



***Abstract – Eating the Face of Christ. Philip Good and his Physical Relationship with Veronicas***

Philip the Good (1396–1467) updated his grandfather's prayer book with many images, including no fewer than six depicting the Face of Christ. Larger images served as folios, and smaller images were sewn to pages. He handled these Veronicas intensely and even kissed them. Facial oils and dirt deposited in cumulative layers on the images testify to the duke's intense facial contact with the Veronicas. Philip's Veronicas received another kind of treatment as well: the paint of two has been scraped off, revealing the parchment underneath. Carefully avoiding the eyes, the knife-wielder has concentrated on the paint from the forehead and nose. Why? This article proposes that the paint may have been lifted off so that the duke could actually ingest the very substance of his favorite images, possibly during his attenuated demise of pneumonia. In this way, the duke would have been restoring a medicinal function to the image-icon, which had, after all, been brought to Rome as a cure. Other owners of small Veronicas likewise scraped them, possibly for medicine. If this hypothesis is correct, then it also explains why such images were often rendered in thick paint that could easily be freed up and consumed.

***Keywords***

Philip the Good (Duke of Burgundy), medieval manuscripts, miraculous cures, painted Veronicas

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# Eating the Face of Christ

## Philip the Good and his Physical Relationship with Veronicas

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Philip the Bold commissioned an enormous prayer book in 1376 and then proceeded to use it heavily. After he died in 1404, the manuscript found its way into the hands of his grandson Philip the Good<sup>1</sup>. All of the inherited signs of wear in his grandfather's immense prayer book may have encouraged the younger Philip to treat it as a living, physical, functional manuscript rather than as some showpiece. As Anne van Buren has shown, Philip the Good had the book dismantled and had texts and images added to it before having the *Grandes Heures* rebound in two volumes around 1450<sup>2</sup>. They are now in Cambridge and Brussels<sup>3</sup>. These volumes absorbed, *inter alia*, six parchment sheets that depict the Face of Christ<sup>4</sup>. Each of these

are also mentioned in an inventory); after John was assassinated, the manuscript was updated for his widow, Margaret of Bavaria. From there it passed to Margaret's son, Philip the Good. It is one of the largest pre-1400 books of hours.

- 2 The volumes are now Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 11035–37 and Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 3–1954. Anne Hagopian Van Buren, "Dreux Jehan and the *Grandes Heures* of Philip the Bold", in *Als Ich Can: Liber Amicorum in Memory of Professor Dr. Maurits Smeyers*, Bert Cardon et al. eds, (Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts = Corpus Van Verluchte Handschriften), Leuven 2002, pp. 1377–1414, considers the role of Dreux Jehan and also presents a systematic analysis of the original and added components of the manuscript. As Van Buren writes on p. 1383, "The *Grandes Heures* are one of the most disrupted and most worn by use of medieval books. Gatherings are interrupted, truncated, augmented, or displaced".
- 3 See Francis Wormald, Phyllis M. Giles, "Description of Fitzwilliam Museum Ms. 3–1954", *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, IV/1 (1964), pp. 1–28; *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Additional Illuminated Manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum Acquired between 1895 and 1979 (Excluding the McClean Collection)*, Francis Wormald, Phyllis M. Giles eds, Cambridge 1982; Megan H. Foster, *Pilgrimage through the Pages: Pilgrim's Badges in Late Medieval Devotional Manuscripts*, PhD Thesis (University of Illinois), Urbana, 2011, pp. 94–122. De Winter connects the two volumes with notes in archival records: de Winter, "The *Grandes Heures*" (n. 1), pp. 786–842; and *Idem*, *La Bibliothèque de Philippe le Hardi, Duc de Bourgogne (1364–1404): Étude sur les Manuscrits à Peintures d'une Collection Princièrre à l'Époque du Style Gothique International*, (Documents, Études et Répertoires / Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes), Paris 1985, p. 183.
- 4 Kathryn Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment: The Social Lives of Medieval Books*, New Haven/London 2015, pp. 176–184.

