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The Art of Memory and the Passion

Peter Parshall

For centuries, rhetorical texts held that an effective memory was by definition a visual memory. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, the most widely used handbook of its type in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, was no exception.¹ Like the somewhat earlier rhetoric of Cicero on which it seems to depend, and the later text by Quintilian, this anonymous Roman treatise was designed to train people in the art of public speaking. One essential component of classical rhetorical training was a technique for disciplining one's "natural memory" through systematic means, a technique that seems to have evolved from still more ancient times. This eventually came to be known as the "artificial memory." Although similar in content to other classical treatises on the subject, it was the *Ad Herennium* that developed the theory of the artificial memory most fully.

Simply described, the artificial memory is a method for recollecting items or ideas by attaching them to imagined images, which is to say, pictures in the mind. In order to employ the system we are asked to envision a complex of spaces, perhaps a familiar building. We then proceed through a sequence of ideas, points in an argument, or an inventory of some sort that must be committed to memory, inventing an image for each and installing it, so to speak, at a particular place in the building. Thus, we are instructed to furnish a kind of imaginary theater with images.² These images may be either pictures or objects such that in recalling the steps in an argument or, for that matter, a laundry list, it should be possible to move through this mental architecture from place to place recalling each element in turn. We might consider it a kind of gallery tour that helps to keep the progression of our thoughts in order. Although variations in the system were introduced throughout its history and its particular features regularly critiqued, the basic scheme seems to have remained much the same for centuries.

Since the appearance of Frances Yates's influential and wide-ranging study of the subject over thirty years ago,³ the history and cultivation of the artificial memory has been extensively discussed, particularly among medievalists concerned with its postclassical applications. Understandably, most of the art historical fascination with artificial memory has had to do with its myriad implications for premodern ideas about actual images: how real images were thought to work their magic on the mind and, more precisely, how our interpretation of the exact construction, arrangement, and iconography of actual images might be illuminated by this very specialized facet of ancient rhetorical training. Given the repeated claim by medieval commentators that images served importantly as a reinforcement of the memory, and given the close interdependence of text and image characteristic of the time, a better grasp of the artificial memory and its use surely holds out some promise in this regard. For example, analogies are often drawn between the artificial memory system,

with its *imagines* and *loci*, and the sequential or diagrammatic ordering of much religious art in the Middle Ages, an analogy that seems sound enough. But how can such a parallel between the vividly imagined and the materially realized be more fundamentally interpreted such that each can better inform the significance of the other?

My intention here is to undertake an approach to this question that differs from those that have been offered thus far in the ever expanding literature on the subject. Rather than concentrating on the organization of artificial memory and its application to reading the structural and programmatic relationships among actual images, I propose to concentrate on what the *ars memorativa* might have to tell us about the premodern understanding of the affective power of images in general. Here I shall be less concerned with the usefulness of training the memory per se than with the assumptions on which it rests.

Striking Images

According to the *Ad Herennium* and its medieval interpreters, one critical feature of a memory image is that it be striking, indeed, idiosyncratic enough to be clearly recalled. The treatise supports this admittedly commonsensical proposition by an analogy drawn from nature:

... ordinary things easily slip from the memory while the striking and novel stay longer in the mind. A sunrise, the sun's course, a sunset, are marvelous to no one because they occur daily. But solar eclipses are a source of wonder because they occur seldom. . . . Thus nature shows that she is not aroused by the common, but is moved by a new or striking occurrence. . . . For in invention nature is never last, education never first.⁴

Thus, the basis for memorability is embedded in our nature, that is to say, inherent rather than a consequence of artifice. When we contrive a means of recollection by artificial means we are in fact drawing on an innate capacity that can be cultivated and controlled in the service of a particular task. In the course of explicating the artificial memory and the means for employing it, the author of the *Ad Herennium* offers two types of examples to illustrate how the system works. The first of these gives us texts to be committed to memory and then proceeds to describe images to recall them. These examples are clearly meant as demonstrations, hypothetical cases to be reflected on and then imitated by analogy. Moreover, examples of the first type are discrete instances designed for the memory of a specific circumstance or a passage from a text rather than ideas or things.

Often we encompass the record of an entire matter by one notation, a single image. For example, the prosecutor has

said that the defendant killed a man by poison, has charged that the motive for the crime was an inheritance, and declared that there are many witnesses and accessories to this act. . . . We shall picture the man in question lying ill in bed. . . . And we shall place the defendant at the bedside, holding in his right hand a cup, and in his left tablets, and on the fourth finger a ram's testicles.⁵

The bizarre inclusion of a ram's testicles in this memory image is explained by the word *testiculi*, recalling *testes*, or witnesses, and by the fact that coin purses were apparently made from the scrotum of a ram, hence making reference to the motive of inheritance. Medieval commentaries on the text predictably had some fun accounting for this motif.⁶

Discerning the author's purpose in setting forth the second type of memory image is considerably more complex. Now we are presented not with an actual mnemonic example as we are for the criminal case, but rather with a list of characteristics that a distinct and therefore memorable image might include. This second case shall most occupy our attention. It is offered shortly after the first example, and here is what the Auctor ad Herennium says:

We ought, then, to set up images of a kind that can adhere longest in the memory. And we shall do so if we establish likenesses [*similitudines*] as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague, but active [*imagines agentes*]; if we assign to them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if we ornament some of them, as with crowns or purple cloaks, so that the likeness may be more distinct to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking, or by assigning certain comic effects to our images, for that, too, will ensure our remembering them more readily. The things we easily remember when they are real we likewise remember without difficulty when they are figments, if they have been carefully delineated.⁷

*Imagines igitur nos in eo genere constituere oportebit quod genus in memoria diutissime potest haerere. Id accidet si quam maxime notatas similitudines constituemus; si non multas nec vagas, sed aliquid agentes imagines ponemus; si egregiam pulchritudinem aut unicam turpititudinem eis adtribuemus; si aliquas exornabimus, ut si coronis aut veste purpurea, quo nobis notior sit similitudo; aut si qua re deformabimus, ut si cruentam aut caeno oblitam aut rubrica delibutam inducamus, quo magis insignita sit forma, aut ridiculas res aliquas imaginibus adtribuamus, nam ea res quoque faciet ut facilius meminisse valeamus. Nam quas res veras facile meminimus, easdem fictas et diligenter notatas meminisse non difficile est.*⁸

What, then, are we to make of this passage and its significance, both stated and implicit?⁹ The proposition about the nature and operation of human cognition is put forward as a universal, though of course it is necessarily embedded in historical circumstances that must also be unraveled and reconstructed if we are to comprehend it adequately. In attempting to dissect the sense and function of the passage I

am as much concerned with explicating a concept of affect in ancient image theory as with providing an explanation for the origins and objectives of the technique, though this will also contribute to understanding the enterprise. On an initial reading, the examples of "strikingness" do not appear to be chosen so as to provide us with images that are specific or coherent in their own right. Rather, they appear to be a loose and random cluster of what might be collectively termed *criteria* for a memorable image, and certainly these criteria as given do not constitute such an image in themselves. Notably, they are criteria of different sorts. Among them are attributes, namely crowns and purple cloaks. Then there are qualities such as beauty and ugliness. There are also suggestions of what we might call a mode or condition—that these images be humorous and that they be active rather than passive. But each of these criteria seems meant to be selectively striking in its own right, not necessarily dependent on the others. Furthermore, each of them seems to be left with nothing in particular to which it can be attached. Thus, these attributes, actions, and conditions revolve around an absent center. They are all of them intransitive, having no direct object to refer to.

Is this vivid collage of isolated characteristics then scrupulously random and discontinuous in selection and arrangement precisely so as not to suggest a particular image or relational pattern, or does it point us toward something more tangible? That no actual subject is implied seems to be confirmed by several medieval and Renaissance commentaries on the passage. Take those of Albertus Magnus and Thierry of Chartres, both of whom gloss this portion of the text, Albertus to remark generally on the inadequacy of the treatise's overall strategy of image making, and Thierry mainly to elucidate the literal meaning of the Latin.¹⁰ Thierry, however, does feel compelled to give us his own version of what a comical element in a memory image might be. He proposes placing antlers on the forehead of a human figure.¹¹ It is telling that a cleric should find humor the one element in all of this that actually needed explaining, and it is amusing in itself that the example offered should suggest the sign for cuckoldry, a proverbial failing of the clergy. Renaissance commentaries rarely appear to have investigated the significance of the passage on striking images except to elucidate its literal sense, an endeavor usually restricted to supplying synonyms for particular terms and sometimes facts or exempla to help clarify the original text. There is much ado about the color red, for instance, explaining how and from what substances this pigment was concocted by the ancients.¹² Francesco Maturanzio's printed commentary of 1500 actually cites a specific case of defamation, referring to Ovid's account of the fate of the Roman general Caius Marius at Minturnae, who escaped his pursuers by burrowing "in the slime and marsh grass enduring many things shameful for so great a man."¹³ This gloss typifies the predilection among these later commentators to restrict their explanations to classical sources wherever they do provide some interpretation.

