

PAIN AS PERSUASION: THE PETRARCH MASTER INTERPRETING PETRARCH'S *DE REMEDIIS*

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Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortune* was certainly one of the most influential books of the early modern period. From its publication in 1366 on, it was disseminated all over Latin-speaking Europe, and found its way in the libraries of a range of intellectuals, clerics and laymen.¹ Much ahead of its time, it represents a very early example of Renaissance Neo-Stoicism (which is generally associated with sixteenth-century intellectuals such as Du Vair and Lipsius), and offers a manual of more than 250 meditative exercises that teach its reader how to master as many different situations in life. As the huge number of manuscripts, printed editions and translations demonstrates, the influence of *De remedies* even grew in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the sixteenth century, part of its tremendous success was due to the large set of illustrations (261 woodcuts), made in 1519–1520 by an anonymous artist from Augsburg in Southern Germany, the so-called Petrarch Master.² The German *De remediis* editions with the Petrarch

¹ The Latin text was disseminated in an enormous number of manuscripts, of which more than 245 have been preserved, and a considerable number of printed editions. Cf. Mann N., "Manuscripts of Petrarch's *De remediis*. A Checklist", *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 14 (1971) 57–90 and Trapp J.B., "Illustrated Manuscripts of Petrarch's *De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae*", in idem, *Studies of Petrarch and his Influence* (London: 2003) 118–170. Moreover, the work was translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish and other languages. The translations were circulated in manuscripts and printed editions alike.

² The illustrations of the Petrarch Master normally accompany the German translations of *De remediis* and are found for instance in the printed editions Augsburg, Heinrich Steyner: 1532; 1539; Frankfurt, Christoph Egenolff: 1551; 1559; 1572; 1583; 1584; 1596; Frankfurt: 1604; 1620; 1672; Lüneburg: 1637. For the illustrations of the Petrarch Master cf. Scheidig W., *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* (Berlin: 1955); Enenkel K.A.E., "Der Petrarca des Petrarca-Meisters: Zum Text-Bild-Verhältnis in illustrierten *De-Remediis*-Ausgaben", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Papy J. (eds.), *Petrarch and his Readers in the Renaissance*, in *Intersections. Yearbook for Early Modern Studies* 6 (2006) 91–169.

Master's illustrations figure among the most intriguing bi-medial book productions of the early modern era.³

The woodcuts have often been interpreted as being essentially in line with Petrarch's text. For example, Fraenger and Scheidig see them as realistic genre scenes or *Schaubilder* that are meant to express Petrarch's humanist and Renaissance world view. More recent interpretations by Raupp, Knappe and Wohlfeil-Wohlfeil argue that they should be read as *didactic images* or *Lehrbilder* that are intended to express Petrarch's Neo-Stoic and humanistic doctrines.⁴ Detailed recent analysis, however, has cast doubt on these interpretations. Some two years ago, I made a first attempt to offer a new interpretation of the relationship between word and image. In the *Glücksbuch*, the *Von der Artzney bayder Glück, des guten und des widerwertigen*, illustrated by the Petrarch Master, word and image operate within remarkably dissimilar discourses. While Petrarch's text is situated in Christian Stoicism, the images participate in the discourses of the house book, moral satire (the *Narrenschiff*), of collections of proverbs and of political and religious polemics.⁵

³ For the relationship between word and image, see especially Enenkel, "Der Petrarca des Petrarca-Meisters" and R. Falkenburg, "Speculative Imagery in Petrarch's *Von der Artzney bayder Gluck*", in Enenkel – Papy (eds.), *Petrarch and his Readers* 171–189.

⁴ Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters*, passim; Fraenger W., *Altdeutsches Bilderbuch. Hans Weiditz und Sebastian Brant* (Leipzig: 1930); Raupp H.-J., "Die Illustrationen zu Francesco Petrarca, *Von der Artzney bayder Gluck des guten und des widerwertigen*" (Augsburg 1532)", in *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 45 (1984) 59–112; Knappe J., *Dichtung, Recht und Freiheit. Studien zu Leben und Werk Sebastian Brants 1457–1521* (Baden-Baden: 1992) 271–317; Wohlfeil R. – Wohlfeil T., "Verbildlichung ständischer Gesellschaft. Bartholomäus Bruyn d.Ä. – Petrarcameister (mit Exkursen von Marlies Minuth und Heike Talkenberger)", in Schulze W. (ed.), *Ständische Gesellschaft und soziale Mobilität* (Munich: 1988) 269–331, esp. 308–319. According to Raupp and Knappe the woodcuts partly summarize 'die Lehraussage' (didactic message); partly they depict the examples mentioned in Petrarch's text; partly they provide examples that are not mentioned in the text but that reinforce the '*Lehre des Textes*'; cf. Raupp, "Die Illustrationen zu Francesco Petrarca", 100; Knappe, *Dichtung, Recht und Freiheit*, 298. Wohlfeil and Wohlfeil, "Verbildlichung ständischer Gesellschaft", 314 agree with this view: 'Nicht selten löste der Künstler meisterhaft die Schwierigkeiten, humanistische Gedanken in eine Form zu kleiden, wie sie Lehr- und Lesebilder erforderten'. P. Michel, in an unpublished article on the Petrarch Master "Transformation und Augmentation bei Petrarca und seinem Meister" (www.enzyklopaedie.ch/dokumente/Petrarcameister.pdf), also believes in the contingency of word and image. Despite 'transformations' that cause major difficulties with understanding the relationship between word and image, it is the Petrarch Master's goal to 'teach' Petrarch's thoughts.

⁵ Enenkel, "Der Petrarca des Petrarca-Meisters".

Physical Pain, Stoicism and the Illustrations

The object of this volume offers an excellent opportunity to analyse more closely a striking feature of the relationship between word and image in the illustrated *Remedies against Foul and Fortune*, the *Von der Artzney baiden Glück, des guten und des widerwertigen*: the function and meaning of physical pain. This paper is not meant to single out a somewhat marginal aspect of the *Glücksbuch*, but touches on the very core of the book, since in a large number of illustrations the Petrarch Master focuses on physical pain, for example in the illustrations to chapters II, 7; 19; 27–29; 36; 38–39; 43; 46; 49; 55; 59–60; 65–67; 70–71; 73–74; 77; 81–82; 84–85; 90; 94–98; 100; 102–105; 113; 116–118; 120–124, and 131. Interestingly enough, in these cases the Petrarch Master does not simply amplify the message of Petrarch's text. In marked contrast with the illustrations, Petrarch's philosophical argument mostly downplays or even excludes physical pain, and focuses on the realm of the mind, especially the emotions, the passions (*passiones animi*; *pathe*).