1 According to Patrick M. de Winter, "The *Grandes Heures* of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy: The Copyist Jean l'Avenant and His Patrons at the French Court", *Speculum*, LVII/4 (1982), pp. 786–842, the *Grandes Heures* passed to John the Fearless in 1404 (when they



**D**eus qui nobis signatis lumine vultu  
 tu dñe memoriale tuū ad instantiam  
 beate veronice ymaginem tuam sudario im-  
 pressam relinquere voluisti. presta quesu-  
 mus vt ita nunc in terris per speculum in  
 enigmate ipsam venerari honorare et ado-  
 rare valeamus. vt te iudicem uenientem su-  
 per nos faciat ad faciem securi uideamus. Qui  
 uiuis et regnas dñs. per oīa secula seculorū amē.



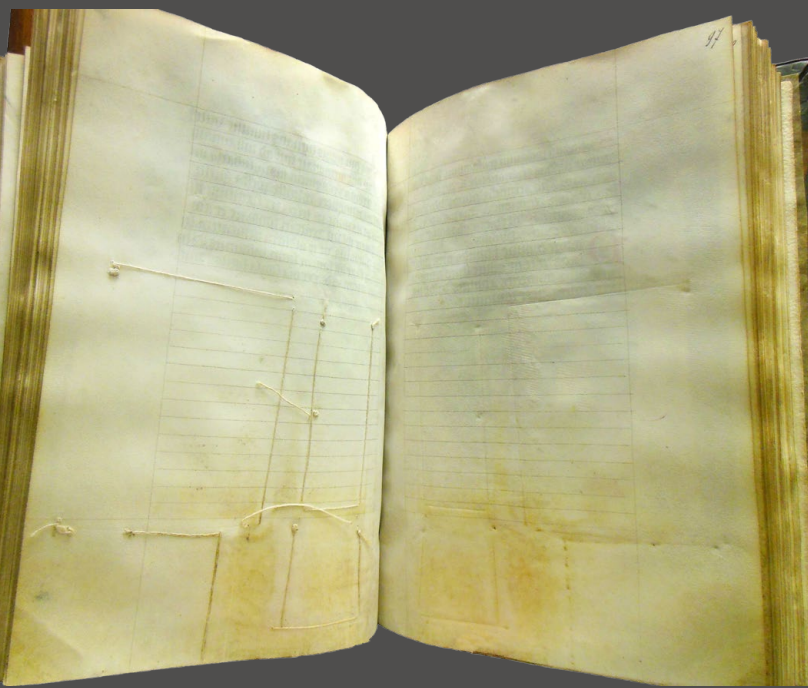
the Good collected these images successively over time, which reveals his sustained interest in this theme; and he venerated them in a particularly physical way by handling them and touching their surfaces to the point where the images are severely darkened with use. Moreover, he seems to have used a blade to scrape the paint from the faces. As I will suggest, near the end of his life he may have used the images as spiritual food.

This paper's aim is to speculate on how and why he treated these images of the Face of Christ in such a physical manner. To do this, I investigate Philip's broader patterns of devotional performance and consider his behavior against cultural norms of the Late Middle Ages, namely the rugged handling and possible ingestion of images of the Face of Christ for their perceived medicinal effects.

### Emotional Attachment

Parchment paintings depicting the Veronica refer to the prototype kept in Rome; however, the status of these objects as souvenirs of Rome is questionable. It is more likely that these came from different sources made throughout Europe. Given the significant number of survivors, they must have been made in large quantities. Parchment paintings had any number of uses, partly determined by how the recipient chose to keep the object, and partly by the size of the leaf. Most extant flat Veronicas survived because they were preserved in manuscripts, which have protected something that was otherwise ephemeral. While pilgrims who went to Rome would certainly have had the opportunity to purchase miniature replicas of the Veronica in a variety of media, such "souvenirs" were also apparently produced north of the Alps, where they might have served as mementos from virtual journeys, or as relics of a famous, distant place, whether their owner had visited it physically or virtually. After all, the Veronica had a famous history of travelling to the afflicted, rather than having the afflicted travel to it, and replicas were considered as efficacious as the real thing.

