Iranian Studies* 52 (2019): 339–95, https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2019.1648998; Rudi Matthee, "Christians in Safavid Iran: Hospitality and Harassment," *Studies on Persianate Societies* 3 (2005): 3–43 (9–11); Roger M. Savory, "Relations between the Safavid State and its Non-Muslim Minorities," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14 (2003): 434–58 (454), https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410320001275 97; Wheeler Thackston, "The Divan of Khata'i: Pictures for the Poetry of Shah Isma'il," *Asian Art* (1988): 37–63 (40, 54–60); William F. Tucker,

Devotees

Beyond rulers and elites, a number of pious individuals—often mendicants, especially Franciscans—sought to consonate with Jesus in various ways. In this century, the two aspects of Jesus's life that attracted the most attention were his poverty and his suffering.

Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) himself was recognized as a great Jesus imitator. The Franciscan Bartholomew Rinonico (d. ca. 1401) wrote up a treatise, approved by the order's authorities in 1399, on the "conformities" between the lives of Jesus and Francis. The title page quotes Jesus telling any would-be follower to "take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24), features an acrostic poem about Francis, and depicts Francis following Jesus, each bearing a cross. The most impressive illustration comes early in the book: the consonance between Jesus and Francis is visualized in the image of the *Arbor conformitatum* [Tree of Conformities]. The tree has forty leaves, each representing a conformity between Francis's and Jesus's lives.[37] Bartholomew also applied the INRI (or JNRJ) *titulus* to Francis: Francis was Jesus (because of his conformity), Nazarenus (as a virgin), Rex (king of own passions), Judaeorum (joyfully leading all creatures to praise God).[38] Recognition of such conformity went beyond religious circles: Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) argued that it was precisely through his exemplification of Jesus that Francis revived Christianity.[39]

Poverty

A number of Christians were particularly interested in poverty, especially Jesus's. The Irish poet Tadg Óg Ó hUiginn (ca. 1370–1448) saw the long-term

"The Kūfan Ghulāt and Millenarian (Mahdist) Movements in Mongol-Türkmen Iran," in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 175–95 (192–93), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004262805_008

37 "Conformitatum scilicet vite Beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Nostri Jesu Christi," in Bartolomeo da Rinonico, *Opus: Auree & inexplicabilis bonitatis & continentie* (Milan: n.p., 1510), fol. 4v. See Rossetti Edoardo, "Arbor conformitatum: Tra 'antico' e 'moderno' nelle due edizioni delle conformità di Francesco a Cristo di Bartolomeo da Pisa (1510, 1513)," *Rassegna di Studi e Notizie* 40 (2018–19): 351–66.

38 Bartolomeo da Pisa, *De conformitate vitae beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Jesu*, Analecta Franciscana 5, 2 vols. (Florence: Quaracchi, 1912), II, 378 (3.2). See Carolly Erickson, "Bartholomew of Pisa, Francis exalted: De conformitate," *Mediaeval Studies* 34 (1972): 253–74.

39 Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, trans. Leslie J. Walker and Brian Richardson (London: Penguin, 1998), 389 (3.1).

dangers of wealth and peril, and preferred "poverty as an atonement."[40] Visiting Rome, a fourteen-year-old Francis of Paola (1416–1507) used reference to Jesus's poverty to criticize the ostentatious display of the carriage and retinue of a cardinal—loudly enough that the prelate stopped to defend himself with a plain-ken appeal to human psychology: "My son, do not be scandalized; for if we did otherwise, the apostolic order would be despised and scorned by the worldly of these times."[41] Wycliffe used Jesus's poverty specifically to argue for papal imitation of Jesus, and restraint in the world: because Jesus was "the poorest man, rejecting all temporal dominion," the pope too should surrender temporal dominion to the secular powers.[42]

At times, Jesus's poverty was juxtaposed with the wealth of the Church as a whole, which could be symbolized by Mary. In one French poem (ca. 1450), Jesus sues his mother in papal court. Mary, he argues, has seized an unfair proportion of God's inheritance, which should instead go to Jesus, as a legitimate only child. He contrasts the wealth of her houses, starting at Reims with its Cathedral of Our Lady, against the poverty of his own, which are visited only by sick people. Mary forcefully counters: God and Jesus have both left her penniless, and she was forced to work to survive, and she thus accumulated all this wealth. Jesus does not love her. She tried to set him up with property, so he could live off the rental incomes, but his obvious, continuing poverty proves his poor money-management skills. The pope rules in favour of Mary, and orders Jesus to pay court costs.[43]

