

## Spoken Words and Images in Late Medieval Italian Painting

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The more I thought of the theme of this colloquium, and of my own contribution within this conference frame, the more grew my concern: What were these words, and what was the meaning and significance of what we call oral, verbal, or written, within the *visual* historical context that I chose? Then, quite contrary to an earlier publication<sup>1</sup> where I emphasized that “*pictura loquitur*,” I concluded that pictures do not really speak.<sup>2</sup> At best, they could be read, or better: perceived as a visual text – sometimes with a ‘real’ text included in the picture – not similar to words, but probably in terms of *inspire et videre* – the new way to denote silent private reading in the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> And how about the oral or written text outside the confinement of the image, if it was there, and why? Did the image need words and text, and how did these relate to it? To be sure, those monumental pictures – due to their location and relatively small format – could not be discerned in a way that would allow their true “reading” – at least as we understand the term “read” or “see” today?

Was it true, then, according to a modern slogan, that *seeing is believing*? Should it not say instead: *believing is seeing*? Was it not the mind or the word that made you believe what you really could *not* see? What actually was thought, if not said in front of pictures by their respective audiences? Was it just something that came to mind, as we would think today, or was it a kind of thinking of a different nature, as indeed different were the images in the medieval mind of the time?<sup>4</sup>

Typically, art history still owes us explanations as to what was thought, said and done in front of pictures. This is true for monumental frescoes and mosaics, and of

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<sup>1</sup> Jens T. Wollesen, “‘Ut poesis pictura?’ Problems of Images and Texts in the Early Trecento” in *Petrarch’s Triumphs Allegory and Spectacle*, eds. K. Eisenbichler and A. A. Iannucci. (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, Inc., 1990), pp. 183-210.

<sup>2</sup> However, see: Leslie Brubaker, “When Pictures Speak: the Incorporation of Dialogue in the Ninth-Century Miniatures of Paris gr. 510,” *Word & Image*, 12 (1996), pp. 94-109. Here, of course, not the pictures, but the words in the picture speak ... ; see also Roger Tarr, “‘Visible parlare’: the Spoken Word in Fourteenth-Century Central Italian Painting,” *Word & Image*, 13 (1997), pp. 223-244.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Saenger, “Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society,” *Viator* 13 (1982), pp. 367-414, 384 f. See also now Paul Saenger, *Space between Words: The Origin of Silent Reading* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1997), passim.

<sup>4</sup> The medieval mind, to be sure, is an academic hybrid – especially when discussed within this brief evaluation.

their relatives in sculpture and relief outside the cult building. Both, I believe, required the explanatory spoken words based on, most likely, biblical texts. Maybe, these images were first understood in a kind of silent perception of their imaginative visual appearance, and then enhanced and specified by the spoken word.

In any event, so it seems to me, medieval pictures rarely functioned without the support of (established) texts or legends, and the spoken word. In many instances, words – sometimes not referring to established (biblical) texts – were included with the picture, and more specifically, *within* the picture, however, again in Latin, and not in the vernacular, and facing the illiterate vernacular beholder within a specific *extra-pictorial* context.

Moreover, to complicate the issue – ignored by most art historians – many pictures were rarely visible at all times, and not for everybody. Altar pieces were normally closed with shutters, and their sacred images only briefly exposed for limited visionary occasions, such as the mass, or special liturgical festivities and celebrations. This *sacred invisibility* remains to be addressed, too.

It seems that images were often enhanced with words: within the context of the mass, or other para-liturgical occasions. Rarely could the *imago* truly compete with the imaginative power of words or the mind. To complicate matters, I should like to add that mind, words, and texts, are distinct and different entities, but intricately dependent on each other, psychologically, as we would call it, creating a complex realm of a historically changing mode of perception – *in tandem* with and applied to images. Further on, the medieval *imago*, the image, is a peculiar and complex phenomenon that is part – and inseparable, together with the word – of the imaginative realm of the mind, soul and intellect. This discrepancy between *imago* and imagination becomes apparent, for example, in a passage of Angela of Foligno's (d. 1309) book of the *Believers' True Experience*, where she realized that:

Quando transibam iuxta crucem pictam vel passionem, videbatur michi quod nichil erat pictum comparatione maxime passionis que facta est ei secundum veritatem et que fuerat michi ostensa et impressa cordi.<sup>5</sup> (My italics)

Or, the function of images, and therefore their message, was determined by the specifics of their location, and the words, occasionally, and in predetermined, fixed terms, performed in front of them. To be sure, this does not mean to play down the importance or documentary value of pictures in relation to texts and spoken words, but just to hint at the complex *interactive* roles of words and images. Both words and images – and imagination – in my view, worked closely together, for at least most of the thousand years we call medieval.

A vital change regarding texts, pictures, and a new category of owners occurred in the outgoing thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century. New genres of

<sup>5</sup> *Liber de vere fidelium experientia*, cited from Georg Weise, *Die geistige Welt der Gotik und ihre Bedeutung für Italien* (Deutsche Viertel-Jahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, vol. 25, ed. P. Kluckhahn and E. Rothacker), (Halle/Saale, 1939), p. 356, n. 2. See also Beatrice Coppini, *La scrittura e il percorso mistico. Il «liber» di Angela da Foligno* (Rome: Editrice lanua, 1986), passim.

private books of prayer, and panel paintings of devotion were illustrated with scenes of silent devotional reading, emphasizing both the new spiritual role attributed to the book and to the image. What I refer to, here, is a new kind of supplicatory, meditational *dialogue* between the image and its beholder. This *dialogue* or *conversation* consisted in loud or silent contemplation within a private realm, capturing wandering thoughts, and/or the reiteration of fixed vernacular prayers – while focussing on the image.

The main stimulus for this development, of course, did not originate in the picture, but in the mind: regarding new ideas of piety, private life and devotion – and language, the vernacular – in France and Italy – a true change of paradigms.

Pictures followed suit to mind and language, reluctantly, however, because of their inherent traditional or canonical structures bound to certain functions and rules of their carriers, and their contextual liturgical roles. This change, in my view, is well testified by the Lambeth Apocalypse of around 1260, although outside France, but intimately related to its culture.<sup>6</sup> The handy manuscript was owned by Lady Eleanor of Quincy, and inspired by her Benedictine monastic advisor (fig. 1). Obviously added later to the Apocalypse, there is a number of full page miniatures of less glossy and expensive quality. Two of them are outstanding and foreign within this context. They reveal the attempt to turn this manuscript into a truly private devotional tool: the *Crucifixion* with St. John ostensibly gazing at the reader, and a leaf showing Eleanor or an allegory of penitence, literally shielding herself against the evil spirits. Only the latter page bears inscriptions not in Latin, but in vernacular French, whereas all the other folios that follow the Apocalypse, strangely enough, are void of any textual comment. Therefore, they are no text illustrations but stand-alone miniatures, comparable to privately owned panel paintings which came to exist at the time in Italy. Moreover, their composition is a remarkable mixture between allegorical and narrative elements that, again, betray their intentional conception and perception as devotional pictures.

