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Isidro J. Rivera

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DEVOTIONAL READING AND THE VISUAL
DYNAMICS OF *LA PASSION DEL ETERNO
PRINCIPE* (BURGOS, 1493?)

Isidro J. Rivera

The University of Kansas

ABSTRACT This essay explores the technologies of reading and visualization in *La passion del eterno principe* (Burgos, 1493?). Early printed texts generated a material relationship between the text and image that allowed the readers to process words and images without interference and to construct meaning from their interplay. The distinctiveness of this incunable resides in its deployment of dynamic visual and verbal codes that offered laypeople a framework for empathetic meditation focused on Christ's suffering and its salvific consequences within the Christian life.

La passion del eterno principe (henceforth *LPEP*) has received relatively little attention from scholars of late medieval Iberia. The volume, a miscellany of devotional texts centered on the Passion of Christ, entered the collection

The essay has benefited from comments by friends and colleagues. I am most grateful to Patricia Manning for her constant insights into early modern culture. Emily Francomano's suggestions about the social functions of early printed texts have guided my approach. I am also indebted to Christina Ivers's work on devotional tactics in late medieval Iberia. I am appreciative of Ángel Rañales Pérez's help at crucial moments in this project. I also wish to thank the anonymous readers for *Hispanic Review*, whose insights were extremely helpful in the preparation of the present essay. Generous support from the University of Kansas International Affairs' International Travel Fund for Humanities Research provided essential support for archival work related to this project. Finally, Charles A. Rivera pointed me in the right direction, and Cynthia kindly saved me from numerous mistakes. For those errors that remain, I alone am responsible.

of the Boston Public Library on October 30, 1940 (*More Books* 416–20).¹ While it lacks a colophon and is unsigned, the Boston *LPEP* bears the typeface used by Fadrique de Basilea’s workshop in Burgos around 1493.² The incunable consists of fourteen leaves set in a two-column configuration with seventeen xylographic illustrations depicting scenes from the Passion of Christ.³ The volume includes Padre Guaberte’s translation into Spanish of chapters 139–149 of Jean Gerson’s *Monotessaron* (349–73), an influential Gospel harmony written in Latin in 1429.⁴ The translated selection of the *Monotessaron* collates the four canonical Gospels into a single account of Christ’s Passion and fashions an accessible narrative useful for devotions or instruction (Hobbins 82–92). In addition, the collection contains other pieces that complement the Passion narrative: a prayer to Christ at the Cross, a hymn on the Passion attributed to Bonaventure, and apocryphal letters ascribed to Pilate and Lentulus.⁵ The experience of reading the *LPEP* with its mixture of texts and images participates in the discourse of religiosity that shaped the devotional culture of Isabelline Castile. Through the materiality of the *LPEP*,

1. Listed for sale in 1938 as item 283 without indication of provenance in the Maggs Bros. catalogue (*Catalogue* 666 96–97), the *LPEP* now bears the shelfmark Q.403.88 (Boston Public Library, Accession Records). See also Goff G-237 and Wilkinson #9471. The Internet Archive digitized this incunable in 2010, and the Boston Public Library has made it available as a downloadable pdf file at https://bpl.bibliocommons.com/item/show/5138567075?active_tab=bib_info. In this essay, I cite and transcribe exclusively from the Boston exemplar of the 1493 Burgos. In my transcription, I have expanded all abbreviations, respected the original orthography of the incunable, and utilized modern punctuation only where it is needed for the sake of clarity.

2. This volume originally served as the preliminary section for a lost edition of the *Leyendas de los santos* prepared in Burgos by Fadrique de Basilea. The imprint uses a distinctive *calderón* found in imprints by Basilea’s workshop around 1493 (Vindel xxiv). While several scholars have identified this witness in relation to a fragmentary, different copy of the text found in the British Library (shelfmark IB.53235), no study has focused on the incunable’s materiality and its relationship to late medieval devotional practices. For a discussion of the publishing activities in Burgos with reference to this imprint and the *Leyenda de los santos*, see the studies by José Aragüés Aldaz and Fernando Baños Vallejo. I am currently finishing a critical edition with translation of this witness.

3. A full list of the woodcuts with information about the pictorial program, size, and location appears in Maggs Brothers (97).

4. Víctor Infantes has identified the translator as “Guaberte Fabricio de Vagad, cronista de Juan II de Aragón” (301). For additional historical context on Guaberte, see the studies by Robert Tate, and Fernando Gómez Redondo (1267–68). For Gerson, see the studies by Daniel Hobbins and Marijke de Lang.

5. For a general discussion of medieval European Passion texts, see Thomas Bestul. For the “Carta de Léntulo,” see the studies by Cora Lutz and Gómez Redondo (595). Both apocryphal letters circulated in medieval Catalan and Castilian versions; see studies by Hugo Bizzarri and Carlos Sainz de la Maza, Montserrat Ferrer, and Maria Mercè López i Casas (“Una altra traducció”, “Versions”).

readers can fashion a subjectivity based on imaginative consideration of Christ's life and thus achieve the salvation to which all Christians aspire.