Most controversial were people following Jesus into poverty. In its first centuries the Franciscan order saw fierce debates essentially over whether Jesus's poverty was inherently good (deep ken), or mere happenstance without obligation on his followers (plain ken). Most theologians understood that Jesus and his closest followers held no individual property. With the deep ken, Bonaventure (1221–74) included among his evidence for Jesus's poverty

40 Tadg Óg Ó hUiginn, *Dán Dé: The Poems of Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh and the Religious Poems in the Duanaire of the Yellow Book of Lecan*, ed. L. McKenna (Dublin: Educational Company of Ireland, 1922), 80 (no. 7).

41 "[Vita] de S. Francisco de Paula," in *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis*, ed. Godfrey Henschen and Daniel van Papenbroek, 68 vols. (Antwerp: Cnobarum, 1675), I, 107.

42 John Wycliffe, "Epistola M(agistri) I(ohannis) W(yclif) missa pape Urbano," in *Opera minora*, ed. Johann Loserth (London: Paul, 1913), 1–2. See John Wycliffe, *De Ecclesia*, ed. Johann Loserth (London: Trübner, 1886), 365–66 (16).

43 "The Dispute between God and His Mother," in Barbara Newman, *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2013), 273–86; Gérard Gros, "Questions d'héritage, ou La Desputoison de Dieu et de Sa Mère," in *Les relations de parenté dans le monde medieval*, ed. Cristina Álvares (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 1989), 487–507.

Ps 40:17 [39:18], written centuries before Jesus's human birth.[44] The plain-ken response to Jesus's property was the more innovative. Peter John Olivi (1248–98) argued that Jesus and his disciples carried a purse simply because of the historical circumstances: for travel in regions like Samaria, culturally *inhospitales* [hostile], it made sense to have money to buy food.[45] This plain-ken interest in the historical Jesus, as a model for imitation, would expand in later centuries in Europe, as we will see.[46]

The "Observant" Franciscans, who embraced this evangelical poverty, lost the debate, but endured in marginal areas unmolested. In the late 1360s, at one such redoubt, in Brogliano near Foligno, they began a new offensive under the leadership of Paoluccio Trinci, and by the end of the century they had won over some two dozen friaries. They advocated and exemplified a radical Jesus-centric perfection and poverty, but within a generation their success brought them back into worldly matters, even into the kind of intellectual scholarship that Paoluccio would have abhorred. Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444) and John of Capistrano (1386–1456) were not meek hermits, but cunning and aggressive reformers. In the decades on either side of 1400, similar Observant movements broke out among the Dominicans, alongside the regular canons, the Carmelites, and the Friars of the Holy Cross. The same energy, and sometimes the same emphasis on poverty, expanded the Carthusians, "never reformed because never deformed," and created the Jesuati and the Birgittines, the Minimi, and the Brothers and Sisters of the Common Life (see below).[47] Lady Zwedera of Deventer, from the

44 The Psalms line is "ego autem mendicus sum et pauper." Bonaventure, *St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Pt. 3, Chapters 17–24*, trans. Robert J. Karris (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2004), 1590. See M. D. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty* (London: SPCK, 1961), 130–33.

45 Olivi, *De perfectione evangelica*, in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Borgh.357, fol. 76r–97v (quaestio 9), esp. 83r, 89r; Olivi, *Tractatus de paupertate in genere, et in specie*, in Assisi, Biblioteca del Sacro Convento, Fondo Antico MS 677, fol. 20v–22v. See David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 2001), 269; Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 57–60, 63–64, 74–76.

46 Some scholars have examined the development of a kind of linear time within Christianity and considered its influence in the scientific development of Europe. See Francesco d'Arcais, Adriano Buzzati-Traverso, Arturo Carlo Jemolo, Ernesto de Martino, Raimondo Panikkar, and Ugo Spirito, "Progresso Scientifico e Contesto Culturale," *Civiltà delle macchine* 11 (1963): 19–29 (20–22); Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, trans. Floyd V. Filson (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1950).

