Van de wereld

PARCUM
DAVIDSFONDS UITGEVERIJ

CAT. N° 46
Mary with Child, Saint Catherine and Saint Barbara,
1300-1375, 15th century and 15th century
ivory, h: 10 cm – OCMW Bruges – Musea Brugge

PART 6: 'THROUGH THE IMAGE ABOUT THE IMAGE'
– MECHTHILD VON MAGDEBURG, THIRTEENTH CENTURY

'Fonteyne der liefde soeticheyt en troost in alle noodt' ('Fountain of love soothes and comforts in all need') The devotion to the wounds and passion of Christ[1]

Evelyne Verheggen

The devotion to the wounds and passion of Christ as practiced from the Middle Ages appears to be one of the most mystical and far-removed metaphors about – and from – the suffering of Christ. In the changed world of today, with a daily abundance of images, the physical and explicit way in which people meditated in earlier times with the help of objects and images is difficult to comprehend. This contribution will explain the imaginary culture of pain and suffering and place it in a historical perspective.

The Bible, Bernard and Francis

At the Last Supper, Jesus broke the bread with the words: 'Take, eat, this is My body', after which He took the cup, recited the prayer of thanks and gave it to His students with the words: 'All of you drink of this, this is My blood, the blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.'

In the subsequent days, Christ was imprisoned, tortured and crucified. Already in early Christianity, His pain and suffering were commemorated in the worship service by means of this text. Bread and wine, the body and the blood of Christ, grew into the symbol for passing on His message of resurrection and salvation. It is a Bible text that led church leaders, church fathers and theologians to debates, discussions and profound dissertations, that inspired artists and writers to poetry, books, paintings and statues. In the Middle Ages, a suffering mysticism developed in which His suffering was followed in a very intense manner, including through the veneration of – and meditation on – His wounds and the implements of His suffering.

The devotion to the suffering of Christ really only became important in the Middle Ages under the influence of the two most important saints from that period: Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and Francis of Assisi (1181-1226).

Bernard was the inspiration for the reformed monastic community of the Cistercians. He was inspired by Mary and considered her to be the most important mediator to God. From her, he received milk from her breasts as spiritual food in a vision, a legend that was later often depicted in art (Cat. N° 30). Bernard became famous for his Song of Songs sermons.[2] He introduced the equivalent of the worldly marriage. In his monasteries one could marry Christ, which was exalted above the 'earthly' marriage – focused on reproduction. He wrote his sermons for his male community;

in the 'bridal mystery', the bride of Christ was the soul of the monk. With this, he also inspired many women to this appealing way of life. Existing Benedictine monasteries reformed under the influence of Bernard, and starting in that time everywhere in Europe, Cistercian women's cloisters, but also many beguinages, were founded. The marriage had its difficulties and limitations; the (semi-)religious life formed a welcome escape for women who wanted to develop mentally and spiritually. With his sermons and writings, Bernard was the inspiration until well into early modern times for religious women. That stands in contrast to, for example, Thomas of Aquino (1225-1274), an intellectual who felt little mental connection with the other sex.

The popular sermons of Bernard on the Song of Songs include how sinful man must venerate the limbs of Christ. Although the devotion to the implements of suffering only became popular later, the veneration of them in the later imagery was also linked to Bernard. From the end of the fourteenth century, Bernard was depicted with the implements of suffering or *Arma Christi* as an attribute and as *exemplum* of his mystical connection with the suffering of Christ. (Fig. 24)

Francis is also referred to as the *Alter Christus*; few in history followed the life of Christ in everything as intensely and meticulously as he did. In 1224, Francis withdrew to Mount La Verna. In a vision, a crucified angel appeared to him. While reflecting on the meaning of that vision, wound marks occurred on his hands, feet and in his side. Francis considered that as a confirmation from Christ that he was showing his followers the right way.[3] This was the beginning of the Franciscan movement. According to legend, his first female follower and contemporary, Saint Clara, already had the habit of saying a prayer daily for the five wounds. Whether this is true, we do not know. But in the late Middle Ages, many legends arose from which it would appear that Francis himself, and his many (later) followers, recited these prayers daily.[4]