The seventeen woodcuts centered on Christ's Passion provide a visually dynamic space that invites readers to become witnesses to the Passion of Christ through their reading and seeing. In the late Middle Ages, this technique constituted an important component of affective meditation, as Sarah McNamer has noted: "reading is virtually synonymous with seeing, as the reader is constantly asked to visualize Christ's sufferings in vivid detail" (*Affective Meditation* 134).⁶ Printed devotional texts like the *LPEP* were intended to enrich the spiritual life of their readers and made possible the private performance of devotion within the lived experience of late medieval Catholicism, which used these devotional activities to remind the faithful of the importance of empathetic contemplation of what Christ had suffered (Bynum 18). The performance of these devotions would bring readers into conformity with the practices advocated by late medieval religious authorities, and formed an important part of Castilian Christianity (Robinson, *Imagining the Passion* 4). Few scholars, however, have examined these xylographic images within the context of devotional reading and affective meditation. The scholarship of the *LPEP* has instead focused on questions of printing history and typographical provenance, rather than on issues of devotional reading processes and the dynamics of the printed page.⁷ With its embedded textual and pictorial objects, the Burgos incunable offers its readers an opportunity to meditate on the suffering and death of Christ through the reading of text and images. In this essay, I contend that these pictorial components promote affective devotions that allow the readers to utilize the images in the book as vehicles for devotional reading in the private space of the home. By considering the illustrated, printed book as a tool for enriching readers' spiritual self, this essay seeks to contribute to our understanding of cultural practices at the end of the fifteenth century and situate incunabular printed texts within the discourse of religiosity in Isabelline Castile. To study these images and texts is to discover the networks of spirituality that informed the religious practices of late medieval Iberia.

6. The scholarship on visualization and affective meditation as it relates to the Crucifixion scene is too extensive to cite in a comprehensive way. Readers can consult Carolyn Bynum, Rachel Fulton (142–92), Jeffrey Hamburger, Jessica Hines, Sara Lipton, and Barbara Newman.

7. For an overview of this scholarship, see especially the studies by Emilia Colomer Amat, Infantes, and Harvey Sharrer.

Late fifteenth-century Castile's interest in this type of devotional activity flourished in part due to the efforts of Fray Hernando de Talavera, Queen Isabel's spiritual advisor, who emphasized the value of private and visual devotions. Talavera's *Católica impugnación* (ca. 1480), written in support of visually engaged piety, provides an orientation for understanding these devotional dynamics. In the treatise, Talavera states: "queremos y ordenamos que cada fiel cristiano tenga en la casa de su morada alguna imagen pintada de la cruz, en que nuestro Señor Jesucristo padeció, y algunas imágenes pintadas de nuestra Señora o de algunos santos o santas que provoquen y despierten a los que allí moran a haber devoción" (127). Some twelve years later, the insistence on visual devotion emerges in his pronouncements as newly installed bishop of Granada after the city has fallen to Christian forces in the form of the "Memorial y tabla de ordenaciones . . . para la comunidad morisca de Granada." Issued in 1492, the "Memorial" establishes a series of directives for the Granadan community with reference to attendance at Mass, daily devotional practices, marriage ceremonies, and even funeral rituals.⁸ Talavera's pronouncements also provide a framework for religious behavior at home, and are intended to bring the *morisco* community into conformity with the religious practices of its Christian rulers.⁹ The first regulation of the "Memorial" reflects on the importance of images within the daily life of these constituents:

Que todos sepays y fagays que sepan vuestras mugeres e vuestros hijos e hijas grandes y pequeños sygnar y santiguar y entrar y estar en la yglesia y tomar allí agua bendita y desir pater noster y aue maria y credo y adorar a nuestro Señor en la Santa Misa y adorar la Santa Cruz y hazer a las ymagenes la reuerençia que les es deuida. (qtd. in Azcona 762)

Later in the document, Talavera returns to the topic of images and their functions in a Christian household:

Que tengays en vuestras casas en lugares onestos y limpios algunas ymajines de nuestro Señor o de la Santa Cruz o de nuestra señora la Virgen

8. For an overview of Talavera's activities in Granada, see David Coleman (82–91).

9. See Felipe Pereda's comments concerning the use of images for the prosecution of *conversos* and other marginalized populations in late medieval and early modern Iberia ("Through a Glass" 272–76).

Maria o de algund santo o santa y que çerca de aquella ymajen tengays colgada la candela bendita[.] (qtd. in Azcona 762–63)

Images in this context provide the switch points between the physical and spiritual worlds. The laity (“cada fiel cristiano”) could utilize these personal spaces to engage in visual meditation. By withdrawing into these “lugares onestos y limpios,” the Christian subjects were able to “awaken” their spirituality. Rosemary Woolf ascribes to these types of Passion-centered elements a meditative function:

Reference to historical time is deliberately evaded: Christ is shown oppressed by suffering, although the Crucifixion is past, as the wounds in hands, feet, and side bear witness. No historical or dogmatic purpose is served by this representation. The intention is entirely meditative, to confront the beholder with a timelessly suffering Christ and thus to arouse his compassion. (185)

With the advent of print, images for private use became more commonly available to readers. Felipe Pereda has noted the rarity of private devotional images in Castile prior to this period (“Through a Glass” 273). According to Elisa Ruiz García, printed devotional texts made possible “una renovación de las prácticas religiosas” (67). The court of Queen Isabel actively promoted this devotional phenomenon and encouraged affective practices (Robinson, *Imagining the Passion* 264). Similarly, Sara Nalle has shown that late medieval and early modern Iberian readers sought out devotional texts in order “to learn by example and imitation, snapping up anything about the human condition as portrayed in the lives of saints and explained in the mirrors of Christian Life” (81). This religious agenda emphasized adherence to the key religious doctrines of Christianity and encouraged interiorized devotions based on affective identification with the humanity and suffering of Christ (Lehfeldt 42–49). Religious texts accounted for 45% of the editorial output in Trastamaran Spain, and in some localities the production of religious texts reached 55.5% as evidenced by the production of books in Zaragoza in this period (Pedraza Gracia 18). The Burgos incunabular taps into these devotional practices and offers its readers an opportunity to engage in meditation on the suffering and death of Christ. Through the *LPEP*, the reader is able to construct a subjectivity based on imaginative contemplation of Christ’s life and thus attain salvation, which is the goal of all Christians.

