

Queering Christ: *Habitus* theology
as trans-embodied incarnation
in late medieval culture

by

Jonah Coman, B.A., M.Litt.

Supervisors: Prof Vicky Gunn, Dr Anna Fisk

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this research has been carried out and the thesis composed by myself, and that the thesis has not been accepted in fulfilment of the requirements of any other degree or professional qualification

Dedicated to my readers, Dr
Stephenie McGucken and Dr Sara
Oberg Stradal, to my mentors, Prof
Pat Cullum and Dr Liz Oakley-Brown,
and to my supporters, Q.M, F.M and
J.H.

Abstract

Situated at the intersection of queer theology, longitudinal research on material culture and trans studies, this thesis presents a coherent medieval theology of a transhuman incarnated Christ. This manifests both at academic/ecclesiastical levels and at lay, mystic and poetic ones. The material evidence stems from exegetical and mystical texts, sermons, lay poetry, community dramatic pageants and visual imagery from book- to architectural-scale. The accumulation of these sources results in a coherent theology associated with the incarnational technology of the sartorial *habitus*. The *habitus* theology enables both the medieval and the modern reader to encounter an incarnated Christ that dons humanity as textile. The history of the *habitus* thology is joined by an art-historical study of skin colour as a gendered signifier, in order to demonstrate the multiple avenues of trans-ontological visibility in medieval sources.

The exploration of embodied and material devotion of the middle ages reveals possibilities of queer readings regarding gender and even ontological status of the human body. The alternatively-bodied/-gendered Christ not only provides a different way of understanding the past and finding what in modern terms would be non-conforming bodies and genders, but also a history for thinking through gender and embodiment in contemporary religious, artistic or daily practice. The theological implications of this are large not just for understanding the medieval body and its boundaries, but also for giving a past to contemporary queer theology and body theology.

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1. Introduction

They were all gathered into the small church in Liège, bodies pressed against each other, feeling each other's warmth and smelling each other's sweat. Above their heads, terrifying yet piteous, there hung a wounded crucifix. The priest knew that his audience was the community of Liege's lepers, ghettoised away from the livelier neighbourhoods, but he knew exactly how to reach to them:

Oh! If it is grievous to you that you are leprous, have patience in all things. Raise up your heads, and perceive with your heart the wounds of our saviour hanging on the tree, the pains of the dying one, the price of the redeeming one, the scars of the one rising up again! ... nothing is so salvation-bringing to us as to daily think about how much God and Man endured for us. Behold! Indeed the saviour suffered, was made leprous on the cross for us, was made suffering, leaving us an example, that we might follow his tracks. (Pseudo-Augustinus Belgicus, *Sermones ad fratres in eremo commorantes*, Sermon 32, in Lipton 2005, p. 1207)

The goal of this thirteenth-century sermon was to encourage this leprous community to suffer their affliction with patience - to shift their thinking about their disease from hindrance to spiritual aid, an opportunity for *Imitatio Christi* already fulfilled. Their leprous bodies were not a curse, but a blessing, modelled on the body of Christ on the cross. The priest points to the scabby, leaky appearance of the man on the crucifix, and then prompts his audience towards a reflexive view of their own bodies – he makes them lift their heads, perform physical action and fully experience their bodies as they visually take in Christ's body. Sara Lipton describes it as such:

The leprous auditors of Sermon 32 knew only too well and from bitter personal experience that external appearance could indeed matter. Themselves victims of disdainful stares, they did not need to be warned against shrinking from Christ's ugliness, nor did they have to be taught how to identify with suffering (Lipton 2005, pp. 1191-2)

This story, which I came across while researching the crippled medieval body of Christ (the quasi-medicalised body seen lacking and broken), resonated with me as a transgender individual. It hit home not only because of the marginalization and stares that a lot of members of my community suffer through their lives – especially throughout the process of social and medical transition. Surprisingly even for myself, it also hit home because of a thoroughly internalized discourse on the medicalization of trans bodies, a hegemonic discourse that still forced my unconscious to identify with a leprous audience. Just as the medieval leper, I and my community carry our identity sometimes highly visible on our skin. Like the medieval leper's identity, the transgender individual's has been – and in some countries, like my country of birth, still is – considered by the medical or religious opinion as abnormal. Although not a believer, I, like the medieval leper, find solace in the already fulfilled *Imitatio Christi* that the medieval body of Christ offers to me and my community. Shared trauma and necropolitics solidify a cross-temporal community incorporating contemporary (see Bychowski 2016c) and historical individuals that transgress cisheterosexual genres of embodiment. The thesis contributes to this solidification of transhistorical community by a longitudinal examination of literary and visual practices that amounts to a coherent late medieval theology which imagined a Christ in transition between human and god, explored through a collage of queer and trans methodologies. As a queer and trans academic myself, then, I have access to embodied knowledge that is accessible to most only by a theoretical proxy. Filtered through my material experience, I find resonances between the narrative structures and relationships to power exhibited in late medieval Christocentric religion and the cultural production of queer and transgender knowledges. In addition to identifying the themes congealing into a coherent medieval theology, this thesis relies on my historical experience giving me insights into affinities between queer methodologies and the mechanism of this medieval theology. This theoretical framing therefore acknowledges my onto-epistemological positioning and holds it responsible for, or moreso relishes in, the production of historiography and heritages. At the same time, the trans-masculine, able-bodied white onto-epistemology delineates intentional or unintended exclusions.

This thesis explores the many variations through which the Augustinian *habitus* theory, formulated at the turn of the 5th century, has survived and transformed into a full-fledged theology through high and late middle ages.ⁱ In visual, written and material texts, Christ appears as a god disguised in human clothing, a visceral disguise that he takes in the form of a skin-suit. This skin-suit, inherited from Adam or from Mary, innate to Christ's natural constitution or simply used by a trans-human god ('god passing as human') as means of communication, permeates the medieval imagery in so many forms, genres and media that it cannot be ignored. If Christ's disguise as human, knight or mother in the middle ages has been remarked upon by scholarship, the larger social potential of Christ's incarnation figured as *habitus* has been completely obscured. Furthermore, the *habitus* trope of Christ in disguise has not yet been pursued by scholarship as a theological matter that trickled into visual and written vernacular texts. Throughout this thesis, I show that the *habitus* theology reveals the un-naturalness of human identity, its transitory and unfixed state, and creates a universal Church where one's human condition and its characteristics should not matter. The popularity of the *habitus* theology in deeply affective and embodied religiosity of the later middle ages can be explained by the fact that this concept frees Christian souls from superficial characteristics of their bodies such as sexed morphology, skin pigmentation, visible disability. In theory, the *habitus* could empower those that an essentialist society would seek to oppress, by expanding the range of sanctified bodies as well as shifting the thinking about the gendered/racialised/disabled body.

I choose here to concentrate on the fulfilled potential that the *habitus* theology opened for expanding on gender, drawing from contemporary queer theory and from medieval liturgical commonplaces. The exchange of skin, and of identities embedded in it, that the *habitus* theology permits, creates a permeability of identity and legitimises fluidity of gender, and especially transgender experiences. The fluidity in gender expression or assumption of gendered roles in late medieval images of Christ has been well documented, but the scholarship on this aspect – especially on the topic of 'mother Christ' – is extremely binary; fully-male Christ switches, when he lactates or

gives birth, to fully female (Bynum 1986b, p. 246; 1991, pp. 101-2, 215). Furthermore, the transformation into different gender forms has not been regarded as either a product or a tool specifically for queering the human and the divine body. Research on historical transgender and genderqueer (rather than cis-situated 'cross-dressing') subjects has proliferated within the past decade (with Davis 2002 as a trailblazer; Lurkhur 2010; Wallace 2014; Bychowski's ongoing blog TransLiterature; Mills 2015; Charland 2016; Karras and Linkinen 2016; Gutt 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c; DeVun 2008, 2018; Boon 2018, Kim and Bychowski 2019 etc), and much work has been done towards challenging essentialist frameworks in the medieval research field, but a theology of a non-binary Christ has not been broached by medievalists. Nonetheless, incarnation as disguise is referenced in modern scholarship but not taken seriously as a mechanics of theological understanding (Bradbrook 1952, p. 162; Wald 2014, p. 9 n. 10). I argue that by exposing Christ's perfect human identity as a costume, a disguise or one transitory identity part of a spectrum, the *habitus* points to liminal spaces that Christ inhabits, both in terms of ontological condition (between human and god) and in terms of gender identity.

The repeated medieval references to Christ's humanity as cloth, as a costume and, even more explicitly, as a disguise, demonstrates the possibility of the *habitus* theology's mechanism to resemble that of theatrical role-play or drag. The incorporeal god is described, over and over again, to have put on the costume of a human, and to have therefore, temporarily, become a human. Nonetheless, this is an ontological type of drag, where the identity of Christ shifts not from a gendered expression to a different one, but from an immaterial expression into a material one. Christ's reconfiguration as food (the Eucharist), as animal (the Paschal lamb), or as the Word (written or spoken) signal the same kind of ontological drag, albeit somewhat more extreme, unrecognisable as agent. The perceived stability but always threatened instability of this identity of Christ – taken as granted for human but also always not *just* that – mirrors the threatened instability of transgender existence. The parallels between the crystallisation of Christ's human identity and the transgender experience run deeper than a performative, early Butlerian conception of identity (Butler 1989,

1990). Christ transcends his godly identity by putting on the human garb; but the orthodoxy of the *habitus* theory rests in the acknowledgment that, even though a costume, Christ's humanity becomes his permanent, true identity, without the exclusion or erasure of his previous identity. The figure of human Christ queers ontological and gender lines; the material, as well as verbal acknowledgment of this ontological transformation also has important implications within formal discourse about transgender bodies, names, material and metaphysical identity. This gendered non-binariness of Jesus reflects the Chalcedonian non-binariness of incarnate Christ, both/neither god and human. Queer transformations and the posthumanism of trans theory is not out of place in a medieval theology where the divine is tautologic, co- and multi-val, in constant flux and relational. The transgender embodiment therefore acquires theological currency. This is a defiantly 'indecent theology' that Marcella Althaus-Reid calls, in a reclamationist sense, 'obscenity': 'The obscene is... that which renders visible the flesh as flesh' (Althaus Reid 2000, p. 110). My use of an embodied queer and trans methodologies is then specifically important as a deeply materialist recuperation of the stuffness of historical life, its fully embodied genders and its queer lusts. These liminal ontologies of Christ not only inform each other, but also have the potential to create an ecclesiastical history for radical embodiments, which could empower genderqueer communities of modern believers.

1.1 Binary Christ

The *habitus* theory – the idea of the incarnation as material exchanges of signification between textile and dermis – has not been addressed as a coherent theology or as a historically-persistent and theologically important image by scholars of medieval text, art or theology. Parts of the imagery presented in this thesis – that of the *tunica inconsutilis*, of Mary as seamstress or of the flaying of Christ – have been the focus of more concentrated efforts from scholars (Follet 1842; Woolf 1962; Dzon 2015; Dent 2017). Nonetheless, medieval scholarship has not commented on their connection or their participation in a multi-mediatic theology that took these images more seriously than just

fanciful allegories. On the other hand, feminist theologians have entertained the possibility of a productive theorisation of a transvestite or genderqueer Christ, a perspective extremely close to the sources presented in this thesis:

Christians believe in a Jesus "dressed" in flesh, that most female of symbols, and they believe in a God in man-flesh who behaves like a woman. This "transvestite" Jesus makes a human space where no one is out of place (McLaughlin 1993, p. 144)

This is Jesus in drag, dressed in a royal purple cloak with a crown of thorns... And there are also Jesus' own torn clothes, muddy clothes that are taken by the soldiers (Althaus-Reid 2004, p. 168).

This has, nonetheless, been framed as an ethical duty of a radically inclusive modern and post-patriarchal church rather than a recuperation of an already-existing historical and perfectly orthodox understanding of the incarnation mechanism. This is predicated on the fact that the modern understanding of medieval thinking about the body, and especially of medieval theology, is still overwhelmingly binary and essentialist. As I mentioned above, the field of medieval trans studies has seen a flourishing in the past decade, with its attendant challenge of essentialist frameworks in historiography. Nonetheless, a historical-theological recuperation of a medieval genderqueer Christ is still to be tackled. The issue of a non-binary Christ, or of a Christ that fluctuates on the axis between feminine and masculine and often transcends these, has not been broached by medievalists.

This project was born out of a longstanding personal fascination with the medieval gendered body, and in particular with the gender of Christ's body in late medieval literature and visual culture. A principal locus of this was, if one goes by the modern literature, Christ's wounded and broken body. There is 'an extraordinary preoccupation with the wounds' in 'late medieval crucifixion piety' (Beckwith 1993, p. 42). The wounded, broken and submissive body sex Christ's body as female according to scholarship (McLaughlin 1975; Bynum 1986b; Newman 1995), as well as setting apart

'feminine' forms of devotion from more mainstream ones (Petroff 1994; Mazzoni 1996; Hamburger 1998; Renevey and Whitehead 2000; Warren 2010; Coakley 2012). A rich historiographical tradition emerging from this line of thinking is that of the 'mother Christ' (McLaughlin 1975; Heimmel 1982; Steinberg 1983; Lagorio 1985; Bynum 1986a; Newman 1995; Jensen 1997; Miller 2010; Bledsoe 2011; Douglas 2016). Majority of original texts describing a maternal Christ do so without switching the pronouns to female. Nonetheless, this did not deter modern scholars from categorising these multiple bodies of Christ from across the middle ages into one of two polarised genders, male or female, while making some essentialist assumptions about sexually dimorphic bodies and the gendered/social roles associated with these two genders. Medievalist Christocentric studies, as well as largely the entirety of the field in regards to concepts of gender and ontology of medieval bodies, is still thoroughly indebted to Caroline Walker Bynum's work. Her lifetime output has been prolific and incessant, but her work on women's relationship with Christ in the thirteenth to fifteenth century probably stands out the most: an oeuvre composed of the books *Jesus as Mother* (1982), *Holy feast and Holy fast* (1986b) and *Fragmentation and Redemption* (1991), and accompanying articles. Bynum's dialog with Leo Steinberg proved to be a pivotal moment of medieval scholarship in the mid-80s. Steinberg's article on 'the sexuality of Christ' (1983) takes as its subject the penile embodiment of Christ as medieval (up to and including Renaissance) proof of incarnation. Bynum's 1986 article, recapitulating her earlier points in *Jesus as Mother*, argues against Steinberg that, while Christ is not explicitly constructed as masculine or male in medieval theology, he is mentioned as mother and maternal, therefore in what Bynum calls feminine and female metaphors or images. This conflation of lactation, menstruation and pregnancy, as well as motherhood, maidenhood, bride-status, with female is the reason that I call Bynum's fault an essentialist one: assuming that biology is destiny, female is mother, mother is exclusively female.

There are enough scholars who have rehearsed this critique of Bynum's essentialising work. In their work on queer or homosexual desire in Christocentric narratives and images, arguing for a transgressive and reactionary eroticism, Mills (2002, p. 153), Trexler (1993, p. 108), Rambuss (1998,

pp. 45-49) and Roman (2017, p. 9) posit themselves as contrasting with Bynum's tame, if still progressive at its time, thesis. Bob Mills points out that Bynum's taxonomy of the male and female body, their social role and their identity performances are based on 'a number of questionable assumptions concerning gender' (Mills 2002, p. 207). These questionable assumptions are, of course, essentialist associations between the female body with motherhood, nurturing, and the flesh 'without, it should be added, interrogating the foundational categories, such as the 'maternal', implicit in her own analysis of medieval gender relations' (Mills 2002, p. 156). In his critique of Bynum's work and legacy, Richard Rambuss draws attention to her 'normalizing semiotics of marriage, impregnation, lactation, or food preparation: a set of terms that keep the female body, even in its most ecstatic states, quite properly domesticated' (Rambuss 1998, p. 3). Mills rightfully remarked that both Bynum and Steinberg engaged with 'a decidedly unperverse Christianity' (Mills 2002, p. 154), and suggests that work should be done to correct this view of the medieval religious environment.

What Bynum tried to do was to recuperate one side of binary patriarchal structure 'female = flesh' / 'male = intellect' as a locus of agency and empowerment: female = flesh = Christ. Her scholarship has nevertheless entrenched this dichotomy (rooted in essentialism) as the *modus operandi* in many fields of medieval studies, and her influence is exhibited by feminist texts that support their claims by referring to Bynum's work. Key works like Sarah Stanbury's *Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (2008), Elizabeth Petroff's *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (1994) and Amy Hollywood's *Inside Out: Beatrice of Nazareth and her Hagiographer* (2001) rely on Bynum's association of female with flesh to present possibilities of escaping patriarchy through abjection of the flesh, and rarely if ever interrogate her use of male and female. The only nuance Bynum's study has added to subsequent scholarship on this dichotomy is that women could now be thought as using this essentialised fleshly body to gain power, in a subversive empowerment movement that might very well describe the feminist politics of the 70s and 80s than the medieval conceptions on body. Even though the only politics that came out of her work is indirect, by framing her ideas around radical

feminist concerns of the day – freeing femininity from sexual object to (maternal) subjectⁱⁱ – Bynum does hint at the fact that she was approaching this topic in a politically-sensitive time for the feminist movement:

A better understanding of the medieval past might thus enable modern people to give to age-old symbols new meanings that would be in fact medieval... if we want to turn from seeing body as sexual to seeing body as generative... (Bynum 1991, p. 117)

Bynum's essentialism is, as the product of its time, understandable. The historical context of the start of her career as an academic (early to mid-1960s), and of the publication of her books (70s through very early 90s), place her work and her advocacy in the middle of the feminist sex wars (Duggan and Hunter 1995). The hard lines exhibited in Bynum's work – even while the primary texts testify to gender fluidity – align her with the second-wave radical feminist trend of strident separation of the concept (as well as the radical self-segregation: Koedt 1971, Krebs 1987) of woman and man. Transgression into feminine could be just partial, but a complete woman MUST adopt femaleness and its essential praxis, motherhood, as characteristics – otherwise it would be just a patriarchal appropriation of feminine images (see Raymond 1979; Stryker 2008, p. 2). This radical binarist way of thinking, although rooted in the feminisms of the 80's, has nonetheless resurfaced as the template for a strong contemporary trans-exclusionary radical feminist work. The Bathroom Bill in the USA (2016), political debates about female-only spaces (2017) and the discussions about changes in Gender Recognition Act revolving around self-ID (2018) in the UK, Caster Semenya's case against the IAAF (2019) and other international discourse regarding trans rights cite the same gender essentialist logic, that what makes a woman is the ability to menstruate and to birth children. In this political climate, upholding such outdated frameworks for thinking about historical past and supporting binarist academic and theological narratives essentially means endorsing the ideology of trans-exclusionary radical feminism.

While Bynum's work can be excused as the product of its time, and her politics not beheld at the same level as more recent scholarship that is attuned to the contemporary radical feminist discourse, a critique levelled at Bynum's work should be the template for an explicit engagement with this discourse by medievalists currently working in and pushing forward the field of medieval gender studies. This is, for example, the case with Jacqueline Murray, who not only continues to but also defends the use of essentialism as framework for researching medieval gender as a 'new direction in gender history' (Murray 2019). In this talk, Murray defines men as essentialised by not just their penises, but specifically the cremaster muscle that is responsible for erections. Her implication is that the only way to assert masculinity in the middle ages was linked to penile visibility (and prowess). When challenged on this, Murray clarified that essentialism as a methodology helps the historian bridge a common understanding of sexed bodies; 'a 40-kg man in the 1200s and a 80-kg man in 2019 function the same way' (Murray 2019, my paraphrase). This is patently untrue, even disregarding the blatant ableism and transphobia that such a statement entails. It is evident that even biological functions are socially constructed, and that 'natural' phenomena like digestion and menstruation are not transhistorically consistent. For example, women in the medieval period did not experience menstruation as a recurring, monthly event as modern, Western-hemisphere women do, because of their diet, a culturally different attitude to multiple consecutive pregnancies, and use of nursing as a contraceptive measure (Stell 1996 pp. 19, 21). Murray's use of essentialism is a stance that she, without explicitly acknowledging it, endorsed in another talk twenty years ago (Murray 1999), but the political situation both in Canada (where she teaches) as well as in the UK (where her 2019 talk was given) makes this repeat performance inappropriate for a publicly engaged mover in her field. At least Bynum, although not in an explicitly anti-essentialist context, does make a good point when challenging automatic associations that genitals have in modern understanding – and definitely in Murray's lifelong scholarship: 'Did medieval people immediately think of erections and sexual activity when they saw penises (as modern people apparently do)?' (Bynum 1991, p. 83). Even before Murray's 1999 talk, David Aers recommended a 'critical and cautious use both of Kristeva and Bynum than are

found in some recent attempts to argue for the subversive and empowering forces of late medieval devotion' (Aers and Staley 1996, pp. 36-7) hinting at the fact that this type of scholarship has been, or could be, used by more radical feminists.

The 'radical' feminist politics in itself is nuanced and influenced by Catholic understandings of the body and sexuality with no historical grounding beyond the 19th century. In an American context, the piece that informed the political position not only of a specific strand of feminists but also of the treatment of trans people by the state – naturalising the general population's perception of these bodies through laws and public policy – was penned in 1980 by Janice Raymond for the Reagan administration. Her report 'Technology on the Social and Ethical Aspects of Transsexual Surgery' prompted a shift in attitudes on medical care afforded to transgender people (Williams 2014), at a time when the same move was implemented on AIDS medical care. Political decisions to strip LGBTQ individuals of federal medical care in the 1980s have solidified a radically conservative attitude towards these communities. The author of the report that had this impact was, nonetheless, not a medical specialist. Janice Raymond was a former Catholic nun belonging to the Sisters of Mercy order, before going on to do a PhD in ethics and society at Boston College, a Jesuit school (Zagria 2010). Her thesis, supervised by radical feminist theologian Mary Daly and published by Beacon Press, a publishing house associated with the Unitarian Church, became the highly influential *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (1979). The book, complete with nativist language such as 'native-born women' for cis women, argues that the male-to-female transsexual body violently colonises femininity. For Raymond, trans women are a tool of patriarchy, created to 'colonise feminist identification, culture, politics and sexuality' (Raymond 1979, p. xx). Even more – her language implicitly drawing on the atrocities of colonialism – she asserts that 'all transsexuals rape women's bodies by reducing the real female form to an artefact, appropriating this body for themselves' (Raymond 1979, p. 104). In her system of thought, trans women are medically-constructed simulacra of an idealised, normative femininity. Raymond's book was perhaps the most foundational work in establishing trans-exclusionary radical feminism as a distinct ideology. Echoes of this colonial language ('boundary violation', rape culture,

cultural appropriation pp. 69-71, 88) reverberate all throughout Mary Daly's own book (*Gyn)Ecologies* (Daly 1978) published the same year.ⁱⁱⁱ Raymond's doctoral supervisor, Daly was a Catholic theologian feminist educated in Catholic-run universities, and co-founder of this brand of feminism that radicalised mainly lesbian communities against what they construe as a male threat. The conservative and essentialist elements of their politics is exemplified in their justification of political lesbianism. This stance is informed by a historically Catholic viewpoint of penis-in-vagina as the only 'real sex' – observed, obviously, in historical categorisation of any non-reproductive sex as 'sodomy'. Such a definition – and its attendant acceptance of homosexual men in Christian communities as long as they are celibate – is then compatible with political and 'gold star' lesbianism which excludes any contact with men. This brand of feminism is therefore thoroughly informed by a conservative Catholic worldview regarding essentialised bodies and, as an extension, gender as well as sexuality. Echoes of Raymond's book are clearly heard not only in trans-exclusive 'radical' feminist discourse in any public forum, but also in discriminatory legislation such as the examples above. This strand of Catholicism is of course one based on a mythology of normalisation of female oppression by the traditional church as well as of 'tradition-sanctioned' binary genders. Its mythology recently re-emerged in the public eye with the document published by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education entitled '*Male and Female He Created Them*', which argued against gender 'ideology' in schools (Versaldi, Zani 2019). The answer to this re-emergence of essentialist, binary and oppressive lens through which the past is interpreted, is the recuperation of a trans-human Christ in Catholic history. A thorough understanding of the medieval orthodox notions of the Chalcedonian Christ, both human and god reproducing, in a way, the inner workings of gender-queerness and transgender identity (see Leah DeVun's 2020 work), could replace the binarist legacy of second-wave feminist medievalists and make way to a more accepting, inclusive and also more nuanced understanding of the past.

1.2 Moving past medievalist essentialism: trans methodologies

This shift towards the dismantling of the binary thinking in theological understanding of Christ's identity has already been taking place in modern, progressive or radical theology, spearheaded by queer theologians. Extending beyond second-wave feminist theologies of 'woman Christ' and Christa (Heyward 1996; Christ 1997; Slee 2011; Beavis 2016), the transhumanist mechanics of the *habitus* incarnation can (in the modern communities, and did, in the medieval practice) impact on the integration of trans and disabled bodies and bodies of colour in a more inclusive theology of salvation. As early as 2000, Marcella Althaus-Reid noted this shift beyond essentialised binaries: 'Queer theologians like Goss and Stuart, amongst others, have been focussing on is Christ who is neither this nor that, a Christ who embraces and shows life as fluid, changing, outside the reductionist patterns' of 'either/or' (Althaus-Reid 2000, pp. 114-5). The field of trans- and intersex-inclusive theology (Mollenkott 2007, Cornwall 2015) has been essentially developed in tandem with the emergence of trans studies as a lens of enquiry in medieval history, and has been dedicated entire journal issues in 2019 (*TSQ*) and 2018 (*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*). Nonetheless, the shift towards a trans-inclusive theology is understood as a break from a long-historical, traditional understanding of bodies and of the incarnation in cisheterosexual terms. Siobhan Kelly's (2018) thorough review of five different genres identifiable in trans theological writing does not include an overview of historiography beyond nineteenth-century biography. Megan DeFranza's 2015 book about gender diversity in theology chronicles late antique and modern theologies about intersex bodies, with Aquinas and Luther being the precarious bridges upon which the two are connected (pp. 125-127). This narrative of modern innovation is a script that the binary medievalist scholarship has not challenged.^{iv}

Historiography itself is not all binary. Medievalist scholarship has offered an expansion of the gender binary through discrete 'third genders' such as MacNamara's (2002) and Mitchell's (2003, p. 136) chastity; Swanson's (1999) and Cullum's (1999) clerical masculinities; or Ringrose's (1993) eunuchs.^v Nonetheless, adding supplemental categories to these systems does not respond to the specifically

transhumanist focus of the medieval incarnation theology. Rather, this theology – and especially its *habitus* model – thrives on the binary as bookends to an expanded spectrum, since its mechanism is the transgressive movement between two distinct embodiments. This makes the *habitus* theology ripe for exploration through the lens of queer and especially trans theories, and its history important to modern queer individuals. The mechanics of the *habitus* incarnation, that of deity dressed as, or passing as, human, can be productively mapped on the *theoretical* work of drag (non-stable, temporary gendered identity as theatrical performance enacted through clothing). But should specifically be analysed via the material conditions of transgender embodiment, with its creative reworking of the material and theoretical content of the body to accommodate gender transitions.

The use of queer in this thesis, both to denote bodies/practices and to name a theoretical field, is complicated by the fact that I am working at the intersection of modern and medieval understandings of gender and by extension of sexual encounters between these gendered bodies.

The impreciseness of language is universal – while medieval individuals will not have had the modern language for these identities, is this modern language precise and useful to all modern queer individuals?^{vi} Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick explains queer as ‘the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically’ (Sedgwick 1993, p. 8). Queer is the counter-cultural, but ethical, non-normative use of desire, bodies, times and spaces, positioned as a counter-narrative to the societal norms in which it subsists. This acknowledgment that queerness depends on its historical and cultural context does not mean that I agree with the myth of absolute social constructivism of queerness. This thesis is based on a radical reclamation of queer heritages and non-reproductive genealogies. Carolyn Dinshaw suggests that historical connection between queers from different times operates ‘partially by virtue of shared marginality, queer positionality’ (Dinshaw 1999, p. 39), a trans-historical trauma that creates communities across time. Carla Freccero hints at this cross-historical kinship by introducing ‘queer spectrality’ which disturbs the linearity and singularity of history through

affective echoes: ‘ghostly returns suffused with affective materiality that work through the ways trauma, mourning, and event are registered on the level of subjectivity and history’ (Freccero 2007, p. 489). Historiography has the potential to create connection between sameness (homo) if it reorients from a ‘history based on hetero difference’ to ‘homohistory... with all its connotations of sameness, similarity, proximity, and anachronism’ (Goldberg and Menon 2005, p. 1609). This historiographic practice then seeks similarity rather than difference, and privileges affect, desire and connection beyond the socially constructed (self or imposed) identity.

This project is committed to homohistory, by queering the body of Christ, interrogating the binaries that historiography has put in place and recognizing modern queer theology as one expression in a long line of queer theologies extending to and beyond the middle ages. In her talk on trans/queer pedagogy in Kalamazoo, M. W. Bychowski (2018) identified a crisis in humanities tied to education traditions deeply suffused with a white, cis-heterosexual (and mostly binary ‘male’) internal logic. Bychowski argues that as embodied practice, trans studies can help academia transition from a monolithic viewpoint to a vibrant epistemological system multiplied and in flux. The methodologies presented in this thesis that are offered as routes to move historiographical writing beyond binaries are guided by trans technologies of the body and how it relates to time, fractures and assemblage, and material conditions of gender. These methodologies guide the selection of sources, the perspective through which medieval theology is viewed from, and the framing of the *habitus* theology as queer praxis. All of these methodologies centre an experiential understanding of the trans (binary, male) body

1.2.1 Metamethodology: assemblage

Assemblage/bricolage and other cluster-oriented philosophies propose that humans and the world around them construct meaning by actively participating as cogs in a larger mechanism: ‘in an assemblage, there is no ‘subject’ and no ‘object’, and no single element possesses agency’ (Fox and

Allred 2015, p. 401). As metamethodology, assemblage uses the physicality of the researcher embedded in a suite of unrelated, clashing or compounding theoretical approaches. Assemblage 'sees human bodies and all other material, social and abstract entities as relational, having no ontological status or integrity other than that produced through their relationship to other similarly contingent and ephemeral bodies, things and ideas' (Fox, Allred 2015, p. 401). As methodology, assemblage allows the artefact to be an equal partner in meaning making, acknowledging its agency and foregoing closure of potentialities through decentring the author, as well as the authoritative interpreter. Instead of possessing one essential reading, that resides in the historical fact or object, and which needs to be unlocked and definitively asserted by an authority voice, assemblage reveals the historical text as an echo-chamber of individualities past and present, multiple readings of which might intersect and coincide, but which are never the one true answer.

As structure as well as methodological practice, bricolage also acknowledges and professes the importance of politically involved epistemology (Rogers 2012, p. 7, referencing Kincheloe). This is an important element both in the phenomenon this study is about (medieval identity predicated on the material-cultural, hybrid and transformative Chalcedonian model) and in the end goal of the thesis, which is to engage with present-day religious and cultural queer politics. One's material positionality and access to specific life experiences, their 'embodying critical knowledges' (Mercado-Lopez 2018), puts them in the ideal position for offering a different point of view, a piece of the multiplied and fractured aspects of any historical narrative, with full acknowledgment of the method's limitations. This aligns with Susan Stryker's methodological definition of trans theory, which 'considers the embodied experience of the speaking subject, who claims constative knowledge of the referent topic, to be a proper—indeed essential—component of the analysis of transgender phenomena' (Stryker 2006, p.12). The body and the experiences of the trans researcher, itself subject, object *and* methodology, therefore, make up an essential component of the research assemblage (Fox and Allred 2015). Assemblage (or collage, bricolage) in itself is identified by Kate Bornstein as a 'transgendered style' of knowledge production:

my identity as a transsexual lesbian... [is] based on collage. You know – a little bit from here, a little bit from there? Sort of a cut-and-paste thing. And that's the style of this book. It's a transgendered style, I suppose.' (Bornstein 1994 in Prosser 1998, p. 175).

Bricolage/assemblage consists of a collaborative ontology and epistemology, where (embodied as well as metaphysical) self or meaning are only relational. These kinds of knowledge-making clusters are at the core of newer philosophical fields like object-oriented ontology (Harman 2002), posthumanism (Haraway 1991) or distributed cognition (Clark 2008). Nonetheless, this is not only a modern method of meaning-making, but it finds roots in historical thought systems, including medieval epistemology. As a methodology, assemblage has its roots much earlier than the late middle ages, but is in full force at the specific point in time and geography that this thesis centres upon. Bricoleur techniques were encouraged in the classroom, taught in the church and deployed in creating specific bibliographic genres that inform late medieval technologies of reading (Parkes 1991; Lubac 1998). Many medieval systems of thought were emergent, iterative and visual/material (Carruthers 1998; Boulton 2015; Gutt 2018b). Assemblage as materialist network theory is a popular paradigm for explaining mechanisms of many natural and cultural phenomena in the medieval society, such as vision, impregnation, remembering etc., predicated on assemblage of material and cultural elements that only produce the desired outcome when relationally involved. Outside highly-intellectual, theoretical thinking about multi-actor structures that produce knowledge in fields like physics, psychology or medicine, bricolage also functioned as universal meta-linguistic and meta-figurative epistemology. In his exploration of medieval narrative structures, Gutt extensively demonstrates a range of patterns of thought from medieval literature that are predicated on assemblage at literary, visual, material level or a combination thereof. While Gutt never explicitly mentions bricolage, all of his structures (like the parasitic or rhizomatic forms) are subsets of this methodology, facilitating collaborative, creative and self-reflective methods of reading encoded in their very form. In focusing on the collaborative structure of several medieval genres, Gutt articulates the instrumental role of collage techniques not only in encoding and arranging

information, but also in structurally encoding their self-reproduction. The mechanism that produced knowledge in the first place, then, also ensures its relevance and perpetuation outside its original medium. As methodology for historical enquiry, assemblage is predicated on mixing historically asynchronous cultural products and allowing them to inform each other without a pre-established teleological, genealogical directionality. This temporally-queer methodology, that does not abide heteropatriarchal genealogies, is native to the endeavour of mining queer subjects from history.^{vii}

1.2.2 Period problems: Chrononormativity

As I showed in section 1.1, the binary system of male/female is embedded not in historical narratives but in the historiographical metanarrative analysing these primary sources. The assumption of stable binaries is projected onto a past that, the thinking goes, must have been patriarchally conservative because of the influence religion had on every element of the daily life. Althaus-Reid identifies the solidification of these binaries in the very structure of cultural, theological and artistic narratives: 'Heterosexual patterns of thought prevail in the narratives, and this is easy to identify... by patterns of hierarchical, binary constructive organised thought' (Althaus-Reid 2000, p. 114). These heterosexual patterns of thought that thrive on sexual/gendered dimorphism – since 'hetero' means different and implies a pair of symmetrically opposed actors – replicate systems of power at the same time as legitimising them. This hierarchical organisation reifies in the association of women with 'lesser' cultural forms such as emotive and somatic/embodied, as well as bolstering cultural forms associated with masculinity (linear reasoning, automation) into a hegemonic position. Philosopher Patricia MacCormack helpfully introduces the concept of majoritarianism to explain the self-reproduction of these narratives:

Majoritarianism is a compulsion to reiterate certain modes of thinking rather than thoughts themselves. Majoritarian thinking is knowledge as absolute (or the possibility of it being such). Majoritarian knowledge anchors on a master discourse where it is not so much that things are

monsters but certain traits, forms and ways of negotiating the world are considered the only ways, based on the privileging of concepts such as objectivity and logic. Historically, then, majoritarians have been white, able-bodied, heterosexual, educated males, but all people who participate in these ways of thinking are majoritarian in spite of their corporeal status. (MacCormack 2013, p. 296)

Perpetuation of majoritarian thinking removes the agency of modern minoritarian communities to create knowledge for, and through, themselves as embodied entities.

One of these practices and forms, consolidated in mechanisms of exclusion, is linearity and 'straight time' still privileged by the modern academic institution. This majoritarian orientation of time and chronology organised in sequential narrative centred on progress, reproduction and accumulation are systematic ways to exclude non-industrial/pre-colonial (non-industrial), as well as queer (non-genealogical and non-reproductive) chronologies. Echoing Adrienne Rich's (1980) 'compulsory heterosexuality', Menon Madhavi calls this phenomenon 'compulsory heterotemporality' (Menon 2008, p. 1), where the past, constructed as other (hetero) is used in order to promote historical alterity. The opposite of homohistory that I was advocating previously, heterotemporality denies a past to communities, such as black, disabled or queer, that are seen as a modern invention linked to an identifiable terminological innovation. It is therefore a moral imperative for the modern, postcolonial, intersectional and unashamedly political medievalist to attend to Menon's project of dechronolization: '[t]he temporal version of decolonization—what may be termed dechronolization—would involve taking anachronism seriously and defying difference as the underwriter of history' (Menon 2006, p. 839).

This effort to dechronolize a heterotemporal field of historiography has materialised in ahistoricism and its queering challenges to genealogical, empiricist and positivist knowledge-making. Ahistoricism and its methodologies (Dinshaw's 1999 'touch' or Bal's 2001 'quotations') are 'queer temporalities, visible in the forms of interruption (...), points of resistance to the temporal order that, in turn,

propose other possibilities for living' (Freeman 2010, xxii).^{viii} As radical and disruptive queer praxis, ahistoricism is particularly striking in scholarship centring cusp or transitional periodisation. A lot of work focussed on 'the Renaissance' or Early Modern period (Goldberg and Menon 2005; Freccero 2006; Nardizzi, Guy-Bray and Stockton 2009) as well as on a mythological classical period (Matzner 2016) disturbs the neat classifications of time to find messy classifications of genders and sexualities. Ahistoricism and its importance in finding cross-historical communities as well as its possible teleological problematics has been discussed by modern queer theorists as well as queer medievalists (Dinshaw and Lochrie 2006; Traub 2013) within the last decade, and my own bricollaged methodology is deeply embedded in this discussion. Queer time then manifests in two ways as historiographical methodology: as reparative reading where the present is the fore-runner of the past, and as a departure from traditional art-historical methods that thrive on classification, traceable stylistic genealogies and participation in capitalist production.

This latter anarchic method of source selection, the basis for the large sweep of visual and textual sources in this thesis, deviates from the traditional groupings of similar geography, century or maker, and produces new insights that take a cross-medium, long duration approach that could not be achieved in traditional art historical micro-case studies. The date and geography of the sources ultimately does not matter, and does not make a major part of the selection criteria for use in this thesis; location and date are noted to emphasise a motif's continuous existence in a widespread, Western European context. This methodology thrives especially on the digital reproduction of medieval manuscripts that can be put in proximity without damaging the fabric of the codex, iconoclasm transformed into e-conoclasm. Rather than inhibiting our perception of a coherent material artefact, this expands our ability to not only think about images in manuscripts relationally, but also about images from different media, geographies and times, and to create (or recreate) different patterns of reading. This technology expands or explodes the manuscript matrix and allows it to continue, in fragments, dialogues that originally informed artistic shorthands and stylistic choices. The digital scholar is able to access a variety of material across time, space and medium so is

not, as scholarship until now, constrained to explore only one manuscript or artist. This allows a different point of view, a macro perspective not afforded to scholars until the emergence of digital humanities. In the context of the thesis, this methodology enabled the piecing together of a visual and textual theology across time, and connecting it with the modern community that needs it as counter-genealogical inheritance. E-conoclasism is the art historical methodology that resists chrononormativity, and that actively participates, through the fragmentation and reconfiguration of imagery inherent in the method, in the abrupt fractures based off a transgender sense of temporality.

If cishetero identity, inscribed along continuities and biographically narrated from front to back (birth to adulthood), structures the heterotemporal narratives pervasive in modern western culture, a queer sense of self is necessarily structured by autobiographical genres. Trans and queer narratives grow out of and express non-normative embodiments. As Gutt hints at when he is talking about anamorphosis (looking back and seeing/being different) as a transseeing practice, the trans and queer (especially autobiographical) narrative structure is back to front.^{ix} This genre is required by spectacularisation of the queer body, demanded by the medical and legal institutions, and then perhaps reworked as formal autobiography or metatheoretical musings on queer/trans embodiment. It is a backwards reading of a personal history, allowing the queer person to overlay intelligibility upon their deviation from a straight teleology or upon their material existence undergoing ontological transformations in time (Prosser 1998; Stockton 2009). These autobiographical accounts, Prosser observes, are necessarily retrospective and involve a split between the narrated self and the narrating self, paralleling the position of the postmodern historian in the research assemblage, who recognises their physical trace in history but also their vantage point.

More distinctively, Althaus-Reid identifies the trans narrative style predicated on 'irregular, cyclic or even multiple, inclusive bodies' (Althaus-Reid 2000, p. 178). The trans body narrative is theorised,

over and over by clinicians, psychologists, literary scholars and trans theorists, as reconciling a split (between initial and current – never final – form) with a continuity. This acute feeling of the split is, in clinical terms, called dysphoria – the opposite of euphoria caused by a comforting alignment. M. W. Bychowski uses this trans-specific terminology to describe the encounter between trans-historical actors that meet at the intersection of continuity and split: ‘manuscripts can cause readers to endure the feeling of anxiety or dysphoria, brought on by the bleeding together of diverse times, species, and genres of embodiment’ (Bychowski 2018, p. 324). Shifts in time and space that the gender-ambiguous body is read through operate not only at the level of life-spans, but at the level of trans-historical connection and synchronic fracture. Bychowski’s discussion of encounters of similarity in skin and blood divided across centuries – of the medieval touching the modern, not just at the physical level, but somewhere deeper, in its conceptualisation of unsettled time – can be productively applied to the inception of this very thesis. Started as a fascination with the gendered aspect of the bleeding body of Christ, the research evolved through a self-reflective methodology based on my trans existence, in search of historical kinship. The body of the researcher, as well as the subject of the research – male bodies that bleed, suppressed menstruations and seeing bodies that gender beyond biological essentialism – actively translates into a transmasculine method of making history – a ‘period problem’. This methodological conception of time as non-linear is modelled by – and functions like – Halberstam’s ‘transgender look’, which ‘inscribes abrupt shifts in time and space directly onto the gender ambiguous body, and then offers that body to the gaze as a site of critical reinvention’ (Halberstam 2005, p. 107).

1.2.3 Transitional bodies

Historically, and especially in the late middle ages, the incarnation was imagined as a bleeding body, but this bleeding and fragmented body extended into bleeding chalices, books, sculptures (Coman 2015, 2016, 2017). These objects (and sometimes animals) not only bled, but were also described as

feeling pain and expressing it through sound and movement. The transhumanity inherent in these object transformations, then, highlight a theological understanding of the incarnation in high and late medieval Western Christianity not focused on human essentialism and exceptionalism. The medieval trans-humanism involved in medieval orthodox theology is at the border of teratological, posthumanist and queer theory; its 'trans-' is modelled on queer theoretical understandings of the word (gender transformations) extended beyond the human/nonhuman dichotomy of posthumanist philosophy. Extended from gender into ontology, 'trans-' emphasizes the destabilisation of fixed identity and the processual transitions between discrete states of being.

The words 'cis' and 'trans' of queer/trans theory are slippery Latin suffixes that can mean multiple things not only according to their lexical contexts but even depending on the theoretical stance and on the time-period used in. Generally, 'trans' is used to identify a dynamic identity, in contrast to 'cis', which is a stable identity; these directional or topographical inflections ('across' versus 'on the same side') are preserved from the Latin etymology of the two terms. The point of reference for these is what makes the suffixes so slippery: sameness/stasis and alterity/dynamism can be mapped onto social roles; assignation of gender at birth; or quantification of body material into binary sex. The trans person can be defined, respectively, as someone whose gender identity is different than the one they were socialised in; different than that projected as a future trajectory when born; or different than the average gender identity of the people with the same corporeal characteristics. Because of its refractive expressions in theoretical as well as material forms that trans embodiment takes, a stable definition of the phenomenon is impossible without flattening and erasing difference. We can, for example, identify in scholarship two models of trans embodiment^x – the assimilationist transsexual and the separationist transgender identity – that intersect and conceptually function through the same processes but that look and feel different. The terminology for the first one developed as a specific prescriptive body technology since the turn of the century; the transsexual body is the medically altered body that assimilates into the majoritarian embodied 'alignment' of physiology and social role (Stone 2006; Henry Rubin in Namaste 2007, p. 63; Zimman 2014, p. 18;

Edelman 2014). In this model, the trans body is only a transitional, temporary stage towards becoming a – normalized through medical intervention – cis body; it reinforces the binary system, rather than celebrating difference, flux and multiplicity (Zimman 2014, pp. 19-20). In contrast with the invisible, ‘aligned’ transsexual, the transgender body – the *transitional* body – is hypervisible and challenging coherent, binary reading. This body emphasizes the locus of dysphoria, of transformation or of fracture of identity; in its visibility qua body in permanent transition, it inhabits multiple timelines of inescapable past and never-completed normative destinations. Nonetheless, faced with the ever-fragmentary taxonomisation of queer identity, Lal Zimman challenges the theoretical separation between the two models of trans: ‘it is inappropriate to draw a sharp line between the presumed normative embodiment of transsexuals and the supposedly revolutionary bodies of transgender people’ (Zimman 2014, p. 20). There will always be a tension between normalising and queering the trans body, but what is characteristic of trans identity is common to both (or all/most) instances of genderqueerness. Both models are dependent on the relationship of the body with normative and normalised embodiment, as well as with time.

Trans cannot be an identity in a theorization that only focuses on the momentary, static snapshot image of body and how it aligns to internal sense of self. Apart from erasing the processual experience of trans individuals, a theorization of trans based on a static, suspended snapshot of the individual promotes a panoptic policing of bodies by endorsing the importance of (medical, political) scrutiny into primary and secondary sexual characteristics in order to taxonomize and classify. Instead, gender identity terminology (cis and trans) refers to the result of the comparison between two historically distinct instances to check for sameness (the cis identity where past, present and future all belonging to the same gender) or difference (different gendered expressions crystallised across past, present and future of the trans person). This historical perspective is also the one employed by the normative cisgendered response to the transgender body. Technical terms such as FtM/MtF (female-to-male, male-to-female) or AFaB/AMaB (assigned female at birth/ assigned male at birth) as well as less ethical/sensitive narratives about transgender individuals – ‘when she was a

man', 'I knew him when he was a she', and the fascination with the pre- and post-transitional body – accentuate this aspect of a dynamic, rather than a static identity, one that has changed from one state to another.

In her (essentialist) work on mystical bodies, Bynum celebrates 'women's fasting and illness [that] in certain ways enhanced their sense of being bodies and being vulnerable' (Bynum 1986, p. 176). This fully embodied experience is one that confirmed and empowered these mystics' gendered identity, since Bynum asserts that 'women had greater sense of interior motivation and of continuity of self...' (idem, p. 177). It is worthwhile delving more into the continuity of self that Bynum talks about, because she uses terms phenomenally close to those of queer/trans theory, but forgoes a deeper conversation of these in favour of precariously re-stabilising binary categories. Dysphoria, as explained in the previous subsection, frames the body in relation with alignment of public and private self, and builds mis-continuities of self as the litmus test of transness.^{xi} When Bynum mentions that religious 'men's renunciations were more radical breaks with previous life' (Bynum 1986: p. 176) and that 'medieval males were more used than females to seeing self as defined by conversion, reversal and renunciation' (idem, p. 177) she uses the discourse of dysphoria, transgender becoming and mutational difference. Jacqueline Murray explicitly verbalises (again, without any intention to contribute to trans discourse) that adult men professing their vocation had 'to accommodate and internalize a different gender identity' than that into which they have been born (Murray 2008, p. 35).

Unbeknownst to her, Bynum's mention of 'continuity of self' puts not only mystics of any gender on the trans/cis spectrum, but this line of thinking also reframes both medieval and modern ways of thinking about childhood and adulthood from a developmental perspective. The cisgender body, predicated on stability and immutability, of coherence of gendered markers measured against singular standards, rather than a range, for 'male' and 'female', is revealed as not only a cultural fiction, but a biofiction. Regardless of bodily configuration, and aided by the fact that prepubertal

bodies are less dimorphic than those of adults, the cisgender-aligned body is revealed as virtually impossible. 'Far from being anomalous, the transgender subject... renders explicit the discord at the heart of all sexed embodiment and the creativity necessary for any gender identity to become subjectively true' (Wallerstein 2017, p. 427). Psychoanalysts Dean and Dyess suggest that gender's 'impossibility of meaning' escapes easy binaries of essentialism and constructivism because of its relational legibility (Dyess and Dean 2000a, 2000b). Gender is not only a body independent of its cultural, social, biological or temporal context, but only exists as part of an assemblage. The *habitus* theology with its abrupt breaks and radical transformations fits into this transitional outlook on bodies.

1.2.4 'To tie it all together': the stitch as trans praxis

The main object of this thesis is a medieval theology that constructs Christ's body as transitional between god and human; an unstable body that is constructed by means of somatic and sartorial technologies. The biblical formulation of this incarnational technique describes it as a form of drag ('in habit found as man', Philippians 2:7), but the theological work done across centuries has made sure that it does not function on the same basis as theatrical and temporary identity where the actor takes up a role but preserves a sense of self distinctly separate from their role. Historically-constructed trans-human becoming of the body of Christ fulfils the same axes as gender transition: Retaining both humanness and godhead visible on the surface of the body, Christ is a transgender figure rather than transsexual one. This theology necessarily threads the tension between clothing as hiding or revealing identity, and at the same time engages in a discourse that is strikingly similar to theorisation of the trans body. This is a god becoming human, and at the same time (because of the paradoxical nature of Christ's embodiment and of the trinity), passing as human by virtue of his suit of human flesh. The vocabulary of gender transition, passing and deception are inextricably linked: passing is a term invented in the 19th century as 'a pejorative term for the act of disguising

one's 'real' (racial) self' (Gilman 2001, p. 20). In this racial context, as well as in later adoption regarding ability or gender, the term is linked with deception and bioessentialism. This is the view that one cannot escape a (racial, gendered, class, able) category that one was assigned at birth, and asserting a different identity than that is delusional and fraudulent. It assumes a nefarious agency to the passing actor, while the mechanism of passing in itself is social and effected by viewer rather than viewed body. The narrative of transition as disguise and passing as deception is also what motivates violence and murder in the trans community, with the 'gay/trans panic' defense accepted in many courts of law as excuses for brutality against trans individuals. In this context, diligence must be exercised, since the theoretical mechanism of this issue has been used both to inflict abuse and invalidate a community, and to reclaim and explain the complex ontological transformations inherent in gender transitions.

Specifically, Raymond and Daly condemn transsexuality as an unnatural 'incorporat[ion of] the oppressed role', and compare it with black-face as well as drag, a 'male-made masquerade' (Daly 1978, p. 67). Daly continues: 'in transsexualism, males put on 'female' bodies' (idem, p. 68). Trans women are therefore presented as grotesque masquerades with an underlying sense of violence towards cis women's bodily integrity; one cannot help but be reminded of figures such as Buffalo Bill/Jame Gumb from *Silence of the Lambs* (1991), a fictional serial killer whose desire to be seen as a woman found a monstrously creative avenue in their fixation with wearing the skin of their female victims. The terminology and imagery in this conflation of transsexuality as skin-transvestism is that of skin as textile, and of identity/body as clothing. Nonetheless, the same sartorial vocabulary is used by trans scholars to explain the physical phenomenon of transition: '[t]ranssexuality entered the cultural lexicon as a form of extreme (body) transvestism, with the body's skin as the "clothing" that the subject needed changing' (Prosser 1998, p. 68). First-hand accounts of gender transition use the same image: Max Beck talks about his shifting personal-historical gender presentation as 'so many wonderful/terrible, sharp/ill-fitting suits; the body wearing them was and is transgendered, hermaphroditic, queer (...) so I found a new suit... that fits better, that's tailored to me' (Beck 2001).

Drag not only allows for momentary gender transformations, but opens a trans and genderqueer imaginary. Thinking of the body as textile to be manipulated opens possibilities of creative reworking of its material and theoretical content to accommodate gender transitions. Through medical intervention (hormone replacement and surgery), the skin changes texture and colour, is folded, cut and sown back together to create new forms that fit the wearer better.

This multivalent theory of textiles incorporates many queer methodologies and hinges on historical discourses about marginalised communities.^{xii} Working in the realm of textile (even theoretically) pushes the researcher to consider textures and to be open to a sensual materialism that deviates from the empirical and disembodied knowledge-making techniques of mainstream scholarship. The material dimension of the textile translates into the necessity of thinking beyond human relationships, and to question the anthropocentric scale and anthropomorphic shape of our cultural discourse. Textiles envelop, suffocate, engulf and protect; they hide and veil; they interpenetrate and fray. Associated with materialism and non-intellectual labour, textile craft nonetheless has also been fundamental to creating alternative ways of encoding memory and preserving information – stretching from mythical codes in carpets through the Andean quipu (knotted chords) to looms as the basis of electronic computer systems. The fragile continuum between textile, leather and skin is also thoroughly connected with a medieval affective state, conditioned (to the medieval as well as the modern medievalist person) by the permanence of skin-bound texts and artefacts. This queer affect solidified in transhistorical touches of the same dermal object open up new ways of thinking about the materiality of connection and attachment.