Both reformers chose a life in austerity, isolation and asceticism. The daily agenda was structured in Rules in which prayer and labour alternated (*ora et labora*). In that daily agenda, much attention was paid to prayer, inspired by the lives of Christ and Mary. The following of His suffering became the guide for monastic life. That message had a highly mystical content. The unification with Christ (and Mary) was actually experienced in a vision. In isolation and prayer, one could meet and see Christ. By meditating on the wounds and the passion tools, one could follow Christ and feel His pain.

Compassion with Christ was experienced as an intimate, loving fusion; through His side wound, one could enter into His heart. One also drank of the blood for the forgiveness of sins and as medicine for their own pain and sorrow. Each wound received its own prayers and its own meaning. Being a participant in this imaginary, mystical world was considered as the highest ideal. Many followers received stigmata. From the fourteenth century, there were special worship services held in honour of the five wounds, the *Humiliavit*.

Virgins and mystics

Women have always played an important role in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. At the time of Bernard and Francis, Europe was fully on the move. The cities were on the rise as centres of trade and industry. People united in communities to arm themselves against evil, war and disease. Bernard and Francis became important leaders for the emerging women's communities; they provided women with an equal role in medieval society. Does the emancipation of the woman in our culture originate from that?

Women united and found each other in the ideals of purity and love for fellow human beings. With dedication, education and care (*caritas*), living in poverty and purity and in the service of peace, they contributed to a better world. With those ideals, they united in religious communities. Their (mystical) marital bond with Christ gave them an extra status; they were, just like Mary, mediators between Christ and the world. Next to Christ, Mary became their new role model. Her life was also held up as an example.

In addition to Clarisses and Cistercians – women's communities that were mostly isolated in a monastery and often dependent on alms – there arose in the thirteenth century a women's movement that wanted to be independent but still wanted to keep living in the world. The first beguinage was founded in 1230 in Aachen. Thousands of women united starting at that time in 298 beguinages, spread over 111 cities, primarily in the Southern Netherlands.[5] These fortresses of seclusion were not separate from society; they were founded at the edges of the emerging cities. The women provided for their own, modest living, allowing them to operate independently of the hierarchical world. The garden, portrayed in the image culture as *hortus conclusus* or the heavenly Jerusalem, provided the inhabitants with the peace to meditate. They only took the vow of purity. Cloister residents also promised to live in poverty and obedience.

In this world, mysticism flourished. Through visions, women were in direct contact with Christ. This also confirmed their status and appearance in the world. The greatest female saints who lived between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries can largely be described as 'ecstatic' and 'mystical' women.[6] These new devout women became the role model for thousands of other women who chose a (semi-) religious life in connection with the mystical groom Christ, whom they honoured spiritually and physically.

Many female mystics practiced a heart devotion, whereby the heart of Christ was considered as a hiding

place. The Benedictine Lutgardis of Tongeren (1182-1246) mentally exchanged her heart with that of her Beloved and drank from His side wound. In the thirteenth century, Hadewijch wrote that she found her sweet resting place in the heart of Christ. The Delft beguine Geertruid of Oosten (1320-1358) endlessly considered His suffering and received the stigmata, which according to the legend bled every Friday. She also had the desire to rest in the opened heart of her Beloved. Following Lutgardis, many, particularly female mystics, drank from the side wound of Christ. Lidwina of Schiedam (1380-1433) drank long draughts from the divine source of His heart. She was probably also inspired in that by Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) who previously experienced the same vision (Cat. N° 29).

Brigid of Sweden (1303-1379), mother of eight children, chose a religious life after the death of her husband. She received many visions, where the emphasis lay on the suffering of Christ. In 1346, she founded the first cloister of her order, the Bridgettines, in Vadstena. As a part of the habit, these women wear a veil that is held on the head by two crossed bands with five buttons on them, which symbolize the five wounds of Christ.