For the most part it seems that early readers of the *Ad Herennium* made few speculations on what lay behind the passage on striking images and showed little inclination to offer a context for it. However, there can be no doubt that the mind has an unavoidable tendency to assemble such elements of vividness into some more apprehensible form. Indeed, we

seem cognitively bound to override any strategy that precludes the possibility of fabricating an image out of so tempting an array of pictorial cues. Reflecting abstractly on the difficulty of giving an example that is at the same time not an example, we can better appreciate the sophistication of the author's accomplishment. Consider Lewis Carroll's familiar nonsense verse "Jabberwocky," which requires us to conjure up our own worst nightmare from a skein of indirect suggestions and invented vocabulary. Despite its crafted incoherence, do we not harbor an abiding suspicion that Carroll himself has disassembled some chimera of his own imagining in order to offer this very opportunity? And, much like the contrivance of a memory image, are we not encouraged to engage in a private Jabberwock hunt of our own to supply a form for the monster who lurks in the forest of the verse? It is all a matter of degree, part of the game one plays in picturing any descriptive text. After all, absolute nonsense is unlikely to prove very interesting. As Alice puts it after reading the poem: "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas—only I don't exactly know what they are!" The temptation to fashion an image of the Jabberwock, or for that matter to do so while gazing into water, a cloud, or a fire, may be an unavoidable mimetic reflex. Discovering images in amorphous forms is a recurring trope in art theory from the classical period onward and offers parallel instances of the phenomenon we confront in the *Ad Herennium* text.¹⁴

Thus, although the *Ad Herennium* passage eludes any easy attempt to recover a particular likeness or coherent image, at the same time it evidently compels us to try to do so. Recall how it opens: "establish likenesses as striking as possible," and then "ornament some of them [*aliquas exornabis*]." The author actually appears to be envisioning a human likeness.¹⁵ Why should we bother to dress up an amphora in a crown and cloak? Moreover, there is an unmistakable reference to kingship in these honorific attributes of crown and purple cloak. Then there are contrasting allusions to defamation, even a call for actual disfiguration ("deformationis"): the blood, the smattering of dirt, the red paint, and a final suggestion of comedy. Not only does the passage seem to evoke a human figure, it appears to provide a clear set of coordinates for such an image through a dialectic of honor and abuse.

These dialectical coordinates are rooted in a universal proposition about the function of the memory, a proposition that underlies both the general rhetorical issue at hand as well as a classical presumption about the psychology of affect. Inventing an image to evoke the recollection of a thing is overtly a gesture of authority, not so much an accommodating act of translation as a decisive act of appropriation. Implicitly, therefore, the election of a mnemonic image is also an act that itself involves a kind of honor and disfiguration. The object or idea to be remembered is privately overwritten with an image that absorbs and subordinates its prototype, a case of the signifier overwhelming the signified. From this perspective it is surely consequential that the criteria offered for striking images entail an overwriting of the human body, as fundamental an act of authority as one can imagine.¹⁶

The theme and the image of honoring and dishonoring the body suggest the Roman practice of *damnatio memoriae*—the

postmortem dismemberment of criminals (including certain emperors condemned by the Senate) and the destruction or effacement of images and inscriptions recording their fame.¹⁷ In Roman political culture *damnatio memoriae* was by definition the final and most potent symbolic gesture of authority available. The imperial reference implicit in the crown and purple cloak alongside disfiguration with blood and filth seems to evoke this practice, though we cannot be certain that it was part of the author's conscious frame of thinking or entirely subliminal. Regardless, the connection with Roman law is especially suitable for a rhetorical treatise intended to train men in the art of public speaking, and still more pertinent to those undertaking prosecution and self-defense in the law courts. Secondly, the very practice of *damnatio memoriae* acknowledges the power of images on the collective memory and, by extension, the political imperative to overwrite it.

In these respects *damnatio memoriae* is all the more germane to the subject of the treatise, and yet it also complicates the problem. A gesture intended to erase something from the memory might succeed all the better in imprinting it on the memory. Although presumably not the purpose, an iconoclastic act may just as easily have the effect of retrieving a recollection as effacing it. Tacitus makes this point explicitly in *The Annals* through his account of the pomp attending the funeral of Junia. "The effigies of twenty great houses preceded her to the tomb . . . but Brutus and Cassius shone brighter than all by the very fact that their portraits were unseen" (*Annals*, 3.76).¹⁸ We seek to adorn or deface images in actuality or in the mind only when they are consequential, and both acts testify to their manifest and residual power. Iconoclasm may thus be construed not just as effacement but as an act of overwriting, the replacement of one image with another more striking and efficacious than the original it supplants.

The Suffering Christ

On my own first encounter, the passage on striking images in the *Ad Herennium* did not call up *damnatio memoriae* but instead the figure of the suffering Christ. Although anachronistic, it is remarkable how closely the passage parallels the essential constituents of Christ's humiliation in the Passion. The account given in the Gospel of Saint Mark (15:15–20) serves well to point up the relevant similarities in content:

And so Pilate, being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas: and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led him away into the court of the palace: and they called together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple: and, plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon him. And they began to salute him: Hail, king of the Jews. And they struck his head with a reed: and they did spit on him. And bowing their knees, they adored him. And after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him and put his own garments on him: and they led him out to crucify him.¹⁹

Pilatus autem volens populo satisfacere dimisit illis Barabban et tradidit Iesum flagellis caesum ut crucifigeretur. Milites autem duxerunt eum intro in atrium praetorii et

convocant totam cohortem et induunt eum purpuram et inponunt ei plectentes spineam coronam et cooperunt salutare eum have rex Iudeorum et percutiebant caput eius harundine et conspuebant eum et ponentes genua adorabant eum. Et postquam inluserunt ei exuerunt illum purpuram et induerunt eum vestimentis suis. Et educunt illum ut crucifigerent eum.²⁰

Are the correspondences between the late classical text and the Gospel account purely fortuitous? That is, are the recurring elements—the crown, the purple cloak, the spattering of blood Christ endured in the Passion, the juxtaposition of beauty with ugliness, and even the implied injection of black humor in the mocking—merely coincidental features, or do they tell us something significant regarding premodern notions about the memory and powerful images of a particular kind?

The similarities between the Gospel and the *Ad Herennium* passage are not limited to descriptive elements. The two texts are also alike in their rhetorical structure. Typical of much New Testament scripture, the Passion narrative is spare in its account of what we must otherwise infer to be a violent and psychologically complex, not to say symbolically charged sequence of events.²¹ The sparseness of the Gospel chronicle reflects a narrative strategy that is surprisingly barren, limited to a mere inventory of acts and material attributes: delivery, scourging, clothing in purple, crowning with thorns, defamation, and physical abuse. There is no imputation of motive granted to the henchmen, and we hear nothing of the victim's response. Christ seems to be no more than a silent specter hovering at the center of a mindless, ritual enactment, his absence made present solely by the atrocities committed on him. Even the incantatory repetition of the personal pronoun *eum* throughout the Vulgate text seems only to reinforce Christ's anonymity. They led him away, clothed him, put the crown on him, hailed him, struck him, spat on him, did homage to him, mocked him, took the purple off him, put his own garments on him, led him out, and crucified him. Typical of all four Gospels, Mark's telling of the Passion is constructed according to a simple opposition of active and passive, an opposition that eventually came to signify Christologically the indefinable condition of divine humility the Savior embodies. Indeed, Christ's anonymity came to be the very sign of this humility.

There is a way in which Christ's Passion can also be construed in analogy to the Roman practice of *damnatio memoriae*, carried out in order to deny Christ's kingship or any claim he might have to transcendent power. Both *damnatio memoriae* and the Passion narrative attack the problem of the memory through a comparable strategy, one that lays bare the nature of authority and seeks to reconstitute that authority in a revolutionary way. Not unlike *damnatio memoriae*, what the Passion recounts is the design on the part of Christ's accusers, both the state and the priesthood, to cast him into oblivion as a mere pretender to the throne. Of course, literally speaking, the acts described in the Gospels are perpetrated against a living being and not a dead body or an image. However, the mocking of Christ is fully consistent with a range of Roman legal practices entailing the dire humiliation of criminals who were condemned to capital punishment.²² Most central to our

purpose is the fact that the Passion culminates a commemorative text meant as the sanctioned testimony of a witness and is in itself as much an image as any statue of an emperor. Yet at the same time the Passion conjures up an image that is not one but rather a turmoil of events surrounding an undescribed figure, an absent center.

The rhetorical problem posed in the *Ad Herennium* and the Gospel is comparable: how to present the criteria for a memorable image with nothing more than an abstract armature to sustain it, and how to recount the unimaginable sufferings of the Savior without presuming to describe the essential mystery of his nature and condition. In both texts the critical act of envisioning a consciously elided subject is fully rendered over to us, the reader/respondent. Each is an image that is no more than the sum of actions and conditions wrought on it, barely present, a figment we must flesh out for ourselves. In the case of the Gospels, it is this very task that has occupied artists and Christian exegetes for nearly two millennia.

That none of the early commentaries on the *Ad Herennium*, as far as I am aware, makes any explicit reference to a parallel with the Passion is provoking. This supports the conclusion that the author of the classical treatise was perceived to offer a general example of individual and therefore idiosyncratic attributes for a memory image, an example that is indeed merely notional rather than functional. And it strongly suggests that any similarity with the Passion that we might see in retrospect proved opaque at least to medieval and Renaissance scholars, a conclusion that surely seems sound given the proclivity of such glossators to uncover the most unlikely connections between antique and Christian texts. But this need not concern us greatly. The issue at hand is more fundamental, having to do with the affective nature of images *per se*. What gives substance to the parallel is a common understanding of the authority granted to images or likenesses of a certain kind to imprint themselves indelibly on the mind. In this respect what the *Ad Herennium* might have to tell us about the Gospels need have nothing to do with the influence of one text on another, actual or perceived, but with an evolving notion of image psychology.

At least from the time of the Latin Fathers, Christ's humiliation in the Passion was thought to have been foretold in a prophecy of Isaiah (53:2–5):

And he shall grow up as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground. There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him: Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was as it were hidden and despised. Whereupon we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities: he was bruised for our sins. The chastisement of our peace was upon him: and by his bruises we are healed.