A textile theory of the body is often materialised in theoretical as well as artistic musings of trans feminists. The stitch, specifically, features heavily in artworks by Micha Cardenas (2016) and Emmett Ramstad (figure 2.1; Vacaro 2010), not only as material practice but also as a trans-embodied conceptual tool. The stitch assembles pieces of different textures; unlike the woven textile, the stitch signals rupture at the same time as holding two separate pieces together. The stitch is the site of uncertainty and peril of disintegration and fraying, as well as the marker of comfortable mending, of repair and of rebuilding a malleable textile in one's true size. The stitch, therefore, can be considered a transgender practice – not only in textile artwork, but also marking the skin of the trans body (figure 1.2). The transitional, medically-altered body is stitched, reassembled; through stitching genders, the trans person creates their own, handmade, punk identity from scraps, an identity that

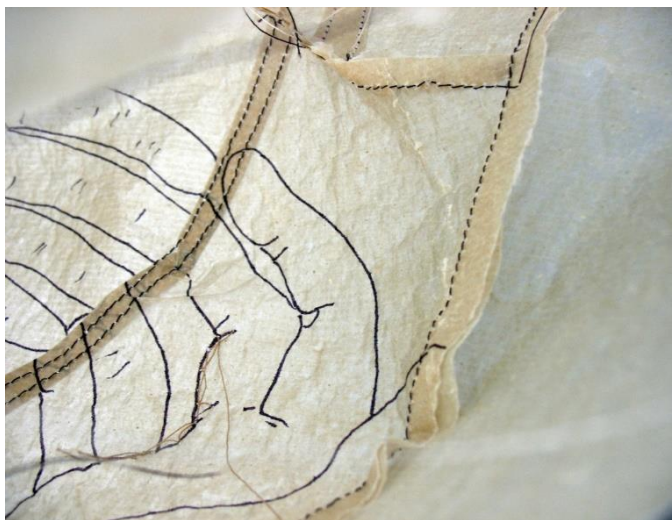


Figure 1.1 Emmett Ramstad, *Sheddings* (detail), 2007. Handmade flax paper and cotton thread.



Figure 1.2 Chest surgery scars, Unknown, FtM tumblr

is processual and deliberate; gathered, stretched, stitched and unravelled, remade and improvised at the edge of skin. The eponymous trans punk-rocker in John Cameron Mitchell's 2001 *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* explicitly references the stitch, as well as collage as a trans punk method, visually (figure 1.3) and verbally in the song 'Exquisite corpse', when she sings: 'I've got it all sewn up / A hardened razor-cut / Scar-map across my body... A collage / I'm all sewn up / A montage / I'm all sewn up'. The stitched body is not only DIY and creative, but also monstrous: Daly uses specifically this detail to describe grotesque trans bodies that explicitly recall Frankenstein's monster, whose

‘artificial faces, limbs, conditioned responses, are dead matter moulded into ‘life-like’ imitations of women, labelled ‘the real thing’ (Daly 1978, p. 72). Nonetheless, as with Daly’s other tropes, the Frankensteinian monster is reclaimed by theoreticians of trans embodiment: Stryker finds ‘a deep affinity between myself as a transsexual woman and the monster in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (Stryker’s 1994, p. 238). The language in here is a theologically-informed one, the surgical transformation a miracle of medicine, rather than a grotesque intervention.



Figure 1.3 *Exquisite Corpse*. Still from *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001) Dir. John Cameron Mitchell

In summary, the stitch is both a transgender, and a medieval conceptual tool. Trans-historically, the stitched body finds visual reflection in pricked as well as repaired parchment (see figure 4.9 page 156). At the intersection of the stitched body, pierced manuscript and embroidered garment, the stitch informs the sartorially-assisted incarnational poetics of the *habitus* theology. Finally, the stitch itself is the formal model for the metamethodology of theoretical assemblage, used in this thesis. Rather than simply juxtaposing paradigms with clear edges separating elements, the methods and theories in this thesis are knit together, stitched from different textures and colours to create something coherent but with visible seams where multiple methodologies enmesh.

1.3 Thesis structure

Through assembling previously-thought dissimilar primary sources and reading them through a host of modern queer and transgender theories, this thesis buckles against previous binarist and cisheteronormative scholarship regarding the medieval body. The original contributions of this thesis hinge on the long-historical case study of the *habitus* theology, which functions as an excuse to further develop both queer methodologies for the field of medieval studies as well as a taxonomy for visualising genders in medieval art. This work is grounded in historiographical analysis as well as trans-embodied methodologies, as an original contribution to queer, theological and historical fields. In bringing together literature from modern theology, medieval history/art history and trans studies, this chapter notes the lack of communication between the three fields that the thesis contributes to. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the project each chapter comes with its own overview of literature.

The present chapter gathers queer and materialist theories, as well as self-reflective bricolage, into a methodology predicated on disruption and challenging of majoritarian discourses. The next chapter, *Gendering the medieval body*, elaborates onto the previous interrogation of the gender binary present in the modern scholarship by first providing textual material exploring social, medical and developmental understandings of the body in medieval culture; this analysis is then supplemented with visual primary sources that, dispensing with biological essentialism, create a much queerer body that will inflect the theological understanding of Christ's incarnation. The third chapter gathers evidence for a centuries-long theological understanding of the incarnation of Christ, which I term *habitus* theology after the Latin word used in the biblical and patristic source material this theology is built on. This chapter then contrasts this Christocentric theological understanding of the human body as investment with a powerful tradition of mainly Marian textile imagery. The fifth and sixth chapter assemble a range of textual, material and visual sources to demonstrate the self-replicating power of the *habitus* theology across non-academic texts produced at and for different levels of the English society. *Tunica dei in English and Latin texts* narrows the remit of the investigation and

demonstrates the self-replicating power of the *habitus* theology in different textual media produced at and for different levels of the English society across three centuries. The next chapter adds a visual dimension to this material, as well as exploring the mechanisms of creative mutation of textile and dermal motifs that culminate in the visual texts of the apocalyptic, resurrected and crucified *tunica dei*. The final chapter offers a moment of self-reflection of the importance of the *habitus* theology for medieval and modern marginal communities, as well as producing some trans-historical, ichronoclastic connections between cultural productions of these groups.

Finally, I need to add here a word about editorial practices used throughout this thesis. Specifically, the capitalisation practices in this thesis might be confusing without clarification. The word ‘god’ will have two forms: capitalised when it specifically signifies the individual entity of the first person of the trinity; and uncapitalized when referring to an ontological dimension (e.g. Christ as god). The capitalised God is therefore one element (‘the Father’) from the category nominated by uncapitalized ‘god’. The names for Christian rituals (Eucharist, Mass), holy days (Easter, Visitation) and the Bible are of course capitalised. Eschewing binary language and binary categories is complex, especially when talking about dimorphic bodies in chapter 2: what does a ‘female’ body looks like? Why is a specific body ‘male’? Therefore, ‘female’ or ‘male’ bodies are designated this way according to our modern (and partially the medieval) understanding, woefully reductively grouped around discursively-constructed binaries rather than a more accurate continuum. This might become confusing in chapters that try to de-essentialise body morphology from gender. While original sources are referenced, non-modern-English texts are translated or modernised mostly by myself, to ensure accessibility for scholars from across the fields that this thesis addresses; I quoted and referenced edited translations only where I found that the modern translation is adequate and sufficient. Biblical quotations both for vulgate Latin and modern English are sourced from the *Douay-Rheims Bible Online* (hereafter DRBO), as an established practice in the field. In regards to my visual as well as textual sources, I need to mention that they are inevitably skewed by manuscript survival,

as well as institutional politics of digitisation (what gets put online?), access (who gets to access manuscripts?) and exhibition (where can these manuscripts get accessed?).

ⁱ While I am aware of not only Bourdieu's (1977), but also Merleau-Ponty's (1962) formulations of their own '*habitus* theories' (influenced by and drawing on different valences of ancient and medieval Latinate *habitus*; see Crossley 2013), in this thesis I am referring to the *habitus* as 'theory' when in its historical context as a theological-theoretical issue. By the thirteenth or fourteenth century, this theory solidifies in the '*habitus theology*' central to my thesis.

ⁱⁱ Maternity is at the core of many second-wave feminist political agendas, such as those regarding marital rape, abortion choice, access to education and equal roles in the workforce etc. (largely explored in Steinem 1984). Of course, framing femininity and womanhood around reproduction does little in the way of giving women agency over their bodies (see the work of Angela Davis, especially 1981), but much in the way of excluding other types of womanhood and femininity, i.e. infertile women, women who choose not to have children, trans women etc.

ⁱⁱⁱ Daly's own use of medieval history (among other questionable cross-cultural phenomena analysed in her book, such as Indian arranged marriages, Chinese footbinding and 'African' genital mutilation) is extremely frustrating for not only any medievalist, but any historian.

^{iv} The work of early modernists such as Leah DeVun and Colby Gordon has not have an impact on trans theology either.

^v There is a danger of thinking about non-binary gender as a third, distinct gender that either sits at the very middle of the binary (male and female genders) and/or adds to the binary system simply transforming it into a trinity or distinct and normative genders. These 'third genders' offered by cis historians are, in fact, variations of binary gendered expressions, and apart from (debatedly) eunuchs, they can be easily classed as non-normative versions of male or female.

^{vi} For sodomy as an umbrella term for non-normative sexuality, including bestiality, see Goodich 1979, ix; Boswell 1980, pp. 178, 323; Brundage 1993, p. 168; Mills 2015, p. 91; on social constructivist versus essentialist models of queerness, see Halperin 2002; Hubbard 2003.

^{vii} This asynchronicity is the historiographical version of methodologies that reclaim text, most of them associated with queer or other minoritarian communities such as Jenkins's 1992 textual poaching; Sedgwick's 2002 paranoid/reparative reading; and Deleuze/Guattari's 'territorialization' (Gutt 2018b).

viii Bravmann 1997, Edelman 2004, Halberstam 2005, Puar 2007 and Stockton 2009 also talk about queer models of past and futurity.

ix It might be a reach to explain this ‘inversion’ of the story logic on the pervasive historical Western psycho-medical discourse on homosexuality, or on the physicality of same-sex cis-gay male intercourse, although Ahmedian orientations might warrant an exploration in that direction.

^x This only refers to interventions at the level of body and its stable identity; other trans-adjacent models are, of course, drag and transvestism.

^{xi} The use of dysphoria, a clinical term, as a defining characteristic for transgender identity is problematic; see Beek et al 2016.

^{xii} Stitching and crocheting has now and again been used as vehicles for political statements, linked with DIY punk and riotgrrrl activism; see Parker 1984.

2. Gendering the medieval body

The title of this chapter is misleading: *the* medieval body is a fiction. There is no generalised, universal way of thinking about *the body*; to claim that would be disingenuous. Even approached as a specific cultural construction, bound by regional or temporal limits, the body is subject to multiple distinct approaches (personal, social, long-historical). Any generalisation of a historical understanding of the nature and characteristics of the body is, therefore reductive. 'The' medieval body is therefore compounded from a plurality of views: the early medieval body; the Christian body; the disabled body in urban environments; the high-medieval female-coded normative (heterosexual, white, abled, young) body in North-European literature. In visual representations of the body, nonetheless, commonly-agreed visual shorthands were used. These visualisations in their own right are cultural products of their own time, reinforcing societal (medical, ethical) scripts and at the same time influencing the way people thought of and shaped their bodies to conform to these scripts. What evidence they give to the historian is to theoretical ideals of what a body should have been. This is not a barrier in addressing my topic; after all, the visualised mythological body of Christ is as much a historical fiction as the body of any contemporary subject matter.

Addressing the visual gendering of the body in a specific time period, therefore, generalisation is a necessity. The original generalisations contained within this chapter are based on surviving visual sources from late medieval Christian West-European book art. They were formed by reviewing more than 25.000 images of manuscript art digitised and available online, a bottom-line estimate based on quantification of digital material and excluding manuscripts I have seen first-hand. The eclectic use of sources and the wide span these come from ensure that these trends are ones solidified across western-European late medieval visualisations. The main trend analysis contained within the subsection 2.3.1 uses a tighter set of visual evidence based on a qualitative survey of 1171 digitised images. This set was selected to exclusively comprise of images with subjects from the life of Christ from birth to ascension, from western manuscripts created between 1210-1531 in England, France,

the Netherlands and Germany. The corpus of late medieval (fourteenth to sixteenth century) manuscripts created in or for English audiences, a dataset widened by the realities of medieval book production widen the dataset, which will include the network of artisans working with the Flemish book-trade as well as French illumination (Smeyers and Cardon 1995; Kren et al 2003; Morrison et al 2006). The observations and discoveries made while reviewing this corpus are necessarily dependent on my embodied positionality as a scholar, as part of the research-assemblage. My critical lens has a queer bent; the modern hegemonic focus on history, with its compulsory cisheterosexuality, is therefore constantly questioned and challenged. In my approach towards the historical visual sources, I write with the specific object to denaturalise the myth of a natural and traditionally established binary. My focus on gendered bodies in late medieval visual sources is therefore not replicating existing scholarly finds.

A gendered understanding of the incarnation has been the focus of star scholarship working on the body of Christ. This is the case in the longstanding, highly influential dialogue between Bynum and Steinberg, who address the body of Christ from female, respectively male literary and visual tropes. Jacqueline Murray faults Bynum with ‘obscur[ing] men's bodies by stressing the humanness of Christ's embodiment and minimising the significance of the sexed nature of that body’, a position in line with her essentialist view of historical genders and the ‘reality’ of sexed bodies. Murray offers Steinberg’s focus on genitalia as a reparative methodology: ‘at least, by focusing on the genitals, Steinberg tried to direct our attention to the maleness of Christ's body’ (Murray 2002, p. 10). Textual or visual, the gendered aspects of the incarnation are an important aspect not only for medieval theologians and believers but also for modern scholarship in theology, medieval studies as well as in queer history and theory. The *habitus* theology reconciles the ontological and gendered focuses by collapsing them into the concept of transitions, as explored in the previous chapter. The *habitus*, identity assumed as material, allows Christ to transition from one state to another, whether it is on gendered (female to male) or ontological (god to human) axes. These transformations embrace the thoroughly paradoxical body of Christ. The essence of Christ’s humanation is that of alterity: god

becomes human; woman flesh becomes son; man becomes god; the son is given a vulvic wound.

This is not to say that the incarnation theology is not also based on homoaffective radical identity – on encountering Christ as truly and deeply human (Lat. *homo*), as same (Gr. *homo*). The transitional body, with its paradoxes (multiple gendered cohabitations in time, mobility along axes of sex, gendered expression, and what that implies for sexual desire), accommodate these theological paradoxes of alterity and sameness.

The first section of this chapter problematises gendering bodies visually and exposes its essentialist pitfalls. Its last subsection considers a visual technique thoroughly linked with a medieval medical concept of essentialised bodies, but which moves outside the modern XX/vulva/woman and XY/penis/man binaries. The second section taxonomises visual attributes that code the gender of a body in medieval visual sources, focusing on the naked body and how primary and secondary sex characteristics gender it. Difference or sameness in discrete visual gendering techniques construct a relational body not solely gendered by its social role or sexed by genital configuration. They reveal a medieval understanding of the difference between gender and sex, of the social construction of these categories, as well as of the importance of time and alterity in creating cis as well as trans bodies. The third section explores a visual gendering technique, skin colour, that has yet been overlooked by medieval scholarship. This body-visualisation technique is important in a cumulative gendering of the body – the skin in itself is denaturalised and constructed as yet another accessory to gendering a body, a costume to which a cultural understanding of gender is attached. This move recalls Jay Prosser's observation about gender transitions as 'full-body transvestism' (Prosser 1998, p. 68), located at the surface of the skin rather than in specific sexed loci (genitals, breasts etc). This formulation and gendering technique will then be important for understanding the *habitus* theology when referring to Christ's body and its ontological and gendered transitions.

2.1 Essentialism and medieval material discourses

Up until very recently, scientific understanding of bodies was based on segregated access to them - male and female physical bodies were treated as essentially distinct and therefore studied differently. The medical discourse has since evolved and it nowadays recognises that biological and social genders are on a spectrum rather than distinct (Ainsworth 2015; Montañes 2017). Unrelated to this scientific development, medievalist scholarship has acknowledged multiplicities of binary gender, distinguished between each other by their sexual status, age or occupation – maiden, wife and widow; boy, man and priest (Walker 1993; MacNamara et al 1994; Phillips 1997; Cullum 2008; Cullum and Lewis 2013). Culturally, medieval understandings of social bodies were filtered through both essentialist and constructivist models. Generally, dress, body morphology or speech patterns are thought of as revealing, rather than constructing of who one is in society. Nonetheless, late medieval western European society at large (but not exclusively) was also aware of the possibility of believably constructing and performing not just of gender but also age, class etc. which is exploited in narratives where kings disguise as peasants, for example.

Madeleine Caviness warns against the assumption that a stable binary system of genders was created by the religion or medical knowledge native to the middle ages, and replicated in medieval society and culture (2006, p. 217). The prolific illustration of the creation of Adam and Eve, as I show later in this section, did nonetheless solidify a visual difference between normative male and female bodies. Hegemonic social understandings of the gender are nonetheless still dimorphic and based on visibility of the culturally and physiologically sexed body, with medievalist scholarship replicating this understanding. Paradoxically then, much historical scholarship uses anachronism as an excuse to reproduce non-nuanced modern binaries in their understanding of historical gender, while rejecting sexual- and gender- queer readings of primary sources on the basis of non-authentic frameworks. Presence of feminine/female characteristics, for example, automatically transforms the canonically male body of Christ into its binary obverse in the corpus of ‘mother Christ’ scholarship. Cultural ideas associated with femininity (motherhood, nourishing, passivity) are most often the tropes tasked with

determining Christ's gender, while physiology is curiously absent. Martha Easton is probably the most radical example of the 'mother Christ' thesis, proposing a medieval female Christ because of vulvic wounds (Easton 2006). Similarly, although as I will demonstrate in the next section breasts do not a medieval woman make, Easton argues that removal of breasts masculinises St Agatha (Easton 1994, pp. 102-104).

2.1.1 Medicine and the multiple medieval genders

Sexual dimorphism, the material grounding for gendered essentialism, is not 'natural'; that is, it does not universally appear in the natural world. Physical dimorphism should not be taken for granted as the hegemonic, historical understanding of human and animal genders. Pre-modern societies had a much more widespread contact with domesticated and wild animals. This could justify a projection of historical understanding of genders as naturally dimorphic: the female and male animal would be easily identified by its shape, size, colour and, if all failed, genital sex. Nonetheless, even within domesticated animals there are variations from dimorphism; many animals have several distinct physical categories, with male as well as female basis for deviations for the binary: bovine taxonomy differentiates between the cow, bull and steer, while poultry has distinct categories for the chicken (as female, egg-laying bird), hen and rooster etc. Moreover, non-domestic and mythological animals are explicitly studied in medieval bestiaries as non-dimorphic (e.g. hyena) and sometimes asexually reproduced (e.g. bears) [Hassig 1999]. This is therefore an argument against oversimplification of an agrarian understanding of 'natural' sex and genders, translated to the human body. The impression of only two sexually stable reproductive genders (e.g. the mythological image of Noah's animal pairs) is the theoretical result of an economy dependent on sexual reproduction of animals.

Theoretical understandings of historical gender as essentialist extension of sex are based on two models, the one-sex and the two-sex system, which were at times competing, at times complementing models to understand sex and gender in medieval western Europe. The two-sex system that we use in modern parlance is Christian of origin. In the pervading myth of Latinate

Judeo-Christendom, two humans were created during the genesis, their essences so different that Philo (b.25 BC) calls them 'two races of men' (Philo 1929, p. 227). The creation of the two is very distinct in primary material: while man was created from clay and 'inspiration' (god's breath), woman was created from human flesh. This different materiality quickly translates into gendered virtues (men are stronger, women are fairer) and weaknesses (women are less intelligent, men cannot give birth) on a binary axis (Cadden 1984, pp. 153-4; 1993, pp. 78-9). It creates a mythology thoroughly distinguishing two separate genders and creating cultural binaries based on associations with essential primary materials. This two-sex system is partly to be held accountable for the association of men with intellect, coldness, pragmatism and women with the flesh, emotionality, physicality, creativity. Far from being confined to mythology and 'non-sophisticated' (religious, pre-modern) understandings of the world, these binaries are baked into the hegemonic structures and languages of academia/medicine/psychology as well as into the wider modern society.

Joan Cadden's research on the medical and social understanding of sexual physiology, nonetheless, has demonstrated that in the Middle Ages multiple understandings of the embodied differences coexisted. The pervasive model for the medieval understanding of the body is that one-sex system. This was mainly proposed by the modern theoretical historian of sex Thomas Laqueur (1990), and was adopted by medievalists as a fitting model for the Aristotelian/Galenic tradition of medieval medicine. The one-sex system theorises male and female embodiment as analogous (an inverted version of each other) and places them on a continuum rather than as completely distinct. According to Galen the difference between men and women was solely the aspect of one's genitals, depending on the temperature at which one developed in utero: '[woman's] workmanship is more imperfect [than man's]... as she is colder than he... the parts of the female cannot escape to the outside' (Galen 1968: pp. 630-2). Woman, here defined by internal reproductive system, therefore, was an 'uncooked' version of man, whose reproductive system was exterior due to higher temperatures. This means that, rather than the two sexes being analogous and similar in essence, the one-sex system creates hierarchies by constructing the concept of women as malformed men, shapeless

bordering on monstrous (Miller 2014, pp. 6-7). Even if based in antique and Eastern medicine, the Aristotelian/Galenic line of thought was by 1200 a mainstream framework for both medical and social understanding of gendered bodies (Allen 1997). This medical idea was further legitimated by theological authorities such as Thomas Aquinas calling the female embodiment 'defective and misbegotten': 'the production of woman comes from defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence' (Aquinas quoted in Gutt 2018b, p. 156 n. 54).

Nonetheless, they all depended on *complexio*: the four humours (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile) as well as their temperature (hot/cold) and abundance (wet/dry), that would combine haphazardly (Stell 1996: p.16). Joan Cadden (1993) testifies to the recognition of importance of complexion and of the qualities of wet and dry and heat and cold as central to all sexes. The number of humours and the need to keep them in balance meant that the gendered spectrum of medieval knowledge was open to more than two discrete instances. Even when the medieval foetus' sex was determined by the dominance of male or female sperm (Cadden 1993, pp. 202-3) – unavowedly socially coded – there were multiple other material conditions that determined the child's eventual gender alignment. Hildegard of Bingen lists six possible results of mixing the male and female sperm, with genders aligned on the axes of sex, virtue and disposition (Cadden 1984, p. 155). A final factor in the future sex of a body is their uterine positionality:^{xiii} where the foetus would develop in a five-chambered (Green 2013, p. 356) or seven-chambered (Cadden 1993, p. 203) womb. This schema allows for a 'true neutral' sex, combining male and female attributes in equal parts, in the middle chamber of the womb: the 'hermaphrodite'. All of these biological and socio-cultural factors contributed to the physical configuration of a body that combined male and female physiological attributes. This system therefore allowed for variations in the binary understanding of sex: beyond her six foetal 'genders', Hildegard of Bingen's taxonomy allows for multiple typologies of male and female constitutions (Cadden 1993, p. 172). These complexions, regulated by the humidity and heat, as well as the percentage of humours, cannot be described only as personalities (as the modern

meaning of the terms, eg melancholic, phlegmatic). The combination of sex, gender expression, dominant behaviours etc makes them something more than psychological categories, at the same time as it essentialises specific embodiments (predicated on specific humoral combinations) as normative. Referring to the multiplicity of types the inhabitants five-chambered womb display, queer historian William Burgwinkle notes their deviation from and multiplication of a bioessentialist binary system that only takes genital configuration into consideration. He rightly observes, nonetheless, that this system is still bound by an essentialist thinking about bodies, and appropriately (recalling the importance of heat in this system) calls it ‘tempered essentialism’ (Burgwinkle 2004, p. 41).

So why do we have so little evidence of any medieval genders outside the modern binary? Gutt theorises that ‘philosophical and scientific understandings of human diversity had to be yoked to a limiting theological paradigm’ (Gutt 2018b, p. 155). In his view, Genesis, with the institution of sexed difference when the second human was created, as well as gendered relations between Christ and the humans funnel the multiple medieval gendered positions into a binary (this is also the position of Miles 2008, p. 40). ‘These binary schemas operate, in each case, to lock down the multiple possibilities which are initially presented into an inflexible dyadic categorization’ (Gutt 2018b, p. 157). While I do not completely agree with Gutt on the (relationally-religious) causes – I suspect it partly stems from our modern, binary inability to recognise medieval gender diversity rather than a strictly medieval framework – the effect is unquestionable. In surviving medieval cultural products, the healthy, ideal body, which formed the majority of visual representations, was one that tended towards the ends of the spectrum, a situation which poses the threat of modern reductive readings of medieval gender. Further, the nature of each individual in this heat-regulated system is still essential: manhood and womanhood (no matter of how many degrees) are associated with a tight set of physical attributes. For example, the idea of all bodily fluids being an analogous substance at different degrees of cooking creates a system regulated by heat. Within this system, even neutral elements (the medieval hermaphrodite) are taxonomized on what ends up becoming a binary model

(Green 2013, p. 356; Gutt 2017). The system then erases the transformative and radical potential of transitions, and essentialises the end result to the conditions surrounding this transformation. This can be observed in the medieval medical conceptualisation of female puberty as an age of declining heat, therefore an expulsion of essential conditions for development into a masculine embodiment (Phillips 2003, p. 24).

2.1.2 Visualising karyotype: or, are you an XX?

This medieval system of gendering still leaves the modern (art) historian with the question: how does one visually recognise the social and medical gender of a character from a medieval manuscript? Modern essentialist and exclusionary clarifications of what a woman or a man is centre on, from larger to narrower definition, social roles, reproductive capabilities, genital morphology and chromosomal (karyotypical) makeup. Only a few of these can be represented visually, and the last one (chromosomes) is not only generally unknown to people (even though not too hard to test for) but also absolutely unrepresentable through socially-agreed-upon visual cues. One can map these multiple modern definitions of where gender resides on medieval understanding of visually-coded gender (as well as modern understandings of that understanding), similarly relying on gender presentation (clothing and occupation) and primary and secondary sex characteristics. The difference between the two, I would like to posit, is that the medieval equivalent to chromosomal determination, the essential role of humours and heat to gendered development, can be visualised. The link between the internal biological conditions and their exterior expression on the surface of the body is preserved in medieval (and modern) terminology: '*Complexio* referred both generally to a person's humoral balance, which revealed his or her temperament, and more specifically to the most immediate marker of this balance: his or her skin tone' (Langum 2013, p. 141).

In her essay on complexion, Langum is concerned with literary depictions, and taxonomises the multiple typologies aligned with temperament, paying attention to descriptions of skin in manuals

for confessors and surgeons. What she disregards, nonetheless, is visual sources, even though a connection between *complexio* and visual representation of bodies has been made for early modern art (Filipczak 1993). As it turns out, art historical evidence supports the general descriptions of the effect of humours on complexion – that is, on the colour of skin. The dark skin of Langum’s melancholic (cold, dry; Langum 2013, p. 149) visually maps onto the visualisation of men (humorally-similar: hot, dry), who are represented with darker skin than women. As I will show in the third section of this chapter, the late medieval artistic conventions preserve a visual encoding of the humoral balance in the choices of skin pigmentation for characters, on a spectrum between light to dark – although often this gets simplified into a dimorphic palette. While Langum only remarks on textual representations of skin, her insight is also applicable to visual sources: ‘Skin was, therefore, a critical site for medieval confessors, which, through the science of *complexio*, provided knowledge with which they could mitigate the limitations of communication and self-representation created by the Fall’ (Langum 2013, p. 148). Although mostly dimorphic in its concrete form (with artists using a pair of colours to represent difference, like pink and white or tan and brown), distinction in skin colour in late medieval visual sources does not accurately map onto modern binary genders. The medieval gender spectrum was theoretically richer than our modern understanding of sexing/gendering bodies: Burgwinkle suggests ‘at least five naturally occurring gender permutations’ (Burgwinkle 2004, p. 41). Nonetheless, medieval medical essentialism still maps onto binaries of temperature (hot/cold) or moisture (dry/wet) which themselves can be assigned to binary gendered constitutions. I suggest that rather than modelling a strict gender-essentialist dimorphism, late medieval visual sources encode on the surface of the bodies information predicated on medieval medical paradigm. Complexion (skin tone) therefore encodes *complexio* (humoral balance), in binaries native to medieval thinking and partly at odds with the modern binary.

Of course, this medieval one-sex system which allows for multiple genders is not safe from falling into binaries, based on idealised bodies instrumental for heterosexual reproduction. As observed in the previous subsection, medieval visual representations normalise bodies that tend towards the

ends of the spectrum, that is, normatively male and female. These two ideal positions, associated with appropriate humoral balance, nonetheless stand witness to an inherently ableist and body conformist system, one that is inherently linked with medieval homo and transphobia. In his examination of Peter Cantor's gendered language on 'De Vitio Sodomitico' in his *Verbum Abbreviatum* (before 1187), Gutt shows that the gendering of intersex bodies was made specifically on the basis of attraction, to avoid same-sex relationships (Gutt 2017). Peter Cantor's language is informed by the humoral theories explored above, and is organised around aligning normative *complexio* to heterosexual desire. Peter determines the gender of a theoretically 'perfectly neutral' intersex body by the medical mechanism of their arousal: if an intersex individual's arousal is related to hotness (*calescit*), they may wed as a male (*ducere*), while if it had liquid properties (*mollescat*) they were to wed as female (*nubere*) [Gutt 2017]. The same language is used not only in theological, but also in legal alignment of hermaphroditic genders, such as twelfth-century Italian legist Gratian's work (Green 2013, p. 256). This alignment of intersex bodies with 'normative' humoral and *complexio* bodily processes creates essential binaries based on medical knowledge that normalises specific embodiments and rejects others. The motivation for this medical policing of gender alignment is most likely linked to homosexuality, which is often associated with gender variance (Burgwinkle 2004; Mills 2015, pp. 80-2). Bernard of Cluny, in his twelfth-century 'Contempt of the World', weaponises natural (animal) queerness in criticising same-sex desire between men. He complains: 'he becomes she . . . / Men forget what is manly; o madness! o terror! they are like hyenas' (Wilhelm 1995, p. 166). This gender policing and reorientation of bodies is a somewhat expected from a sex/gender system that treats the reproductive pair as different aspects at opposite ends of a spectrum. This system threatens the clear separation of genders at the same time as affording multiple positions beyond a binary, as well as, as a logical extension, transitions between these genders. While this one-sex model has fallen out of favour at the cusp between early modernity and modernity (Martin 1987, p. 28ff), its epistemological construction of bodies has still survived (probably through the continual concern of the Christian church with bodies, see the

Catholic radical feminists cf. section 1.2). This historical medical system still echoes in modern understanding of gender transitions and especially in popular grotesque imaginings of gender reassignment surgery. The analogous but inverted genitals of the Aristotelian/Galenic medicine is explained as the mechanics of the material interventions: imaginary vaginoplasty builds the neo-vagina as an 'inverted penis' (O'Connor 2005, pp. 171-172).

2.2 Medieval gender: The naked body

Age, dress and occupational attributes nuance the gender presentation of the body in (virtually) all societies. These cultural variables make exact gender valences hard to decipher from any perspective outside the native culture. Universally then, the most clear visual indicator of sex (and sometimes of cis gender) is the naked body. Although reductionist and essentialist, the physical/biological characteristics of naked bodies would more accurately (but not unfailingly) form indexes onto which a modern Western translation of sex and gender can be applied. This methodology based on visibility of the naked body for acquisition of accurate knowledge is inherently problematic, especially when it comes to gender identity. It 'inevitably operates by harnessing the capacity of those temporal structures and epistemological enterprises of policing and surveillance inherent in any framing of questions of representation and visibility' (Keeling 2009, p. 577). The complications of sight in gender politics are multiple, including institutional policing of bodies, self-regard and self-policing of one's own embodiment, and formation of self/identity in absence or presence of typically gendered bodies. It is, nonetheless, a methodology prioritised by modern systems of thought, although not by medieval Christian system of thought where material reality has otherworldly valences of divine as well as malevolent transformations. Physical/physiological indexicality is also a methodology that, applied anachronistically to medieval images, could still reveal important insights, if only to prove that this methodology (and its attendant system of thought) is unsuitable for medieval understandings of sex and gender.

Medievalist scholarship, nonetheless, mostly averts its eyes from naked bodies. Jacqueline Murray criticises scholarship for ‘the overwhelming impression that only women have gender and only women had bodies’ (Murray 2002, p. 10). The situation within medievalist (and historical at large) gender and sexuality scholarship has changed since Murray has written this, with the addition of brilliant work on masculinities (Cullum and Lewis 2005, 2013) as well as on queer identity (Mills 2001, 2002, 2015, Burgwinkle 2004, Roman 2017). In the same article, she attributes the ‘notion that women had specific, sexed, marked bodies whereas men had human bodies’ (Murray 2002, p. 10) to medieval thought, an idea that she saw replicated in modern scholarship to the detriment of the field. Considering how widespread Bynum’s Hildegard of Bingen quote ‘and woman his humanity’ has been cited as evidence of essentialised identification of women with ‘the flesh’ in the middle ages, Murray’s dichotomy hardly represents the modern understanding of a medieval binary system. Rather, the modern understanding of sexed bodies (accompanied by its compulsory cisgenderism and allo-heterosexuality) back-casted onto a different culture (a quasi-colonist impulse residual from the Victorian origins of nationalist history-making) seems to guide medieval scholarship. This is evidenced, for example, in the attention given to secondary sex characteristics, such as the breast, discussed in the following first subsection. Modern mainstream visual culture – both popular and medical – recognises and therefore naturalises the male/female sexual dimorphism: men have body and facial hair, women have breasts; men have penises, women have vulvae. The late medieval naked body – a significantly rare sight in surviving imagery – nonetheless muddles distinctions in primary sex characteristics, therefore standing witness to a different understanding of sexing the naked body than the modern one. This is explored in the second subsection, while the effect these visual techniques have upon the representation of god the father and Christ are spelled out in the third subsection. The following exploration of sexed medieval bodies, therefore, reveals that visualisations of the naked body encode surprising permutations of primary and secondary sexual characteristics and therefore construct gender on a different scale than the modern binary one.

2.2.1 Secondary sexual characteristics

The fact that even naked bodies (imaginary as well as material) are socially constructed is revealed by distinct preference in mainstream fashion for what become normative bodies over time. The naked bodies often preserve contours moulded by the absent clothing, constricting garments that would otherwise accentuate the contemporary mainstream body-form. Late-medieval fashion of the fourteenth and fifteenth century in Christian western Europe engendered dimorphic silhouettes mandated by moral and penal codes, characterised by broad chests and cinched waists for men and rounded bellies and high waist-lines for women. This dimorphic silhouette is sometimes replicated in literary descriptions and visual representations of the naked body. Clothing, therefore, even when absent, marked and gendered the bare body. Even illustrations of the 'natural' body, like those of prelapsarian Adam and Eve or general image of the creation (such as figure 2.1), or images of the supposedly post-cultural body of the resurrected, replicate the fashionable silhouette. These naked bodies suggest the temporary removal of clothing, rather than its absence; its constricting effects linger on the body which preserves the clothing's contours. The body, therefore, is never bare: a dimorphic silhouette replicated in visual representations of the naked body is 'dressed' in the



Figure 2.1 Creation in Augustine's *City of God*, France c. 1475 (The Hague, RMMW, MS 10 A 11, f. 300v)

cultural ideas of what a specific body should look like. The 'natural' body of nude illustration is therefore a tamed, civilised body.

The multiple meanings of the civilised body are neatly illustrated by the example of the breast. Two studies of the long history of the breast acknowledge the religious and nutritive (maternal as well as related to wealth, when associated with a wet-nurse) meanings of the medieval breast (Miles 2008, pp. 33-53; Yalom 1999, pp. 36-54). Nonetheless, Margaret Miles's appreciation of the medieval women 'as bearers – not owners – of the breast' (Miles 2008, p. 4) is selling the cultural power of the breast short. Literary mothers of the middle ages, like the maternal figures in Chretien de Troyes' romances, as well as real figures, used the breast in later life to express their role as counsellor, building on the metaphor of feeding with knowledge (Hitt 2016). Mourning women, especially mothers, expressed their grief by baring their breast since the ancient times; evidence for this continued practice can be found throughout the middle ages (Ryan 2002). The overwhelming evidence of female behaviour associated with the breast is not conducive of the absence of these in male contexts; rather, this is the result of the selection of sample texts by a gendered binary-conditioned scholarship. In contrast with its cultural capital – overwhelmingly skewed towards feminine use by modern scholarship, even when disavowed as agential element – the medieval breast was not only invisible because of its concealment, but at times and in specific cultural environments barely existent as a distinct anatomy. Across Western Europe 'the petite ideal is... dominant, even normative...into the sixteenth century' (Phillips 2018, pp. 7-8). Full breasts, on the other hand, were unappealing because they were visual signifiers of sexual corruption. Many texts comment with disgust on big breasts and associate them with loss of virginity and the resulting spoiling of the flesh (Phillips 2018, pp. 10, 13; Kane 2008, pp. 26-7). The breast could therefore be used to construct the feminine form as deficient and essentially unstable. Popular advice texts offer solutions against unsightly big breasts, from surgery and topical medicine to binding and special tailoring (Phillips 2018, pp. 4-5).

In light of these cultural associations of breasts, it is justifiable that they ‘were too important to be left alone’ (Phillips 2018, p. 14). Surprisingly, then, is the lack of importance of the breast as a secondary sex characteristic associated with, or essential to, women. In Middle English, *breȝt* denominates both male and female anatomy (see breastplate); the Old and Middle English *cist/cest* (strong box) doesn’t acquire its anatomical, sexed meaning until mid-sixteenth century. In Latin, *mamma* means both breast and more generally nipple. This in-existent linguistic difference in Latin as well as in Old and Middle English between male and female breasts seems to reflect a larger cultural phenomenon: the medieval chest was not a key marker of gender (Schultz 2006, pp. 26-28, 193 n. 25). Many late medieval images of small or non-existent breasts, reflecting the normative chest shape of the time, confirm the breast’s largely irrelevant role in marking gender on the naked body. Although romance literature, influenced by the formulas of Song of Songs, include the breast in itemisations of the beloved’s appearance (Phillips 2018, p. 7), it was not regarded as a sexual (erotic) or gendered characteristic (Schultz 1998). Joan Cadden finds that ‘[i]n contrast to modern expectations, *mammae* are not often mentioned in the context of sexual differentiation’ (Cadden 1993, p. 180). Breast reduction and medical remedies from swelling (including that related to cancer, pregnancy and lactation) not included in works of gynaecology (reproductive health) or segregated women’s health (Phillips 2018, p. 3). This cultural attitude to the breast is reflected in the little care that the medieval visual artists gave to its correct anatomical representation. Rather than part of the body, the breast is very often represented as a globe of flesh appended to the upper torso; breasts started to be depicted more realistically only starting with the fifteenth or sixteenth century (Miles 2008, p.9-10).

In contrast, another secondary sexual characteristic, body hair, is often discussed in texts that insist on a clear biological, medical and also religious distinction between women (hairless) and men (hairy). Created from ‘residu[e] of the nutritive and generative processes’ expelled from the body by heat, beards were the principal sign of *complexio* essential to biological normative masculinity (Cadden 1993, pp. 182-3). Women’s essential coldness meant that they were unable to ‘form the

vapors needed to open the pores and then solidify into hair upon contact with outside air' (Murray 2008, p. 39). Clement of Alexandria (150-215) explains that being hirsute is a requisite consequence to the warm-blooded and active nature of the male (Flood 2011, p. 21). Therefore a hirsute woman, or a hairless man, had an imbalance in humours that caused them to transgress normative gender boundaries (and with it, sexual boundaries). Hildegard's *Causae et Curae* (started in 1151) makes the same association between body hair and humours, and links hirsuteness with male virility (Cadden 1993, p. 181). Nonetheless, she also attaches value judgments to hair, which could signal having too much humours: 'Some are hairy of body and seem dirty in the soul, because they are pervaded with unclean human pollution' (Murray 2008, p. 44). Similarly, Juan Rodriguez del Padron (d.1450), associates the masculine hairiness with the virility of animals, therefore linking men with sub- or proto-humans, not fully or perfectly developed, in his defence of Eve (Flood 2011, p. 150). While medical, ethical and religious works were concerned with hair as a clear visual difference towards a gender binary. The *Sachsenspiegel* (a German legal text) treats male body hair as legal proof of age in regards to rights of bearing arms and attending public deliberations, making hirsuteness a marker on another axis, that of age (Jolly 2012, p. 185). While the *Sachsenspiegel* does not explain its logic, this is clearly based on medical ideas about *complexio* and the change in balance in heat/wetness that accompanied adolescent development, towards stabilisation of adult gender identities and roles.

In visual sources, body hair is mainly not represented until the very end of the middle ages when hyper-realism comes in fashion. The exception is discrete tufts of pubic hair (designed to conceal) and gender- and age-coded facial hair. While the subject sporting a beard is obviously male (except when she isn't, see Wilgefortis – also called Uncumber in England), its presence connotes age (youth and adult males rarely sport a beard), or status (a wild man, a sick man, a Jew or a beggar). On the other hand, a hairless face does not necessarily signal a female subject. All these secondary characteristics are therefore, when visually represented, highly influenced by the normative patterns of gender expression in the culture at a given time. Simultaneously, secondary sex characteristics are

used in visual representations of the body to subtly modify presentation in order to clearly communicate an infinite combination of assigned sex, assumed gender identity and internal gender identity using the contemporary vocabulary of social signification.

2.2.2 Primary sex characteristics

Body size, shape and hairiness are therefore unreliable visual indicators of a body's gender assigned by the artist; more hard-coded signifiers, then, are primary sex characteristics – genitalia, although reliance on this, of course, is problematic. The binary gendered indexicality of the naked body hinges on essentialist assignment of cultural gendered signifiers to the reductively sexed body. This is instrumentalised by modern trans-exclusive radical feminists, who believe in the immutability of a 'natural' sex, established at birth by medical assignment into one of two narrow categories. Modern western culture in which access to body-modification technologies is relatively spread has created a model of cisgendered alignment of sexual and gendered characteristics (cf section 1.2.3). As a result, many binary transgender people (male-to-female or female-to-male) medically transition to fulfil this alignment – fuelled by circularly self-enforcing cisgender societal pressure as well as very real body dysmorphia. The medically modified trans-sexual body is therefore considered as the marker of true identity – the truth of the mind borne on the material of the body (see the terminology of 'gender-confirmation surgery' etc Prosser 1998, p. 11; Rosario 2005, pp. 180, 188). The indexicality of the material body is also instrumentalised by the medieval society, where so many narratives of miraculous bleeding, somatic signs of sanctity and proofs of innate destiny (such as markers of royal descent or of a corrupted nature) are used to solidify the status of the body as the locus of inalienable proof. Sexed bodies are included in these narratives – the exhibition or discovery of one's bare body is considered in many stories, such as that of the trans monks (Eugene, Marinos etc), as proof without doubt of their transgender identity (Grayson 2009; Mills 2018).^{xiv} Medical evidence concerning genitalia was also used in the medieval court to settle cases where women passed as

men (Boon 2018, p. 289 n. 31). The physical configuration of the body trumped self-identity, sexuality or, sometimes, humoral constitution.

When visually depicted naked, late medieval men should, if one follows the modern binary alignments, exhibit penises and scrotums, and medieval women, labia. This is obviously complicated by the position and visibility of the genitals on a three-dimensional naked body (hypervisible penis, less obvious labia). Additionally, such visualisation of marked difference would be scarcely native to a religious, medical and moral body politics of the high and late middle ages. This was a medical model that theorised – and visualised – women as deficient men, a theoretical move that blurs the physical distinction between two immutable sexes. In this context, the female body should be depicted as male, with a lack (of the penis, of beard, or a beautifully constructed body) rather than a distinct and exclusive physical difference. Labia are therefore very rarely pictured in high and late medieval images (more liberally towards the end of the middle ages) and the female genital area is therefore marked only by absence. This dual gender system plays on visibility and presence, where male is simply complemented by non-male. Nevertheless, this understanding of visibility and clear morphological indexicality of the male body has its pitfalls when overt phallic nudity is avoided and minimised, as it is in the vast majority of the post-classical western culture. The naked male body has to navigate the subtle line between socially-codified phallic presence and erasure of masculinity through non-representation of the anatomical naked body or bowdlerised representations of risqué fashions revealing the phallus (Caviness 2012).

Only a minority of medieval images show explicit nudity, and much of these still obscure the genital area by objects (cloth, household items, the edge of the miniature, even animals) or the hands of the person themselves. On rare occasions, naked bodies are explicitly sexed by adding either minuscule, or otherwise monstrous genitals: the figure of the Aquarius is depicted, over and over again, with a diminutive and displaced penis (such as in the Hours of Claude Molé, Morgan Library MS M.356 f. 1r). Similarly, although differently at the order or magnitude, sexed, is the cyclops (such as that in

British Library Harley 3954, f. 4). This is one of the multiple non-human races depicted in this manuscript of Mandeville's travels (alongside Blemmyes, sciapods, cannibals and cynocephales) who exhibit larger-than-human genitals. Martha Easton observes that explicit sexing of the body is very infrequent in images where genital visibility is not used as a narrative point, like in Christ's circumcision, Lot's shame, or explicating a medical diagram as male/female (Easton 2012, p. 164). She proposed that visible genitalia outside these narratives are only relegated to individuals possessing unruly sexuality such as peasants. To these categories Caviness adds monstrous bodies like those of heretics, ethnic Others, hybrid kinds (Caviness 2006, pp. 222ff; Burke 2013). This instantly casts a moral shadow on any sexed body indexed by genitalia. To exhibit labia or penis is to (possibly) belong to the Other, to the monstrous with their unquenchable sexual (and cannibal) appetites.

This phenomenon can be seen at work in a fourteenth-century copy *Romance of Alexander* held in the British Library (Harley MS 4979). Each chapter, dealing with the various foes Alexander the Great and his army encountered, is headed by a horizontal miniature showing the two nations facing each other (figures 2.2-4). After meeting horse-headed men, cyclops and giants, all well-endowed, Alexander the Great stumbles upon a nation of naked people, the Oxydraces, who look exactly like humans; the first image even models the violence brought upon this naked nation on the expulsion of the naked Adam and Eve from Paradise (like the miniature in a contemporary *Abrégé des histoires divines*, Morgan Library MS M.751 f. 1r). On subsequent folios (47r, 56v, 68r) Alexander's army encounters these people (visualised as complete societies with individuals of different ages and genders) living in mountains, caves and lakes. In two locations their monstrosity comes to light: in the first miniature, the right-most mountain-dweller is discretely munching on a severed arm, holding another chopped-off limb in his other hand. In the last miniature, seven sea-dwellers, naked



Figure 2.2 Oxydraces in *Romance of Alexander*, Netherlands before 1325 (British Library Harley MS 4979, f. 47r)



Figure 2.3 Naked cave inhabitants in *Romance of Alexander*, Netherlands before 1325 (British Library Harley MS 4979, f. 56v)



Figure 2.4 Lake dwellers in *Romance of Alexander*, Netherlands before 1325 (British Library Harley MS 4979, f. 68r)

and in very close proximity, engage in physical intimacy, one pair explicitly depicted as having sex in the middle of the crowd. The only body clearly exhibiting genitalia in this third image of the

Oxydraces is the right-most one, whose hairy labia is topped by a small red dot similar to that used for the characters' lips (a similar technique is used on f. 60r). This individual with visible labia clearly recalls the bodies pictured in the first two illuminations, naked and with plump, oversized genitals. The accumulation of their deviant behaviours in these miniatures explains the choices in visual presentation of the bodies. They appear naked and clearly exhibiting genitals not only because they live like savages, naked and in tribes outside of cities, but also because they engage in unabashed sexual behaviours.

Particularly interesting in this series of illuminations is the variety of genitalia and of their exhibition. In the crowd gathering beyond the mountains on folio 47r, read through the lens of the two binary-sexed bodies at the left recalling the expulsion of the very first two binary bodies, we can find one adult and a child exhibiting enlarged penises in full view, while two other adults have deeply-cut vulvae. In another illumination of a group of cave dwellers (figure 2.3), one individual (the savage king, with a crown and beard) shows a partially-obscured penis, while the rest of the cave-dwellers find positions where their genitalia are completely out of view. This compositional trick does not stop the illuminator from depicting a wildly displaced set of genitals on another figure bending down just at the upper edge of the miniature. This displaced penis, growing from the ribs of the bearded adult, seems to make a point of the monstrosity of the sexed embodiment of this folk. Another adult at the right, with no facial hair and with visible breasts sagging under her extended arm, sits with her legs splayed, exhibiting her loins. In the third example of a group of savages (figure 2.4), there are no penises in view, but as observed before the individual at the right is offering the viewer a full frontal. In this diversity of exhibition and concealment, two curious bodies have found their way in these illustrations: the adult holding the child's hand in the first image, and the envoy accompanying the king in the second. Both these figures are signalled as male by their secondary sex characteristics (their beards) but exhibit either badly drawn, short penises, or actually show signs of intersexuality/hermaphroditism sporting hairy vulvae.

In order to avoid explicitly depicting genitalia in illustrations which would require exhibiting entire, unobscured bodies, some medieval illuminators have devised visual conventions that blur the distinction between sets of dimorphic genitals. I identify two such visual conventions that appear in late medieval western European book art with consistent frequency: the tuck and the long crotch. The first makes use of pot bellies, whose drastic curvature pulls the genitals far back between the legs, similar to a 'tuck' (as an example, figure 2.5). My (queer-coded, historically-informed) language of describing this visual convention informs the way I, as a modern reader, view these bodies. Read as a tuck (a technique employed by people with a penis trying to create the visual illusion of a vulva, such as drag queens, transfeminine or genderqueer individuals) this visual convention assumes the presence of an obscured phallus. The tuck therefore visually presents a vulva and theoretically acknowledges a penis. On the other hand, the second visual convention, the 'long crotch' (such as that in figure 2.6), is explicitly acknowledging the physical presence of a vulva, although it visually and socially codes maleness. I term this way of prefiguring genitalia the 'long crotch', taking a cue from the medieval French fabliau *Berenger a long cul*.^{xv} This 'long crotch' is manifested when the construction of the painted bodies does not end at the top of the thighs but continue halfway down it, in an elongation that obscures genital morphology and therefore makes difference invisible. This



Figure 2.5 Harrowing of hell in Hours, Dutch around 1500 (Leeds University, Brotherton Collection, BC MS 7, f. 148v)



Figure 2.6 Mouth of hell in Psalter, English before 1225 (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS BSB Clm 835, f. 30v)

way, bodies coded female through secondary sexual characteristics get a long crotch that potentially signals a phallic identity, and male-coded bodies extend and disappear from view without a visual resolution for the *locus phallicus*. This technique of obscuring the genitals and elongating the crotch is used for all bodies. Their genital sex (as opposed to secondary-characteristic-determined sex) becomes, in effect, illegible.

These different techniques are seen at play in two selections from a Dutch Book of Hours created at the end of fifteenth century (MS Brotherton Collection 7, figure 2.5) and a thirteenth-century English Psalter held in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (figure 2.6). The only visual cue that codes bodies as male or female in images of The Last Judgment in Book of Hours is hair: women have long hair, (some) men have beards; hips, crotch or chests do not give any indication of sex. Obversely, in the Psalter the four nude figures in the foreground of a hell scene on folio 30v can only be sexed by the positive presence of breasts. Out of the four, only two can be firmly sexed – the first from the left, with long hair, curiously long crotch and two breasts hanging from just under the neck is female. The second one, with short hair and a grey beard, concealing his chest behind his arms and with a hairy long crotch, is male. The other two figures are nearly impossible to sex: the third from left is smooth-faced and concealing their chest, and the last on displays a long crotch, a shadow under the chin and a flat chest. Many secondary characteristics are also ambiguous in this image: the flat chest is not explicitly linked with males in this picture, since the only clearly male figure's chest is not exposed; their hair length also cannot be used to determine their sex. These two examples of crowds of naked figures are taken from illuminations depicting souls – notoriously unsexed, if we go by modern scholarship. They demonstrate that the modern understanding of medieval genderless souls is erroneous – these bodies, earthly or not, are clearly coded as having a gender, regardless of their ambiguous genital sex. This is in line with Augustine's deliberation in 'Against Manichaeans' that the sexed bodies of humans will resurrect as intact (Flood 2012, p. 26).