The printed book would in turn facilitate the devotional activities of “cada fiel cristiano” (Talavera 186).

Devotional Dynamics in La passion del eterno principe

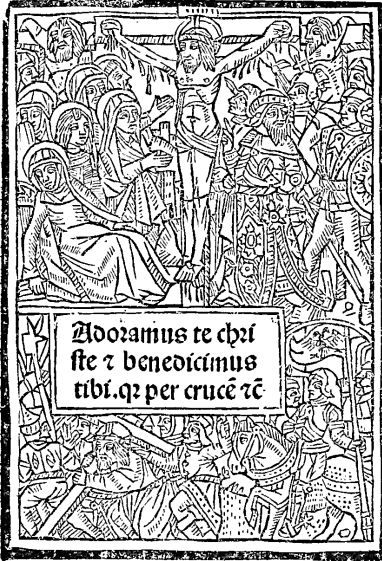
An example of this devotional dynamic in the *LPEP* occurs in woodcut thirteen (Figure 1). Anchored by the rubric “De como escarnescieron a Jhesu puesto en la cruz y de las palabras que dixo y de las señales que aparecieron en su muerte” (folio 11v), the block illustrates the *Via Crucis* [Way of the Cross]: Christ Carrying the Cross, interactions with dense crowds, the Crucifixion with the Two Thieves, and Mary’s swoon at the foot of the cross. The xylographic artist has condensed the episodes of the *Via Crucis* into a compact vertical format (102 × 70 mm) that conveniently sits directly underneath the rubric in the first column and is surrounded by the narrative of the procession to Golgotha. In the center of the block, the artist has carved a rectangular space for the insertion of a segment of the Latin prayer: “Adoramus te Christe / et benedicimus tibi, / quia per sanctam crucem tuam etc̄.” The prayer belongs to the Good Friday liturgy (Duffy 242–43) and also occurs in the Office of the Invention of the Holy Cross (Atlas 138). In some usages, the faithful would recite this prayer in private devotions for the remission of sins (Kamerick 162–69). Readers most likely knew this Latin prayer well enough to perform its recitation with minimal prompts (Zieman 141–43). The placement of “etc̄” at the end of the inset line attests to readers’ familiarity with these practices and serves as a trigger for the performance of the required prayer.

The insertion of the prayer, moreover, situates the readers into the lived experience of Christianity, where observances associated with the *Via Crucis* would evoke memories of liturgical and paraliturgical performances, for example, at the Veneration of the Cross service during the Good Friday liturgy. The recitation of the “Adoramus te” and the reading of the accompanying Passion narrative effectively promote an experience similar to those liturgical moments. Given this context, Robert Clark’s and Pamela Sheingorn’s comments concerning reading and performance, while directed to manuscript texts, are pertinent here: “The written word does not remain inert on the page; rather the act of reading transforms it into enacted text, and it is this process that we term performative reading” (136). In addition, the

La passion.

y sería quando le crucificarō a hora de tertia.

De como escarnescieron a jhe fu puesto en la cruz y delas palabras q̄ dixō: y delas señales que aparecieron en su muerte.



Escarnesciále demas desto fasta los que por ay passauan: faziédole gestos de cabeza ⁊ avn diziédo. Buay de ti q̄ destruyes el téplo y en tres días le tornas a edificar. Si fijo de dios eres salua a tí mismo y descendiende dela cruz. Dessa manera misma fazian burla delos príncipes delos sacerdotes con los sabios y ancianos del pueblo fabládo entre sí por escarnio diziédo. A los otros fizo saluos y a simismo saluar nō puede. Si rey de ysrael es descienda a gora dela cruz y creeremos enel. Pues confianca en dios tiene y se dize fijo suyo: librelle si quitiere. Al tanto fazian fa

sta los ladrones mismos que estauan crucificados conel: que le denostanā y escarnescian. y estaua el pueblo esperando lo q̄ sería. y los príncipes conel pueblo reyanse del y dezian. Como a los otros fizo saluos salue se a simismo. pues christo de dios es y escogido entre los otros. fasta los mismos caualeros sacauā burla del y se le allegauan y le offresciā vinagre diziédo. Si rey de los judios eres salua a tí mismo. Uno delos que cōel colgava dlos ladrones le blasfemaua tan bien ⁊ dezía. Si tu eres xp̄o: faz saluo a tí mismo y a nos. Respondió el otro y reprehendíole dello diziédo. Tu ni temes a dios: ni reconoces que la misma sentenca lieuas q̄ el mas nos padescemos la justamente: ca recebimos segun nuestras obras. mas este ningún mal ha fecho: y boluiose para jhesu ⁊ dixole. Mientbra te señor de mí q̄ndo fueres en tu reyno. E dixole jhesu. Ciertaméte te digo que oy seras conmigo en parayso. y era entonce hora q̄si de sexta Estaua cabe la cruz en que jhū colgava maria madre suya y su hermana maria cleophe y maria magdalena. y en viendo jhesu a su madre ⁊ al discipulo que el amaua: dixō a su madre: Muger cata ay a tu fijo. y despues dixō al discipulo. Cata ay a tu madre. E recibíola desde aquella hora el discipulo por suya. y desde hora de sexta fasta hora de nona echaronse teniebras sobre toda la tierra. y escureció el sol. Cerca hora de nona reclamo jhesu con grāvoz ⁊ dixo. Heli heli lamasabatani: q̄ es tanto como dezir. Dios mio dios mio porque me has desamparado. Algunos delos q̄ ay estauā oyendo aq̄sto dezía. a hestas llama este. y cofio luego vno dlos y tomo vna espōja ⁊ abebro