In his tendency to marginalize physical pain, Petrarch closely follows the discourse of antique Stoicism (as presented by Cicero and Seneca). The Stoics did their best largely to ignore physical pain, and emphasized the power of reason over bodily affects. While they did not deny that the wise man could feel physical pain as a bodily sensation they ascribed to *Ratio* the fundamental ability not to 'assent' to this sensation, that is to say not to let it through to the soul or the mind.⁶ They classified bodily sensations among the essentially meaningless and 'indifferent' aspects of human life. Also, they did their best to live in accordance with their theoretical views and provide others with their living example. Thus, Stoics liked to cultivate an attitude of bravery. Posidonius, for instance, who in old age suffered so heavily from gout that he could not leave his bed anymore, did not stop receiving visitors and lecturing. He was visited by Scipio the Younger, for whom he lectured on the 'summum bonum'. When, during his lecture, he was almost overwhelmed by physical pain that was 'burning like fire', he said: 'You will not achieve anything, pain. Although you are annoying, I will never admit that you are an evil'.⁷

⁶ Cf. e.g. Weinkauff W., *Die Stoa. Kommentierte Werkausgabe* 58–62 ('Affektenlehre'); Rist J.M., *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: 1980, 3rd ed.) 37–53.

⁷ Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* II, 61: 'nihil agis, dolor. Quamvis sis molestum, numquam te esse confitebor malum'.

To modern readers, Posidonius' attitude may seem exaggerated. The crucial issue, however, was that of *autarkeia*: the individual's independence, which could only be safeguarded if the philosopher was able to downplay all kinds of physical sensations or 'outward' influences.

Petrarch, who knew the source of the story, Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes* (in itself a kind of manual on Greek philosophy), almost by heart, was not only familiar with Posidonius' example but above all with the Stoic's contempt of bodily pain. Although he did not strive to appear as a Stoic hero like Posidonius, he adopted the Stoic principle of ignoring physical pain. He also successfully combined Stoic meditative practice with Christian dualism, which departs from the clear-cut division between body and mind, and between earthly and spiritual things. Physical pain is not considered as a serious danger, since it does not hinder man's salvation. On the contrary, pain may help us to understand the vanity of all earthly things, and, therefore, it may even contribute to salvation. Thus, in his meditations, Petrarch powerfully organizes the human mind on the basis of both Christian and Stoic models. In the case of the illustrated *De remediis*, we are confronted with the puzzling fact that we have a Neo-Stoic and Christian treatise, in which physical pain holds at best a marginal position, while a considerable number of the large images⁸ precisely focus on or emphasize physical pain. This points to a clash between two paradigms: the visual artist and the writer seem to have interpreted physical pain in radically different ways. In what follows I will examine the two paradigms more closely, starting with a form of pain that seems difficult to ignore, namely toothache.

Toothache

Petrarch deals with rotten teeth in *De remediis*, chapter II, 94 ("De dentium egritudine").⁹ Somewhat surprisingly, he is not at all concerned with the mental suppression of a bodily sensation that must have been acute, since especially in the late Middle Ages, efficient pain-killers

⁸ Mostly 14.5 × 9.8 cm.

⁹ A critical edition of the Latin text of Petrarch's *De remediis* is still a desideratum. For this study, I have used the edition by Joannes le Preux (second edition, Bern: 1600) ('editio secunda, priore longe castigatior'), which goes back to Joannes Paganinus' edition dedicated to Pope Leo X from 1515. This edition offers a much better text than the commonly quoted edition in the *Opera omnia*, vol. I (Basel: 1554). In Le Preux's editio secunda, chapter II, 94 is on pp. 574–576.

against toothache were hardly available.¹⁰ Instead, Petrarch exclusively focuses on the emotions, particularly on grief. Most remarkably, in Petrarch's philosophical argument, grief is *not* caused by physical pain, but by the consequences of bad teeth: the loss of teeth, for example, brings about a loss of beauty of the face ('decus oris'), and difficulties with daily matters such as eating, drinking and speech.

Petrarch unfolds his consolatory argument on two levels. First he argues, in the vein of antique Stoicism, that teeth should not be regarded as man's property, but as a temporary gift of Nature/God. Man should be grateful for what he has received from God instead of complaining about the loss of what he wrongly considers as his property. If it is only in old age that he loses his teeth he should 'give thanks to Nature for permitting him to keep until senility this gift of hers, which she demands back from many when they are still young'.¹¹ The second level is that of the Christian *contemptus mundi*: Petrarch argues that the loss of teeth is in fact desirable since it helps us to prevent deadly sins such as gluttony, lust and vanity. He who has lost his teeth, will eat less ('minus comedes'), refrain from gossiping or offending others,¹² and from voluptuous kisses,¹³ which he regards as a manifestation of forbidden lust (*luxuria*). Furthermore, the loss of teeth will remind man strongly of the weakness, transience and frailty of his body: If even 'solid' parts of the body cease to function, what can one expect from 'soft' parts such as muscles and skin?¹⁴ Also, the loss of teeth prevents man from being too cheerful, and especially from committing the sin of (loud) laughter ('parcius ridebis', 'you will laugh less'). According to (medieval) clerical and monastic values, man should avoid laughter, especially loud laughter (*multus risus et excussus*).¹⁵ In fact, as *RATIO* argues, the loss of teeth brings

¹⁰ This is not to say that medicine in the late Middle Ages was not interested in alleviating pain. Cf. Schmitz R. – Kuhlen F.-J., "Schmerz- und Betäubungsmittel vor 1600", *Pharmazie in unserer Zeit* 18 (1989) 10–19.

¹¹ *Petrarch's Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul*, transl. by C.H. Rawski, Indiana U.P. 1991, vol. III, 231. Le Preux 575. The idea that man receives health, strength and physical beauty not as property, but only 'on loan' occurs very frequently in Seneca's Letters and philosophical dialogues.

¹² *Petrarch's Remedies*, transl. Rawski, vol. III, 231: 'You bite less mordantly when you chew up another's reputation. The broken row of your teeth will curb your ready tongue [...]'.
¹³ Le Preux 575: 'ab illicitis osculis [...] cohibebit'.

¹⁴ Le Preux 575.