Isaiah's vision of beauty turned to abjection was explicated most fully by Augustine in his *Sermo humilis*, where he

examines the paradox of the stained and rejected image of the Savior. In the view of Erich Auerbach, the elevation of Christ through his acceptance of "voluntary humiliation" constitutes a watershed in ancient rhetorical and philosophical thinking.²³ Out of this dramatic inversion of the classical idea that physical beauty and the perfection of the soul were necessarily one and the same arose an entire tradition of meditational practice and Christian image making, a vision codified in the Man of Sorrows invented in the distant wake of Isaiah's prophecy. This paradoxical vision of heroism underlies the entire rhetorical tradition of formulating Christian mysteries in terms of dialectical opposition, as for example Roger Bacon's evocation of "the terror and sweet wonder of the Eucharist."²⁴

Memory Images Made Actual

How then shall we assess the alignment between the *Ad Herennium* and the Gospels as it pertains to the construction and meaning of actual images? At a minimum it would seem that the similarities arise from a shared understanding of the sorts of pictorial cues that best serve to imprint an image on the memory. Most art historical approaches to the general subject of the artificial memory have proceeded along approximately similar lines, in essence taking the basic model for locating objects or images in a sequence of defined spaces and relating this principle to existing complexes of actual images.²⁵ For example, it has often been pointed out that the architectural structure of the memory system bears an analogy with altarpiece arrangements, pictorial cycles in religious book illustration, and mural painting.²⁶ Similar to this is the widespread medieval employment of pictorial schemata for diagramming theological concepts²⁷ and the rhetorical use of images to recall specific passages of scripture or successive items in a creed.²⁸ A much cited and familiar instance of how the architecture of the memory system might have influenced the construction of actual images is Giotto's well-known series of Virtues and Vices in the Arena Chapel, Padua (Figs. 1, 2). There a cycle of personifications is arranged in clear sequence in order to recall to the beholder the good and evil dimensions of the human character.²⁹ In a vivid example, the figure of *Hope* levitates magically from the ground as she strives for the crown of salvation, while *Inconstancy* precariously flips over backward on the unstable circle of the world.

Toward the end of the fifteenth century a renewed enthusiasm for mnemonic theory is evident in the many printed editions of the *Ad Herennium* and also in the publication of altogether new, sometimes lavishly illustrated treatises on the memory.³⁰ A likely reason for this is the growth of popular preaching in the vernacular and a consequent resurgence of interest in rhetorical techniques. These later prescriptions for artificial memory tend to explore the more figurative and allegorical implications of the classical system. A fifteenth-century tract (here shown in an early sixteenth-century printed version) employs a set of diagrams for recalling passages particular to each Gospel (Fig. 3). The splayed-out figure of a lion, the sign for the Evangelist Mark, is fitted out with various objects cued to specific portions of the Gospel text. Each reference is conveniently numbered according to the relevant passage. For example, the numeral 8 (beneath the lion's chin) signals the bread given by Christ to Peter,

symbolized by seven loaves of bread and a key for Saint Peter; 9 represents the Transfiguration, symbolized by the sun and an exorcised demon; 10, the union of matrimony, symbolized by two clasped hands, and then the rich man whose entry into heaven shall be as a camel passing through the eye of a needle, symbolized by a sack of gold and a needle.³¹

This deployment of the memory system speaks to the capacity of an image to mimic a text through a set of pictorial references that allow one to recall its content. The "striking" dimension of such an image obviously comes from its self-consciously referential oddity. Saint Mark's heraldic lion rigorously avoids making any sense as a naturalistic figure, playing on our capacity to recollect a contrived if improbable scheme of associations. One wonders if this could ever really have been effective as a memory image, or whether it merely reflects a period of renewed curiosity about the idea of a mnemonic system. The evangelist figure of the lion is envisioned strictly as a mnemonic crutch, a kind of metaphor, not an image that is in any way suited to contemplation. In this respect the lion of Saint Mark harks back to the peculiar strangeness characteristic of much allegorical figuration in the Middle Ages.³² This is one way in which mnemonic theory can be seen to reflect the medieval understanding of how to structure allegorical meaning in images and texts. The scheme for Mark's Gospel stands in a long tradition extending from medieval diagrams to Renaissance emblems and *impresa*, a text-picture comparable to the figure for the case of poisoning described in the *Ad Herennium*. It is designed for memorizing words or passages of text rather than for remembering persons, objects, or concepts.

All of these prescribed examples, however, share a basic discrepancy with the prevailing ancient and medieval theory about how artificial memory was actually presumed to operate. Classical and medieval explanations of how to construct a successful memory image are very forceful on the point that in order to be effective an image must be highly personal and idiosyncratic, concocted by the very subject who seeks to fix its meaning in the mind. In fact, the *Ad Herennium* emphatically cautions against adopting ready-made images such as these as aids to the memory, a caveat reconfirmed by several medieval tracts and commentaries on the subject. According to orthodox mnemonic theory, a memory image must be a very private kind of sign which, in order to be functional, is likely to have (at least to the outsider) an obscure and inscrutable relation to what is signified. In short, a good memory image must be peculiar to the individual's own web of associations.³³

Scholarly applications of classical mnemonic technique to the function of actual images typically underrate if not entirely ignore this basic principle. For example, they attempt to explain the elements of an altarpiece, the marginal grotesques in liturgical manuscript illumination, or, for that matter, Giotto's Virtues and Vices as actualizations of a private memory theater, or they credit rebuslike figures such as the lion of Saint Mark with "real" mnemonic value. To suppose that the formal or architectural structure of an altarpiece can be construed as a set of *loci* in a memory scheme, or that a cluster of fanciful *bas de page* grotesques constitutes a set of visual cues to the location and meaning of a text in the manner of crowns and purple cloaks, is in effect to play the system backward. Prescribing a memory theater ready-made,



1 Giotto, *Hope*. Padua, Arena Chapel (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, NY)



2 Giotto, *Inconstancy*. Padua, Arena Chapel (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, NY)

so to speak, undermines the essential proposition about the psychology of memory that presumably led to the invention of the system in the first place. Putting it another way, trying to construct an underlying memory scheme from a set of actual images is much like reconstructing a rhetorician's privately conceived mnemonic scheme from the completed form of a public argument. One must concede that in practice proposals circulating in memory tracts may in some sense or other have been realized in complexes of actual images, in other words, that their structural homology may not be purely coincidental. Nevertheless, the effect of a truly private scheme will necessarily differ from one that has been construed *a priori*. Proper treatment of the relation between actual

images and the artificial memory should be far more circumspect on this point.³⁴

Yet we ought not to discard the matter so easily. The parallel between image making and the imagined memory theater rests on an assumption that certain motifs have the power to fix themselves in the mind for the very same reason that making one's own memory scheme is possible in the first place. Once the cues have been delivered and the effective mental pressure points contacted the message might not only be established but even established with some permanence. What I am disputing here is not the basic idea itself but the fact that so much current scholarship on the relation between the *ars memorativa* and actual images tends to diminish the

VII. De nō lotis manibus dec̄ filia Chananeę mulierculę quā Christus sanauit. VIII. De panibus septē & cōfitetur Christus a Petro. IX. De Christi transfiguratiōe vbi demoniū ej̄cī ieūnjo & orationibus. X. De vniōne matrimonij & diuite cū camelō. XI. De alina: & quō pullo vectus intrauit ciuitatē hierosolimā obuio puerorum concentu. XII. De vinitoribus heredem occidentibus: dec̄ censu c̄fari reddendo

Gentilis natam sanat: docet inquinamenta:
Effeta cui dicit: audit& hinc loquitur.
Hinc quoq̄ mille quater cibat: ornat lumīe c̄cum:
Petrē retro vade ne neget ergo sequens.
Inter fratres hic transformat se: rediensq;
Curat spumantē: scandala cuncta vetat.
Iussit vt vxorem serues: pueros benedit:
Centupla retribuet: Barthimeusq; videt.
Legati soluūt asinum: fico maledicit:
Cedet mons fidei: cr̄dite sic petite.
Mortua non surgit: mādatum scriba requirit:
Est dominus Davidis: approbat q̄ra duo.



3 *Lion of Saint Mark*, woodcut, from *Rationarium evangelistarum omnia in se evangelia prosa, versu, imaginibusque quam mirifice complectens*, Pforzheim, 1505

critical role assigned to the individual in ancient memory theory. The more revealing parallel therefore exists on the level of the classical model of the mind, that is to say, how the mind was thought to take impressions and to retain meaning. On this question the passage in the *Ad Herennium* about striking images may be the most eloquent, if also both frustrating and elusive.

Giotto's Virtues and Vices and the Saint Mark diagram reflect in different ways the systematic disposition of evocative imagery proposed in the *Ad Herennium* passage. They offer a kind of parallel as resolved formulations of an essentially abstract idea. However, taken as mnemonic images in their own right they probably tell us little or nothing about how people actually tried to remember things. A more compelling parallel can be found in a curious early fifteenth-century German manuscript described many years ago by Fritz Saxl.³⁵ This manuscript, now in the Biblioteca Casanatense in Rome (Cod. Cas. 1404), includes a large number of drawings, many of them accompanied by inscriptions and sometimes brief explanatory texts. It is a marvelously eclectic assemblage of picture types, including personifications, allegories, genre scenes, episodes from classical mythology and the Old Testa-

ment, images of the pagan gods, mystical diagrams, and so on.³⁶ One example shows Christ crucified by the Virtues with personifications of Synagoga and Ecclesia beneath (Fig. 4). Notice that the chief virtue of Faith is granted the privileged role of placing the crown of thorns on Christ's brow. Saxl remarks especially on the lack of system in this manuscript, each composition having its own particular point to make about the proper conduct of life or spiritual understanding but with little or no thematic connection among them. Many of the figures in this manuscript are highly inventive, seemingly original departures from familiar iconography, and each one is meant to provide an exemplum of a sort. Saxl relates the manuscript to late medieval preaching and supposes it may have been intended as a kind of primer and a source book for "emblematic" sermons, an entirely credible proposition.