The images of the Face of Christ Philip the Good added to the *Grandes Heures* are all parchment paintings, that is, images painted on parchment that were not necessarily destined for a codex, but





had any number of functions as loose objects. Philip the Good, or his book maker, affixed four small loose images of the Face of Christ onto a blank, ruled page of the *Grandes Heures* (fol. 96r; [Fig. 1]). These have been attached with linen thread that pierces the page several times, as the back of the page reveals [Fig. 2]. This demonstrates that all four images were added to the page in a single campaign of sewing. After a blank folio (fol. 97), he inserted a larger parchment painting so that it formed a page in the book (fig. 98r; [Fig. 3]). Although artists with various levels of skill made these five images with different techniques, the book's owner has conceptually grouped them together on fols 96r and 98r because they all represent the same subject. As such, they appear as a collection, mounted in the book. It is possible that Philip left fol. 97 blank in the anticipation of collecting and sewing further Veronicas to that page. Indeed, his collecting activities did continue, as evidenced by yet another large Face of Christ, which appears at the beginning of the manuscript (fol. 8v) and was also large enough to form an entire page [Fig. 4]<sup>5</sup>. It seems likely, therefore, that Philip owned at least six images of the Face of Christ before 1450 and had these incorporated into his book. But why did he need so many?

Because copies of the Veronica were understood to possess all of the supernatural properties of the original, there were powerful motivations for reproducing the image endlessly, just as there were for collecting it endlessly. Producers made them and collectors collected them because they were effective and immediate. Their effects were widely understood. Two of the four images have further added value: the incipit of the prayer *Salve sancta facies*. As the sheets are too small to contain the entire prayer, they only contain the opening words. They thus assume that the beholder would know the entire prayer and be able to recite it from memory, based on this prompt. This suggests that the images crystalize a pervasive image-text ritual, held in memory.

5 I am not sure why Philip the Good ignored the image on fol. 8v. Signs of wear on the recto of the same leaf show offsets of sewing threads, which were used to affix round badges to the previous folio (fol. 7), which has intense signs of wear. Thus, fol. 8 was in place at an early date. Clearly, the duke concentrated his attention to the Veronicas on fols 96–98.



1 / Four different parchment paintings depicting the Veronica, all pasted to a single leaf of the *Grandes Heures* of Philip the Bold / Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 11035–37, fol. 96r

2 / Opening of the *Grandes Heures* of Philip the Bold, showing 15<sup>th</sup>-century stitches holding the small Veronicas in place / Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 11035–37, fol. 96v–97r

3 / Parchment painting depicting Veronica holding up her veil, with the prayer *Salve sancta facies* forming an integral component at the bottom; folio inserted into the *Grandes Heures* of Philip the Bold / Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 11035–37, fol. 98r



Parchment paintings depicting the Veronica usually feature sparse designs executed simply. Although the four examples sewn to fol. 96r differ in size, aspect ratio, and composition, they all present the Face of Christ as a very dark silhouette, whose attenuated features terminate in a bifurcated beard. The blackness of the face eats light and swallows most of the details, thereby reducing the need for nuanced modelling. The two sheets in the upper tier include the contextualizing detail of the female saint. The painter did not need to master the human figure to paint these, since most of Veronica's body is obfuscated by the enormous sudarium. Three of the four parchment paintings show the Face of Christ within a round nimbus. Thus, the main compositional elements comprise simple geometric shapes, which an amateur could master.

What is most striking about the images is the thickness of their paint, the boldness of their compositions, and their small size. In short, these could be produced with someone with few skills and limited materials, perhaps upcycling offcuts from the manuscript industry. Made by amateur painters and scribes, the sheets were entrepreneurial endeavors by a non-artist class. This amateurishness contrasts with the way people treasured the objects.

As the Veronicas do not fit the manuscript well, they were undoubtedly not made for it. It is unlikely that these parchment paintings were designed to be used in a book at all. Rather, they may have been designed as objects to hold, keep in a box, or tack onto the wall. Because they originated with a famous icono-relic prototype and bore the association with a miraculous image<sup>6</sup>, these objects transcended questions of "quality", such that a very elite manuscript might come to include them. Perhaps this fact also licensed owners to handle the images more, because they were external to the book, and amateur, but at the same time provocatively and attractively authentic. These images therefore would have a status within the book beyond that of the established, commissioned images: they were special objects of devotion precisely because they did not originate in the book's production.