¹⁵ Cf. St. Benedictus, *Regula* IV, 54: 'Risum multum aut excussum non amare'. Cf. *ibidem* VI, 8 and VII, 59.

man closer to his desired future existence in heaven: instead of eating, drinking and talking immoderately, it teaches man to concentrate on spiritual food (*cibus animae*).¹⁶ Thus, in Petrarch's philosophical argument, physical pain is largely ignored, while physical decay is presented as an important means of spiritual progress.

How did the Petrarch Master illustrate these thoughts? First of all, he rendered a scene focused on the sensation of physical pain that early modern users of the book would have recognized immediately. It presents an early modern dentist, or rather a strolling practitioner or surgeon, 'curing' a woman by pulling a tooth [Fig. 1]. Strolling practitioners wandered from village to village and offered their service especially on market places. The Petrarch Master's image resembles a certain type of genre scene, that of the "charlatan" ("kwakzalver"; "tandentrekker"; "Zahnbrecher"), a practitioner who frequently figures in Dutch and Flemish paintings, drawings and etches a century later. Maria Elisabeth Wasserfuhr, in her monograph on this genre scene in Dutch art, collected some forty examples of the "Zahnbrecher" ("tooth-puller"), and there are more.¹⁷ Somewhat surprisingly, Wasserfuhr does not mention the image of the Petrarch Master as a possible forerunner of the Dutch genres scenes, although its pictorial invention is much closer to them than that of Lucas van Leyden, whom she presents as a 'Wegbereiter' of the genre [Fig. 9].¹⁸

It is, of course, not my intention to limit my interpretation of the Petrarch Master's image by linking it exclusively to Dutch and Flemish renderings of the scene. There are, however, several aspects which the Petrarch Master's illustration and the Dutch examples have in common. First, the scene, which represents an experience shared by many (it usually took place on markets), is characterized by a satirical tendency, sometimes connected with fraud and deceit. Second, although the image depicts a medical cure, it concentrates precisely on pain *caused by the cure*. For example on the painting by the Utrecht Caravaggist Gerard

¹⁶ 'REASON: '[...] If you do not fool yourself, you will think about the road you must walk upon, which leads to the place where one does not eat material food, but where one lives exclusively from joy and spiritual food.' ('[...] nisi dissimulans cogitandum eo tibi iter instare ubi nil editor, atque ubi solo gaudio cibisque animae vivitur', Le Preux 576).

¹⁷ *Der Zahnarzt in der Niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne: 1977) (Kölner medizinhistorische Beiträge 1); Maar F.E.R. de, *Vijf eeuwen tandheelkunde in de Nederlandse en Vlaamse kunst* (Nieuwegein: 1993).

¹⁸ Wasserfuhr, *Der Zahnarzt* 25–28.

Von dem weethumb der zeen/
Das XCIII. Capitel.



Fig. 1. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 94, fol. CXIXv.

van Honthorst (1628) the patient flails his arms in response to the pain, while his eyes are wide open as a sign of the stress he is undergoing [Fig. 2]. Three visitors of the market look with great compassion at the poor man in such intense pain. Jan Victors expresses the pain the young patient suffers from by depicting him with crossed legs, clenched fists and closed eyes [Fig. 3]. The Leiden specialist in humorous scenes Jan Steen depicts the physical pain of the patient by having him stamp his feet and clench his fists [Fig. 4].¹⁹ The young client in a scene by the Flemish painter Theodoor Rombout flails his left arm [Fig. 5],²⁰ a gesture similar to that of the peasant in the woodcut of the Petrarch Master. Lucas van Leyden, a contemporary of the Petrarch Master, also emphasizes the patient's pain by his hand gestures [Fig. 9].

The expression of *physical* pain plays an important role in the pictorial rhetoric of the Petrarch Master [Fig. 1]. The persons who have come to visit the surgeon obviously suffer from severe pain. This is expressed, for example, in the flailing arms of the second and fifth figures from the left (respectively a patrician and a peasant). Moreover, the peasant is pointing his finger in the direction of his mouth, obviously the source of the intense pain he is suffering from. As is the case with the Dutch and Flemish images, the Petrarch Master emphasizes that the remedial operation, the pulling of teeth, in fact causes severe pain: the face of the female client in the centre, is contorted with pain, while her cramped hands express the same sensation.

How should one 'read' this pictorial invention? Scheidig considers it a perfect example of his 'Schaubilder' interpretation – realistic scenes taken from daily life bearing a moral message which he identifies with Petrarch's humanist outlook. According to Scheidig the moral message of the image is that '*vor dem Schmerz sind alle Stände gleich; Bauern, Landsknechte, Patrizier und ihre Frauen suchen einträchtig Hilfe bei dem Zahnbrecher*' (italics mine).²¹ Interestingly enough, this moral message fits in extremely well with the socialist morals of the German Democratic Republic, the context in which Scheidig worked; the Petrarch Master and Petrarch himself appear as the venerable forefathers of

¹⁹ Cf. Brown Ch., *Holländische Genremalerei im 17. Jahrhundert* (Amsterdam – Munich: 1984) 67–70; 98–99.

²⁰ Cf. de Jong E. – Luijten G., *Spiegel van alledag. Nederlandse genreprenten 1550–1700* (Gent: 1997) 221–225; Maar, *Vijf eeuwen tandheelkunde in de Vlaamse en de Nederlandse kunst* 197–223.

²¹ Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 297.



Fig. 2 [Col. pl. II]. Gerard van Honthorst, *The Tooth-puller* (1628). Oil on canvas, 137 × 200 cm.
Paris, Musée du Louvre.



Fig. 3 [COL. PL. III]. Jan Victors, *The Tooth-puller* (1654). Oil on canvas, 76 × 94.5 cm.
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



Fig. 4 [COL. PL. IV]. Jan Steen, *The Tooth-Puller* (1651). Oil on canvas, 32.5 × 26.7 cm. The Hague, Mauritshuis.



Fig. 5. Andries Pauli, etching after Theodoor Rombouts, *The Tooth-Puller*, 29.6 × 38.2 cm.

Marxist philosophy. As we have seen already, Petrarch's argument unfortunately has nothing to do with that type of message.