The 'long crotch' technique is also used outside the representation of incorporeal souls. This artistic shorthand of the long crotch is especially striking when the subject of the miniature is a male figure posing in a frontal splayed-leg position. This is the case for the fictional decorative figure hunting birds in an illuminated initial in a twelfth-century Latin Bible (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 16746.) as well as for the historically/narratively male body of Jonah springing out of the mouth of the whale in a 13C Palter-Hours for use of Liège (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 76 G 17, f. 55v). Here the crotch is extended and distorted to anatomically impossible forms simply to obscure the genital conformation of these naked bodies. This attitude to the male nude body was termed by Madeleine Caviness 'viriphobia', a fear of not only erect or prominent penises but of depicting penises altogether (Caviness 2012). Viriphobia extends not only to naked bodies but also to clothed ones. As I hinted above, many naked bodies are not completely nude. In some illumination genitalia is obscured, as by coincidence, by chains, ropes and other non-clothing items that follow the contours of the body. In others, genitals are covered by drapery, loincloths or obscured but at the same time their presence revealed by tight undergarments. Most often used in depictions of martyrdom or prosecution, tight pants are only used on male bodies at either end of the punishment (torturer or tortured), playing with visibility and concealment of the gendered body. In a French *Speculum historiale* manuscript (Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS Fr 50, f. 358v) both the torturer and the martyr bodies are phallicised through the use of tight-fitting clothing. Commenting on the use of this visual trope in a (fairly standard) scene of Christ's flagellation, Bob Mills proposes that the 'ugly brutes wearing bulging codpieces... veil lack with exaggerated signifiers of virile power. As such, normative masculinity itself is exposed as a mask' (Mills 2001, p. 31). This insight plays with the idea that the visible sex of the body, whether clothed or not, is anything but natural. The sexing of the male body, Mills continues to argue, also brings a sexual, transgressive and ludic element in a scene that would otherwise only signify negatively, through violence and pain. Conversely, Mills' logic can be applied when the body gendered through genital visibility is the tortured one. This is the case even when sexing the body is not needed for the purpose of the

narrative, since the victim of abuse is an anonymous body that could be of any gender. In the illustration of their expulsion from Carcassone (British Library Ms. Cotton Nero E II Pt2, f. 20v), the gender of the Albigensians should not matter, but it is clearly marked by men wearing tight-fitting undergarments that reveal the crotch, and women depicted as naked or draped in barely-concealing white linens. The pants therefore don't function as a necessary gender marker but accentuate the bodies of the wearers, create desirable bodies, and bring them into the sexual economy that their resistance to nakedness was trying to eschew in the first place (a phenomenon very obvious in late medieval images of St Sebastian). The undergarments reveal the sexed body of the saintly person without the savagery and sexual associations of full nudity, but at the same time encourages the viewer to associate this body with a sexed and sexual being at its very moment of dissolution as subject and material object (Gravdal 1989; Mills 2005).

One set of images of the fully sexed body is nonetheless subject to excessive visibility bordering on scopophilia. This is the case of bodies that sit perfectly at the intersection of male and female physiology, mapped onto their visible body: the androgyne or the hermaphrodite. The visualised androgyne can take many forms such as a named mythological character (Andromeda, in the *Heidelberger Schicksalsbuch*, Heidelberg University, Cod. Pal. germ. 832 f. 86r); a reification of an allegorical concept (Fortune, in the Morgan Library *Roman de la Rose* MS M 948 f. 61r); the medical, alchemical or socio-geographical symbol of alterity (inhabitant of the edges of the world in the 22 *Nuremberg Chronicle*, Cambridge University Inc. 0.A.7.2[888], f. 12v). While the terms androgyne and hermaphrodite were mostly synonymous at times, Marian Rothstein proposes an anachronistic taxonomy that lends to preserving the medieval and early modern cultural associations connected with these bodies: 'for the purpose of this study... [the androgyne] never puts the laws of nature into question. Rather than being monstrous, insufficient, indecisive, or excessive [as the hermaphrodite], the combined form denoted by the word androgyne... is a figure of the completion, perfection, or plenitude, of originary and ultimate human possibilities and strengths' (Rothstein 2015, pp. 2-3). This distinction is useful for my observations about the body of these multi-sexed individuals. In my

observations, the androgynous figure of allegorical or religious personas (gods, angels, concepts) is marked by lack; perfection is attained by combining the least excessive characteristics of maleness and femaleness. This way, the androgyne is pictured with a hairless face, non-phallic genitalia and a smooth and muscular chest. On the other side, the hermaphrodite is characterised by excess, visualised in phallic genitality, facial hair and excessive body tissue represented by presence of breasts. This is also the way hermaphroditism was viewed in medical texts, which recommended reparative surgeries that removed excess (Green 2013, p. 355). These conventions for visualisation attach value judgments to specific gendered parts, but also illustrate the power of specific dimorphic characteristics in sexing a body.

In this sexual and gendered economy based on genital visibility, one can therefore observe distinctive visualization systems that differentiate the body of the monstrous, the human and the saintly. Monstrous bodies (defined by their non-normative biology or psychology) exhibit engorged and fully visible genitalia. This is also the case for the hermaphrodite, which exhibited a combination of bodily excessive sexually-coded signs, while the androgyne is characterised by lack. Normative human bodies are depicted according to complex and sometimes awkward illustrative systems. These blur the line between biologically dimorphic sexual configurations; a combination of secondary sex characteristics need to be considered as cues for determining gendered identities. This visual practice mirrors a medieval medical perspective where reproductive health and genital diseases were written about in non-essentialised and non-segregated ways (Green 2013, p. 355). Finally, saintly human bodies have their genitals either completely obscured by hands, torture devices or flowing robes. In the case of male bodies, tight-fitting garments conceal and reveal at the same time phallic, desirable and desiring bodies.

2.2.3 Sexing Christ

Where does the human, sexed and gendered body of Christ stand in this visual economy based on genitality? As Leo Steinberg (1983) has thoroughly discussed, Christ child undergoes a sometimes strikingly visible, sometimes partially obscured circumcision as confirmation of not only his male embodiment, but of his thoroughly human incarnation. His childish body exhibits genitalia – during play, veneration by magi, his family or donors – in anticipation of this event. The visibility of the baby penis is not shocking, scandalous or theologically debatable; after all, the foreskin of Christ has gathered a large cult in high and later middle ages. Foreskin relic pilgrimage took place to Rome, Compostela, Antwerp, Chartres and Stoke-on-Trent, to mention just a few alleged locations of the Holy Prepuce. The same foreskin also appears in private devotion – St Catherine of Siena weds Christ with the ring of his foreskin as a token of love; Austrian nun Agnes Blannbekin had a vision in which a sweet-tasting foreskin appears in her mouth, in an act resembling communion:

And behold, soon she felt with the greatest sweetness on her tongue a little piece of skin alike the skin in an egg, which she swallowed. After she had swallowed it, she again felt the little skin on her tongue with sweetness as before, and again she swallowed it (Blannbekin 2002, p. 35).

Pre-existing, biblical as well as apocryphal narrative arcs involving the saintly baby penis could then excuse its visibility in devotional art depicting the young Christ. The visibly male-coding penis is at the centre of attention in images of the circumcision (like those in Morgan Library MS M. 8 f. 28v or Friedrich Herlin's Twelve Apostles Altar in St Jacob's church in Rothenburg ob der Tauber), as well as, Steinberg argues, in the visual trope of '*ostentatio genitalium*' (figure 2.7; Steinberg 1983, p. 1 and passim). This latter imagery, unconnected to narrative structures, is not as wide-spread in medieval illumination (thirteenth to fifteenth century) as Steinberg has made it seem, but rather rare especially in North-Western European manuscript art that is the main corpus of this thesis. More than that, the images of '*ostentatio genitalium*' can also play on the gendered and sexed



Figure 2.7 *Ostentatio Genitalium* in Book of hours and prayer book, Dutch around 1525 (The Hague MMW 10f14, f. 101r)

associations of the demonstrative body. In the *ostentatio* miniature in a Dutch book of hours and prayer book from around 1525, Hague MMW 10 f 14 (figure 2.7), the naked body of the baby Christ is supported by his mother in such a way as to exhibit his extremely small penis, depicted by two brush strokes. This baby body, nonetheless, is shown against a white cloth that is laid, rather stiffly, between the body of mother and child. Its presence here can hint at the importance of birth-related textiles as material extension of the *habitus* theology. More than that, though, the cloth in the Hague manuscript folds between the legs of the baby as to create a vulvic shape. Through its juxtaposition, this fabric vulva reduplicates Christ's exposed genitals, as well as blurring the corporeal boundary between the bodies of the mother and child. As evidenced by

the long tradition of Mary-oriented textile imagery, the endowment of Christ with his human form, as well as textile coverings, by his human mother create a body shared between the two. Mary's flesh as well as her handiwork endows her son with part of her – and that could include her gender or even her sexual morphology.

On the other hand, before the sixteenth century fabric-obscured/revealed penises that Steinberg (1983) exclusively identifies, adult Christ's genitalia was a taboo subject, something to be kept out of view or representation. In the two instances when the body of Christ could or should be depicted as naked – at his baptism and his crucifixion – the visual techniques used for non-monstrous bodies (the long-crotch or the tuck) are deployed. It is worth mentioning that the body of Christ and its each individual component was the object of close literary, theological and artistic scrutiny. Nonetheless, the only medium that could not get away with simply skipping it is the visual one – sculpture, miniature and mural illustration, etc. While the thick descriptions in textual narratives about Christ's

baptism and his crucifixion simply skipped over Christ's genitals, visual art had to deploy already-commonplace techniques in order to obscure this unavoidable body part. Out of hundreds of medieval baptism scenes I have seen – a main event where Christ's body is necessarily naked – there is only one, in a fourteenth-century Latin psalter (British Library Royal 2.B.VII m f. 190v), where circumstantial clues could point to the possibility that originally there was a penis pictured. In this manuscript, the crotch area of the depicted undressed Christ has been rubbed; the reason for the rubbing, whether destructive or desirous, can only be guessed. The majority of baptismal images, nevertheless, obscure Christ's genitals by swathes of water, or use the tuck (like Solothurn, Zentralbibliothek, Cod. S II 43 f. 366r) or the long crotch (Morgan Library, MS M.359 fol. 49r) technique to avoid fully depicting Christ 'in his humanity'.

Crucifixion images, the other set of illustrations that Christ's genitalia could be found, frustrate this endeavour as well. Christ very rarely appears naked on a cross; his middle is usually protected by a solid-coloured (usually white) loincloth. The knot in this loincloth, as Steinberg suggests, could be a literally veiled reference to an erect penis starting with the early modern period (Steinberg 1983, pp. 102, 132). Form-fitting underwear is extremely rarely used when depicting Christ's crucified body, and only in the very late middle ages. When the absolute entirety of his body is visible in crucifixion images, a sheer loincloth thinly obscures the genitals. With this measure of modesty in place, the artist can go on depicting Christ's crotch as long, rounded or, in several examples of fifteenth-century sculpture with removable soft loincloths, fully phallic (Schleif 2011, pp. 258-9). Therefore, overtly male genitalia are assigned to Christ on the cross in very few cases. Baptism is prefigured as a homosocial event between Christ and the Baptist, and has very few or no supporting characters. On the other hand, crucifixion scenes are most of the time illustrated as social events, with at least two people (Mary and John, donors, or the two thieves) accompanying Christ in the picture. Because of its social nature, then, one can look for cues of gender legibility in the attending crowd. In larger groups, men and women will be dressed differently, exhibit different hair configurations, and even differences in general body shape. This kind of cues enables the modern viewer (and probably the

medieval one as well) to put the individual dressed personas on a spectrum of gender presentation find the extremes of legible male and female bodies and then distribute the individual characters in two groups, according to proximity to one or the other extreme. A blurring of the genders is inherent in smaller groups, where there are less explicit variables in terms of gender presentation (e.g. dress, facial hair and hairstyle, occupational accessories, emotional state, body shape, phallic presence or absence) and less control examples for what male and female looks like. For example, in three-person scenes where the only characters pictured are Mary, John and Christ, it is sometimes hard to place the three in distinct gender categories without previously knowing the culturally-assumed gender identity of the characters at the point of the creation of the image. All three might have long hair; Mary might have her hair covered, as proper for a Jewish woman, but sometimes nobody has a head covering. Mary and Christ might shed tears and blood, or Christ might be the only one to bleed while Mary and John have tears down their faces. Mary and John might be dressed in flowing gowns while Christ is undressed on the cross, or Christ and John might exhibit legs while Mary's entire lower body is obscured by an ample dress. Christ's gaze might be downcast and humiliated, while John and Mary's might emulate or diverge from this attitude. Christ and John might have a beard, or Mary and John might have no facial hair. Social gender, not to mention the sex of the body, is much harder to identify in such scenes.

A similarly queer blurring or even transgressing of gender can be found in a decorated initial in the de Grey Book of Hours, held at the National Library of Wales. On folio 108r, three crosses support three nearly-naked bodies (figure 2.8 left). The first two from left to right sport beards, as well as long hair, while the third does not; the first two are, by the medieval visual codes overviewed above, probably male. Their body shape is very similar, all three exhibiting broad shoulders, a small waist with ribs visible above, and widening hips below; the third person, then, must be male as well on account of the identical body shape. Around their middle, two of them are sporting tight undergarments that lower to the top of the pubis and bunch in front in a very revealing manner, obscuring but also signalling the definite presence of a penis and scrotum. As control group for this

being a specific male garment, and for the groin-bulge indexing masculinity, stands the historically male Saint Sebastian in the same manuscript (f. 58r). He also exhibits the specific hourglass body-shape that the other three figures do, and sports a long blond mane and no facial hair. The two bodies on the smaller crosses, then, are coded as unquestionably male through their tight garments, even without a beard (in the case of the rubbed face of the good thief on the right), and with long hair. The body on the middle cross in figure 2.8a, on the other hand, is tied around the waist with a criss-crossing sheer loincloth, and there is no hint of male genitalia bulging under that. In the company of the thieves who are wearing codpieced undergarments, the lack of Christ's male genitalia, the lack of even a hint that the male body came 'with all the parts', is even more glaring. The flat loincloth of Christ stands in stark contrast with the virile pelvises of the two other bodies (maybe provocatively facing towards the central body). The flat loincloth signalling a non-phallic Christ appears when the gender of the bearded Christ is also contextualised in comparison with Mary and John's smooth faces and fully enveloped bodies (figure 2.8b).

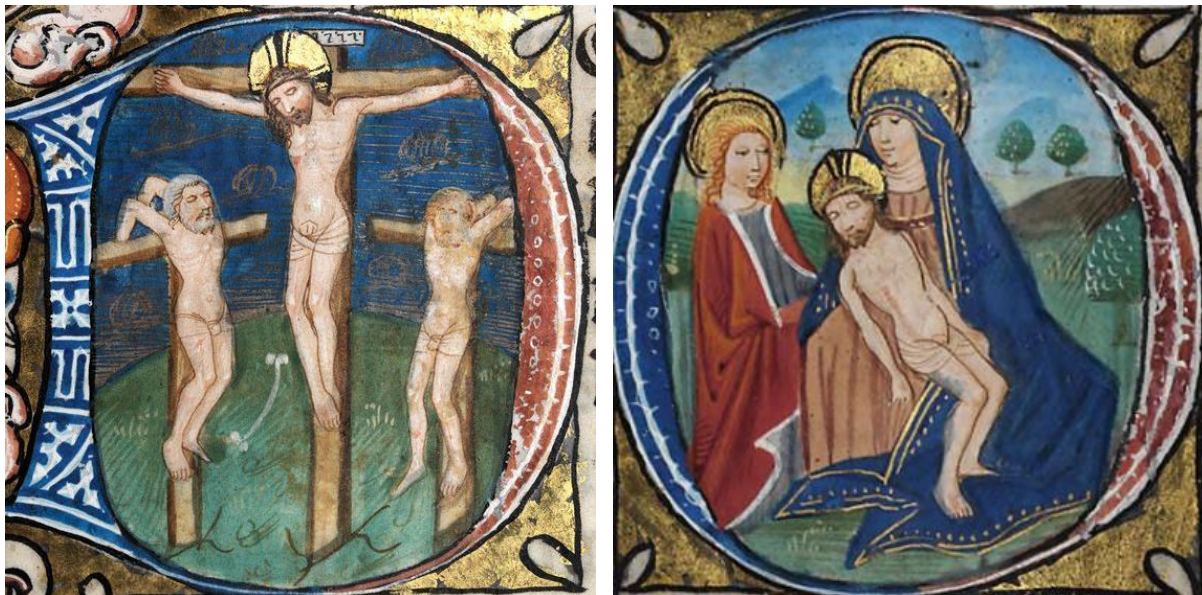


Figure 2.8 De Grey Book of Hours, Dutch for English use, mid 15c (National Library of Wales, MS 15537C). (a) Left, crucifixion, f.108r; (b) right, Pietà, f. 90v

If the loincloth is a mechanism of concealing (veiling) genitalia, why would the third crucified body wear a garment structurally different than the one the obviously masculine bodies are wearing? The alternative is the loincloth serving to reveal genitality. If the tight loin coverings reveal the two virile bodies on the smaller crosses, why does the crossed loincloth not cling to anything? Is there

anything to cling to? The way this miniature was intended to be read is a mystery: was the viewer supposed to associate the penis with sinners, and therefore conclude that Christ must have not had a penis, even though he was male? Are the bulging pelvises of the thieves compensating for their lack of power in this abject situation, revealing masculinity, as Mills argues, as a socially-constructed, replaceable mask (Mills 2001, p. 31)? Was the alternative embodiment of an intersex or androgynous Christ a welcome reading in this context? Was this Christ supposed to be read as specifically female, because of his lack of the obvious part of the body that would otherwise index masculinity? The medieval bricoleur viewer could gather theologically-orthodox proof to answer most these questions yes. Evidence for Christ's alternative embodiment confirms that here, as well as in other late medieval imagery, Christ is not male; not JUST male.

2.3 Medieval difference: Gendered skins

Not all the illuminators across Western Europe at one point in time will depict gendered bodies with the same kind of attention to biological detail. Nonetheless, starting with the thirteenth century a lot of images of naked bodies proliferate in a revealing but wider-spread pictorial shorthand. This technique is easier to observe in specific categories of miniatures, like those depicting Adam and Eve, the Gemini, and some Harrowings of Hell where pairs of naked bodies stand close together as if to highlight the dimorphic difference of their sex. The sexually dimorphic difference is coded by the use of different tone of skin. If, as explored above, medically and visually there was little morphological difference between bodies at ends of the one-sex spectrum, their gender could have depended on their *complexio*. This balance of humours, temperature and wetness/dryness would get outwardly expressed by marked difference in complexion, information not only encoded in theoretical discussions (for surgeons or priests, Langum 2013) but also in the way gender was codified in visual sources.

Women's/female/feminine-coded bodies are generally depicted as 'fair'-skinned, in a palette dominated by pinks and whites. Men's/male/masculine-coded skin looks tanned and generally darker, in a red-brown palette. Even if, for the sake of the argument, we would accept that the true colours of the original, fresh illumination has not survived because of pigment loss related to aging materials, the difference in tones reflects the different chemical disintegration of pigments these bodies were painted with, and therefore a deliberate selection along humorally-gendered lines. This colouring distinction is not an innovation peculiar to high middle ages; it is rather a continuation or a re-emergence (after early medieval art which did not highlight this feature) of a classical tradition. The motif appears in Roman art, as demonstrated by surviving erotic frescoes of the Pompeii Apodyterium as well as the contemporary Mars and Aphrodite fresco in the Museo Archeologico Pompeii. The skin colour in this culture is also associated with the positioning of same-sex partners in amorous/sexual pairings, inflecting their gendered identities on a spectrum beyond the modern male/female binary. The fresco 'The Education of Achilles' in the basilica of the Herculaneum depict the centaur Chyron as an older, bearded and dark-skinned man teaching a young, fair-skinned Achilles the lyre. Moreover, this classical Roman tradition in itself draws from older visual cultures, like Etruscan as well as Egyptian (Eaverly 2013). These cultural-specific skin-colour indexing practices might be drawing on contemporaneous and cultural association between gendered spaces and social roles (women, associated with the domestic realm, have lighter skin than men who work in environments more exposed to the weather) as well as on evolutionary biological skin dimorphism (Aoki 2002; Madrigal and Kelly 2007; de Lurdes Carrito et al. 2016). The main researcher on the ancient skin-color dimorphism, Mary Ann Eaverly, only mentions any medical or biological reasoning for it (associated with the later medieval *complexio*) in passing, without an elaboration of its link to visual practices (Eaverly 2013, pp. 12, 135).

The specific patterns of popularity and falling out of use of this visual short-hand link it to artistic and cultural trends rather than a 'natural' and objective sexual dimorphism (Frost 1988). The dimorphism, rather than skin colour gradients, observed in the majority of surviving medieval art

from the fifteenth and sixteenth century, do not reflect the sophisticated gendered understanding of the medieval society where male and female were on a continuum. Two-tone skin-colour differentiation, applied uniformly following specific artistic rules, stands out therefore as a convention. Art historian Richard Dyer (erroneously) notes in his book about historical intersections of race and gender, 'in the medieval period there seems to be no interest in flesh differentiation; everyone looks pinky-yellowy' (Dyer 1997, p. 66). In contrast, the binaries suggested by two-tone skin colour differentiation in medieval visual culture are not even exclusively sexual, although this will be the main focus of my analysis. By reviewing over 25 thousand medieval images, I can ascertain that skin colour dimorphism is linked with complexion and its essential qualities regarding age, moral character, as well as biological or social gender, encoded on the surface of late medieval visualised skin.

This section will then explore the role of skin in gendering human bodies in late medieval visual culture. The first subsection will show how skin dimorphism was used in illustrating gendered, as well as other cultural binaries that have their origin in a medicalised explanation. Skin colour is most often used to codify gender, regardless of the morphology of the sexed body. Skin in itself becomes a secondary sex characteristic, a visual clue that can be used for more accurately gendering a body. Together with the *habitus* theory of the human body (as well as its theological implications regarding Christ's body), skin becomes another layer over the pre-cultural body, by way of which social gender is constructed and deciphered. The social construction of identity, including gender, by way of clothing, is rehearsed in all types of later medieval texts. It is therefore especially interesting that the naked bodies, rather than those disguised in the trappings of genteel society, are considered the ones that need extra clarification in regard to their gender, in form of the colour of the skin. It reveals that gender was understood as not just socially constructed by manners, clothing, occupation, voice etc. The biological gender of the body is therefore in itself not self-evident, relying on genital facts, but constructed by many layers. The body, even bared to its essentials, does not fully reveal gender – skin is tasked with this endgame. While the majority of visualised medieval

bodies are aligned in sex and gender (as what in modern terms we would call cisgender bodies) the importance of skin-colour to signify gender – in spite of and superseding the morphological characteristics of the body – can be gleaned by the example of transgender (rather than transvestite) saints in the second subsection.^{xvi} The last two subsections draw out the implications of skin dimorphism regarding Christ's embodiment, especially in the context of *habitus* theology. In specific examples of crucifixion imagery from England, France and the Netherlands, Christ's skin marks him as crossing (*trans*) boundaries of gender, a transformation whose mechanism is the same as that of the *habitus*: a physical and social change in identity that is borne on the body. The *habitus*, nonetheless, is important in unifying these transitions into a coherent incarnational theology, that materially explains a transhuman god.

2.3.1 Gendered skins

The most quantitatively wide-spread skin-colour dimorphism is, as explored earlier, gendered, on the basis of a 'tempered' (Burgwinkle 2004, p. 41) biological essentialism. While gender-coded skin colours were always employed in art to some degree throughout history, in the medieval period the generalised use of a dual skin coloration system is a peculiarly fifteenth-century phenomenon. Outside images of creation, skin-colour differentiation in other mixed-gender images can very rarely be found in books, paintings or murals earlier than the fifteenth century. French-produced manuscripts are more likely to replicate this visual system of sexual differentiation. Notwithstanding, due to professional mobility and book trade networks, this motif was familiar to patrons across western Europe as well as to artists in other bookmaking centres such as Flanders, England and Rhineland. Most prominently, skin-colour dimorphism appears in images of the first humans – the visualisation of the moment in which sexual differentiation is born had special import in medical, theological and social understanding of gender. This is a moment of intense scrutiny of naked bodies ontologically (and medically) gendered as polar opposites, as well as of visualisation of finer

theological points about the nature of human bodies. Eve's body is not only marked by primary and secondary sex characteristics (breasts and lack of penis), but also by her fairness in skin, which telegraphs the normative mix of humors, temperature and humidity. Her ideal *complexio* also suggests her suitability for reproduction and her biological need for heterosexual interaction with her opposite, Adam, whose heat and dryness would balance her coldness and wetness through intercourse. Indeed, Gregory of Nyssa explains the binary genders in his 'On the Fabrication of Man' (*De hominis opificio*) as necessary for sexual reproduction or 'animal generation' (Brown 1988, pp. 295-296).

Arguably, by its essential link to the female gender as well as to a theological understanding of what makes a woman, skin colour is in medieval visual literacy yet another secondary sex characteristic. The difference between the colours used for dimorphic skins is sometimes subtle (the Gemini in Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Français MS 599 f. 4v) or very strong (Adam and Eve in the French Book of Hours, Morgan Library MS M.131 f. 5v). It appears in illumination proper, marginal decoration (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex 1885) and in non-manuscript media like panel painting (like the lovers inside a translucent bubble in Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*). In these images that rely on bodies exposing a lot of skin, secondary sexual characteristics like breasts and beards are most of the time visible. Therefore, colour of skin can either be considered a superfluous signifier, or the defining gender characteristic which nuances the sex assigned by primary characteristics. The gender of clothed bodies is rarely signalled additionally by the skin colour of their hands and faces. The type of images where signifiers of clothing and skin colour are combined is mostly concerned with heterosexual marriage and (e.g. British Library Harley 4380 f. 6r; Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MSS Français 12575, f. 26v and Français 2646 f. 245v). This sole reliance on clothing, rather than compounding it with skin colour, to signify the sex or gender of the veiled body is surprising. Dress can be deceiving and used in trickery and disguise; clothing in itself is used as a trope, both in lay and religious literature, to reveal the body as unnatural and constructed, just as Butler's drag does (Butler 2004, p. 209).

Theoretical reasons for the differentiation in skin colour can be traced, historically, to medical and cultural ideas preserved by Aristotle and his contemporaries (Frost 1988, p. 39). Since women were cool and moist, their skin was paler, but the skin colour was not a direct consequence of someone's gender, but of the humoral conditions that contributed to this gender alignment in the first place. These associations between humoral types (choleric, melancholic etc) with skin complexion are theorised in vernacular medical books such as '*Chirurgie of 1392*' and John Metham's fifteenth-century *Physiognomy* (Langum 2013, p. 149). In addition, medieval medical treatises preserve this knowledge of the connection between humours and normative gender expressions encoded in discussions about body hair (which I have discussed above). By this logic, the prevalence of body hair in men is the result of the same humoral processes as the darkening of skin. On the other hand, confessor's manuals, Langum suggests, encode a medical theology of biological-essential predispositions and figurative surgeries in order to diagnose and heal the soul (Langum 2013, pp. 147, 152-155). Furthermore, a different type of texts, apocrypha about Adam and Eve, exploits this difference in humoral constitutions. Courtly love author and Franciscan Juan Rodrigues del Padron details in his didactic allegory *The Triumph of Women* (c.1440) the creation of Adam at the same time as that of animals. The creation of Eve is the culmination of god's labours in this text. Through the voice of the nymph Cardiana, he explains that women's lack of body hair represents their distance from the bestial and the savage (Flood 2011, pp. 84-5). Much more explicit in the association between light skin and the female body is an apocryphal retelling of the Genesis in Middle English, the *Vernon Lyfe of Adam and Eve* (c.1390). In a rhetorical aside after describing the creation of animals and of Adam, the narrator of the *Lyfe* muses on

Why are women fairer in constitution than men? Here I will answer: because woman was made in Paradise out of Adam's rib, and man was made from earth and out of filth. Therefore woman's skin is clearer than man's (my translation from the Middle English 'The Life of Adam and Eve' 1972, p. 107).

The darkness of Adam's skin is therefore not only associated with animality, but also with earth and filth. This association reverberates in later commentaries about Adam's coat of skin, his body that lends humanity to Christ, as a worthless sack of filth (cf. section 3.2.3).

The (universally assumed) cisgender Adam and Eve serve as binary models for the bodies of men and women respectively. Transgender saints' gender presentation, as I will show in the next subsection, influences the visual encoding of their bodies, through skin colour, of a gender congruous with their social roles rather than their previously-assigned gender signalled by their birth-name, or the sexual morphology of their body. What about the persons of the trinity, associated with femininity, masculinity and other (or neither)? If god creates Adam as male (dark skin, male-coded physiology) and Eve as female (light skin, female-coded physiology), but both 'to his own image', what gender does god's body telegraph? What is the humoral constitution of an incorporeal god, the source of all created things? In most of the visual culture of the middle ages (and beyond), god has a beard to denote fatherhood and wisdom. In miniatures of the Creation, the moment of sexual differentiation for the Christian civilization, the juxtaposition of the naked bodies of Adam and Eve, figured as clear dimorphic opposites in the high and late medieval art, also highlights god's beard as a gendered signifier (e.g. figure 2.9). God the father is ostensibly male, both textually and visually, for the entire medieval orthodox Christianity. Nonetheless, the miniatures of Genesis take as subject a deeply queer, asexual as well as non-heterosexual moment of creation of human life. This way, the fatherhood of god unsettles genders at the moment of their creation.^{xvii}

Medieval illustrations of the genesis are as original as individual, by virtue of their unique, handmade manufacture. The visual conventions in late medieval English, French and Netherlandish manuscript art are varied, and the theology encoded in them, a momentary event that entailed the collaboration of the illuminator (their intent preserved in fossilised form) and the reader (their reading of one image iterative and subjective). The four examples I give here, then, encode slightly different understanding of the gender of god in relation to that of the first humans. While in the

Paris manuscript (figure 2.9a) god's face is slightly-imperfectly mirrored both by Adam's as well as Eve's, in the Morgan one (figure 2.9b) Adam's head is nearly a miniature replica of god's, with forked beard and a sharp-angled nose. There is a kinship of masculinity, mirrored in secondary sex characteristics, between Adam and god, which Eve does not share in. Nevertheless, god's skin is coded by the chromatic dimorphism as less than ostensibly male. The Tours manuscript (figure 2.9c) depicts Adam's skin as extremely red, nearly in contrast with god's pink-beige skin. Here, the

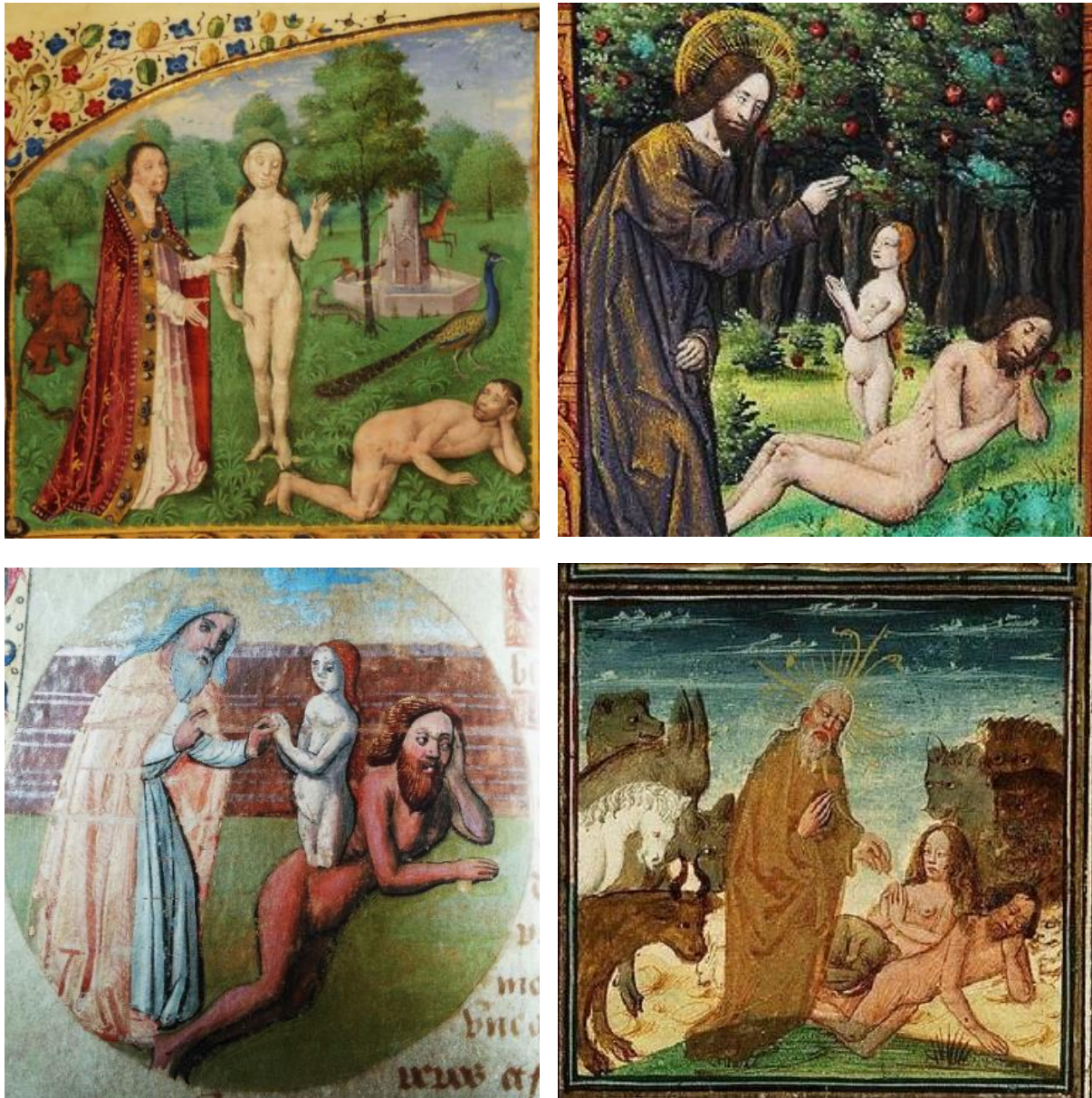


Figure 2.9 Creation of Adam and Eve:

(a) top left: *Chronique Universelle*, France, 15th century (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 64 f.7r);

(b) top right: *Book of Hours*, France, early 16th century (Morgan Library, MS M 174 f.21v);

(c) bottom left: *Chronique Universelle*, France, end of 15th century (Tours Bibliothèque Municipale MS 0975 fragment);

(d) bottom right: *History Bible*, Netherlands c. 1467 (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 78 D 39, f. VIIIv)

relationship between the three characters is not one of similarity, but of difference: Adam and Eve stand at opposite ends of the skin-colour and gendered/sexed spectrum, while god is set somewhere in between, neither white nor red, an assumed perfect balance of humours and temperature. In the Hague manuscript (figure 2.9d) god's skin is dark like Adam's, while in the Morgan manuscript (figure 2.9b) he is bright-skinned like Eve. A combination of beard and bright skin is then accessible to god; this is not afforded to human characters as decidedly cisgender as god the father. As it is the case with the Chalcedonian body, where the boundaries of human and non-human collapse into one materiality, god the father's genders all collapse into visual representations of an all-encompassing human body. These illustrations of the Genesis therefore visualise potentialities and hybridity of the body of the creator. Here, the human form, at the brink of sexual dimorphic separation but still explicitly understood as the mirror image of god, resembles that of the astrological or medical visualisations of the hermaphrodite (DeVun 2008, 2018, 2020). The creator, then, stands in a powerful gendered space where he visually encodes both genders, or neither.

As I discussed above, skin colour, employed when the body is either clad or naked, is not exclusively linked with visualising a limited, binary version of medically-determined gender in medieval art. Skin colour-coding based on gender positions is a quantifiable trend, the examples of which easily outnumber instances of other frameworks. Nonetheless, skin colour has also been used to signify other traits, mainly based on other dualistic systems associated with variations in humours, temperature or quantity of liquid. Difference in age, race, moral character, ontological status – alive or dead body, human soul or sacred individual such as angels and members of the Trinity – was at times signified in medieval images. I will quickly go through these categories in reporting on my observations based on a qualitative survey of a fairly large set of Christocentric images from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. These minor trends observed here nonetheless appear with enough frequency to form a pattern; some patterns, nonetheless, have established exceptions which I will signal.

Skin-colour difference is most frequently used in signalling age, which complicates one's body's relation with gender (c.f. section 1.2.3). Adolescence was the age that solidified and normalised one's *complexio*, through processes of increasing (for men) or declining (for women) heat. No matter of their gender, therefore, children had a different *complexio* than their adult counterparts; aging brought a balance in humours, a phenomenon that I suggest is also connected with medical preparations of conditions optimal for heterosexual reproduction. This latter observation is pertinent in understanding Walter Daniel's description of twelfth-century English monk Aelred of Rievaulx: 'His flesh was clearer than glass, whiter than snow, as though his members were those of a boy five years old, without a trace of stain, but altogether sweet, and composed and pleasant. . . . pure and immaculate in the radiance of his flesh as a child' (Murray 2008, p. 45). The association of youthful or even childlike complexion with the older monk is most likely the result of assumptions about his (sexual) innocence. Jeffrey Hamburger notes the connection between virginity and gender expression, 'virginity could be seen as transcending gender distinctions' (Hamburger 2001, p. 296), but does not associate this (or the link between virginity and age) with biological processes. Conversely, with the cessation of menses and reproductive capacities, old women would approximate the social status of a man (Mulder-Bakker 2004). In general terms, older characters of any gender are depicted darker than younger characters, as witnessed in the miniature of the presentation in British Library manuscript King 9 (figure 2.10). On folio 104v, beside the elderly Simeon (leftmost in foreground), the other two characters (are supposed to) have the same binary gender identity: the women Mary and the prophetess Anna. Their skin tone codes their age, in addition to their gender: Anna's skin resembles Simeon's more than that of the virgin's; the infant Christ's skin is white as the virgin's; as a control group for gender, a man in a turban in the background has the same dark skin as Simeon. While in other miniatures in the same manuscript, the maturing Christ is depicted with the same skin-colour as his mother, a reversal of age-shaded skin happens in the full-page pieta on folio 153v. Mary mother of Christ seems to not have aged, as her skin is still the same bright shade as at presentation, even though she must realistically be

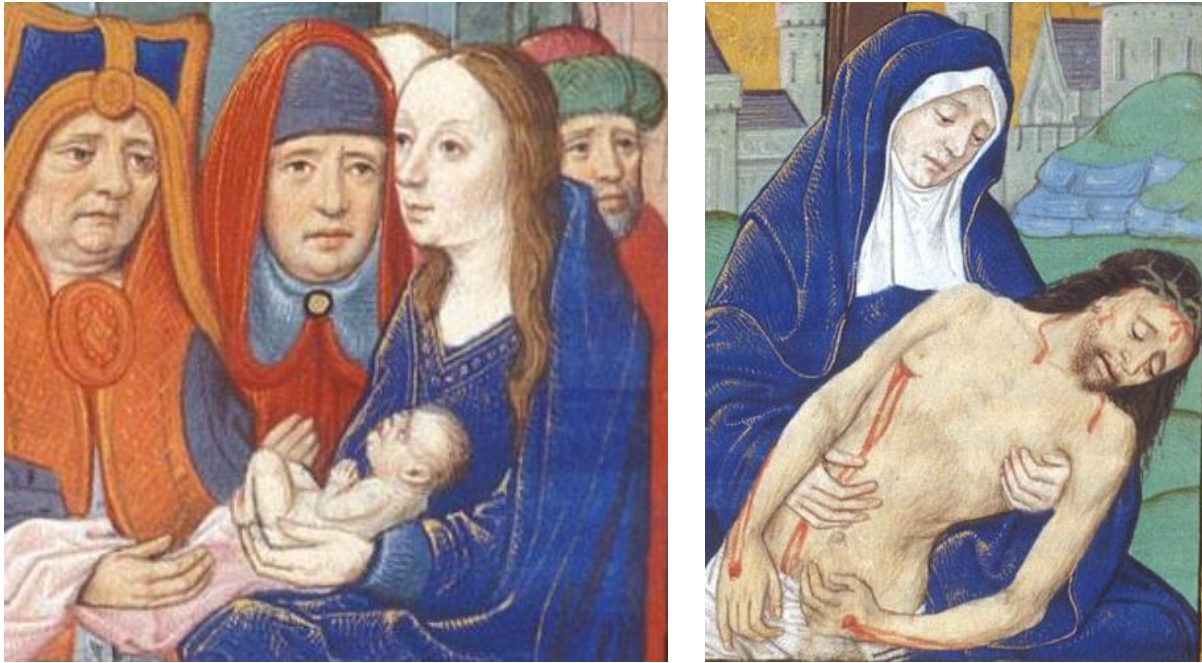


Figure 2.10 Book of Hours, Netherlands for England, c.1500 (British Library King 9, left: f. 104v right: f. 153v)

around the prophetess' age, while Christ matured into a dark-skinned adult man. Somewhat related to age, but not exclusively, is the colour difference between bodies alive and dead. The dead usually appear as darker-skinned, a visual representation that reflects cultural understanding of death preserved in textual sources: 'Homo in fine: his colour blacketh' (DIMEV 2031). Their complexion is also dependent on intersections with moral worth and gender (e.g. Cambridge MSS Additional 4100, Additional 4097; Morgan Museum MSS M74, M493).

Moral worth is a tricky axis to decipher, although in many manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the wicked clearly appear darker-skinned than the good or neutral characters. This is a result of bioessentialism that extends not only to gender and physical characteristics, but also to psychological and moral constitution. A disturbance in humours, therefore, was not only dangerous to one's health, but also one's salvation. In his twelfth-century *Liber Poenitentialis*, Alain de Lille suggests preachers take notice of skin colour: 'the complexion of the sinner must be considered, as far as can be assessed by external signs, because a person is more impelled to one sin than another owing to the variety of complexions' (Langum 2013, p. 148). The biological essentialism is present in the pre-determinism of the association between medical information encoded on the

surface of the skin and moral choices and behaviour that is considered innate to a person. The fourteenth-century vernacular *The Book of Vices and Virtues* also warns sinners to scrutinise their *complexio* and be cautious in order to avoid sins to which they are physiologically predisposed (Langum 2013, p. 148). Because darker skin colour was associated with higher moral danger – after all, hotness, an essential quality of normative masculinity, was the main driver of sexual arousal as well as of rage – male characters are more at risk for this qualitative assessment. Interestingly, manuscripts in which the torturers of Christ are distinguished by their skin colour, even in images where all the characters are supposed to be male, are most often produced in either England or South-Western Europe (British Library MS Arundel 203, MS Yates Thompson 13, MS Royal 1.d.X; Morgan Library MS G50, G55, M31, M618; Cambridge Additional 18850). The skin colour dimorphism used as an index for moral worth and essential goodness is complicated by the fact that by the twelfth century, skin colour and deformed facial features becomes an easily distinguishable visual shorthand for race. Compounded with medieval anti-Semitism, race becomes conflated with pagan religion and therefore skin colour signals, by extension of the primary scenes where the image of the Jewish Other is encountered (the passion and crucifixion of Christ), moral corruption.

Nonetheless, the earliest intersectional systems of colour-signalling race, gender, morality and age pose a challenge to both medieval race and gender scholars as to their actual significations. Because gender-based colour differentiation has not been explored by medievalist scholarship, some scholars of race are not aware of the complicated intersections of *complexio* with multiple binaries (gender, age, moral worth) and identify skin colour-coding as a system to only encode race (MedievalPOC 2014 on the Brailes Hours, British Library Additional 49999). Nonetheless, these examples encode multiple binaries in skin colour dimorphism – based on gender, race, age – made apparent in this and several other surviving works of the same illuminator, such as the French Moralised Bible (Morgan Museum MS M.240). At the intersection of the issue of race and the gendered focus of my thesis, Roland Betancourt (2018) specifically works on Byzantine imagery from c.800 but his corpus is too removed from the western European visual canon to have a significant impact on the way

gender-based colour distinctions are theorised in the medieval studies field. Betancourt considers depictions of alien gender systems of different races (eunuchs, transsexual saints, Ethiopians in the Byzantium) in manuscripts created by a hegemonic hand. Even though he notices body-colour literary and visual conventions, he fails to acknowledge the wide-spread, quasi-universal system of colour distinction based on dimorphic gender-coding as the reason why these bodies might be marked cross-gender and -race.

2.3.2 Visualising trans genders

One of the most empowering as well as problematic queer narratives from the middle ages is trans hagiography, which publicly presents the trans body as a blessed part of the Christian community and celebrates its history of transition (Davis 2002, p. 4). In her essay about one of the transgender saints, M. W. Bychowski coins the term '*imago transvesti*' for the visibly trans body of the medieval saint and draws on the body technologies inherent in many gender transitions to point out the salvific possibilities of this *imago transvesti*. The focus of these narratives, the transition is 'an act of salvation that embodies the creative, transformational, and reforming image of the Creator' (Bychowski 2016a). In the mould of *Imago Christi*, the ontology of the *imago transvesti* with its material interventions parallels the self-creative theology inherent in incarnation and, I will show later, even functions on the same sartorial basis. These narratives therefore present the empowering and salvific qualities of the transitional body.

At the same time, transgender hagiography relies on the trope of the self-evident truth of the body. Unlike romance, hagiography does not 'resolve' bodies like the miraculous narratives of *Yde et Olive* and *Tristan de Nanteuil* where the protagonist's body is, by the end of the tale, aligned with their gender identity or desire (Lurkhur 2010, pp. 234-5; Gutt 2018c). In hagiography, the genderqueer character bares their body – or more often, the dead body is re-sexed against their wishes – in a gesture that can be read both through a lens of erasure and violence and a lens of radical visibility

(Ambrose 2004, Grayson 2009, Mills 2018).^{xviii} Conservative readings of trans narratives ignore the construction and social life of a character and concentrate on the morphology of the body – often only revealed at the end of the story, against the wishes of the protagonist – that is the only index of their identity ('he was *actually* a woman' 'discovered to be a man'). This translates into 'stubborn refusal of gender-inversion [and] defiance of both the familiar narrative and logic itself' (Grayson 2009, p.165) when the reader is presented with a saint that looks like a nun, being accused of impregnating a woman like in the miniature accompanying Saint Eugene's story in Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 50, f. 393v. Alternatively, the revelation of the non-normative, dysphoric body is a visual confirmation not of their 'real' sex, but of the radical ontology of the lived transgender body. Read this way, the medieval hagiographical genre does not dissolve the transgender body into a transsexual cisgender oblivion, an anxiety many trans theorists like Sandy Stone (2006, p. 230) share, but keeps them in a permanent state of visibility. Finally, a solution to visualising the trans body that relies both on visibility and on assimilation is offered by some fifteenth century manuscripts that rely on skin colour to subtly comment on the transmasculine saint's gender, while illustrating a story that dead-names and misgenders them.

A French vernacular Golden Legend manuscript created in Bruges mid-fifteenth century, Morgan Library MS M.672-5 III, introduces the transmasculine saint Marine/Marinos as a 'noble vierge' (a noble virgin) and uses feminine pronouns and inflexions when talking about him. Nonetheless, his kneeling figure on f. 279v closely mirrors that of his elderly father who is laying on his deathbed in the same miniature. He is dressed and groomed like all the other brothers, and there is no skin-colour differentiation between him and the other figures in the image, all men. Compared to folio 278r where female saint Julitta of Tarsus is fair-skinned among nearly red-skinned male prosecutioners, and to similarly stark difference between Zacharias and the rest of the characters in the miniature on folio 283r who are exclusively female, Marinos stands, a few pages away, in visible suspension of gender difference when the text refers to him as a female virgin. Saisha Grayson correlates femininity with youthful maleness when remarking on Marinos' thin hair crown and

smooth face, an intuition that is most likely correct according to the medieval medical underpinnings of skin-colour difference (Grayson 2009, p. 153). Grayson's description of these gendered signifiers as 'how women were able to carry off transgender disguises in real life', as well as the title of the miniature in the Morgan Library repository ('Marina the Disguised') still talk about the unwillingness of modern scholarship to acknowledge what the medieval image clearly telegraphs.

In a luxurious miniature accompanying the story of the saint Margaret-Pelagia of another French vernacular translation of the Golden Legend, the saint's body lives its truth as a male saint (figure 2.11). The saint is introduced as Margaret-Pelagia by the title of the text, as well as throughout the narrative; the pronouns used by the translator are unflinchingly feminine, presenting the saint as a cross-dressing woman. Nonetheless, the saint is clearly visualised in the illustration preceding the story as a biological man. The monk dwelling in a gated cave sports a tonsure, as a social signifier of his (monastic, male) gender. His skin tone is similar in darkness to that of his monastic brothers, four



Figure 2.11 St Margaret-Pelagia, *Légende dorée*, France, 15th century (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Français 245, f.132r)

of which (of two different shades of dark pink) can be seen in the background; two of the monks have a slightly lighter skin than the saint's. In contrast, the woman who accuses Pelagios (now going by a single name with male suffix, even though the story continues with feminine pronouns and adjectives) of impregnating her has a much lighter complexion than that of any of the men's. The woman, obviously oblivious to the fact that the accused monk is anatomically incapable of impregnating her, takes him at face-value, literally. His skin signals his humoral complexion, that of a man, who by virtue of his hotness and dryness would be able to produce sperm, no matter of the genitalia. Pelagios' ability to 'pass', both in the narrative and in the illustration, is at odds with the story's name and pronouns for the saint in the manuscript. The choice of the illuminator to assert the monk's masculinity enacts a queer rebirth with the correct morphology or essential *complexio* qualities.

2.3.3 Gendering Christ: beyond the binaries

There is no consensus as to what binary gender-codes should be used when Christ's incarnated body is represented. Probably influenced by the proto-feminist discourse of mysticism, by the end of the fifteenth century, Christ is often painted white-skinned, reflecting visual conventions used to figure Mary's, as well as other women's, body.^{xix} This is especially evident in group settings, such as the crucifixion, where a number of characters are placed at polar opposites of the gendered spectrum. The body of Mary, often described as the purest, tenderest human body, is therefore not singled out as the whitest figure in these images, but rather a part of a larger collection of female or feminine bodies. At the same time, in other manuscripts (and sometimes even in the same book, on different folia), Christ is coded male by a skin as dark coloured as that of fellow men (good or bad characters, older or younger) that accompany Jesus to the Calvary or off the cross, or spectate within the image.^{xx} Where manuscript images visually encode a gender difference by means of skin colour, Dutch-produced ones assign masculinity to Christ, while French illustrators give him a feminine-

coded skin. English manuscripts have limited illumination programmes with fairly erratic gender-encoding patterns. Italian visual culture seems to be unconcerned with this tradition and represent gender through primary and secondary characteristics, as well as gender roles projected by clothing, occupation etc. throughout the high and late middle ages. Keeping in mind that Italian visual craft, especially in the later middle ages, seems to be focused on naturalism and hyper-realism in proportions, perspective, musculature and other details, the lack of skin-colour differentiation in this visual tradition seems to align with Eaverly's observations on Etruscan and Egyptian art: 'in some periods in both of these ancient cultures, men and women are shown with the same skin colour. This occurs in both areas in times during which the art is usually judged by modern scholars to be most naturalistic' (Eaverly 2013, p. 2).

Skin colour-coding the body of Christ in late medieval western visual culture afforded the creator, or even the patron of a work, to express and in the long run to consolidate beliefs about the gender of Christ. Whether explicitly linked to the *habitus* theology of incarnation or not, gender reassignment of Christ through the medium of skin-colour functioned through the same mechanics and achieved similar destabilisation of binary categories. Reconfiguration of the nature of Christ's body through a combination of sex characteristics including skin was a detail that would have informed not only conceptions about his gender, but also hint to the implications Christ's incarnation has for the Chalcedonian body. Here, we are faced with a crowd-sourced, bricoleur theology consolidated by networks of book-making and -illumination such as those operating between France (where a lot of Netherlandish artists would train), the Netherlands (the epicentre of English book trade) and England. Judging by the surviving witnesses, English-produced manuscript culture seems largely unconcerned with promoting a specific view about Christ's skin colour (and humoral constitution). Nonetheless, it does not mean that this was completely disregarded: English discourse about Christ's complexion is preserved in a range of manuscripts through visualising techniques and vernacular literature. The following rhyming device from a vernacular preaching manual is explicitly linked to the *habitus* theory on Christ's incarnation by its placement between other texts surveyed in the

section about vernacular preaching. It cements the connection between Christ's 'clothing' and his physical skin: *A body with a fair complexion / And of the noblest nature / A nation of a wicked kind / And of all men most cruel. / Sharp and shameful / Best and blissful* (DIMEV 16, in Cambridge MS ii.3.8, f.111r, between DIMEV 2487 'Clopyngge color and question' and DIMEV 3450 'A matter of murnyng' discussed in the sixth chapter). The short poem replicates the correlations between moral worth and ethnic otherness encoded in some visual culture: Christ's fair body is directly contrasted with the wicked nation of (and here the text specifically avoids naming them) dermally-marked Jews. Gender markers are also left unexplained – while the poet uses the word 'men', he is not nominating it as a gender category for the adjective 'wicked'. Nonetheless, the stark binary contrast that the poem draws between Christ and this category of Other would logically nominate (following the dichotomies the poem ends with) Christ as the opposite of men. The last two lines, explicitly in contrast with one another (*Sharp and shameful / Best and blissful*), shape the rest of the poem into binary comparisons between the first two couplets. In very few words, the poem creates a strong comparison of which some pairs are explicitly stated, some are left for the listener's bricoleur knowledge to piece together. While this alignment of several binaries is not universal and agreed-upon in religious and medical literature, the pairs in this poem are an excellent example of the nexus of value judgment coming from a medieval bio-essentialism based on humours and temperature expressed as skin colour, temperament, moral worth and gender.

<i>(cold, wet)</i>	fair	noble	<i>sanctified</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>loving</i>	Best	blissful
<i>(hot, dry)</i>	dark	<i>ignoble</i>	wicked	Men	cruel	Sharp	shameful

This exact dichotomy, between Christ's fair-skinned body and the appearance of the wicked men, also plays out in the illumination programme of a luxury copy of a very orthodox vernacular text. This copy of the Bonaventuran-inspired *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* is held in the National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates' 18.1.7. Composed (or rather, translated and adapted) by

the Carthusian prior of Mount Grace, Nicholas Love, the *Mirror* is one of the very few vernacular religious works that was allowed free circulation after Lollardy has become a significant threat to orthodoxy in England at the end of fourteenth century, being endorsed by Archbishop Arundel of Canterbury (Watson 1995, pp. 831, 840; Sargent 2016; Falls 2016, pp. 108-112). This manuscript is therefore an orthodox production by and for an English consumer.