Anyway, this part of the manuscript is a tentative experiment to add strong personal and private devotional *dialogue* qualities to an otherwise rather conventional, biblical repertory. Apart from the *Crucifixion* and the page depicting the successful resistance against the devil's aggression thanks to her virtuous devotion, there are full-page portraits of her favourite saints with no accompanying text at all.

Of course, the supplicatory *dialogue*, i. e. the spoken word or prayer, had to be added from outside by Eleanor herself, probably guided by the expertise of her monastic advisor. This part of the manuscript reflects the attempt to pictorially achieve an even more individual devotional *dialogue*. However, neither do we do know what Eleanor thought nor what she really said while looking at these pictures which were not yet related to certain hours of prayers, such as in a Book of Hours.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 209, fol. 48, the Lambeth Apocalypse; see Suzanne Lewis, *Reading Images: Narrative Discourse And Reception in the Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Apocalypse*. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), passim.

<sup>7</sup> P. Saenger, "Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Late Middle Ages." *Scrittura e Civiltà*.

Parallel to these Books of Hours, but pictorially unrelated to this phenomenon, we witness the equally unique invention and use of privately owned panel paintings in the outgoing thirteenth century in Italy: private devotional, small single panels, diptychs, and triptychs.<sup>8</sup> It seems that these privately owned devotional panels became extremely popular. The most important cause for the triumph of small devotional and private panel paintings is the contemporary development of private meditative devotion. The surviving small panels are all anonymous. They are neither signed nor dated, because they were not made for the type of use that would propagate the reputation, fame or sake of the soul of their makers within an official or public (cult) ambience. Equally important is that they did not relate the artists to the protective power of the image that they created. One cannot emphasize enough that these small panels were not firmly placed within a fixed liturgical, saintly, apothropaic, miraculous or propagandistic-religious context (church altars), but were – without any liturgical “detours” – directly bound to people. These new, privately owned pictures also *reprocessed* the images of their authoritative official and liturgical models. In other words, they were not only adopting the main characteristics and conventional features of established official imagery – and there was no alternative to that as yet – but they were *adapting* them to the personal wishes and needs of the private clientèle. The same buyers then also included devout portraits of themselves in the picture, together with a growing explicit and concrete visual expression of their personal pious needs, wishes and hopes. In modern terms, pictures became truly *interactive*, functioning as part of a new visual, personal and devotional *dialogue* that paved the way for the use of these images as *pictures* and not primarily as liturgical tools. These panels not only introduced a new category of pictures, but far more importantly, point to a new category of users, *private lay men and women*. These, to be sure, do not stand at the very end of an art historical development, as was usually the case in the past, but are the true catalysts. The panels, by their miniature size alone, escaped the liturgical frame to become devotional images for both semi-private, monastic groups, and then an exclusively private civic clientèle. Remarkably, this phenomenon is paralleled by contemporary developments regarding the vernacular language.<sup>9</sup> If – within the context

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9 (1985), pp. 239-269.

<sup>8</sup> My study on this phenomenon entitled HASTEN TO MY AID AND COUNSEL... *The Answers Of The Pictures: Private Devotional Panel Painting In Italy Around 1300*. is pending publication. See also Hans Belting, *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter: Form und Funktion früherer Bildtafeln der Passion* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1981); Hendrik Willem Van Os (with Eugène Honée, Hans Nieuwendorp, Bernhard Ridderbos), *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994); Jens T. Wollesen, “Das bürgerliche ‘Betrachterporträt.’ Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Bildsprache im Medium des kleinen Privatbildes um 1300,” *Europäische Kunst um 1300. Akten des XXV. internationalen Kongress für Kunstgeschichte, CIIIA. Vienna 4-10 Sept 1983* (Böhlau: Vienna, 1986), vol. 6., pp. 223-232, idem, “The Case of the Disappeared Stoclet Madonna,” *Pantheon*. LVI (1998), pp. 4-9.

<sup>9</sup> For this issue see Franz Bäuml, “Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy,” *Speculum*, 55 (1980), pp. 237-264. Serge Lusignan, *Parler vulgairement. Les intellectuels et la langue française aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Montréal: Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1987),

of Books of Hours – the emphasis is on the text or word in conjunction with the picture, it is here the stand-alone picture that invited for a verbal or oral dialogue.

Many of them show the Virgin and the Christ Child with Passion scenes, such as the Crucifixion<sup>10</sup> (fig. 2). They could, whenever and wherever required, be pulled out of their protective leather cases and be contemplated. For that matter, they were quite different from – if not superior – to what I called the *imago* or image which only appeared temporarily within a liturgical, prototypical context.

Their private use – and in particular the issue of the complimentary company of spoken words – was never discussed, and seemed to have been more diverse and substantial than one would expect. From the *Ricordi*, a diary written by a certain Florentine Giovanni di Pagolo Morelli between 1371 and 1444,<sup>11</sup> we know that he used a small panel with the Crucifixion for his devotional practice. Dressed only in a shirt, with bare head and knees, he would contemplate the image, reflect on his sins, and burst out in tears in view of Christ's suffering.<sup>12</sup> After a while, however, he regains the "allegria" of his mind, and engages in a mixture of supplications and prayers, citing psalms, 'orazioni' and *laude*, 'con voce pietosamente (compassionately) ordinate,' and then speaks to the picture *in his own words*.<sup>13</sup> This exercise goes on for some time; he then touches and kisses the protagonists of the *Crucifixion* picture, and, finally, after

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passim. Eugenio Savona, *Intelletualità e pubblico nell'età comunale* (Messina and Florence: Casa Editrice G. D'Anna, 1979), and, of course, Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern: A. Francke AG Verlag, 1948), passim, and esp. pp. 383-388.

<sup>10</sup> As an example, I chose the small (Reder) triptych from the Art Museum, Princeton University, acc. no.: 58-126, gift of Mr. And Mrs. Jacob Reder in memory of their son; overall: 42.2 x 52.2 cm. Edward Benjamin Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting. An Illustrated Index* (Florence: Olschki, 1949; reprint New York: Hacker Art Books, Inc., 1976), no. 303, Florentine, dated c. 1260-70

<sup>11</sup> *Ricordi* (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Codex Magliabecchiano II IV 52, between 1371 and 1444). Cited from *Collezione in Ventiquattresimo*, eds. E. Cecchi and V. Branca. (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1956), pp. 476 ff.