But what about the Petrarch Master? In my view, his pictorial invention is far from Scheidig's naïve, simple, and politically correct message. Consider, for example, the enormous number of teeth on the surgeon's table, on the right of the image. If these were pulled out the same day, this early modern dentist must already have treated, or perhaps rather maltreated, some 100 clients. One can imagine how careful and precise his diagnosis must have been. Such an enormous number of teeth, however, was neither a 'realistic' detail nor a standard element of pictorial images of the tooth-puller. The image on the "Augsburger Monatsbild" ("Winter"), which shows a tooth-puller at work at the market place of Augsburg in the year 1532, has nothing similar [Fig. 6].²² From the exaggerated number of pulled teeth, the viewer may deduce that the 'dentist's' treatment may be questionable, and that he may in fact be a charlatan.²³ The clients on the image, however, are obviously unaware of this, and fall into the trap. Probably, by drawing on common social and gender prejudices, the Petrarch Master wanted to emphasize this by the fact that peasants and women are first in line to be cheated. There are even more disturbing elements in the picture, such as the strange decoration on the dentist's cloak, which resembles the decorations worn by noblemen. The pendants on the decoration, however, are not made of gold or silver, but represent teeth [Fig. 1].

The Petrarch Master's woodcut, then, is certainly neither a neutral rendering of a scene from "daily life", or merely a realistic description of early modern dentistry, but clearly has a satirical dimension. As a dentist, I would be reluctant to hang this image in my office. The

²² Cf. Grüber P.M. (ed.), *"Kurzweil viel ohn' Maß und Ziel". Alltag und Festtag auf den Augsburger Monatsbildern der Renaissance* (Munich: 1994) 192–193.

²³ This is not meant as a teleological judgement from the point of view of modern medical standards. Late medieval and early modern readers may have come to the same conclusions on the basis of personal or collective experience. Cf. Wasserfuhr's brief but convincing description of the practice (*Der Zahnarzt* 6): 'Neben den von der Zunft her ausgewiesenen Zahnärzten spielten bis an die Neuzeit heran die Zahnbrecher oder Zahnreißer eine große Rolle, "Doktoren der Landstrasse", die wie Starstecher und Steinschneider von Ort zu Ort zogen. Zu dieser Kategorie gehörten sowohl ehrliche Praktiker als auch bloße Marktschreier und Scharlatane, die lediglich Zähne herausbrachen und wertlose, wenn nicht gar gefährliche Wundarzneien feilboten, nach der "Behandlung" sofort verschwanden und ihre "Patienten" ohne jede Kontrolle oder Nachbehandlung ihrem weiteren Schicksal überließen'. Cf. also Anel M.A. van, *Chirurgyns Vrye Meesters, Beunhazen en Kwakzalvers* (The Hague: 1981, second edition).

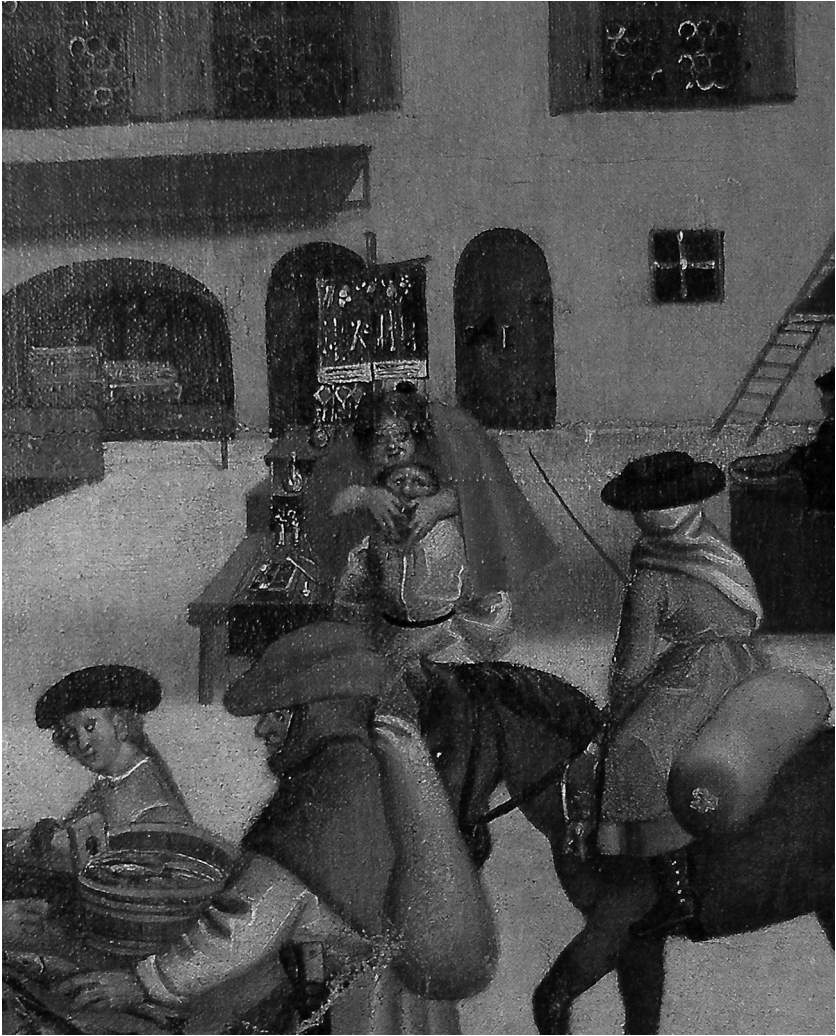


Fig. 6 [COL. PL. V]. "Augsburger Monatsbild", "Winter", detail with tooth-puller. Oil on canvas. Augsburg, Städtische Kunstsammlungen, Maximiliansmuseum.

image is in fact characterized by a mordant and aggressive rhetoric of *unmasking* of both the dentist and his clients. It unmasks the dentist as a dangerous charlatan and the behaviour of his patients as utterly foolish. Indeed, it transforms Petrarch's Stoic meditation into an argument in the vein of the *Ship of Fools*, the *Narrenschiff*. This kind of satire is one of the more important elements of the pictorial rhetoric on which the Petrarch Master's inventions are based.²⁴ As can be demonstrated by several images, the Petrarch Master was very well acquainted with Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff*. Interimaginality shows that he sometimes imitated Dürer's famous illustrations of Brant's work [Figs. 7 and 8]. For example, in his pictorial invention for the illustration belonging to chapter II, 107 of the *Glücksbuch*, he imitated Dürer's illustration of chapter 35 of the *Narrenschiff* (depicting the proverb 'den Esel reiten' or 'sich auf den Esel setzen lassen', which literally means 'to ride the donkey' and refers proverbially to an attack of anger).²⁵

In his illustrations of Petrarch's *De remediis*, the Petrarch Master used the discourse of the *Ship of Fools* for various purposes and types of arguments.²⁶ In the case of chapter II, 94, he might have invited the viewer to construe the message as a kind of practical advice or warning: 'if you suffer from toothache, avoid visiting practitioners. They are untrustworthy, only interested in your money, and they won't properly cure you'. The illustration may be usefully compared to the "Augsburger Monatsbild" ("Winter") from 1532: it represents the tooth-puller as a fat and cruel man with bad eyesight [Fig. 6]. That blood is spouting from the victim's mouth [Fig. 6] suggests that one should not trust the technical skills of the tooth-puller. In fact, in 1532 complaints were issued in Augsburg against unauthorized practitioners.²⁷

An even more urgent warning against the "Zahnbrecher" can be found in an etching by Lucas van Leyden, which was made only a few years after the Petrarch Master's image [Fig. 9]. While the foolish

²⁴ See Enenkel, "Der Petrarca des Petrarca-Meisters" 131–147 (chapter "*De remediis* in den Narrenschiffdiskurs").