Figure 1. "Adoramus te" woodcut, *La passion del eterno principe* (Burgos, Fadrique de Basilea, 1493?), folio 11v, Boston Public Library. Public domain.

printed book with its juxtaposition of various material elements causes readers to switch modalities and process the illustration in conjunction with the recitation of a prayer, thus enhancing the visualization of one of the central episodes of the Christian religion.¹⁰

Through the contemplation of the printed page, the devout subject reexperiences the pain and suffering of Christ in private. Jessica Brantley has characterized these types of performances as having “a kind of private sacramental power, in place of the communal processions and liturgical spectacles” (209). The movement from public domain to private space brings into relief the importance of the visual.¹¹ The reading of the woodcut, whether vocalized or silent, in solitude or in community, introduces a clear protocol that enables the readers to engage in reading practices that help to visualize the Passion. This page ultimately supports the devotional engagement promoted by Talavera, in which pious seeing formed an important component of private devotional practices and complemented the prayer and meditation by the faithful.

The *Adoramos* prayer serves as a reminder of liturgical moments where supplications can be used to enrich devotional activity. Prayer was an integral part of this meditational ritual, and the devotee could structure these activities around practices that made possible the experiences of affective spirituality (Stock, *After Augustine* 107). Modern readers often do not have access to woodcut illustrations like this one and rarely focus on the textual codes embedded within the blocks (Francomano 143). Late medieval Castilian readers, however, would have associated this illustration with a visual network used to facilitate the reading and contemplation of Christ’s procession to Calvary.

The combination of printed visual and verbal elements is fundamental to the Burgos incunable’s material context. Unlike manuscript illustrations, where the images were produced separate from the verbal elements and in some cases at a different time, the xylographic blocks were executed to be printed at the same time as the printed text and provided mimetic codes that gave the readers an orientation toward the contents of the printed book.¹² Michael Camille has noted how in early printed books word and image oper-

10. Jill Stevenson has characterized this type of activity as “a unique experience of visual piety through a devotional object’s materiality” (“The Material Bodies” 214).

11. Pereda describes this trajectory in terms of the importance of the pictorial in extraliturgical devotions (*Las imágenes* 82–83). For additional information about private images in Iberia, see Manuel Peña (243–44) and Pereda, “Through a Glass Darkly” (264–65).

12. The term mimetic is often used to describe that which is made visible to the reader. When used to refer to narrative discourse, the term “mimetic” can describe “supposedly direct presen-

ated interdependently because the print medium reduced the rift between image and text. Camille argues convincingly that this interdependence produced a dynamic relationship: “From the viewpoint of reception, the woodcut image would have less ‘interference’ in Goodman’s sense, precisely because the image has the same black and white structure as the word, and although it is read in space, is also read in time” (283). Similarly, Bonnie Mak notes that these zones on the printed page functioned as aids to the readers “who must locate themselves in relation to the illustration and begin to make sense of the pages, but these cues also constitute a way in which designers may elicit an ideal response from their audiences” (32). These practices caused the readers to process images and words as one integrated unit on the page (Rivera, “Performance” 8).

The grouping of verbal and textual elements within woodcut 13 also exemplifies the concept of “imagetext,” a term coined by W. T. J. Mitchell to replace the binary between word and image (9), and highlights “the inextricable weaving together of representation and discourse, the imbrication of visual and verbal experience” (83). His term allows for the flexible analysis of “an image-text structure responsive to prevailing conventions” (90). This formulation offers a useful tool for thinking about how various components of the printed page work together to promote verbal and visual experiences and to compel readers to interact with this mixed media in order to attain a richer spirituality. With print, these units operate “interdependently” and without separation as a result of the typographical processes utilized.

This dynamic structure emerges in a slightly different manner in a second xylographic block located on the verso of the first folium of the book. The readers encounter a full-page illustration (204 × 127 mm) portraying Mary and John at the foot of the Cross (Figure 2). This scene, one of the most recognizable images within Western visual culture, projects a moment central to the Christian faith. Identified by the *titulus* above the crossbar, Christ hangs on the cross with a single nail in each hand and one through both feet. The artist has chosen to depict Christ in a serene pose rather than the suffering Christ common in later medieval Europe. Adam’s skull lies at the base of the cross, referencing the ancient tradition that held that Adam was buried under the Cross at Calvary (Merback 84). The figures of Mary and John flank

tations of events and conversations, the narrator seeming to disappear (as in drama) and the reader being left to draw the conclusions from what he ‘see’ and ‘hears’” (Rimmon-Kenan 107).