In this case the mode of invention closely approximates the *Ad Herennium* proposition about unusual and striking conjunctions, almost as if the compiler of Cod. Cas. 1404 were formulating pictorial ideas in the manner of someone privately practicing the *ars memorativa* and, as it were, merely illustrating the results. The predominance of picture over



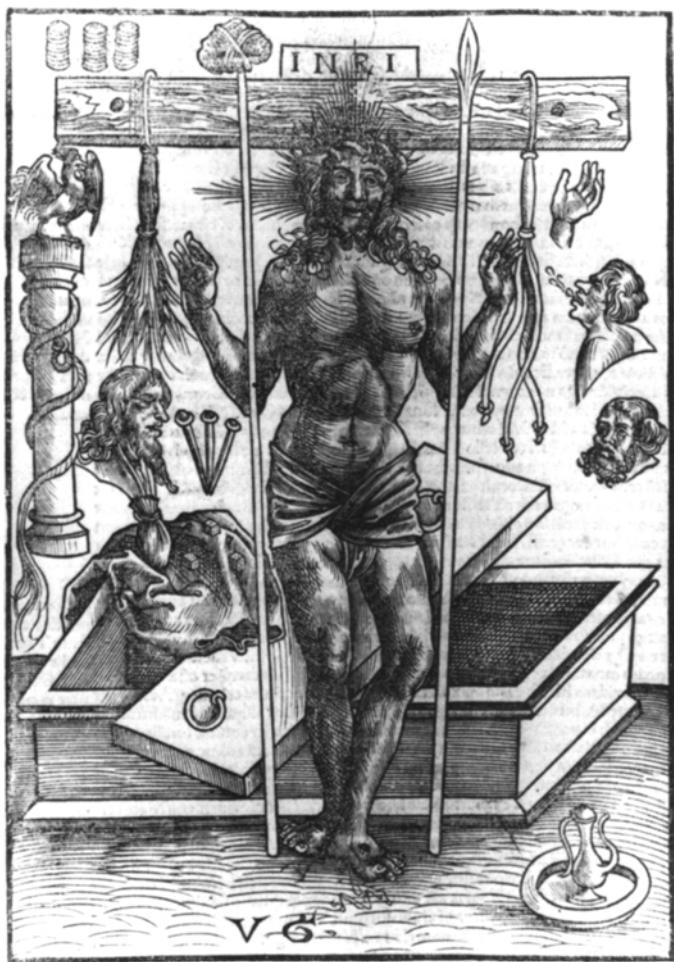
4 *Christ Crucified by the Virtues and Vices*, German, 15th century. Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, Cod. Cas. 1404, fol. 28v (photo: Warburg Institute)

text, the mix of allegorical and figurative modes in constructing pictorial meanings, and most of all the promiscuous accumulation of subjects and motifs all point in this direction. The manuscript is a model of how to invent pictures out of abstract ideas and, conversely, how to stimulate the construction of a new and private text on the basis of a picture. The pictures are not intended to be mnemonic in a direct sense, but in strategy they reflect the principle of the *ars memorativa* and suggest at least one way in which late medieval preachers might have invented propositions for their sermons. Given the interplay of the familiar, the arcane, and the bizarre, the spiritual encyclopedia may come closest to illustrating the procedure for inventing mnemonic images in accordance with the classical theory outlined in the *Ad Herennium*.

The Artificial Memory and the Psychology of Pictorial Affect

Although the *Ad Herennium* gained increasing currency among monastics and theologians during the later Middle Ages and

the Renaissance, there is no evidence that particular Passion images were ever directly prescribed or consciously influenced by this text. How then might the constituents of striking imagery set down in the *Ad Herennium* and their reflection in the Gospel and later Passion iconography best be understood? The answer to this question must be sought in a theory of affect, a shared understanding of one way in which images were apparently deemed to work. Over the course of the fifteenth century the Gospel passages on the Passion and their apocryphal elaborations formed the basis for a class of kindred devotional images that codified the figure of Christ for the worshiper.³⁷ The type most pertinent to our considerations is that deriving ultimately from the Isaiah passage, the Man of Sorrows, an image at the center of a constellation of late medieval devotional pictures with many variations that emerged alongside a comparably evocative form of meditational practice directed to rendering the suffering Christ indelible in the mind of the faithful.³⁸ In devotional subjects



5 Urs Graf, *Arma Christi*, woodcut, from *Passionis Christi unum ex quatuor evangelistis textum*, Strasbourg: J. Knoblauch, 1506 (photo: Warburg Institute)

such as the Man of Sorrows the details of the Gospel narrative have been selected, modified, and conjoined into a repertoire of iconographic variants that are transnarrational, pictures meant to distill a poignant and isolated vision of pathos and to fix the Holy Face and the condition of Christ's human suffering in the spirit of the believer. We now tend to identify these variants according to their particular narrative referents, for example, the Crowning of Thorns, the Ecce Homo, the Mocking of Christ, the Sudarium, and so on. And yet, like portrayals of the Madonna and Child, all finally convey one dogma, and all are species of a single genus. Moreover, they are set pieces of mnemonic imagery, complete and autonomous in themselves, while at the same time resonant with the full and extended significance of the New Testament story of Christ's Incarnation and its confirmation in the Passion. Such a concept of an excerpted narrative image that contains within it the full span of the Passion has a diagrammatic counterpart in the *arma christi*, a panoply of motifs drawn from the Passion story that are shown surrounding the figure of Christ (Fig. 5). It is schematized in a manner similar to the *Lion of Saint Mark* (Fig. 3), offering in a comparable way a segregated set of memory cues parsed out to recall specific moments in the Gospel account. One can take the *arma christi* as a kind of index of how the representation of the isolated figure of Christ as Man of Sorrows might have served as the

matrix of a diagram that could then be read centrifugally to encompass the whole of the Passion story.³⁹

But what of the outward reading of Passion subjects that are ostensibly presented as a single narrative episode? We have a revealing instance in a panel painting of *Christ Crowned with Thorns* from about 1480, attributed to Albert Bouts and now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon (Fig. 6). The panel shows on its recto the head and upper torso of Christ bearing the crown and adorned with the purple cloak prescribed by Mark, his brow pinched with suffering, the blood and sweat running freely over a face distorted in pain.⁴⁰ This is an exemplary portrayal of the abject figure of Christ and, to judge from the number of surviving examples, one that must have been familiar in many, perhaps many dozens of devotional panels painted over an extended period of time.⁴¹ An additional feature of the Bouts panel suits our purpose well, for on its reverse is a second figure of the type commonly referred to as the *Portrait of Christ* (Fig. 7). Here we find the idealized form of the Savior without the crown of thorns, now clad in a red robe signifying his resurrection.⁴² Once again it is a composition of which many examples survive, and one that may originally have been an invention of Jan van Eyck.⁴³ The *Portrait of Christ* might have been scraped off or left unfinished and the panel simply reused for the *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, though it is also possible that both images were initially meant as a pair, offering the Savior's visage in its two most elemental aspects. Such a pairing has precedent, notably in a panel now in Leipzig by Meister Francke showing the *Man of Sorrows* on the recto and a painted *Veronica Cloth* on the verso. Remarkably, Meister Francke's benign image of the Sudarium, like the Bouts image, has been scratched up, in this case certainly in an act of iconoclasm.⁴⁴ If first intended as a pairing in the manner of Meister Francke's two images of Christ, Bouts's Dijon panel carries in its very construction the dialectic of honor and defamation, of authority and its reinstatement through a humiliating ritual of inversion. This is precisely the dialectic that governs the *Ad Herennium* passage and, more important, the Gospel text itself.

Any attempt to reconstruct the individual experience of devotion before an image, even within the vaguest parameters, is notoriously vexed. At best one can try to establish certain conventional boundaries of expectation, and the approach taken here does not presume to do any more than that. However, we can confidently say that both literate and more popular understandings of the Passion that evolved in the late medieval period expected the image of the suffering Christ to carry a powerful message to the beholder. Needless to say, the bases for this are complex, but iconographic innovation and textual sources offer us a wealth of opportunity to investigate the question, at least on the level of convention.

As an image of actual and anticipated suffering, Albert Bouts's rendering of the *Christ Crowned with Thorns* is a variation of the Ecce Homo, that moment in the Passion when the sacrificial lamb is rendered over to the judgment of the people. The crowned head of Christ set in isolation excerpts the central focus of the Ecce Homo episode, the sequence of events narrated in John (19:5) where the drama reaches its first climax. This is the point when the people take upon themselves the collective responsibility for Christ's blood.

According to the notion of the “perpetual Passion,” a common late medieval teaching promoted among lay brotherhoods in northern Europe at the time that Bouts’s panel and its related types gained currency, every time a member of Christ’s congregation sins, that additional transgression inflicts further pain on the omniscient and omnipresent body of the Savior.⁴⁵ We are therefore urged to reflect on the Passion as a continuing crisis of suffering in which the offer of grace is perpetually renewed and perpetually undeserved. It is important to recognize that the conviction implied in the perpetual Passion threatens an immediate and shocking consequence for the believer, since it carries forward that drastic onus of responsibility inherited from those who initially gazed on Christ and judged him guilty. Hence, this constellation of images, whether the Man of Sorrows, the afflicted Holy Face, or the full tableau of Christ being presented to the people, was meant to confront the unconfessed sinner with a moment of profound and reflective truth, a trauma inflicted through the reinstatement of a cataclysmic memory. In this respect the suffering Christ was an image potentially more fraught with private implication than the Crucifixion itself.

So regarded, the affective message of Bouts’s panel arises from the bland and humble visage of Christ racked with pain and distorted with the markings of affliction and the physiological symptoms of his torture. Beauty resides in passive resistance, and abjectness resides in the evidence of suffering. By definition the face of Christ must be the flawless face of beauty, indeed of perfection. And yet the meaning of the Passion must simultaneously embrace its opposite, the horror of that very face reduced to the hideous. Acknowledgment, acceptance, and resolution of this disparity can occur only as an act of faith in the mind of the believer. By the same token, the idealized image of Christ, such as that shown on the reverse of Bouts’s panel, is a *tabula rasa*, a wax tablet waiting to be inscribed with the recollection of disfigurement. The very blankness of this canon of beauty, the characteristic blandness of this distinctly Christian mode of idealization, offers the communicant a receptive surface on which the marks of suffering can be projected.

The blank beauty of the face of Christ was by this time a convention best codified in the “Lentulus Letter,” a document that in the fifteenth century was still taken to be a contemporary account of Christ’s true appearance, despite the fact that about 1440 Lorenzo Valla had already denounced it as a forgery.