At the end of the fourteenth century, clergy and laymen, men and women, united as brothers and sisters of the Common Life, a movement that arose in the Northern Netherlands. The Modern Devotion 'conquered' all of Western Europe and brought about major reforms in the existing monasteries. One of its most famous sons, Thomas à Kempis (c. 1380-1471), described how the limbs, including the heart and the side wound, could be venerated. The suffering of man was in no way comparable to the pain that Jesus had suffered upon His death on the cross. By meditating on this, evil was expelled and the faithful received comfort and strength. It exerted a positive influence on the mind in times of weakness and temptation. Eventually, it brought man closer to the unification with Christ.[7]

After the Reformation, at the end of the sixteenth century, women's religious lives once again flourished. In the Southern Netherlands, many again chose a life in the beguinages. Cloisters flourished or were (re)established; especially the Clarisses and the Carmelites appeared popular.

In the Northern Netherlands, that was more complicated.[8] In the republic, the public exercise of the Catholic faith was bound to restrictions; monasteries were forbidden. The Catholic Church went underground. That did not prevent thousands of women from choosing a religious state 'in the world'. These 'spiritual virgins' or spiritual daughters were commonly called 'klopjes' ('knockers') in the north; in Flanders, they were known as 'quesels' ('overly pious woman'). Also in the republic, some beguinages remained because the houses were privately owned. The semi-religious women were by far in the majority of the priests, who served these women as a spiritual father. As many as ninety percent of Roman Catholic professionals in the republic were women. The difference was also that the church hierarchy in the Northern Netherlands was more or less minimized. The republic had become a mission country for Rome. In the Southern Netherlands, the church hierarchy continued to exist, supported by the Spanish governesses, who were Catholic. Women played a leading role in the Counter-Reformation of the Low Countries.

The medieval day and week structures and the existing devotions were maintained. Just like in the Middle Ages, Mary, female saints and mystics were popular. Their lives were held up as the example without any change. However, under the influence of the reforms after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the emphasis came to lie more on the virtues of the saints. Saints' lives were rewritten to this end. All sorts of meditations were focused on the daily practice of virtues.[9] There was a renewed attention for the ascetic life after the example of hermits. Paintings, books and prints with hermits and hermitesses were popular. Just like them, the faithful isolated themselves from the world to enter into a mystical connection with Christ.

The women practiced their faith according to a strict daily and weekly order. Every day was connected to a phase of Christ's suffering. In the collection of the Ruusbroecgenootschap in Antwerp a (rare) print is preserved on which in the middle a woman kneeling on her prayer stool meditates on the four extremes (death, judgment, hell and heaven) (Fig. 25). At the bottom, the daily order of the week is described, in which she must consider Christ's suffering. The print is to be hung on the wall as a reminder of the daily order.

From the sixteenth century, many devotional books and devotional prints about the suffering of Christ were printed and distributed, primarily from the new Catholic bulwark of Antwerp. From there, the whole world was provided with spiritual lectures and objects, including reliquaries and millions of devotional prints that served as a tool for prayer.

That also included many prints and booklets about the lives of the mystical women. The *Catholica* proved to be an (excellent) propaganda agent. With spiritual books and pictures, the various orders competed with each other for callings.

A print in which the virgin rests in the side wound of her Beloved was considered to be a 'virgin weapon' (Cat. N° 58). This *Andachtsbild* was very popular among religious women until well into the nineteenth century. In the life story of Jannetgen Dirks (d.1636), bound as a spiritual virgin connected to the station 'in den Hoeck' in Haarlem, was recorded:[10]

Soo practiseerde dese maecht een beelt daer Christus alleen hangt aen 't cruis, verciert oft omset met wapenen van sijn lijen; onder leit de Bruit, in 't hertge. Hierin hadt se grote devotie om de eenvuldicheit ende het ruste van de Bruidt in 't hertge van haer Beminde.
(Thus practised this maid an image of Christ hanging there alone at the cross, decorated or surrounded with the weapons of his suffering; below lies the Bride, in a heart. In this she had great devotion to the unification and peace of the Bride in the heart of her Beloved.)