<sup>12</sup> "a ginocchie ignude e 'n camicia, senza avere sopra alla testa alcune cosa, colla correggia in collo, nel mio orazione così verso di quello ragguardando, incominciavi prima a immaginare e ragguardare in me i miei peccati, ne' quai duramente vedeva avere offeso il Figliuolo di Dio. *E appreso, considerando con quanta dura, acerba e scura passione Yesu Cristo crocifisso, la cui figura ragguradava*, avea dall'eternali pene ricomperato, non patì a' miei occhi Lui con durezza ragguardara, ma, credo per dono di pietà per Lui a me conceduta, il cuore e tutti i miei sensi rimosi a somma tenerezza, per li miei occhi il viso di lagrime si bagnava".

<sup>13</sup> "E così per ispazio di buon pezzo dimorando, e già alleggerato la debolezza dello 'ntelletto, ripreso buon conforto, con divoti salmi e orazioni al crocifisso Figliuolo di Dio a orare incominciavi; e dopo di' salmi e laude a sua riverenza detti con voce piotosemente ordinata, a Lui pregare coll'occhio, col cuore e colla mente m'addirizzai, nelle seguenti parole procedendo: O santissimo e sagratissimo Padre, Figliuolo e Spirito Santo, nella cui maesta, divinita e unita allumina e risprende il Paradiso santo e 'l mondo universo, concedi al tuo picciolo servo e fedele cristiano tanto della tua infinita grazia ch' 'i possa dire a tua laude e riverenza quelle parole le quai meritino trapassare dinanzi al tuo cospetto, facendole per tua misericordia favorevoli alla benedetta anima, delle quale prima dalla tua grazia ricevetti dono, e qualla, come desidera, sia beatificata nel tuo cospetto."

making the sign of the cross, retires to bed.<sup>14</sup> This *dialogue* between picture and beholder comprehends, at that time, roughly around 1400, imagination, exaltation, supplication, contemplation, and the spoken word in terms of structured text, and in his own words, or what Giovanni calls his *rozzo parlare*.<sup>15</sup>

A most interesting and much earlier testimony of this kind of discourse that I should like to mention here for the sake of both its originality and orality, happened again in front of a picture of the *crucifixus* – but now within the confinement of the Benedictine nunnery of Helfta near Eisleben, Germany. This geographical side step is inserted here in order to show that this type of vernacular orality was, so it seems, much more developed north of the Alps, and especially within the context of nunneries and its visionaries. It is provided by Gertrude of Helfta (1256-1301/02),<sup>16</sup> who, however, entrusted someone else to pray for her *ante imaginem crucifixi* with the following words recorded in Latin, as part of her visionary account written *post festum*:<sup>17</sup>

Per tuum transvulneratum Cor, transfige, amantissime Domine, cor ejus jaculus amoris tui, in tantum ut nihil terrene continere possit, sed a sola efficacia tuae divinitatis contieatur ... Domine, fateor quod secundum merita mea non sum digna accipere minimum donorum tuorum; sed tamen meritis et desiderio omnium adstantium supplico Pietatis tuae, ut transfigas cor meum tui amoris sagitta, etc.

This supplication before the image of a *crucifixus*, in all likelihood, was not spoken in Latin, but in the vernacular, and therefore reflects an important instance of orality in tandem with an image around 1300. However, it remains obscure, towards what kind of picture Gertrude was directing her prayer, since she only mentions the *imago* of the *crucifixus*: Since she also mentions that the crucifixus was “in an elevated place,” one may assume that she was looking at a sculpted or painted Crucifixion on an elevated rod beam right in front of an altar.

Back in Italy, one realizes that this discourse was less smooth and eloquent at that time regarding the new medium of privately owned devotional panel paintings. A rather peculiar case in point is a small private devotional panel in the Princeton Art

<sup>14</sup> “E dette ch’i’ ebbi le sopra iscritte orazione, rendendo molte laude a Dio e ai suoi benedetti Santi, con gran conforto, parendomi dovere essere asaudito, moltissime volte, tenendo nelle braccia la tavola, basciai il Crocifisso e la figura della sua Madre e dello Evangelista. e di poi dissi il Taddeo. E fatto riverenza alle sante merite, mi parti per andare a riposare il corpo; e cosi lieto e pieno di buona isperanza e di gran conforto me n’entrai nel mio letto, e fatto mi il segno della croce m’acconciai per dormire”.

<sup>15</sup> “Ma pure, come piacque a Dio, preso sicurtà, istetti fermo; e ragguardando lei ripiena di tanto dolore, cominciai a piangere e in tanta fisima venni, che gran pezzo non poterono i miei occhi raffrenare. Ma ispirato da Dio, che io piangeva la salute de’ peccatori, ripresi cuore e conforto; e rasciutti gli occhi e la faccia dalle molte lagrime, fattomi il segno della croce, dissi la Salve Regina; e qualla detta, cosi nel mio rozzo parlare incominciai ...”

<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey Hamburger, “The Visual and the Visionary: The Image in late Medieval Monastic Devotions,” *Viator* 20 (1989), pp. 161-182, 172 f.f.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from Hamburger, “The Visual and the Visionary,” p. 172, n. 52.

Museum (24.5 x 17.7 cm), again with the Crucifixion (Fig. 3).<sup>18</sup> In all likelihood it was part of a diptych, is datable between 1315 and 1335, and shows the red letters ECE. MATER TUA – rather clumsily, it seems – inscribed beneath Christ's left arm and directed towards Saint John.

In my opinion, the panel shows a verbal dialogue between Christ and John that could be read and spoken by the owner of the diptych. It seems peculiar, however, that this discourse was not held in the vernacular, but in *Latin*, and that it was not more explicitly visualized. For example one could imagine Christ's arm reaching down from the cross toward his favorite disciple – as shown in a unique Sieneese example around 1290<sup>19</sup> (fig. 4). The only insignificant, so it appears, and visual support of Christ's words is that his head, usually sunken on the shoulder on Mary's side, is not depicted in agony but seems to speak to and is turned toward Saint John. Most likely, then, the inscription was not just a kind of afterthought in order to make the panel more attractive, if not more suitable for the devotional *dialogue* with its owner and client. Instead, it has to be seen (or better: read) in conjunction with the extraordinary position of Christ's head. Therefore, text and image in the Princeton Crucifixion are meaningful derivations of the normal official pictorial scheme. The conventional Crucifixion theme was manipulated to parallel the message of the inscribed words. Together, picture and words establish not only a *dialogue within* the picture, but the more so between the depicted religious protagonists and the supplicant outside the picture. But what exactly were the role and the reference of these words within the picture and their echo outside? Were they repeated, or spoken by the beholder as part of his devotional contemplation with this panel? The answer is yes, but has to be significantly qualified.