### How the Veronicas in the Grandes Heures Were Handled

Whereas professional photographs of the manuscript decontextualize the folios, flatten them, and reduce some of the signs of wear by "correcting" the color, an informal snapshot gives a better sense of the extent of Philip's physical and oral devotions. The extent of the wear is palpable when one views the openings from 95v–98r, fanned out [Fig. 5]. Fol. 95v is ruled and has the *Salve sancta*

<sup>6</sup> See Hans Belting, "In Search of Christ's Body. Image or Imprint?", in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, Papers from a Colloquium held at the Bibliotheca Hertziana, (Rome and the Villa Spelman, Florence, Villa Spelman Colloqui, 6), Herbert L. Kessler, Gerhard Wolf eds, Bologna 1998), pp. 1–11; and the other essays in that and in the current volume.





4/ Parchment painting depicting Veronica holding up her veil, with a prayer to God the Father added to the bottom; folio inserted into the Grandes Heures of Philip the Bold / Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 11035-37, fol. 8v

5/ Hand-held image showing the wear to the Face of Christ images and accompanying texts / Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 11035-37, fol. 95v-98r

*facies* inscribed on it in a hand from the time of the rebinding (ca 1450). Fols 96–97 were also ruled but mostly blank, implying that the planner left open the possibility that they could receive more script, such as more prayers to Christ's face. Indeed, the top of fol. 96r contains a short prayer to Veronica and her image, but it did not fill the page, and therefore it left more than half the folio blank. This blank parchment demanded fill, and the duke did so with four small images. Philip apparently considered all of the Veronicas sewn onto fol. 96r authentic and did not limit himself to one especially good image. Each of them, no matter how bad and no matter how different from the others, was invested with its meaning. He therefore needed to perform devotion to them all, because they were all an accretion of little miracles, each one bearing its own miraculous weight.

And perform devotion, he did. As a collection, the images on 96–98 formed a constellation that repeatedly drew the duke's attention. They have all therefore incurred a common level of grime in addition to whatever wear they received in their previous career as loose objects. Ground-in dirt reveals the duke's affection for these images: he has rubbed and touched those on 96r so that the details are no longer visible, so buried are they beneath the soil. This veil of dirt extends to fol. 98r, the inserted full-page Veronica, which is large enough to accommodate images of Sts Peter and Paul. As with fol. 96r, the duke has apparently stroked this image, handled its text, and kissed the image of the face. Clearly his attentions did not extend to the top fifth of the sheet, where Sts Veronica, Peter and Paul are represented, absent signs of wear. The material evidence suggests that his osculations were reserved for the Face of Christ alone.

Not just the images, but the area all around them is darkened with wear, as if he had inserted his mouth and lips and his entire head into the opening of the large book. This caused the oil from his skin and the moisture from his mouth and nose to come in contact with the pages. Because the small sheets have a certain thickness, they stand out in relief from the page. They each have a halo of clean parchment around them, where the apparently filthy face of the duke could not reach. The dirt is so substantial near the bottom of fol. 96r

that it has seeped through the parchment and is visible on the verso. The pattern of the dirt reveals the protrusions (such as the threads) caked in dirt, while the crevices, which the duke's face would not have reached, remain clean. Moreover, he has stained not only the folios with the images, but also the facing folios: fol. 95v with the *Salve sancta facies* inscribed on it is caked in dirt. The text folio has been darkened not only through dirt transferred from the duke's face, but it also contains offset dirt from the images and small amounts of paint (especially the rubricator's red) that adhered to the slightly damp, tacky surface, when the book had been loved then closed.

This kind of accumulated deposit is consistent with ritualized activity over a long period of time. The book's owner has repeatedly touched this page of Veronicas, so that the parchment skin caressed Philip's own lips and cheeks, and he thereby spread layer after layer of bodily oil and grime into the very material of the two-page spread. Whereas most manuscripts' lower corners are filthy, those on fol. 96 are actually cleaner than the surrounding area, as if the duke wiped with his hands some of the dirt deposited on the page by his face. In short, the type of wear on fols 96–98 is consistent with a pattern of habitual handling and kissing, possibly over of a period of seventeen years, from 1450 when the book was rebound and these Veronicas were sewn in, until 1467 when he died.