47 Bert Roest, "Observant Reform in Religious Orders," in *Christianity in Western Europe, c.1100–c.1500*, ed. Miri Rubin and Walter Simons, Cambridge History of Christianity 4 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2010), 447–54.

latter group, valued poverty so much that she warned against fake simulations of it, for "Poverty without need is like a letter sent to a great lord without a seal."[48]

Such debates often depended on how the Gospels represented Jesus, and what implications that had for those who sought to imitate him. When Richard FitzRalph (ca. 1300–60) had insisted that, as a carpenter, Jesus would have been fairly well-off, William Woodford (d. ca. 1400) in his *Defensorium* (1390s) disagreed: that Jesus was called a "carpenter" did not make him a carpenter, for the Gospels report many names misapplied to Jesus, including "seducer," "drunkard," and "demon-possessed." Woodford made a deep-ken argument: if Jesus were a labourer, then bishops would themselves, following him, labour, which they obviously did not. He more broadly advocated caution in the imitation of just the historical Jesus: emulating Jesus was not the whole of perfection, because many perfect acts postdated Jesus, who would not have been able, for example, to make the sign of the cross. Christians would be fools to literally ape Jesus by, say, being crucified, cursing trees, or drowning pigs.[49]

A similar debate was fought in other settings. In 1400 and 1405, the Dominican Johannes Mulberg (d. 1414) preached in Basel against pious lay women begging in imitation of Jesus's poverty. The Franciscan Rudolf Buchsmann pushed back: Jesus's example authorized this beloved mendicant poverty, and therefore such beggars should receive their due, just as labourers were justly paid. The Dominican theologian Johannes Nider (1380–1438), a follower of Jean Gerson (1363–1429), defended Beguine poverty, and lay poverty more generally, at the Council of Basel. Nider asserted that even lay people should adopt poverty "for" Jesus, following Jesus's example. In effect, Nider created a hierarchy: poverty for Jesus was superior to labour, which was superior to involuntary poverty. Ironically, Nider's hierarchy places the greater deep-ken significance on voluntary poverty. He further subdivided the top step: religious-order poverty for Jesus was superior to lay poverty for Jesus.[50]

48 D. A. Brinkerink, ed., *Van den doechden der vuriger ende stichtiger susteren van Diepen Veen* (Groningen: Wolters, 1904), 49.

49 Oxford, Magdalen College, MS 75, fol. 100v–02r, 108r, 137r–38r, 152rv. See Bridget Riley, "Christ's Poverty in Antimendicant Debate: Book VIII of *De pauperie salvatoris* by Richard FitzRalph, and William Woodford's *Defensorium*" (PhD thesis, University of Reading, 2019).

50 Nider, *De paupertate*, in BSB Clm 18195, fol. 244vb, 255vb. See Michael D. Bailey, "Abstinence and Reform at the Council of Basel: Johannes Nider's *De abstinencia esus carnium*," *Mediaeval Studies* 59 (1997): 225–60; Michael D. Bailey, "Religious Poverty, Mendicancy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages," *Church History* 72 (2003): 466–73, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640700100319; Alexander Patschovsky, "Straßburger Beginenverfolgungen im 14. Jahrhundert," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 30 (1974): 57–198; Hans-Jochen Schiewer, "Preaching and Pastoral Care of a Devout Woman (*deo*

Jacob of Nouvion represented the University of Paris at a 1408 Prague summit between the French and the Bohemians, a meeting intended to make progress on the papal schism. Over dinner, Jacob got caught up in a local hot issue, priestly poverty. Jacob pointed out that Jesus only advised poverty, but did not actually require it. The Bohemians trapped him with a Bible, and Jacob conceded that priests did not have to do everything that Jesus merely advised. This was outrageous to the Bohemians, for whom any clear teaching by Jesus must be followed.[51]

The Dominican preacher Johann Herolt (d. 1468), called "Discipulus," argued that any beggar was "Jesus Christ in the guise of the pauper, and you should consider it is to Him that you give it." Poverty was so deeply tied to Jesus that anyone in it necessarily imitated him. We could see the consonance with poverty and modesty, Herolt explained, in many aspects of his life: "The mean rags of Christ reprove costliness, the harsh straw on which Christ lay reproves softness, and Christ's narrow manger reproves big, wide beds and cushions." Indeed, "he held to abstinence from his very entry into the world: he was born in winter, in the middle of the night, was placed in a manger on straw, in adult life never wore shoes or linen but only a seamless tunic, and never ate any meat except the paschal lamb." Herolt thus establishes a deep-ken consonance between beggars and Jesus, who was not merely criticizing wealth but was embodying a criticism of it.[52]