He is a man of average size and pleasing appearance, having a countenance that commands respect, which those who behold may love or fear. He has hair the color of an unripe hazelnut, smooth almost to his ears, but below his ears curling and rather darker and more shining, hanging over his shoulders, and having a parting in the middle of his head according to the fashion of the Nazarenes. His brow is smooth and quite serene; his face is without wrinkle or blemish, and a slight ruddiness makes it handsome. No fault can be found with his nose and mouth; he has a full beard of the color of his hair, not long but divided in two at the chin. His facial expression is guileless and mature; his eyes are grayish and clear. . . . At times he has wept, but he

has never laughed. In stature he is tall and erect and his hands and arms are fine to behold.⁴⁶

For all its descriptive detail this is an account of a numbingly unmemorable figure. Soft and pliant in shape and mild in color, it is designed to exclude any evidence of conflict or animation. The fifteenth-century German mystic Nicolas of Cusa virtually offers a gloss on the Lentulus Letter when he describes his encounter with an icon of the face of Christ:

Thy gaze causeth me to consider how this image of Thy face is thus perceptibly painted, since a face cannot be painted without colour, nor can colour exist without quantity. But I perceive, not with my fleshy eyes, which look on this icon of Thee, but with the eyes of my mind and understanding, the invisible truth of Thy face, which therein is signified, under a shadow and limitation. Thy true face is freed from any limitation, it hath neither quantity nor quality, nor is it of time and place, for it is the Absolute Form, the Face of faces.

When, therefore, I meditate on how that face is truth, and the most adequate measure of all faces, I am brought into a state of great wonder. For that face which is the true type of all faces hath not quantity. Wherefore, it is neither greater nor less than others, and yet ‘tis not equal to any other; since it hath not quantity, but ‘tis absolute, and exalted above all. It is, therefore, the Truth, which is equality, freed from all quantity.⁴⁷

Nicolas locates the face of Christ in an ontological condition that must finally belie all representation, a face in which identity is dissolved into an abstraction that “being the true type of all faces hath not quantity.” We are compelled to ask whether it must not therefore be a face that lacks all quality as well.

Michael Baxandall has suggested that the anonymous and repetitive facial types Perugino employed for holy figures might be understood as blank fields allowing worshipers to project onto them the particular features of familiar persons, and by this means to make the stories of Christ and the saints more immediate and personal to themselves. Perugino’s faces then become locations for the deployment of a private and intimate memory scheme. In support of this reading Baxandall cites an extraordinary monastic handbook in which the devout are encouraged to imagine holy figures as personal acquaintances, or the city of Jerusalem in the shape of a familiar town.⁴⁸ The analogy with the dictates of the artificial memory system is doubtless not coincidental. It would appear that on the level of instilling a powerful condition of affective response something quite similar is taking place. At the opposite extreme are the grisly Passion accounts, meticulously analyzed by James Marrow, that abound in fifteenth-century devotional literature.⁴⁹ In these texts the physical reality of the Passion is evoked with shocking precision and clarity of detail. These two modes of pictorialization—the bland and the vivid—are amply reflected in the devotional imagery of the time, as well as in texts. The dichotomies in the *Ad Herennium* prescription for memorability seem to have abided, indeed to have become the very substance of late medieval Passion narrative.

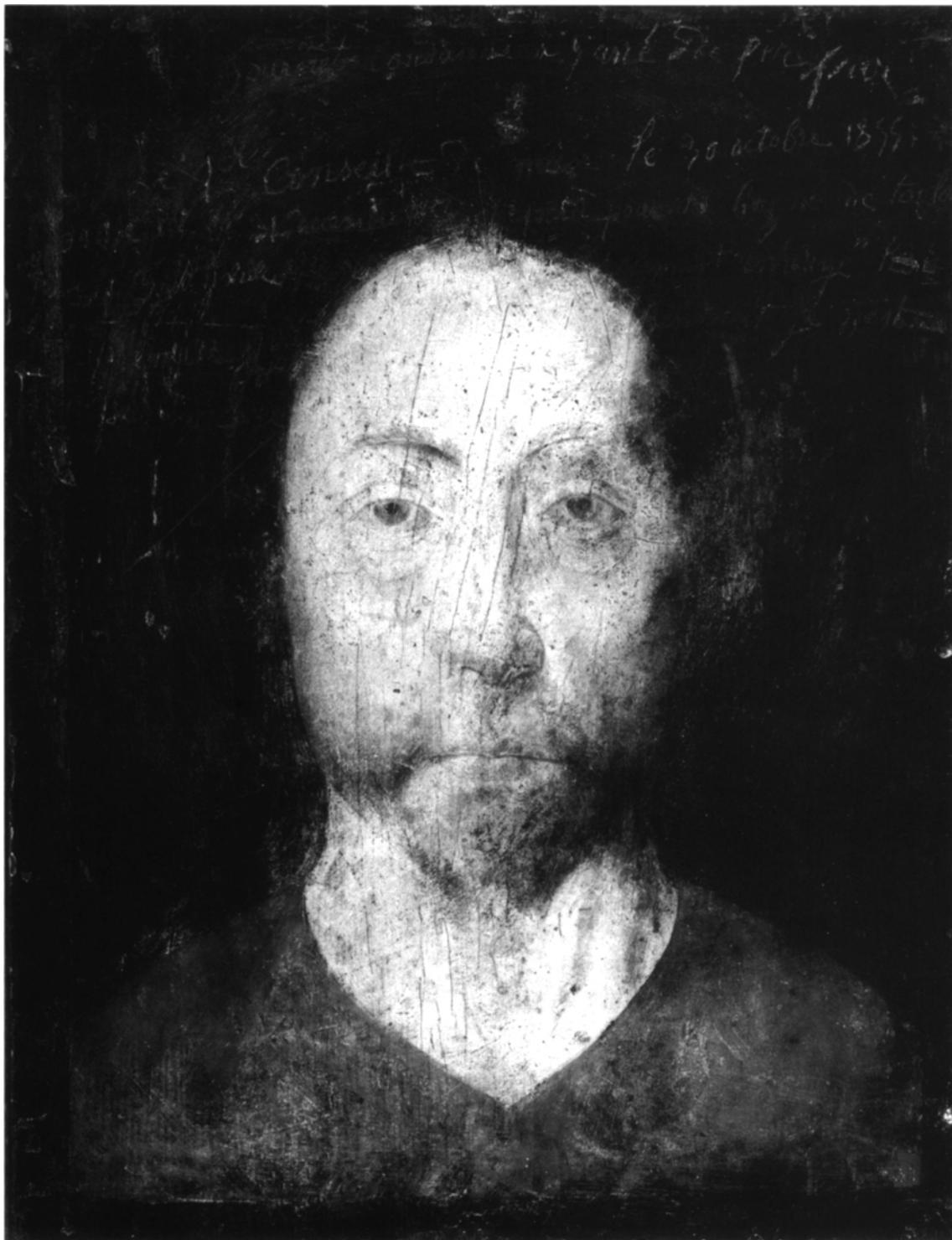


6 Albert Bouts, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, oil on panel, 36.9 x 27.6 cm, ca. 1480. Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts

Memorableness and Improvisation

Mary Carruthers has argued that the revival of memory techniques during the High Middle Ages was in all probability closely connected to monastic meditational practices in which religious pictures, like texts, were put to use as objects of devotion meant to stimulate recall, an association that reflects the peculiar medieval use of the verb "to remember" for the act of meditation.⁵⁰ By her construction meditation was, in part, the act of remembering itself. Words and pictures operated not as representations or replicas of something actual, but rather as signs meant to establish recollection. And

recollection, the act of calling up a memory, is inherently an act of internal visualization, of image making. Thus, the link between images and the memory was seen to be essential and indissoluble. Both religious pictures and meditational texts were deemed occasions for rumination and reminiscence, beginning with a seminal clue and unfolding in stages of reflection that were understood to elaborate and expound on a central idea. The memorable image, therefore, should serve as a fixed point of departure and at the same time have the effect of calling to itself a whole complex of pertinent associations. In this context the pictorial constituents of the



7 Bouts, *Portrait of Christ*, verso of Fig. 6

Crowning of Thorns and its iconographic kin, like Euryclea's recognition of Odysseus's scar so brilliantly explicated by Erich Auerbach, are as much markings of transtemporal significance as they are narrative elements in a story.⁵¹

The ambiguous relationship between the attributes of memorability as they are described in the *Ad Herennium* and any actual image offers us a way of thinking about how the interplay between originality and convention was negotiated by artists beset on the one hand with the problem of inventing new and appealing configurations and, on the other, of having to work within the constraints of a conventionalized

and often dogmatic network of religious patronage and audience expectation. At one level the rhetorical theorist of the *Ad Herennium* and the painter of stock religious images such as Albert Bouts faced a similar problem: how to offer a general instance that would nevertheless register to each respondent individually. This is hardly a simple matter to address, whether rhetorically or pictorially. In fact, one might argue that this very problem lay at the crux of pictorial invention in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance. How did an artist continue to invent the supple variations required for the most common religious subjects such as the Madonna

and Child in order to make them both striking and familiar at the same time? In a way we take this matter for granted every time we go about proclaiming the peculiar brilliance of this or that Raphael Madonna. But are our usual formal and iconographic strategies of analysis properly Renaissance in their assumptions? Do they in fact offer sufficient access to grasping the relation between available convention and individual imagination?⁵²

In just this respect the blank figure of the suffering Christ as he is portrayed in the Gospels served as an armature of pictorial meaning, a figure so familiar as to relinquish its identity, to become a template to which the constituent elements of "strikingness" might be effectively attached. The mock honorific cloak and ragged crown, the blood and filth, the concomitant resonances of beauty and ugliness are by one account all elements of vividly precise definition, each having its own complex implication. Taken together they establish a dialectical framework of love and hate, beatitude and remorse, that encourages the believer to plot the disposition of his or her faith through an unfolding process of self-reflection, self-recognition, and finally self-knowledge. Herein lies the essence of contemplating and the eventual promise of resolving the paradox of the Passion. Albert Bouts's paired images of Christ suffering the Passion and his cleansing in the Resurrection manifest that very dialectic, one that defies all but the most schematic textual description, for it harbors at its center the essential mystery of the Incarnation.