### Scratching Paint and Rituals of Ingestion

Inspecting two of the Veronicas reveals another kind of wear: severe paint loss. Within the image on fol. 98r, Jesus's forehead and the bridge of his nose and his upper cheeks have been scraped down to the parchment, while his eyes are still fully intact. Furthermore, near his right temple and extending upward through his hair, a white line signals paint loss. Another deep scratch appears just below his mouth. These lines seem to have resulted from contact with a sharp instrument, such as a scalpel, with which a beholder deliberately scraped some of the paint but also made a few stray marks. Wielding the blade with surgical intent, the scraper has carefully avoided the eyes. While iconoclasts universally attack the



eyes represented in paintings and sculptures, the person who scraped the Veronica, by contrast, purposely avoided the eyes. To scrape out someone's eyes was just too brutal. Furthermore, this way, Jesus could watch the duke carry out the ritual of ingestion that followed. These marks – although extreme and destructive – are consistent with the ultimate image-loving motive: the will to take the image into one's own body. This was possible because the image was considered both image and icon, an embodiment of Christ's presence. A similar pattern of scraping appears on the upper left-hand image sewn to fol. 96r. The knife bearer has aimed for the forehead, nose, fleshy cheeks and mouth of Jesus, but has carefully avoided scraping the eyes. Clearly this is not the work of some later iconoclast who has attacked the image out of hate for its subject, nor to express disapproval of image-making in general; but rather, this damage reflects a continued veneration of the images to which all of the dirt and signs of wear attest.

The physicality of the image of the Face of Christ is part of its history. Its legendary material presence as a healing aid stems from the story of Abgar, told elsewhere in this volume. The Golden Legend's version of the Passion also speaks to the image's curative powers: shortly after Pilate ordered Jesus crucified, the sickly Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar learned of a physician who could cure all diseases. This physician was, of course, Jesus. Tiberius sent a messenger named Volusian to fetch the healer from Jerusalem and bring him back to Rome, but Volusian arrived after Jesus' execution. According to the legend, Volusian brought Veronica's image back to Rome. Looking at it restored Caesar's health. As the narrative makes plain, the image possessed curative powers that worked its medicine when the patient gazed upon it. Significantly, the patient did not require faith or belief in order to reap the working of the image: the act of looking itself was sufficient to obtain a cure. This story led to the association of the image of the Face of Christ with miraculous healing. The duke may have treated the face as the source of medicine, of some miraculous cure. If so, he was not alone. The ultimate way to possess an image, more than owning it, was eating it: destroying it through one's own consumption.

Scraping the image ritualistically presupposes that the copy transmitted the properties of the original, which consisted of a piece of cloth soaked in Christ's body fluids. The duke scraped, or had someone scrape for him, the paint of the Face of Christ, because he considered the image a substitute for Christ's flesh. After scraping up these "fluids" with a knife, Philip would then have been able to collect these particles of pigment (or blood, or divine substance) and ingest them. To make the Savior easier to swallow, the duke's doctor could have mixed the particles in water so that Philip could drink the concoction in what must have been a solemn ceremony. In fact, the duke's body (his hand and facial grease, his spittle, perhaps his tears) had already mingled with the images when he deposited a loving veil of his body fluids on them. Now the direction of the loving exchange would be reversed, as Jesus would travel to Philip's lips.

Ingesting the dust from sacred relics as a desperate, eleventh-hour cure had an illustrious history. When Gregory of Tours (539–594) was suffering from debilitating dysentery, and when all regular medical interventions had failed, he ingested dust from the tomb of St Martin. According to the account, Gregory said:

"Let them bring dust from the holy master's tomb and make a potion for me from it. And if this does not cure me, every means of escape is lost'. Then the deacon was sent to the tomb of the holy bishop just mentioned and he brought the sacred dust and put it in water and gave me a drink of it. When I had drunk soon all pain was gone and I received health from the tomb. And the benefit was so immediate that although this happened in the third hour, I became quite well and went to dinner that very day at the sixth hour"<sup>7</sup>.

St Martin's contact relic worked a miracle when Gregory drank the dust. Far from being a folk remedy, it was practiced by one of the most powerful men in Christendom.

Other parchment paintings depicting the Veronica have likewise been scratched or scraped, which suggests that ingesting the Face of Christ was a pervasive practice, and that some of the myriad images of this subject were created as

7 From *The Four Books of the Miracles of St. Martin*, Bk 2, Ch. 1 [<http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/gregory-mirac.asp>, last accessed on 27. 11. 2016].