Nudity

Christian theologians had long linked poverty and nudity to Jesus. Jerome (d. 420) had written of nakedness and poverty, *nudus nudum Christum sequi* [to follow naked the naked Christ]. This and similar pronouncements often understood this nudity as a mere metaphor for poverty, or at least frugality. Breaking with tradition, Francis of Assisi took nudity literally. The late medieval period saw

devota) in Fifteenth-Century Basel," in *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, ed. Miri Rubin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2009), 126–32 (130), https://doi.org/10.1515/978140083377

51 Jacob of Nouvion, *Disputatio cum Hussitis*, ed. Joannes Sedlák (Brno: Benedictinorum Rajhradiensium, 1914), 21.

52 Johannes Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli de tempore et de sanctis* (Strassburg: n.p., 1484), fol. 41vb–42rb. Translation from Ian D. K. Siggins, *A Harvest of Medieval Preaching: The Sermon Books of Johann Herolt, OP* (*Discipulus*) (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corp., 2009), 129.

an increased emphasis on the suffering of the naked and human Jesus.[53] One fourteenth-century Franciscan poet asked to be "clad in Christ's skin."[54]

Poverty was just one facet of wider debates on Jesus's nudity. St. Bridget's Revelations (see Chapter 12) included the shepherds demanding to see Jesus's genitals, as confirmation of his identity, for the angels had announced the birth of the world's saviour, not its "saviouress." Upon the gender reveal, the shepherds "immediately adored him with great reverence and joy." According to Bridget and Pseudo-Bonaventure, someone (an anonymous bystander according to the former, Mary according to the latter) covered up Jesus's genitals on the cross.[55] Gerson worried that a naked Jesus image might provoke lust.[56] In 1499, Jakob Wimpfeling (1450–1528) wondered whether Jesus's genitals were exposed on the cross, in view of his own mother, against "decorum and honesty." Reaching back to Capistrano and Gerson, he found good arguments for and against this, but insisted the topic was not to be discussed in the presence of women. Johannes von Paltz (d. 1513) largely agreed, and denounced preachers who mentioned Jesus's nudity, for "such a preacher strips the Lord before a multitude of people."[57] (See Chapter 15.)

One Friday morning, in the first decade of the 1400s, Bernardino of Siena stripped naked, bore a heavy cross on his shoulders, and, followed by twelve naked friars, entered the Tuscan town of Seggiano to preach the Passion, "all

53 Philipp Fehl, "The Naked Christ in Santa Maria Novella in Florence: Reflections on an Exhibition and the Consequences," *Storia dell'Arte* 45 (1982): 161–64; Franco Mormando, "'Nudus nudum Christum sequi': The Franciscans and Differing Interpretations of Male Nakedness in Fifteenth-Century Italy," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 33 (2008): 171–97.

54 John of Grimestone, Order of Friars Minor, in a 1372 collection "I would be Clad in Christ's Skin," in *English Verse, 1300–1500*, ed. John Burrow (London: Longman, 1977), 31.

55 *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden*, trans. Denis Searby, ed. Bridget Morris, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008–12), I, 68, III, 253; Pseudo-Bonaventure, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, trans. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1961), 333 (ch. 78). See Vida J. Hull, "The Sex of the Savior in Renaissance Art: The *Revelations* of Saint Bridget and the Nude Christ Child in Renaissance Art," *Studies in Iconography* 15 (1993): 77–112.

56 Jean Gerson [attributed], *Tractatus pro devotis simplicibus*, in Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, MS B. 204, fol. 197v–98r.

57 Johann von Paltz, *Coelifodina*, ed. Christoph Burger and Friedhelm Stash (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1983), 52. See Gustav Knod, "Jacob Wimpfeling und Daniel Zanckenried: Ein Streit über die Passion Christi," *Archiv für Literaturgeshichte* 14 (1886): 1–16; Richard C. Trexler, "Gendering Jesus Crucified," in *Iconography at the Crossroads*, ed. Brendan Cassidy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1993), 107–20.

drunk with the spirit."[58] Bernardino's contemporaries called him "naked" (presumably at least partly as a metaphor), and he himself noted that Jesus was naked both at birth and death,[59] an intentional coincidence that invited further participation in that nudity.