As far as I can see, the message and the use of this picture was – at least occasionally – bound to other accompanying textual or oral resources. I would assume that the diptych's owner, apart from *ad hoc* prayers and supplications that came to

<sup>18</sup> Garrison, *Index*, no. 263. Except for this catalogue entry, this panel is not published or discussed elsewhere. The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. Inv. no.: 36-18. Gift of Margaret G. Mather. Datable between 1315-1335. Attributed to "The Speaking Christ Master," (Garrison). Italian, Venetian. Tempera on panel; 24.5 x 17.7 cm. Hinge marks are visible on the left – therefore this was the right wing of a diptych.

<sup>19</sup> Garrison, *Index*, no. 411 (232 x 113 cm). From Colle Val d'Elsa, now in the *Pinacoteca* of Siena (no. 313); Piero Torriti, *La pinacoteca nazionale di Siena. I dipinti dal XII al XV secolo* (Genova: Sagep Editrice, 1980), fig. p. 39, p. 39, no. 313, dated around 1290. See also Vincent Moleta, *From St. Francis to Giotto. The Influence of St. Francis on Early Italian Art and Literature* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), pp. 29 f.; H. Van Os, "St. Francis of Assisi as a second Christ in early Italian Painting," *Simiolus* 7 (1975), pp. 3-20, esp. p. 9, fig. 7. To Gábor Klaniczay I owe the reference to the interesting, but much later picture of Christ conversing with Saint Hedwig in the *Vita Hedvigis* (1353) in the Hedwig Codex; where: "hymago crucifixi manum et brachium [...] de ligno crucis absolvens extendensque ipsam benedixit, dicens voce sonora: Udit est oratio tua et que postulans, impetrabis," (*Vita Hedvigis* 520-521). See David Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 283-343, and in general: Caroline Walker Bynum, "Women Mystics and Eucharistic Devotion in the Thirteenth Century," *Women's Studies* 11 (1984), pp.179-214.

mind, returned to unillustrated prayer books – or their memorized words and passages – which would provide a suitable text; those prayers which Ringbom rightly recognized as a “fundamental accessory.”<sup>20</sup> Moreover, this referral to a more organized and standard form of prayer before or “with” these or similar panels may be significant in regard to their function as an important source of indulgences.

What kind of prayers would have been suitable for a similar private devotional practice? The very popular *Obsecro te* (I beseech you) and *O Intemerata* (O Immaculate Virgin) in many Books of Hours contain passages that could well be read before a panel picture such as the Princeton Crucifixion. Especially the ‘Obsecro te’ illustrates several important characteristics of late medieval piety, and tries to *create an intimate relationship* with the supernatural person being addressed.<sup>21</sup>

This intimate relationship, or the intimate *dialogue*, launched by the religious protagonists in these panels’ pictures, is one of the most important qualities that privately owned devotional panels could offer. The *Obsecro te* first concentrates on Mary, and then focuses on the *crucifixus*. The compassionate reflection on the crucified Christ is followed by an impatient and quite demanding supplication.<sup>22</sup> Manuscripts with this prayer sometimes are accompanied by the picture of the Virgin with the Christ child, and, in some cases, by a “portrait” of a lay person kneeling and praying before her.

This would perfectly correspond to the situation of the supplicant with a prayer text in front of the panel or diptych in question similar to the before mentioned illumination with Lady Eleanor de Quincy in the Lambeth Apocalypse (fig. 1). This is also manifest, albeit much later, in an ensemble of a panel and prayer book from the prayer book of Philip the Good of Burgundy (1419-1467). There, he is depicted together with his son, kneeling and praying from a prayer book topped by a small diptych<sup>23</sup> (fig. 5).

<sup>20</sup> Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative. The Rise of the Dramatic CloseUp in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1965), p. 30. See also Josef Stadlhuber, “Das Laienstundengebet vom Leiden Christi in seinem mittelalterlichen Fortleben,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie*. 72 (1950), pp. 282-325, esp. pp. 302 ff. Franz Beringer, S. J., *Die Ablässe. ihr Wesen und Gebrauch*, vol. 1 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh. 1921), passim. Nikolaus Paulus, *Geschichte des Ablasses im Mittelalter vom Ursprung bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn, 1922). Further on, Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative*, 30: “Both the *Gnadenbilder* and the images of indulgence in some cases adopted identical motifs and pictorial formulas. but the similarity does not end there. In fact, both represent the same trend of late medieval piety, the tendency, that is, to regard the devotion in front of an image as an effective means of supplication, the efficacy in the one case consisting of the alleged »authenticity« and miraculous power of the image itself, in the other being the prospect of salvation offered by the indulgence which was connected with the image.”

<sup>21</sup> Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified. The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York/Baltimore: George Braziller, Inc., in assoc. with the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, 1988), p. 42.

<sup>22</sup> Wieck, *Time Sanctified*, pp. 163 f.

<sup>23</sup> Otto Pächt (ed.), *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Incunabeln der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Fortsetzung des beschreibenden Verzeichnisses der illuminierten Handschriften der Nationalbibliothek in Wien*. vol. 6: O. Pächt, Ulrike Jenni, Dagmar Thoss, *Flämische Schule*, I (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1983), p. 19, figs. 16-21, esp. fig. 25; Prayer book in Vienna. Austrian National Library, Cod. 1800, fols. 1v/2r; from

This testimony for a facultative connection of a private devotional picture and prayer book is, of course, rather late; but it refers to the potential, purely pragmatic problem of this context and its unique and noble solution.

After this rather complex prayer encompassing the full spiritual and bodily realm or welfare of the supplicant, the *O Intemerata* prayer focuses on the protagonists of the Crucifixion and Christ's famous last words as follows:

... thus saying to you, as he was hanging on the cross, 'Woman, behold thy son,' and then to the other, 'Behold thy mother.' By the sweetness of his most sacred love may you be joined by the words of Our Lord as mother and son, you two to whom I, the sinner, commend my body and soul today and every day, so that you might be, at every hour and every moment of my life, inside and outside me, my steadfast guardians and pious intercessors before God.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the popular *O Intemerata* prayer contains exactly the words that are written on our panel, including the reference to its user. The Princeton Crucifixion, therefore, testifies for the use of standardized prayers with picture panels as part of private devotion. Of course, we cannot say whether these prayers – induced by the picture – were performed aloud or silently – with a prayer book at hand, or the prayer memorized.

The context of supplicatory text and picture is further evident in a contemporary portable – most likely privately owned – panel in the Museo Bandini in Fiesole, near Florence (fig. 6)<sup>25</sup>. It shows Mary as *Regina Coeli*, and a male, kneeling supplicant to her right on a star-studded blue surface. The top horizontal and vertical margins of the golden background behind them are incised with the following supplicatory prayer:

AVE REGINA MISERICORDIA DI ME MADRE DI PIATA (PIETA) CHE SON MISERO  
SERVO VIRGHO VIRGINIS.