6/ Ampule stamped with the Veronica, lead-tin, 15<sup>th</sup> century / private collection

medicine<sup>8</sup>. A small, fifteenth-century ampule may refer to this same practice [Fig. 6]<sup>9</sup>. Stamped onto the miniature jug is Christ's symmetrical, confrontational image; the bifurcated beard and long hair which form a "w" shape at the bottom of the face, plus the square of cloth framing it, leave no doubt that this ampule is yet another material witness to the Veronica. The purpose of an ampule, of course, is to preserve a liquid form of the sacred, in this case, perhaps Holy Face scrapings mixed with water.

The workings of these images were therefore similar to those of textual amulets, which have received recent scholarly attention<sup>10</sup>. Texts, and sometimes images, functioned in this way by working an effect on a believer who merely makes bodily contact with the textual carrier. In other words, one merely needed to carry the supernatural words

in order to enjoy their protection. Many such amulets were associated with childbirth, and one example in Princeton consists of a square piece of parchment with apotropaic words inscribed upon it, which has been folded and apparently pressed to a woman's belly during childbirth<sup>11</sup>. Her sweat has made the ink run.

To achieve even more proximity with the miraculous words, shapes, or images, one could eat them. As Jocelyn Wogan-Browne has shown, various apotropaic practices within Christianity involved eating words and images<sup>12</sup>. Such images may have functioned as contact relics, or even held a status as identical with their referents. She writes: "Some assumptions of hagiographic writing germane to its liturgical uses provide a theoretical underpinning in which hagiographic texts, in all their material components – parchment, script, images –, can be

seen as presenting (rather than re-presenting) the saint<sup>13</sup>. In other words, every image (re)presenting the saint is divine and is connected to its prototype. Wogan-Brown analyses an example in London, British Library, MS Sloane 3564, which is a French charm for women in childbirth. It instructs the bearer to inscribe these magical words in an apple and consume them<sup>14</sup>.

Use of contact relics was certainly not limited to “popular” audiences, but even queens and nobles used relics of St Margaret to ease childbirth<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, the Virgin’s Chemise, the principal relic held at Chartres Cathedral, was reputed to protect its bearer during battle and childbirth. Mary herself was said to have worn it at the Conception and Birth of Jesus, and miracle stories emphasize that it had “lain against her naked skin”<sup>16</sup>. Copies of the Chemise also protected their wearers, and people visiting the relic could have copies made for themselves. Men would wear it under their cuirasses during battle, and women would wear it on their naked skin during childbirth, as Mary had. Charles V owned a miraculous chemise in 1380, the duchess of Orléans had four of them in 1409, and Jean, duke of Berry had two in 1416<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, the latter owned a small painting on leather depicting the Veronica, which was pasted to the front of the *Très Belles Heures de Jean de Berry* (Brussels, Royal Library, MS 11060–61)<sup>18</sup>. My point here is that physical rituals with contact relics and replicas of them were not limited to illiterate people, but had many adherents among the nobility, both men and women. Class or gender did not limit use of such relics.

Gary Vikan has shown that certain tokens of St Symeon Stylites were designed to be consumed<sup>19</sup>. Byzantine believers touched images because they were like relics, direct conduits to a human prototype. Most famously, relic-icons of miraculously imprinted cloth had a reception that treated them both for their relic-ness and their icon-ness: objects such as the so-called Mandylion of Edessa were venerated because of their iconic likeness and because they had touched the body of Christ. Likewise, enterprising image makers produced small tokens depicting Symeon. They made these of clay from the area near the column atop which Symeon sat. In other words, the images themselves formed

contact relics of the saint. These images depicted Symeon in his basket, a severely abbreviated image of a column, which was otherwise difficult to fit onto a disc of clay less than two inches in diameter. These imaged discs were lightly baked rather than fully fired. This made them crumbly rather than hard, strong, ceramic.

Believers ritualistically used the “holy dust” of the saint in the hopes of miraculous cures. According to stories from Symeon’s *vita*, a monk from the Magic Mountain offered a cure to a certain prefect named Theodore Pikaridios, who suffered from an intestinal disorder. The prefect was to use “the dust of [Symeon’s] eulogia”. (*Eulogia* are unconsecrated hosts distributed to non-communicants, but in this case the term refers to the wafer-like discs of clay representing Symeon distributed at his shrine). The monk told Theodore to: “take some, break them up in pure water, in faith drink them up, and [then] wash yourself with this water, and you will see the glory of God”<sup>20</sup>. The Symeon tokens, in all their copies, were both relics and icons and therefore doubled the presence of their divine prototype.