Attitudes progressively hardened; authorities became less tolerant: was this pious deep-ken resonance with Jesus, or plain-ken perversion? Some authorities interpreted this nudity symbolically, but were offended by its dissonance with Jesus's dignity. In 1412, naked pilgrims, expecting the sea to part for them, walked on foot toward Jerusalem for the apocalypse. They made it as far as Fermo, of the Italian Marche, before being arrested for indecency.[60] Other authorities interpreted the nudity with more of the plain ken than it was intended, and read it as sexual deviance. In 1420, four Franciscan friars processed naked through the streets of Venice while carrying crosses. Pious nudity was still socially acceptable enough that some laymen could join the nude friars. The city government, however, was uncertain. The men were in fact arrested, but eventually exonerated, as "their deeds were not carried out with any evil intention." Their own superiors then put them under house arrest. In 1438, members of a confraternity in Venice were arrested for flagellating each other naked in the church of Santa Maria Zobenigo. Four were convicted and sentenced to terms in prison in chains and banishment.[61]

Even Bernardino, our first nudist example, by the 1430s and 1440s clearly associated nudity—except the modesty of bare feet—with sin and evil. He became obsessed with sexuality. In one sermon he talked about someone who "when contemplating the humanity of Christ hanging on the cross—shameful to say and horrendous to even think—carnally and repulsively polluted and fouled himself."[62] His horror about sex does not seem to have stopped him from talking frequently about sex: Bernardino's earthy description of the wife's "obligation to give her husband what he asks for, every occasion, at every time, in every way" prompted some women to walk out of a sermon, with him calling out after them, "Don't go; don't leave; wait, you might hear things that

58 Piero Misciattelli, ed., *Le più belle pagine di Bernardino de Siena* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1926), 281–82. See Mormando, "'Nudus nudum Christum sequi,'" 180.

59 Bernardino of Siena, *Opera omnia*, 9 vols. (Florence: Quaracchi, 1956), V, 104–05. See Ferdinand Delorme, "Une esquisse primitive de la vie de S. Bernardin," *Bulletino di studi bernardiniani* 1 (1935): 1–22 (12–13).

60 Bernardino of Siena, *Le prediche volgari*, ed. Luciano Banchi, 3 vols. (Siena: Tip. Edit. all'inseg. di S. Bernardino, 1884), II, 374.

61 Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex, Crime, and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Oxford UP, 1989), 140–41; Mormando, "'Nudus nudum Christum sequi,'" 178.

62 Bernardino of Siena, *Opera omnia*, VI, 259.

you've never heard before."[63] The man who once had a deep-ken appreciation of nudity's appropriateness had finally taken up a plain ken so earthly that he could offend ears expecting decorum while being himself offended by the dissonance between the nude and the holy.

Nevertheless, nudity and whips endured. Late in the fifteenth century, one confraternity in Florence regularly performed a special flagellation ceremony: with the lights extinguished, one would speak about the impermanence of life and the need for zeal. After a silent period, the naked confraternity members would whip themselves "for the space of saying five paternosters and Ave Marias." This was followed by prayers and psalms.[64]

Suffering

The flagellation these enthusiasts combined with poverty was one part of a larger suite of Jesus-inspired suffering, often associated with religious confraternities, who were prominent Jesus-imitators around 1400. Self-flagellation was at the heart of their labours. Almost half of the men in San Sepolcro in the 1420s belonged to flagellant confraternities. The Gonfalone confraternity (see above) adopted flagellant practices by 1400. Their flagellant processions preceded the Passion Plays they produced in the Colosseum. Eventually, their *flagellationi* procession expanded as other fraternities' members joined in, and the destination was moved to St. Peter's Basilica. Some half of the roughly two hundred participants flagellated themselves, using ropes knotted and studded with metal. By 1500, the Gonfalone restricted flagellation to Good Friday, although they kept their whips as part of their habit. In Venice and Florence, conspicuous displays of wealth increasingly pushed penance aside from the Holy Week ceremonies. Nobles hired substitutes to replace them in the procession. Contemporary cynics expressed surprise that nobles were even that penitent, but in the deep ken the substitutes enabled the nobles' participation, rather than detracting from it. Some confraternities concluded the flagellation with communal requests for forgiveness and a washing ceremony, in which a ranking official would wash the feet of each member, before a symbolic Last Supper. A member might read the corresponding gospel passage as the confraternal brothers were enacting a scene. The literal imitation of Christ thus served as a deep-ken recreation of