How unchanged mysticism carried through into the early modern times is also apparent from a short poem written by her fellow sister Maria of Wieringen in 1655:

Leght u mondt aen u Bruydegoms oopen Wonden.
Ende suijcht daer uyt ghenade en verghiffenis van alle uwe zonden. Ende gaet daer met al u gebreckelijckheijt soo diep in van binne
Dat Ghij daer moocht verdwijnen, en versmelten, en rusten in sijn Goddelijcke minne.
(Lay your mouth on the Bridegroom's open Wounds. And suckle from there grace and forgiveness for all your sins. And go there with all your inadequacy so deep inside That You might disappear there, and merge, and rest in his Divine love.)

In early modern times, the wound and heart devotion were practiced without abatement and practically unchanged. The veneration of the wounds contributed to the forgiveness of sins, gave pardon for the souls in purgatory and brought a blissful death. In addition, it would protect against 'temptations'.

In 1672, an image meditation book appeared with 49 prints about the life of the protected Carmelite Maria Magdalena de Pazzi (1566-1607) from Florence. She was declared holy in 1669. The prints were engraved by various artists after the example of the Brabant painter and draftsman Abraham van Diepenbeeck (1596-1675). The image meditation book appeared on the occasion of the foundation of a Carmelite monastery in Boxmeer in Brabant. The illustrations depict practically all mystical clichés of the female religious life. The religious thus received the stigmata during the meditation on the suffering of Christ (Fig. 26). As she receives the instruments of suffering from her bridegroom, the caption reads: 'Our Lord gives her the instruments of His Suffering, as an all-powerful remedy against the temptations.'

At the end of the seventeenth century, the heart devotion gained a new impetus thanks to Marguérite Maria Alacoque (1647-1690) in the French Paray-le-Monial. Starting in 1675 she received visions in which Christ appeared before her and called on her to work for the implementation of a liturgical celebration in honour of the Sacred Heart.[11]

Mindfulness avant la lettre

Daily meditation with the help of text and/or image was practised in the Catholic Church starting in the Middle Ages. The technique is comparable with today's very popular mindfulness.[12] The text and/or image on which one focuses during meditation in the Catholic culture are texts of images from the Bible, the life of Christ or the saints. By studying the subject of the meditation, by reading about it or looking at an image, one could imagine being physically present at an event – for example, from the life of Christ. One withdrew for a meditation exercise and turned inward to listen to Christ who lived and acted from the heart. Or one meditated on the virtues of saints. Virtues are increasingly referred to today as emotions, which relate to all times and all religions.[13] The traditional Catholic meditation method was termed 'imagination'. The illustrations made to be used as a tool for prayer were called *Andachtsbilder*, from the German *Andacht* in the sense of prayer and meditation. One practiced the imagination with all the senses and limbs. Imagining with the help of text, image or an object, promoted concentration on the subject of the meditation and people were less easily distracted.

As aids for meditation, all kinds of devotionalia were made and distributed, not only prints, but also for example rosaries, medallions, crosses and crucifixes, images and so on. To get as close as possible to a venerated saint, his or her relics were honoured, usually packaged in artificial gardens or holders. In Germany, these homemade religious objects are brought together under the term *Klösterfrauenarbeit* ('Cloister women's work'); they are illustrative of the daily work of the large numbers of (semi-)religious women. In the context of praying and working, making these devotionalia was very useful: one could pray while doing the handiwork, and the items could be sold to provide financial support. Thus, from the Middle Ages, there arose a lively trade in religious circles in embroidered vestments, relic gardens, hand-cut images and statues, and hand-made devotional prints.

Rhytmica oratio

From the High Middle Ages, visionary experiences, prayers, and spiritual texts of followers of Bernard and Francis were drawn and described, whether or not with illustrations drawn in manuscripts and incunables, and from 1500 in printed devotional books.