In the illumination of this manuscript, skin-colour dimorphism singularly encodes gender, with the specific connection with its *complexio* basis. Skin-colour differentiation appears in the most important images in this manuscript (nativity, baptism and crucifixion), but inconsistently throughout the rest of the book. While mostly encoded on the skin of a naked Christ, not all the



Figure 2.12 Nicholas Love, *Mirror of the blessed life of Jesus Christ*, England, 15th century (National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 18.1.7, f. 118v)

miniatures containing nudity make a point of the dimorphism: the full-page miniature on folio 129v combining the resurrection and *noli me tangere* exhibits a semi-nude Christ whose skin is the same shade as that of the other characters, Mary Magdalen as well as male guards. On the other hand, race, moral worth or age does not inflect the gendered essentialism encoded in the dimorphism: in the crucifixion scene (figure 2.12) Longinus (depicted in the middle of his blindness being miraculously cured by the Holy blood) and the good thief (who is giving up a white ghost, instead of the black one exiting the bad thief's mouth) are still part of the pink mass of masculine (and for these two, male) characters. Here, it is the white-skinned

characters that stand out: this is a group consisting mainly of feminine, if not entirely female bodies. Apostle John, supporting Mary, is depicted as an ephebic youth, the beloved of Christ and the new son of Mary. He blends in with the women not only due to his golden hair and nearly Marian features, but also his white skin.^{xxi}

The association with the medical reasoning behind encoding *complexio* as gender dimorphic skin is hinted at by the attention given to Christ's bleeding. Not only at crucifixion but also at other important points in his life (in the Gethsemane, visited by Mary Magdalen at the tomb, at the ascension, and as part of a trinity) Christ is bleeding and/or oozing other liquids. Christ is covered in copious amounts of blood in the crucifixion scene, while the accompanying crucified men barely exhibit any blood, not on nail entry wounds but around their elbows and knees. Furthermore, emotion is expressed in the manuscript through the image of bodily fluids: in the crucifixion scene, Mary and her feminine companions shed tears flowing down their robes. Mary cries not only tears, but also blood, mirroring a previous image of Christ in the Gethsemane garden where he exudes water as well as blood (Luke 22:44). Within the crowd of female mourners, fair-skinned and -haired, John's normative masculinity is disputable. He also exhibits not only same amount of sorrow but also the liquidity of a female (wet and hot) body by exuding tears, a humoral mix also characteristic to young ('uncooked') men. In this manuscript, attention to tears and blood is coupled with the specificity with which the dimorphic skin has been used, and I would argue it is used to encode theological information. In this schema, the medical implications about Christ's excess, and therefore continual loss of both blood and water, are visualised by gendering him through fair skin that brings him closer to the essential *complexio* of his mother and other women. This medical gendering relative to lachrymosity is also seen in other media contemporary with this manuscript (Williams 2016).

When skin-colour differentiation is used it therefore encodes gendered and possibly theological information. In this *complexio*-inflected gender system relying on a binary colour-coding of skins,

Christ is aligned with the women. The morphology of Christ's naked body reinforces the gender to which the skin colour points. Christ's naked body is sexed ambiguously: as a baby, he lies in the manger without clothes or a cover, but the new-born boy does not exhibit a primary sex characteristic. In scenes like the hierarchy of heaven, the baptism, crucifixion and resurrection, he is presented as a bearded adult, his forked beard scraggy by comparison with his peers, the Baptist and the apostles. Does this Christ not have just enough hotness to cook a more vigorous beard? His virtually naked body, only wearing a sheer loincloth, is marked by an even more hairless, genital-free crotch, female-morphed in contrast with the equally discrete but more phallic visual convention of the long crotch. The choice of Christ wearing a transparent gauze loincloth in the crucifixion illumination, revealing a smooth pubic bone, responds to some of the challenges observed in subsection 2.2.3. Here, the body of Christ powerfully hints at a lack of physical morphology to fill similar boxers as the thieves'. The red-skinned thieves, one a sinner and one contrite, their torsos intact, wear plain white 'boxer-shorts' with typical trouser legs that allow, at least for the right-hand thief, to display a bulge. Christ's body, in contrast, could be read through the Aristotelian/Thomistic (as well as classical Freudian) framework, with female genitalia associated with deficiency, signifying the lack of the phallus. The rent body of Christ, in clear contrast with the whole, if still tortured, bodies of the thieves, embellishes on this medical framework through another highly visible display of signifiers of the lack: the wounds. Christ's loincloth is imagined as a sheer fabric, and crucified Jesus' nakedness is indeed pointed at in the text of Love's *Mirror* as a device for humiliation and scorn. Nevertheless, this sheer cloth is very similar to what Christ is wearing in other scenes in *Advocates'* (coronation of Mary, *noli me tangere*); this becomes in the manuscript something of a 'naked' uniform of the human Christ rather than a humiliating garment imposed on him by his torturers. This nakedness as garment of choice highlights the textile associations between the humanity of Christ and the loincloth and frames the skin-differentiated representations of Christ with the *habitus* theoretical mechanism.

2.3.4 Christ the perfect hermaphrodite

The radical, empowering and, for some, salvific idea that the godself contained multiplicities of gender, although not sanctioned by the official church, manifested itself at all levels of discourse.^{xxii} High and late medieval mystics from a variety of backgrounds and with different levels of (local, regional or international) influence verbalise this idea when ascribing a multiplicity of gender roles and even sexes to the body of Christ, in order to enable intimate interpersonal and emotional exchanges. The Biblical origin story of the humans, in itself, posed interesting questions about the gender of the creator, the mould for the two polar opposites represented by Adam and Eve. In the Jewish *Genesis Rabbah*, god has an all-gender-encompassing potential which manifested in a dimorphised pair of first bodies. Discussing this idea, John Flood notes that throughout the church history, Christian commentators had ‘thought the idea important enough to require [continuous] contradiction’ (Flood 2011, p. 72). Augustine (354-430 AD), Peter Comestor (1100-1178), Albert the Great (1193-1280) and Hugh of St Cher (1200-1263) repeatedly rebuff the idea of an androgyne or hermaphrodite god as a Jewish heresy (Flood 2011, p. 42). Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD) hints at the creation of a quasi-Platonic androgyne first human when he exhorts on the ‘sin against nature’ embodied by catamites (associated with transgressive gender roles and sexual desires). Male femininity is for Clement un-natural, since god removed all femininity out of Adam as he extracted Eve from his body (Flood 2011, p. 21. Cf. Horowitz 1979 and Pagels 1978). Clement therefore weaponises the multivalent idea of the primordial androgyne against effeminacy. While unorthodox to some church intellectuals, the completeness of the original androgyne is instrumental to the defence of heterosexual marriage, such as Pope Gregory the Great’s echoes to the prelapsarian unity in his definition of marriage (c. 551) as ‘they two shall be one flesh’ (Gregory the Great 1720, p. 9). Furthermore, the same theological argument carried through to high medieval literature such as the echoes to Genesis in the thirteenth-century French *Roman de Silence*: ‘God created Adam and Eve of one flesh, “so that they would be of one mind, as they are made of one substance.... There is great unity between man and woman, because the two are of one substance.’ (Bychowski 2017, p.

15). The same idea can be found in vernacular English in the fourteenth century, where the trinity is described through the examples of first three humans of Genesis in *Piers Plowman*. This text hints at the fact that femininity/Eve was drawn out of a previously multi-gendered Adam, the mirror-image of an all-encompassing god: 'One God almighty, if all men are of Adam. / Eve was of Adam and drawn out of him / and Abel of them both and all three one nature... one in humanity' (passus XVIII, ll.216-220). This argument survives through the antiquity and middle ages to be found in seventeenth-century philosophical and theological debates (Almond 1999, p. 6).

The insistence on the separation of the sexes that always accompanies this argument denudes the radical potential of a multi-gendered, or non-gendered god. Nonetheless, the idea, significant enough that there was a repeated need to clarify the point, lingered. The medieval illuminator rehearsed this debate every time the dimorphic bodies of the newly created woman and man faced the singular body of their creator and mould. The choice in gender presentation, and even more subtly in the skin colour that the medieval painter decided to depict god as, reflects this struggle with the perceived lack of orthodoxy. Individual creators made their own decisions, and the surviving images preserve hard-coded a personal sense of the ontology of god at the time of their creation. This important unanswered question of the gender(s) of god shows how the need to visualise theological knowledge is a creative force that not only leads to artistic innovation. This visual encoding of theological knowledge can solidify a non-official, community-sourced and -sanctioned view outside the authority of the church. Answers to the issue of the genders of god (both the father and the son) and that of the mechanics of the incarnation emerge out of cross-medium bricolage, formalisation of book trade routes and naturalisation of specific tropes enabled by artistic technologies (such as the leather body-stocking in stagecraft, cf. section 5.1.1).

The implications of such sedimented artistic technologies for medieval visual depictions of Christ's gender or larger ideas about his embodiment are not meant to be scandalous. I am not arguing that the average late medieval Christian imagined an incarnated Christ that was transgender. The

suggestions are there in the theology of virgin birth, as well as in the prominence Christ's wounds took in late medieval devotion. The larger cultural hegemonic discourse was characterised by a too complex misogyny and queerphobia, thoroughly the products of their time, in order to envision such an idea as widespread, orthodox dogma. Nonetheless, the radical potential of an incarnated body in flux was acknowledged not only by disenfranchised medieval communities that needed an embodied model for *imitatio Christi*, but also by the wider church that sought emotional and fully-embodied appeal to as many members of the public as possible. An understanding of the incarnation of Christ as solidified in a white, male, macho, abled body would not have appealed to as many potential Christians as that of a body in flux, male as well as female, chronically ill as well as healthy. This draws on orthodox tradition of late medieval visual and material mysticism. Richard Rolle and Julian of Norwich imagine 'Christ's body in the Crucifixion... as combining simultaneously the dominant masculine and feminine complexions of medieval medical theory' (Reynolds 2013, p. 211). The parentage, ontology, gender and materiality of god, all marked by surplus of meaning (more than two parents; more than human; more than male or female; more than incarnate), manifests in a formulation of how the incarnation worked, the *habitus* theology, that, by virtue of its transitional mechanics, opens the possibility of a transhuman Christ. This was not only widespread sacred knowledge in the middle ages but was also refracting into wider epistemological systems such as poetics, art, science and alchemy. Such a radical history of understanding the mechanics of *habitus* theology has the potential to empower certain groups of modern queer individuals.

^{xiii} Gutt observes this can be reframed as Ahmedian orientations (Gutt 2018b: p. 147)

^{xiv} Although in many medieval narratives this transgender identity is celebrated not as a transition towards one's real gender, but away from it. The narrative resolution of these episodes of baring a trans body is to assign it back to the sex originally assigned to it at birth. (Bychowski 2016)

^{xv} Berenger is the male knightly alter-ego of a cunning wife whose husband is too cowardly to even train with other men. After defeating her husband in a dare while in drag, the wife makes him kiss the 'knight's' asshole. The husband marvels at the configuration of the knight's taint, remarking that 'he' has a rather 'long arse'

(long cul). This fabliau comments on the husband's lack of anatomical knowledge as well as on gendered and sexual roles in the medieval everyday life. Berengier au Long Cul 1826.

^{xvi} This is, as any, an artificial separation and an oversimplification of genderqueer history, which features, nowadays as well as throughout history, individuals that identify with one or more of the labels intersex (and other non-standard chromosomal and hormonal constitutions), agender/nonbinary, crossdressing, transgender and transsexual etc. At the same time, these categories have not been clearly delineated not only in a past that did not have the words or the legal structure (eg sex-practice queerness conflated with gender queerness) for it, but even today.

^{xvii} It is not fatherhood that makes god male, but his secondary sex characteristics (beard) and pronouns, as well as a traditional patriarchal-led understanding of power and authority. Fatherhood is not, in itself, a gendered attribute, but a social construct predicated on interpersonal relationships: a father is someone who has children and is, incidentally, male.

^{xviii} This narrative structure is also common in historical trans biography, especially journalistic reporting from the nineteenth and twentieth century on genderqueer bodies.

^{xix} White-skinned Christ can be found in British Library MS Harley 2846, Harley 2915, Harley 7026; Vatican MS Lat. 14935; Beinecke MS 425 and MS 663; Walters Museum MS W31, MS W195 and W436; The Breslauer Book of Hours; Metropolitan Museum, Cloisters Collection MS 54.1.1; Morgan Library MSS H.7, S.6, M.58, M.72, M.83, M.85, M.453, M.646, M.677, M.813, M.834.

^{xx} Dark-skinned Christ in the British Library MS Harley 2985, Royal 1.D.D and Sloane 2683; Huntington Museum MSS 1180 and 1173; Walters Museum MSS W182 and W3; Index of Medieval Art John Plummer Database, manuscripts in private collections 5 and 27; Beinecke MS 664; Morgan Library MSS M.12, M.63, M.815, M.972, S.1, S.5.

^{xxi} The affinity between young John and Mary, signalled both by more recognisable secondary sex characteristics (such as absence of beard, long flowing hair) and by the visual shorthand of bright skin, queers his body in terms of gender. When Christ himself is imagined as young and femme-coded, John's similar gender as Christ queers their relationship (Hamburger 2001 is of course cautious about conflating sexuality with gender non-conformity, p. 303). Their bodily affinity towards the feminine end of the spectrum reminds one of Clement's discourse on the appearance of catamites.

^{xxii} The catechism of the Catholic church (produced with the occasion of the Second Vatican Council, 1959-1966) has relatively recently, in the context of the history of the church, declared the non-binary, post-human characteristics of god as absolutely orthodox. See articles 42, 239, 370, 2334.

3. *Habitus* theology

If modern radical Christianities entertain the possibility of an incarnated Christ who is more-than human, non-human, or trans-human, at the peril of being deemed as unorthodox, this radical thought finds worthy historical precedent in the medieval approach to the incarnation.^{xxiii} This chapter argues that an important strand of theological and lay thinking about the body of Christ placed it within a narrative of trans-humanity, while retaining an orthodox line of thinking. This idea specifically solidified in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries as a larger trope (or even a veritable theology) in Christological discourse. The trans-humanity of Christ that I refer to here is not adopted from (queer) feminist transhuman (Haraway 1985, 1991; Hall 2016) and posthuman (MacCormack 2009; Haraway 2016) philosophy, which seeks to decentre self-sufficient anthropocentrism. Rather, it stems from a permutation of transgender theory, a system of thinking about Christ in textile terms, which I will call *habitus* theology. This theological system relies on the continuous cultivation of a trope that I call the *habitus* theory (appropriating the language of Rosemann 2004, p. 131), that asserts that Christ's incarnation is an ontological transformation of god into human by way of 'putting on' his flesh as a tunic of skin. The material mechanics of the *habitus* incarnation parallels transitional body processes involved in some trans identities, the gender transition as an exchange of bodily surfaces (Prosser 1998, p. 68 c.f. sections 1.2.3.-4).

One of the most important paradoxes of Christianity is the transitive nature of Christ, at the same time mortal and god, human and animal, sentient creature and object. The central mystery of the medieval (pre-reformation) church, the transubstantiation, as well as the nature of the Christian god as a Trinity participate in and solidify the innate potentiality of Christ's body. These sacraments put Christ-oriented mutability at the forefront of the believer's system of making sense not only of the nature of god or of the world, but also of their own human body. Medieval religious imagery specifically capitalises on this aspect of Christ's body and its relation to the universally human body. By doing this, it brings a widely-approachable Christ – a child Christ who needs nursing, a wounded

Christ who suffers just as a leper, a mother Christ giving birth to new Christians – to as many believers as possible. This mutability of Christ's body, established as a central mystery in theological orthodoxy, was stabilised by the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), in which the inner workings of the Trinitarian god were articulated:

So, following the saintly fathers, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same *perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity*, the same *truly God and truly man*, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity; like us in all respects except for sin; begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and in the last days the same for us and for our salvation from Mary, the virgin God-bearer as regards his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, *acknowledged in two natures* which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and *comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being*; he is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ (Council Fathers 451, my emphasis).

The Council of Chalcedon 'clarifies' Christ as a paradox, both fully god and fully human, an indivisible whole made up of two natures. This idea of the Chalcedonian body of Christ in itself gave rise to many theoretical problems, from lexical to anatomical ones. One of the solutions offered by Church Fathers to these problems is based on the Pauline expression from the letter to Philippians 2:7:

...but [Jesus Christ] emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man (*habitu inventus ut homo*).

This chapter explores the importance of this Pauline verse in medieval conceptions of the incarnation, and the signification of this imagery not just as a poetic, metaphorical concept, but as a material explanation of the mechanics of incarnation. The first section, '*Historical habitus*' chronicles the emergence of the *habitus* theory from an orthodox concept posed by Augustine, through

centuries of contestation and controversy, to its late medieval form as a material theology. The second section, '*Tunica inconsutilis versus tunica pellicea*', considers the multiplicity of Christocentric textile motifs that circulated in the high- and late-medieval West and more narrowly defines the material imagery that has the radical potential to reveal the popular medieval conception Christ as trans-human.

3.1 Historical *habitus*: antiquity to late middle ages

This idea of the incarnate god as holy spirit enveloped in human form –the '*habitus* theory' – resonates through patristic, mystical and didactic literature, and survives from the theoretical work of Augustine to original reinterpretations in late medieval drama and catechism. The image of Christ's putting on the robe of humanity, therefore becoming a spirit in-vested in sentient and sensitive flesh susceptible to pain, pleasure, destruction and decay, has influenced, as I will show, theological formulations of the incarnation.

This explanation of the incarnation has found plenty of adopters, not all exclusively from highly-learned theological environments. Its popularity beyond academia might be attributed to its resemblance to contemporary explanations of the relation between the human soul and its fleshly home on earth (Kay 2017, pp. 128-137).^{xxiv} Medical practitioner and theologian Hildegard of Bingen (c.1175) describes the body as *indumentum animae*: the clothing of the soul (Bingen 1855, 4:105, especially pp. 899-900). Anthony of Padua submits that *clothes are our bodily members, with which the soul is clothed*.^{xxv} Catherine of Siena (d.1380; 1914, ch. 41) imagines the joy of souls re-clothed in their resurrected bodies (*rivestita... del vestimento della propria carne*). England provides a quick case study: in Middle English literature, explicit references to this idea survive from two different temporal points. *Ancrene Wisse*, the early thirteenth-century (c.1215-1225) rule for anchoresses written in one of the earliest versions of Middle English, describes the role of physical punishment from god as an act of maternal mercy: 'God loves us as the mother does the child that beats on her

clothes, when he beats us here upon our bodies and not on our naked soul' (cited in Lagorio 1985, p. 26).^{xxvi} The image here is that of a soul enshrouded in the fleshly envelope of the body for protection and contact with the physical world. *Ancrene Wisse* could be called a classically Christian somatophobic text, that enjoins for taming or even punishing the body – an attitude characteristic of literature of the early and high middle ages. Nonetheless, we can still sense the care with which the relation between the material and non-material components of a human individual is described over and over again. At the same time, *Ancrene Wisse* already contains the urgency of proper understanding (through visualisation) of this incarnational body technology for the salvation of the soul.

The same idea of the soul clad in the body is echoed two hundred years later in Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* (c. 1413). Describing the usefulness and indeed blessedness that the body itself brings to the human condition, Julian praises the physical body as something not only given from god but modelled in his image:

Because he had no contempt for what he had created, nor had he any disdain to serve us at the simplest office that belongs in nature to our body, for love of the soul that he had made in his own likeness. Because just as the body is clad in clothes, and the flesh in skin, and the bones in flesh, and the heart in the chest, so are we, soul and body, clad and enclosed in the goodness of God. (Norwich 1994, ll. 208-213; my adaptation into modern English).

Here Julian imagines the human anatomy as a metaphysical Russian doll, with consecutive layers formed not only of skin, flesh, bones, ribs and heart, but also of soul, body and 'goodness of God'. This layered conception creates a specifically poignant mise-en-abîme, considering that contemporary visual culture – a medium that very much solidifies, then just like now, contemporary imaginations of specific ideas in generally standardised representations – depicted the soul as anthropomorphised figure. For example, the miniature on folio 94v which illustrates a high medieval encyclopaedia of the creation as 'everything good' (*Omne Bonum*, British Library MS Royal 6 E VI)

designed by god (c.f. Genesis 1:31) visually translates the morphologic similarity between god and his creation. It also associates the act of designing Adam out of (fully-material) earth with the creation of the human soul, the *anima*, figured as indistinguishable from the human body. The layered image that Julian creates puts this anthropomorphic soul-figure at the middle of a human body, which is surrounded by a god that gave Adam his 'image and likeness'. The visuality of Julian's mise-en-abîme informs the way she and her readers come to an understanding of the multivalent human form at large, not only of the soul, but also of the human genesis, conception or incarnation.

The wider conception of the human body as clothing for the soul – used in non-theological contexts such as medical interpretations of a unity between body and soul, or in answers to the daily concern regarding what happens when one dies – resonates with the complex idea of the Chalcedonian body of Christ. This multifaceted paradox of one coherent person that is both god and human, mortal and resurrected, all-powerful and tortured on the cross, finds a graphic explanation in the image of a god passing as human by actively wearing his humanity. The vocabulary of this formulation of the incarnation, is woven through with textile analogies. The *habitus* theory was not only an idea formulated on a biblical foundation, but was also the subject of venerable theological defence across time, from fourth/fifth-century Church Fathers to university theologians in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The three subheadings of this section detail the historical development of the literary, theological, visual and material motif of the tunic. First, I detail the theological foundation upon which the proponent of this theory, Augustine of Hippo, elaborated on the *habitus*, before turning to the reception of the Augustinian theory and the history of the *habitus* through the high middle ages. Finally, I tackle finer points emerging from a fully-formed *habitus* theology by the thirteenth century, that take issue with the material as well as linguistic components of the *habitus* proposition.

3.1.1 Augustine's *habitus*

In one of his first works, Augustine of Hippo defines the relevant terminology in the *habitus* question, a motif that was later going to appear over and over again in his work.^{xxvii} In 83 *Diverse Questions*, dictated 'from the very beginning of my conversion and after our return to Africa' (Augustine's *Retractions*, quoted in Mosher 1982, p. 2) i.e. 388-396, Augustine clarifies the terms of the Philippians 2:7 passage. The answer to the 73rd question, 'On the scripture *and having been found in the habit of a man*', defines several ways of talking about *habitus*. As in English, the polysemy of the word habit is highlighted in Augustine's Latin explanation of several meanings of *habitus* – where he gives examples of manners of the mind as well as of clothing of the body:

take clothing (*sicuti est vestis*): certainly when it has been laid or cast aside, it does not have that shape which it assumes when it is put on and drawn over one's members. Therefore, when put on, it receives a shape (*induta accipit formam*) which it did not have while off, although the members themselves, with the clothes on or off, remain in the same state.

[Augustine c.390, Q.73 (Latin); 1982, p. 187 (English)]

Augustine then takes pains to clarify that the mechanism of the *habitus* aligns with this last explanation:

he took up (*assumptus*) humanity in such a way that it was transformed for the better, and it was filled out by him in a manner more inexpressibly excellent and intimate than is a garment when put on by a man (*vestis ab homine cum induitur*). Therefore by this name habit (*habitus*), the Apostle has adequately indicated what he meant by saying, 'having been made into the likeness of men,' because he became a man not by way of a transformation, but by way of a habit (*sed habitu factus est*) when he was clothed with a humanity (*cum indutus est hominem*) which he, in some way uniting and adapting to himself, joined to [his] immortality and eternity. [Augustine c.390, Q.73 (Latin); 1982, p. 188 (English)]

Here especially, as well as in later work, Augustine uses a larger group of words in the semantic family of habit (*induere* = to put on; *vestire* = to clothe), so that there can be no confusion as to what *habitus* means both in the biblical quote and in his commentary. This is one of the earliest, but also most comprehensive works of Augustine on the Philippians sentence. The same question of the habit is addressed in *De Civitate Dei*, and the discussion is extended to Adam, therefore encompassing in the clothing simile the creation of other human bodies. The mortal body, ‘the image of the man of earth’, is put on by human souls in the process of creation (*induimus imaginem terreni*); at the same time Christ, as the second person of the trinity, puts on ‘earthly mortality’ (*terrenae mortalitatis corpore vestiretur*) at the moment of his incarnation (Augustine 1966, pp. 232-3). Augustine uses the same verb he used in the *83 Questions* to describe Christ’s in-vestiture, *induere* [to put on], when talking about mortals assuming their bodies.

As a former Manichee, and somebody acquainted with other current heterodox beliefs, Augustine seems to have recognised the dualistic possibilities that the *habitus* theory poses (Augustine 2014, liber 7, capitula 13-14, 18). In his *Confessions*, he tells of a man, Alypius, who converts to Christianity only after coming to terms with the mechanics of the *habitus* incarnation. The Apollinarian heresy that Alypius imagines as the mechanics of orthodox incarnation hinged exactly on the belief ‘that God was so clothed with flesh (*Deum carne indutum*), that, besides God and flesh, there was no soul in Christ’ (liber 7 capitulum 19; Augustine 2014, pp. 344-345). The Philippians 2:7 can easily be quoted as proof of separate entities in the person of Christ – his human habit and his spiritual godself. Augustine himself remarks on the ‘dualistic theory of substances’ of Manichaeism (Augustine 2014, p. 335), which could have lent itself to a heretical theology of Philippians-inspired *habitus*. In previous works (his *Questiones* and *Civitate Dei*) Augustine insisted on the change clothing suffers when donned by a human body, or what the flesh undergoes to accommodate the incarnate god. This insistence resulted from the Chalcedonian need of the two components to not be the same together as they were before when separate. Augustine specifically uses the Philippians quote (2: 6-9) in his *Contra Sermonem Arianorum* to consolidate the idea of the Chalcedonian unity

of human flesh and godly nature. Arianism per se did not specifically contest the human form of Christ on earth, but took a heretical stance on the separation and hierarchy of the Trinity.

Nonetheless, Augustine defends at length the unity of substances in Christ (*unitatem personae Christi Iesu*) even as materialised in ‘the form of the servant’, giving us a glimpse of his concerns about the risks of heterodox use of the *habitus* theory [Augustine 2009, liber 1 cap 8; p. 197 (Latin); 1995, p. 146 (English)].

3.1.2 Orthodoxy and heresy beyond Augustine

Augustine’s attentive elaboration of his conception on the Chalcedonian body of Christ as god in habit has served him well. The position recurs in orthodox sermons and writings of the eighth and ninth century, such as those of John of Damascus (Milliner 2014, p. 8). Nevertheless, the twelfth century saw not one, but three condemnations of heresy based on the Philippians quote and on Augustine’s interpretation of it. Nihilianists, and unassociatedly Peter Abelard and Peter Lombard, have faced synods on account of the same formulation that, I show by the end of this section, are used in thoroughly orthodox communications by popes and preachers of the time.

At the Council of Rheims in 1148, Robert of Melun used the 73rd Augustinian answer to mount a case for condemnation of Gilbert de la Porrée’s teaching on the nature of Christ (Lilley 1938, p. 227).

Gilbert maintained that there was no continued presence of godhead in the incarnated Christ. The in-vestment point made by Augustine, something that could be given heterodox valences, was not discussed by either side of the argument. Rather, the Augustinian semantics of ‘form of a servant’ were used to demonstrate how Christ’s essential natures coexist in his human body. Robert’s use of this specific part of Augustine is especially odd since contemporary theologians used it to argue for the exact opposite view. The Philippians quotation and its Augustinian interpretation in *83 Questions* was the core argument of the Nihilianists, condemned by the same Robert of Melun (among others) around 1168-1180 (Colish 1996). The Nihilianists’ view was that the incarnate humanity of Christ is

nothing (*nihil factum esse*) but a legible appearance of a fully ethereal god (the Word) used to interact with his flock. Since the humanity of Christ and his godhead are the same nature, and since godhead is spiritual, the human body of Christ is essentially non-substantial (Lilley 1938, pp. 235). Augustine's interpretation of the humanity as tunic draped over the godly nature in order 'be found' by other humans 'in form of servant' (83 *Questions*) lends itself easily to the heretical view that his humanity 'was nothing more than the vesture which the Divinity wore to manifest itself to man' (Lilley 1938, p. 234). A similar concept, of one god appearing in multiple trinitarian 'masks', and of the nature of Christ being that of god assuming the form of human to converse with other humans, was what precipitated Abelard's condemnation as heretic in the local synod of Soissons in 1121 (Monagle 2007, p. 41; Talbot 1952, p. 21).

But one of the most surprising accusations of heresy based on the Philippians quote and Augustine's *habitus* formulation was levelled against Peter Lombard (Colish 1994, p. 223; 1996, pp. 146-7). Around the middle of twelfth century, Peter Lombard undertook the major task of composing and compiling commentaries on the Bible and on patristic sources, one of which being Augustine. In his third book of sentences, '*On the Incarnation of the Word*', Peter Lombard introduces the biblical quote from Philippians 2:7 as well as recapitulates Augustine on the meanings of *habitus*. The Lombard extensively quotes Augustine's 73rd question, and uses his clothing-related vocabulary (*habitus, induere*) to explain the nature of the incarnation.

For god the Son emptied himself, not by changing his form, but by taking the form of a servant [*formam serui accipiens*, echoing Philippians 2:7]; nor was he changed or transmuted into a man, thereby losing his unchangeable stability, but the taker himself was made in the likeness of men, by taking a true man, and he was found in the habit of a man [*habitu inuentus est ut homo*], that is, by having human form, he was found as a man [*inuentus est ut homo*]: not for himself, but for those to whom he appeared in his human form. [*Sententiarum Libri Quatuor* 3:6:6 Lombard 1855b, p. 770 (Latin); 2007, p. 30 (English)]

This Lombardian gloss essentially follows the exact formulation of Augustine's *83 Questions*, quoted by multiple other orthodox commentators and preachers up to the Carolingian period (Colish 1994, p. 402). Lombard does not only explain the habit as cloak of humanity, but following Augustine similarly draws special attention to the appropriation, rather than transformation, that the nature of Christ receives from the habit: 'he was made a man not by way of transfiguration, but by habit when he was clothed with a human form [*sed habitu factus est cum indutus est hominem*]' [*Sententiarum Libri Quatuor* 3:6:6 Lombard 1855b, p. 770 (Latin); 2007, p. 30 (English)]. He carefully emphasizes the coexistence of the two natures in the Chalcedonian body, and therefore the more-than of the human Christ.

Like Augustine's, Lombard's Christ puts on humanity through 'uniting and adapting to himself' the habit, rather than just putting on an interchangeable mask. This is the point that condemned Abelard as heretical during the same century, and Aquinas (as well as Abelard's inquisitors) views this theology as a revival of Nestorian (4-5 century) heretical tenets (Cross 2007, p. 32). The only quasi-Nihilianist or Nestorian valences that were presumably posthumously used to condemn Peter Lombard's work are found in glosses on the Philippians 2:7 (Colish 1996, p. 148). In his *Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*, where Christ puts on the habit out of curiosity, so that he experiences mortal life as humans do: 'is clothed [*inventus est*] in the manner of whom [*alicui*] he wanted to experience, as another human [*ut alius homo*], how to eat, drink, talk etc.' [*Ad Philippenses*, 2:1; Lombard 1855a, p. 234, my translation]. This is nevertheless followed by a near-literal repetition of his (and Augustine's) explanation of four types of habit, comparison of humanity to a garment, and difference between transformation and unity.

Lombard's *habitus* Christology was first attacked shortly after his *Sententiarum Libri Quatuor* was finished and after Peter's own death. A double audience at the Council of Tours in 1163 and the following year's Synod of Sens (Colish 1994, p. 429ff) enfolded on the background of Europe-wide suspicion against heretical ideas. His *habitus* theory was directly associated by his detractors with Nihilianism, a personal matter of concern for the new pope Alexander III (Robinson 1990, p. 140).

Later, in the 1170s, John of Cornwall and Walter of St Victor both attacked Peter Lombard's Christology in view of the Third Lateran Council, at a time when the Catholic Church also faced the threat of Albigensian and Waldensian heresy (Colish 1994, p. 431; Mews 2016, p. 56; Robinson 1990, p. 140). Some of these men (like Alexander III, John of Cornwall and Gilbert de la Porrée) previously subscribed to the *habitus* theory themselves (Mowbray 2012, p. 27-29). Walter of St Victor wrote an exhaustive work, called *Against the Four Labyrinths of France*, where he explicitly condemns the Nihilianists. He included Lombard and (among others) Abelard, whom Lombard himself disagreed with, among them (Walter of St Victor cited in Colish 1994, p. 431). Through this juxtaposition with other thinkers and ideological movements, it might seem that Lombard asserted the partible and counter-natural identity of Christ's humanity as *habitus*. Nevertheless, Lombard incorporated his *habitus* formulation in larger discussions, did not proclaim it infallible, and explicitly objected in his *Sentences* to the accidental and partible view of Christ's humanity as *habitus*. His work was finally taken as a whole, and vindicated, by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 (Colish 1994, p. 222; Monagle 2007). Nevertheless, Lombard's *habitus* theory was not explicitly mentioned in the pardon, and the new orthodox confession of faith does not introduce the Philippine/Augustinian textile similes:

Father generating, the Son being born, and the holy spirit proceeding; consubstantial and coequal, co-omnipotent and coeternal (*procedens consubstantiales et coaequales coomnipotentes et coaeterni*); one principle of all things, creator of all things invisible and visible, spiritual and corporeal; who by his almighty power at the beginning of time created from nothing both spiritual and corporeal creatures, that is to say angelic and earthly, and then created human beings composed as it were of both spirit and body in common [Council Fathers 1973 (Latin); Council Fathers 1215 (English)].

As shown above, formulations of the *habitus* theory had been branded as an error or as base for heretical beliefs throughout the twelfth century and attacked in several synods and councils as such.

Nevertheless, having survived nearly a century of criticism, of which I only covered that pertinent to his *habitus* formulation, Lombard's *Sentences* were introduced in curriculum for the Masters of Theology at the University of Paris in 1233-7 (Knowles 1962, pp. 162-3; Rosemann 2004, p. 89). This way, some of the most prominent theologians of the thirteenth century onwards were intimately acquainted with the *habitus* concept, carried from Augustine through Lombard in the teaching of universities. It does not mean that the idea was not challenged by similarly prominent readings in the curriculum, such as Thomas Aquinas' own *Commentary on Sentences* (Cross 2007, p. 32; Mowbray 2012, p. 29).

Even during the twelfth century, while high-theological denunciations of the tunic theory as quasi-heretical were taking place, the concept of humanity as Christ's tunic, habit, or skin-suit is mentioned in sermons and commentaries without any indication that it is less than an orthodox idea. Around the middle of the century, after the Abelardian scandal, Aelred of Rievaulx composed a sermon on the annunciation that expanded on the clothing metaphor (Aelred 1855). By flitting between old and testamentary images of Adam and Joseph and the scene of annunciation, Aelred describes the humanation of Christ as Augustinian in-vestment. Christ is 'dressed in flesh to appear in the world' (*quasi uestitus carne in hoc mundo apparuit* [my translations from the Latin Aelred 1855, p. 256]). Aelred not just grazes on, but fully restates the Abelardian implications of the *habitus* theory: that of the second person in the Trinity disguising himself in the fleshly tunic at will. 'Like a tunic (*tunicam*), he takes off (*deposuit*) this flesh when he wants and assumes it (*sumpsit*) when he wants' (256). Nonetheless, Aelred allays fears of heretical error through a poetic formulation of the co-substantiality: 'gaze in safety on the Lord, thy God, in that tunic. Adore in Him who wears the garment, both the garment and the wearer of it' (*Securus adora in tunicato tunicam et tunicatum* [Latin and English from Talbot 1952, p. 22]).

In this sermon, we encounter several motifs already familiar, as well as new poetic concepts. Aelred seems to avoid the ambiguous *habitus* formulation, preferring its more literal synonym *tunica* – and

less often *vestimentum* – but keeps the two clothing verbs, the biblical *vestire* and Augustinian *induere*. Two tunics appear here, as elaborations of Augustine’s animal and spiritual bodies (from *City of God*, 13:23) with their biblical parallels: the tunic of skin(s) belonging to Adam (*Adae inoboedienti tunicam, sed pelliceam* [256]) and clothing Christ in animal (carnal) body; and the damasked tunic received from Joseph (*Ioseph...tunicam, sed polymitam* [256]) and vesting Christ in a celestial (ethereal and eternal) body. Aelred’s imagining of two tunics make clear that the earthly vestment of Christ is fleshly, nearly viscerally ripped off the back of Adam (*exuamus... tunicam Adae pelliceam* [257]) and carrying with it all the biological baggage humanity entails. If anything in this sermon points to the fact that the image has a heretical history, energetically and assuredly Aelred sustains the analysis within the highly poetic language of old and new testamentary exegesis.

Before 1200, the phrasing *tunica pellicea* (fleshly tunic) appears again in William of Neuburgh’s commentary on the Song of Songs (Fulton 2005, p. 457). This poetic work uses the full range of textile images, describing Christ the bridegroom tearing apart the *saccus* (sackcloth) of flesh of his *tunica pellicea*, to acquire his new *stola* (gown) of immortality. Here again appears the distinction between the rough, grossier, and tangible *tunica* Christ wears on earth, and the fine, ethereal and abstract *stola* he is invested in heaven. The move from the high-theological, academic register to the anagogic, poetic or mystical language seems to have saved the *habitus* theory from heretical condemnation and germinated the roots to a textile-imaginary *habitus* theology.

3.1.3 Disguise versus revelation

As demonstrated above, the *habitus* theology was born within the context of a didactic tool designed to be easily understandable, a simile used by Augustine. Nonetheless, the reiteration and elaboration of this imagery had material impact upon the shape orthodox as well as heterodox belief took. The mechanics of textile covering was expansively probed to illuminate the function of the *habitus*: was it to cover the godhead, as a material disguise would, or to reveal Christ’s humanity, as

sartorial markers of social status, just like sumptuary laws established? At the border between theoretical language and material mechanics of incarnation, the *habitus* theory reflected in its facets the concrete imagery of the Bible and the abstract expressions of god attempted by high theology.

The idea of the *habitus* as not a disguise, but an instrument of revelation that makes god legible to the human intellect has some traction with high medieval orthodox writers, even though the idea could easily lead to Docetism or Nestorianism if unqualified (Young 2011, pp. 263-4, 270).^{xxviii} At several points in different works (*Sentences* and *Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*), Peter Lombard explains *habitus* as the cover that makes visible to humans a god otherwise invisible: ‘the Word of God was clothed (*vestiretur*) in [flesh] as though in a garment (*velut indumento*) so as to appear fittingly to the eyes of mortals’ (Lombard 1855b: Liber 3, 7:1). The common humanity as a factor in human recognition and social legibility was especially emphasised: ‘not for himself, but for those to whom he appeared in his human form.’ (Liber 3, 6:6). Hildegard of Bingen similarly notes around 1173 that ‘humanity is the guise in which my son, clothed (*circumamictus*) in heavenly power, reveals himself as the god of all creation’ [Bingen 1978, p. 139 (4:105)]. As Augustine and Lombard show (*83 Questions, Sentences*), the *habitus* formulation with its multiple valences was easy to misread and therefore more prone to guide into error. Hildegard departs from this wording and explains humanity as vestment (*vestimentum*, Bingen 1855, p. 890).

As late as the first quarter of the thirteenth century, Anthony of Padua explains the materiality of the *habitus* as the hermeneutical support (even for those less versed in theological issues) for a complete knowledge of the incarnated Christ. In this Sermon for Easter, Anthony recognises the advantages of thinking in material, ‘bodily’ concepts, and approves of this technique for the use of laity while warning about specific pitfalls of a *habitus* understanding of the incarnation.

In this way the weaker spirit, which knows best how to think about bodies and bodily things, will have something towards which it may direct its affection [...] as long as in faith he does

not make a separation between God and man, he learns for that time how to recognise God in man. (*Sermon for Easter*, Anthony of Padua 1979, p. 184)

In the thirteenth century the imagery of Christ's humanity as tunic expands, incorporating motifs from biblical and apocryphal sources beside the habit of humanity (Philippians 2:5). These motifs include the winepress-worker's garment (Isaiah 63:3), Mordechai's robe of honour (Esther 6:11), Joseph's cloak dipped in blood (Genesis 37:31-2), Mary's womb as a fleshly textile (Job 10:11), and royal garments (Revelations 19:13). These images draw their authority from the old testament, apocryphal gospels and patristic sources, normalising the *habitus* theory as one with a rich orthodox history. The most important text signalling the complete change of the status of *habitus* from quasi-heretical theory to papally sanctioned theology is Pope Innocent IVth's statement of faith sent to the Güyük Khan with his missionaries in 1247-1248. Only a few decades after the Fourth Lateran Council formulates a statement of faith that makes no mention of the Augustinian conception of Christ clad in humanity, Innocent's explanation of the trinitarian god of Christians reads:

God the Father... sent from the lofty throne of heaven down to the lowly region of the world
His only-begotten Son, consubstantial with Himself, who was conceived by the operation of
the Holy Ghost in the womb of a fore-chosen virgin and there clothed (*indutus*) in the garb
(*veste*) of human flesh... He showed Himself in a form visible to all men. [...] The Creator of
that creature became visible, clothed (*habita*) in our flesh, not without change in His nature, in
order that, having become visible, he might call back to Himself, the Invisible, those pursuing
after visible things [Innocentius IV Papa 1894, pp. 72-73 (Latin); 1955, pp. 73-74 (English)]

Innocent uses a full lexicon of textile imagery, adding '*indutus*' and '*veste*' to the Augustinian/Lombardian *habitus* formulation, the materially-supported explanation of the incarnation that was, by this point, rehabilitated and gained new imagery with the new century. Nevertheless, the justification attached to Christ's incarnation by these orthodox teachers – Peter Lombard, Hildegard of Bingen, Anthony of Padua, Pope Innocent IV – still savours of Abelardian

heresy (Nestorianism). The weighed explanation of the fact that the incarnation in human form was necessary for god to communicate with his creatures is open to the possibility that the fleshly habit might be just a temporary mask.

A glimpse into this complex issue comes from the other end of the spectrum of orthodoxy – the English Lollard reformist John Wycliffe (1330-1384). The first English translation of the Philippians 2:5 as ‘into lyknesse of men maad, and in habyt founden as a man’ is Wycliffe’s own version of the vernacular Bible (c.1380).^{xxix} Wycliffe also cites at length Augustine’s commentary on the verse, rehearsing the explanation of the four types of *habitus*, both in his Latin and vernacular sermons [Wycliffe 1887-1890: vol. 2 p.187 (Latin); Wycliffe 1871: p. 285 (English)].^{xxx} While his reformist stance is highly critical of the Catholic church taking the miracle of the transubstantiation literally, he never comments on a possibly similarly erroneous literalism in the explanation of Christ’s incarnation as in-vestment of god in human flesh. On the contrary, he edges on Nestorian separationism of the persons of the trinity in his explanation of the *habitus*: ‘the second essence of the reigning king, lord Jesus Christ... put on the habit as man (*habitu inventus ut homo*), and this way the second divinity is the likeness of human’ (my translation from the Latin Wycliffe 1887-1890: vol.1 p.93). Interestingly, Wycliffe also uses the textile vocabulary of *tegumentum* (cover, skin, or clothing) to denote ‘figure of speech’, rhetorical rather than material meaning (Wycliffe in Green 2002, p. 284). His use of the textile metaphor (*tegumentum*) shows that this lexical field could be mobilised against theological literalism, especially by a radical reformer such as Wycliffe. He has no qualms with the Augustinian formulation of incarnation as in-vestment in the *habitus* taught to a lay audience. His weaponization of the textile lexical field against literalist readings stands at odds with the creativity and multiplicity of the textile expressions used by popular preachers and teachers to expand on the *habitus* theology. Although *tegumentum* has not by itself been used to discuss the *habitus* theory before Wycliffe, the common lexical field of the textile has been expanded beyond *habitus* to include *vestis*, *induere*, *(in)vestire* etc. Wycliffe nonetheless never condemns the theological literalism employed in discussions of Philippians 2:5, and he uses an expanded Latin

textile lexical field (*induere*; *vestis* as his gloss for *habitus*) in connection with the incarnation of Christ (Wycliffe, 1966). He is nonetheless more cautious in his vernacular work, where he avoids the literal translation ‘clothed in human attire’ by rendering *indutus* as ‘found’ as man. At one point, Wycliffe alludes to the history of theological debates around the *habitus* in a brief divagation about different beliefs on the true nature of Christ. He brushes it away, however, as not a topic to be discussed in communities of lay believers: ‘all this is comprehended more by clergy than by the community and therefore men might skip over this when speaking to the laity’ (Wycliffe 1871, p. 285). On the other hand, his willingness to talk about the Philippians verse in vernacular and to translate *habitus* as ‘abit’ speak of the understanding that this matter was not too complex for the lay, Latin-illiterate folk. His code-switching between Latin and English, and between textile and theoretical aspects of the *habitus*, reveal a larger concern about suitability of the materialist adaptations of the *habitus* for different audiences exposed to different historical texts.

The *tegumentum* formulation of rhetorical invention is used, centuries before Wycliffe, by Augustine’s contemporary Ambrose (d. 397). In his *Hexameron* rendition of the fall (*Paradise*, par. 13), Ambrose uses text and textile metaphors to articulate cultural artifice (clothing as well as lies) that precipitated the expulsion from paradise. As Eric Jager notes,

Ambrose suggests that fallen humans... use verbal artifice to cover (*operire*), conceal (*contegere*) or veil (*velare*) the truth. In combination with these verbs of ‘covering’, Ambrose employs a series of textile nouns to figure fallen language as deceptive ‘clothing’: *integumentum* (covering, cloak), *amictus* (mantle, cloak), *involucrum* (wrapping), *tunica* (garment) and *velamen* (veil) (Jager 1993, p. 126).

In Wycliffe’s and Ambrose’s work, *tegumentum* is the disguise of the word (utterance or lexical unit); in Augustine, *habitus* is the disguise of The Word (humanated Christ and phallogocentric authority of god). The difference is that the *tegumentum* is glossed by Ambrose as *manufactus*, a Latin word describing objects resulting from the manual labour of humans (Jager 1993, p. 125). In contrast to

this, the *habitus* is not – it is inherent and inherited, quasi-synonymous with being and embodiment. While *tegumentum* conceals to deceive, *habitus* conceals in order to reveal the truth. Moreover, the meaning of *habitus* as instrument of revelation of the inherent truth is solidified in the Latin and vernaculars of the late middle ages. The use in vernacular of the word habit as ‘inherent material or mental condition’ appears at around the same time as the Wycliffite translation of the Bible where Philippians 2:5 is translated as *in habyt founden as a man*.

3.2 *Tunica inconsutilis versus tunica pellicea*

Against the backdrop of these major shifts in the theological discourse – from allegorical expression to material mechanics – it is necessary to lay out the textile imagery which was brought to the theological understanding of the incarnation by the Augustinian tradition. As we saw in Aelred’s sermon, as well as in lexical developments of the motif after the twelfth century theological debates, the image of Christ’s vestment has spread beyond Augustine’s Philippians-inspired incarnation-as-tunic. An entire repertoire of textile imagery, encompassing other textile allusions from the Old and New Testament, has accumulated around the *habitus* theory to develop into a veritable *habitus* theology by the thirteenth century.^{xxxix} The biblical and apocryphal constellation of clothing imagery used as source for sermon material, visionary experience as well as for material devotion extended far beyond Joseph’s and Mordechai’s robes. For example, Bonaventure’s chapter ‘Jesus Dripping with Blood’ morphs Christ’s liquid envelope of blood through a cycle of tropes such as the a ‘priestly robe of red’, the biblical garments of the wine presser and Joseph, as well as ‘the sacred garment’ given to him by Mary (McNamer 2010, p. 90).

The textiles that Christ is endowed with at various points of his life acquired narrative arcs and material significance that permeated the late medieval religious discourse and practice (Rudy and Baert 2007). In this section I will explore some of the themes along which theological and practical importance of these material-oriented practices regarding cloth attached to the human body of

Christ's life run, after I give an account of the various guises it took. In chronological order relating to the life of Christ, the first important textile Christ encounters as an infant are the swaddle-clothes Mary wrapped him in after his birth. The images of Mary's domesticity revolve around the common iconography of her and the other important mother in Christianity, Eve: the distaff (Novacich 2017, p. 94). The Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (c.1300) popularised the narrative of Mary's prowess as a textile artisan – producing not only clothes for her infant son but also making a living from her handiwork (Dzon 2015, p. 136; Gibson 1990, p. 49). Odo of Deuil (d.1162), Abbot of St Denis and counsellor of Charlemagne, encouraged the king's daughter to follow the Marian example by taking up textile work. Mary's occupation as a seamstress is not only figured in visual and textual sources by her spinning or weaving, but also by the skilful feat of creating a seamless tunic for the child Christ. The stylistically and geographically distinct altars of Master Bertram (Buxtehude altar) and that of Tommaso da Modena (the Baronzio polyptich) have specifically paid attention to textile work in visualising Mary's occupation. Through keen observation, they figured out that the best textile technique by which one can achieve this garment 'without a seam' (*inconsutilis*) is knitting in the round – and portrayed her work accordingly, with Mary knitting with four and five needles respectively.

Multiple instances of textiles related to the life of Christ have no biblical or apocryphal source, nor any theological significance per se, but solidify as *locus classicus* in late medieval iconography simply by sheer repetition. This is the case with the iconographically-popularised cloths used to protect Christ's body from the hands of his mother and his contemporaries during his circumcision and presentation at the temple and descent from the cross, whose function is similar to that of the corporal, the textile protecting the consecrated host from the hands of the celebrant on the altar (Cardile 1984; Holladay 1989, p. 479; Gertsman 2015a, pp. 70-71). This ontological connection between the host and the body of Christ – both protected by cloth – is made explicit by common iconography of the Mass of St Gregory, where the celebrant sees the silhouette of the dead or resurrected Christ as he lifts the host. A similar non-biblical textile, again possibly popularised by

iconography, is the robe Christ takes on after his baptism in the Jordan. The baptism is a central event in Christ's life, with several elements that could link its imagery to that of Christ's *habitus* incarnation, such as god the father's conformation that Christ is the Messiah, and John the Baptist's own sartorial style (which I will discuss in the next chapter). I have not found any textual links between the baptism of Christ and the theological conception of *habitus*; nonetheless, the iconography of angels bringing Christ's garment provides visual clues that these might be related on a conceptual level.

The multiplication of the Christocentric textiles through iconography and tradition is best illustrated by the several layers of clothing Christ wears during his trial. Multiplied by a literary tradition obsessed with Christ's passion and by the desire of worshipping communities for material witnesses, Christ's textile connections include the mock-royal robe or *purpura* the soldiers put on him as part of the mocking and buffeting and (unspecified if different) the tunic that the soldiers cast lots on. In late medieval imagery of the *Arma Christi* (the instruments of the passion), these cloths are represented as a multiplicity and associated with the corporeal suffering of Christ (Cooper and Denny-Brown 2016; Dent 2017, pp. 226-7). These textile coverings of the suffering body of Christ are explicitly described in texts as clinging to his body, fusing with his skin and peeling it away when torn off (see my discussion on Christ's passion in next chapters). The veil of Veronica, which preserves Christ's 'true likeness' (*vera icon*) during his ascent to Golgotha in sweat and blood (Kuryluk 1991; Clark 2007; Murphy 2018), and the shroud that Christ is wrapped in as he is laid in the grave present the strong connections between the body and its absence indexed by bodily fluids on the textile. These two cloths became widely popular in the late middle ages as a Christocentric relic, replicated in medieval material culture by cloth Veronica, pilgrim badges and the shroud of Turin.

The burial shroud is not the only cloth associated with the death of Christ: so is the veil of the tabernacle which tears in half as Christ gives up the ghost. There are complex associations between Christ's body as tunica and Mary's handiwork woven through the narrative of the ripping of the

altar-cloth, which I will unpack in the first subsection. For now, it suffices to remark that their connection is based on the apocryphal gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, chapter 8 and Proto-Evangelium of James chapters 10 and 12, where Mary is assigned to work on scarlet and purple cloth. This association appears in the Pseudo-Bonaventuran (James of Milan, late thirteenth century) *Stimulus Amoris: Divine secrets are here manifested and made clear by the opening of the side of Christ; and therefore worthily was the veil of the temple rent in sunder* (Dent 2017, p. 225). The same imagery carries through to Lydgate's fifteenth-century *Life of Our Lady*, where he ascribes the altar veils as Mary's own handiwork: *this purpura... that Mary wove / thick veil that was torn in two / the same hour that he so dear bought us* (Gibson 1990, p. 48, my translation).

The continuity of textiles in the narrative of Christ's life does not go unremarked: at the beginning of the thirteenth century, Anthony of Padua instructs his listeners to 'note that Christ is wrapped in cloth both at the beginning and at the end of his life' (Anthony of Padua 1979, p. 970). This remark is based off the visual category of images I have just described, which I collectively attach to the *tunica inconsutilis* (the seamless tunic). Anthony then makes the connection between textile continuities in the personal history of Christ and history of salvation: 'The old Adam... was clad in animal skins, which... represents the fleshly nature of Adam... The new Adam [i.e. Christ] is wrapped in linen, whose whiteness represents the purity of his mother' (p. 970). This way, Anthony of Padua endows the material realm with prophetic and visionary properties and envisions the somatic life as a conduit for theological information. This second remark is based off the ontological imagery of a textile mechanics of humanation of souls, the *tunica pellicea* (the skin-cloak). While the *tunica inconsutilis* is the skilful product of human labour that covers to hide (Ambrose and Wycliffe's *manufactus tegumentum*), the *tunica pellicea* is something one is born with, the inherent *habitus* (Augustine and Lombard) that covers to reveal.