This time, the personal supplication or prayer is literally included in the picture, and could be read (aloud) as part of the devotional practice.

Moreover, the immediate context between seemingly independent private pictures and prayers is corroborated by two other examples datable around 1334: the so-called *Opera Madonna* in Florence<sup>26</sup> (fig. 7), and her fragmented sister panel in

Flanders, c. 1450 (18.5 x 13 cm). The diptych, according to Pächt, Jenni and Thoss, dates from ca. 1430, whereas the manuscript is from ca. 1450.

<sup>24</sup> Wieck, *Time Sanctified*, p. 164.

<sup>25</sup> Odoardo H. Giglioli, *Catalogo delle cose d'Arte e di Antichità d'Italia. Fiesole* (Rome, 1933), pp. 205 f., fig. 6; (54.4 x 30.2 cm, from S. Ansano).

<sup>26</sup> Florence, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, no. 89; ex-cathedral. *Catalogo del museo dell'Opera del Duomo*, (Florence: Tipografia Barbera, 1904), p. 4l (no. 89), attributed to Taddeo Gaddi; Miklòs Boskovits & Mina Gregori, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting. The Fourteenth Century. Bernardo Daddi, His Shop and Following*, Section III, vol. IV, (Florence: Giunti Gruppo Editoriale, 1991), pp. 205-209, pl. XXII.1-5; Wilhelm Suida, "Studien zur Trecentomalerei," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, XXIX (1906), pp. 108-117, 111; *Mostra Giottesca*, no. 169, figs. 169 a, b, with literature up to 1937, p. 529. Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting. The Fourteenth Century*. Sec. III, vols. I-VIII, (New York: Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1930-1958), III, IV (1934), pp. 50 ff., pls.

Rome, the *Magnificat Madonna*<sup>27</sup> (fig. 8). Both, although for different occasions but related functions, hold books in their hands. The Opera Madonna's book on the left contains a personal prayer that was verbalized in front of the picture, whereas her "Roman sister", the Magnificat Madonna to the right, accepts a Marian hymn, the *Magnificat*. Let me first focus the Opera Madonna which was presumably part of the many devotional pictures and altarpieces in Santa Reparata, the cathedral of Florence.

Mary is shown as a half-length figure, neither crowned nor enthroned, with no Christ child on her lap, holding a book in her left hand with a text that reads as follows: "Dolcissima Vergine Maria dabagnuolo priegovi che pr(e)ghiate lui per sua charita (e) p(er) la sua pote(n)zia mi faccia gr.... dicio che mi fam mestiere."<sup>28</sup>

The book is held upside down so that its text can be read and pronounced by the supplicant below. The prayer is written in *volgare*, just as it probably was actually spoken by the lady in black, and therefore could be understood as well by the lay beholder who could read, but was not familiar with Latin.<sup>29</sup> Obviously, she was not praying for the salvation of her soul, but for heavenly advice and divine support

XXII, XXII, I., ("close following of Daddi"). Richard Fremantle, *Florentine Gothic Painters from Giotto to Masaccio. A Guide to Painting in and near Florence 1300-1450* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1975), p. 629, fig. 98, attributes to Bernardo Daddi; Dirk Kocks, "Die Stifterdarstellung in der italienischen Malerei des 13.- 15. Jahrhunderts," Ph. D., Diss., University of Cologne, 1971, pp. 130 f., no. 345; Barbara Greenhouse Lane, "The Development of the Medieval Devotional Figure," Ph. D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms 70-25, 675, 1970), p. 140. The frame is modern, therefore there are no hinge marks visible on either side of the panel and there is no indication whether originally there were additional wings or, more probably, shutters attached. See also Klaus Krüger, "Bildandacht und Bergeinsamkeit. Der Eremit als Rollenspiel in der städtischen Gesellschaft," in *Malerei und Stadtkultur in der Dantezeit. Die Argumentation der Bilder*, ed. Hans Belting and Dieter Blume (Munich: Hirmer, 1989), pp. 187-200, 193 ff.

<sup>27</sup> Rome, Pinacoteca Vaticana, inv. no. 174 (cut on all sides, tempera on poplar, 86,7 x 52,6 cm); Offner, *Corpus*, III, IV, p. 544, pl. XXIII, has different measures: 72,5 x 33 cm. For the two panels with the missing saints see Offner, *Corpus*, III, VIII, pl. XXV, and Boskovits & Gregori, *Bernardo Daddi*, section III, vol. IV, pl. XXIII.1, pp. 205-209; Caroline Feudale, "The Iconography of the Madonna del Parto," *Marsyas*, VII (1954-1957), 1957, pp. 8-24, esp. p. 11. Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Il Trecento. Firenze e Siena. Monumenti musei e gallerie pontificie. Catalogo della Pinacoteca Vaticana* (Città del Vaticano Libreria: Editrice Vaticana, 1987), vol. II, p. 30, no. 31, fig. 57 (71 x 53 cm). A similar gesture, probably referring to the picture of a (lost) supplicant, is performed by the Madonna with Christ Child in *Le Rose's* church of San Lorenzo (near Tavar-nuzze). See Fremantle, *Florentine Gothic Painters*, fig. 141, (95 x 60 cm).

<sup>28</sup> "Sweetest Virgin Mary of Bagnuolo I ask you to pray to Him for His grace and His power that He does (grazia?) to me as concerns my things." The best transcription of the book's text is given by Offner, *Corpus*, III, IV (1934), p. 50. See also Suida, "Studien," p. 111; Kocks, "Stifterdarstellung," p. 406, no. 345; Giulia Sinibaldi and Giulia Brunetti, *Pittura italiana del Duecento e Tre. Catalogo della mostra giottesca del 1937* (Florence: Sansoni, 1943), p. 529.

<sup>29</sup> For the vernacular reading ability of women see Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," *Signs* (Journal of Women in Culture and Society), 7 (1982), pp. 742-768. Further on James Westfall Thompson, *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939), passim, and Franz Bäuml, "Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy," *Speculum* 55 (1980), pp. 237-264.

regarding her worldly and, most likely, her professional concerns. It is significant that the Opera panel records the prayer as a *book*, or in a book held upside down, therefore suggesting that it indeed “belongs” to the supplicant(s).