²⁵ Röhrich L., *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* (5th edition, Freiburg – Basel – Vienna: 2001) 398, s.v. "Esel". Interestingly enough, Röhrich presents the Petrarch Master's illustration chapter II, 107 as a comprehensive pictorial rendering of the proverb.

²⁶ Cf. Enenkel, "Der Petrarca des Petrarca-Meisters" 131–147.

²⁷ Gensthaler G., *Das Medizinwesen der freien Reichsstadt Augsburg bis zum 16. Jahrhundert* (Augsburg: 1973) 78–79. The complaints, however, came from four medical doctors who had, of course, a financial interest in measurements against practitioners.



Fig. 7. Albrecht Dürer, woodcut illustration to Sebastian Brant, *Narrenschiff*, chapter 35.

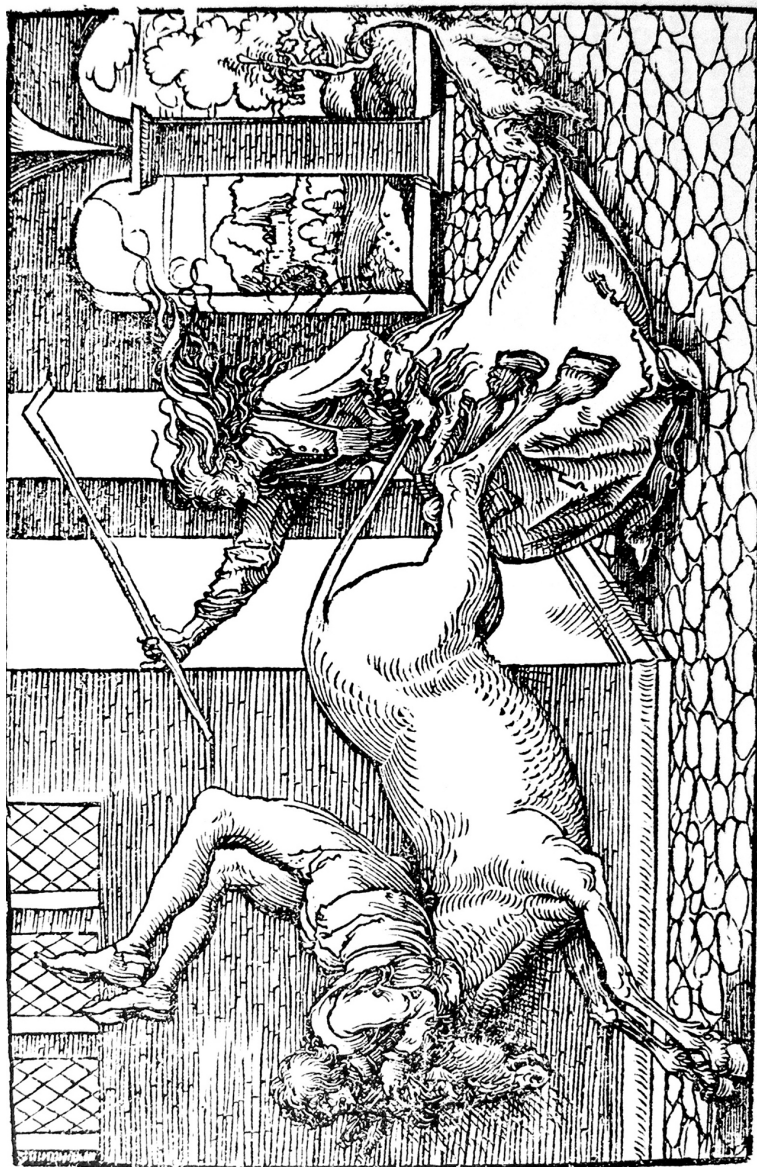


Fig. 8. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck [...]* (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 107 (erroneously 112), fol. CXXXIIIv.



Fig. 9. Lucas van Leyden, *The Tooth-Puller*. Engraving (1523), 11.6 × 7.5 cm.

patient is treated, a woman coming from behind steals his money.²⁸ Its practical orientation brings Lucas van Leyden's message close to house book wisdom. Its satirical elements, however, suggest that the image's message is more sophisticated. Physical pain seems to be presented as something ridiculous and even humiliating. The social position of the patient, together with his ragged clothes and untidy hair seems to point in that direction: he is an uncouth peasant, an uneducated person whom one cannot take seriously. That he lets himself be cheated by the woman on the right underscores his stupidity. All these elements together made it difficult for the early modern viewer to identify with the person undergoing physical pain.

The same is true for quite a number of Dutch representations of the 'tandentrekker'. The clients are ignorant boys, as on the paintings by Jan Victors [Fig. 3] and Jan Steen [Fig. 4], peasants, or peasant women, as on an etching ascribed to Pieter van den Borch.²⁹ This etching characterizes everyone involved as dim-witted peasants. They let themselves be cheated by an extremely untrustworthy "tandentrekker", a sordid tramp with a ragged hat who even remains seated on his donkey when he is pulling teeth. Similar satirical elements expressing social alterity can be detected in the image by the Petrarch Master; for example the peasant pointing at his open mouth [Fig. 1]. Nevertheless, they do not produce the same overall effect as on the etching ascribed to Pieter van den Borch. Most of the clients depicted by the Petrarch Master are not peasants. This means that the Petrarch Master made a "Leseangebot" which invited the early modern users of the *Gluecksbuch* to identify with the clients of the dentist. In this "Leseangebot", the Petrarch Master used pain as a means of persuasion with respect to the practicalities of everyday life.

In the case of chapter II, 94, the pictorial rhetoric by the Petrarch Master is even more sophisticated and complex, in the sense that it transcends the level of literal interpretation, and adds to the satire on early modern dentistry a political or even propagandistic dimension.