If textile imagery is used by Anthony of Padua (and other *habitus* theologians) to make a doctrinal point or offer concrete imagery for lay understanding of a theological mystery, the instructive

impulse is not always the strongest reason for using it. Mary Dzon observes that by the second half of the fourteenth century ‘Bridgitta [of Sweden] uses images of cloth – as swaddling bands, seamless garment, and burial linens – to emphasize the continual intimacy between Jesus and his mother’ (Dzon 2015, p. 117 cf. pp. 122, 126). With the multiplication of textile imagery, the symbolic or typological significance of concatenated tunic references have bled into as well as adopt theological content from the *habitus* theory. This process leased the *habitus* theology a second life in the material content of late medieval devotion, and at the same time infused high theological ideas with emotion and intimacy. As a result, the Augustinian *habitus*, preserving its full theological force, was smuggled in visual and textual culture of the middle ages by way of poetic play, crossing between textile and fleshly: the *tunica pellicea*.

The theological and emotional content of this neo-Augustinian *habitus* is still under-estimated and not remarked on in modern scholarship. Instead of being appreciated as material/concrete imagery with theological content, *habitus* language is treated by modern scholarship as ‘metaphors of clothing extensively to treat of [sic] abstract ideas (as some medieval exegetes, theologians, and devotional writers were wont to do)’ (Dzon 2015, p. 117). Because of its apparent non-concrete, theoretical and semantic-based functions (as Augustine’s quadruple signifier), the Philippian/Augustinian *habitus* formulation is treated by modern scholarship as inconsequential or as a convoluted allegory, a product of contemporary extravagant discourse. At the same time, the *tunica inconsutilis* (the seamless tunic) and its typological echoes are recognised as concretely material, somatic-based images, and hailed by the same feminist scholarship as innovative and engaging. Specifically, Dzon (2015) makes much of the binary gendering of textile work, motherhood and material culture as feminine, a marginal discourse pitted in direct contrast to patriarchal dealings with ‘loftier’ pursuits such as the intellectual work of learned theology and aesthetic metaphors. To a degree, this modern analysis reflects the binary quasi-misogynistic medieval environment, which women mystics as well as their peers deeply internalised; see prologues of Hildegard of Bingen’s or of Julian of Norwich’s work, who follow the trope of the ‘illiterate’ female

writer. Nonetheless, there is much gender nuance in religious teaching and practice of the middle ages, so to place the *habitus* theology as opposite to proto-feminist material devotion along any modern, patriarchally-informed binary lines would be to misrepresent the radical complexity of medieval gender systems as well as disavow the material AND theological contents of textile imagery.

As an effect of binarist thinking about intellectual versus material culture, the swaddling or funerary linens of Christ are treated as literary echoes that ground the reader/listener in physical reality, and as such hailed as counter-discourses about Christ's incarnation. Nonetheless, these images shift the material and experiential attention from Christ incarnated to the stuff *around* Christ's body. The veronica and the shroud of Turin weave a network of worship sites that concentrate on the materiality of the textile, and at best on the absence of Christ' incarnated body. The swaddling bands and the tunic without a seam displace the Christo-centric textile into Marian material culture. I am not claiming that Christ's peripheral textile culture, what makes up the *tunica inconsutilis* corpus, is irrelevant in the context of late medieval lay religiosity. Nonetheless, its imagery (of the swaddling bands, seamless tunic or burial shroud) are not essential in theological incarnational Christocentric understandings of body and identity. *Tunica inconsutilis* grants a material anchor to an experiential realm of lived religion expressed in relic devotion and domestic sentimentality. Its connection to, and bleeding into, *tunica pellicea* provides the gateway to reviving the late ancient *habitus* theory in the late middle ages.

In the rest of this chapter I will explore the multiple anagogical meanings of material language at the intersection between the *tunica inconsutilis* and the *tunica pellicea*. These are the motifs that surround and edge into *habitus* theology, although not its straightforward expression. Nonetheless, a roster of these images should be considered not only as to define, by exclusion, what *habitus* theological sources are, but also to showcase the diversity and creativity of textile imagery in the late medieval Christocentric devotion. The first motif is that of the fleshly body of Christ as textile

work undertaken by Mary. Her labour of birth is figured, in complex sermons that employ imagery from the *tunica inconsutilis* set, as skilled textile labour. The second motif is that of Christ as textile for humans to bear, such as armour or baptismal garment. In this imagery, Christ's fleshly body itself becomes a metaphorical textile. The last imagery is a reverse of the second one, where Christ is wearing humanity himself. Instead of enveloping humanity, Christ is the one enveloped. This section endeavours to create an artificial taxonomy of the types of tunic iconography connected with Christ's human body in the late antique and medieval theological discourse. By distinguishing the different major categories of textile imagery, I align them with poetic or material uses (*tunica inconsutilis*, the tunic without a seam) or uses that follow the logic of the Augustinian theological formulation of the incarnation (*tunica pellicea*, the tunic of skin). Some texts (such as the apocryphal story of Christ's miraculous tunic) fall neatly within these artificial categories. Most of them, nonetheless, do not, due to cross-pollination between genres and media, and to anagogical language yielding multi-faceted metaphors. This should be kept in mind even as I attempt to taxonomise these images in the following subsections.

3.2.1 Mary the god-weaver

Mary's role as creator of not only Christ's textile covering, but also of his fleshly *habitus*, assembles a beautiful imagery of human generation as female-gendered textile work. The concept of the body as human habit, as a cloak woven from flesh and blood that gives the human their appearance, in combination with the *tunica inconsutilis* given to Christ after his birth, is expressed in the lyrical imagery of Mary. This is Mary spared the pain of birth labour, belabouring to weave a fleshly tunic for her son, manifested not as handiwork but as labour inside of her own body. This textile imagery has a long tradition, going back to (if not earlier than) the second half of the fifth century. Proclus of Constantinople (d.485) used his gifts as orator and Neoplatonist philosopher to compose what came to be known as his *Homily One*. This sermon described Mary both as a loom and a thread for Christ's

robe. Mary is ‘the awesome loom of the divine economy upon which the robe of union was ineffably woven... the wool was the ancient fleece of Adam; the interlocking thread the spotless flesh of the virgin’ (quoted in Atanassova, 2010, p. 457). In *Homily One*, Mary provides not only the flesh that will become Christ’s body, ‘the thread’, but also the instrument through which this garment is created, ‘the loom’. More interesting a variation on another incarnational motif, that of the cloak inherited from Adam, is integrated, perhaps not entirely accidental, right before the description of Mary. The common textile motif shared by these two figures hints at a quasi-heterosexual, and yet deeply queered, descent of Christ from Adam (the father of all humanity) and Mary (the mother of god).^{xxxii}

In contrast, at the turn of the eighth century John of Damascus (676-749) makes sure that the single-parenthood of Christ is obvious. In his sermon on the nativity of the Virgin Mary, he asserts: ‘From her [Mary] will come the king of glory clothed in the purple of his flesh...’ (quoted in Milliner 2014, p. 8 n. 34). This one sentence alone contains multiple poetic allusions and biblical reverberations that travel through a host of *tunica inconsutilis* motifs. If one was acquainted with the apocryphal gospels of Pseudo-Matthew and of James, they would recall Mary’s handiwork at the temple where she was appointed to weave the purple thread. The luxurious purple cloth of Christ befits the king of glory, but also prefigures his purple robe of shame during his passions, when Christ was outfitted with mock-royal accoutrements. The idea of body tissue as garment is emphasized by vocabulary (clothed, *purpura*) as well as by the chromatic, possibly gory visuals of the bloody, red tunic of inside-out flayed skin. This last imagery, combined with the attention the Damascene paid to articulating the inheritance source of the purple robe, recalls images of birth and afterbirth as enveloping carnality.

The same imagery of royalty, textiles and birth was presented to Hildegard of Bingen (twelfth century abbess) in her fifth vision, when she describes the robe not as a result of physical toil, but as a natural, quasi-vegetal or explicitly gestational, emanation out of Mary’s body: ‘that tunic (*tunicam*) which germinated (*germinabit*) in the virgin’s womb’ (my translation from the Latin Hildegard von

Bingen 1855: 5:43:5). Aside from visionary and writer, Hildegard was well known as a composer but even better known as a medicine practitioner, having written two monumental works, the *Physica* and the *Causa and Curae*. The latter is currently viewed as containing the most information about obstetrics and gynaecology compiled in a single book at the time (Moulinier 2005; Cadden 1984). With this information in mind, one has an explanation for Hildegard's use of the verb *germinabit*, unusual for this motif: she uses technical gynaecological language even in her poetic description of the incarnation. This also reconfigures the imagery of the tunic germinating in the virgin's uterus into an image of afterbirth, of cloyingly enveloping corporality clinging to god in order to give him a human shape. This acutely physical imagery of afterbirth is, surprisingly, not an unusual topic for preachers and mystics alike to draw inspiration from, as early as Tertullian's treatise *On the Flesh of Christ* (Glancy 2010, pp. 83, 126). Parish priests usually had a working knowledge of the birthing process, since they were often privy to the event so that, in a medical emergency, the souls of the mother or the infant were secure. Uterine linings are therefore an appropriate comparison in a theology of incarnation such as that of John of Damascus and Hildegard of Bingen.

Less explicit is another description of the same fleshly cloak in Hildegard's fourth vision. It details an image where 'out of the Virgin's flesh the holy godhead put on (*induit*) a royal robe (*regale indumentum*)' [Hildegard of Bingen 1855, 4:105:92 (Latin); Hildegard of Bingen 1987, p. 139 (English)]. Here, rather than her womb or its lining serving as cloak for the incarnated Christ, Mary herself supplies the fabric of the tunic, amounting to a near-erasure or dissolution of Mary's body and individuality. Similarly, Francis of Assisi's (d.1226) pointed *Salutation of the Blessed Virgin* not only defines Mary solely in relation to her son, but also, by this process, completely objectifies her body and erases her existence as individual: 'hail, his palace; hail, his tabernacle; hail, his robe' (Bynum 1986, p. 268). Hildegard's and Francis' descriptions of Mary as cloak or tabernacle recall slightly later devotional objects like the *vierges ouvranes*, statues of the seated Virgin Mary that would open to reveal a triptych-like structure sheltering an image of the Trinity, or of Christ's personal history (Gertsman 2015b). The virgin in figure 3.1a opens and fragments, without retaining

her human characteristic, to become a multi-tiered tabernacle for a smaller statue of the trinity. In contrast with the complete dissolution of the human form of the German virgin, the Polish Mary in figure 3.1b gets to keep her body by virtue of a continuity in anthropomorphic form, enabled by a secondary body contained within the inside of the statue. This *vierge ouvrante* opens as a protective Marian cloak over the trinity and its worshipers. Mary's exterior body becomes a human-textile hybrid in the inner chamber, composed of her upper torso and arms supporting the insides of the statue as a cloak. With these statues, Mary's body is just a container-in-waiting for god. The intact body of the virgin mother – the statue in its 'closed' state – has the latent promise of the dissolution of this body for the revelation of god. Elina Gertsman notes the similarities between the *vierges ouvrantes* and medical depictions of multi-chambered uteri, as well as the violence of the (generally deadly) caesarean-like prying open of the maternal body (Gertsman 2008, Katz 2009). The virgin's body is objectified, split open and as the frame (tabernacle) or the material (robe) from which the godhead takes its physical form.



Figure 3.1 (a) left: Shrine of the Virgin, German, c.1300, Metmuseum; (b) right: Vierge Ouvrante, 1390, Poland, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nurnberg

Following the sensibilities of its founder, Franciscan poetics in itself developed a strong link to material culture and especially cloth. Kenneth Baxter Wolf observes that ‘the role of cloth and clothing in Francis’s conversion is multi-layered.’ (Wolf 2003, p. 16). In his thirteenth century vita of Francis, Thomas of Celano described how the saint

made for himself a tunic in the shape of the cross, so that in it he would drive off every fantasy of the demons. He made it very rough, so that in it he might crucify the flesh with its vices and sins. He made it very poor and plain, a thing that the world would never covet (Twomey 2014, p. 124)

The son of a rich cloth merchant himself, Francis used his experience and material knowledge of cloth to a new context: he chose specific textiles that would enhance discomfort and designed his habit with material considerations constantly at forefront (Wolf 2003, pp. 17-18; Twomey 2014, p. 125). This way, Francis (as well as his hagiographers) is building not only an aesthetics for his order, but also builds powerful material metaphors for his as well as Christ’s body, which is the matrix of his own body after receiving of the stigmata. This self-conscious construction of the *Imitatio Christi* body, as well as his clever use of textiles, was also picked up by illustrators across the late middle ages. Apart from his hand and feet wounds, visible at all times, Francis’ side wound is paralleled by an aperture in his own habit; the opening in his skin is therefore mirrored by an opening in his clothing, their theological analogy highly prominent in images of the saint (especially ones of his receiving of the stigmata). Moreover, Francis’ individual concern and connection with clothing is embedded in the rule of both his order as well as the sister order, the Poor Clares (Twomey 2014, p. 125). The fact that textiles were embedded in the vocabulary of this popular preachers’ order, among its other innovations (such as materialism writ large, as well as the deeply affective tone and their decentralised method of disseminating their theology) majorly helped in the spread and staying power of the *habitus* theology.

A close collaborator of St Francis' and an early adopter of Franciscan spirituality (although an Augustinian canon at the start of his monastic career), St Anthony of Padua (d.1231) elaborates the typology of the tunic with a wild imagination supported by a wide theological knowledge. While he still credits the virgin Mary with the source material for 'the towel of our humanity from the most pure flesh of the Virgin' (Anthony of Padua 1979, *Sermon for Last Supper*, p. 1107), Anthony removes much of the mother of Christ's agency and productivity. Rather, it is the 'Father who clothes his Son Jesus Christ in the white garment of his flesh, clean from every spot of sin, taken from the immaculate Virgin' (1979, *Sermon for Quinquagesima*, pp. 54-55). Other times, it is the second person of the trinity that helps the third person, Jesus Christ, to make 'a tunic for himself from the sackcloth of our nature'. The hemming of the fleshly tunic, taken as an amorphous sackcloth from the virgin's womb, is seen as the collaboration of persons of the trinity. Rather than Mary using her agency as embroiderer, Christ is 'sewing it [the tunic] with the needle of the Holy Spirit's subtle operation, and the thread of the blessed Virgin's faith' (1979, *Sermon for Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost*, p. 549). This lack of agency of Mary, and Christ's proactivity, is reverberated in his other sermons: 'He was an 'embroiderer' in his Resurrection... he mended and restored to immortality the coat of many colours, his glorious flesh which he took from the virgin Mary' (1979, *Sermon for Fourth Sunday after Easter*, p. 258). The same 'embroiderer... adorned with the sevenfold gifts of grace the 'coat of many colours', human nature, which *he made ready for himself* in the Virgin's womb' (1979, *Sermon for Nativity of the Lord*, p. 974, my emphasis). While Mary is still the original material for the tunic in these sermons, Christ himself takes up textile work rather than being invested by others. In an unusual reversal of (gendered) professional roles, Christ is the one who works on a pre-existing canvas of old cloth that he mends and decorates (embroiders), rather than weaves from scratch, an inherited cloth.

Another early follower of St Francis, and the main proponent of Franciscan brand of mysticism and piety in the western Latin Europe, St Bonaventure (d.1276) can be credited with as much originality as St Anthony of Padua. The enormous appeal of his works (such as the *Lignum Vitae* and the *Vita*

Christi) made them perfect conduits for popularising textile metaphors relating to Christ's incarnation in medieval Christianity. In his allegorical work *Lignum Vitae* Bonaventure poetically collates a lot of the typological and metaphorical imagery on Christ's *habitus*. Drawing on the typology (visualised in *Bible Historiale*, *Speculum* and *Biblae Pauperum* c.f. 4.3.2) of Joseph's bloodied tunic as a foreshadowing of Christ's suffering in the flesh, Bonaventure entreats both father (god) and mother (Mary) to contemplate the bloody body of Christ:

Recognize, therefore, O, merciful Father, the tunic (*tunicam*) of your beloved son Joseph, whom the envy of his brothers in the flesh [...] befoul[ed] its beauty with the remains of blood, for it has left in it five lamentable gashes. For this is indeed, O Lord, the garment (*vestimentum*) which your innocent son willingly gave over into the hands of the Egyptian prostitute, that is to the Synagogue, choosing to be stripped of the mantle of his flesh (*spoliatus a carnis pallio*) and to descend into the prison of death rather than to see temporal glory by acquiescing to the shouts of the adulterous mob. For when joy was before him, he endured a cross, despising the shame. But you also, my most merciful Lady, behold that most sacred garment (*vestem*) of your beloved Son, artistically woven (*contextam*) by the Holy Spirit from your most chaste body... (Bonaventure 2011, p. 48 (Latin); 1978, pp. 156-157 (English))

Among the many visual innovations, as well as articulations of existing theology encoded in imagery, Bonaventure casts Mary's body as the loom onto which the holy spirit weaves 'that most sacred garment'. This passage is rich in linguistic reverberations, which encourage the reader to use their bricoleur knowledge, and can be interpreted in many ways based on pre-acquired visual and textual referents. The garment can mean, paralleling Joseph's *tunica poymita*, a literal material damasked robe of cloth. Nonetheless, casting the Synagogue as an Egyptian prostitute recalls Mary of Egypt and/or Mary Magdalen. This female figure associated with the church remind one of the stories of another Mary, the virgin mother, whose handiwork of cloth of purple for altar veils in the synagogue where she lived before her marriage is textually connected to Christ's embodiment in apocryphal

sources. This implied connection with Mary is then solidified by the mention of Christ's 'mantle of flesh', and in this context Virgin Mary is explicitly the material from which Christ's humanity was woven. Bonaventure's own student, Franciscan preacher and Archbishop of Canterbury John Pecham (c. 1230-1292), alludes to textile imagery in his Latin mystical lyric *Philomena Praevia*. In this lyrical meditation, the nightingale – the bird whose song efficiently expresses the sounds of sorrow – sings: 'Speak, fountain of holiness, who clothed you in the rags of our poverty (*induit nostrae paupertatis*)?' (Hodapp 1995, p. 84).

If Mary's body is objectified to become a loom or a tunic for Christ, it nearly disappears when it is described as a space in which the incarnation, as a priestly in-vestment or a knightly in-vestiture, takes place. In his 1295 treatise on the liturgy, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, William Durandus bishop of Mende (France) compares the institutional sacristy and the priest's robes to 'the womb of the blessed Mary in which Christ dressed himself in his robes of humanity (*sacra vestes carnis induit*)' (Gibson 1990, pp. 50 and 54 n. 15; 1994, p. 156). Similarly, in one of Bridget of Sweden's (d.1373) revelations, Mary reveals in conversation with the saint that 'it was indeed in my temple... that he dressed himself spiritually in the priestly garb in which he offered a sacrifice for the world' (*Revelaciones* 3.29, in Dzon 2015, p. 136).^{xxxiii} Franciscan friar Albert de Metz (died c.1310) creates in one of his sermons a dense textile metaphor that accentuates the virgin's visceral physicality at the same time as he erases her by repeatedly associating Mary with the dye, the garment and the dressing room in which Christ the knight prepares for battle:

from that girl you took the tunic dyed with her blood (*accepit tunicam ejus tinctam suo sanguine*) as she asked, and put it on in her room... took the white tunic (*accepit tunicam albam*), namely flesh in the virgin's womb... (Gaffney 1931, p. 162).

Vernacular works, regardless of genre and audience, also preserve the idea of Mary as the textile material for Christ's human garment. In the theatrical script for the *Adoration of Magi* play from the N-Town cycle, one of the magi describes how the incarnated Christ child 'in a maydonys flesch is

clad' (Gibson 1994, p. 159). Dramas of this nature were attended by people of all stations from towns and villages and vehicle not only of entertainment but also of learning. Chaucer's prologue for the Second Nun section of his *Canterbury Tales* praises Mary as the noble material in which god the maker, much like a mother in lieu of Mary herself, clothes and swaddles a baby Christ: 'You so greatly enobled our nature / That the maker of humankind had no disdain / To clothe and wrap (*clothe and wynde*) his son in blood and flesh' (Chaucer 2006, ll. 40-2). Chaucer's contemporary Julian of Norwich uses similar language: 'In this low place, he arrayed and clothed him (*rayhid Him and dyte Him*) ready in our poor flesh, himself to don the service and office of motherhood in all things' ll. 2488-9. The complete disappearance of the virgin Mary as human mother in this text does not only reaffirm Chaucer's textile poetics as part of an increasingly popular *habitus* theology. The fact that Mary has no agency in Julian's work hints to the fact that the mystic saw Mary, as clothing to Christ, to in-vest him in a feminine/maternal role. The effect is that with a (ex)change in costumes there was a transference of gendered, social and familial roles. Contemporary English vernacular poetry also emphasize Mary's passive contribution to the 'fleshly wede' (clothing) and 'red array' of Christ, given to him by god of [from] *mylde May* (Fein 1998, p. 122 ll. 508-513), or her active contribution to the salvific materiality of the *habitus*, which gives her the agency to intercede:

Lady, sister and mother / Tell your son, my brother, / Who is the judge / That to be gracious to me / on behalf of you who bore him domesmon, / He took up my robe (sic, robe). / Truly he took my robe / as I read in the book / he is to me bound / ... When you gave him my clothing (wede) / Lady, you helped the poor (Herebert 1996, poem 6, *pou wommon boute uére*, my translation).

This language of winding and swaddling of Christ in Mary's own flesh is also reified in visual sources, such as in the German collection of gospel readings for the mass, Morgan MS M77 (figure 3.2). Christ's circumcision – the first wounding of his skin – is figured as less of a ceremony concerned with skin but with cloth. On the second page, accompanying readings for the feast of Circumcision,



Figure 3.2 *Circumcision of Christ in Evangelary, Germany, 1440 (Morgan Library MS M.77 fol. 2v)*

the miniature portrays a rabbi wielding a substantial knife on one side of an altar upon which a swaddled infant rests. Mary, dressed in an ample blue cloak from head to toe, unwinds the strip of cloth that covers Jesus from his (still covered) legs upwards to his middle, extending the loose end of the strip towards her body, and more specifically towards her womb.

Mother and child are not only connected by fabric but appear to be mainly constituted by it. The rabbi appears to accept the

unwound swaddling cloth under his knife in lieu of Christ's genitalia – in stark contrast with majority of contemporary depictions of the scene (Steinberg 1983, pp. 46-50), no skin is exposed for this circumcision. This miniature portrays with exacting subtlety the concepts of parturition, co-embodiment and *habitus* incarnation.

English is not the only vernacular that preserves the textile metaphor of the original Latin, nor is the *habitus* theology restricted to Franciscan piety. Constanza de Castilla (d. 1487), a Spanish writer lesser known to modern historians, solidified her status as a religious leader by her tenure as a prioress of nearly five decades at the Convent of San Domingo el Real in Madrid between 1416-1465. Constanza records her private theology culled from multiple sources in several languages in her vernacular *Devocionario*, a compilation that consists of narratives of life and passion of Christ and Mary, original prayers and epistolary material, surviving in a unique witness, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 7495 (Seidenspinner- Núñez 1997, p. 2). In the first chapter of her life of Christ, continuing a firmly established theological formulation of Christ's embodiment as textile derived from Mary, Constanza describes Christ having 'tak[en] from her entrails the vestment (*vestidura*) of man' (Seidenspinner- Núñez 1997, p. 4). Similarly, observing the Bonaventuran method of personalising the passion narrative and inserting oneself in the scene at crucifixion (Bestul 1996, p. 43; McNamer 2010), Constanza reminds Christ, addressing him in second person, how he displayed to his mother 'the wounds that you have sustained on the garment (*vestidura*) that you have taken

from her' (Seidenspinner- Núñez 1997, p. 4). In this formulation, the tunic of flesh takes an unusually objectified role, a true garment of disguise with its own materiality rather than something coinciding with Christ's body. The violence is inflicted to the *vestidura*; the only reminder that this vestment is indeed Christ's incarnated body is that strikes open real wounds that bleed, revealing or confirming without a doubt the identity between Christ and his human body.

The examples in this section demonstrate the continual presence of a *habitus* theology throughout the high and late middle ages. This imagery penetrates from highly theological text, through mystical treatises, to vernacular literature. Moreover, in this section I have also revealed a Marian theology (and the textile metaphors associated with it) that has the potential to logically yield a Christ that is essentially co-substantial with Mary. This is a topic recurring in modern feminist medieval scholarship concerned with reclaiming a radical embodiment of Christ. One of the rationales for this radical embodiment is the common early medieval and early modern motif of Mary as co-sufferer through the sharing of flesh (Cohen 1995; Neff 1998; Fulton 2005). Another methodology of this scholarship relies on working the Aristotelian and Galenic physiology to its logical conclusion that Christ's flesh is identical to female flesh (Bynum 1984, pp. 205-206; 1985, pp. 14-15; 1986a, pp. 265-6; Neff 1998; Baert 2013, p. 228). Nonetheless, the authors cited fail to provide examples of mystics actively using these medical tools in their theology. This is not for lack of evidence: William of Newburgh's *Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles* plainly states:

with respect to His flesh, He was of His mother only, who, of course, had not conceived of man. Other sons, drawing the substance of their flesh from both the paternal and maternal seed, seem, according to the flesh, not to be wholly sons of their fathers, nor wholly sons of their mothers, but, as it were, half and half. But according to His flesh our Lord was the son of His mother wholly, for according to the flesh He had no father (William of Newburgh 1963, p. 7).

And Bonaventure comments in his meditation guide addressed to female religious, the *De Perfectione Vitae ad Sorores*:

You will see even more clearly how cruel was the death of Christ if you consider that whatever is more sensitive suffers more. In general, the body of a woman is more sensitive than that of a man; but never was there a body that felt pain as keenly as that of the Savior, since his flesh was entirely virginal, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin. Hence the Passion of Christ was much more painful as he himself was more tender even than any virgin." (Easton 2002, p. 53)

The last type of evidence used by this feminist medieval scholarship is exactly the '*tunica humanitatis*' that this section explores. They use the image of Virgin's body providing a tunic as a rhetorical exercise, and without putting isolated expressions in their historical, theological and visual context. As a response to the gaps presented in this scholarship, in this subsection I have tried to demonstrate (a) the persistence of the conception of Mary as either the god-weaver, or the primary material for the tunic of humanity that Christ wears as a fulfilment of the *habitus* theory, (b) its links to the iconological and textual references to textiles in related sources, and where appropriate, (c) the medical theories that could explain one mystic's approach to the somatic dimensions of this imagery.

3.2.2 Christ as protective overcoat

Christ's body itself, as clothing, is another popular literary conceit that emphasizes not only the shared humanity that the bodies of believers and that of Christ partake in, but also the mutability of identity and the empowering possibilities of these human bodies. The image of Christ as spiritual or fleshly envelope to a human body serves to destabilise the essentialised naturalness of one's unique body, by highlighting the power of textiles in constructing identities. This is another textile metaphor

based on traditional biblical imagery, whose force rests on the power of material metaphors to concretely signify an abstract context such as baptism or conversion. Just as is the case with *tunica inconsutilis*, though, these formulations are just metaphors that do not carry theological truths – the body of Christ was not thought to literally stretch over one's own body in order to protect or renew it. The basis of this textile imagery of clothing in Christ is the Pauline epistle to Galatians, 3:27: 'For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ' (*Christum induistis*). In this verse, baptism is a ritual akin to royal investiture (the modern word of which preserves the Latin connections with cloth and vestment) or monastic disrobing. The multiple meanings are afforded by the material ritual where pouring of a liquid (water, oil or honey) that coats the recipient is followed by a robing of the symbolically renewed body with the insignia of their new station (Clark 2010; Koslin 2017; Moore 2017). The new Christian, more than just clad in fresh material clothes, emerges from the baptismal font in-vested in Christ.

With the normalisation of infant baptism in high and later middle ages, the baptismal vestment becomes synonymous with the investment of the new soul into the new-born body (Taglia 1998). The language of baptism as a new birth also consolidated this image of human bodies acquiring a new skin-suit cleaned of the original sin. This meta-linguistical and material bricolage culminates in the late medieval commonplace understanding of the human self as a robe, able to be materially damaged by sin. In his bilingual handbook of sermons, John Sheppey, Bishop of Rochester (*d.* 1360) remarks on the material effects of sin:

Now my robe's shape is truly amiss / Inside-out my robe as the world is / It is foul to behold
and repulsive / I am like an ape and no man indeed (DIMEV 3767, my adaptation)

With his robe (humanity) damaged, the 'man' regresses to (or is exposed as) an ape. While the imagery of the human transformed into animal is startling, it reveals a widely-circulated explanation of the inner workings of humanity as a cover for something else. This mechanism serves as primary rationale in the lay understanding of the incarnation, humanation and human identity. Regressed to

the status of an ape, the human's only chance to regain humanity is by surrendering to Christ, who becomes the new coat.

The same image of the body as a coat, soiled through sin and regenerated through baptism, is made very explicit when Shropshire-born, London-dwelling author William Langland refers to Haukyn's garment in *Piers Plowman* (c.1380). A long-form allegorical poem populated by typological characters and personified vices and virtues, explaining the salvific work of faith in the context of a mismanaged church, *Piers Plowman* was a popular text. Despite the challenges it addressed to the institutional church, its theologically-solid contents ensured that over 50 manuscripts of the text, as well as multiple printed editions, survive to this day. Haukyn, one of the rare human characters in the extended allegorical long-form narrative, describes his *beste Cote* with 'many moles and spots; it must be washed' (my translation; 1987, ll. 13: 313-314). The damage to the garment is described in very physical terms – '*bespotted*', '*soiled*', '*crumpled*', '*beslobbered*' (translations by Grayson 1985, p. 156). It is nonetheless explained as the direct result not of physical labour, material contact with food and tools or accidental soiling, but of metaphysical contact with sins. Haukyn is promised that no-one will have a cleaner garment than him after Christ 'will clean your jacket of all worldly filth' (my translation; 1987, ll. 14: 16-26). The textile/material dimension of this image is preserved in the vocabulary that flickers between manual labour and absolving grace: 'Christ shall wash it and wring it through the manner of a confessor' (ll. 14.16-26; translated by Grayson 1985, p. 156; n. 16 p. 160). Haukyn's salvation is a very material one, both in locus (the textile or dermal bodysuit that bears the evidence of sin) and in method.

If Christ is the launderess that washes the baptism coat as salvation work in *Piers Plowman*, he is the coat itself in Julian of Norwich's *Revelations*: 'he is our clothing (*clotheing*), which wraps us out of love' (my translation from Julian of Norwich 1994, ll. 154-157). Julian does not explore the mechanics of Christ's body becoming a protective coat for the human further than the textile allusion to wrapping. In Catherine of Siena's mystical work the fluid materiality of the body is

reflected with full force: ‘blood ...clothes (*vestela*) her with the fire of divine charity’ [Catherine of Siena 1912 (Italian): ch. 66; 1370 (English)]. The gruesomeness and fear of contagion that contact with blood usually elicits is here completely sidestepped by accentuating its divine origin and beneficial effects. Less somatically explicit is another passage by Catherine:

‘Such as these have lost themselves, and have stripped (*spogliatisi*) themselves of the Old Man, that is of their own sensuality, and, having clothed (*vestiti*) themselves with the New Man, the sweet Christ Jesus, My Truth, follow Him manfully (*virilmente*)’ [Catherine of Siena 1912 (Italian): ch. 100; 1370 (English)]

Similar to the imagery found in *Piers Plowman*, here the body or sensuality of humans is a jacket that should be stripped off and discarded. The alternative offered to the jacket of human sensuality is Christ, himself a vestment (*vestiti*). Catherine of Siena only hints at the gendered implications of the female mystic’s body accepting the virile Christ-tunic (*virilmente*). Instead, her emphasis is on re-dressing in Christ as a true fulfilment in humanity for the sensual human. Hybrid Christ is here more fundamentally human than his human followers.

This textile imagery of Christ as protective coat is linked to conceptions of the composition of the human identity, as well as to changing practices in church rituals. It is a startling and paradoxical reversal of the *habitus* incarnational logic of the divine Christ covered in, dressed like or disguised as, human. This much more popular configuration, that straddles the final line to fully-realised *habitus* theology, is explored in the next section.

3.2.3 Clad in our humanity

The incarnational image straddling these boundaries between metaphorical and literal language can be found in the explanation of the body of Christ as a legacy from Adam. The language is abstract or evocative insofar as Christ is not dressed in his own humanity, but in Adam’s or ‘our’ humanity.

Nonetheless, it is much closer to trans-human incarnational theology insofar as the textile terminology is used to materially describe the process of the incarnation.

Hildegard's fourth vision in her *Divina Opera* is indicative of this shifting and morphing language of the textile, and exemplifies why it is hard to create a definite line between poetic and descriptive uses of this imagery. In the 105th chapter, on the John 1:1 '*In principio erat Verbum*', Hildegard uses the same verb, to clothe (*induere*), to signify (A.) creation of Adam, (B.) conception and incarnation of Christ, and (C.) materialisation of the Word. In her close analysis of the Johannine incipit, Hildegard weaves the three events by materially-inspired lexis.

The Word of the Father gave carnal life to the humans when he created them, and furthermore dressed them with his tunic (*cum tunicam suam induit*) [...] When God gave life to Adam through his breath, God paid attention to strengthen the flesh and blood, since that flesh was to be his clothing (*quoniam carnem...qua induendus erat*), and God dressed (*habuit*) him [Adam] in fiery love [My translation from the Latin Hildegard of Bingen (1855): 49:153.]

Hildegard is using this textile imagery to blur not only the distinction between human and god, but also arguably to create a queer, non-linear timeline of creation and of origination of this tunic of humanity. As image of god, (A.) humans are clothed in *his* tunic, revealed afterwards to be 'the flesh and blood'. Adam's (and the humanity's) creation is figured as dressing the soul in flesh, as an anticipation of Christ's incarnation and dwelling among his brethren. The grammar of the last sentence in itself confuses recipient and giver of the fleshly tunic: 'was to be his clothing' (*induentus erat*) refers both to Adam's new human form and to (B.) the future vessel for the incarnated second person of the trinity. Hildegard uses the same mirroring, time-non-linear language in regards to John's own words; as the Word of god endowed Adam with his fleshly gown, so the Word incarnate adopts this self-same garment (C.): 'the Word dressed in flesh' (*Verbum carnem induit*, 1855: 157-158, 162). The language is deliberate, not only because it adopts the language of John's text, but also because Hildegard constantly reiterates this exact wording. Clearer variations of this, which simplify

the timeline, are explicit references to Christ dressing in the human, rather than god-given-but-now-fallen, tunic of flesh: ‘dressed in human flesh’ (*humanam carnem induerat*; 1855: 6, 94, 102) ‘willed to be dressed as human’ (*hominem induere voluit*; 1855: 72, 104). Hildegard’s linguistic prowess in carrying a theological argument shines through repetition of these exacting formulations.

The origination point of the fleshly tunic is not the only paradoxical and disorienting detail in this material poetics of incarnation. The clothing of god, by virtue of which he can pass as human, inherited from his mother, stands at the boundary between unique and universal. As the garment of Christ, only begotten son of god from a virgin mother, the skin-suit is absolutely unique and non-transferrable. At the same time, nonetheless, this skin-suit is the central material for a body-oriented theology of incarnation, of Christ made human like all his other brethren, by adopting *their* habit. 9th-century Patriarch of Constantinople Photius’s homily on the Annunciation also dwells on the intricacies of incarnation. It reiterates the idea that the skin-clothing that Mary provided for Christ is also ‘*our* garment, dyed red with thy virginal blood like imperial purple’ that ‘has clothed the unseemly nakedness of our first father’ (Photius 2018, Homily Vii, p.148, my emphasis). The image of Mary as the weaver or the loom itself is still present in this explanation. Nonetheless, the immediate context of the sentence transforms Mary into a place: ‘Mayest thou rejoice, palace not built by hand, in which the king of glory has put on our garment... mayest thou rejoice, living ark of God... furnace forged by God’. Photius’ point is a Marian one, but the connection between Christ’s humanity and that of humans is at its core. Christ takes the woven purple of postlapsarian humanity through Mary: ‘our’ garment now dyed in the virgin blood creates a kinship between god incarnate and humans, starting with Adam at his expulsion from Paradise.

This ‘unseemliness’ of Adam’s (and by extension all humans’) embodied condition is persistent in a range of later writing. Whether it forms part of literary convention (Clark 1999) or the authentic feelings of theologians who had to oscillate between fearing their bodies as agents of sin, and loving their bodies as gifts from god, it cannot be conclusively determined. A perfect example of devaluing

or denigrating the body is Anthony of Padua's sermon for First Sunday in Advent (c.1225). In it, Christ 'shades the splendour of his light with the sack-cloth of our mortality' and 'cover[s] the light of his divinity with the sack-cloth of our humanity' (*First Sunday in Advent*, Anthony of Padua 1979, p. 715). Here, the textile metaphors are understated; humanity is not an imperial robe, embroidered with the finest silks or dyed in the scarlet of nobility. Rather, it is a penitential sack-cloth which dampens the true splendour of Christ only revealed before incarnation and after Advent, when he is freed from this abject clothing. It should probably not be lost on the medieval as well as modern audience that the textile metaphor, the sack-cloth or the hair-shirt, that Anthony chooses for the human body is one fully familiar to him as preacher thoroughly infused in early Christian-inspired Franciscan ascetic practices (Longo 2018). Another Italian saint, Catherine of Siena, uses diaphanous textile metaphors of veiling (*velare*) and clothing (*vestire*) that are somewhat incongruent with the heavy materiality of dirt that the human body is composed of in her writing:

[Christ] performed your obedience, Eternal Father, which you imposed on him, when you clothed (*vestisti*) him with *our humanity, our human nature* and likeness... We are your image, and you have become ours, by this union which you have accomplished with man, veiling (*velando*) the Eternal Deity with the woeful cloud and corrupted/putrid matter (*massa corrocta*) of Adam. [Catherine of Siena 1912 (Italian), ch. 13; 1370 (adapted English)]

The mutual exchange of form, the mirroring of image between Christ and man, creator and creature, does not redeem the human body in this treatise. The material body is *corrocta* in a physical (putrid) and spiritual (corrupted) sense. The corrupted matter of Adam that coats Christ's divinity is described in the passage above in Catherine of Siena's self-deprecating personal voice. Nonetheless, even when we hear god's voice in her revelations, he does not hold a better view on the nature of humans: 'I sent My Word, My own Son, clothed (*vestito*) in your own very nature, the corrupted/putrid [matter] of Adam' [Catherine of Siena 1912 (Italian), ch. 14; 1370 (adapted English)]

In English vernacular, humanity represented as inherited clothing from Adam is not presented in as negative terms as in Catherine of Siena's work, but more often as a site of redemption. In the *Ancrene Wisse* Christ, as well as his human peers, are described as both children of Adam and children of god. In their existence on earth, they all inherit 'our old kirtle (*curtel*) ... the flesh that we inherit from Adam our old father' (*Ancrene Wisse* 2000, part 6, l. 181; my translations hereafter) Torn and sweaty, this poor bodily disguise is nonetheless only temporary both for Christ and for the rest of humans. since, *pellem pro pelle* (skin for skin, citing Job 2:4), resurrection of the body means exchanging the old rags with 'the new... inherited from God, our rich father, in the Doomsday resurrection, when our flesh shall shine brighter than the sun' (2000, part 6, ll. 181-183). The passage specifically glosses *curtel* with *flesch*, in a text that, as an overall somatophobic manual for anchorites, advocates for salvation through punishment of the flesh (2000, Introduction, ll. 44-45; Part 3, ll. 220-222; Part 5, ll. 101-106; Part 6, ll. 249-251) and cites St Paul 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing' (2000, Part 5, l. 430). The association between 'stinking flesh' and 'old curtel' of Adam (and of humans) is therefore implicitly negative, but its role in Christ's incarnation saves it from polarised, quasi-Manichaeian rejection. The N-Town cycle *Adoration of the Shepherds* play, at the end of the middle ages, reflects this shift from a self-abnegating corporality to a salvific one. There, the players hail the incarnated Christ 'clad in our kende'; 'Cryst in oure kend is clad' (Gibson 1994, p. 159)

The textile imagery of the *tunica inconsutilis* (the tunic without a seam) has been used as a literary metaphor and allegory in connection with Christ's life and especially in connection with the women in his company. Christ the child is gifted, physically or metaphorically, a damasked tunic without seam by his mother, in the form of extra- or intrauterine swaddling clothes, as I showed in section 3.2.1. Christ himself, as the new Adam, acts as a new clothing for the saved human, as in section 3.2.2. Nonetheless, these uses of textile language are evocative – abstractly figurative in the case of Christ's conception or material in the case of Christ's childhood – rather than a factual explanation of the mechanics of the incarnation. As I observed at the beginning of this chapter, the *tunica pellicea*,

part of a *habitus* theology, has the potential to embody radical possibilities of identification and representation for (medieval as well as modern) gender-variant bodies, a potential that M. W. Bychowski terms *imitatio transvesti* (Bychowski 2016b). This medieval incarnational theology can constructively be explored to recover a human ontology beyond gendered binaries, modelled on a skin-bound ontology of Christ that parallels some concepts of gender transitions and fulfilment.

^{xxiii} Transhuman theology imagines god as alien (Loughlin 2004) or cyborg (Hefner 2003 and Midson 2017 draw on Haraway 1985). For modern permutations of a Christ beyond his 'historical' essentialist embodiment, see liberation, feminist (especially Christa), queer and post-colonial theologies. Specific queer embodiments of Christ can be found in Althaus-Reid's 'Bi' (transvestite) Christ (2000), Mollenkott's (2007) omnigender god, Cheng's (2011) and Goss' (1993) gay/bisexual Christ, D'Costa's (2000) BDSM trinity etc. Althaus-Reid's editorial output frames these theological approaches as reclaimed and empowering 'perversion', 'indecent' 'controversies' (2000, 2004, with Isherwood 2008); their exclusion from established and mainstream churches also confirms their radicalism.

^{xxiv} In Christian context, the Bible is one of the earliest sources to theorise humanation (creation of humans, not just of human Christ) in textile terms: Job 10:11 "[did you not] clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews?" and Psalm 138:13 in *Vetus Latina* 'You have knitted me together in my mother's womb/orsusque es me in utero matris meae' (for the latter see Dzon 2015, p. 122 and n. 18). Cf. Bildhauer 2012, pp. 21-27.

^{xxv} Anthony of Padua 1979, *Sermon for Palm Sunday* 4:12, p. 170; in *Sermon for Eight Sunday after Pentecost* 3:13 p. 457 'his body, with which his soul is clothed' and again in *Sermon for the Ascension of the Lord* 8 p. 1164 'the body, which clothes the soul like a garment'

^{xxvi} The human composed as two elements, the body and soul, also discussed in *Ancrene Wisse* (2000) part 2 where the heart is described as the seat of the soul; part 3: ll. 231-264 establishes much of the dichotomies between higher, rational soul and baser, sensual body; ll. **618-19** 'Not the body alone, for that is the most worthless, but your five senses and the heart above all, and all [things] where (or, in which) the life of the soul is.' [*Nawt te bodi ane, for thet is the unwurthest, ah ower fif wittes ant te heorte over al, ant al ther the sawle lif is*] part 4: ll. **105-06** 'The soul and the body is but one man (or, person) and one judgment will befall both [of] them. Will you divide into two [that] which god has joined into one?' [*The sawle ant te licome nis bute a mon ant ba ham tit a dom. Wult tu dealen o twa, the Godd haveth to an i-sompnet?*] ll. 1196-1197 'Think what you

have from yourself. You are (i.e., consist) of two parts: of body and of soul' [*Thench hwet tu havest of the-seolf. Thu art of twa dalen: of licome ant of sawle*].

^{xxvii} The textile imagery is cultivated by Augustine in *Confessions* (397 AD) lib. 7, cap. 9, l. 23; *De Trinitate* (400-416 AD); his Carthaginese *Ennarationes in Psalmos* (411-413 AD) [38, 39; 40]; *Tractatus in Johannis Evangelium* (416-417 AD) [12:6, 29:8, 47:13, 55:7]; *Sermones* (c.391-426 AD) [16, 30, 41, 47, 68, 92, 95, 97, 144, 186, 187, 213, 214, 244, 264, 265, 288, 293, 304, 305, 380].

^{xxviii} Even before the high middle ages, this idea appears in the hymnody of Ephraim the Syrian (306-373): '[one] errs by means of these metaphors with which God clothed Himself for his benefit... although it has nothing in common with him, yet Grace clothed itself in his likeness in order to bring him to the likeness of itself' (Kenney 2015: p. 38). Nonetheless, the two lines of thought (ancient and high medieval) are most likely unconnected: 'the evidence for the bridge between the Syriac hymns and the Roman tradition remains very slim - historians of ecclesiastical hymnody are still vexed by a 'missing link' (idem, p. 39). See also Brock 1982.

^{xxix} *Habit* (var. *abbite*, *habet*) as an English word is very rarely used in connection with theological discussions of Philippians 2:5. Most often, 'habit' is used to describe monastic (Legend of St Beckett [c.1300]: *abyte of monek*; Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester [c.1300]: *abite of none*) or martial (Wars of Alexander [c.1450]: *abbetus off werres*) clothing; examples for the secondary meaning, disguise (under which the Wycliffite use is filed in the OED), are nonetheless interspersed in examples for the primary meaning in the OED; e.g. John Trevisa, Higden's Polychronicon (1387) 5.193: *Paphnucius the abbot took secular clopinge and abyte and converted a strompet þat heet Tharsis*; Lydgate, Fall of Princes (c.1439) 2.2245: [King] *Sardanapalle... among women... span, In ther habite disguisid from a man*; Romance of the Rose (c.1400) 6192: *Abit ne makith neither monk ne frere*. See entry for habit in MED: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED19738> (accessed 20 May 2018).

An interesting instance where habit is at the same time monastic cloth, disguise and/or embodiment is in the Middle English version of the story of (transgender) saint Marina/Marinos (c.1325), where (ll.75-6): *Sone þer after þe habit he nom / Ant holi monk þis may* [maiden] *bicom*; Bøddeker 1878, p. 259.

^{xxx} He further discusses the Philippians quote in Wycliffe 1887-1890 vol.1 Sermo 14 (p.93) and vol 2 Sermo 13 (p.90).

^{xxxi} A startling parallel to the range of textile imagery in Western incarnational theology is seen in the development of Ephraim the Syrian's hymnology, a tradition wholly unconnected to that covered by this thesis. Ephraim explicitly models his *habitus* explanation of the nativity on Philippians 2:7 ('emptied himself as a servant') in his Hymn of Nativity 2: 'He also stripped and took off from us the clothing of our filthiness.' The continuation of textile motifs in Christ's life (from swaddling to baptismal clothes and funerary linens) is mentioned in Hymn for Nativity 16 part 12. What I term the suite of imagery of Mary as the god-weaver appears in Hymns of the nativity 2 (Christ as sacristan in Mary's temple) and 3:

the measure of His Majesty who has measured? He caused His measures to shrink into a Raiment. She wove for Him and clothed Him because He had put off His glory. She measured Him and wove for Him,

since He had made Himself little... the Hidden One who came down and clothed Himself with a Body in the womb.

The connection between Adam and Eve, on one hand, and Christ and Mary, on the other – as humans dressed in skins, and of Eve as the spinning mother of humanity – is present in Hymns of Nativity 11 and 12, Hymn for Epiphany 12. The continuity between Adam's, Christ's and the newly baptised Christian's garments is explored in Hymns for Epiphany 6, 9 and 13. The exchange between ontological states that the incarnation provides, what I term as the trope of Christ as protective overcoat, appears in Hymn of Nativity 15: 'our body has become Your clothing; Your Spirit has become our robe'. Ephraim 1898a, 1898b; Cf. Stevenson 1998; Kenney 2015, pp. 46-7.

^{xxxi} The queering of this heterosexual pairing is done in multiple ways, from the intergenerational and trans-historical dynamics to the asexual productive and reproductive mechanics represented by the virgin Mary as weaver and mother.

^{xxxi} Anthony of Padua also describes Christ's flesh as a priestly tunic: 'Clothed with a garment down to the feet, a priestly garment, his flesh in which he once offered himself' (Anthony of Padua 1979, *Sermon for Second Sunday after Easter* 1:5, p.210).

4. Tunic iconography

In the previous chapter, I showed that the conceptualisation of Christ's incarnation as akin to an enveloping of the godly presence in flesh is one that had much traction in high theological discussions from the very start of the middle ages. Indeed, this imagery provided one of the central ideas in university debates in the twelfth and thirteenth century. The language used by *habitus*-proponents, one ridden with textile and leather-related terminology, shows that it was more than just a metaphor. While the analogy of the tunic gives a visual and tactile dimension to otherwise transcendental ideas based in the grammar of *aliquid* (*something*), *aliquis* (*someone*), *nihil* (*nothing*) and *aliud* (*other*), it does not just stay in the realm of transcendental imagery (Lilley 1938, pp. 235-6; Monagle 2007; White 2013, p. 86). Beyond the highly-abstracted vocabulary of intellectual theology, this idea trickled down to the orthodoxy practiced on the ground in fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. This manifests in vernacular literature, sermon texts, mnemonic poetry and even theatrical practices, as well as in monumental or manuscript imagery less obviously charged with theoretical theological information. This chapter will demonstrate that the theological knowledge encrypted in these media is one created by accumulation of meaning and in an epistemological culture that values bricoleur practices. The chapter contextualises the theological and material implications of the *habitus* theory by comparing it with other Christian iconography. Established medieval saintly iconography such as that of John the Baptist and apostle Bartholomew threatens the biological boundaries of the body and that focus on skin as a conduit for inter-subjectivity. The Christocentric iconography that echoes these representations centre around the showing of the wounds, loci that trouble the coherence of the 'natural' body. Imagery related to the apocalypse, as well as to *ostentatio vulneris* in different historical (biblical or medieval-contemporary) settings, not only echoes iconography otherwise familiar to the medieval believer but also has roots in biblical, theological and popular texts that have been discussed in previous chapters. This corpus of visual

and literary texts comes together to form a fluid but significant reification of the *habitus* theology at the end of the middle ages.

4.1 John the Baptist's camel-hide

Tunica dei, the imagery of Christ incarnate as god in-vested as human, rests on subtle cues replicated from other religious imagery. This is the result of a complex process of cross-contamination, typological prefiguration and paradoxical reconfiguration of lay, religious, fictional and historical motifs. In the established repertoire of western medieval religious imagery, there are mainly two men who wear skin-cloaks: John the Baptist and Apostle Bartholomew. Imagery and signification from these two figures feeds back into the visual representation of the highly theoretical dogma of incarnation at the end of the middle ages.

John the Baptist, who chose to live in the desert without the comforts of society (cf. Matthew 11:8, Luke 7:25), is historically depicted wearing a camel skin fashioned into a toga, following the biblical tradition: 'And John was clothed with camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins' (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6). John the Baptist is regularly depicted in manuscript and church imagery, given his importance as the one who 'came before Christ' (Luke 1:76). He is sometimes present in images of the Holy Family, usually as a child (Marrow 1986, pp. 3-4). Most prominently he appears in scenes depicting the baptism of Christ, and related imagery of his life in the desert (preaching, baptising) as well as his untimely execution (chastising Herod, decapitated). Often, he is a central figure in images of 'all saints' or congregation of martyrs, and stands on Christ's left in scenes depicting Christ in glory, in heavenly court or at the end of times. Less often, he plays a role in harrowing of hell, and sometimes he presents donors to god or virgin Mary. John the Baptist's three main attributes are the lamb (*agnus dei* John 1:29-30), the lamp (*lucerna*, John 5:33, 35) when accompanying images of St Christopher, and the camel skins (visible in majority of narrative images) (Marrow 1986, pp. 7ff). Early Christian as well as medieval images of the Baptist elaborate on the hairiness and simplicity of his biblical primitive cloak. This garment is glossed by patristic commentators as a continuation of

prophet's attire (Jerome [Dennert 2015, p. 141 n. 43], Clement of Alexandria, Origen [Kelhoffer 2005, p. 4 n. 8]) or a point of reference for future orders of hermits and monks (Isidore of Seville: *De Ecclesiastici Officii*, 2:15). Later medieval images, however, seem to concentrate on subtle visual cues that connect the Baptist with the non-human – animal and transcendentally sacred.