Memory and Mimesis

The *Ad Herennium* prescription for memorable images is directed to recall, and in this sense the point of these images is purposefully declarative, information-bearing in a very pragmatic sense. An image vocabulary based on such principles ought to have certain general characteristics underscored in the list of memory cues and elsewhere in the treatise. Memorable images should be articulate, infused with the clarity of a text and yet be still more vivid, since images were thought to better texts in just this respect. Hence, it is possible to consider the dictates of the artificial memory as a prescription not just for the content of certain kinds of images but also as a prescription for style. For example, the *Ad Herennium* insists that memorable images must not only be striking but also clear and precise, well spaced and brightly lit.⁵³

Pictorial representations of the Passion in the fifteenth century are frequently of this sort, especially in northern Europe and most glaringly in Germany. Consider the *Deposition* panel by the Master of the St. Bartholomew Altarpiece made about 1500–1505 (Fig. 8).⁵⁴ The gradual emergence of naturalism in northern religious art was accompanied by a marked amplification of violence, parody, pathos, beauty, and love: the torture and execution of Christ, the mock worship of the Savior King, the isolated image of the suffering Christ, and the beatific vision of the Holy Face. Although fifteenth-century representations of the Passion are as often densely claustrophobic as they are orderly and well spaced, their exacting record of detail, the investment in saturated local color and crystalline enamel finish are characteristics that seem to strive for maximum lucidity and legibility. A structure of meaning built on polar oppositions is a structure built for

the sake of absolute clarity, a feature of content aptly supported by the preference for a particular style.

One way of understanding the peculiar realism of the late medieval devotional objects termed *Andachtsbilder*, and the fraught meditational imagery that evolved from them, is to regard this phenomenon as partly the legacy of the *ars memorativa*, a psychology passed down through a specialized medium of instruction in the art of rhetoric. More specifically, the face of the suffering Christ contains within it the essence of a classical and medieval image psychology put forward in the passage on striking images in the *Ad Herennium*, to wit, the construction of a familiar but unassertive architecture on which key elements of strikingness could be effectively disposed. Considered in this way, the so-called portraits of Christ are not so much imaginative re-creations of "how something might have looked" as they are codes disposed across a level field meant to recall a complex of episodes and ideas.

In his examination of the imagery of the *arma christi* Robert Suckale calls attention to the distinction drawn by Thomas Aquinas among various orders of symbols: *signa demonstrativa*, *signa memorativa*, and *signa prognostica*, signs that respectively declare or make manifest, signs that recall, and signs that prophesy. Over time, and not coincidentally while pictorialization further embraced a close observation of the world, these separate functions drew together. Realism devalued the sign in favor of what must have been taken to be a more direct and apprehensible form of expression, thereby subsuming the mnemonic and predictive into the demonstrative. Suckale interprets this change as a consequence of the increasingly popular and didactic role of religious imagery addressed to an unlettered (or at least less lettered) public, one presumably better equipped to read images literally than semiotically. This tendency became orthodox in the theology of the Protestant Reformation, with its profound suspicion of all forms of mediation in the reading of images and scripture alike.⁵⁵

In certain respects James Marrow's study of Passion imagery offers a parallel case, namely, the derivation of a particular mode of realism from the abstract language of Scripture, or what he terms "sacred metaphor."⁵⁶ Marrow has shown how many seemingly realistic details in pictorial and textual elaborations of the Passion during the later Middle Ages were imported from the figurative, typically obscure language of Old Testament prophecy. The parallel with mnemonic technique is self-evident. Especially in the more bizarre cases that Marrow has uncovered, these embedded references were perhaps not just vestigial but actually served to recall their figurative origins. However, it is impossible to know the degree to which the trace of sacred metaphor, or for that matter an underlying mnemonic scheme, was a conscious part of the experience of such images by those who first contrived or beheld them. Yet by the mid-fifteenth century these referential modes of understanding, whether subliminal or conscious, were already being subordinated to a mimetic style of rendering and to a rhetoric of imitation, the prevailing classical doctrine of literary and artistic creation that set the foundation for Renaissance and Baroque art theory.

The fifteenth century was a critical turning point, one marked by the curiously abstract character of Bouts's visages



8 Master of the St. Bartholomew Altarpiece, *Deposition*, oil on panel, 75 by 47 cm, ca. 1500–1505. London, National Gallery

of Christ, which seem to catch the impulse to describe in a net of codified mnemonic cues. So regarded, the idea of a memory image offers us an alternative point of view on the problem of representation and what we inadequately term *realism* in picture making. Rather than bringing something to life by representing it, mnemonic images seem to arise from a strategy or a premise that is in essence antirepresentational: a resistance to describing the object itself in favor of offering a kind of blank, a configured but unadorned space we must fill in for ourselves. It is for us to lend the image certain

qualities and attributes in order to give it a distinct and private meaning. From the perspective of the *ars memorativa*, Albert Bouts's two images of the face of Christ—one crowned with thorns and the other unmarked—offer two such models of abstraction. Each is a variation on the template of the human face, but a face without an individual human referent. This face is generic, the face of all faces, which is also to say the face of no man: *nemo*.

Although I have suggested a way in which one might reconsider a particular type of sacred imagery in nonrepresen-

tational ways, I do not mean to imply that the *ars memorativa* provides an exclusive means for understanding it. Certainly the Bouts icons were accessible in more immediately familiar and referential respects, something that would have been especially true a generation later. Yet despite the astonishing longevity of the two Bouts images, the particular interplay between realism and abstraction evident in them probably records a rather brief moment in the history of Christian art. It would be wrong not to acknowledge a lingering doubt about the claims made for reconstructing the apprehension and experience of actual images. For how in the end should we characterize the cognitive operation that invests the outline of a face with features that are more attributes than observed details, an operation whereby one simultaneously perceives the actual and the abstract in what is after all a clearly delineated representation of Christ? Did such an image really "look" different because of what it portrayed, or is this more a conjecture about the origins of a representational mode than an approximation of the beholder's experience?

Equally problematic is the definition of *realism* itself, a concept I have approached narrowly in relation to an ancient rhetorical strategy for achieving affect. Moreover, the argument about honor and defamation is based primarily on a theory put forward by Erich Auerbach about the status of realism in late antiquity and in the writing of the Gospels. Auerbach's "new critical" orientation is grounded in a history of linguistic style and presumes an autonomy of individual intention expressed in language, a strategy that has recently been criticized because it precludes the need to establish a social and political context for interpreting different historical perceptions of the real.⁵⁷ Both the *Ad Herennium* and the Gospels were composed in periods of profound political and religious unrest: the collapse of the Roman Republic and the gradual undoing of the empire. I place the final realization of these ancient propositions about memory and affect much later in the visual arts, but also at an unsettled moment in European history. To investigate the relationship with the visual arts more fully, one would have to turn to those developments that have traditionally been invoked to account for the "new realism" in the fifteenth century: the emergence of certain monastic and lay religious movements, more widespread preaching in the vernacular, the evolution of private forms of devotional practice associated with late medieval mysticism, and the displacement of institutionalized religious observance by newly cultivated forms of popular piety. Although these factors are of fundamental importance, they lie beyond the scope of this essay.

Over the course of the fifteenth century, when fascination with the *ars memorativa* crested once again, the visual arts and devotional writing were intently engaged in the pursuit of mimesis. The local consequences of this new engagement with the world of appearances are well known. Mimesis quickly became problematic, especially in northern Europe, where many proponents of the Reformation recognized a deep underlying conflict between the objectives of imitation and the transcendental requirements of conceiving holiness. Surely this conflict had been acknowledged openly and covertly at earlier stages before reaching a point of crisis in the outbreak of Reformation iconoclasm. How might one

effectively mobilize the demand for empathy implicit in the new realism without transgressing the realm of the divine? Because of their poignancy and the overdetermined character of their affective appeal, certain images of the Passion were bound to provoke a tension between the objectives of mimesis and more abstract spiritual understandings. In principle, at least, the concept of a memory image allowed for mimetic appeal to be privately indulged while at the same time directing that impulse to a larger and more legitimate purpose, the experience of the present as an act of recollection.

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 Yates, Frances A., *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

Notes

I am indebted to several colleagues for their close reading of the text and many helpful criticisms: Bettina Bergmann, William Diebold, David Freedberg, and William Ray deserve special mention. Above all I am beholden to Jeffrey Hamburger, who read drafts of the text at two stages and engaged me in a running exchange about the most difficult aspects of the argument. He contributed substantially to my reading and thinking throughout this trespass into classical and medieval theory.

1. On the basis of internal evidence the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* appears to have been composed ca. 86–82 B.C.E. The introduction to the Loeb Classical Library edition and translation discusses the origin and later history of this anonymous text, whose renown lay in the fact that throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance it was thought to be by Cicero. For the probable date of the treatise, see *Ad Herennium*, introduction, xxvi.

2. *Memory palace* is the term familiar from Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1984).

3. Yates. Jocelyn Penny Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind* (London: Routledge, 1997), traces the classical evolution of the technique, includes much discussion of modern psychological examinations of the art of memory and its efficacy, and presents an extensive bibliography on the subject. Small points out that the introduction of architectural spaces, or *loci*, into the system, a feature that became standard in all later schemes, was probably a Roman addition, there being no specific reference to this in the Greek tradition. To explain this she makes the odd assertion (95) that the Greeks had "little sense of place, as is demonstrated most clearly by the virtual absence of setting in their pictorial arts."

4. *Ad Herennium*, 3.22.35–36.

5. *Ibid.*, 3.20.33.

6. *Ad Herennium*, 14–15 note b, for an explanation of the ram's testicles. Small (as in n. 3), 283 n. 83, disputes the usual translation.

7. For this passage I have taken over the more literal translation given by Yates, 10, though rendering *similitudines* as "likenesses" rather than "similarities" and adding the last clause from Caplan, *Ad Herennium*, 3.22.37. *Fictae*, or "figments," might also be rendered as "inventions" or "fictions." In centering on this passage my own treatment is limited to the scheme for remembering subject matter—objects or things [*res*] rather than words (*Ad Herennium*, 3.20.33). Later in the tradition there was much discussion of this difference and the effectiveness of the system for accomplishing these separate tasks, and with it much discussion of the dissimilarities between things and words. For an account of this debate, see Carruthers, *passim*. The idea that

memory images must be vivid and striking echoes the discussion of the subject in Cicero, *De Oratore*, 2.87.358.116, trans. E. W. Sutton, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1942), 470–71, who prescribes “images that are effective and sharply outlined and distinctive, with the capacity of encountering and speedily penetrating the mind.”