²⁸ Vos R., *Lucas van Leyden* (Maarssen: 1978) 103, considers Lucas van Leyden's etch as a warning, as 'een ernstige boodschap' presented in a 'vrolijke verpakking'. His moralistic interpretation of the scene is shared by Filedt-Kok J.P., *Lucas van Leyden* [...] (Amsterdam: 1978) 72 and Reys K., *De grafiek van Lucas van Leyden, een beschrijving en vergelijking met tijdgenoten* (unpublished MA thesis, Leiden: 2004) 292 ('een waarschuwing tegen "varende luyden"').

²⁹ New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Cf. de Jong – Luijten, *Spiegel van alledag* 222.

A number of hints point in this direction. On a kind of advertising poster hanging above the table of the surgeon, a shield of arms with the double-headed eagle of the German Emperor can be seen, held by heraldic lions [Fig. 10; detail of Fig. 1]. At the top of the shield a crown is depicted. On a smaller shield, the double-headed eagle bears the arms of Austria (left) and Old Burgundy (right). In this way, the Petrarch Master conspicuously connects the seducing charlatan with the Roman Emperor. At first sight, this may have been interpreted by contemporary viewers as implying that the charlatan sells his doubtful services under the protection or authorization of the Emperor. Adver-tizing posters were used by surgeons in order to attract clients and to persuade them of their trustfulness.³⁰ Such posters would celebrate the practitioner's medical successes by showing operated body parts or kidney stones, for example in a drawing by Lambert Doomer [Fig. 11] or in the etching ascribed to Pieter van den Borcht (kidney stones).³¹ In addition, surgeons could present letters of authorization, as in Jan Steen's painting in the Mauritshuis [Fig. 12; detail of Fig. 4],³² in the 1523 etching by Lucas of Leyden [Fig. 9] or in Jost Amman's "Zan-brecher" in his *Ständebuch* [Fig. 13].³³

It was not normal practice of surgeons, however, to present themselves with the most venerable coat of arms, that of the Roman Emperor. Moreover, in the Petrarch Master's image the coat of arms of the Emperor is not put on a letter of authorization or something similar, but is painted directly on his advertizing panel. One must bear in mind that it was of course strictly forbidden for ordinary people to bear the coat of arms of the Roman Emperor. Thus, for early modern viewers, the strange association of the charlatan with the Holy Roman Emperor must have been a remarkable detail that required some specific explanation. It invites the user of the book to identify the charlatan with the Roman Emperor. The chain which the dentist wears, and the strange decoration on his cloak may have reinforced this identification. On a

³⁰ Cf. Andel M.A. van, "Kwakzalver-reclames in vroeger eeuwen", in *Nederlands tijdschrift voor geneeskunde* 5 (1912) 297–310.

³¹ Brown, *Holländische Genremalerei* 99 (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum).

³² Ibidem 70.

³³ *Eygentliche Beschreibung Aller Staende auff Erden/Hoher und Nidriger* [...] (Frankfurt a.M.: 1568), nr. 52. Wasserfuhr, *Der Zahnarzt* 26: 'Ähnliche Schriftstücke, die sehr häufig abgebildet wurden, waren entweder Meisterbriefe einer Gilde oder Ehrenurkunden, die den Zahnbrechern von kirchlichen und weltlichen Fürsten für erwiesene Dienste verliehen wurden'.



Fig. 10. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 94, fol. CXIXv. Detail.



Fig 11. Lambert Doomer, *The Tooth-Puller*. Drawing, 28.7 × 40.2. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.

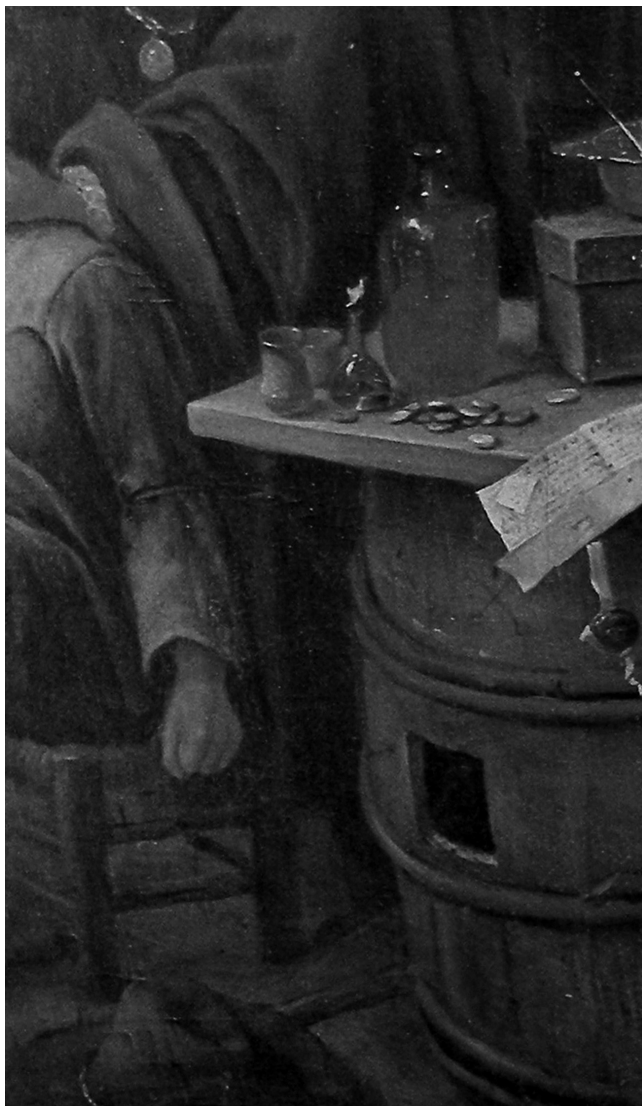


Fig. 12. Jan Steen, *The Tooth-Puller* (1651). Oil on canvas, 32.5 × 26.7 cm.
The Hague, Mauritshuis. Detail.

Der Zanbrecher.



Fig. 13. Jost Amman, The “Zanbrecher”. From Hans Sach’s *Eygentliche Beschreibung Aller Staende auff Erden* [...] (Frankfurt a. M.: 1568), no. 52.

literal ‘reading’ of the image, of course, the pendants on the decoration and the chain represent teeth. In visual representations, early modern dentists sometimes wear chains of teeth, as on the painting by Theodoor Rombouts [Fig. 5]. These may have been meant as a caricature of the charlatans’ advertising practices.³⁴ In connection with the Emperor’s coat of arms, however, the pendants on the Petrarch Master’s image display a remarkable resemblance to one of the Emperor’s main markers of identity, the Golden Fleece. Since Maximilian I [Fig. 14], Charles’ V predecessor, the Roman Emperor had been the president of the Order of the Golden Fleece. As on Lucas van Leyden’s etching, the Petrarch Master’s dentist wears the robe of a nobleman, for example the beret. This is a satirical element introduced to express the charlatan’s pretensions. In the Petrarch Master’s image however, the dentist wears on his beret the weapon of Austria.