Within the conventions of iconic representation of the Baptist in late medieval visual culture, one can distinguish several strands concentrating on different details. The hairy camel-shirt sometimes reveals a peek of red, raw lining facing John's body (figure 4.1b; Morgan Library MS M.972 f. 1r; Walters Manuscript W.174, f. 95r); the hide sometimes preserves the shape or even some of the parts of its previous, animal wearer; and John the Baptist's girdle is sometimes fashioned with a voluminous knot. In surviving visuals, the hairiness of the camel-shirt is always obviously signalled by curved lines imitating curly wool, and often nearly flawlessly blends with St John's own hair and beard. The browns and tans of this hairy exterior sometimes act as a visual foil for a red lining,



Figure 4.1 (a) left: flaying a goat, *Libro de componere herbe et fructi*, Italy, c1470 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Italien 1108, f.59v); (b) centre: John the Baptist in *Book of Hours*, Flanders for England, 1440 (British Library Loan 85/7, OLIM London, Southwark Cathedral, Ms. 7); (c) right: devil roasting David in *Latin Breviary*, Paris, c.1410-1419 (British Library Harley 2897 f. 33v)

emphasizing the cloak's dual aspect of inside-outside, animal and non-animal. This visual distinction through different colouring for the flesh side and the hair side of a pelt transforms John into a figure standing on the line between animal and human (figure 4.2).^{xxxiv} The Baptist at the same time wears and sheds animality – he is a creature of the desert but he is a human, and more importantly a Christian, creature of the desert; he feeds off the fruit of the earth as an animal does but can at any point act with human agency. This point is further reinforced by depictions of the Baptist among other (furry) animals of the desert, especially the almost always present *agnus dei* perched on his arm or grazing at his feet.

The garment's unfinished, animal origins are sometimes, furthermore, signalled by the still-attached head and/or limbs (figure 4.1 and 4.2; Morgan Library MS M.254 f.25v; Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 416, f.297r). This context is especially poignant since the visuals echo conventional depictions of skinning animals during slaughter (figure 4.1a), prompting bricolage possibilities that are theologically significant. The motif of the Baptist wearing a cloak with visible animal parts still attached is a peculiarly fifteenth/sixteenth century one, and is popular in Northern continental as well as in English manuscripts. From John the Baptist's cloak hang limp, but still bony, limbs with hooves, or leg-skins fashioned into ties and skull-less heads that preserve contorted details of their former faces and highlighting the gruesomeness of animal death. When a camel tail appears from the tunic, it is usually the only appendage – fuzz-topped and dangling behind the Baptist, as if to reinforce the associations between him and the other animals. Across media (illumination, statuary, pilgrim badges) camel heads limply hang usually between the Baptist's legs (figures 4.1b and 4.2) placing his entire figure on yet another thin human/non-human boundary – the groin-face would possibly echo demonic anatomy, familiar to any medieval church-goer. This association is especially visible in images of Christ harrowing Hell, where John the Baptist is among the first to escape the infernal mouth infested with monstrous, hairy, face-crotched devils (figure 4.1c). These illustrations of the harrowing are rife with possibilities of assemblage, especially through textile/dermal associations between Christ, John the Baptist and Adam. All of them share, in their late medieval

narratives, in the same cloak of human as well as animal skins; they are all figured as synchronic typological variations on a theme: wearing the human, animal and godly skin. These textile associations are made explicit by John the Baptist in theatrical, publicly-distributed texts: *'In place where I pass I bear witness / I shall tell the truth wherever I go / that Christ the son of god will become our kind / clad in our clothing to suffer for us'* (Gibson 1994, p. 159, my translation). The theme of robing, disrobing and in-vesting links Christ and John the Baptist's visual representations all the while carrying theological and emotional information.

Putting on the camel cloak, the Baptist can undergo – or is helpless against – transformations beyond his human form of being. This motif of ontological transformation through the medium of a cloak is one inspired by, and at the same time contributing to, the Christological motif of incarnation as in-vestment. While biblically the Baptist is the precursor for, and a prophet of, Christ by virtue of his preaching and baptising role, during the fifteenth century representations of John build his image as a twin, or previous incarnation of, the messiah. This happens in art-historically negligible duplication of a stock male figure in scenes where Christ and John appear together, or in more theologically-laden images where the Baptist plays his prophetic role and visually prefigures Christ's destiny. In a scattered group of manuscript illuminations, John the Baptist's biblical leather girdle is reconfigured into a diaphanous white fabric sash that is knotted around his waist and hangs over his crotch (e.g. Carpentras, Bibl. mun., MS 57, f. 67v; Morgan Library MSS G.14 f. 67v, M.254 f. 25v, M.306 f. 22v). These manuscripts are not associated with one another by any significant art historical connection, as they appear as early as tenth century but proliferate between 1410-1490 in France, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Spain in missals and books of hours. Referring to the late tenth century Benedictional of Aethelwold (BL Add MS 49598) in which the Baptist's camel cloak is tied by a grey knotted sash (f.25r), Robert Deshman suggests that this sash prefigures Christ's perizonium (Deshman 1995). The benedictional is noted for its visual innovations at its point in time (Prescot 2001), but this parallelism between Christ and the Baptist is solidified and spelled out in several fourteenth and fifteenth-century Latin sermons from England that employ textile metaphors:

Induimini Dominum Jesum Christum (Put on your Lord Jesus Christ: Oxford, New Coll. 92 f. 5v),

Induite vos armaturam Dei (Put on the armour of your god: Bibliothèque Nationale de France Latin

16498 f. 10v) and *Induamur arma lucis* (Let us put on the armour of light: Oxford, Bodley 25, p. 13).

The emotional and personal impact of images of the Baptist is neatly illustrated in the National Library of Scotland *Mirror of the Life of Christ* manuscript, whose illustrative programme I already discussed in chapter 2. In this manuscript, the hairy surface of the Baptist's skin-garment (figure 4.4) is figured as nearly coterminous with his facial hair by virtue of the same pigment and textural techniques used. The cloak's pink lining closely mirrors John's own skin, at the same time contrasting Christ's. Human skinning is visually only at one step removed: the parting of the Baptist's cloak similarly reveals his skin just as an incision in the skin of an animal reveals their pink flesh (figure 4.1a). Diffuse ideas about (animal, as well as human) dismemberment, embodiment and frailty are

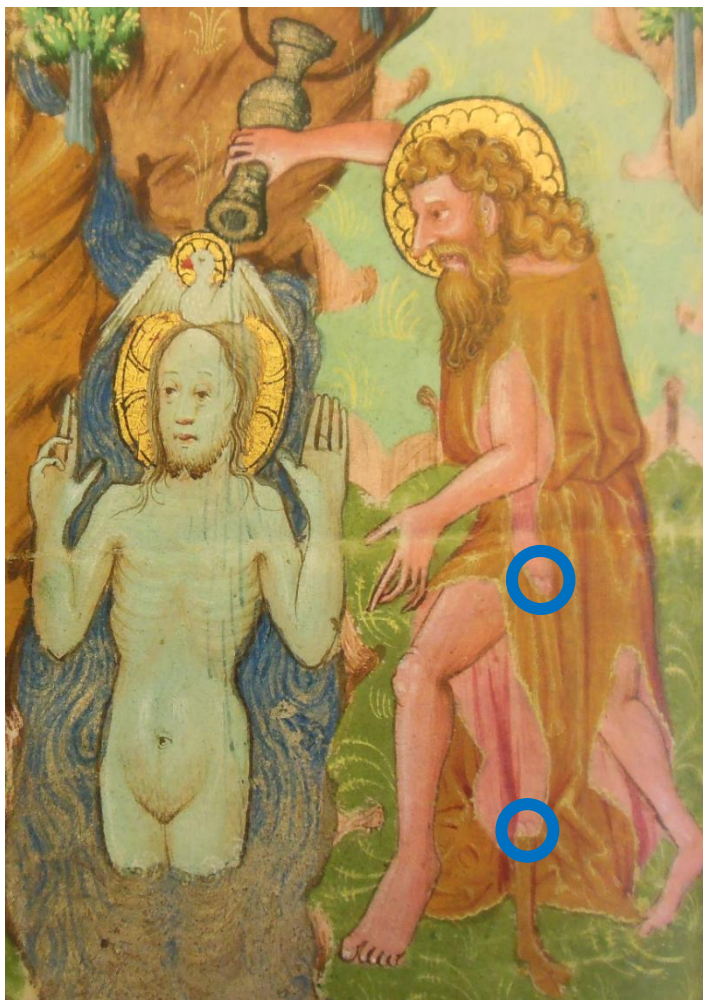


Figure 4.2 *Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*, England, 1445-1465, NLS Adv MS 18.1.7, f. 41v

driven home by gashes in the pelt that reveal the gruesome detail of bare bones poking out the top end of the limbs still attached (highlighted in blue). The similarity between the Baptist's skin and the inside (flesh side) of the camel-shirt also functions as a blurring of boundaries between human and animal. The quasi-human face of the camel, under the man's foot, functions both to reinforce this animal connection and to make other non-human connections visible (Mills 2001, p. 12 n. 31; Bain 2017).

4.2 Apostle Bartholomew's skin-jacket

The animal flaying that is only visually alluded to in images of John the Baptist wearing animal skin is fully realised in imagery of Bartholomew. This second skin-wearing saint dons not an animal skin, but his own human shell. Apostle and saint Bartholomew's story circulated in high and late middle ages as part of one of the era's best sellers, Jacobus of Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (c.1260) and its vernacular translations. Voragine's conflicting sources embellish and multiply his tortures (beating, skinning, upside-down crucifixion, decapitation), the compilation of which paint a picture of repeated, overkill martyrdom (Kay 2006; Mittman 2017, p. 147, Gravdal 1989; Hamburger 2007). Of these, skinning is the most visually striking and unique torture that allows the trained viewer to identify the saint. While in earlier depictions (and in most books of hours) the saint's attributes, a big knife and a book, only obliquely hint at his fate, Bartholomew's skinning is illustrated in a majority of late medieval texts of *Legenda Aurea* and saints' lives that contain images (Kay 2006, p. 70). Two altarpieces from different regions (figure 4.3, a. Spanish and b. Italian) depict the apostle's skinning

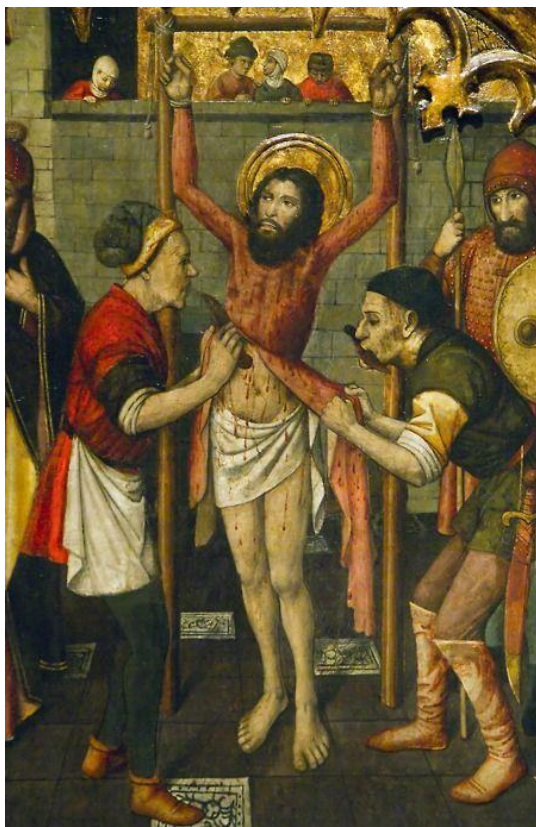


Figure 4.3 Flaying of St Bartholomew (a) left: detail of altar triptich by Jaume Huguet, Spain, c.1470 (Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya); (b) right: predella of Altar with Madonna and Child with Saints by Giovanni Da Milano, Italy, c.1355 (Prato, Museo di Palazzo Pretorio)

in exquisite detail. Bartholomew has his hands tied above him while the top half of his body is raw, recently uncovered from under the skin gathered in his executioners' hands like soft leather. The Italian altar plays on the textural differences between the pale outside and the violent red inside of the skin twisting in executioners' hands. The detail of the non-peeled left thumb on an otherwise raw palm (4.3b detail E), and especially the small tears in the main horizontal surface of the skin (4.3b detail B), is cleverly juxtaposed with the executioners' torn dark clothes. The soft leather aprons hang with the same weight as the saint's skin; the fabric folded in the armpit of the executioner facing the viewer (4.3b detail A) mirrors the fold in the vertical large piece of skin draped over the second executioner's arm (4.3b detail D). The tear in the clothing on the back of this second executioner (4.3b detail C) allows a glimpse of his pale skin just as the small tears in the saint's raw hide (4.3b detail B) reveal its pale underside. This image of the martyrdom throws into question the borders of human, of one's identity with oneself, and creates direct links between one's skin and one's clothing as something worn as a projection screen within social encounters (Kay 2006, pp. 3-4, 19, 62, 88).

This reading is given a literal illustration in miniatures, calendrical mnemonics and a later, famous sculpture at the Milan Duomo, all of which show St Bartholomew preaching while holding his flayed skin. British Library Additional MS 50000, f. 9r and the orphan leaf recorded as Met inv 2006.250 show the white/beige skin with a red lining limply hanging in St Bartholomew's hand, over his shoulder and around his body, respectively, with the shape of the limbs and the head/face easily discernible. Small details like the saint's raw, red body and the knot around his chest made of his glove-like hand skin force the viewer to acknowledge the horror of the saint wearing his own epidermis as a cloak. These details (the knotted garment, the limp skin of the limbs and head), as well as his preaching stance clearly echo similar images of the Baptist. This parallel brings into contact the ideas of human skin and animal hide, leather and unshorn fleece, as equivalent covers for the true essence of the self. St Bartholomew and John the Baptist inhabit embodied spaces

where their human form only exists because of, and constantly threatened by, the specter of non-human (whether animal or spiritual – angelic or demonic) modes of existence.

The connection between human skin and clothing is made explicit in the *Legenda Aurea* vita of Bartholomew:

When the king heard that, he rent his purple [*purpura*, a scarlet material reserved for the elites] with which he was clad (*indutus*), and ordered the apostle be beaten with staves and skinned alive at once... (Jacobus de Voragine 1846: p. 543; my translation and note)

While the illustration of Bartholomew's flaying usually stands alone, two manuscripts of vernacular French saints' lives include the episode with the king in the visual depiction of the torture (figures 4.4 and 4.5). These two French manuscripts (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Nouvelle Acquisition Francaise 15940, f.158v and Arsenal 5080, f.89v) are independently produced, with original drawing and coloring style, but very similar in iconography and pose. Diptych miniatures in these manuscripts depict two stages of Bartholomew's martyrdom. The right halves are occupied by Bartholomew, laying on a trestled table, while the skin on his left leg and right arm is carefully peeled off by two executioners supervised by the king. The left half, chronologically anterior to the right one, depicts the apostle mocked by an aggressor while presented to the king, who is caught in the middle of the gesture of tearing his royal *purpura* to bits. The king and the saint resemble each other at a visual,



Figure 4.4 Trial and Martyrdom of St Bartholomew in Jean de Vignay's *Speculum historiale*, France, 1335 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Arsenal 5080, f.89v).



Figure 4.5 Trial and Martyrdom of St Bartholomew in Jean de Vignay's *Speculum historiale*, France, c.1370 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Nouvelle Acquisition Français 15940, f.158v)

typological and symbolic level. The similarly bearded and coiffed heads of the two men are surrounded by crown and halo, made out of the same material (yellow pigment in the Nouvelle Acquisition manuscript, gold foil in the Arsenal one). They both reach across their chest with both hands, but while the king is tearing his clothing apart, the saint seems to try to protect his own body which will suffer the same fate as the king's clothes.

In both manuscripts there is a peculiar connection between the clothing of the king and the figures in the second half of the image. In the Nouvelle Acquisition miniature (figure 4.5), the king's *purpura* is partly ripped from the neck down, but his lower half is fully enveloped in a cloak lined with the same blood-red colour used for the raw skin, and the flesh side of the skinned pelt, of the saint in the next frame. The yellow exterior of the king's *purpura* is light enough to create the illusion of the king splitting open the cocoon-like cloak of skin. In the Arsenal manuscript (figure 4.4) the reclining body of the saint visually draws a line between the king's gloved left hand, with its limply hanging cuffs, with the saint's own hand and its limp skin envelope hanging off his forearm. His body is fully portrayed in the second frame, the king's right foot encased in a light-tan leather shoe alludes to the saint's own right foot peeled of its skin, hanging behind the executioner's hand. The colour choice for the cloak worn by the king in the second frame is highly interesting: his cloak is red, lined with white, even though in the first frame he is tearing off his red *purpura* tunic to reveal his white skin. While the flesh side of the saint's skin, and the raw surface of his limbs, are not blood red but a faint pink, the typological associations and contextual connexions prompt the viewer to do the imaginative work. The wider Bartholomew imagery – the saint's skin draped over his shoulders while

preaching, the white human leather curling and folding to reveal a scarlet lining – works with the adjacent text, prompting the associations between the rent cloth of the king and the skinned body of the martyr. The bricoleur reader can imagine the king tearing off his own skin, and then wearing it inside-out as a white-lined red cloak in the second frame. The golden-crowned king, gesticulating the condemnation of his enemy, quickly blurs into and doubles as a golden-haloed lord of heaven blessing his apostle. The viewer expands the source of visual bricolage, stretching from the canon of Bartholomew's martyrdom into his apostleship under Christ.

The association between Bartholomew's martyrdom and his apostleship, and the significance of his flaying as a duplication or echo of Christ's *habitus*, is most powerfully shown in a royal illuminated Bible, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Français 9561 (figure 4.6). The full-page miniature on folio 188r illustrates the ascension, but the foreground is occupied by the gathering of Mary and the apostles. One of the men in this group stands out: his robe is blue-ish white and is embroidered with mandorla-like golden decoration. The exact same decoration, which I will show in the next section, is a simulacrum of the wounded body, is embroidered on the tunic that Christ's miniatural ascending body is wearing. The identity of the apostle is easily discernable if the reader, just like the illuminator, is familiar with the details of the *Legenda Aurea* text. In the *Legenda Aurea*, Bartholomew's description touches not only on his physical attributes, but also on his apparel:

His hair is curly and black, his skin white, his eyes large, his nose even and straight, his long beard has a few grey hairs. His stature is even. He is dressed in a white *collobio* trimmed in purple, and clothed in a white *panio* that has purple gems at each corner. He has worn these garments and sandals for twentysix years, and they neither wear out nor become dirty.

(Mittman 2017, p. 145).

In the ascension miniature in the illustrated bible (figure 4.6), the only apostle with dark curly hair is the one in the embroidered tunic. The apostle is without a doubt Bartholomew. His portrait has been carefully composed according to specifications from the *Legenda Aurea*, and further textual



Figure 4.6 Ascension in *Bible historiée toute figuree*, Italy for France, c.1350 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 9561, f. 188r)

allusions to his similarity to Christ brought out in visual form. The indestructibility and immaculence of his garments and (leather) sandals echo Christ's *tunica inconsutila* that grows at the same pace as his body. The visual similarity between Christ's and Bartholomew's embroidered tunics not only reify the special qualities of both these garments, but spell out their association with or equivalence with skin.

Illustration of these two male figures, John the Baptist and apostle Bartholomew, are informed by and inform in their own turn visual depictions of *habitus* theology. The literary and visual narratives of both these saints incorporate important textile motifs, while at the same time complicating its symbolistics. If John the Baptist is wearing animal skins, and Bartholomew his own human skin, Christ the god is wearing restored humanity as a costume. These transvestisms are not only theologically significant but also open up possibilities of physically and religiously metamorphosed bodies. These are bodies in a queer relation with linear time as well as with consistent and persistent identity: the Baptist embodies a quasi-animal, quasi-demonic body; Bartholomew's flayed body sustains trauma and still walks around, wrapped in its own tegument. These two examples, as well as the body of Christ, reveal the trans-human possibilities embedded in the medieval understanding of saintly and sanctified bodies. These medieval concepts open up historically-sanctioned theological spaces for non-conforming bodies, and bodies that have an unusual relationship with self, stasis and linear time. Their culmination, of course, is Christ dressed in his *purpura*, a cloak that functions as skin, textile and text.

4.3 Tunica Dei in visual texts

As I showed in chapter 3, the theoretical discussions about the nature of the incarnation have been using textile metaphors since the beginning of Christianity. Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans enjoins the new Christians to 'put ye on (*induamini*) the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences' (Romans 13:14), equating the human body of Christ to a protective suit. Running through Augustine, Peter Lombard and Abelard, important discussions on the literal or

metaphorical sense of textile imagery regarding the embodiment of Christ are kept biblically-rooted. Nonetheless, as with the case of other complex theological paradoxes like the trinity, the *habitus* theology extended beyond formally trained theologians. Tricky conversations about embodiment of Christ, generally suited for those well versed in semiotic and semantic subtleties of substance and essence, were democratised by a Franciscan and pseudo-Bonaventuran current of affective Christocentric devotion. Within this tradition, the body of Christ as a protective or disguising suit is a popular metaphor, as I will show in the next chapter, that used the mechanics of the *habitus* in a creative way. Democratisation – even if not fully approved of the official church – of the doctrine of the incarnation through affective devotion opened the job of theologians to mystics and illuminators, parish priests and seasonal actors, guild members and book-trade patrons.

4.3.1 *Ostentatio vulneris*

A fertile, and creative, iconographical ground for the *habitus* theology was Christ's *purpura* worn during his Passion. Narrative-wise, this appears in the *Ecce Homo* motif – Christ, beaten and bleeding, cloaked in a mock-royal garment and shown to the Jerusalem crowds during his trial. Nonetheless, this imagery cross-contaminates – an excellent example of bricolage solidified by long-term use – with that of the Man of Sorrows: dead or resurrected Christ, propped up from the sepulchre or on a throne. By the end of the middle ages, this results in similarly-composed images of the resurrected Christ showing his wounds while wearing the scarlet cloak from his (narratively-antecedent) buffeting. This cross-contamination based on the formal similarity between the two iconographies has, nonetheless, not limited its impact only to one set of images, but for an entire range of visual representations of Christ after his resurrection. Christ appears dressed in a scarlet cloak in fifteenth and sixteenth century visually parallel images of *noli me tangere* and of doubting Thomas (like in the marginal decoration of Morgan Library MS M.1003 f. 146r), and in illuminations depicting Gregorian or liturgical epiphanies (figure 4.7). What all these motifs have in common is the post-crucifixion state of Christ's body, a body bearing mortal wounds but inhabiting a timeline where

Christ is either not yet punished/dead, or already wounded but alive again. The *ostentatio vulneris* motifs also expose the queerness of sacred, Christocentric time. Linear, binary timelines (before/after) collapse, and not align during *ostentatio vulneris*, when a 'before' (alive) body shows wounds from the 'after'.

Callum Hourihane (2013) identifies related images of Christ showing his wounds (a convention called *ostentatio vulneris*) occurring within an assemblage cluster of separate motifs, like that of the *arma christi*, the mass of Saint Gregory, or by itself as man of sorrows. In these scenes with Mary Magdalen, apostle Peter and pope Gregory, Christ is explicitly showing his wounds and ostensibly revealing bleeding gashes. This is the locus where the inside and the outside of his skin become confused, and where the integrity and identity of the body are threatened. The 'natural', intact and ideal body is therefore revealed by these very same images as an impossibility and an illusion; a body that sustained that many wounds could not have survived. While the biblical and patristic sources for these specific episodes do not refer to Christ's body as a cloak, nor do they link the *purpura* of the resurrected Christ with his bruised and bleeding body, some imagery is explicit in conveying the *habitus* message.

Two contemporary mid-fifteenth-century images (figure 4.7), a panel painting from Germany (a) and a Psalter miniature from England (b), make explicit the link between the shroud and the mortal skin that Christ sheds after his resurrection. In both images, a loose garment framing Christ's wounded body is supported by angels. In the German painting, (a) the tunic's blood-red lining, facing the viewer and the body of Christ, is in explicit contrast with its white obverse. In both images the fabric facing Christ's body has the exact colour of Christ's blood, dripping from the wounds, and of his flesh, peering from big gashes in his skin. This colour is so similar that the stream of blood squirting from his side-wound into the chalice in the English miniature would be indistinguishable against the red fabric if not for the fine golden light rays surrounding Christ's body. The direct juxtaposition highlighting the contrast between Christ's pale skin and his red wounds, and in the German painting,

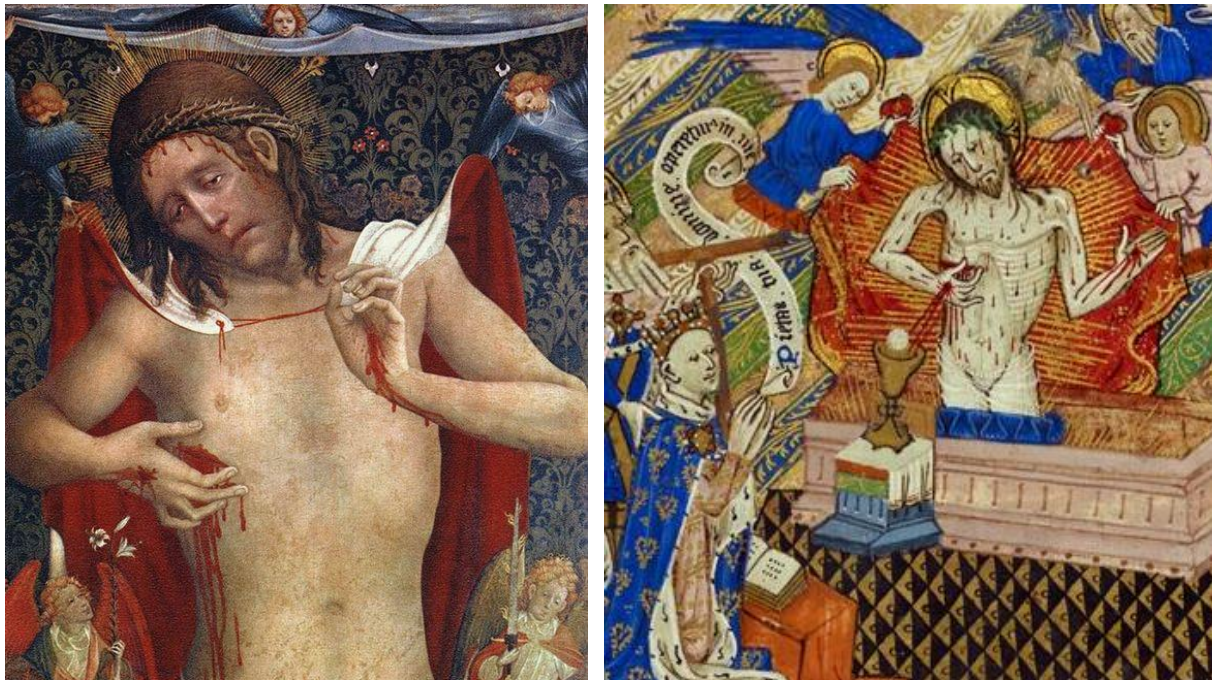


Figure 4.7 (a) left: *Ecce Homo* by Meister Francke, Germany, c. 1435 (Hamburg Kunsthalle); (b) right: *Mass of Gregory* in *Psalter*, England, before 1447 (BL Royal 2.B.I, f. 8)

between the two sides of the tunic, maximise the connection between Christ's body and the tunic itself. Equipped with the medieval imaginary of, among others, John the Baptist and apostle Bartholomew's tunics, the viewer can recognise the robe supported by two angels (reverberating the figures of the apostle's two executioners) as a raw skin peeling away from Christ's body. In order to reinforce this impression, Meister Francke emphasizes the blurred distinction between skin and textile by subtle, but powerful, details. The tunic is fastened around Christ's shoulders with a wispy, blood-red thread going through a small hole; this red elongated circular hole in the white facing of the tunic allows a glimpse at the red lining. The hole is positioned exactly above Christ side-wound, splitting his pale skin, and their horizontal axes are parallel. A realistic fastening would have required the thread to go under the tunic and back over it again. Instead, the painter chose to depict the two ends of the fine red thread limply hanging down from the inside of the hole onto the facing of the tunic and Christ's own skin. This way the threads are mimicking, and at the same time vertically extending, the thin streams of blood that come out of the side-wound. The two images, with their individual subtle cues, require the viewer to tap into bricolaging from previously-seen iconography and real-life situations. Through this cross-referencing of visual themes, these panel and book

paintings can easily be read as a dead Christ shedding his skin at the same time as reasserting its fleshly, gory materiality.

The body as a social construction materialised and performed, revealed by the mechanics of the *ostentatio vulneris* imagery, is thrown into relief even more in imagery where the cloak of Christ mimics, just like his tunic at judgment, the wounds of his body. A powerful material transfer takes place in there: in the *ostentatio* process, what is shown is not just the fleshly wounded body but also the wounded textile. Skin and textile become synonymous and fulfil the role of canvas for spectacular adoration. Wound-centric affective devotional images and texts were modelled on the biblical *ostentatio* events with Mary Magdalen and Thomas. For example, saint Catherine's encounter with Christ's body fulfils her (and Mary's) desire for touching Christ's wounds, his interdiction (*noli*) lifted. An Italian polyptych by Sano di Pietro depicting this episode draws attention to the post- or trans-fleshly state of Christ's revealed body by dressing him in a white tunic with gold-rose dots in an irregular pattern (Siena Pinacoteca Nazionale, acc. no. 261). Rather than symmetrical embroidery or damask, the textile bears reminders of the violent tortures the body – illustrated as intact but for a side and a palm wound – went through before its resurrection.

In a cutting from a contemporary Italian gradual (figure 4.8), a miniature that would have accompanied the vigil of the feast of the Assumption, another *ostentatio* Christ stands in the middle of stylised clouds exposing his prominent palm wounds. His left foot peeks out from under his white cloak revealing a third wound, while the right foot and the side wound are hidden from view. Under a red *purpura* with a white lining draped over his shoulders (reminiscent of Bartholomew's skin-cloak), Christ is wearing a white long robe with an intricate, regularly spaced pattern. Red droplet-shaped embroidery surrounded by blue highlighting dots adorns his tunic, clearly mimicking the lacerations and bloodshed inflicted during Christ's passion. Under a sinuous fold, one of these droplets, running parallel to his obscured right foot, ends at the same height as the visible wound from the left foot, so that an invisible wound is revealed not on Christ's skin, but on his textile covering. At the same time, the toes of his right foot closely mimic the shape of the textile fold under



Figure 4.8 cutting from a gradual, Lombardy, 1440-60 (Free Library of Philadelphia, Lewis E.M.28-10)

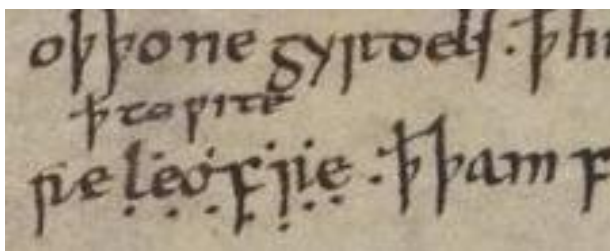


Figure 4.9 (a) top: stitch in Graal cycle, France, 1344 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Français 122, f. 88r); (b) bottom: subpuncting in Old English Martyrology, England, 10-11C (British Library MS Cotton Julius AX 148r)

Christ's left foot, and the orientation of the toes matches the direction of the embroidery on this fold. Here, again, Christ's body and its textile cover are confused, his right foot blurring into a fold while embroidery marks the foot-wound just above its supposed location.

Further allusions to textile qua skin qua vellum might be encoded in the blue-dot pattern around the red embroidered drops. These resemble the needlemarks parchment-makers would produce while stitching together 'wounded' animal skin in preparation to the writing process (figure 4.9a). The thread that would hold the two pieces of skin together would usually be removed or lost, leaving only two rows of pierced dots around the closed wound. This way, repair of the skin

involves more stabbing of the same skin and leaves behind more pricking, rather than an intact dermal surface, while at the same time treating stiff vellum as a stitchable textile. The blue dot pattern also resembles subpuncting, a correction technique used by scribes, most common in fourteenth and fifteenth century (Wakelin 2014, p. 109). Words too long for scraping out would sometimes be surrounded by a dotted line to imply excision, with the

replacement word, if any, written interlineally or in the margin (figure 4.9b). De Hamel (1992, p. 43) suggests that this correction method was used in high-grade manuscripts, a category that was also most likely to have luxurious miniature and sometimes full-page illuminations. This type of correction has the peculiar characteristic of being stuck, and co-existing in two time-lines, in two editions, in two versions. The text is corrected, and visibly so, but the past, erroneous, variant or nonconforming, version of the text is still integrated within the text, visible and fully legible (Wakelin 2014, p. 115). It is then significant if/when this correction technique is the inspiration for the illustrator or for any of the subsequent readers. Just as the text exists in two versions, with error and violence done to it still visible within the correct exemplary copy, Christ's resurrected, perfect and immortal body forever bears the marks of its human past. A mistake, or wound, in the Word, is surrounded by dots as to erase them, linking the wounds of Christ to their salvific valences of wiping out man's sins. All these flickering resemblances are never explicit and impossible to assert if intended by the original illuminator, but reveal themselves to the bricoleur reader – whether medieval or modern – accustomed with medieval manuscript culture as patterns of iconological connection.

4.3.2 Intersections: Pink Christ

The connection between textile and skin that the embroidered cloak makes visible is underlined in manuscripts representing variations in body morphology visually. As I showed in chapter 2, subtle cues such as skin colour throw into relief the creative possibilities afforded by the body. Gender is visualised by a combination of characteristics culturally assigned to individuals at the very ends of the one-sex continuum, such as primary sex characteristics (genitalia), secondary sex characteristics (facial hair, breasts) and material culture (clothing, trades). Quasi-dimorphic skin colour, used by late medieval illuminators to encode medical information otherwise not materially expressed, are among what counts as medieval secondary sex (-determining) characteristics. Gender creativity of the body

is highlighted when all these dimorphised characteristics do not align, and the imagined character does not 'pass'. Similarly, the interplay and exchangeability between textile and skin highlight ontological creativity afforded by the body, which is denaturalised and constructed as another 'extreme (body) transvestism' (Prosser 1998, p. 68).

A lavishly illuminated book for an elite couple, the *Grandes Heures de Rohan*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS Latin 9471, produced between 1430 and 1435 in the workshop of a French illuminator, exhibits special attention to skin-colour dimorphism. In this manuscript, this visual technique encodes a gender binary from the very start of the manuscript – and of the human history, with Adam and Eve starkly differentiated in complexion (ff. 9v-14v). The less-than-systematic use of skin-colour dimorphism, used for multiplied binaries (such as good/bad, young/old, sacred/profane etc), shows an understanding of different essentialist valences that the humoral theory entails. The illumination programme of this luxuriously illustrated book of hours is modelled on a Bible Moralisee (picture-Bible; Lowden 2010); these books all belong to a bricoleur genre, with miniatures on the same page, on facing pages and on two sides of the same folio are in dialogic conversation. The half-page images in the Rohan hours are not just juxtaposed in contexts rich with meaning and let to speak for themselves, but are explicitly annotated to draw meaningful comparison between their content. There is evidence to suggest that the illumination programme (and the text annotating each miniature) largely follows the parallel line stories found in another book in the possession of the patron, the Angevin Bible (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 9561) completed in the fourteenth century in Italy (Meiss and Thomas 1973). By virtue of their visual genre as well as of pictorial innovation, the Rohan Hours and the Angevin Bible allow the bricoleur reader to produce knowledge aligned with the historical notion of the *habitus* incarnation.

In the Rohan Hours, a full-page illumination on f.135r depicts the (discreetly) genitally-sexed body of Christ laying on the ground between the descent from the cross and entombment. Christ shares a skin colour with his mother and with the youthful saint John, while the three humans are in direct

contrast with the depiction of god the father's ruddy complexion. On the other hand, on f.237r a gradient can be observed from the white-skinned Mary, through the slightly darker John to the fully pink-skinned Christ on the cross. The explanation for this could be a reverse accounting of moisture (cf section 2.3.3), with Christ on the cross being drained of moisture (by bleeding) in contrast with his mother, not only a woman (cold and wet) but also a virgin (closed vessel). Christ's body is unsexed under the sheer loincloth, although a surprising amount of blood is gathered at the top of the pubic bone, as well as dripping down between his legs. Mary's menstruation (the lack thereof signalled by her white skin, that indexes retention of moisture) is therefore displaced onto Christ's bleeding body. Nonetheless, the skin-colour definitely serves as gender signifier, a dimorphic colour signification reinforced on the same page in a smaller miniature. Here, the only ostensibly-female character has a bright complexion, while the rest of the other bodies (including the one on top of her, engaged in foreplay for heterosexual sex) are pink-skinned. Rather than undermining the argument that colour-coding skin is a deliberate signifier of dimorphic gender differentiation, I believe that the inconsistency in deployment of the skin-colour convention is pointedly used in miniatures where this visual differentiation based on sexed skin has a specific theological, moral or intellectual message. In some miniatures concentrating on Christ's incarnate body (pre- or post-resurrection), skin colour is used to accentuate the similarity (humanity) or difference (godliness) this body poses in relation to others. In other miniatures, especially those depicting Christ and Mary together, the message seems to be that Jesus' genetic makeup – and therefore his assumed gender – stands closer to the virgin's than to any of the other characters (c.f. Bonaventure in Easton 2002: p. 53). The mechanism of this transference of gender between Mary/human and Christ/god is revealed by the more poetic parallels with Joseph's story, as well as in ostensibly explicit images of the bloody cloak.

Particularly rich is the parallel between the story of Joseph and Christ's life. Previously I showed how the damasked tunic of Joseph appears as a foreshadowing or thematic metaphor for Christ's wounded body in literature (by Augustine, Bonaventure, Anselm) as well as in art in picture-bibles

and similar genres. The Rohan Hours itself morphologically reflects the rent body of Christ on the cross to the torn and bloody garment of Joseph presented to his father (Rohan Hours ff.64r/v), while the Angevin Bible alludes to the habitus theology without making the visual connection between Joseph's cloak dipped in blood with the curiously untarnished body of Christ (Angevin Bible f.24r).



Figure 4.10 (a) left: Robing of Joseph and robing of Christ Child in *Bible historiée toute figurée* Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 9561 f.23v; # (b) right: Robing of Joseph and Resurrection/*Noli me tangere* in *Grandes Heures de Rohan*, France c.1430 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 9471, f. 80r (top) and f. 80v (bottom))

Nonetheless, the episode depicted before that, the robing of Joseph is directly associated with, and visually mirrored by, Mary or god's robing of child-Christ in his *tunica inconsutile* (figure 4.10: Angevin Bible f.23v, comparable with robing of the first humans in the same manuscript f.9 v; Rohan Hours ff.80r/v). In the pair of miniatures retelling Joseph's freeing from the prison by Pharaoh and his re-clothing, replicated by Christ's resurrection (Rohan Hours ff.80r/v), the visual parallels are startling. Specific attention should be paid to Joseph's clothing (both old and new, figure 4.10 b, top) and to newly-resurrected Christ's tunic by which he masks his nakedness, as well as to the switch between the layers Christ is wearing and those worn by the visiting Mary (figure 4.10b, bottom) in the Rohan Hours *noli me tangere* encounter.^{xxxv} Freed from prison, Joseph exchanges a blue tunic for a light brown one; the resurrected Christ appearing to a Mary (not specified whether his mother or Magdalen) as a corporeal apparition is wearing the exact same kind of blue tunic with golden details. Moreover, the duplicated standing Christ is wearing, loosely hung over his blue tunic, a cloak of the same pink fabric that Mary is wearing underneath her own cloak. Clothing is established as a vehicle for Christ's humanity, through the mapping of this story onto that of Joseph's. The variation between the two colours of Christ and Mary's layers is further revealed to have a more important role in explaining the incarnation and the Chalcedonian body. As the layer closest to Mary's skin (as well as resembling her skin colour), the pink fabric might figure the mortal humanity, which Christ is wearing literally as a cloak. This reading is reinforced by the fact that the duplicated resurrected Christ that reaches for god the father's hand is naked but for a similar pink draped fabric. The obverse is also true: the blue cloak of Christ, his deified humanity by virtue of which he can appear to his visitor, envelops Mary over her mortal humanity – an echo to the medieval mystical concept of Christ as a protective, deified cloak for the believing Christian.

The techniques of visualising bodies and narratives, and especially the attention accorded to the symbolism of cloth as skin or skin as cloth, are highly original in independent manners in the Rohan Hours and the Angevin Bible. The best example of the co-presence of the two visual tropes that reveal the body as socially constructed material – the reified *habitus* and the skin-colour dimorphism



Figure 4.11 Coronation of Mary in *Grandes Heures de Rohan*, France c.1430 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Latin 9471, f.106v)

– in the Rohan Hours is found in the full-page miniature on folio 106v (figure 4.11). The coronation of Mary is transformed into a scene of great tenderness, with an older-coded god (by way of the white beard and hair) comforting Mary while angels support a red cloth embroidered with golden blood drops behind the two characters. Mary and the angels have white skin, while the skin of god and that of another white-bearded male figure without a halo (probably a prophet) in the top left corner is a dark shade of pink. This image brilliantly uses two visual techniques that have skin at their core, the inter-signification of which is signalled by the way the red backdrop cloth has been conceptualised. The lining facing the viewer, and the body of god, is red and stylised drops flow the whole way down its large swathes. Folds in the fabric allow us to peek at the other face of the cloth, white as Mary's skin. The colour, texture and position of the fabric relative to the bodies of god and the virgin reconfigure it as a cloak of (Mary's) skin, with its flesh-side facing the viewer. Encrypted in its visual shorthands, this textile preserves not only hints of its somatic materiality (as skin peeled off of a fleshly surface), but also at its culturally-encoded biological sex characteristics (as a woman's/feminine skin).

In contrast to the artists working on the Rohan hours, the illustrators of the Angevin Bible have not used skin-colour to differentiate characters on the basis of gender, age or moral worth. Nonetheless the group of artists tasked with the illumination programme for the New Testament (f.113v onwards) have demonstrably collaborated towards a cumulative way of visually encoding the *habitus* theology. This was accomplished by having Christ dressed in a wound-embroidered tunic; the influence of this motif over the depiction of the coronation of Mary by Rohan artists can only be speculative, although similar use of gold to catch the eye of the reader towards this motif suggests the possibility. In several full-page illuminations, starting with the transfiguration on folio 151v, the trans-human Christ appears dressed in a bluish-white flowing fabric brocaded with a gold pattern. The design of the brocade is slightly different in each subsequent illumination between ff. 184v and 188r, most likely because of change in illustrator, but on page after page Christ is dressed in a cloak with more or less figurative wounds embedded within the fabric. While the only recurring artist, who



Figure 4.12 Harrowing of Hell in Bible historiée toute figure, Italy for France, 14C (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 9561, f. 185r)

painted three of these full-page miniatures (151v, 184v and 188r), adds subtle almond-shaped decoration surrounded by rays to Christ's garment, the artist that tackles the harrowing of hell (f.185r, figure 4.12) makes the meaning of this decoration explicit by adding a blood-red core to each textile 'wound'. Christ's transfigured and resurrected body dressed in the wounded brocade is contrasted with, and bookends, the dressed or naked body of a thoroughly human Christ. After the transfiguration, which reveals Christ's excess of natures and makes explicit his body as divinity cloaked in suffering flesh, the first few miniatures come back to a human Christ dressed in layers of colour-blocked red and blue fabric. During his crucifixion, Christ's body is naked and marked with wounds, later echoed by the brocade. The treatment of swathes of fabric, as well as of naked skin, in each of these intervening miniatures betrays a special care with which the illumination team has thought about the materiality of Christ's body. The naked body of Christ being crucified not only has the same colour as his loincloth, but the red lacerations on his skin are regularly spaced, like the pattern on the damasked tunics. Furthermore, the orientation of these lacerations visually mimics that of the loincloth folds; at the crucifixion (ff. 177v and 178v), the ribs visible under the skin mirror the wind-blown white cloth. These contrasts explicitly signal the trans-humanity of Christ and, to the reader engaging in the bricolage, the book's format demands from its user, reflect the intertextuality often used by *habitus* theology. With their unique takes on visualising skin as fabric, supplanted to Joseph/Christ parallels, the Angevin Bible and the Rohan Hours present a visually consolidated *habitus* theology.

The exchange between visual metaphors of wound and embroidery that is present in the crucifixion scenes, where Christ's body appears naked, in the Angevin Bible is only a subtle cue towards the multi-directional applicability of visualising *habitus* theology. In most of the examples above, the textile clothing of Christ changes morphology and gains wounds or other dermal qualities in order to imagine the *habitus*. Nonetheless, the suffering skin of Christ itself can also take the qualities of a garment. This is an iconographic convention common across Europe throughout the middle ages (e.g. eleventh-century Cristo de Burgos, in the Spanish Iglesia de San Gil Abad, Burgos to sixteenth-

century Fetternear Banner in Museum of Scotland). More or less regularly-spaced identical groups of wounds and blood trickles are arranged to form a raised pattern on the skin, which gives it the appearance of an embroidered textile. The three-dimensional aspect of this motif is exploited by artists. Several media in which this imagery is depicted – sculpture, mural painting, illumination or embroidery – make the most of the peculiarities of the medium to emphasise the three-dimensionality and with it the textile tactility of these wounds. The decorative role of the blood drops creating a pattern is especially striking in needlework depictions of bloody Christ, which very concretely reify the associations between skin and textile.

In this chapter, I have concentrated on formal visual inheritances that inform the reification of the *habitus* theology in late medieval material culture. Images of Christ in his bloody tunic trigger associations with other saint imagery. Christ's embroidered cloak remarkably resembles images of St Bartholomew carrying his similarly spotted hide. Christ wrapped in his purpura, red lining facing his skin, reminds one of John the Baptist and his animal skin whose raw lining would face his body. In this context especially, as Christ's double who edifies some of the cloak symbolism, it is significant that John the Baptist was patron of tailors' and drapers' guilds in England (Yorkshire: Crouch 2000, pp. 137-8; London: Davies 1994) between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Gail McMurray-Gibson speculates that the textile motif was especially well-received in East Anglia because it resonated with the local economy of wool-working and -selling (Gibson 1994, p. 155). Bricoleur knowledge here combines lived experience, community- and body-based working practices, sense-memories and visual cues from everyday life to solidify an iconographic metaphor. Through affective meditation and the bricolage that this technique, as well as contemporary technologies of reading and viewing, encouraged, the theoretical multi-potentiate body of Christ found visual representations informed by other cross-dressing and trans-human bodies such as those of John the Baptist, Bartholomew or the old testamentary Joseph. The *habitus* theology translated powerful visuals of wearing animal skins or one's own flayed skin and attached them to pre-existing iconology regarding Christ's life. The attention this Christocentric iconography shows to the wounds of Christ

throw into relief their locus of denaturalisation of the coherent body. *Ostentatio vulneris* is therefore an important visual text where the believer encounters a queer body that is neither/both alive and dead, male and female, human and god.

^{xxxiv} 'Hair side' and 'flesh side' are also (modern) terminology for the two distinct surfaces a vellum folio has: 'distinction between the hair and flesh sides of the parchment is also often marked, one being considerably darker and smoother, the other softer and paler.' (Kay 2006, p. 52). Moreover, at least the medieval book-maker and illustrator, if not the general population, definitely distinguished between the two because of their material qualities as support for pigments, as observed in many manuscripts with blank-backed illumination. For more about the connection between parchment and human skin, see Kay 2017, Walter 2013.

^{xxxv} The Angevin Bible has a visually similar depiction of this scene on f. 29r, but the colours used in this manuscript for Joseph's and Christ's clothing don't imbue the two scenes with the same theological content.

5. *Tunica Dei* in English and Latin text

In chapter 3, I have shown that the *habitus* theoretical model of the incarnation has a reputable theological grounding, which has influenced both the metaphorical and the literal understandings of Christ's Chalcedonian body. This idea of Christ dressed as human was poetically, typologically and materially encoded in the medieval imagery of Christ as well as in larger patterns of understanding of the human soul or prefigurations of a messianic figure such as John the Baptist. Before concentrating on English-produced texts and their technical as well as visual innovations, I want to quickly consider how the *habitus* theology has been cemented and naturalised through networks of inspiration and diffusion of such texts.

A great example for this is the fifth-century Latin poet, Sedulius, whose work survives in over 400 medieval manuscripts (Springer 2013, pp. xiv; xvii n. 11). Sedulius' work has achieved a long-lasting influence at all levels of literacy: 'throughout the premodern period, his poetry was widely copied in scriptoria, read in schools, and sung in churches'. This was not only due to the technical competences of Sedulius as a poet, but also to the inclusion of one of his texts in foundational church books, such as the breviary (Springer 2013, p. xxii). Sedulius' poetry has a longstanding tradition in the liturgical calendar and performance, dating continuously, in continental as well as insular context, back to the Anglo-Saxon period (Springer 2013, pp. xvi, xviii). His acrostic Christmas hymn recapitulates Philippians 2:7 in its surprisingly simple second verse: 'The blessed maker of the world / Clothed (*induit*) himself in a slave's body (*corpus*) / ...freeing flesh with flesh (*carne carnem*)' (Sedulius 2013, *Hymnus II* pp. 196-7, ll. 5-8). This trans-human incarnational method, Christ as god clothed in a human body was, therefore, constantly rehearsed (by entire communities of believers) when celebrating his birth. The prominent attention given to the adult body of Christ is modelled also on Sedulius', more nuanced and elaborate, hymn *Paschale Carmen* (cc. 425-450). This text 'enjoyed the greatest conceivable circulation and remained one of the primary models for all of the Latin poetry of the Middle Ages' (Manitius, cited in Springer 2013, p. xiv). Sedulius' *Paschale Carmen*

sets the scene of the aftermath of Christ's encounter with Elijah and Moses, in book 3, as a return from godhead back to humanity by re-assuming his garment of flesh: 'After the Lord's divine power returned into his body's limbs / He cloaked (*texit*) his venerable form with a veil (*velamine*) of flesh / and showed himself openly to people' (Sedulius 2013, pp. 92-93, ll. 286-9). Another original and extremely evocative typological image that explains the incarnation is found in book 5, when, as in the material visual culture I explore in the previous chapter, Christ's appearance at his buffeting is figured as an image revealing the mechanics of the *habitus* incarnation:

[Christ] went off to his punishment, he was clothed (*vestitur*) with a cheap cloak (*subtegmine*) / Made of a red fabric (*chlamydem*), so that his whole appearance / Might represent the bloody image of death. [...] And soon, putting off (*deponens*) / the vestments (*habitus*) of others he put on his own clothing, / Since, you see, he was about to set down the covering of human flesh (*tegmina carnis*) / And take it up again, so that he would no longer wear (*ferret*) anything perishable / after his death... (Sedulius 2013, pp. 150-151, ll. 164-167, 171-175).

The editor draws attention to his choice to translate the Latin word *subtegmine*, 'thread'. He notes that, because of the ancient style of handwriting (with no space between words) in which the hymn originally circulated, medieval as well as later copyists and translators have chosen to render this as two words, *sub tegmine*, literally 'under cover'. The poetic virtuosity of this Latin work is not the scope of this thesis, but one must remark on the finesse with which Sedulius composes his comparison of the red fabric (*tegmine cocci*) with the veil of flesh (*tegmina carnis*) as a contradiction; while the *ecce homo* is dressed in red cloth, the real 'under cover' is the human Christ dressed in bloodied flesh.

The simplistic, unqualified idea of Christ as transcendental god disguised in the mantle of human skin is avoided by the *habitus* theology of the late medieval English sources. The emotional content, a defining characteristic of Franciscan-inspired religiosity, ensured that Christ's incarnation is seen as

fully human and fully analogous with the carnal existence of any of the believers. The multi-channel encounters with the *habitus* – in drama, poetry, sermons, monumental as well as small-scale visual representation, music – also contributed to building a materially-oriented bricoleur theology. In this chapter I analyse distinct *habitus* tropes in late medieval England, and accumulate evidence towards a solidified, multi-genre theology of the incarnation. The first three sections address the *habitus* imagery in Latin and English vernacular literature, with an emphasis on cross-genre influence, borrowing, echoes and multiplications. The last section will address one original motif, that of flaying of Christ, across multiple genres. All of the examples, though, stand as witnesses to a textual tradition that reached across class and literacy to explain a Christ ‘found in habit as man’.

5.1 English drama – textual and meta-textual *habitus*

Theological information conveyed by visual representation uses bricoleur knowledge based not only in the domestic and bibliophile life experiences, but also in one’s craft and practical handiwork. Leisure activities of the community can also be a site from which cues can be drawn from, and in which complex theological knowledge can be visually represented. Biblical textile/dermal allusions are solidified in several English accounts which testify to the communal involvement in theatrical productions. In contrast to book, mural and tapestry production that required only a few contributors, dramatical production consisted of a larger communal effort and represented the result of cooperative decision-making (Gibson 1994, Twycross and Carpenter 2002). The medium of medieval theatre forces, more than any other medium, the historian to assemble multiple primary sources (literary text, stage directions, witness accounts, spending and hiring accounts) in order to piece together its actual form as well as cultural significance. This makes the medium of drama an unruly but at the same time incredibly rich piece in the bricolage of theoretical and material influences to late medieval theology. The communal as well as the material aspect of this medium

puts it in a prominent position where its influence is difficult to empirically demonstrate but at the same time impossible to ignore.

In addition to textual testimony for a communal understanding of the *habitus* theology, medieval drama adds a material dimension to evidence regarding cross-medium influences in visually expressing this theology. Two-dimensional manuscript imagery explored in the previous chapter – the crucified Christ in his embroidered human skin, of the man of sorrows in his blood-red *purpura*, and of the apocalyptic Christ in his blood-stained cloak – were demonstrably reified three-dimensionally through the medium of costume. The most interesting of these are fair leather costumes (*aparlet of whytt leder*) found in account books for medieval theatrical companies at least until the late sixteenth century. The reference to these costumes is as simulacra of naked bodies on the stage, worn by pre-lapsarian Adam and Eve as early as twelfth century (Gramling 2017, pp. 244-5 n. 20), as well as resurrected bodies of the wicked and the good (Davidson 1999, pp. 501-504). The existence of this technical solution in contemporary stage-craft might point to the type of garment that the expenditures associated with crucifixion or apocalypse plays call for.