What remained of the Vatican Magnificat Madonna (right) is – to judge from the extant evidence – a replica of the Opera panel’s centre. Her book contains the beginning of the following gospel passage:

Magnificat anima mea Dominum: Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Quia respexit humilitatem ancilla suae<sup>30</sup>

However, the Vatican Mary holds the book as if reading it herself. This is another way to physically demonstrate the acceptance of the supplication. The text, though, is of a more official type. To be sure, it is based on a biblical source (Luke I:46-55). More important is, however, that it is a famous and popular Marian hymn, the *Magnificat* (*anima mea*), or the *Canticle of the Virgin* which is an important part of the *Officium* or Hours of the Virgin, and the *Office of the Dead* in Books of Hours.<sup>31</sup>

Both pictures are fairly unique, as far as we know. In both cases, the Madonnas present texts as *books*, one containing an unconventional and personal supplication (Museo dell’Opera), the other one (Vatican) a Marian hymn.

A fairly large number of French manuscripts also shows the owner of the devotional manuscript with the same book right in front of a picture that is part of the same book. Similarly, in Italy, the owners of these panels also “enter” the picture, always depicted as a kneeling and praying supplicant, but *never* with a book in their hands, because it is not an integral and formal part of the devotional, supplicatory practice of this medium. In this respect, the panel picture becomes indeed a kind of *mirror*, reflecting the supplicant and the actual supplicatory dialogue. The Book of Hours never took root in Italy compared with its great popularity in France. It seems that the owners of these Italian panels were less dependent on similarly established texts, but relied more on an oral tradition, or *memory*,<sup>32</sup> when it came to cite appropriate words of prayer, supplication or intercession.

In sum, I would suggest that the messages of the new devotional pictures in Italy around 1300 and little later were significantly enhanced by words – although less eloquently as compared with northern examples of the same time – performed spoken or silently, from an *ad hoc* mind, or according to more structured vernacular prayers, and hymns. To be sure, the visual message, i. e. the picture, was as yet neither as imaginative as the believing mind, nor as eloquent as the spoken word. It seems that

<sup>30</sup> Luke I, 44 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Wieck, *Time Sanctified*, pp. 166 f.; Franz Unterkircher, *Das Stundenbuch des Mittelalters* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1985), pp. 120, 153.

<sup>32</sup> Suzanne Lewis, *Reading Images*, pp. 242 ff. (“Memory was supplied by the imagination, the image-making faculty of the mind and the sensitive part of the soul that is imprinted with sense impressions”); Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 122-155. Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 61, 70 f., 77, and passim; see also Helga Hajdu, *Das mnemotechnische Schrifttum des Mittelalters* (Vienna: Franz Leo, 1936), pp. 61-65.

the picture, apart from its (limited) emotional-devotional impact, triggered those words which would be drawn from *memory*, or (memorized) vernacular prayer repertory. The same words also would influence the picture's composition – resulting in the visual presence of the supplicant in the picture.

No doubt, the pictures discussed here mark the beginning of a profound change of paradigms regarding this intricate context: the development from images to *phantasmata* (Thomas Aquinas), *metaphorica*, or *imagines agentes* (Albertus Magnus)<sup>33</sup> – i. e. to pictures, and the gradual emancipation of the imagination – and therefore of the picture – from structured, established prayers to more vernacular oral supplications.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Lewis, *Reading Images*. pp. 242 ff.

<sup>34</sup> See also Hamburger, "The Visual and the Visionary," pp.172 f.



Fig. 1: London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 209, fol. 48, the Lambeth Apocalypse. Lady Eleanor de Quincy kneeling and praying before the Virgin with Child; photo: museum. From: Ruth Mettler, Nigel Morgan, and Michelle Brown, *Die Lambeth Apocalypse* (Stuttgart: Verlag Müller & Schindler), facsimile vol., fol. 48.



Fig. 2: Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Art Museum (acc. no. 58-126). The Princeton (Reder) Madonna; photo: museum



Fig. 3: Princeton, N. J., the Art Museum, Princeton University (no. 36-18); panel with the crucifixion, gift of Margaret G. Mather; photo: museum.

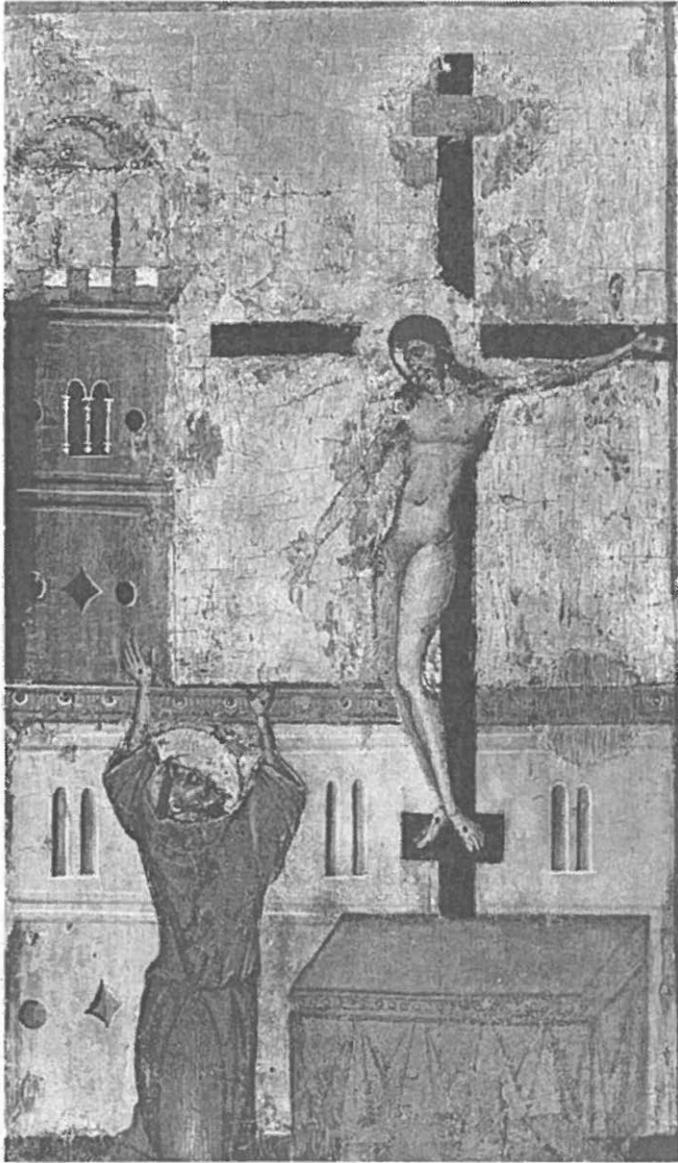


Fig. 4: Siena, Pinacoteca no. 313, Franciscan Vita panel, detail: St. Francis before Christ; photo: Alinari. From: Hellmut Hager, *Die Anfänge des italienischen Altarbildes. Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte des toskanischen Hochaltarretabels*. Römische Forschungen der Bibliotheca Hertziana, XVII (Munich: Anton Schroll & Co., 1962), fig. 136.