**Q vos omnes qui transitis per viam attendite
et videte si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.**

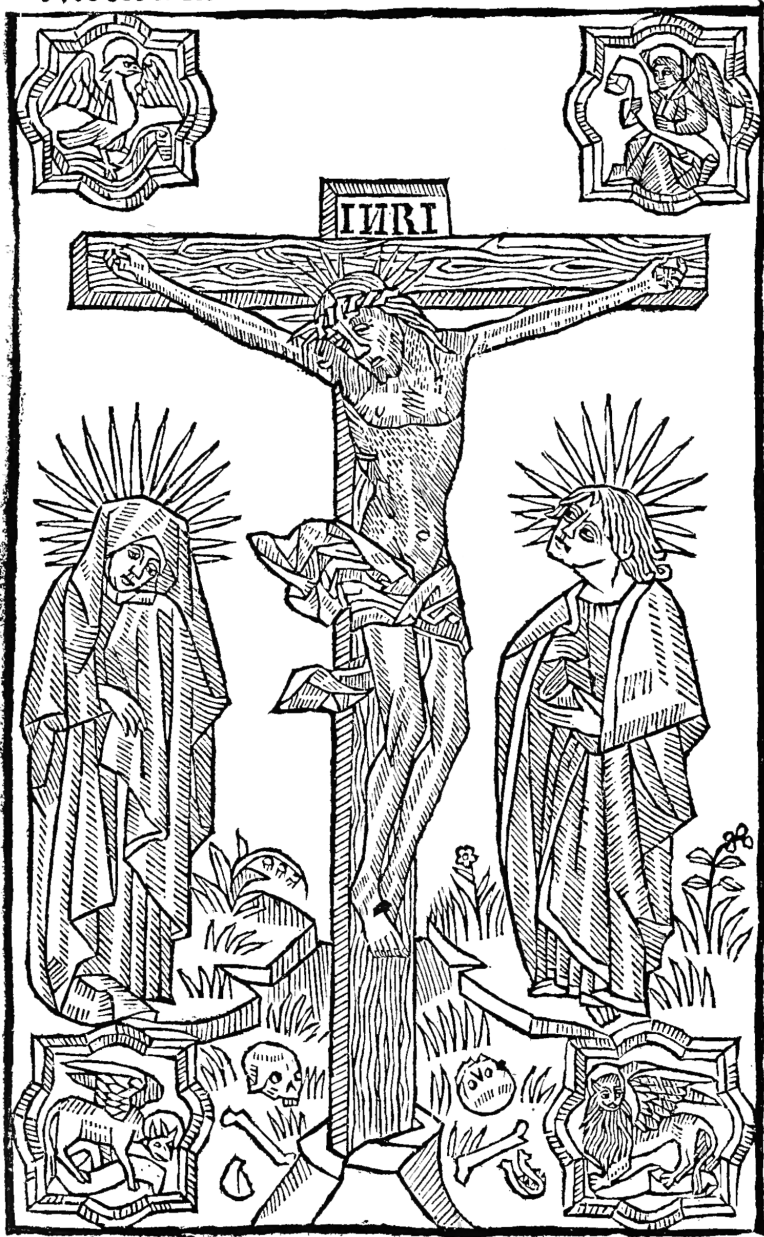


Figure 2. Crucifixion scene and tetramorphs, *La passion del eterno principe* (Burgos, Fadrigue de Basilea, 1493?), folio iv, Boston Public Library. Public domain.

the cross in iconic poses that suggest different states of engagement. Mary, with arms hidden by her cloak, glances downward away from the closed eyes of Christ in calm acceptance of her son's death. John beckons to Christ in a gesture of compassion. The printed image of Christ crucified should cause the readers to linger, to pause their reading, and to consider the xylographic image in relation to the grim torture and death associated with Christ's Passion. The woodcut also incites the viewers to visualize the Passion events from multiple perspectives: John's active engagement, Mary's contemplative introspection, and Christ's patient acceptance. These visual references generate a pictorial narrative that awakens the readers' memories of Christ's Suffering at the Cross (Parshall, "The Art of Memory" 464).

Making the Passion present in the mind's eye was one of the key features of late medieval meditative practices, and devotees learned to use images and words as *loci* for shaping that experience. The *Meditationes vitae Christi* (henceforth *MVC*),¹³ a fourteenth-century text whose influence on European devotional literature and religious visual culture has been sizeable, provides an important framework for these practices:

Tu autem si ex his fructum sumere cupis, ita presentem te exhibeas his que per Dominum Iesum dicta et facta narrantur ac si tuis auribus audires et oculis ea uideres, toto mentis affectu diligenter, delectabiliter et morose, omnibus aliis curis et sollicitudinibus tunc omissis. (*MVC* 10)

[So if you wish to profit from all this, Sister, you must place yourself in the presence of whatever is related as having been said or done by the Lord Jesus, as if you were hearing it with your own ears and seeing it with your own eyes, giving it your total mental responses: with care, delight, and sorrow, and with all extraneous cares and concerns set aside for the time being. (*Meditations* 4)]

The illustration similarly brings these events into the present and functions as a stimulus for the contemplation of the mysteries of Christ's suffering on the cross. Printed illustrations from the period served as staging points for

13. Recent scholarship has suggested Johannes de Caulibus of San Gimignano, a Franciscan friar, as the author of the *MVC* (Despres 34–41; McNamer, "The Origins"). In this essay, I cite the Latin text from Stallings-Taney et al.'s edition and utilize Taney's translation of *MVC* (henceforth "*Meditations*").

devotional reading and were elements actively used by the owners of the text to enrich their spiritual self through individualized, private, affective devotions.