5.1.1 *Kote of leddur*

In 1451 in Coventry, the Smiths' guilds accounts preserving expenditures of the community include payment for six skins of white leather (*vi skynnys of whit leder*) for use in the town's passion plays for the costume for the god character (*Godds garment*). Another entry in 1498 for the same plays pays for tailoring god's costume, which included a coat and glove-like 'hands' from leather (*sowing of gods kote of leddur and for makyng of the hands to the same kote*) (Craig 1967, p. 85). This garment is one of the multiple costumes the second person of the trinity, god the son, wears in the crucifixion play. Separate entries mention gilded, rather than white, clothing items for the first person of the trinity, god the father. This specific *kote* for Christ was a project requiring a vast surface (six entire skins, c. 30 square metres of skin) and had integrated matching hands. The

distinctive description of the costume point to a very likely possibility that this garment, rather than just another one of the multiple textiles Christ puts on and takes off during his passion, was something like a bodystocking made out of supple white leather.

This technical solution to visualising Christ's naked body on the stage, as a skin-suit enveloping the human body, seeps into the text of plays. Dialogue from several plays ranging from conception, through crucifixion and to judgment day reiterate the *habitus* theology of an incarnate Christ putting on the cloak of humanity. In the N-Town play comprising of Parliament of Heaven, Salutation and Conception, the persons of the trinity agree on salvation of mankind through god's partaking in its fleshly form. God the son articulates the Chalcedonian nature of his incarnation and explains its textile mechanics: 'Father, he that shall do this must be both god and man / Let me see how I may wear that *wede*' (Gramling 2017, p. 244, my translation). The *wede* (MED: a garment or attire) is therefore highlighted as that which transforms singularly god into 'both god and man'. The wording of this conversation also attracts attention to the attire of the actors themselves. The material bodystocking has the potential of being integrated in theological understandings of the Chalcedonian from the start, in a context that explains several mechanics of the incarnation, such as the virgin birth. In another infancy play from the Chester cycle, that tackles Joseph's doubt, special attention is given to the *tunica inconsutilis* as dermal cloth Mary produces for her son. To assure Joseph as well as the spectators of the material existence of Christ's naked body as flesh and bones as well as a costume, Mary herself steps in to clarify that '*swete Jhesus... wyll be clad in flesch and blood*' (Gibson 1994, p. 155-7). Two N-Town cycle Adoration plays have shepherds and kings marvel at Christ's embodiment using specifically sartorial vocabulary: '*clad in our kend*' and '*in a maydonys flesch is clad*' (p. 159). This is a meta-theatrical move that blurs the distinction between literary devices and the real world, and reveals the body as socially and materially constructed.

The text of the 'Before Pilate', 'Christ's scourging' and 'Christ's buffeting' plays mention Christ's naked body beaten but describe the 'blows as though they were falling on a fur coat or a cloak'

(Rose 2001, p. 347; Sponsler 1997, p. 148; Tydeman 1978, p. 212). Even more explicitly, a surviving text of a passion play (though not from Coventry but from Wakefield, from which no costume records survive) has Mary lament: 'My dear is escorted to death / His robe all ripped up / Which I have given to him / And have shaped with my hips' (Gibson 1994, p. 156, my translation). Mentioned in a passion play, and attributed to Mary, this short lament collapses both the birth-related, womb-materialised *tunica inconsutilis* and the crucifixion-related, animal or human skin *tunica pellicea* into the focus of somatic and material attention. The text of the crucifixion play itself, therefore, draws attention to the meta-theatrical conceit of the leather bodystocking as skin. This is connected by the text to not only the theoretical, but also the narrative theology behind the incarnation, bringing in contextual proximity Christ's conception and his incarnation.

The white bodystocking appears to be still in use as late as mid-sixteenth century, as documents regarding Apocalypse plays suggest. The Coventry Drapers' accounts periodically mention expenditure for an ample garment with gloves: [1553] v [five] *shepskens for God's coot* [1556] *vij* [seven] *skynnes for Godys cote*; [1557], *a peyre of gloves for God*; [1562], *a cote for God and a payre of gloves* (Craig 1967, pp. 86, 100; Twycross and Carpenter 2002, pp. 103-4). The ample leather surface required to build this costume by sixteenth century indicates that even the Apocalypse plays required a fully-enveloping bodystocking such as that used in creation, nativity and crucifixion. This marks a shift in later visual and material representation of the Apocalypse Christ, which in the fifteenth century wears a cloak – nonetheless still connected to the visualising a *habitus* theology.

5.1.2 *Sirke wounded*

The 1433 York Mercers' production of the Domesday play is one such source for the previous reification of the *habitus* theology via a cloak rather than a bodysuit. In the guild accounts, the wardrobe for the actor playing the apocalyptic Christ is itemised as 'costume for god that is *a wounded jacket*, a crown and a golden mask' (*array for God that ys to say a Sirke wounded a diademe with a veserne gilted* [Twycross and Carpenter 2002, p. 103]). The *wounded sirke* is an

example of how the medieval visual imaginary solidifies tropes which afterwards get replicated in material culture. This visual and material representation is based on the Johannine text of the apocalypse: *And he was clothed (vestitus) with a garment (veste) sprinkled with blood* (Revelation, 19:13). The imagery of the wounded shirt can be found in Apocalypse manuscripts as early as the thirteenth century (e.g. Morgan Library MS M. 524, f. 18r; Bibliothèque Nationale de France MSS Français 403 f. 37v, Français 13096, f. 71r [14C]; Morgan Library MS M. 68 f. 225r and M. 484 f. 97r [15C]). The blood on these cloaks is arranged in a regular pattern, mimicking a damasked design, a labour-intensive complex woven design blurring the distinction between organic and fabricated, dead and alive matter, human and object while incorporating the bodily fluid as fabric of the garment. The material 'sirke wounded', a textile that bears the marks of torture after Christ's body is resurrected, is therefore the culmination of this visual tradition of depicting Apocalyptic Christ dressed in a cloak marked with wounds and blood splatters.

In the same Domesday (resurrection) play, Christ specifically directs the gaze to his wounded 'sirke' enveloping every aspect of his body: 'Behold all of my body, back and side / How dearly I bought your brotherhood' (Play 47 2011, l. 250). The wounds are reminders, if not continuously bleeding testament, of Christ's pain at the crucifixion: 'Behold, unkind, I am this way / because for you I suffered such mistreatment' (l. 266). This connection of the wounds with pain is not explicitly made in Apocalyptic illumination – where sometimes Christ's cloak is more removed from its dermal associations by dyeing with non-human-innate colours (blue, green). Nonetheless, the late medieval English reader would corroborate and consolidate messages from private prayer books, public preaching, vernacular literature and dramatic text as well as visuals to form an understanding of the nature of Christ's body during and after his suffering on the cross.

Another example of the theatrical props being influenced by the current tastes in visualising Christ's embodiment is the provision of three yards of red fabric for the Apocalyptic costume of Christ. An entry in the Coventry Drapers' guild book in 1565 notes expenses not only for a *cote* of leather but also for *ijj (three) yards of redde sendall for God* (Twycross and Carpenter 2002, p. 103). The English

vernacular word *sendall*, the sinden cloth, is invariably used in descriptions of Christ's shroud, a fabric associated with whiteness (*Northern Passion*, l.1792: 'sendal clene'; *Handling Synne*, l.11083: 'whole *sendal*...as vibrant as it were freshly painted', my translation), rather than as Christ's apocalyptic coat or resurrection cloak. Coventry Drapers, nonetheless, equip Christ with nearly three meters of red fabric. This extra flowing red material would have enhanced the goriness of the leather costume by enveloping the white detachable skin in a bloody cloak as in figure 4.7. Mimetic bricolage, therefore, happened not only between visual images in the same medium or genre, but would communicate across material boundaries to create a visually-recognisable sign that embodied the *habitus* conception of the incarnation.

5.2 Latin and vernacular English literature

5.2.1 Pseudo-Bernardine tradition: Christ vs the worldling

Beyond the *habitus* configured as a knightly apparel, Latin and English vernacular works describe Christ's embodiment as a multi-layered costume of pain. A first example of this literary explanation of the *habitus* theology is the comparison with the joyful costume of a worldling (table 1), scattered through a rather large corpus. Comparing Christ on the cross with a human enraptured in bodily pleasure, the passage describes not only the composition of the body, but the bodily affectations and reactions – outstretched arms, the labour of pain, the rhythms of the dancing body. This parallelism is based on a Latin passage attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux in the *Legenda Aurea*. This attribution is by this point impossible to verify – since no similar work by Bernard, or other independent attribution made to him, survives, I will designate this text as pseudo-Bernardine. The popularity and multiplicity of the pseudo-Bernardine versions is partially owed not to their connection with its presumed author, but to the inclusion in the chapter 53, 'De Passione Domini', of the *Legenda Aurea* in Latin and in its vernacular translations (table 1, first column). This comparative framework is quoted in two widely circulated English-composed Latin preaching manuals *Fasciculus*

Morum and *Summa Predicantium* (Wenzel 1978, pp. 36-41; Woolf 1968, p. 41 n. 1). *Fasciculus*

Morum, extant in 28 manuscripts, was composed by an English Franciscan Friar at the beginning of

the fourteenth century. The *Summa Predicantium*, by John Bromyard (d. c. 1352), an English

Dominican preacher, was also composed at the beginning of fourteenth and was highly popular even in the seventeenth century, when the last known print edition was published in Antwerp in 1627.

<i>Legenda aurea</i> (de Voragine 1846, p. 227)	<i>Summa Praedicantium</i> (Woolf 1968, p. 41)	<i>Mirk's Festial</i> (c.1415-50; Mirk 1905, p. 113, my translation)
		You, man, sing and cry out of vanity, while for you I cry and weep
<i>Tu homo es et habes sertum de floribus et ego deus et habeo coronam de spinis</i>	<i>Tu es homo, et habes sertum de floribus: et ego Deus, et habeo spineam coronam</i>	You have on your head a garland of flowers, while I suffered for you a wreath of pointy thorns on my head
<i>tu habes chirotecas in manibus et ego habeo clavos defixos</i>	<i>Tu chirothecas habes in manibus et ego clavos</i>	You have white gloves on your hands, while for your love I have bloody hands
	<i>Tu tripudias cum pedibus: et ego laboravi</i>	
<i>tu in albis vestibus tripudias et ego pro te derisus fui ab Herode in veste alba</i>		
	<i>Tu in choreis brachia extendis in modum Crucis ad vanum gaudium: et ego in Cruce ad opprobrium</i>	You have your arms spread out broad, leading carols [folk songs], while for your love I have my arms spread on the cross, fastened with big nails
<i>tu habes latus apertum et pectum in signum vanae gloriae et ego latus effosum habui pro te</i>	<i>Tu habes latus apertum in signum vanae gloriae: et ego latus habui effosum ad poenam</i>	You have your clothes cut and pinched small, while for your love I have my body full of large welts

Table 1 – side-by-side, line-by-line comparison of Latin and English descriptions of the worldling's clothes

The imagery used in this comparison between Christ on the cross and the dancer is one familiar to the medieval audience. The Latin texts in the *Legenda Aurea*, *Summa Predicantium* and *Fasciculus Morum* all compare the crown of thorns to a celebratory wreath of flowers, the wounded hands to elegant leather gloves, and the crucified body opened by the side-wound to a tailored robe teasingly open. In this pseudo-Bernardine text and its variants, Christ's embodiment is not a whole, intact body-stocking put on by divinity, but a fragmented and multi-pieced costume consisting of headgear, robe and gloves. The comparison between Christ's pierced body and an open-sided robe (*latus apertus et pectus*) would not be as unexpected to the medieval listener as it is to the modern reader. The fifteenth century fashion for both men and women featured slits and slashes that gave the clothes volume and allowed the multiple layers of the costume to be visible. At the same time, these slashes gave tantalising visual access to the inside of the clothed body, hinting at social and sexual intimacy (Denny-Brown 2004; Friedman 2014). The cultural significations of the undressed, as well as the naked body, spills through these slit or trailing sleeves, pockets, as well as side-lacing and the hemming of sideless surcotes. These sartorial elements function as openings in the clothing and, transitively, in the body of the wearer. Multiple formal motifs from the popular late medieval iconography of Christ's open and bleeding body are therefore easily visually mapped on the fashionable body of the period. For example, Christ's blood flowing copiously from his hand wounds resembles the hanging tippets of a long-sleeved kirtle or the mis-matching slit sleeve of a gardecorps hanging from the elbows and giving way to the sleeves of the undercoat (see Thursfield 2001, p. 135). The clear mirroring of the textile and the cutaneous *latus apertus* at a lexical level in the text is then not an insignificant choice. This reflects similarities in visual depictions of the two motifs, as well as the description of these exact contemporary fashion styles in sumptuary laws and moralistic texts (Denny-Brown 2002; Friedman 2014). More than the slashed sleeves, medieval pockets create distinct entrances in the surface of the clothed body by allowing the colour of the material underneath it to be visible. Depiction of vertical pockets in visual sources resembles the iconography

of Christ's side-wound (or the other way around), drawing on similarities in size, positioning and edging between clothing and skin.

Enriched by oral mutation and translation, different versions of the pseudo-Bernardine text concentrate on different aspects of this body. Probably the text has been most circulated in its *Legenda Aurea* version, considering that over 1000 manuscripts and incunabula of this Latin hagiographic compilation still survive (Fleith 1986). The *Legenda Aurea* version of the pseudo-Bernardine comparison with the worldling is thoroughly committed to the parallel between Christ's body and the multi-layered textile imagery surrounding it. This Latin version features the unique addition of the comparison between the white garment of the merry-making sinner and the white robe Christ has worn while being scorned in front of Herod: 'you dance in white garments (*albis vestibus*) and I for you was scorned in front of Herod in the white cloak (*veste alba*)'. If the other Latin texts do not spell out the form that the *latus apertus* takes, the *Legenda Aurea* version explicitly mentions the over-coat, *veste*.

The *Summa Predicantium*, on the other hand, includes not only the physical, but also the social body as an element in the comparison. The text comments on the parallel between the painful labour of Christ's feet and the joyous movement of the dancer's feet (*Tu tripudias cum pedibus: et ego laboravi*). The position of the arms of the dancing body is compared to that of Christ's crucified arms stretched on the publicly shameful torture device (*in opprobrium*), suggesting blissful abandon to the intense moment (*in vanum gaudium*), on the cross as well as in the dancing circle. The affectivity of these images relies on the specularity, homosociality and body-memory; the listener is reminded to deeply inhabit their body (the main locus of association and affective identification) and draw on previous material experiences. These affective embodied loci intimately connect the listener, thrust in the role of the dancer, with Christ in his most degradingly human moments.

John Mirk's *Festial* is the vernacular response to Latin preaching guides like *Fasciculus Morum* and *Summa Predicantium*. Its influence by the *Legenda Aurea* is made clear by Mirk's attribution of the

this comparison of Christ to man to ‘Saint Barnard’ (Mirk 1905, p. 113). The complete image mirroring of the dancer’s apparel and his extended upper body is preserved in the poem. The more dynamic image of moving feet is dropped, so that the two humans (the dancer and the motionless crucified Christ) resemble each other more. Nonetheless, unlike the *Legenda Aurea* that clearly uses textile vocabulary to correlate the two images, this text capitalises on contrasting Christ’s shredded body with the intact body of the dancer. Christ is imaginarily pieced together from a suffering head, dirty, ‘bloody hands... fastened with nails’ and a slashed ‘body full of large welts’. The dancer’s body, in contrast, is delineated by the clean white gloves and the tightly-tailored jacket. Here the dancer’s fleshly body is almost invisible, and what is contrasted is Christ’s naked body and the human’s festive garb, revealing Christ’s humanity as equivalent to a costume signifying one’s temporary role. Another significant innovation in Mirk’s *Festial* is the addition of echoes and sound comparisons: ‘You man for vanity sing and roar, and I for you cry and weep’. The crucified Christ is here immobile but suffering out loud, paralleling a dancer/singer transfixed in the pleasure of performing through their body. The addition of sound in this text acts as another affective avenue for recall, augmenting the already-present embodied and kinetic recollections.

<i>Stanzaic Life of Christ</i> 1926, pp. 200-1	<i>Jesu doth him bemean and speaketh to sinful man</i> Brown 1924, pp. 225-6	<i>In a Valley of the Restless Mind</i> 1998, pp. 68-79
5921-24 'you have a garland / of flowers shining fair and bright, / and for me, god, a crown you made / of thorns stinging strong & sharp	Your garland is made of leaves and flowers; / mine of sharp thorns - / it makes my face pale	33 I crowned her with bliss, and she me with thorn
5926-28 'man, you have gloves on your hands, / And through mine with much shame / I have nails driven in bitter bondage	...your hands gloved neatly, / white and kept clean; / Mine pierced with nails, / on the cross, and so are my feet.	41-47 Look upon my hands, man: / These gloves were given to me by she whom I pursued – / They are not white, but red and pale, / embroidered with blood. / My spouse brought them. / They would not come off; I would not

		loosen them. / O honour her with them, wherever she would go – / These hands for her so readily fight;
5933-35 'You dance with feet in great joy, / And my feet are shamefully broken / Toiling for pain on the rood-tree		49-52 Don't marvel, man, if I sit still: / See, love shod me wonderfully tight, / Buckled my feet, as was her will, / With sharp nails, lo!
5929-31 You dance around in white clothing / and I as well in white was sent / from Herod to Pilate		
5937-40 In the ring of dancing you / spread your arms away from you / and I on the cross had them spread / shamefully, for all to see	You throw your arms across / Whan you dance close to others... / mine for you on the cross / with the jews' fury / were stretched with big ropes	
		27-28 I clothed her in grace and heavenly light / This bloody shirt she forced on me!
5945-46 'You have your side open in vainglory, / And I [have my] side stabbed, for all to see	You have your side open / with long and wide vents [spaiers] / out of vainglory and pride, / and your long knife displayed / you are in happy company / My [side] with sharp spear / stabbed to the heart	

Table 2 – side-by-side comparison of three vernacular English poems; all translations and adaptations mine

Vernacular elaborations of *habitus* theology survive beyond the narrow genre of preaching manuals. Three English long-form poems expand on the parallels between the costume of the dancer/sinful man and the vestment-like embodiment of Christ as human. The common imagery to all these texts (from *Legenda Aurea* through preaching templates) is the crown, gloves and the open-side surcote, creating the outline of a human being. Upon these core elements, each text elaborates with kinetic, textile and embodied recollection points suited to the mood of each poem. The *Stanzaic Life of*

Christ (table 2) is a grand vernacular exposition on biblical and apocryphal episodes in Christ's life in the form of a hybrid text at the intersection between sermon material and dramatic text. It was written in the second half of the fifteenth century by a monk at the Benedictine abbey of St Werburgh, Chester (Wilson 1931). Clearly influenced by the *Legenda Aurea* version of the comparison, it is the only English vernacular text to mention the white tunic in which Christ appeared before Pilate, compared to the white garment of the dancer. The material that does not appear in the other vernacular versions is seemingly concerned with the kinetic aspect of the body as locus of identification. The movement of the feet and arms of the dancer are likened, rather than contrasted – 'your hands... and I...' rather than 'your hands... but I' – to those of Christ crucified. This signals an attempt to convey the physical effort that the crucifixion requires from Christ's body: 'You dance with feet in great joy, and my feet ... toiling for pain on the rood-tree'; 'dancing you spread your arms away from you, and I on the cross had them spread'. Without spelling it out, the *Stanzaic Life of Christ* conjures the writhing body of Christ as parallel to the dancing body of his interlocutor, interspersed with textile imagery (gloves, robe, open side). In this dynamic imagery the human body expresses itself without words, assigning a vocabulary of movement to intense emotions such as joy or experiences such as pain. By the virtue of this vocabulary, moreover, the boundary between the negative and positive emotions is blurred. This parallels the indistinguishability of the boundary between the human and clothing, or the human and the divine, blurred through the pace of the breathless text: 'You have your side open in vainglory, And I [have my] side stabbed'.

Another example of vernacular long-form poetry expanding on the *habitus* imagery as parallel to the leisure clothing of a human is *Jesu doth him bemean and speaketh to sinful man*. This text is a forty-line poem which survives in a single manuscript, added in the blank pages at the end of a quire in MS Bodley 416 (table 2). This early fifteenth-century manuscript contains other instructive and literary material such as *Speculum Ecclesiae* and *The Book to a Mother* (Hanna 1997, p. xviii). The poem's main body consists of the pseudo-Bernardine comparison between the sinful man and Christ on the cross, with the last two stanzas encouraging the sinner towards meditation upon Christ's sacrifice.

Medieval philologist Rosemary Woolf reads this poem as engaging with ‘a tradition of social satire well established in homiletic prose and verse’ whose aim is to entertain first while its ‘description of suffering comes second’ (Woolf 1968, pp. 41-2).^{xxxvi} While this is a possible reading, it overlooks the poem’s participation in a tradition of pseudo-Bernardine elaboration of the *habitus* theology. In contrast with the *Stanzaic Life of Christ*, this poem pares down the elements of the comparison to concentrate on the body fragmented and in pain rather than the entertaining mobile body energetically dancing or contorting. Even the singularly-dynamic motif in this text, the arms stretched outwards while dancing, is paralleled with Christ’s arms being pulled apart by Jews; the tight, intimate dance of the worldling with his mates becomes a distanced, violent act of torture. This motif echoes vernacular descriptions of body-splitting in meditative texts such as Bernard’s *Meditationes* and the *Northern Passion* (The Northern Passion 1913, ll. 2771-2796) as well as in sermons (Legat 1939, pp. 1-21). The textile imagery is scant and concise (gloves and tunic) and is compared with pierced and bloody limbs, and with a gash that cuts so deep inside Christ’s body that it reveals his heart. The tunic-and-glove body of the dancer is, as I showed in section 5.1.1, exactly what the theatrical body of the suffering Christ consisted of, materially: *a cote for God and... a payre of gloves*. Its composite and fragmented textile body designed for suffering finds its mirror image in the figure of the dancer.

The most original addition to the poem *Jesu doth him bemean...* is, nonetheless, the elaboration of the imagery of the open tunic. The poem compares the vents in the cloak to the side-wound. *Jesu doth him bemean...* is not only the first to devote five lines to a creative description of the dancer’s tunic but also the first to explicitly translate the Latin participle adjective ‘apertum’ in English as ‘spaiers’ – vents or sleeves. The word ‘spaiier’ appears in two vernacular lexicons from 1425 and 1440 as a translation for Latin *apertura* (opening) or *cluniculum* (pocket). In further two lexicons from 1450 and 1475, it translates the Latin *manubium* and *manulum* (sleeves) [MED *spayere/speyr/spayre*]. This translation confirms the sartorial meaning of ‘latus apertum’ as parallel to the visual pockets, sideless gowns and tippet sleeves in the Latin works cited above (*Summa*

Predicantium, Legenda Aurea, Fasciculum Morum). While these Latin texts started circulating at the beginning of the fourteenth century, they were still influencing sermons and didactic literature at the end of the fifteenth century, as demonstrated by this later vernacular adaptation. If (however unlikely) their initial resonance was not with the *habitus* theology, by the fifteenth century they were fully incorporated into this through the convergence of sartorial styles, ad-hoc translation as well as a solidified tradition of vernacular versions.

Moreover, the spear that opens Christ's body is paralleled by the martial accoutrements of the ostensibly male dancer: 'On your side you have open / long and wide decorative slits / for vain glory and pride / and with your long knife sticking out / you are in cheerful company; / mine was stung to the heart / with a sharp spear.' The masculinity of the dancer is highlighted by his ability to carry a 'longe knyf'. This social gender signifier appears in other textual descriptions such as *Piers Plowman's* Envy, who is not only 'clothed... in a jacket and a pea coat, and a knife by his side' but also wears 'a friar's frock's... sleeves' (Langland 1978, p. 45 ll. 5.078-90). The side-knife's connotations of male genitalia is made obvious in highly sexualised contemporary imagery incorporating phallic weapons (Camille 1998; Wolfthal 1999, pp. 61, 81-83; Sandler 2008, pp. 33-44; Immonen 2014). The analogous literary description of the dancer's robe, with knife sticking out of his side *spaiers*, emphasizes his social and physiological masculinity. This is directly compared with Christ's side wound, with the spear sticking out (or in?) it, playing at Christ's physiological sex ambiguity as well as socially perceived sexual position, fluid between penetrated and penetrator (cf. Mills 2002).^{xxxvii} Contemporary images of Christ having his side split open on the cross, with the pointed spear penetrating an apparently already-existing gaping hole between his ribs, can be mapped onto images of gaping side-pockets out of which thin long knives peek out. The parallel also emphasizes the pocket-like quality of the loose, red-lined hole of Christ's side wound, in contrast with the naturalistic image of a fresh wound: a tight, quasi-indexical mark of the presence of the spear breaching the skin. Contemporary visual representations of the side-wound as a sagging hole makes explicit the skin itself's resemblance to a garment. The poem's formal qualities as a

comparison of the dancer with Christ specifically encourage all of these association games, happening across (textual and visual) media. The text assumes of its audience a bricoleur memory and imagination and a willingness to playfully combine pre-acquired images and notions in order to create new (in this case, theological) knowledge.

A final example of long-form vernacular poetry inspired by the pseudo-Bernardine comparison between the dancing man and the crucified Christ is *In the Valley of the Restless Mind*. This is the single poem in this set to attract considerable scholarly attention, and represents a wonderful example of textual bricolage. The 16-stanza form solidified in two manuscripts is pulled together by the use of the refrain *Quia amore langueo* (Because I am sick for love, Canticles 2.5). This tight framing still preserves a montage-quality by flitting through familiar themes as well as by abrupt changes in tone and personal pronouns. The transitions in roles and themes are jarring for some modern scholars (Stevick 1966, pp. 109-110; Hill 1986, pp. 459, 463, 465) and appraised as the source of oneiric surrealism by others (Wimsatt 1984, p. 83). These abrupt theme changes are explained as poor poetic skill or the poet's way of 'deliberately attempting to achieve an original and startling effect' (Manning 1962, p. 62). Contrarily, I see them as the still-visible, unconcealed seams and frayed edges of bricoleur text and knowledge-making techniques, left in the poem to encourage further textual and visual exploration. Modern scholarship also often comments on the 'perversely original' queering (Hill 1986, p. 463-4) of Christ's gendered nature (from lover-knight to parturient and nursing mother) and the 'problems' this poses to the intimate relationships between the two personages in the poem. Nonetheless, the consequences of this multi-layered poem beyond artistic value has received little to no attention. The poem's editor comments on 'the poet's seemingly bizarre blurring of gender lines' whose 'logic exists devotionally' (Fein 1998, pp. 59-60). By this devotional logic, nonetheless, she means emotional appeal, rather than the poem's contribution to lay knowledge of theological incarnation theory, through redefinition or rereading of Christ's body.

Its theological content is subtle in contrast with the other instances where the incarnational theology of the *habitus* is introduced in tightly-knit, concise poetry via the comparison of the dancer's and Christ's body. *In the Valley* reworks this original idea and only preserves echoes of the pseudo-Bernardine parallels. Christ's composite suit of humanity is described, piece by piece, in separate stanzas that sometimes draw parallels with human embodiment: 'I clothed her in grace and heavenly light / This bloody shirt she had on me set!'. However, most of the stanzas that take inspiration from this imagery (stanzas four to seven) severely deviate from the Latin or English template. The descriptions of each element are embellished with highly original material specifically designed for maximum affective impact. The description of the open surcote, the last element in the original pseudo-Bernardine template, is split into two stanzas bookending the rest of the verses alluding to the *habitus* theology. They discretely describe not only the cloak of pain (as the lines above) but also the labour of love and seduction, in metaphorical images of hunting and maiming. This poem is also probably the first English example that I found that translates the 'latus apertus' pointedly as a 'bloody shirt' resembling that of the tortured Christ. This stands in contrast with previous examples, which did not spell out the 'open side' specifically as a shirt but rather as a pocket or decorative feature. The next element of the skin suit of Christ are, as in previous versions of the pseudo-Bernardine comparison, gloves. Material vehicle of devotion, rather than of conspicuous consumption like in the other poems, the gloves are exchanged as tokens of love in *In the Valley*. This exchange mirrors contemporary courting practices, often figured in the margin of romance and religious texts as well as on objects of amorous exchange themselves (Witthoft 1982; Camille 1992; Sand 2011). The description of the gloves, nonetheless, capitalizes on the textile metaphor (*embroidered with blood*) while still preserving echoes of the original comparison (they are specifically *not white, but red*). The affective impact is enhanced by the connotations of a selfless masochistic practice of forcibly, but also voluntarily, wearing these embroidered gloves for the benefit of the spouse. At the same time, the imagery is designated to project visual allusions to what would happen if they would come off in a gift exchange:

Look at my hands, man / These gloves were given to me when I was searching for her / They are not white, but red and purple / Embroidered with blood. My spouse brought them. / They won't come off; I don't loosen them / I woo her with them wherever she goes (*In a Valley of the Restless Mind* 1998, ll. 41-45; my translation)

The most original element of the descriptions of *In a valley* is the material explanation for the stillness of the lover, another echo to the original Latin comparison between Christ on the cross and the dancer that comes at a stand-still: *Merveille nought, Man, though Y sitte stille*. The pursuing lover is masochistically accepting the uncomfortably tight buckled shoes that the wooed one has *shod* for him, out of the devices of his own torture: 'Love has shoed me, very tightly / she buckled my feet, as was her will, / with sharp nails, behold!' (ll. 50-53, my translation). These tight shoes complete the leather ensemble that pieces together a human skin for Christ. A similar association of Christ's feet with a pair of 'galoches' can be found in *Piers Plowman's* description of disguised Christ (ll. 18.14). Modelled on fashionably slashed (*ycouped*) shoes of the time, this imagery alludes to and makes the connection between broken skin and slashed leather. This association of stretched leather and the humanity of Christ is exegetical (Barney and Galloway 2006, pp. 15-17). Through intertextual and visual associations, the body of a queerly gendered and embodied Christ is assembled together from leather pieces: gloves, a jacket, shoes.

In a valley... contributes to the spread of the original short poem by reworking it into an emotive anthology-bricolage. The importance of the poem's formal qualities cannot be stressed more: its framing provides the optimal emotional context to its theological content. Due to this innovative emotionality, the image of Christ's incarnation as costume-like *habitus* works as a moment of intimate learning about Christ's human body. Through weaving of intense diverse imagery of hunting, battle, sadomasochistic erotic practice, mothering and nursing, this poem guides the reader or listener through a very embodied and emotional way of relating to theological knowledge. *In a valley* reveals only the edges of a church and school of the body that was by any means not unique to the century and location of its creation, and which empowered, at least since the twelfth century,

generations of (generally) female visionaries, mystics and public speakers. The bricolage frame is transparently revealed under unfinished transitions and clear (for the accustomed eye) borrowing of wholesale imagery from different literary genres and visual media revolving around the theme of courtship and dressing. This assembled structure of the poem encourages the listener/reader to consider the other environments when they encountered this *habitus* theology – in paratextual and monumental images, in sermons and prayers, and in poetic and dramatic texts.

The emotional dimension that the predominantly-Franciscan *habitus* theology in general, as well as this last example of the pseudo-Bernardine poetry in particular, bring to the fore is the key to its popularity across media. Notwithstanding its stance perilously close to several heresies (Nestorianism, Nihilianism, Docetism), the ability of the sartorial trope to command an emotional response assured the survival of the *habitus* theology as one encoded in individual as well as collective works of art and literature.^{xxxviii} Surprisingly, influential medieval scholarship framed theology based on intimacy and emotion (a distinctive characteristic of Franciscan piety) as ‘female’/‘feminine’, regardless of the gender of the author. This is the case for Bynum’s approach, as well as articles such as Fite 1991, titled ‘The Feminine Dynamic of Richard Rolle’s Mysticism’. This binary framing is not only unnecessary and reductive, but it also perpetuates a perspective of non-hegemonic voices associated with ‘lesser’ ways of producing knowledge. The next subsection concentrates on an original, unique woman-authored text rather than an orally-multiplied tradition. Nonetheless, both these sets of texts exhibit similar theological (*habitus*) and formal (bricolage) content, as well as the same emotional tone and special attention to the body.

5.2.2 Julian of Norwich’s innovation

Julian of Norwich’s *Revelations of Divine Love* is another example of long-form, highly-affective vernacular literature that contains the *habitus* as an imagery imparting theological knowledge. Unlike the pseudo-Bernardine comparison of the worldling, which has spread to form a rather

extensive corpus in several languages and original interpretations in multiple manuscripts, Julian's *Revelations* survives in just a few manuscripts, and has achieved a rather stable variant. The earliest manuscript for this mid-fifteenth century work is BL Additional 37790, a book that is nearly contemporary with Julian herself (died c.1443). This manuscript contains a shorter version than the more widespread surviving long-version, copies of which only date as far back as mid-seventeenth century but which uses language contemporary to Julian's. The longer version of the *Revelations* is characterised by an elaborate, original mystical theology that is thoroughly assembled in formal style as well as in source material. The *habitus* theology in itself is explored by Julian in her chapter 51, an expansion and explanation of her previous visions, revisited twenty years after she first received them. Julian's articulations of the *habitus* theology are extremely explicit and clear, and express an understanding of this knowledge from someone at the intersection of lay/vernacular literacy and collegiate/Latin educated clergy. As a life-long anchorite, she was immersed in the textual, material and visual culture that I discuss throughout this chapter. Her reading, listening and viewing material, framed by the small squint windows facing the church interior, put her in the best position to synthesise this theoretical knowledge with her embodied experience as an isolated, introspective and self-inhabiting body (Holloway 2016; Windeatt 2015).

A first glimpse into Julian's interest in the textile materiality of Christ's body appears in her second showing (chapter 10 out of 86). This chapter is concerned with a vision of Christ's face at his death, which reminds Julian of the Vernicle:

It was a figure and likeness of our foul dead skin (*hame*), that our fair, bright, blessed Lord bore for our sins. It made me think of the holy vernicle of Rome which He hath portrayed with His own blessed face when He was in His hard passion... (Julian of Norwich 1994, ll. 373-6, my translation).

The English-Latin children's dictionary *Promptorium Parvulorum* (1440) glosses *hame* with 'skynne' and translates it as *membranula* (MED: *hame* 1). The *hame* that Christ 'bears' is described as

something between gruesome disguise, mortuary mask and face veil, a membrane that both reveals and conceals. Julian is even more explicit in expressing a *habitus* theology a few sentences later: ‘it was the image and likeness of our foul black dead *hame* wherein our fair bright blessed Lord God is hidden’ (ll. 394-5). Julian’s association of Christ’s face-skin with something he should wear (to hide) rather than just have engenders the comparison between this dermal surface and its own textile reproduction, the Vernicle. In the revelation, the distinctions between dermal and textile, as well as between the original and the reproduction, are confused and blurred. The Vernicle, the textile simulacrum, becomes more concrete than the original; the *habitus* creates the danger of there not being an original at all.

The same attention to the concealing AND revealing properties of textiles is apparent in chapter 51. Here, Julian describes one of her revelations that took form of a luxuriously-dressed lord, sitting on a throne, and his humble servant standing before the latter in tattered clothing:

And yet I marvelled, looking at the before-mentioned lord and servant... his clothing was a white shirt (*kirtle*), unlined, old and worn, dyed with the sweat of his body, fitting him tightly and short since it was a palm’s-breadth beneath the knee, seemingly soon to be worn out to the point where it is ready to be torn and shredded (Julian of Norwich 1994, ll. 1928, 1933-35; my translation)

Her vocabulary solidifies in English vernacular the vestment allusions that the other Latin and vernacular texts (with the exception of *Legenda Aurea*) only denominate as *latus apertus*/open side: *his clothing was a white kirtle*. A cursory look at the use of the word *kirtle* (or *kirtel*/*kurtel*/*curtel*) in English vernacular literature reveals that the word denotes a unisex garment: usually as the outmost layer of one’s clothing. The Middle English Dictionary has separate entries for male garment (def. 1) and female garment (def. 2), but the same word is used in very similar vernacular textual contexts. This modern binary division is not only unnecessary but, considering Julian’s deployment of genders in her work, counterproductive. Additionally, the same word is also used in medical vocabulary to

describe outermost shells of organs (def. 5) or, in case of animals which shed their skins (snakes, worms), it nominates the outer, discardable layer (definitions 3, 4). Julian's employment of *kirtle* is therefore making use of multiple meanings of the word, flitting seamlessly between them and creating a (meta)text that thrives on the instability of the Middle English words. In unwavering language, Julian explains her vision – and, with it, most likely other similar imagery that she and her contemporaries were exposed to – as a theoretical, but effective and affective, way of expressing the theological fact of the incarnation. Julian explains the identity of the servant as both – at the same time – Adam (*al man*) and Christ (*manhood*):

In the servant it is understood the second person of the trinity [Jesus Christ] and in the servant is understood Adam, that is, anyone. And therefore when I say 'the son', it means the godhead which is one with the father; and when I say 'the servant', it means Christ's humanity (*manhood*) which is the reformed Adam. By the closeness of the servant it is understood that it is the son, and by him standing on the left side it is understood that it is Adam (Julian of Norwich 1994, ll. 1970-5, my translation)

At the same time, Julian makes it extremely clear in line 1999 that she uses textile imagery to explain Christ's incarnation: *the which kirtle is the flesh*. A few lines later she imagines the reciprocal mechanics of the *habitus* incarnation, where the fleshly clothing is still fully part of the Chalcedonian constitution of Christ, through which he suffers as human: *our flesh in which he also intensely felt the deadly pain* (ll. 2030-31, my translation).

In Julian's vision, Christ literalizes the Philippians 2:7 (*formam servi accipiens*) by 'taking the form of a servant' in front of his lord. His social status is signalled by his clothing, inherited from none other than the hard-working father, Adam, whose sweat stains the tunic: *The eld is of Adam waring; the defacing of swete, of Adam traveil* (ll. 1999-2000). There is a very intimate exchange of bodily fluids beyond the conceit of the tunic as skin. The slave inherits a personal item, but even at face value (as textile rather than skin) the garment still carries the residue of Adam's body. Similarly to the image

of the Veronica, where Christ's face is painted in pigments of his own secretion, the fabric becomes suffused with organic residue and becomes something more, at the intersection between textile and dermal. Sweat is given the clear index of labour, which in turn conjures a gift of time, effusion of fluids, human energy, muscles expanding and contracting, a ghostly residue of the body itself. Julian nevertheless makes sure to reiterate the significance of the tunic as not just textile, but skin-suit. *Our foule dedly flesh that Gods Son toke on Hym, which was Adams old kirtle* (ll. 2051-2), transforms the rest of humanity into an embodied history that connects Adam and Christ. Human souls inherit the tunic of flesh from their parents; it is only a natural consequence that the incarnated god putting on Adam's garment of skin. Building on a poetic imagery enhanced by the nominal meanings of Latin and English language, the image of skin as human costume, Julian of Norwich elaborates on the history and destiny of this garment of flesh that brings together Adam and Christ in the somatic locus of affective identification, one's humanity, understood as one's deeply-inhabited body.

The text fully reveals that Julian's source for this theology is the Philippians passage. After explaining Christ's status as a slave (Philippians 2:7; Julian of Norwich 1994, ll. 1999-2000), Julian goes on to explain the rest of Philippians 2:7-8 which explains the mechanics of the incarnation. Julian reads Christ's 'empty(ing of) himself' and 'humbl(ing) himself' as parallel to Adam's fall from Paradise:

For the godhead sprung (*sterte*) from the father into the maiden's womb, falling (*falling*) into the taking of our kind. And in this falling he took great humiliation (*sore*). The humiliation that he took was our flesh in which he also intensely felt the deadly pain (*peynis*). His clothing was not worthy for Christ to stand in it in front of the Lord. (ll. 2028-3, my translation)

Again, Julian's clever use of vocabulary accomplishes a lot of linguistic feats, such as that of conflating heterosexual intercourse with the fall from paradise by using the verb '*sterten*'. This way, the godhead 'gushes' or 'spurts' (MED definition 5) from the masculine-constructed deity to the virgin's womb, a physical element of conception. At the same time, '*sterten*' (definition 1b) also denotes a physical downwards fall (a verb Julian also uses), a tumbling from heavens to the earthly

realm, where Christ suffers a ‘sore’, both physical (MED, noun, definitions 1, 5) and emotional (definitions 2, 7). The humiliation of incarnation and in-vestment is associated with the pain (*sore*, *peynis*) this vestment allows Christ to feel.

The anchorite’s sophisticated understanding of the incarnational *kirtle* as the connection between Christ and Adam (and therefore the whole humanity) makes clear the link between learned and vernacular literature. At the same time, it stands witness to the persistence of the *habitus* imagery across the twelfth, fifteenth and sixteenth century. The idea that the fleshly shirt of the incarnation originally belonged to Adam, an element that the other vernacular poetry discussed here does not mention, is found in the thirteenth century rule for anchorites, *Ancrene Wisse: Our old kirtle (curtel) is the flesh that we have from Adam; our old father* (*Ancrene Wisse* 2000: 185:14, my translation).

This vernacular work is most likely an item on Julian of Norwich’s reading list (Holloway 2016) – since she herself was an anchorite; since *Ancrene Wisse* manuscripts contemporary with Julian survive; and specifically because her *Revelations of Divine Love* echo other imagery found in the *Ancrene Wisse*, such as the body as a cell. More than that, these two texts (the *Revelations* and *Ancrene Wisse*) create a direct genealogy of the *habitus* across genres and publics. This links the twelfth-century academic proponents of the theoretical *habitus* theology (Aelred of Rievaulx and Abelard, as confirmed sources for the *Ancrene Wisse* [Grayson 1985, p. 155]) with ‘unlettered’ lay devotion of the fifteenth century, representative of which Julian of Norwich describes herself as. This direct link shows how the bricoleur collaboration of visual and textual imagery can sustain an idea through the centuries and how this specific method of knowledge-making makes language, genre, medium and environment borders fluid. Most pertinently to this thesis, this genealogy shows how a high-theological theory like that of the *habitus* can, through bricolage and specifically through emotional ‘texts’ that involve the body as locus of knowledge, survive and thrive. The gender of the author, as well as their level of education and sanction from the church, are less important than their access to an emotional, body-centred *habitus* tradition.

5.3 Latin and vernacular English preaching

The question of the orthodoxy of such a doctrine as Christ's in-vestment in his humanity is made much more ambiguous by the fact that boundaries between late medieval learned and popular religious texts are very fluid. The exchange of ideas is moreover not only driven from the highly theological discussions of the university to the town church, but the other way around as well. The economy of ideas is partly driven by the economy of their material support, such as the book trade and seasonal dramatic production. Images and texts are sanctioned by the local or universal church, but they are still produced by single, order- or guild-associated individuals, and commissioned by both religious and lay patrons. These will have had their own agendas and preferences in terms of self-representation through objects of religious or conspicuous consumption (Bryan 2008).

Influences from imported manuscript iconography maps onto local church statuary and murals, and liturgical text and song reverberate through textual and dramatic narratives.

This subsection explores the rich textual tradition of one discrete verse within the context of sermon practice. Collected from vernacular and bilingual preaching material, I identify an emergent corpus of works based on Isaiah 63:1-2, rhetorically constructed as a question-and-answer:

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength? / I, that speak justice, and am a defender to save. / Why then is thy apparel red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the winepress?

This old testamentary text exhibits an attention to red clothing that enabled it to become part of the suite of *tunica* images associated with the *habitus* theology throughout the late middle ages.

Additionally, its inclusion in the Sarum processional, the playtext for hymns and litanies to be used in English processions (Kretzmann 1916, p. 143), assured its circulation and accessibility. Used during the Paschal period, the *Quare rubrum* verse (called after the Latin words that are most often preserved in variants) was familiar to audiences, as well as to preachers that used it as sermon

prompt. This section traces its meta-textual morphing throughout preaching material, borrowing from dramatic and secular literary works, as well as from material and visual culture. Vernacular literature within sermon context functions differently than the works previously studied in this chapter. Rather than the lyrical, emotional work embedded in Julian of Norwich's or Langland's oeuvres, sermon poetry fulfils a functional role (Jeffrey 1975). In this context, some poetic work is completely dependent on the sermon structure, while others that can survive and circulate freely are more conducive to use and reusing outside their original context. In the following subsections, I explore the multiple forms *Quare rubrum* took in vernacular and bilingual sermon practice: as instructional imagery, as base structure for sermon development and as summarising mnemonics. At the same time, I do not lose sight of its sources and influences, in order to present the complex role vernacular elaborations of this verse played not only in sanctioned preaching but in the range of media that the *habitus* theology relied on.

5.3.1 *Quare rubrum*: genealogy and influences

As examples of *habitus* textual material, the vernacular versions of the Isaiah 63 verse exhibit the same emotional concern with the body as well as similar formal assemblage-like qualities as the texts explored since the beginning of this chapter. A first example of these vernacular elaborations can be found in a short poem that appears in two preacher's miscellanies: *Wat is he þis þat comet so brith* (DIMEV 6233). This English verse adaptation of Isaiah 63:1-2 appears in two macaronic Easter sermons (table 3: BL Harley MS 7322 and Worcester Cathedral MS F.126, both end of fourteenth century) written in Latin and English between which the narrator switches at ease. Although preserved in sermon context, the poem is instructive rather than functional; a self-contained subject matter develops across 6 verses. For these reasons, *Wat is he þis þat comet so brith* could have circulated independently from the sermon as an explanation of incarnation.

Using the rhetorical conventions of the Isaiah text, the poem asks about the identity (*wat*) of a man (*he*) dressed in bloody clothes, and answers not with a name, but with a summary explanation of the incarnation. The ontological matter of coexisting identities (*both God and man/ God full of might who became man*), the purpose of the incarnation (*for Adam's sin/for us to fight*), and the violent means to salvation (*suffered death/died*) are quickly summarised in three lines. The second and the last line nonetheless do away with the subtlety of the biblical quote, which substitutes the visceral image of bloody clothes with that of exotic dyed cloth, and instead convey very explicitly the image of Christ wrapped in blood-soaked garments. While the Isaiah verses tease the reader with veiled references to 'dyed garments' and 'red apparel' before revealing, semantically much later than the

<i>DIMEV 6233</i> BL Harley 7322	<i>DIMEV 6233</i> Worcester Cathedral F.126	<i>Latin Vulgate</i>	<i>Chester Ascension play</i>
Who is he who comes glowing / dressed in bloody clothes?	[<i>Wat ys he þat comeþ so bryth wyt bloody cloþes al bydith</i>]	Quis est iste, qui venit de Edom, tinctis vestibus de Bosra?	Angelus Primus: Quis est iste, qui venit de Edom, tinctis vestibus de Bosra?
<i>respondentes superiores dixerunt:</i> He is both god and man / such has never been seen	He is God full of might	Iste formosus in stola sua, gradiens in multitudine fortitudinis suae.	<i>Angelus Secundus:</i> Iste formosus in stola sua, gradiens in multitudine fortitudinis suae?
For Adam's sin he suffered death	Who became man to fight for us / and died for our sins	Ego qui loquor justitiam, et propugnator sum ad salvandum.	<i>Jesus:</i> Ego qui loquor justitiam, et propugnator sum ad salvandum.
And therefore his robe was red	[<i>and þerfor ys hys robe so red</i>]	Quare ergo rubrum est indumentum tuum	
		et vestimenta tua sicut calcantium in torculari.	<i>Angelus Tertius:</i> et vestimenta tua sicut calcantium in torculari.

Table 3 – comparison between two vernacular poems, biblical text and Latin dialog from an English play;
Middle English was kept in case of identical verses in column 2

poem, that they stand for a more sordid imagery, *Wat is he þis þat comet so brith* introduces the bloody spectacle within its opening lines. The rest of the poem can be mapped one-to-one onto the first two versets of Isaiah 63 (see table 3), although the inspiration for the second line comes from the end of Isaiah 63:3: ‘their blood is sprinkled upon my garments (*vestimenta*), and I have stained all my apparel (*indumenta*)’. This verse itself reverberates in apocalyptic textual imagery of Christ ‘clothed (*vestitus*) with a garment (*veste*) sprinkled with blood’ (Revelation 19:13)., the source of the ‘wounded sirke’ material and visual artifacts (c.f. 5.2.1).

The textual imagery that the poem recalls (of Christ dressed in a blood-sprinkled garment) is one that the medieval listener would be able to summon to their visual memory from manuscripts or church murals, dramatic performances or from liturgy itself. Nonetheless, the more meaningful layer of information, that the bloody robe stands for Christ’s incarnation and violent death, is conveyed by the poem much clearer than in the visual sources I proposed earlier. The demonstrative linking of the doctrinal content of the poem (*both god and man*) with the reiteration of the visual elements (*bloody clothes, robe so red*) through ‘therefore’ puts these two bits of information into an unambiguous equivalence. As a vernacular rhyming takeaway from an Easter sermon, *Wat is he þis þat comet so brith* is a very effective poem that modifies or elucidates visual texts that the medieval viewer might already have encountered.

The memorability of this short poem is enhanced by the fact that it was not only a rhyming instruction text, but it was also most likely associated with music. One of the manuscript versions (Harley, table 3 column 1) preserves a Latin recitation or stage direction: ‘respondentes superiorum dixerunt’. The plural respondents, with the adjectival modifier *superiorum*, could be either higher in position (like a priest responding to a choir) or in pitch (e.g. polyphony). Respondents in both of these situations are related to existing contemporary quasi-dramatic practices in medieval liturgical music (Fulton in Fassler 2001, p. 27 n. 20). Since the Old Testamentary Latin verse that serves as a direct source for this vernacular poem was set to music not only for the Sarum processional, but also

for regular medieval liturgy (Rastall 2001, p. 283, table 10), these recitation directions could be a vestige of this direct adaptation. More convincing, though, is that the music and stage direction stem from the use of the same Isaiah quote in passion plays. A Latin adaptation of *Quare rubrum* is concretely found in the text of Chester 'Ascension' (table 3 column 4), perhaps significantly (at least in the context of the previous discussion of a blood-splatter-robed Christ) supplied for, directed and staged by the city's professional guild of tailors. While no additional music notation is appended to the stage direction 'et in ascendendo cantabit Jhesus ut sequitur' in the surviving manuscript, the musical score of the play was most likely reproduced from the liturgical use (Mathews 1923, p. 211). The 'respondentes superiorum dixerunt' directions are inserted in the poem exactly where in the play the source verse is split between 'angelus primus' and 'angelus secundus'. Here, in the middle of the first verse's question, is not where a natural break is dictated by the text. Nonetheless, this division of lines between the first and second angel is replicated by the poetic text, which transforms the second part of the question into part of the response, an indication that the two adaptations of the Isaiah 63:1-3 might be related.

Another preaching book (BL Additional MS 46919) offers conclusive proof for both the theory that the vernacular poetic elaborations could have circulated by themselves, and of the theory that these rhyming versions incorporated in sermons were connected to dramatic production. The trilingual miscellany of Oxford Franciscan William Herebert (d.1333), written around 1325, contains culinary and medicinal recipes, notes for sermons and long-form poetry inspired by Latin works (Pezzini 1991). On folio 210r an English version of the Isaiah-inspired verse is preserved in eight stanzas of different length. This text, committed to the page earlier than any of the *Wat is he þis þat comet so brith* variants, takes the form of a dialogue between Christ and the angel, with the stage directions 'questio angelorum' and 'responsio Christi' preserved as headers for the first four stanzas (Herebert 1996, poem 16). The literary content closely follows the biblical original, while the theological content of the *habitus* is already present. Herebert uses several textile terms to explain the red clothing of Christ (*ycoyntised* [dressed] *wede, shroud, robe*) repeatedly throughout the text. There is

an aesthetic tension between the fair (*vayre*) and handsome (*semlich*) apparition of the *lordling* and the plainly expressed gruesomeness and shocking nature of the blood-dyed textiles: *with bloodred clothing so dreadfully dyed*. Nonetheless, in line with other vernacular translations of the Isaiah verse, Herebert does not offer his listeners a relief from the somatic horror that the *habitus* theology can crop up. This reflects the change in tone and direction of the theological content attached to the Isaiah 63 verse.

The link between vernacular mnemonics, dramatic text and liturgical music made visible both in Friar Herebert's work and in *Wat is he þis þat comet so brith* demonstrates the bricoleur production methods for instructive religious texts and images. Moreover, it also gives us an insight into not only how complex theological knowledge, like that of *habitus* incarnation, was transmitted but also how it contained, encoded in its intrinsic echoes and residual material, hypertextual references to other religious media. Later instances of its adaptation, used independently from rhyming sermon or liturgical material, are testament to the continuous use of this formula, without any acknowledged connection to the biblical original. As I suggested, the short poem is self-contained and short enough that it could circulate independently. Vernacular elaborations of the *Quare rubrum* still preserve the same formal pattern while integrated into larger structures. This is the case with echoes of the Isaiah verse in *Piers Plowman*, in the context of an ample discussion regarding the *habitus* incarnation: 'Is this Jesus the knight... who painted him so red?... he that comes so bloody is Christ with his cross, the redeemer of Christians' (Langland 1978, ll. 19.10-14, my translation from the Middle English). The rhetorical as well as dramatic structure is still preserved, while seamlessly integrated in the conversation between Langland's allegorical characters.