Fig. 5: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 1800, fols. 1r-2v, Prayer Book of Philip the Good of Burgundy, Philip the Good and his son Count of Charolais praying before an altar topped by a diptych; from: Otto Pächt, ed., *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Incunabeln der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Fortsetzung des beschreibenden Verzeichnisses der illuminierten Handschriften der Nationalbibliothek in Wien*, vol. 6: O. Pächt, Ulrike Jenni, Dagmar Thoss, *Flämische Schule, I* Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, Denkschriften, vol. 160. Veröffentlichung der Kommission für Schrift- und Buchwesen des Mittelalters, Reihe I, vol. 6 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1983). Fig. 19.

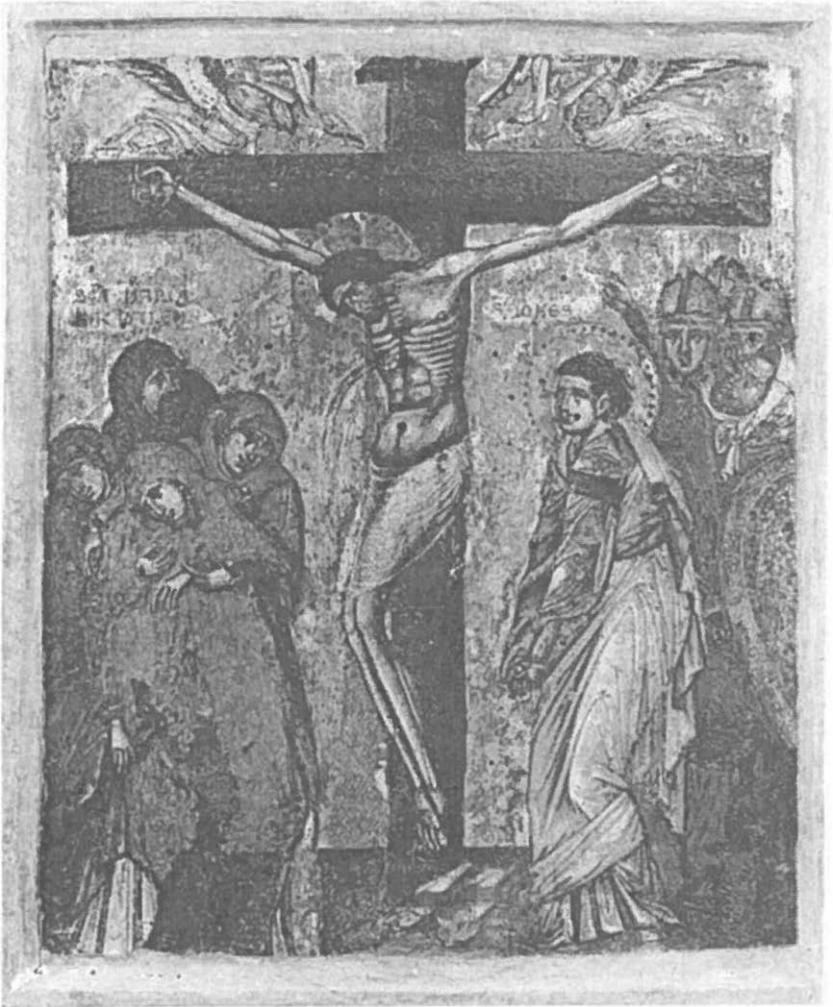


Fig. 6. Florence, Fiesole, Museo Bandini,  
Madonna del Parto panel with supplicant; supplicant; photo: Wollesen.



Fig. 7: Florence, Museo dell'Opera. The Madonna dell'Opera(before restoration); from: Giulia Simi'baldi & Giulia Brunetti, *Pittura italiana del Duecento e Trecento. Catalogo della mostra giottesca del 1937* (Florence: Sansoni, 1943), fig. 89.



Fig. 8: Rome, Pinacoteca Vaticana, (formerly no. 90, now no. 174), the Magnificat Madonna; from: Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting. The Fourteenth Century*, sec. III, vol. III/IV (New York: Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1930-1958), pl. XXIII.

ORAL HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES  
THE SPOKEN WORD IN CONTEXT

Edited by Gerhard Jaritz and Michael Richter

**MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM**

SONDERBAND XII

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**CEU MEDIEVALIA**

VOLUME 3

**Oral History of the Middle Ages**  
**The Spoken Word in Context**

Edited by Gerhard Jaritz and Michael Richter

Krems and Budapest 2001

**GEDRUCKT MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG DER ABTEILUNG  
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DER NIEDERÖSTERREICHISCHEN LANDESREGIERUNG**

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Cover illustration: The wife of Potiphar covets Joseph: "... erat autem Joseph pulchra facie et decorus aspectu: post multos itaque dies iecit domina oculos suis in Ioseph et ait domini mecum." ("... And Joseph was [a] goodly [person], and well favoured. And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me."), Gen. 39: 6-7 (KJV). Concordantiae Caritatis, c. 1350. Cistercian abbey of Lilienfeld (Lower Austria), ms 151, fol. 244v (detail). Photo: Institut für Realienskunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit (Krems an der Donau).

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## Preface

Oral culture played an instrumental role in medieval society.<sup>1</sup> Due to the lack of any direct source evidence, however, research into the functions and importance of oral communication in the Middle Ages must confront a number of significant problems. Only indirect traces offer the opportunity to analyze phenomena that were based on or connected with the spoken word. The 'oral history' of the Middle Ages requires the application of different approaches than dealing with the 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For some decades Medieval Studies have been interested in questions of orality and literacy, their relationship and the substitution of the spoken by the written word.<sup>2</sup> Oral and literate culture were not exclusive and certainly not opposed to each other.<sup>3</sup> The 'art of writing' was part of the 'ars rhetorica' and writing makes no sense without speech.<sup>4</sup> Any existing written statement should also be seen as a spoken one, although, clearly, not every oral statement as a written one. Authors regularly wrote with oral delivery in mind. 'Speaking' and 'writing' are not antonyms.

It is also obvious that "the use of oral communication in medieval society should not be evaluated . . . as a function of *culture populaire* vis-à-vis *culture savante* but, rather, of the communication habits and the tendency of medieval man

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<sup>1</sup> For the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, cf. Willem Frijhoff, "Communication et vie quotidienne à la fin du moyen âge et à l'époque moderne: réflexions de théorie et de méthode," in *Kommunikation und Alltag in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Helmut Hundsbichler (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), p. 24: "La plupart de gens vivait encore pour l'essentiel dans une culture orale et les procédés d'appropriation des idées passaient de préférence par la parole dite et écoutée, quand bien même on était capable d'une lecture visuelle plus ou moins rudimentaire."