The full-folium illustration contains other elements that foster devotional activity. The page includes four medallions representing the tetramorphs, symbols associated with the four evangelists (Hunt 474).¹⁴ These referential icons might cause readers to associate them with other religious objects. Medieval culture, as Jill Stevenson has reminded us, frequently utilized sacred artifacts to trigger devotional activities (*Performance* 57). An apt example would be the *retablo mayor* of the Cartuja de Miraflores, Burgos, a late-fifteenth-century altarpiece designed by Gil de Silóe and Diego de la Cruz. Similar to the *LPEP*, the altar contains a large Crucifixion scene surrounded by scenes from the Passion and the tetramorphs in a four-medallion configuration similar to the one on folio iv.¹⁵ The tetramorphs are meant to solidify the ties with meditational reading practices introduced into the Western tradition by Cassian and Benedict (Fulton 156). In this context, medieval readers were trained to see *lectio* [reading] as “an act of worship at whose center stands the incarnation of wisdom” (Illich 50). As Rachel Fulton has observed, the practice of *lectio* became “the basis for creating the spiritual self” (156). While the reading of the Gospels enabled readers to fashion their lives in imitation of Christ, this reading regimen also allowed the devout practitioner to achieve a higher state of spirituality (Stock, *The Implications* 90). In the case of the *LPEP*, Gerson’s *Monotessaron* provided a narrativization of the Passion and served as a guide for the reading of the four Gospels (Hobbins 81). Through this Gospel reading, the readers were empowered to grow spiritually and to achieve an understanding of how to attain personal salvation.

It is likely that Castilian readers would have used the Crucifixion woodcut as a protocol for engaging the book within the framework of empathic meditation.¹⁶ These activities, as Cynthia Robinson has noted, become more prevalent in Castilian devotional practices “from the 1480s forward” (“In One” 163). Fadrique de Basilea and his artisans most likely had familiarity with

14. Clockwise from top left, the medallions are Eagle (John), Man (Matthew), Lion (Mark), Ox (Luke).

15. See Joaquín Yarza Luaces’s analysis of the Miraflores *retablo*, especially pp. 220–22. Yarza Luaces also makes reference to the book arts and the use of bookish elements in the *retablo* (220).

16. Roger Chartier suggests that “[t]he image was often a proposal or a protocol for reading, suggesting to the reader a correct comprehension and a proper meaning for a text” (Introduction 5).

these practices and designed the page elements to support the processes of *lectio* afforded by the *LPEP*'s collection of texts. Early printed texts typically generated a material relationship between text and image that allowed readers to construct meaning.¹⁷ Through the contemplation of these material page elements, the devout subjects reexperience the spectacle of the Passion and utilize the printed objects as vehicles for devotional activity. Pereda associates this reading practice with the emergence in late medieval Castile of a devotional culture that promoted affective responses to images (“experimental empáticamente las imágenes,” *Las imágenes* 37). This activity ultimately contributes to the devout subject’s engagement and transformation by means of the doctrines and mysteries of Christianity.

The *mise-en-page* encourages the practices of *lectio* in other ways. In the uppermost register of the folium, readers discover a quotation from Lamentations 1.12, “O vos omnes qui transitis per viam attendite et videte: si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus” [“O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow”].¹⁸ This verse, the first textual element after the title page, would have been familiar to readers as one of the antiphons recited during the Good Friday and Holy Saturday liturgies to summon devotees to reflect on the suffering endured by Christ (Petersen; O’Kane 72). Consequently, the paratext points to liturgical spectacles most likely witnessed and remembered by the readers in the course of their experience of Christianity. The exhortation to look (“videte”) encourages the readers to engage in the imaginative reflection on the suffering endured by Christ. Upon processing this scriptural verse, the readers would be able to internalize the visualization of the Crucifixion scene, and the vocalized or silent recitation of the verse would in turn trigger responses derived from other experiences. The simultaneous experience of the visual and the verbal is closely related to liturgical moments when the celebrant often calls to the congregation to engage in visualization and meditation.¹⁹ In this context,

17. Chartier has identified the importance of materiality in this process: “Readers, in fact, never confront abstract, idealized texts detached from any materiality. They hold in their hands or perceive objects and forms whose structures and modalities govern their reading or hearing, and consequently the possible comprehension of the text read or heard” (“Laborers” 50).

18. I cite from the Douay Rheims Bible. Yarza Luaces has commented on the relevance of this verse in the *Miraflores retablo* (219–20).

19. In this context, Sara Lipton’s comments on the power of liturgical moments provide a useful orientation: “In the spring of 1272 or 1273, at the conclusion of his Good Friday sermon, an unknown preacher stood in a church in Paris, gestured toward a crucifix, and cried out to his flock:

Brantley has noted, “certain late medieval devotional texts call upon their readers to imagine public spectacles as a way of creating individual ones” (3). The “O vos omnes” phrase invites the readers to attend to the meditation on Christ’s pain and respond to the image through mental reflection. Looking, speaking, and hearing thus allow readers to visualize the drama of these sacred events in their hearts and create a private, empathetic engagement with the suffering and death of Christ, an activity encouraged by the *LPEP* through the interplay of the woodcut with Gerson’s *Monotessaron*.

Attendite et videte

Near the close of the incunable, the readers experience one final, dynamic interaction with textual and pictorial programs. In folio 13r (Figure 3), the tight two-column format of the previous folia changes to reveal a striking mix of design elements. At the top of the folium, the readers encounter the phrase “Ecce homo” [“Behold the Man”], words used by Pilate during the *Ostentatio Christi* (John 19.5). Printed in bold Gothic type and centered at the head of the folium, the “Ecce homo” rubric disrupts the two-column format and compels readers to dwell on the Gospel narrative, which they had previously read on folio 10r (“Ueys aqui el hombre”), when Pilate presented Christ to a boisterous crowd prior to His journey to Golgotha. Below the “Ecce Homo” rubric, the imprint places a complementary image that helps readers to imagine a body degraded by torture and bleeding from the violence inflicted by His accusers (Scribner 461). The illustration represents the post-Crucifixion, pre-Resurrection Christ, standing in His tomb. It depicts Christ flanked by Mary and John and belongs to the late medieval iconographic tradition of the *Imago pietatis* [Man of Sorrows] (87 × 142 mm). The figure of Christ faces the viewers, displays His wounds on hands and His right side, and summons readers to behold and reflect on His suffering. In this version, Mary and John function as