One of the oldest poems in which this sublimed love is poetically written is the legendary poem by Arnulphus of Leuven (1170-1250), *Rhytmica oratio*. Initially it was thought that Bernard himself was responsible for the text, but now the poem is attributed to his cohort in the order, Arnulphus. The poem is also in the prayer book from around 1490, including a prayer to the five wounds of Christ (Cat. N° 57). In addition, a glittering golden heart wound is

depicted, showing the cut from the lance, surrounded by the four other wounds to the hands and feet of Christ.

The prayer is divided over the days of the week. Already in the first paragraph, on Sunday, the loving unification with Christ is described through the wounds.[14]

Hail Jesus kind and sweet,
Lord, let smart live in my heart
Hail thou, my salvation,
Draw to you my Heart and Sins
Lead me inside along your Wounds
Oh, Abyss of sweetness!

Sunday also describes how the blood forgives and cleanses sins, purifies and heals like medicine:

That which drips down from above:
This will wash all my sins,
This will heal all my wounds

The bloody character, which has long pervaded folk devotion in image culture, is referred to in Monday's prayer:

To make my Soul clean:
Your blood, that with thick streams
Descends along your Cross,
Are here a Medicine.

The print of the wounds is printed as it were in the heart of the believer. The heart is the soul of man and symbolizes the place where Christ works and speaks and the conscience is developed. The poem writes for Friday:

Through that unbearable pain,
Will bring my Heart into yours
Mix my love with yours
And let me be one with you.

On the last day of the week, the Saturday, the head wounds are mentioned. The first stanza reads *Salve caput cruentatum* (Hail, head covered in blood). This was translated into German by Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) as *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* and appeared that way in the *Matteüspassion* by Johan Sebastian Bach.

The devotion to the 'weapons' of Christ

Through the viewing of the implements of torture, the passion of Christ was followed. In the experience of the faithful, then, evil, often symbolized by the devil, was overcome. The implements of Christ's torture were therefore symbolically referred to as the 'weapons of Christ'. In addition to the most important weapon, being the cross, these are the nails, the lance, the scourge column, the thorny crown, the purple royal mantle, the reed with the sponge, the seamless robe and the dice, the sweat cloth, the ladder, the grave, the shroud and so on. The depictions of the *Arma Christi* became popular from the fourteenth century, which can be connected with the liturgical cult that has emerged then around the reliquaries of the most special implements of suffering. The thorny crown was thus venerated from the thirteenth century in the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. The lance was venerated in Nuremberg. This weapon belonged to the German empire and was used for the emperor's coronation ceremony. In 1353, Pope Innocent VI, at the urging of the German emperor, held a feast in honour of the lance and the nails on the Friday after the octave of Easter.

Just like the prayers over the wounds of Christ, prayers are included in the medieval manuscripts that are dedicated to the weapons. The best-known prayers are the *Oracien* of St. Gregory I (540-604). In these, five, seven or ten prayers are dedicated to the *Arma Christi*. Each time, a weapon is mentioned, ending with the Our Father, the *Paternoster*. Most of the prayers go back to the ninth century. According to the legends, the mystery of the suffering was thus revealed to Pope Gregory I. In that vision, the suffering Christ appeared to Gregory as a Man of Sorrows while he celebrated the mass. This also confirmed the connection and presence of the body of Christ in the Holy Mass. The depiction of this miracle became an important display at the end of the Middle Ages. Portrayals in which Gregory sees this vision during the mass are numerous. Later, depictions of this vision without Gregory also became popular as an aid to prayer (Cat. N° 48). Over the course of the Middle Ages, it became increasingly common to connect the prayers for the wounds of Christ to the *Arma Christi*. Thomas à Kempis also wrote a prayer about the implements of suffering.

By making objects with the *Arma Christi* (one's self), one could simultaneously consider the suffering of Christ (Cat. N° 49, 50, 52, 53 and 54). They were then also sanctified indirectly, since prayers were recited during the making (*ora et labora*). Before they were passed along or sold, they were blessed, so that they could protect against evil, illness and danger.