More poignantly addressing the *habitus* incarnation is the inclusion of this structure in Lydgate's Philomela: 'why his garment was red and bloody, full of wet drops so disguised was his vestment' (Lydgate 1900, p. 21 ll. 148-151). In this passage that just about preserves the rhetorical structure, the more radical side of the *habitus* incarnation, the disguise, is revealed. The 'wet drops' do not

homogenise in a red dye like in the source material but accumulate onto the textile (*garnement, vestiment*) such as to ‘disguise’ it. This passage reveals the true potential of the *Quare rubrum* verse: it speaks not of the organic body as disguised through textile, but of the textile itself replaced by or morphing into a blood-and-skin costume. The reciprocal transformation of textile and dermal surfaces in Philomela collapse imagery of Christ’s skin as embroidered textile and clothing as intimate dermal layer. The incorporation of this old testamentary image in Langland and Lydgate’s works are examples of the widespread use of the *Quare rubrum*, which can be traced from dramatic text through sermon use to episodes incorporated in long-form works.

5.3.2 *Quare rubrum* as sermon themata

The long-form vernacular adaptation of the Isaiah verse, integrated into or completely independent from preaching material, is just one example of the complexity that a line from the bible explaining Christ’s incarnation can achieve. Variants of this ur-text has nonetheless been used in different genres of sermon material, such as in text-dependent thema (pl: themata), preaching tags or couplets embedded in the structure of the sermon. Vernacular rhyming couplets are not unusual in late medieval Latin and bilingual sermons, with their use mainly functional. As themata, they are employed as mnemonic devices – to cement the structure in the memory of a preacher, and to prepare the audiences for what the sermon will cover (Wenzel 1986, 2015). By design, these rhyming couplets usually need the sermon context in order to be unpacked and their meaning to be revealed.

A first example of a thematic version of *Quare rubrum* comes from a Franciscan’s preaching collection and personal handbook written in Lichfield, 1436: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat.Th.d.1. This manuscript, written by and documenting the preaching of one Nicholas Phillip, contains an expanded script of a sermon associated with Good Friday and Ascension, originally composed by a Franciscan friar named Chambron around 1380 (Nichols and Wenzel 1996, pp. 10-11). This specific

sermon was relatively popular, surviving in nine manuscripts from late medieval England (Wenzel 2005, pp. 125-8), so its orthodoxy and its reach should not be underestimated. The language of the sermon in MS Lat.Th.d.1 switches flawlessly and non-uniformly between Latin (the primary language of the sermon) and vernacular English (the language of asides, explanations, and mnemonic bits). The sermon delivered in Newcastle in 1433 might have been bilingual or completely adapted into vernacular. The allegorical symbolism of the sermon is incredibly rich; Christ's passion iconography is associated with juridical, bibliographic, and musical imagery: '*Dolor iste siue passio assimilari bene to* [This pain we can well liken to] / A man of plea and argument / A book of scripture and writing / A harp of melody making' (Little 1949, p. 248; my translation). Notwithstanding this original three-partite division, the idea of the *habitus* incarnation creates a common thread throughout the sermon, with multiple appearances throughout the sermon.

The sermon's prompt itself is the Isaiah 63:2: '*quare rubrum est indumentum?*' (Little 1949, p. 247). The author starts off straight away with an explanation of the incarnation, aided by the image of the red garments. Words from the lexical field of textiles are glossed with a cluster of flesh-oriented words, like 'sanguine' and 'carne':

Thus rightly [she] asked 'Why is your garment red etc.' (*quare rubrum...*) that is, beloved so greatly made red as if of blood (*sanguine*) [...] the Jews... carried his tunic (*tunicam*), that is, his flesh (*carnem*)... (Little 1949, p. 247)

Two further references to the role of textiles in Christ's passion consolidate the *habitus* imagery of the sermon. One, integrated into the second sub-thema of the ABC, refers to Christ's dress during his buffeting and will be explored in the section 5.4. Another reference to the *habitus* explanation of the incarnation is found in the last sub-thema, which describes Christ's suffering as a harp making sounds. This passage describes Christ's humiliation as his royal claims were parodied (according to the evangelists) by investing him with a crown of thorns, a sceptre of reed and a scarlet cloak before being led to be crucified. In this last reference, the image of the buffeted and mocked Christ loses

the physical, textile garment and replaces it with part of Christ's own body, his blood: 'If you are a king where is your crown? Instead of gold you have a crown of thorns, for clothing (*vestimentus*) you have a new *purpura* from your own blood, for sceptre you have a reed' (Little 1949, p. 256). This textual transference between the red textile cloak and the fresh liquid *purpura* recalls the similar visual conversion in the man of sorrows painting by Meister Francke (figure 4.7a), where Christ's fingers support the dainty red lace of his cloak, which looks like it would liquefy and drip out of his hand at any moment.

Another bilingual Good Friday sermon that makes explicit use of the *habitus* doctrine survives in a few paper folios from the early fifteenth century, bound in Oxford Bodleian Library MS Bodley 859. Based on the apocalyptic mnemonic phrase *Percussa es tercia pars solis* (The third part of the sun was smitten, Rev 8:12) this sermon's thema is also divided in three sections: Christ's works, his humanity and his passion (Wenzel 1994, pp. 19-20). This structure is inspired by that of the *Quare rubrum*, although barely visible in this themata unlike the more transparent adaptations in the other sermons explored in this section. The thematic scheme is reiterated three times on the same folio with a significant variation which will carry through to the sermon:

Hec verba signant:	Vel sic in hijs verbis tangitur:	
quomodo Christus <i>wyrchit in hijs godhede</i> , sicut sol;	<i>Cristis wyrchinge</i> , que est ad modum solis;	<i>His worching hys endeles</i> ,
hou he <i>wonitp in hijs manhede</i> , quia in tercia parte;	et <i>Cristis clopyng</i> , in tercia parte, qui est corpus eius;	<i>ys clopyng hys wemles</i> ,
and wat he <i>suffrid for houre mysdede</i> , quia percussa est tercia pars solis.	and <i>Cristis suffryng</i> , in percussione.	<i>ys suffryg hys lekles</i> .

Table 4 – themata of the 'Percussa es tercia pars solis' sermon in Oxford Bodleian Library MS Bodley 859

While in the first iteration of the thema Christ's 'living in his manhood' is mentioned, this is explicated in the second version as 'Christ's clothing, that is his body'; the third version expands this textile metaphor with the mention of 'seamless'. The textile register substitutes the theological mystery of Christ's incarnation as human shortly after its first mention. Christ's humanity is glossed as his clothing, then nonchalantly explained as *qui est corpus eius*. The ease with which these transitions are implemented might be an indication of the preacher's assumption that the matter of the *habitus* is familiar to, and has been thoroughly rehearsed by his audience. Even if this is not a theological concept his audience is familiar with, this is a Latin sermon with functional and structural elements in English, so the mnemonic elements tend to be in vernacular rhyming lines. This themata is therefore easy to remember not just by the priest, but also as a takeaway by the audience; the repetition of the division at the end of each principal ensures that the structure of the sermon, and its conceptual content, will be remembered.

In this context, with an audience familiar with, or thoroughly introduced to, the *habitus* explanation of Christ's incarnation, the quick quatrain on f. 318v (with variant spelling in the margin) can reveal multiple meanings: 'A prince is clothed in mourning clothes (*clad in cloþȝ of dul*) / For the death of his family / There is no tongue that could tell / What woe he suffered for her sake' (DIMEV 148; Siegfried Wenzel 1974, p. 58, my translation). The prince in mourning clothes is, at first impression, an allegorical image of Christ dressed in his *purpura* on the way to Calvary. Nonetheless, the Middle English word *dul* (sorrow) means both (emotional) mourning and (more physical) pain. Read with the *habitus* theology as the background for this sermon, Christ's garment of pain signals that this poem is not just a snapshot of his circumstances during the passion. Rather, it takes a longer view and explains the incarnation – Christ donning a cloth of pain, the human body – and its salvific consequences. The second line, that explains why Christ assumed humanity (to die for his folk), contains a second reference to Christ's ontological status as human: his *make*, no longer only that of the lord of heaven, is fragile, mortal and created or born.

A last example of bilingual Latin/English preaching that uses the Isaiah 63 imagery associated with the *habitus* explanation of the incarnation can be found in MS Cambridge ii.3.8, manuscript containing 58 sermons *de tempore*, written (and most likely used as an exemplar for vernacular preaching aids) by several Oxford-based hands from early and late fifteenth century. The Cambridge ii.3.8 manuscript offers yet another sermon prompted by the verse *Quare rubrum est indumentum tuum*, addressing the incarnation in relation to the *habitus* theology. Although the sermon material is written in Latin, this manuscript is the only witness for several vernacular rhyming ditties used to quickly summarize the incarnation doctrine. The title of the first one, on folio 109r, alludes to the structure of the old testamentary verse upon which the sermon is based: *Clopyngge color and question*: In clothing is life hidden / In the colour is love shown / In the question is asked / Why is all thus revealed (DIMEV 2487, my translation). Here again the imagery of the clothing is not treated like a figure of speech that imparts knowledge of a more metaphysical phenomenon, but a physical reality that conceals the true spirit of Christ. Blood, alluded to by colour— red, not explicit in the poem — is also given a meaning, but its metaphorical turn is here clear. Rather than *hīden*, the vernacular verb that can mean to conceal, to wrap, to clothe, or to shelter, all physical actions requiring a material substrate, the second line uses the verb *kīthen*, to make something known, to reveal an idea, to recognize or acknowledge. While clothing literally hides life, the colour *symbolizes* love. Later, the same sermon includes the verse ‘Matter for mourning is his robe coloured red for our sake / Matter for learning is the question why they had him it take’ (my translation from the Middle English DIMEV 3450). While this is not a sophisticated, or even highly memorable, couplet, it is still yet a novel variation of summarising the rhetorical structure of the Isaiah verse. The proliferation of the *Quare rubrum* sermon, and the degree of innovation that it encouraged, are testament to the importance of this matter in the lay consciousness in the fifteenth century England, to the doctrine’s orthodoxy, and to the power of a highly complex theological idea moving between audiences, genres and mediums. Integrated into the functional apparatus of the sermon, the *habitus* incarnation imagery that follows from the Isaiah verse is regarded as a philosophical and theological

knowledge-production mechanism rather than an edifying figure of speech aiding one to find an answer. Nonetheless, by virtue of its structuring importance to the sermon, the themata versions of the *Quare rubrum* thread the *habitus* theology through the entirety of the sermon they appear in. A thema derived from the Isaiah verse therefore invites the inclusion of further *habitus* imagery into the sermon as its logical, visual and textual companions.

5.3.3 The multiple *tunica* of *Quare rubrum*

As previously explored, the *habitus* theology hinged on multiplied images of red and embroidered textiles, woven throughout the narrative of Christ's life as well as through old testamentary prefigurations and prophecies. Reflecting on this rich cache of textile allusions, sermon *habitus* imagery is not exclusively related to Christ's passion and assumption. The open question of *Quare rubrum* invites reflection on these multiple *habitus* embodiments Christ takes in the late medieval imagination. This multiplicity can be addressed subtly through the skill of an accomplished wordsmith such as friar John of Grimestone (Jeffrey 1975, pp. 243-5). Appended to the margins of his sermon on *De Via Christi*, dateable any time before or around his autograph in 1372, Grimestone translates the answer to Isaiah 63 in a short independent quatrain: 'With flesh/fleece (*fles*) all spread / With blood all bled / The wicked to damn / And the good to save' (my translation from the Middle English DIMEV 6725). The quatrain can be read as a description of a freshly-risen, still bloody and mangled Christ, who enters hell to deliver all the unfairly damned. A less gruesome image of the saviour can be conjured if one takes *fles* to mean fleece, rather than flesh. A fleece-wrapped Christ still recalls the image of the Baptist in his camel hair-shirt, and this association can easily return to horror if one recalls annexe visuals like John's *Ecce agnus Dei*. Himself the lamb of god, Christ wrapped in a bloody fleece is practically wearing his own skin, very much like St Bartholomew after his skinning. The fluid mutation and substitution of animal and human skin, as much as that between clothing and human flesh, gives rise to possibilities of horror, as well as to avenues of intimate

contact (like that between human bodies as *corpus Christi*) and empowering intersubjective identification (like the image of Christ as a disfigured leper).

The quatrain cited above is nonetheless also included in a longer set of rhyming lines, in Oxford, Merton College Lat. 248, f. 139va-139vb. In this manuscript, the poem is dependent on its context as part of the ‘formal division of a Latin sermon put into English rhyming lines’ (Wenzel 1985, p. 345).

The sermon is one of over 200 macaronic pieces found in the Benedictine *vademecum* of John Sheppey, bishop of Rochester (d.1360) (Nichols and Wenzel 1996, p. 10). It expands the verse ‘where do you come from and where are you going?’ (Genesis 16:8 and Judges 19:17) into a homily on the ascension, incorporating, like the Chester play depicting the same event, the apocalyptic imagery of Christ riding a white horse, wearing a garment sprinkled with blood. In this sermon, the answer to *Quare rubrum* recombines with a different biblical context of a similar rhetorical structure to create a new perspective on the *habitus* theology. The Latin introduction, translated by the modern editor of the text, Siegfried Wenzel, clearly refer to a Christ incarnated by wearing his flesh wrapped around him: ‘they [that is, the angels] saw him veiled in flesh (*carne velatum*), crowned with blood, finding him as man, and rejected by the world’ [Wenzel 1985, p. 347 (English) p. 352 ll. 24-26 (Latin)]. Wenzel’s translation is missing the finer Latin nuances: the text switches from the plural of the angels (*videbant*, they saw) to the singular masculine of Christ *hominem per ipsum repertum*, so that ‘he found himself as man’ rather than ‘[angels] finding him as man’. The imagery of the *habitus* itself is here constructed as a brutal physicality barely concealing Christ’s true self. The use of the veil, rather than tunic or robe, denotes a loosely draped piece of cloth rather than a fitting garment, and conjures images of unfinished or ripped hems and edges. ‘Veiled in flesh’ (*carne velatum*) invokes a much rawer physicality than if the text would refer to Christ’s skin, hide or body as the envelope for his godly substance. No clean leather bodystocking, the flesh is pulsating and bleeding as separated from the substance it conceals. The incarnation is an awe-some and an awe-ful sight at the same time. The imagery is bloody, physical and raw, and is a surprising find not only for the angels, but it seems for Christ himself.

In this sermon, the four-line Isaiah-inspired verse is incorporated in a much-longer English poem-cum-thematic structure [Wenzel 1985, p. 343 (English); pp. 353-354, ll. 68-85 (Latin)]. This extensive thema connects the visuals of a fleshy and bloody Christ with apocalyptic mnemonics such as four horses, cardinal geographic locations, natural elements etc. Aside from explaining the theological implications of the incarnation and assumption, this exploration of the *habitus* also provides a context to symbolism found in apocalyptic manuscript imagery. Thus, the main theological and illustrative points of the sermon (written in Latin) is contained in an easily-memorable, rhyming vernacular form. After the initial setup of the thema in Latin prose, Latin verse and vernacular adaptation of the verse, Sheppey continues with the first particulars (expansion of the material into discrete subsections) in Latin:

Firstly I maintain that the spirits of the angels might wonder at Christ and ask: Where do you come from? Because they saw him thus veiled in flesh (*carne velatum*). Because from incorporeal god and spirit alone not having flesh and bone to part from himself, now they saw him dressed (*indutum*) in the new robe (*roba*) of human nature. Thus it might be worth asking that which is written in Genesis 24: Who is that man who cometh towards us along the field? who is he who was god timeless and now was made human bound by time? Who was the creator but now made as the creation, emanated from Father and now veiled in flesh (*carne velatus*)? Who, at last, is this man, not any man but man and god, god and man, creator and creation, eternal and temporary? (Wenzel 1985, p. 354 ll. 86-94, my translation)

This fragment creates strong links between the *habitus* imagery and the theology of the incarnation. Although the biblical sources directly quoted do not mention the bloody robe, the preacher chooses to focus on developing the in-vestment imagery. The reiterations of the thema explicitly link the textile and fleshly imagery, insistently excluding the possibility that this is just a figure of speech or a metaphor. Additionally, the use of *velatus* (veiled) is supplanted here with *roba* (robe, cloak) and *indutus* (dressed), reinforcing the imagery of Christ vested in his humanity as a robe of flesh as one

that contains theological knowledge explaining the incarnation. The *habitus* incarnation articulated in *Quare rubrum* is then offered as an answer when confronted with the multiple paradoxes of the trinity, of spirit-made-flesh, and of Christ's dwelling on earth as human.

The same sermon uses the apocalyptic imagery of the rider on the white horse, expanding on the initial imagery of the four apocalyptic horsemen coming from four cardinal points. The association with the *habitus* incarnation is not made by the more common, biblical vestment sprinkled with blood. Instead, martial associations that, as we have seen, were connected thematically but not directly to the *habitus* theoretical grounding, now complete their allusions with references to Mary's very material contribution to the humanity of Christ: 'The garments (*vestimenta*) of Christ have been the received blessed flesh, in which divinity has been concealed (*diuinitas fuerat obumbrata*)' (Wenzel 1985, p. 354 ll. 166-170, my translation). Even without referencing the apocalyptic imagery of Christ dressed in his blood-splattered garment, the sermon quickly returns to the vestment imagery to explain the incarnation, in the process revealing some interesting – whether intentional or not – connections. The in-text citation, to Matthew 9, can be described as a creative act of mis-remembering. The quote *vestimenta autem ejus facta sunt alba sicut nix* is indeed verbatim from Matthew although it is not from the 9th chapter but from 17:2. On the other hand, Mark 9:2 reads *Et vestimenta ejus facta sunt splendentia, et candida nimis velut nix*, describing the same event (Christ's transfiguration). The confusion between 9 Matthew and 9 Mark might be more than just coincidental. Matthew 9:20-21 recounts the story of the woman with a blood issue, who touches the hem of Christ's garment (same Latin word used, *vestimenta*) and is healed. This story opens up a nexus of associations with the adjacent context, sadly not spelled out: parallels between the sinner woman and the unstained virgin; comparisons between the sinner's blood issue and the virgin's blood that becomes Christ's body; quasi-metaphorical commentary on the woman touching Christ's vestment or, intrinsically connected, his body-as-cloak. Beneath the surface lurks a network of implications and mis-remembered, half-forgotten, nearly-intuited and barely-spelt-out explanations of complex theological knowledge. What is explicated is the clear correspondence between Christ's

cloak (and horse) as the apocalyptic rider and his flesh, obscuring or concealing the divinity hiding underneath. The Latin word *obumbrata* used here has quite a literal and physical meaning, conjuring an object that can cast a shadow over something it obscures, rather than a metaphorical and theoretical one, such as ‘hidden meaning’.

In this section I presented vernacular versions of one verse from the old testament, and showed its diverse application within bilingual sermon material. Macaronic sermons are rife with associations that they spell out, in an assemblage of various imagery and collating diverse sources (Old and New Testament, patristic sources, other sermons, commonplaces). The force with which the *habitus* theological content of the *Quare rubrum* is expressed depended on historical-contextual parallels to which the audience and the preacher had access to (liturgical chants, dramatic play texts, long-form lyrical poetry, manuscript and mural illustrations). At the same time, the formal qualities of this specific text, and its use dependently or separately from the sermon structure, make it a versatile vehicle for the introduction of a *habitus* imagery. The rhetorical structure of the *Quare rubrum*, especially used within the creative sermon conception process, is conducive to this multiplication of *habitus* themes, while making sure the theological implications of these images, the incarnation as assuming a suit of flesh, is coherently pursued. Whether it refers to the image of the pitiful flagellated Christ, the knight redeeming humanity, or the resurrected Christ wearing a cloak marked with fleshly insignia, the sermon material curated here presents the theology of an intimately carnal god to a large vernacular audience.

5.4 Disrobing Christ: flagellation as flaying

Habitus theology, or at least the idea that the mechanism of the incarnation is akin to that of a god donning the costume of humanity, is found at all levels of literacy and across all media in the late medieval England. While it achieved incredible sophistication in mystical works, as well as in some material and visual commentary on the *habitus*, the most common expression of this theology,

'Christ dressed in humanity', is simplistic and dangerously reductive. The skin becomes inert leather coat, multi-part knight's costume or poor shift inherited from hard-working ancestors. This unqualified impassibility is risky, since it presents the idea of a god whose human nature is not fused to his essence, a god that, although undergoing torture, does not suffer as humans would. Nonetheless, as seen in Julian of Norwich's exploration of the textile motif, the metamorphoses between the dermal and textile go both ways. A successful version of *habitus* theology needs this side of the coin in order to preserve its acceptability and orthodoxy. The textile, embroidered with wounds, saturated with bodily fluids or fused, one way or another, to the organic substratum, becomes part of the human body. It behaves the same way the skin of the body does, it bleeds and scabs. Once this sensitivity is added to the textile, its material manipulations (its creation and destruction, both marked by the stabbing and cutting tool) take new, violent meanings. These two movements of exchange in material properties usually take place in the same visual or textual event, in order to avoid oversimplification of the incarnational theology. The *habitus* incarnation theology itself collapses textile and dermal violence in its more lyrical expression. In his ninth meditation on the humanity of Christ (a mediation that also touches on the earthly and resurrected bodies as robes), Anselm extends the typology of Joseph's tunic to the crucifixion. Talking about Joseph as a Christ figure, he writes:

It is the coat of thy Joseph, thy son; an evil wild beast hath devoured him and hath trampled on his garment in its fury, spoiling all the beauty of this his remanent corpse, and lo, five mournful gaping wounds are left in it. This is the garment which thy innocent holy child Jesus... choosing rather to be despoiled of his coat of flesh... (Anselm d.1109, Ninth Meditation).

Anselm not only gives Joseph (or his coat) the wounds of the crucifixion, but also alludes to the main motif that collapsing the textile and the dermal covering of suffering Christ: that of crucifixion and flagellation as flaying.

Nonetheless, *habitus* theology of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries more fruitfully prompted a special attention given to the robings and disrobings of Christ during his passion. One aspect unconnected directly to the *habitus* must be noted about texts concerned with the passion of Christ: its overt antisemitism. Fully the product of its time, the antisemitism of late medieval sources is especially vicious when exploring the context of its ground zero, the flagellation and crucifixion. The perpetrators of violence against Christ's body are explicitly Jewish, and their actions as well as simple existence is condemned. This bias does not directly impact their *habitus*-theological content, but the emotional content of the imagery was definitely enhanced for the medieval audience by the presence of the Jewish Other. This is easily discernible in affective texts such as pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditations on the life of Christ*. The narrator instructs focused attention on the act of dressing performed by Christ, but the emotional stress is on his humiliation in front of his tormentors: 'You will see him, with unmistakable modesty, reverence, and blushing, getting dressed again right in front of them, while they keep on ridiculing him' (Dent 2017, p. 222). Only later, at an ulterior refocusing on the scene, the reader is prompted to meditate on how the ineffable divinity of Christ can relate to his act of clothing himself:

Return now to his divinity and think of that immense and eternal, incomprehensible and imperial majesty incarnate, bending humbly to the floor, stooping and collecting his clothing, and with reverence and blushing, dressing himself the same as if he were the lowliest of men. (Dent 2017, p. 222).

This passage only preserves faint echoes of Philippians, in alluding to the godly form Christ discarded in order to take up the 'habit as man'. Nonetheless, the incarnational valences of the robing and disrobing are made clear in the same chapter a few paragraphs later. In a surprisingly brief vignette, pseudo-Bonaventure notes that Christ's wounds are reopened by the clothing that adhered to the lacerations from the flagellation and was later torn off him (Pseudo-Bonaventure 1868, p. 605). Here, removal of clothing amounts to removal of skin. Because it causes the body to bleed and hurt,

the violent undressing of Christ is equivalent to flaying. This minute detail was seized upon in vernacular elaborations of the passion. The motif of textile flaying, like other *habitus* images, travels through the genres— drama, Latin and vernacular long-form literature, sermonic and mnemonic material. The fourteenth-century vernacular Veronese Passion (*Passione Veronese*), is credited by Peter Dent to have solidified the association between the image of Christ ‘dressed’ in his own blood and the forceful wearing and removal of the purple robe during the passion (Dent 2017, p. 225 n. 39). Another fifteenth-century vernacular work, the English partial adaptation of Philomela Previa (discussed in the previous section) plays on the textile lexical field of the *habitus*: ‘When Jesus Christ died for mankind and was wearing a fully new garment... his blessed body looked all so torn’ (Lydgate 1900, p. 20, ll. 112-123, 127, my translation).

A material flaying was enacted every time the actor playing Christ in the late medieval passion plays would take their leather costume off, on stage or behind the scenes. Less ostensively, but definitely written into the script, is the flaying of Christ in N-town play of *Trial before Pilate*. After his tormentors strip him of his clothes, they describe a sequence of dressing and undressing without using any textile. Instead, they use Christ’s own blood to ‘*array (dress) hym / and rente (tear) hym*’ (Sponsler 1997, p. 148, ll. 33/355-56). In another N-town play, Mary describes the pitiful state of Christ’s body, ‘all torn from top to toe / his flesh without skin (*hyde*)’ (my translation from the Middle English in Gramling 2017, p. 241, ll. 244-45). The topmost layer of this body, therefore, is the film of blood that solidifies across its surface or the textile (a cloak, loincloth or burial shroud) adhered to it. In the absence of textile cover, wrestled off him, and skin, flayed away at the flagellation, Christ’s ‘*flesch*’ itself takes the damage, ‘*al totorn*’ fulfilling its *habitus*-mandated role as envelope of the self. The material connection between leather by-product and Christ’s clothing as reification of his incarnation is acknowledged in late medieval vernacular literature. In the *Charter of Christ* (A-Text, BL, Add. 11307), the simile between a parchment document and Christ’s skin is evident and the comparison that sustains the text. Less prominent is the *habitus* theology embedded in this text, but the sequence of trials that Christ’s body is put through is mirrored by that of

parchment manufacture. At the beginning of his passion, Christ is made to shed his 'jacket (*kirtel*) that I had and more clothes' (l.67, my translation). By the end of this journey, this had morphed into the parchment that Christ's skin becomes: 'splayed to dry on the rood tree/ As parchment is supposed to be' (ll. 79-80; Baker 2018, p. 22-3).

Dramatic technology and scripts, as well as text formulae focused on the material dimension of Christ's dermal surface, only preserve faint (although cumulative) references to an imaginary flaying of Christ. Nonetheless, longer texts dedicated to providing an intimate connection between the human reader and the broken body of Christ during his passion elaborate on this non-Biblical episode. The *Northern Passion* is a text that collected apocryphal stories in order to multiply and effectively prolong the narrative of the passion. An exemplary bricoleur text, the *Northern Passion* draws on apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus and employs mysticism and Franciscan emotional piety towards creating an immersive encounter with Christ's body at its most human moment. The text is an English translation of a French work, and reaches this vernacular form at the end of the thirteenth century, although it remains an alive text, constantly morphing, for the next two centuries. Multiple versions of this long-form rhyming meditation, as well as of analogous *Stanzaic Life of Christ* and *Southern Passion*, have survived. Among others, the *Northern Passion* is known to have been a source for theatrical works such as York and Towneley cycle plays (Shuffelton 2008). The sequence of events in the version in MS Ashmole 61 lexically connect Christ's red cloak with his blood:

They beat him as long as the scourges last. / The blood ran down clinging to him; / Jesus'
body, where he stood, / Was all covered with his blood. / They bound well and fast his feet /
With strong cords, so that they would last. / They hung on him a purple sheet (*palle*) / And all
fell one knee before him. (Northern Passion 2008, ll. 1138-1145).

The detail of the blood enveloping Christ's body is added in two disposable lines. Their inclusion in a tight text where other inessential details are omitted testify to the importance of their addition here. With this couplet, the tormentors dress Christ in two red garments, the covering of blood and the

‘purpull palle’. This scene gets a dialogic postscript in another version of the text, the Harleian manuscript: after the tormentors kneel, they proclaim ‘Hail Jesus, king of Jews. You are dressed (*araid*) in rich attire / since you say you are lord and sire’ (*Northern Passion* 1913, p. 123 ll. 1206-b). This reference to the rich clothes of the king echoes the Apocalyptic and Isaiah man in resplendent clothes, as well as the mirrored image of Christ ‘in habit found as servant’ of Philippians. The purple cloth becomes the focus a little later as well, in a ten-line addition to the description of stripping Christ in the Harleian *Northern Passion*:

The purple cloth that he in stood/ was hardened all with his own blood/ so that it clung on
each side/ full fast onto flesh and hide. / They ripped it off without rest/ when it was firmly
stuck to the flesh / that in their tugging in that tide/ all bled after back and side (*Northern
Passion* 1913, p. 133, ll. 1279-1280f)

The ‘purper’ cloth links back to the original bloodshed at the scourging. This cloth borrows many characteristics from Christ’s body, as it soaks up its fluids. The colour of the cloth is just as easily borrowed from the blood than dyed in pigment, and the tunic moulds to Christ’s body and becomes a crusty carapace. Its removal, then, amounts to a flagellation: the body bleeds again.

The more accomplished elaborations of this episode can be found in long-form affective texts narrowly concentrating on the passion, such as Richard Rolle’s lyrical meditations. Rolle chooses vignettes such as the flagellation and builds up detail in order to immerse the reader into a fully-embodied meditation. His texts survive in several versions of different length and with slightly different angles to the point of view. Nonetheless, he regarded this detail important enough to include a running commentary on it in two surviving witnesses. The address in second person makes the physical intimacy with the rent and bleeding body more acute:

what a terrible plight you were in when your tunic was removed, when the traitor Herod
pulled it off you: it had stuck firmly with the blood from the violent flogging to the flesh of
your back, which was beaten agonisingly raw and ripped your poor skin; the robe stuck to it

and had dried on it; your flesh was so tender, so weakened and so sore, that they ripped it off your body roughly and sharply, and took no notice of how agonizingly the stripping distressed you because some pieces of the blisters and torn skin came away with it. (Rolle 1989, p. 94 (Cambridge University Library MS LI.i.8))

Stripping distresses Christ both mentally, because of the humiliation highlighted in the Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditation*, and physically due to the con-fusion between skin and textile. Undressing is literally weaponised. Flogging, undressing and full-on (non-biblical) flaying collapse on the same material locus, the skin of Christ. Rolle creates painful soundscapes of flesh and textile material ripping, through alliteration and repetition: ‘agonisingly raw and ripped’, ‘agonizingly the stripping’. The verb ‘ripped’, a refrain in the passage, addresses both tunic and skin, in a clever attempt to confuse these two surfaces’ outlines. What did the tormentors ‘ripped... off your body’, the robe or the flesh? Similar attention to a bricolage of dermis and textile is paid in the longer version in Uppsala MS C. 494, ff.16r-v. While the skin is barely holding on together, the robe is clinging so fast to the body as to create discomfort when torn off:

at the beginning, at Herod’s command your tunic was taken from you; it had fused to your body with the blood of your scourging, when you were so cut and rent, beaten so sore and so long until completely all of the blood was bled; your skin barely hung together when they drew off your clothing that clung to you with dried blood... that pitiful stripping when many a piece of your tender skin followed. (Morgan 1947, pp. 54-5).

Julian of Norwich seizes on the same imagery of rending cloth during Christ’s passion when she builds her very visual, Philippians-inspired *habitus* theology, as explored before, in her fifty-first chapter. The incarnation as a servant, dressed from the womb of Mary with the jacket of humanity, is directly associated with the rending of Christ’s skin during the flagellation. The link between the two is made explicit:

That his jacket was to be torn and rent full of small holes, it is understood the blows and the whipping, the thorns and the nails, the drawing and the dragging, ripping his tender flesh - as I saw the flesh was rent in some sections from the top of the head, falling in pieces as the bleeding subsided, and it then began to dry, clinging again to the bone. (Julian of Norwich 1994, ll. 2038-2042, my translation).

In another description of the buffeting, Julian manages to add depth to the same gruesome detail of sagging flesh separated from the bone of the skull. Her attempt at hyper-realistic close-up enhances the horror, while presenting the viewer with a fully-realised *habitus* which would re-occur in her other visions. This description presents an ill-fitting skin at the verge of separating itself with that which it disguises, at the moment of Christ's death:

I saw that the sweet skin and the tender flesh, with the hair and the blood, were raised and loosened out from the bone with the thorns, where it [the skin] was pierced through in many pieces; [it was] like a cloth that is sagging, as if it would very soon have fallen off because of its heaviness and looseness, while it had natural moisture. (Julian of Norwich 1994, ll. 628-31, my translation).

The parallel, reverse transformation of skin-as-cloak, the trope of ripping of the cloak as a sensitive surface does not have as strong a sermon tradition as *Quare rubrum*, mostly because the latter is not a biblical detail. Nonetheless, the flaying of Christ does make its way into preaching material. In Nicholas Phillipp's sermon discussed above (section 6.3.2), Christ's tunic torn by the Jews is explicitly translated as his flesh: 'the Jews... carried his tunic (*tunicam*), that is, his flesh (*carnem*)' (Little 1949, p. 247). This image of rending cloth and skin re-appears later in the sermon, glossing letter H ('for hurtyng') in an alphabet of the passion. Here the imagery of the two coverings for the body bleeds into each other, in one of the most explicit figurations of this detail as *habitus*:

after that they put on him a scarlet cloak (*induerunt eum clamide*) and then they tore off the cloak (*extraxerunt de clamide*), tearing off all the skin (*pellem totum extraxerunt*), and the

blood (*sanguis*) flowed a second time. Think of it, man, who takes pleasure in luxurious clothes (*vestimentorum*), how for your sins he was dressed (*indutus*) in his own blood (Little 1949, p. 253)

Dressed in a scarlet cloak, Christ looks like he is covered in blood; the textile covering of his body fails to obscure the hidden content enveloped just under his skin, which then comes off as if another layer of clothing. This paradox of a clothed body that reveals its inner secrets is inverted by the second sentence, where Christ, stripped off not only of his robe but also of his own skin, is now dressed (*indutus*) in his own blood. The cloak supposed to obscure the naked body makes its vulnerability and rawness visible, while the body stripped off its layers is enveloped in the stuff of humanity: blood. The sermon creates more immediacy in the imagery of in-carnated Christ by directly addressing the listener (*cogita tu homo*), making him aware of his own body and its luxurious covering. This sort of rhetorical convention, of pulling the listener in the tableau of the passion in order to involve them in a process of com-passion (suffering with) Christ and/or Mary has been thoroughly discussed by medievalists. It has been usually associated with Franciscan devotion, and with the influence this had on affective spiritual literature. Nonetheless, in this sermon this rhetorical appeal is more than just a plea for affective participation; it is rather a tool towards embodied identification. The listener is encouraged to mindfully, consciously and thoroughly inhabit their embodiment. This way, they would reflect on the identity of Christ as an incarnate god, a fellow human, starting from clothes (external identity) and ending with blood (biological substrate shared by all humans). The rapid flickering between textile and bodily imagery does not put these two lexical fields in contrast, but equates them and conjures up the image of Christ cloaked in his humanity.

The appeal of the image of Christ's flaying should already be relatively obvious. A non-biblical detail borrowed from the Nicodemus Apocrypha, the imagery enjoyed the same multi-genre and multi-mediatic reach as its counterpart. The concept of skin-as-textile, as well as textile-as-skin, connected

with a theology of the *habitus* incarnation, is found in dramatic and lyrical texts, mystical and didactic works, and sermon material. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it circulated in vernaculars, and in prose as well as verse. One last example of *habitus* flaying demonstrates not only its aesthetic and emotional appeal, but also its bibliographic history. William Nassington's *Tractus de Trinitate et Unitate* (before 1359) centres the passion of Christ, described in the second-person, in a larger narrative of the creation and final salvation of the human race. The 432-line poem survives in three high-status compilations of poetry, from the end of the fourteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century (Zweck 2010, p. 204). The scourging and flaying takes place over the course of more than ten lines.

He clothed you in white garment and sent you to Pilate again. / Afterward only you were scourged in Pilate's house, bare-naked / so that then, your hide was all ripped / and the blood ran down on each side. / The knights after that scourging / in scorn wrapped around you a mantle (*mantill*) / that clung around your body with your blood. / With satisfaction they pulled it off and that aggrieved you / and lifted off all the skin at that point / since that clothing (*clethinge*) clung tightly to your hide / And when they had done you this pain / they clothed (*clede*) you in your own clothing again (Nassington 1889, ll. 209-222).

The attention to textiles is here noticeable. Christ's garment is given an unnecessary – for the narrative – prominence, while no mention of his own clothes is made. After flagellation, Christ is wrapped in a mantle that gets ripped off together with the skin. In textual as well as visual tradition, this is the *purpura* mantle. Nonetheless, in contrast with the first mention of a textile, the text does not mention its colour. The reader is left to piece together a red cloth, the white garment now dyed with Christ's blood. At this point Christ is dressed as much in the mantle as he is in his crusted blood stuck to his 'hide'. This is the point of exchange in signification – the organic matter becomes removable cover, while the clothing becomes skin. As a result of this exchange, stripping (the cloth-skin/the skin-cloth) becomes unavoidably a flaying. When this mantle – as well as the skin – comes

off ‘they clothed you in your own clothing again’. Considering the absence of an original clothing just a few lines before, this re-clothing can be read as an explanation, a translation of the result of the flaying. ‘When they had done’ is not sequential, but simultaneous. Christ is re-clothed in blood, as he was before the mantle was put on him.

In this chapter I have presented distinct *habitus* tropes that in late medieval English literature has inherited from Sedulius’ comprehensive work, such as that of the god dressed in a costume of skin, the knight equipped with a most vulnerable suit of arms, or the flagellation of Christ by disrobing. These images accumulate towards a solidified, multi-genre *habitus* theology of the incarnation. This is a thoroughly assembled theology, materially and emotionally-oriented. The emotional content, prompted by memory work and deeply inhabiting the body, ensured that Christ’s incarnation is seen as fully human, while being more-than. The idea of a transhuman Christ, of a Christ that can put on the leather costume and slip into and out of roles and embodiments like Langland’s Piers, has a radical potential for personal salvation. Imagined as a suit, the humanity of Christ does not have to be normative. The highly imaginative religion that sustained such a theology as the *habitus* gave license to imaging Christ’s embodiment as analogous with that of the believer – man or woman, disabled or white, cis and sexual as well as genderqueer and chaste.

^{xxv} I choose here to overlook her a historical homophobic remarks, which will be echoed by McNamer 2010, pp. 177-193, when discussing the same genre of *improperia* poems.

^{xxvii} While outdated in its lack of nuance and intersectionality, Ruth Mazo Karras’ discussion of gender-coded sexual hierarchies in the middle ages (2005) still largely represents the way sexual bodies were seen in western European society

^{xxviii} The theory that a theology based on emotionality would appeal wider and stay stronger outside the institutional church is not a new insight. Bynum and Petroff (1994) (at the individual level) and on the other side Hollywood (2001) and Beckwith (1993) (at corporate/social level) all discuss this way of emotionally relating to theological knowledge.

6. The legacy of *habitus* theology

The *habitus* trope does not disappear with the transition between medieval and early modern theology, or with the restructuring of incarnational theology that reformation attended to. In his edited works (that circulated in many print runs for an entire century since the 1730s), John Bunyan systematically rephrases Philippians in the same manner that medieval preachers and mystics did: ‘indeed his glory is veiled, and cannot be seen, but as discovered by father. It is veiled with flesh, with meanness of descent from the flesh, and with that ignominy and shame that attended him in the flesh’ (Bunyan 1831, p. 397). Charles Wesley’s hymnology, including the phrase ‘veiled in flesh’, is completely incomprehensible by scholarship that has no historical context for this (traditionally catholic, by virtue of its age) imagery:

we are not sure what we are to behold. Further confusion comes with the injunction ‘veiled in flesh the godhead see!’. When godhead is veiled in flesh the whole point would seem to be that we cannot see it (...) the modern Methodist...and Presbyterian...versions fiddle with the relationship, trying to make sense of the fleshly veil (Marshall 1995, p. 51).

The veil of flesh has therefore lost its transhumanist empowering meanings, and godhead is hiding, rather than revealing itself, under the veil. The textile or fleshly veil, the material that makes metaphysical truths visible, becomes an inscrutable textual veil, without substance but which obscures not only the sanctity of the body but also its own rich history. This thesis has endeavoured to recover that history (in the form of the *habitus* theology) and to link it with embodied methodologies that place it on a political level of radical inclusion and transhistorical connection. The historical material easily lends itself to being examined through a queer methodology, making the *habitus* a great surface for affective and material connection between past and present.

6.1 Queer Christ and salvific trans-gendering

The criticism levelled at much modern Christianity and its use of its deep historical past is that it is patriarchal and androcentric. Thoroughly invested in a womanist theology, Mary Daly blames Protestantism for eliminating 'the ghost of the goddess', Mary (Daly 1973, pp. 87-89; 1978, p. 88). She nonetheless also condemns the reclamationist renamings such as Christa, which initially arose as a pluralist and inclusive role model for women's theological liberation and leadership in church as a second wave feminist praxis that cyclically reappears with each new wave. Echoing Daly, feminist theologian Julia Baudzej reflects in 2008 on the modern theological Christology's recourse to Christa: 'Can we already see a representation of a man passing for a woman here? With nurturing, feminine flesh of a man?'. She argues that the femininity of Christ promoted by womanist theologians colonises feminine territory and violates the female body by taking its agentic power and making it a male practice (Baudzej 2008, pp. 79-2). The recent history of Catholic theological epistemology provides current 'radical feminist' voices with a genealogy and a discursive practice that reinforces the creation of theological trans-exclusionary discourses. Baudzej perpetuates a simplistic and transphobic theological discourse by eschewing exactly the multiplicity and flux which medieval and modern theologians explore through a queer/trans Christology.

This thesis counterbalances this binary theology with a queer theological history that has as much if not even more legitimacy within (at least the Catholic) tradition. What this thesis is (and an extended transhumanist theological project based on this scholarship could) endeavouring is exactly what Daly sets herself in opposition of:

Jesus, androcracy's absolute androgyne, is male femininity incarnate... This Christian demolition of the goddess and mythic establishment of male divinity has paved the way for the technological elimination of women through the application of modern medicine, transsexualism, cloning, and other forms of genetic engineering (Daly 1978, p. 88).

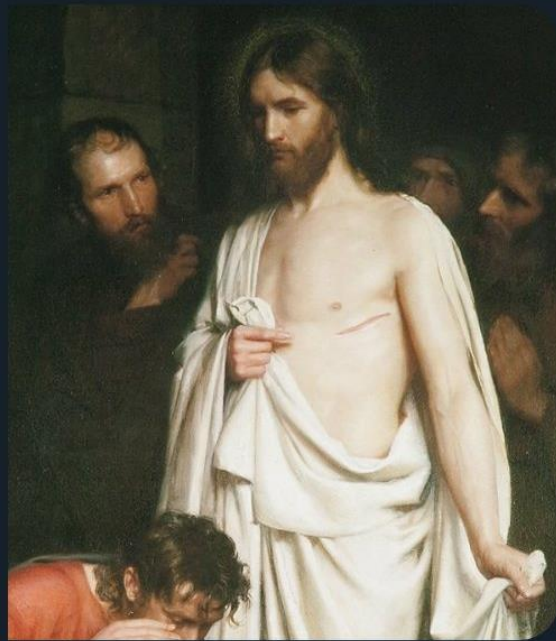
The *habitus* theory and the methodologies used to mine it from medieval texts and images assert the complexity of the gender of an genderqueer, incarnate Christ, never simply replacing one identity with its opposite. It appropriates the deep history of theology to reveal possibilities of an orthodox transsexual, clone, cyborg Christ unashamedly, unencumbered by bioessentialism and the mythology of a stable body. While queer theology has not come to terms with its radical history, responses by trans people accumulate in radical work such as Jo Clifford's *Jesus, Queen of Heaven* (first performed in 2009; published in 2014) where Christ comes back as a trans woman, and Elisabeth Ohlson's trans reimagining of Caravaggio's *Incredulity of St Thomas* (figures 6.1 and 6.2) where Christ's side wound becomes a mastectomy scar. These are joined by theoretical, speculative and creative work by non-professionals, who find salvation in their trans body as *imago Christi* (figure 6.3)



Figure 6.1 (a) left: Caravaggio, *Incredulity of St Thomas*, Italy 1602 (Sansouci Picture Gallery, Potsdam, Germany); (b) right: Elisabeth Ohlson Wallin, *ID: trans*, Sweden 2018, digital exhibition

The larger scope of this thesis is not only the formulation of a historical theology encoded in material and visual culture, but more so a recovery of a thoroughly legitimate and documented Western European Christian past that is empowering for queer individuals. I am therefore recovering a history for modern radical Christology such as that of McLaughlin and Althaus-Reid, which imagines a liberationist theology with 'high interpellative power' (2000, pp. 95-101). The importance of a nuanced understanding of what this multivalence and gender non-conformity of Christ means, from a transgender-embodied way of thinking, a trans-historical ontoepistemology, is important in

Scars like mine!



7:45 · 12 Apr 20 · [Twitter Web App](#)

Figure 6.3 *Scars Like Mine*, Aaron Llwyn Barnes (2020) recreating Carl Heinrich Bloch's 1881 *Doubting Thomas*

modern theological discourse. Althaus-Reid has written about the importance of a similarly-embodied Christ for empowerment of marginal communities (Althaus-Reid 2000, p. 89). A theology that accepts and celebrates creative embodiments of Christ – such as, to give some medieval examples, female/feminine, disabled/leper or posthuman/transhuman – works towards challenging a hegemonic stabilisation of the theological imaginary. This type of radical theology is not a modern project. The medieval multivalent theology of a thoroughly human incarnated Christ, with its embodied and materially-driven creativity, has empowered individuals from the margins, such as the disabled Alice of Schaerbeek (Spencer-Hall, 2015) and intersex/transgender mystic Juana de la Cruz (Boon, 2018).

More than that, the language and medium of this counter-hegemonic theology in itself calls into question received genres of making theology. Ken Stone remarks that queer biblical studies 'call into

question any rigid distinction between ‘theological’ and ‘non-theological’ readings of the bible. This distinction ... may be another one of those binary oppositions that is in serious need of a deconstructive analysis’ (Stone 2001, p. 29). The project of culling examples of *habitus* theology from a multiplicity of contemporary media, voices and positions (institutional or disenfranchised, collective or personal) emphasizes the power of a ‘jointly-owned cultural artefact in which entire populations held a stake’ (Gutt 2018b, p. 55). Dispensing with Stone’s binary, the medieval *habitus* theology, thriving through bricolage and cross-textual reading as well as through a materially-engaged thinking, is an example of such queer exegesis. Emergent in a western church facing the threat of decentralisation and reformation at the end of the middle ages, the theologians of this embodied Christocentric praxis were illuminators, artisans, mystics, anchorites, leathermakers and butchers.

The pervasive historiographical frame of medieval gender variance of Christ and of his followers in literary, historical and theological studies is that of unsexing. Its mechanism, certainly advocated by early medieval, male-leadership-dominated Latinate church, was rejection of one’s sexual and gendered attributes in order to approximate a Christlike ‘third gender’. Nonetheless, this mythological unsexing has stretched to encompass the theoretical understanding of the entire history of medieval church. In order to replace this historiographical trope, this thesis shows that the high and late medieval Christ was all flesh *in potentia*; the Chalcedonian body emphasized Christ’s existence as a human who experienced not only aging and pain, but also pleasure and transformation. This understanding of a fully-humanated Christ had a major impact on the poetics of the high and late medieval believers, both lay and mystics, orthodox and heterodox, personal and communal. Medieval *Imitatio Christi* by people that were not embodied identically as the imagined ‘historical’ (presumably male, cisgender, heterosexual, abled) Christ paints a picture of marginal communities (women, queers and crips) finding agency and a reflection of Christ’s embodiment in their own bodies. This can be seen in the affective community of the lepers from the very start of the thesis, Francis of Assisi’s imitation Christi, or the *imitatio transvesti* that Bychowski chronicles

(Bychowski 2016a). Medieval historiography, influenced by somatophobic (and by extension misogynist) post-reformation church as well as the gender and racial biases embedded in the institutional systems in which both of them (theology and history) are produced, denies the creative potential of this incarnational poetics not only for women but for other minorities such as people of colour, crips and queers. More than that, it also denies the empowering potential of extending the history of these identities back into the middle ages, a 'golden age' for a lot of conservative radical groups. The reframing of medieval theology through a trans theoretical lens pushes towards a re-evaluation of the implicit binariness of the way historical scholarship writes and thinks about genders and bodies, as well as a recuperation of an orthodox Christian history that emphasizes the non-conforming, transhumanist embodiment of Christ. This kind of futuristic outlook does not, nonetheless, need to break with a tradition that is important for both the religious as well as the queer community. History, as I showed, is ripe for an inclusive reclamation of an orthodox idea of Christ as a thoroughly embodied god, 'in habit found as man'. And the demand for such a trans saviour in the current political and religious climate is palpable.

6.2 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have traced the late antique to medieval intellectual history of an incarnational formulation, the *habitus* theory. This examination chronicles its development from biblical textual source (Philippians 2:7, 'in habit found as man'), through unstable formulations verging on heretical, to its wide-spread orthodox circulation in the late medieval theological discourse, Latin and vernacular preaching, secular literature, the material culture of medieval drama and visualisations of Christ. The thesis also puts this theology in its textual and visual context, especially related to Mary, Bartholomew and John the Baptist. The art historical project is aided by a nuanced taxonomy of gendered bodies in medieval visual culture, that proposes paying much more attention to skin colour as gendered signifier.

The *habitus* theory proposes a god becoming human by virtue of clothing in the somatic materiality of humanity, a knowledge-producing journey and transformation from non-human to human akin to a gender transition. The trans-humanity of Christ, rather than relying on prosthetics or science, maps onto an ontological transformation of the nature of Christ from one state to another – the etymological root of ‘trans’ in transgender. The mechanics of the *habitus* incarnation, an exchange in (material or metaphysical) costumes, links these transformations of god into human with transitions and an itinerant identity. Mutation of identity therefore does not have to operate on just one axis, that of humanity, but, as I showed with regards to the concept of Christ’s embodied gender, reveals possibilities of travelling between poles of other binaries. The link of incarnation with costuming is exploited not just in theoretical and metaphorical language but also in the visual and material culture of explaining this theology. The nuanced understanding of contiguous identities from across spectrums (human/god, male/female) reveals that not only humanity, but also gender and sex are socio-cultural constructs that are open to challenge. Medieval incarnational phenomenology exploits radical mutations of otherised bodies; recovering its history is recovering a history of alienation of socially as well as medically/technically reconfigured bodies, a key feature of posthumanist as well as trans and genderqueer theoretical thought. This approach is one of the methodologies that can be applied to medieval theology, and a larger project (one that might be addressed in a book-length extension of this thesis, and that was embryonic in previous iterations of this thesis) would encompass issues of reclaiming Christ’s medieval body – through looking at it dismemberments, animalities and cyborg qualities – for other marginalised communities such as people of colour or disabled people.

The purpose of this thesis is not to demonstrate that Christ was universally considered as a transgender or transhuman figure in the orthodox church of the late middle ages. There is no unified reading; it is impossible to make a generalised statement about the entirety of the medieval population. The thesis brings evidence from all levels without holding up that this reading was universal, and also without collapsing the multiplicity of personal and embodied readings into one

narrative. The medieval reader in this thesis, and their readings, are themselves part of a social, textual and temporal bricolage. The purpose of the thesis is, nonetheless, to collect evidence of theological, popular, poetic, visual and dramatic texts that open the avenue towards this reading through an agreed-upon and legitimate contemporary lens. This historical material is examined in the context of a methodological framework that 'seize(s) the ethical importance of transgender as a category for acknowledging and retrieving forms of identification' (Betancourt 2018, p. 2). Including trans/queer approaches to historiography is a necessary outcome of ethical scholarship in the 21st century, a scholarship that pushes against cisgender, racist, misogynist and heterosexual biases of the very institutions that enabled the perpetuation of these hegemonic myths, the university and the church. The medieval *habitus* theory gives a history to the theoretical modern discussions about gender and sex constructedness, and empowers communities with the weight of long-term historical legitimacy.

The project is not just a historical one, but a mythical one as well; the thesis recovers medieval Christianity as (an impossibly homogenous) culture where the potentialities of the body (on a myriad of ontological axes) were publicly and socially acknowledged, and from where personal mythologies and communal ontologies of the modern transgender/transhuman body can be extracted. The medieval Chalcedonian Christ translates the ontological drama of transgender embodiment; in true medieval fashion, the history of this body should be fulfilled by anagogical and typological readings drawing not only on a materialist, but also temporalist assemblage. Disruptions in chrononormativity, one of the methodologies of this thesis, result in a rethinking of possibilities based on radical relationships between past and future. This is a relationship critical of the present's difference from the past, and the historiography based on this model is a homo-affective endeavour. Affective assemblages across time create queer community based on recognition and desire for similar bodies, on the way these bodies are constructed through the same mechanisms and are beheld in the same gesture: 'Ecce homo'. In a methodology remarkably close to that of the medieval encounter with the divine, Menon's use of historicism uncovers across time (modern/medieval), just

as the incarnation theology uncovers across ontologies (god/human), a deep similarity, 'the homo in us all' (Menon 2008, p. 142). Avowedly queering time and material encounters frees the historian to take an openly affective look onto the past, where people might have looked, loved and worshiped as them.

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