‘Ha! Veroi chrestien, regarde, regarde, comment il a le chief encliné por toi beisier, les bras estendu por toi embrachier!’ (Oh see, Christian, look, look! See how [Jesus] has his head leaning down to kiss you, his arms extended to embrace you!) Was there ever a more heartfelt response to a work of art, a clearer indication of the immediate power of the religious image to move and inspire? In encouraging his listeners to look up at a crucifix, so confident that they will find there bliss, the preacher seems to express supreme faith in the force and transparency of art, that famed Bible of the Simple” (1172). Jessica Hines similarly analyzes how liturgical moments condition the meditation on the Passion in devotional texts (277–80).

Ecce homo.



In passione domini: in qua datur salus homini: sit nostrum refrigerium: et corporis desiderium. Portemos in memoria: et penas et obprobria: coronam christi spineam: crucem clauos et lanceam. Et plagas sacratissimas: omni laude dignissimas: acerrimum fel arundinem: et mortis amaritudinem. Hec omnia nos sauent: et dulciter inebrient: nos repleant virtutibus: et gloriosis fructibus. Te crucifixum colimus: et toto corde poscimus: vt nos sanctorum ceteribus: coniungas in celestibus. Laus honor christo vedito: et sine casu pdito: passio morte pro populo: in aspero partibulo. Sit laus et gloria christo. Amen.

Siguete vna oracion muy deuota al crucifixo.



Ohesu xpo crucificado saluado: del mudo: q es de aqlla ta extrema beldad en q sobrasse todos los hijos de los hombres. q es de aql rostro ta reueredo et de ta gra

acatamiento: q es de aqlla faz sin ruga ni tacha: q es de aqlla fermosura ql la natura nica otorgo a psona viuiente. Oh dios mio crucificado: qen son los q te ha assi messado et maltratado. Oh seño: qn desfigurado estas. Oh seño: y quien te conoscera. hauiendo conoscido vna ta extrema belleza viedo agora vna tã maña difformidad de golpes et feridas

Figure 3. Imago pietatis page, *La passion del eterno principe* (Burgos, Fadrique de Basilea, 1493?), folio 13r, Boston Public Library. Public domain.

“witnesses” to the suffering with gestures evocative of the gestures in the Crucifixion woodcut (Figure 2). This configuration would allow the readers to make the post-Crucifixion Christ “present” in the mind’s eye and thus realize a compassionate response to Christ’s Passion through the interaction of pictorial and verbal stimuli (van Os 99). This layout also corresponds to late medieval devotional practices which often required readers to act as participants in the re-creation in the mind of the Passion.

Below this xylographic block, Fadrique de Basilea has inserted a framed text box with the Latin hymn “In Passione domini” (Chevalier no. 8722).²⁰ Often attributed to Bonaventure, this hymn frequently appears in Books of Hours and the Office of the Passion (Sticca 190). The hymn, if readers performed it, would dissolve the distance between the historical moments of Christ’s death and the contemporary experience of empathy for Christ’s suffering. In this configuration, the page moves closer to the designs of medieval prayer books, which frequently encouraged the performances of prayer and song as part of a regimen that enriched the spiritual life of the devotee.²¹ According to Laura Sterponi, late medieval prayer books frequently invite “illustrational reading, which follows a linear chronological order and offers visual sources for recalling other texts (primarily Christian hagiographic writings and the Sacred Scriptures)” (678). This folium follows this model of “illustrational reading” and supports the regimen of private devotions promoted by Talavera in the “Memorial.”

The popularity of the *Imago pietatis* grew in the fifteenth century with the Carthusian Order’s promotion of devotion to the Passion of Christ (Bertelli 49–52; Kamerick 169–73). Prayers and devotions performed before the *Imago* were frequent and often received an indulgence of 14,000 years, according to a tradition attributed to Pope Gregory the Great.²² Insofar as Talavera’s pronouncements in the 1480s and 1490s established guidelines for visual devotion, it seems likely that the habitus of printed religious books produced in late medieval Castile integrated many of these devotional practices so completely

20. For a discussion of hymns and the *Imago pietatis*, see Susan Boynton.

21. For prayer books in late medieval Castilian literature, see Sol Miguel-Prendes. Kamerick also provides a useful overview (161ff). Within the context of the Book of Hours, Bronwyn Stocks suggests, “The images might even have reminded the viewer that the reading of devotional books was an important first step on the path to mystical communion” (20).

22. The *Imago pietatis* often included a hymn, as evidenced in manuscript KB NkS 27c 8^o, folio 49v, Royal Library, Copenhagen, where a similar pictorial element is accompanied by the “In Passione Domini” hymn. For an overview of the indulgence practices associated with the *Imago*, see J. Jacoby 577–79 and Parshall (“*Imago*” 556–57).

that the faithful would use the imprints to venerate images of the Passion and perform the required reverence (“hazer a las ymagenes la reuerençia que les es deuida,” qtd. in Azcona 762) through the graphic interface of the printed book. This type of activity, common in the rest of Europe, had entered Castile in the fifteenth century and formed part of a network of religious practices that offered the devout opportunities to gain salvation through indulgences (Robinson, “Preaching to the Converted” 158–59). The “Ecce homo” illustration invites similar reflections on Christ’s Passion and provides the devotional scripts of song, prayer, and contemplation promoted by late medieval spirituality. The reading of the *Ecce homo* page could thus have tangible spiritual benefits for the faithful seeking to enrich their spiritual self (Lewis 184–89).