The side wound and the shoulder wound

What does a wound look like that is created by piercing with a lance? The wound is often present in illustrations of the crucified Christ in the form of a half-moon; on the *Andachtsbild*, the side wound is depicted elliptically, a shape that connects more with the imagination of resting in the heart of Christ. One of the oldest-known illustrations of the side wound is derived from a manuscript from 1320. It was written by Johannes of Sint-Truiden, a monk from Villers in Brabant and the spiritual father of the sisters in the Vrouwenpark at Leuven (Cat. N° 59).

In the wound of His heart, one could conceal himself from the evil of the world and devilish visits and temptations. In texts and poems, this metaphor was described, as in the seventeenth century by the Jesuit Guilielmus Wael, whose devotional book about the wounds was reprinted many times.[15]

Oh good Jesus hear me,
In your Wounds hide me,
Against the evil enemy protect me,
In the hour of my death, call me

The side wound was considered the gate to the heart, symbolic of or related to the soul; where the blood flowed like a fountain of life. People must prefer the belief in the healing effect of the wounds over the commonly used bleeding, which was supposed to promote health.

The church fathers glorified the side wound as the source and origin of the sacraments. Through the side wound, the 'heart exchange' took place. Jesus knocked on the door of the heart and went to live in the heart of the beloved. He or she gave his or her heart to Him.

The position of the heart of Christ also had a symbolic meaning. According to tradition and on the grounds of the Biblical considerations, it was supposed to have been pierced on the right side. In the same way, the gate to the temple was on the right side (1 Kings 6:8), and Ezekiel saw the water flowing out of the temple on the right side (Ezekiel 18:1).

In addition to the five wounds, other wounds were also added to the devotion, including the head wounds and bodily wounds of Christ as a result of the crown of thorns and the scourging, and the wound as a result of circumcision eight days after his birth. There was even a dispute in the Middle Ages about precisely how many wounds Jesus would have had: that would be somewhere between 4466 and 6666 wounds. In other tracts, his blood drops were counted. Later, there was also meditation on the shoulder wound, which was also referred to as the 'hidden' wound, resulting from the carrying the cross on his right shoulder. On an eighteenth century engraving with the depiction of the shoulder wound (Cat. N° 60), there is still a connection made in the prayer instruction with the writings of Bernard.

The side wound was depicted as bloody. The contemporary viewer may well associate the side wound is depicted with the female genitalia, whether or not during menstruation (Fig. 27).[16] It is assumed that the correspondence between the two 'wounds' grafts itself onto the giving of new life. For the religious viewers of that time, this correspondence would not have been shocking, but rather obvious, since the wound gave access to a relationship with Christ. Feelings and thoughts were sublimated in the imagination of – and with – an intimate relationship with Him. Sacred existed next to the profane. The religious pilgrimage badges popular in the late Middle Ages were thus worn next to erotic badges with phalli and vulvas. They were meant to bring luck. Both were considered as amulets and special powers were assigned to them.[17]

In a manuscript from the Carthusians of the fifteenth century and later on many prints of saints and mystics, the nails and the lance, and a scourge are depicted next to the wounds (Cat. N° 56). By (self)chastisement, one hoped to help the spirit triumph over the flesh (the body); sexual lust was suppressed in this way.

Epilogue

The Catholic Church again flourished in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many people chose a religious life, which, however, differed in many respects from the medieval and early modern religious culture, which ended around 1800. Many new women's cloisters were established in which the sisters – in contrast to the semi-religious women in the Middle Ages and early modern times – had to live in obedience to authority. The Revivalism conquered Europe in architecture and religious art. For the first time, Christ and saints were presented in historical apparel. Christ, Mary and (female) saints were now generally formless, emotionless and lacking eroticism. A prudish era dawned that would have an impact until well into the twentieth century in popular piety and imagination.

Around the devotionalia that the religious produced true to tradition, there remained the scent of magic, protection and healing.[18] Cloister sisters thus, for example, embroidered devotionalia, painted monk icons, or made candles for a long time.