63 Bernardino of Siena, *Le prediche volgari*, II, 135.

64 Biblioteca Riccardiana Florence, MS 2566, fol. 7v. See John Henderson, "Penitence and the Laity in Fifteenth-Century Florence," in *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, ed. Timothy Verdon (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University School of Visual Arts, 1985), 229–49 (241).

Jesus's history in a new time and place.[65] Their self-flagellation resonated with the Passion, their banquets with the Last Supper. The consonance suggests deep-ken meaning, and following Jesus's teachings the plain ken.

Some suffering was not ritualized, but still understood in a Jesus context. Late September 1412 saw the arrival in Prague of the papal decree that Bethlehem be destroyed. German parishioners of another local church put on armour, armed themselves with swords, halberds, and crossbows, and marched against Bethlehem. That chapel now faced a new massacre, and a new Passion. There, Jan Hus (ca. 1370–1415) was preaching as they stormed the building. "Let the bishops and priests of the supreme bishop send after me, as they had sent after Jesus," he later remembered. Somehow the preacher's words or his audience's determination disarmed and unnerved the invaders. They left to plot their next move and left Hus to marvel, "Consider the German audacity: they would not dare to pull down a neighbour's oven or a stable without the king's permission, and they would dare to attempt [to destroy] God's Church!" Hus later compared the near-miss to an event in Jesus's life, where his would-be arresting party ended up listening to him instead (Jn 8:12–20): "For they came inopportunely. The bishops had sent after the Lord Jesus when he preached; but because His hour had not yet come, therefore the servants of the bishops preferred to listen to Him rather than to seize Him. Likewise the hour of my death has not yet come…"[66]

The desired consonance could also be emotional. Antoninus of Florence (1389–1459) urged daily meditation on the Passion while kneeling before a crucifix. Then "with the eyes of the mind, rather than those of the body," you should contemplate "first, at the crown of thorns, pressed into his head down to the skull; then the eyes, full of tears, blood, and sweat; then the nose, full of snot,

65 James R. Banker, "Death and Christian Charity in the Confraternities of the Upper Tiber Valley," in *Christianity and the Renaissance*, ed. Verdon, 302–27 (316, 320); Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance* (London: Polity, 1987), 219; Henderson, "Penitence and the Laity," 242–43; Nerida Newbigin, "The Decorum of the Passion: The Plays of the Confraternity of the Gonfalone in the Roman Colosseum, 1490–1539," in *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image*, ed. Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2000), 173–202; Barbara Wisch and Nerida Newbiggin, *Acting on Faith: The Confraternity of the Gonfalone in Renaissance Rome* (Philadelphia, PA: Saint Joseph's UP, 2013); Barbara Wisch, "The Passion of Christ in the Art, Theater, and Penitential Rituals of the Roman Confraternity of the Gonfalone," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 1991), 237–62 (237–41, 253–54).

66 Matthew Spinka, *John Hus at the Council of Constance* (New York: Columbia UP, 1965), 244–45.

tears, and blood; the mouth, full of gall, drool, and blood; the beard, similarly full of drool, blood, and gall..."[67] In the 1470s in Florence, Giovanni Nesi (ca. 1456–1522), a future Girolamo Savonarola (1452–98) supporter, called upon his audience to consider Jesus's Passion: "From the head to the feet every part of his suffered," namely:

> the holiest head from biting thorns, the shining eyes from the darkening bandage, the mellifluous mouth from the bitterest bile, the resplendent face from bloody sweat, the weak shoulders from the most heavy weight of the cross, the most sacred chest from the sharp lance, the innocent hands and the immaculate feet from sharpened nails, and finally all his precious body from the harshest blows.