The Face of Christ was an even more powerful relic-icon, copied in many more forms over a wider geographical swathe than any other Christian image. Clues about use and reception in some

8 For example, see the images of the Veronica pictured in Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment* (n. 4), p. 197, fig. 178; p. 269, fig. 254; p. 270, fig. 255; p. 271, fig. 256. These have all been scraped.

9 I heartily thank Dr Hanneke van Asperen for bringing this ampule to my attention.

10 Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*, University Park, PA 2006, with further references.

11 For an image, see *Ibidem*, p. 248, fig. 10.

12 Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, “The Apple’s Message: Some Post-Conquest Hagiographic Accounts of Textual Transmission”, in *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, Alastair J. Minnis ed., Cambridge 1993, pp. 39–53.

13 *Ibidem*, p. 43.

14 *Ibidem*, p. 49, quoting Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England*, Cambridge 1990, p. 361, n. 135.

15 E. Jane Burns, “Saracen Silk and the Virgin’s ‘Chemise’: Cultural Crossing in Cloth”, *Speculum*, LXXXI/2 (2006), pp. 365–397.

16 *Ibidem*, p. 365.

17 *Ibidem*, p. 368.

18 Millard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean De Berry; the Late Fourteenth Century and the Patronage of the Duke*, 2 vols, London 1967, vol. I, pp. 201, 321.

19 Gary Vikan, “Ruminations on Edible Icons: Originals and Copies in the Art of Byzantium”, in *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies, and Reproductions*, (Studies in the History of Art), Kathleen Preciado ed., Washington, DC 1989, pp. 47–59.

20 *Ibidem*, p. 56, translating and quoting Paul van den Ven, *La Vie Ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune (521–592)*, (Subsidia Hagiographica), Brussels 1962.



surviving copies suggest that it, too, was involved in a set of rituals of ingestion. As I have shown above, two of the Faces of Christ in Philip's prayer book have been carefully scraped. In light of this physical evidence, one plausible hypothesis is that the duke ate the image, flake by flake. Related parchment paintings preserved in other manuscripts suggest that this was a practice spread throughout northern Europe, and perhaps beyond. (Because images are not usually catalogued according to their damage, and often the damage is not mentioned in catalogue entries, and authors/publishers often eschew severely worn images in their publications, such images are difficult to locate systematically.) For example, a parchment painting glued into a compilation manuscript, made in various parts of France and assembled/bound around 1500, has comparable damage ('s-Heerenberg, MS 2)<sup>21</sup>. This image has been affixed to the book in this location, simply because there was space available to accommodate it. This parchment painting is similar to those that Philip had attached. Here again, the user has deliberately scraped the image, seemingly with the goal of loosening some of the pigment to complete a ritual that depended on the image's physicality. Similar marks of deliberate wear appear in small paintings of the Face of Christ discussed by Jeffrey Hamburger<sup>22</sup>. As Hamburger points out, small paintings with this image were often used in manuscripts as osculatory targets, areas that the user/reader is supposed to kiss. These images, therefore, fulfilled a ritual of oral touching. It was only a short leap to ingest the image. Philip, as I am arguing, may very well have made this leap.

Indulged rubrics and image-based prayers touted the salubrious effects of the Veronica. Another strand of the worship of the Face of Christ treated the image as powerfully apotropaic. For example, some of the translations of the *Salve sancta facies* bear a rubric such as one found in a book of hours made by the sisters of St Ursula in Delft in the 1470s or 1480s:

*rub:* Anyone who looks upon the Veronica with devotion will have from the pope in Rome 3000 days of venial

indulgence, and he will not die that day suddenly or with an unforeseen death. *inc:* I greet you, merciful face...

*rub:* Soe dat beelde vanden vero[152v]nica aensiet mit devocien hi hevet vanden paeus van romen iijc dagen oflaets. Ende hi en sterft niet bynnen dien dage onversierne of quader doot. *inc:* Ic gruet u ghebenedide aenschijn... [Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 243, fol. 152r/v]

This image, in other words, had powerful effects on the spiritual health of the dying; seeing it would guarantee that one would not die unconfessed or suddenly. It was the ultimate spiritual food.