8. *Ad Herennium*, 3.22.37.

9. The excerpt on striking images in the *Ad Herennium* first came to my attention as an epigram in an essay on *ekphrasis*, where it is employed for a very different purpose; Michel Beaujour, “Some Paradoxes of Description,” *Yale French Studies* 61 (1981): 27–59.

10. For the medieval transmission of the *Ad Herennium* text, see Caplan’s introduction, esp. xxxiv–vi, and Carruthers, *passim*, with further bibliography. The relevant passage from Albertus Magnus’s commentary is transcribed in Carruthers, 273–74, app. B, where Albertus questions the usefulness of the proposition. For an edition of Thierry’s commentary, see Thierry of Chartres, *The Latin Rhetorical Commentaries of Thierry of Chartres*, ed. Karin M. Fredborg (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988). A fuller medieval discussion of the passage appears in Albertus Magnus, *De bono*, in Carruthers, 140–42, 273–75, app. B. Albertus quotes the passage in full and judges that the author insists on the manufacture of several images for the recollection of each point, a requirement he believes renders the system unwieldy and unworkable, concluding that “the rules of Tully are useless”; in Carruthers, 274.

11. Thierry (as in n. 10), 309: “Ridiculas, ut si in fronte alicuius humanae imaginis cervi cornua constituantur vel aliquid tale.” Medieval discussions of the artificial memory, typically carried out by clerics, often seem to have turned to grotesque sexual imagery to make a point. See, for example, Thomas of Bradwardine (Carruthers, 134–43). Thierry’s gloss, perhaps reflecting marginal grotesques in contemporary manuscript decoration, implies that the other motifs suggested in the text (blood, crowns, and so on) are self-explanatory.

12. Several of the incunabula editions of the *Ad Herennium*, all of them Italian publications, include marginal commentaries: *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* (Leipzig, 1925–38), vol. 4 (hereafter GW), s.v. “Cicerio,” cols. 523–28, nos. 6728–32, 6735. I have had an opportunity to examine three of these: [Ciceron], *Rhetorica Veterum et Nova cum Commentario M. Fabii Victorini* (Venice: Joannes de Forlilio et Jacobus Britannicus Brixianus, July 17, 1483), Columbia University Library, C-648 Cicero (Goff C-648/Hain 5078); [Ciceron], *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium*, with commentary by Hieronymus Capidurus (Venice: Guglielmus de Cererto, 1490), bound with Cicero’s *De inventione*, New York Public Library [KB+1490. Cicero] (Goff, C-682; GW, no. 6729); [Ciceron], *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium*, with commentary by F. Maturantius and A. Mancinellus (Venice: P. Pincius, 1500), University of Pennsylvania Library (Goff, C-685; GW, no. 6732). These texts reflect the main traditions of Renaissance commentary. See John O. Ward, “Renaissance Commentators on Ciceronian Rhetoric,” in *Renaissance Eloquence*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 128–46. I have been unable to examine a unique manuscript (cited by Ward, 138) that apparently glosses the *Ad Herennium* passage on memory extensively.

13. *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium* (Venice: P. Pincius, 1500), fol. Oiii recto. Maturanzio’s reference is to Ovid’s *Ex Ponto*, 4.3.45. Ovid, *Ovid: Tristia and Ex Ponto*, trans. Arthur Leslie Wheeler, Loeb Classical Library (London: W. Heinemann, 1924), 433, from which the quoted passage is taken. The one instance I have come across in which this passage has been connected to Roman art is Bettina Bergmann, “The Roman House as Memory Theater: The House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii,” *Art Bulletin* 76 (1994): 249.

14. Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 45–47; H. W. Janson, “‘Images Made by Chance’ in Renaissance Thought,” in *16 Studies* (New York: Abrams, 1974), 53–74.

15. Yates, 10, makes this point.

16. I would like to thank William Ray for this way of reading the memory system.

17. See *Paulys Real-encyclopedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, rev. ed. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1894–1972), s.v. “*Damnum memoriae*,” vol. 4 (1901), cols. 2059–62; Thomas Pekáry, *Das römische Herrscherbild*, vol. 1, pt. 3, *Das römische Kaiserbildnis in Staat, Kult und Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1985), 134–42; Hans Belting, *Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1990), 119.

18. Tacitus, *The Annals*, trans. John Jackson, Loeb Classical Library (London: W. Heinemann, 1931), 643.

19. *The Holy Bible: The Catholic Bible Douay-Rheims Version* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1941).

20. *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgata versionem*, 3d rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983).

21. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 14–16. On New Testament narrative, see chap. 2, esp. 46–49.

22. K. M. Coleman, “Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 46–47. I am indebted to Bettina Bergmann for this reference. Interestingly, the crown of thorns is not mentioned in the Gospels as an instrument of torture as it came to be in later devotional texts and especially images. Like the reed scepter, the crown has been interpreted as more strictly an element of ritual humiliation, the spikes

perhaps no more than palm fronds intended as an allusion to the rays of sun emanating from the head of emperors on ancient coins. Campbell Bonner, “The Crown of Thorns,” *Harvard Theological Review* 46 (1953): 47–48, supports this view with reference to Apuleius and to Sartorialian practices.

23. The basic treatment of this is Erich Auerbach, “*Sermo humilis*,” pts. 1 and 2, *Romanische Forschungen* 64 (1952): 304–64; 66 (1955): 1–64. Auerbach later revised portions of this study and published it as *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), chap. 1, esp. 39–43, 67–68, 79–81. Most recently on the problem of abjectness and the ugly in medieval art, see Jeffrey Hamburger, “To Make Women Weep”: Ugly Art as ‘Feminine’ and the Origins of Modern Aesthetics,” *Res* 31 (1997): 9–33.

24. On the concept of wonder in the Middle Ages, see Caroline Walker Bynum, “Wonder,” *American Historical Review* 102 (1997): 1–27, on Bacon, 9.

25. See Carruthers and also the collection of studies in Bruno Roy and Paul Zumthor, *Jeux de mémoire* (Montreal: Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1985). For lucid accounts of the two main medieval contributors to the system, also discussed at length by Carruthers, see Grover A. Zinn Jr., “Hugh of St. Victor and the Art of Memory,” *Viator* 5 (1974): 211–34; and Beryl Rowland, “Bishop Branwardine on the Artificial Memory,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978): 307–12. Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 1200–1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), was unavailable to me at the time this essay went to press.

26. Hans Belting, “Das Bild als Text: Wandmalerei und Literatur im Zeitalter Dantes,” in *Malerei und Stadtkultur in der Dantzeit*, ed. H. Belting and D. Blume (Munich: Hirmer, 1989), 54–58.

27. Carruthers, 229–42; John B. Friedman, “Les images mnémotechniques dans les manuscrits de l’époque gothique,” in Roy and Zumthor (as in n. 25), 169–84; Belting (as in n. 26), 57–58.

28. On this aspect, especially as it develops in the early stages of printing, see Ludwig Volkmann, “Ars memorativa,” *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, n.s., 3 (1929): 111–200, which remains the authoritative study of the later history of printed memory tracts; Joachim Knappe, “Mnemonik, Bildbuch und Emblematik im Zeitalter Sebastian Brants,” in *Mnemosyne: Festschrift für Manfred Lürker zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Werner Bies and Hermann Jung, *Bibliographie zur Symbolik, Ikonographie und Mythologie, Internationales Referateorgan, Ergänzungsband*, vol. 2 (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1988), 133–78; and Jean Michel Massing, “From Manuscript to Engravings: Late Medieval Mnemonic Bibles,” in *Ars memorativa: Zur kulturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der Gedächtniskunst 1400–1750*, ed. Jörg Jochen Berns and Wolfgang Neuber, special issue of *Friße Neuzeit* 15 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993): 101–15. For the post-Renaissance tradition, see Paolo Rossi, *Clavis Universalis: Arti della memoria e logica combinatoria da Lullo a Leibniz* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1983).

29. Yates, esp. 92–94; and Belting (as in n. 26), 54–55; Zinn (as in n. 25). For more sharply theoretical analyses, see Georges Didi-Huberman, *Fra Angelico: Dissemblance and Figuration*, trans. J. M. Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 60–75; and William E. Engel, *Mapping Mortality: The Persistence of Memory and Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), chap. 1.

30. Volkmann (as in n. 28). For further bibliography, see Carruthers, who inexplicably omits Volkmann’s study; Small (as in n. 3); and Lina Bolzoni, “Gedächtniskunst und allegorische Bilder: Theorie und Praxis der *ars memorativa* in Literatur und bildender Kunst Italiens zwischen dem 14. und 16. Jahrhundert,” in *Mnemosyne: Formen und Funktionen der kulturellen Erinnerung*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Dietrich Harth (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1993), 147–76.

31. The anonymous 15th-century pamphlet from which these diagrams derive is titled *Ars memorandi notabilis per Figuras Evangelistarum*, printed in the following century with woodcut illustrations as *Rationarium evangelistarum omnia in se evangelia prosa, versu, imaginibusque quam mirifice complectens* (Pforzheim: Thomas Anshelm, 1502), reissued in 1503, 1504, 1505, and 1507. Volkmann (as in n. 28), 118–22; Massimiliano Rossi, “Gedächtnis und Andacht: Über die Mnemotechnik biblischer Texte im 15. Jahrhundert,” in Assmann and Harth (as in n. 30), 177–91; Lina Bolzoni, “The Play of Images: The Art of Memory from Its Origins to the Seventeenth Century,” in *The Enchanted Loom: Chapters in the History of Neuroscience*, ed. Pietro Corsi (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 21–22, 36–37; Engel (as in n. 29), 54–66.

32. Carruthers, 142. For modern confirmations of this principle, see Small (as in n. 3), 112.

33. *Ad Herennium*, 3.23.38–39. Quintilian advised this, as did Albertus Magnus (in Carruthers, 145, 275).

34. Yates, 108–9; Carruthers, 145–46, 255–56, and passim. But cf. Belting (as in n. 26), 57–58, on the efficacy of actual images as templates for private images, and idem (as in n. 17), 20, remarking on the limitations of the theory of artificial memory in general for understanding medieval religious imagery.