Devotionalia are still sold in many cloister or abbey shops to keep the community going. The aura of mysticism around the blessed, often handmade objects has not, after all those centuries, yet disappeared.

Fig. 24 Susanna Verbruggen, *Saint Bernard with torture tools of Christ*, 1801 – Utrecht, Museum Catharijne Convent

Fig. 25 *Seer heylige en profytelycke dagelycx morgens opdracht*, Hendrick Thieulier, woodprint A. Voet, Antwerp, 1710 – Antwerp, Ruusbroecgenootschap

Fig. 26 *Zij (Mary Magdalene) ontfanght de H. Wondt-teekenen door Vierige straelen, Bescauwende het Lijden Vanden Salichmaecker*, woodprint from *Vita seraphicae virginis S. Mariae Magdalenae de Pazzis*, designed by Abraham van Diepenbeeck, c. 1672 – Breda, city archive

Fig. 27 *Vulnera Christi*, c. 1700 – Antwerp, Ruusbroecgenootschap

1 The title is derived from the caption of a devotion print by Cornelius de Boudt with a picture of the Holy Heart with side wound of Christ from around 1700 (Museum Catharijne Convent Utrecht OKM dp976). With thanks to Lieke Smits, Jury Smit, Paul van Geest and Inge Schriemer.

2 Eloe Kingma, *De mooiste onder de vrouwen. Een onderzoek naar de religieuze idealen in twaalfde-eeuwse commentaren op het Hooglied*, Hilversum, 1993.

3 Gerard Freeman, 'Franciscus van Assisi: ordestichter en populaire heilige', in *Franciscus van Assisi*, exh. cat., Museum Catharijne Convent Utrecht, 2016, pp. 50-51.

4 For this contribution, repeated use has been made of Maria Meertens, *De Godsvrucht in de Nederlanden: naar handschriften en gebedenboeken der XVe eeuw*. Antwerp/Nijmegen, 1930-1934: pt II *Lijdensdevoties*.

5 Paul Trio, 'Begijnen en bedelorden in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de dertiende en veertiende eeuw', in P. Nissen (ed.), *Geloven in de Lage Landen. Scharniermomenten in de geschiedenis van het Christendom*, Leuven, 2004, pp. 35-49.

6 Paul Vandenbroeck, *Hooglied. De beeldwereld van religieuze vrouwen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden vanaf de 13de eeuw*, exh. cat., Paleis voor Schone Kunsten Brussels, 1994, p. 11.

7 G. Kanters, *De Godsvrucht tot het Heilig Hart van Jesus in de vroegere Staten der Nederlanden (XIIe-XVIIe eeuw)*, Den Bosch, 1929, pp. 115-119. See for the veneration of the wounds by the Modern Devotion: Kathryn Rudy, 'Laat-middeleeuwse devotie tot de lichaamsdelen en bloeduitstortingen van Christus', in Kees Veelenturf (ed.), *Geen povere schoonheid. Laat-middeleeuwse kunst in verband met de Moderne Devotie*, Nijmegen, 2000 and Paul van Geest, *Thomas a Kempis (1379/1380-1471). Een studie van zijn mens- en godsbeeld. Analyse en tekstuitgave van de Hortulus rosarum en de Vallis liliorum*, Kampen, 1996, pp. 218-222.

8 For this contribution, repeated use is made of Evelyne Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie en hartstocht. Bid- en devotieprenten in de Noordelijke Nederlanden, 17de en 18de eeuw*, Zutphen, 2006.

9 Evelyne Verheggen, 'Volksdevotie rond Franciscus vanaf de Gouden Eeuw', in *Franciscus van Assisi*, exh. cat., Museum Catharijne Convent Utrecht, 2016, pp. 148-179.

10 Joke Spaans, *De levens der Maechden, Het verhaal van een religieuze vrouwengemeenschap in de eerste helft van de zeventiende eeuw*, Hilversum, 2012, p. 138; Verheggen 2006, pp. 91-92 and 261.