In the visual rhetoric by which he presented his statement, the Petrarch Master – as in many cases – makes use of proverbial expressions. In this specific case, he refers on the one hand to the German proverb ‘die Zähne ziehen’, which means something like ‘to harm someone’ or, more specifically, ‘to get money out of someone’.³⁵ If the Emperor pulls the people’s teeth (‘zieht dem Volk die Zähne’), it means he will harm them and try to get money out of them. On the other hand, the Petrarch Master alludes to the popular expression ‘wie ein Zahnbrecher lügen’ (‘to lie like a practitioner’).³⁶ Thus, in referring to the German Emperor, the image suggests that he is a liar and a fraud.

The context of this satirical attack is the German political situation of 1519–1520, the period in which the woodcuts were made, specifically the election of the new Emperor after the death of Maximilian I (1519). The town of Augsburg – the very place where the Petrarch Master worked – financed the election of Maximilian’s grandson Charles by huge sums of money from the famous Augsburg bankers Fugger (543.585 guilders) and Welser (143.333 guilders).³⁷ Conrad Peutinger, the councillor of Augsburg, argued in favour of Charles, in order to

³⁴ Jost Amman’s “Zanbrecher” has a chain of teeth fixed to his advertising poster [Fig. 13].

³⁵ Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* V, 1756, s.v. “Zahn”.

³⁶ Ibidem V, 1757, s.v. “Zahnbrecher”. For the Dutch version of the proverb (‘Hij liegt als een tandentrekker’), cf. de Jong – Luijten, *Spiegel van alledag* 222; also the French poem which accompanies Andries Pauli’s etching of Theodoor Rombout’s “De tandentrekker” refers to this notion: ‘C’est son art de mentir [...]’ (ibidem).

³⁷ Cf. the manuscript Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 2o Cod. Aug. 126.



Fig. 14. German Painter, Portrait of the Emperor Maximilian I, after Albrecht Dürer. Oil on wooden panel, 40 × 31 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

bring about an alliance between the new Emperor and the Pope. He was eager to have Charles elected in order to destroy the Lutheran heresy. In the end Peutingers wish was fulfilled, and in the summer of 1520 he was sent to the Low Countries to welcome Charles as he prepared for his coronation.³⁸ His speech was published by Erasmus' friend Peter Gillis (Petrus Aegidius). As the analysis of a number of images has shown, the Petrarch Master was an ardent Lutheran. Time and again he attacks the Pope, the Catholic Church, clerics, Catholic rites,³⁹ as well as the Roman Emperor. His opposition to the election of Charles V has already been observed by Ulrich Steinmann.⁴⁰ It is this context that helps us to understand the aggressive polemic in the image accompanying Petrarch's *De remediis*, chapter II, 94.

What, then, is the function of physical pain in this image? Why does it play such an important part? It is, of course, most remarkable that the Petrarch Master's image has so little to do with Petrarch's argument. In his chapter, Petrarch does not offer any practical advice concerning visits to a dentist, and does not engage in political polemic, nor does he discuss physical pain. So why did the Petrarch Master focus so strongly on pain? It could very well be that he almost automatically associated dental problems with toothache. Yet the association had also already been made by the German translator, who rendered 'illness of the teeth' as 'toothache': "Von dem wechtumb der zeen", as becomes clear already in the title of the chapter (fol. CXIXv).⁴¹ In other words, the German translator already changed the tone of Petrarch's argument by giving physical pain a prominent place. We could interpret this as a feature of vernacular discourse which was somewhat alien to the humanist's Stoic way of thinking. In vernacular discourse, the mental 'dolor', the Stoic *pathe*, was probably difficult to understand or, at least, hard to grasp as a phenomenon fundamentally different from physical pain. Since it better fitted the vernacular discourse, the translator introduced physical pain where Petrarch exclusively talked about mental suffering.

³⁸ Cf. Lutz H., *Conrad Peutingers Beiträge zu einer politischen Biographie* (Augsburg: 1958) 160–163.

³⁹ Enenkel, "Der Petrarca des Petrarca-Meisters". Cf. Lanckoronska M., "Der Petrarcameister und die Reformation", *Imprimatur* 11 (1952/53) 162–174.

⁴⁰ "Die politische Tendenz des Petrarca-Meisters. Seine Stellungnahme gegen die Wahl Karls V. und sein Verhalten zu den Ereignissen in Württemberg", *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Forschungen und Berichte* 6 (1964) 40–90.

⁴¹ Scheidig adopts the questionable old German translation (297: "Von dem Wehtum der Zähne").

This suggests that physical pain played different roles within learned Latin and vernacular discourses.

The function and meaning of pain becomes even more interesting if one considers the political and propagandistic dimension of the Petrarch Master's rhetoric of pain. Here, physical pain functions as an important means for conveying a political statement. 1520 Germany was full of political tensions in which aggressive advertisement strategies and powerful propaganda were required. Especially the rise of the Reformation brought about a new use of printed media. Luther was one of the first to use the printed pamphlet and the printed images as means of propaganda.⁴² In II, 94 and in a number of other chapters, the Petrarch Master used physical pain in a comparable propagandistic manner.

In terms of propaganda, pain serves first of all to attract the viewer's attention by emotionalizing the viewer. This is possible because physical sensations are extremely powerful identifiers. Furthermore, the physical sensation of pain causes emotional reactions such as fear, distress, grief, panic, shame and embarrassment. These reactions may be used for rhetorical means as well, for example in order to make the audience receptive to various messages, and to advices and warnings. Moreover, images of physical pain may also cause identification by compassion. The viewer may feel compassion for the pain-sufferers, which again may serve as an effective means to convey a range of messages. Compassion may also serve as a means to incite hatred in the viewer against the people who cause physical pain, and hurt or even torture others. The production of negative feelings, of course, is an important propagandistic device. Last but not least, images of physical pain are especially useful for political and religious propaganda since they can express relationships in terms of power and hierarchy. The persons who cause physical pain are the powerful; those on whom pain is inflicted are their subjects.