35. Fritz Saxl, “Aller Tugenden und Laster Abbildung: Eine spätmittelalterliche Allegoriensammlung, ihre Quellen und ihre Beziehungen zu Werken des frühen Bilddrucks,” in *Festschrift für Julius Schlosser zum 60. Geburtstage*, ed. Arpad Weixlgärtner and Leo Planiscig (Zurich: Amalthea, 1927), 104–21. On a related manuscript, see Fritz Saxl, “A Spiritual Encyclopedia of the Later Middle Ages,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 82–142. See also, on the images, the art of memory, and medieval “faculty psychology.”

V. A. Kolve, *Chaucer and the Imagery of Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), chap. 1.

36. Saxl, 1927 (as in n. 35), 105–8, 116–21, app.

37. This portion of my study is partly meant as a counterpart to an earlier examination of the image as an objective undertaking, one in which the representation of a particular iconic type of the suffering Christ is perpetuated according to empirical rather than subjective standards; Peter Parshall, "Imago Contrafacta: Pictures and Facts in the Northern Renaissance," *Art History* 16 (1993): 554–79.

38. Erwin Panofsky, "Imago Pietatis: Ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des 'Schmerzensmannes' und der 'Media Mediatrix,'" in *Festschrift für Max Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstage* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1927), 261–308; Gert von der Osten, *Der Schmerzensman: Typengeschichte eines deutschen Andachtsbildwerkes von 1300 bis 1600*, *Forschungen für deutsche Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 7 (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunsthissenschaft, 1935); and Erwin Panofsky, "Jean Hey's 'Ecce Homo,' Speculations about Its Author, Its Donor, and Its Iconography," *Bulletin des Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts* 6 (1956): 95–136. For the development of late medieval devotional imagery in general, see Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative* (Abo, Finland: Abo Akademi, 1965), chap. 1. For the more extreme representations of episodes in the Passion in texts and images, see James Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance* (Kortrijk: Van Ghemert, 1979).

39. On the iconography of the *arma christi*, see Rudolf Berliner, "Arma Christi," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, n.s., 6 (1955): 35–152; Robert Suckale, "Arma Christi: Überlegungen zur Zeichenhaftigkeit Mittelalterlicher Andachtsbilder," *Städels Jahrbuch*, n.s., 6 (1977): 177–208; Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Nov. 26, 1994–Feb. 26, 1995, 114. On the *arma christi* and the pictorial concept of surrounding a central object of devotion with cues to topics of meditation and its implications for mnemonic technique, see Rossi (as in n. 31), 186–93. And see most recently an intriguing study that explicates a specific type of image collapsing the affective, symbolic, and diagrammatic aspects of devotional imagery: David S. Areford, "The Passion Measured: A Late-Medieval Diagram of the Body of Christ," in *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late Medieval Culture*, ed. A. A. MacDonald et al. (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998), 211–38; and more generally on the referential aspects of the subject, Bernhard Ridderbos, "The Man of Sorrows: Pictorial Images and Metaphorical Statements," in *ibid.*, 145–81.

40. Micheline Comblen-Sonkes, *Le Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon*, 2 vols., Les Primitifs Flamands, no. 14 (Brussels: Centre Nationale de Recherches, 1986), vol. 1, 55–69, no. 142; vol. 2, pls. XXVIII–XXXIII. The figure is described (57) as "vetu du manteau de dérisio pourpre." Comblen-Sonkes reattributes the panel from Dirk Bouts to Albert. See also *Dirk Bouts en Zijn Tijd*, exh. cat., Sint-Pieterskerk, Louvain, Sept. 12–Nov. 3, 1975, 290–93, no. B/36, where the panel is attributed to "Dirk Bouts (?)" and the verso (regarded as a damaged study for a Vera Icon) to the Bouts workshop, ca. 1460–70. The panel measures 14 1/2 by 10 7/8 inches (36.9 by 27.6 cm).

41. The Dijon panel probably derives from a composition designed by Dirk Bouts. Versions from the Bouts family workshop exist in many examples that remarkably stretch into the early 17th century, over one hundred and fifty years after its invention; see *Dirk Bouts en Zijn Tijd* (as in n. 40), 61–65. I would like to thank Maryan Ainsworth for pointing to the dendrochronological evidence placing Boutsian images of the Head of Christ this late. It is dramatic testimony to the tenacity of these quintessentially 15th-century devotional formulas.

42. The measurements are identical to those of *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (see n. 40 above). The specific designation of colored garments differs from Gospel to Gospel. Matt. 27:28 identifies scarlet as the color of the cloak given to Christ in the Crowning of Thorns ("clamydem coccineam"), after which he states that they "put his own garments on him." This last detail is important, because later beneath the cross the henchmen will cast lots to divide them. Luke 23:11 says Christ was dressed in white ("veste alba"). Both Mark 15:17 ("Et induunt eum purpuram") and John 19:2 ("veste purpurea") specify purple. These color codings were irregularly observed in devotional imagery at the time. However, Hans Memling's *Passion of Christ* (La Galleria Sabauda, Turin), which includes a full series of Passion episodes in a synthesized narrative landscape, programmatically observes each change in the garments. As is typical, Christ is dressed in blue (his "own" clothes) prior to the scourging and mocking. There the blue robe is shown cast aside and replaced with the purple cloak (a brownish-toned purple). The blue robe is then restored for the bearing of the cross to Calvary, and finally Christ is resurrected in a red cloak, which he continues to wear throughout the remaining episodes of his life on Earth.

43. Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of Christ* (Dahlem Museum, Berlin), signed and dated Jan. 31, 1438. Comblen-Sonkes (as in n. 40), vol. 1, 66–67, although

recognizing that the verso has an earlier prototype, deduces these two versions (both recto and verso) must have arisen within the Bouts shop. She offers no speculation about the date of the panel, which, on the basis of its quality, is here taken to be contemporary with Albert. In any case, the points being made are relevant to the type rather than the particular example. Short of additional (presumably dendrochronological) evidence we must, however, regard this as tentative.

44. Comblen-Sonkes (as in n. 40), vol. 1, 58–59, 65–67; vol. 2, pls. XXXIV, XXXV. Though the condition of the panel suggests that it was left incomplete in the studio, it appears that it cannot be known for certain whether the figure was scraped away at a later point. On Meister Francke's panel (Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig), see Michael Camille, "Mimetic Identification and Passion Devotion in the Later Middle Ages: A Double-sided Panel by Meister Francke," in MacDonald et al. (as in n. 39), 183–210.

45. Camille (as in n. 44), 190–94. Panofsky, 1956 (as in n. 38), 110–11, notes that Ludolph of Saxony's *Meditationes in vitam Christi* equates the Ecce Homo with the host in the Mass and suggests it be addressed accordingly in the *elevatio*. The reference descends from the legend of Saint Gregory's Mass, also popular in 15th-century devotional art. On the sources for the perpetual Passion, see E. Breitenbach and Th. Hillmann, "Die Sternbacher Pieta," *Christliche Kunst* 33 (1937): 268–74. On its use in the 15th century in the Netherlands, see Walter Gibson, "Imitatio Christi: The Passion Scenes of Hieronymus Bosch," *Simiolus* 6 (1972–73): 83–93. Given that the doctrine of Christ's two natures requires that his body cease to suffer after the Resurrection, the teaching of the perpetual Passion is manifestly unorthodox. The idea of the perpetual Passion was widely known from the 14th century onward. Although its origins are likely to have been popular, by the 16th century it had achieved acceptance among northern humanists. The Latin verse text written by Benedictus Chelidonius for Albrecht Dürer's *Large Woodcut Passion* asserts the principle in clear and unambiguous terms. See Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, 3d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), vol. 1, 138–39.

46. On the Lentulus Letter, see Cora E. Lutz, "The Letter of Lentulus Describing Christ," *Yale University Library Gazette* 50 (1975): 91–97 (from which the translation is taken); and Kurt Ruh, "Der sog. 'Lentulus-Brief' über Christi Gestalt," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 5 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1985), cols. 705–9. Valla's rejection seems to have had little effect, and Ludolph of Saxony quoted the letter in the prologue to his widely popular text the *Meditationes in vitam Christi* (Nuremberg, 1483). On the idealized image of Christ and its relation to the devotion to the body, see Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 145–248.

47. Nicolas of Cusa, *The Vision of God*, trans. Evelyn Underhill (New York: F. Ungar, 1928), 23–24. Cf. Joseph Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 130–31, who reads this text as an expression of "the self's irreducibly egocentric perspective on the world."

48. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 46–47; Camille (as in n. 44), 197–98.

49. Marrow (as in n. 38), esp. 141–42 and passim; and idem, "'Christi Leiden in einer Vision Geschaut' in the Netherlands," *Ons Geestelijke Erf* 43 (1969): 337–80. Relevant to the Albert Bouts *Christ Crowned with Thorns* is an elaboration on the *Ad Herennium*'s requirement for strikingness written by a 15th-century Italian exegete suggesting "overpowering sadness or severity" as appropriate qualities for a memorable image; Jacobus Publicius, *Oratoria artis epitome* (Venice, 1482), app., cited in Yates, 110.

50. Carruthers, 46–47, 118, 149–50, 162–76.

51. Auerbach (as in n. 21), chap. 1.

52. Like the author of the *Ad Herennium*, any theorist bent on teaching a practical and efficacious technique for invention must successfully tread a line between that which is merely suggestive and that which is outright prescriptive. We are obliged to read between the lines. This is particularly true where one mode of discourse is being adapted for use in another, in this case, ancient rhetorical theory being developed as a basis for art theory, which may amplify rhetorical (for example, Albertian) modes of contextual criticism as well. Making sense of decorum, symmetry, proportion, *istoria*, and so on might all be informed by this evidence.

53. *Ad Herennium*, 3.18.

54. The painting, in the National Gallery, London, measures 29 1/2 by 18 1/2 inches (75 by 47 cm).

55. Suckale (as in n. 39), 188–91.

56. Marrow (as in n. 38); and idem, "Circumdecerunt me canes multi: Christ's Torturers in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance," *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977): 167–81.

57. Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf, *Mimesis: Culture-Art-Society*, trans. Don Reneau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), chap. 1.