The affective regimen associated with the *Imago* woodcut continues into the leaf’s lower register where the text offers readers an opportunity to recite a prayer before the crucifix: “Siguese vna oracion muy devota al crucifixo” (*LPEP* folio 13r). The *bas-de-page* image in the lower left of the folium anchors the prayer and creates a devotional space for the reader to engage in prayerful contemplation of Christ’s Crucifixion. The “oración” stages vividly imagined scenes from the Passion and casts the reader as a witness to Christ’s suffering by soliciting visual and verbal interactions with the Passion. It opens with an evocation of Christ crucified (“O Jhesu Christo crucificado Salvador del mundo,” fol. 13r). As the prayer unfolds, readers experience an anamnesis,²³ which compels them to revisit Christ’s pain and agony through the remembrance of specific moments of the Passion: the Scourging (“O Señor aquel cuerpo tan delicado et fermoso como esta golpeado açotado et ferido”), the Nailing to the Cross (“O Jhesu mio enclauado . . . que sienpre sienta en mis oydos aquellos golpes crueles de martillo, quando enclauauan tus manos et pies sagrados”), and His Death (“O dulce Jhesu quando pienso que por me saluar has querido voluntariamente reçebir tan cruda passion et muerte,” fol. 13v). The prayer concludes with an affirmation of the Cross’s redemptive effects: “et pueda con el estandarte de la cruz decir et gritar a voces a las puertas de parayso diciendo Abrid me que christiano catholico soy et he fecho penitencia et vengo a morar con mi señor Jhesu Xpisto en su reyno para siglos sin fin” (fol. 13v). Through the prayer,

23. Within the framework of theology and liturgy, anamnesis is defined as “re-presentation of God’s saving works so that worshipers can participate in these events as present realities and thereby receive the eschatological salvation, new life and sanctifications divinely accomplished through them” (Harrison 37). I wish to thank Rev. Tyler Kaufman for introducing me to this concept.

readers mentally reenact those key moments from the Passion.²⁴ According to Mary Carruthers, this ability to visualize becomes a fundamental characteristic of medieval meditational practices:

This meditation involved mentally visualizing scenes, events, and the buildings described in the Bible. One was admonished to “paint” in one’s mind the pictures which the texts raise up: *enargeia* (“bringing-before-the-eyes” or “vividness”) was an especially valued characteristic of style. (102)

Within the context of meditational practices, it is useful to recall the discussion of prayer in the *MVC*, which stresses the transformative nature of prayerfulness within Christian life. In chapter 36, the *MVC* focuses on the important effects of prayer:

Si uis animam tuam sanctis et bonis cogitacionibus desideris, feruoribus et deuocionibus impinguare, sis oracionis. Si uis cor tuum uirili spiritu et constanti proposito in Dei beneplacito stabilire, sis oracionis. Denique si uis uicia extirpare et uirtutibus imbui, sis oracionis. In ea enim recipitur Spritus Sancti unccio, que de omnibus mente docet. (*MVC* 136)

[If you wish to buttress your soul with good and holy thoughts, fervent desires, and devotions, be a woman of prayer. If you wish to hold your heart steady in God’s approval with courageous and unwavering spirit, be a woman of prayer. Finally, if you wish to root out vices and become imbued with virtues, be a woman of prayer. For in that prayerfulness we receive the Holy Spirit’s anointing, which *instructs your mind about all things* (JN 14.26). (*Meditations* 121)]²⁵

The *Ecce Homo* page offers, in its design and layout, the possibility of achieving the alteration of the self as described by the *MVC* through prayer and visual devotion. It brings readers into an environment of contemplation of and meditation on Christ on the Cross, which can have salvific consequences. Katherine Jansen reminds us that the crucifix in late medieval culture represented “a wonder-working object of devotion through which others

24. For this phenomenon, see Robert Swanson (3–6), and Katherine Jansen (226–27).

25. This information was available to Castilian lay readers through a partial translation in Andrés de Li’s *Summa de paciencia*. For a discussion of the impact of *MVC* on Li, see Rivera, “Visualizing the Passion.”

might hope to have their own faith sustained” (227). The performance of sight, song, and supplication in the presence of the *Imago* and Crucifixion moves readers closer to full engagement in the practices recommended by Talavera. These practices resemble “technologies of the self” which Michel Foucault describes as ways for individuals “to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (18). In the Burgos incunable, the technologies of print and visualization make possible these transformations and foster new mechanisms for enriching the spirituality of the readers who handle the book.

This essay has primarily focused on three representative case studies of xylographic blocks and the devotional dynamics they created within this printed book. The *LPEP* forges links with meditational activities through its *mise-en-page* and guides readers toward routines that can deepen their religious selves. At the same time, these devotional performances bring readers into conformity with Talavera’s prescriptions concerning visual devotions. The required reverence advocated by the late-fifteenth-century religious authorities thus becomes much more a matter of individual prayerfulness, private devotional activity, and attentive reading of words and images.²⁶ While Castilian readers used printed books as tools to sustain their spiritual identities, these same books awakened deeper, empathetic ties to the sacred mysteries of Christ’s Passion. Early imprints, like the *LPEP*, created dynamic environments that helped devout readers to attain a heightened spirituality and to experience their faith through visualization and in conformity with the devotional protocols of the late fifteenth century.

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26. In this context, Michelle Karnes has characterized these types of devotion as activities “no longer governed by and transparent to the church . . . the monastic trinity of *oratio*, *meditatio*, and *lectio* now turned popular” (380).

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