<sup>2</sup> See Marco Mostert, "New Approaches to Medieval Communication?" in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 15-37; Michael Richter, "Die Entdeckung der 'Oralität' der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft durch die neuere Mediävistik," in *Die Aktualität des Mittelalters*, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz (Bochum: D. Winkler, 2000), pp. 273-287.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Burke calls the construct of "oral versus literate" useful but at the same time dangerous: idem, "Mündliche Kultur und >Druckkultur< im spätmittelalterlichen Italien," in *Volkskultur des europäischen Spätmittelalters*, eds. Peter Dinzelsbacher and Hans-Dieter Mück (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1987), p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Clanchy, "Introduction," in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), p. 6.

to share his intellectual experiences in the corporate framework.”<sup>5</sup> Oral delivery was not “the sole prerogative of any socioeconomic class.”<sup>6</sup>

For all these reasons, it is important to analyze the extent of and context, in which ‘speech acts,’ auditive effects, and oral tradition occur in medieval sources.<sup>7</sup> Research into the use of the spoken word or references to it in texts and images provides new insight into various, mainly social, rules and patterns of the communication system. It opens up additional approaches to the organization and complexity of different, but indispensably related, media in medieval society, and their comparative analysis.<sup>8</sup>

The spoken word is connected with the physical presence of its ‘sender.’ Speech may represent the authenticity of the given message in a more obvious way than written texts or images. Therefore, the use of ‘speech acts’ in written or visual evidence also has to be seen in context with the attempt to create, construct, or prove authenticity. Moreover, spoken messages contribute to and increase the life-likeness of their contents, which may influence their perception by the receiver, their efficacy and success. Being aware of such a situation will have led to the explicit and intended use and application of the spoken word in written texts and images – to increase their authenticity and importance, too.

If one operates with a model of ‘closeness’ and ‘distance’ of communication with regard to the level of relation of ‘senders’ and ‘receivers,’ then the ‘speech acts’ or their representation have to be seen as contributors to a ‘closer’ connection among the participants of the communication process.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, however, speech might be evaluated as less official. One regularly comes across ‘oral space’

<sup>5</sup> Sophia Menache, *The Vox Dei. Communication in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21. Cf. also Jan-Dirk Müller, “Zwischen mündlicher Anweisung und schriftlicher Sicherung von Tradition. Zur Kommunikationsstruktur spätmittelalterlicher Fechtbücher,” in *Kommunikation und Alltag in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Helmut Hundsbiehler (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), p. 400: “Offensichtlich sind schriftliche und nichtschriftliche Tradierung von Wissen weiterhin relativ unabhängig voneinander, nachdem die Schrift längst dazu angesetzt hat, Inseln der Mündlichkeit oder praktisch-enaktiver Wissensvermittlung zu erobern. Die Gedächtnisstütze kann die Erfahrung nicht ersetzen, sondern allenfalls reaktivieren. Sie ist sogar nur verständlich, wo sie auf anderweitig vermittelte Vorkenntnisse stößt.”

<sup>7</sup> Cf. W.F.H. Nicolaisen, ed., *Oral Tradition in the Middle Ages* (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> See, esp., Horst Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen, Schrift und Bild. Kultur und Gedächtnis im Mittelalter* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1995), *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> See also Stefan Sonderegger, “>Gesprochen oder nur geschrieben?< Mündlichkeit in mittelalterlichen Texten als direkter Zugang zum Menschen,” in *Homo Medietas. Aufsätze zu Religiosität, Literatur und Denkformen des Menschen vom Mittelalter bis in die Neuzeit. Festschrift für Alois Maria Haas zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Claudia Brinker-von der Heyde and Niklaus Largier (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 665: “Jedenfalls darf man sich bewußt bleiben, daß auch in den Texten des deutschen Mittelalters die Reflexe gesprochener Sprache eine bedeutende Schicht ausmachen, die besonders dann immer wieder hervortritt, wenn es um einen direkten Zugang zum Menschen geht, um ein Verstehen aus unmittelbarer Partnerschaft heraus ...”

that has become institutionalized or more official by the application of 'written space.'<sup>10</sup> Simultaneous employment of such different levels and qualities of messages must often have had considerable influence on their efficacy.<sup>11</sup>

The papers in this volume are the outcome of an international workshop that was held in February, 2001, at the Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University, Budapest. Participants concentrated on problems of the occurrence, usage, and patterns of the spoken word in written and visual sources of the Middle Ages. They dealt with the role and contents of direct and indirect speech in textual evidence or in relation to it, such as chronicles, travel descriptions, court and canonization protocols, sermons, testaments, law-books, literary sources, drama, etc. They also tried to analyze the function of oral expression in connection with late medieval images.

The audiovisuality of medieval communication processes<sup>12</sup> has proved to be evident and, thus, important for any kind of further comparative analysis of the various levels of the 'oral-visual-literate,' i.e. multimedia culture of the Middle Ages. Particular emphasis has to be put on methodological problems, such as the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches,<sup>13</sup> or the question of the extent to which we are, generally, able to comprehend and to decode the communication systems of the past.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the medievalist does not come across any types of sources in which oral communication represents the main concern.<sup>15</sup> Instead, she or he is confronted, at first glance, with a great variety of 'casual' and 'marginal' evidence.

We would like to thank all the contributors to the workshop and to this volume. Their cooperation made it possible to publish the results of the meeting in the same year in which it took place. This can be seen as a rare exception, at least in the world of the historical disciplines. The head, faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Medieval Studies of Central European University offered various help and support. Special thanks go to Judith Rasson, the copy editor of

<sup>10</sup> This, e.g., could be well shown in a case study on the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela: Friederike Hassauer, "Schriftlichkeit und Mündlichkeit im Alltag des Pilgers am Beispiel der Wallfahrt nach Santiago de Compostela," in *Wallfahrt und Alltag in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, eds. Gerhard Jaritz and Barbara Schuh (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), pp. 277-316.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bob Scribner, "Mündliche Kommunikation und Strategien der Macht in Deutschland im 16. Jahrhundert," in *Kommunikation und Alltag in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Helmut Hundsichler (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), pp. 183-197.

<sup>12</sup> Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen*, p. 292.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Ursula Schaefer, "Zum Problem der Mündlichkeit," in *Modernes Mittelalter. Neue Bilder einer populären Epoche*, ed. Joachim Heinze (Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1994), pp. 374 f.

<sup>14</sup> Frijhoff, "Communication et vie quotidienne," p. 25: "Sommes-nous encore en mesure de communiquer avec la communication de jadis?"

<sup>15</sup> Michael Richter, *Sprache und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter. Untersuchungen zur mündlichen Kommunikation in England von der Mitte des elften bis zu Beginn des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1979), p. 22.

this volume, who took particular care with the texts of the many non-native speakers fighting with the pitfalls of the English language.

Budapest, Krems, and Constance  
December 2001

Gerhard Jaritz and Michael Richter