Here is one scenario that is consistent with the patterns of dirt and wear in this manuscript: after seventeen years of intense oral contact with the images of the Face of Christ sewn into his book, Philip the Good lay on his death bed in 1467 with pneumonia, finding it exceedingly difficult to breathe. As his health weakened and his death neared, he abandoned kissing the images in his prayer book. In a last-ditch effort to comfort Philip, his valet scraped two of the duke's most beloved images from his favorite prayer book, added the scrapings to water, and brought the suspension to the duke's mouth so that he could ingest the ultimate *via tecum* and comingle his flesh with that of his beloved images. One can see in the pattern of dirt that the knife scraped away the paint of the black face, but no more dirt was layered upon the now-exposed parchment: scraping the faces of Christ was the last thing that happened to these pages before the book was closed for the last time as a devotional prayer book. Philip the Good died in Bruges in 1467 at the age of 69. After that, his prayer book became a relic of him and was preserved as a museum object.

21 The image is pasted into a composite manuscript prayer book made in France. 's-Heerenberg, The Netherlands, Collection Dr. J.H. van Heek, Huis Bergh Foundation, MS 2 (inv. 259). See Anne S. Korteweg, *Catalogue of Medieval Manuscripts and Incunabula at Huis Bergh Castle in 's-Heerenberg*, 's-Heerenberg 2013. I treat this manuscript at greater length in *Piety in Pieces: How medieval readers customized their manuscripts*, Cambridge 2016, pp. 233–244, with an image of the Veronica on p. 242, fig. 218.

22 Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany*, New York 1998, ch. 7. See also Herbert Kessler, "Turning a Blind Eye: Medieval Art and the Dynamics of Contemplation", *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, Jeffrey Hamburger, Anne-Marie Bouché eds, Princeton 2006, pp. 413–439.

## Pozření Kristovy tváře

### Filip III. Dobrý a jeho fyzický vztah k Veraikonům

Filip III. Dobrý (1396–1467) nechal doplnit modlitební knihu svého děda, Filipa II. Smělého, o několik iluminací, z nichž minimálně šest zachycovalo tvář Krista. Větší výjevy tvořily celá folia a menší byly přišity na speciálně vyhrazené strany. S těmito Veraikony Filip často manipuloval, a dokonce je i líbal. Stopy po používání se objevují v celém rukopisu. Zbytky obličejových olejů a vrstvy nečistot svědčí o vévodově přímém a intenzivním kontaktu s Veraikony.

Způsob, kterým jsou tato vyobrazení do rukopisu začleněna napovídá, že je vévoda soustředil do jedné části, se kterou poté opakovaně manipuloval. Kromě toho se s Veraikony zacházelo i jiným způsobem: barevné vrstvy u dvou z nich byly seškrábány až na pergamenový podklad. Ten, kdo barvu seškrábal, se opatrně vyhnul očím a zaměřil se pouze na oblast čela a nosu. Ale proč?

Kathryn Rudy navrhuje hypotézu, že barva mohla být seškrábána z toho důvodu, aby vévoda mohl pozřít samotnou substanci svých oblíbených obrazů. Muselo se tak stát ke konci vévodova života, protože žádné další stopy po

obličejových olejích se na obnažených částech pergamenu nedochovaly. Je možné, že seškrábaná barva se stala jakousi speciální ingrediencí léčivé tinktury pro vévodův zhoršující se zápal plic. Filip nakonec nemoci podlehl, nicméně nabídnout vévodovi šanci dovolit své nejoblíbenější modlitební knize – a zejména jejím iluminacím, se kterými tak vroucně manipuloval – aby doslova splynuly s jeho tělem, byl poslední pokus o jeho zázračné uzdravení.

V tomto směru by vévoda obnovoval léčivou moc obrazu-ikony, která byla koneckonců do Říma přinesena jako lék. Daleko od vévodova sídla a jeho zbožnosti seškrabávali i jiní vlastníci malých Veraikonů vrstvy barev, možná také ve víře v jejich léčivé vlastnosti. Pokud je autorčina hypotéza správná, vysvětluje také, proč byly takové obrazy často malovány hustými nánosy barev, které mohou být snadno seškrábány z pergamenového podkladu. Značilo by to, že malíři Veraikonů předpokládali použití svých obrazů k léčebným účelům – tedy k tomu, aby byly seškrábány a pozřeny.