In total, it was impossible to count the "innumerable number" of these outrages, because "there was no point of health anywhere in his divine body."[68] In a Holy Thursday sermon, Angelo Poliziano (1454–94) explained that the dead Jesus, taken from the cross, encouraged his audience

> to weep with him in his sourest suffering, to keep company with his holy wife, a disconsolate widow, with his sorrowful mother whose soul is pierced with a knife, to mourn his incomparable torment, even with the stones, with the sun, with the heavens, with the earth, with all the elements, with all the world, to savour the bitter taste—but to us beneficial—of his arduous passion, to kneel, to bow down, to lay down at his holiest feet [...] Let us cry tenderly, my devout fathers, let us cry bitterly for the death of sweet Jesus...[69]

Envoi

We close with the most complex and dramatic case of Jesus resemblances. Jesus ruled Florence amidst a controversial moral and verbal consonance with Savonarola (see Chapter 5). A thin, dangerous line separated Savonarola's insistence that he spoke only what Jesus said and the blasphemous assertion that both men spoke the same thing. Some opponents suspected demonic

67 Antoninus of Florence, *Opera a ben vivere* (Florence: Cellini, 1858), 169–70.

68 Olga Zorzi Pugliese, "Two Sermons by Giovanni Nesi and the Language of Spirituality in Late Fifteenth-Century Florence," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 42 (1980): 641–56 (648–49).

69 Angelo Ambrogini Poliziano, *Prose volgari inedite e poesie latine e greche edite e inedite*, ed. Isidoro del Lungo (Florence: Barbèra 1867), 7.

possession. In one sermon, Savonarola marvelled that because God "certainly" would not let him be deceived, he could declare, "I do not have a demon" possessing him. The fact that Jesus had said those same words when he was accused of demonic possession (Jn 8:49) created a consonance that confirmed the truth of his utterance.[70] His critics accused him of claiming publicly and repeatedly that "Jesus Christ and God lies if he lies."[71] Savonarola wrote out performance notes for his sermons, including, "Pull out a nail [from the Crucifix], and let his [Jesus's] right arm fall," before explaining to Jesus that his falling arm represented God's abandonment of the Jews.[72] This was highly effective. One sermon worked up to a finale where he violently faced the crucifix and cried out his readiness to imitate Jesus by dying, and his audience exploded in shouts of "Long live Jesus Christ, our King!"[73]

Jesus resemblance sometimes struck onlookers as excessive or wrongheaded. Presumably to punish Savonarola for presenting himself too closely with Jesus, opponents sneaked into the cathedral to embed nails in the pulpit, so that the next morning when the preacher pounded his fists he would be driving them into nails. For good measure they put feces on the pulpit as well, and topped it all with the putrefying hide of a donkey, perhaps another Jesus reference.[74] Some contemporaries were taken aback by such violence in relation to Jesus, especially in the context of an execution. At the end of the century, one *converso* in Spain struggled to understand the fascination with Jesus's Passion. Framing it with plain-ken human terms, Pedro Nuñez de Santa Fe noted (ca. 1502) that "when they kill a brother or relative, especially if he's executed as punishment, they don't want it mentioned," but Christians could not refrain from talking about Jesus's Crucifixion as a criminal.[75]

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70 Savonarola, *Il Quaresimale del 1491: La certezza profetica di un mondo nuovo*, ed. Armando F. Verde and Elettra Giaconi (Florence: SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001), 212.

71 Savonarola, *Le Lettere*, ed. Roberto Ridolfi (Florence: Olshki, 1933): 80–91. See Francesco Altoviti, "In Defensione de' magistrati e delle leggi e antiche cerimonie," in *'Questa è la terra tua': Savonarola a Firenze*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Florence: SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2000), 140–47 (144); Giacinto A. Scaltriti, *L'Ultimo Savonarola* (Rome: Paoline, 1976), 51.

72 Savonarola, *Il Quaresimale*, 276.

73 Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Amos a Zaccaria*, ed. P. Ghiglieri, 3 vols. (Rome: Belardetti, 1971–72), II, 109.

74 Pacifico Burlamacchi [attributed], *La vita del Beato Ieronimo Savonarola*, ed. Piero Ginori Conti (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1937), 107–09; Pasquale Villari, *La storia di Girolamo Savonarola e de'suoi tempi*, 2 vols. (Florence: Succ. Le Monnier, 1898), II, 19. See Lauro Martines, *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for Renaissance Florence* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), 27, 94–96, 128, 163.

75 Carlos Carrete Parrondo, ed., *El Tribunal de la Inquisición en el Obispado de Soria (1486–1502)* (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia, 1987), 90.