11 See also, for example: Kanters, *De Godsvrucht*; Jan Klinckaert, 'Sursum Corda. Het hart in de christelijke religie', in *Het Hart*, exh. cat. Teylers Museum Haarlem and Museum Dr. Guislain Ghent, 2004-2005, pp. 42-57; for the image mediation book of Mary Magdalena de Pazzi see: Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie en hartstocht*, pp. 156-157.

12 Mindfulness originates in Buddhism. For the Catholic meditation technique from the Middle Ages, see: Verheggen, *Beelden voor passie en hartstocht*, 2006, pp. 26-42. For the Middle Ages, also see, e.g.: Rudy, 'Laat-middeleeuwse devotie', pp. 111-133.

13 The term 'emotions' is currently chosen as a collective name for all kinds of expressions of human activity, in which the virtues also find a place in a broader context. Also see: Schwartz et. al., *Emoties. Geschilderde gevoelens in de Gouden Eeuw*, exh. cat., Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, 2014-2015.

14 Anton van Duinkerken (justification), *Beati patris Bernardi primi quondam abbatis Clarevallensis coenobii Rhytmica Oratio ad unum quodlibet membrorum Christi patientis et a cruce pendentis* of *Godtvrughtighe oeffeninghe van den H. Bernardus tot de lidmaeten vanden ghekruysten Jesus*, Haarlem, 1948; translation by Fulgentius Bottens OFM from 1685.

15 Guilielmus Wael SJ, *Croone der Alderheylichste Wonden Christi Iesu*, Antwerp, 1649, p. 115.

16 Barbara Baert, *Interspaces between Word, Gaze and Touch. The Bible and the Visual Medium in the Middle Ages*, Leuven, 2011, pp. 52-55 and 103; Barbara Baert, 'The washing wound: late medieval ideas concerning Christ as 'Fons pietatis' in *Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte*, 16 (2004), pp. 203-241; Gabriele Finaldi et. al., *The image of Christ*, exh. cat. The National Gallery, London, 2000, pp. 166-167. In this, a similar seventeenth-century engraving from Augsburg is discussed and depicted.

17 H. van Beuningen, A. Koldeweij and D. Kicken, *Heilig en Profaan 2. 1200 Laatmiddeleeuwse Insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties*, Cothen, 2001, p. 12 and in this: Johan Winkelman. 'Bazige vrouwen, hitsige dwazen en leurende kooplieden', pp. 185-187.

18 See for the various types of devotionalia made until the very twentieth century, e.g.: Willem Knippenberg. *Devotionalia. Religieuze voorwerpen uit het katholieke leven*, Eindhoven, 1985; *Volksdevotie. Beelden van religieuze volkscultuur in Noord-Brabant*, exh. cat. Museum voor Religieuze Kunst Uden, 1990.

Bound to the lock: about Mario De Brabandere

Tom Lambeens

Locked up

Mario De Brabandere (°1963) unlocks forms. Opening up, though, accomplishes nothing. Everyone who comes into contact with the works of De Brabandere almost immediately finds them closed, fixed and locked. It is exactly this movement, where the unlocking nevertheless leaves the locked up unaffected, I think that appeals to the religious, even in images. This dynamic also immediately hypothesizes every direct statement about the religious dimension of images. Given that this effect comes from the forms themselves, I focus first on their appearance. Do I take Mario De Brabandere as a form purist? Apart from the pejorative connotation that this term currently carries, De Brabandere is simply one of the few European artists who so explicitly relies on powerful forms, and thus on the power of forms.

It is true, though, that forms are never simply included in his work as forms. In the way he inexplicitly focuses on the shapes of forms, his images become receptive to an implicit content that immediately also makes clear that real forms are always forms of interaction. For no artist does the form represent an endeavour in itself, in contrast to design: in each case, the form stands for something different – as each literally speaking opens itself to many figurative interpretations, and only then actually brings the speaking to speech. Forms always appear forms of interaction in order to show us what we cannot see or understand. In this text, I want to make this particular function of images comprehensible, where the content cautiously emerges,