In the case of II, 94, the image of physical pain will immediately attract the viewer's attention. His gaze is drawn directly to the open mouth and the contorted face of the woman in the centre of the wood-

⁴² Edwards M.U., *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley: 1994); Faulstich W., *Medien zwischen Herrschaft und Revolte. Die Medienkultur der Frühen Neuzeit (1400–1700)* (Göttingen: 1998); Hamm B., "Die Reformation als Medienereignis", *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie* 11 (1996) 138–166.

cut. The image may activate the viewer's own memories of toothache, as well as unpleasant or even humiliating situations when he had a tooth pulled in the marketplace, in front of a crowd of spectators. The viewer will identify with the image of pain, and in this way he will become receptive to the warning which the Petrarch Master's image seeks to put across. As a consequence, he will rethink his response to the pain depicted in the image. Ashamed of having surrendered to physical pain, he will be inclined to be more cautious henceforth. He will understand that it is dangerous to be driven into the hands of a charlatan by a toothache. Thus, the image arouses feelings of fear from practitioners in the viewer. Yet once the viewer has also discovered the political dimension of the image, he will transfer his fear of the charlatan to the Roman Emperor. As a consequence, he will feel hatred against this powerful fraud and torturer, and he will be embarrassed at having been cheated by him. He will come to distrust and feel anger against the Emperor. In this way, he will easily accept the image's message: 'avoid being hurt by Charles. Don't be so foolish as trust or support him. If you do so, you will end up paying for your naive attitude, just like the foolish people who trust practitioners'.

Eye-Piercing

Spectacular differences in attitude towards pain between word and image also occur in chapter II, 96 "De cecitate" ("On Blindness"). In his argument, Petrarch does not discuss physical pain, but is concerned with grief about loss of vision. As with chapter II, 94, the humanist's argument is shaped partly by antique Stoic statements, partly by Christian patterns of thought in the *contemptus mundi* tradition. The *contemptus mundi* patterns of thought are very similar to those presented in chapter II, 94. Loss of eyesight means freedom from sensual temptations, for example beautiful women and exquisite food:

DOLOR: I have lost my vision.

RATIO: And the view of women's faces. Hence rejoice! Closed are the windows through which normally death enters, and the way is barred to many vices; greed (*avaritia*), gluttony (*gula*), lust (*luxuria*), and other pests have lost their helpmeets and accomplices. As much as these friends took away from your soul, that much, you should understand, have you now regained.

DOLOR: I have lost my eyes.

RATIO: You have lost evil guides (*duces malos*), who were used to lead you to ruin (*qui in precipitium te ducebant*). It is amazing how often the most lucid part of the body (*lucidissima pars corporis*) casts mind and soul into darkness. Begin now to follow the spirit that calls you to better things, and listen to the truth which shouts into your ears. Seek not for 'the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen, are eternal' (*Nolite querere que videntur. Que enim videntur, temporalia sunt. Que autem non videntur, eterna*).⁴³

In the last two lines Petrarch quotes Paul's Letter to the *Corinthians* II, 4,18, in which the apostle persuades his audience to put aside earthly things in search of the heavenly kingdom. The Christian argument culminates in the paradox that whoever who has lost his vision has begun to see the light, the light of God and spiritual truth: 'When Saint Anthony came to see the old man (Didymus), he told him not to worry about the loss of the eyes one has in common with flies, mice, and lizards but to exult that those eyes he had in common with the angels were safe and sound. Words worthy of Anthony, the pupil of the heavenly Schoolmaster'.⁴⁴ Petrarch quotes the Latin version of the famous *Life of Anthony*, one of the key texts of medieval monastic spirituality.⁴⁵ Thus, he who has lost his physical eyes has the advantage of having (re)gained his inner sight, which enables him to perceive the true light.

The Stoic line of argument concentrates on examples of antique heroes who either ignored blindness or were not prevented by blindness from extreme forms of bravery. The first in line are of course Homer who despite his blindness was able to deliver no less than 48 books of epic poetry, and the philosopher Democritus, who was said to have deliberately deprived himself of his eyesight in order to better perceive philosophical truth.⁴⁶ As is the case with Homer, the Stoic philosopher Diodotus, Cicero's house philosopher, refused to be prevented by his blindness from pursuing demanding intellectual activities. He continued to study books incessantly, which he had read to him by slaves. As a

⁴³ Trsl. Rawski, III, 235–236; Le Preux 579 (additions of the Latin text in italics mine).

⁴⁴ Rawski III, 237; Le Preux 580–581.

⁴⁵ Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* (*Life of Anthony*), translated into Latin by Hieronymus' friend Euagrius bishop of Antiochia, in Migne, *Patrologia Latina* vol. LXXIII, 158.

⁴⁶ Cf. Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* V, 114; Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* X, 17; Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri VIII*, 7 ext. 4.

telling detail, he managed even to construct geometrical drawings by meticulously describing the figures to Cicero's servants.⁴⁷ As an example of a military hero, Petrarch refers to the otherwise unknown soldier Tyrrhenus (taken from the Stoic poet Lucan) who fought in the battle of Massilia.⁴⁸ This example is especially interesting in relation to the role of pain in Petrarch's text, since it is connected with an extreme form of violence and pain. Lucan tells us that a lead bullet crushed the bones of Tyrrhenus' temples, causing his eyeballs to jump from their sockets and blood to gush from his head. This dramatic accident did not prevent the brave soldier from continuing his fighting. Petrarch, however, does not give any of these bloody details, but only briefly mentions Thyrrhenus' name. In other words, Petrarch did not consider physical pain important enough to discuss it when dealing with the loss of functions of the body. Whenever possible – or even impossible – in his argument, the state of mind (grief, sorrow, fear et cetera) prevails over the physical sensation.

In marked difference, the Petrarch Master illustrated the chapter with an image that precisely exaggerates physical pain and violence [Fig. 15]. In the centre of the woodcut a patient lying on a bench is being operated upon by a wild-looking surgeon in primitive dress, who is into his eyes with a sharp instrument. Obviously the operation causes so much pain that the patient is tied to a bench. This is done in such a strange and exaggerated way – the patient is tied at the feet, knees, hands, arms, body and head – that the patient resembles more a victim of judicial torture. Behind the bench, a bird scratches out the eyes of a queen. Moreover, the queen is about to commit suicide in a painful way, by stabbing a dagger into her breast. Modern viewers are likely to be puzzled by this extraordinarily cruel image. It is difficult to understand how the Petrarch Master came to his pictorial invention. Even Scheidig, who thinks that the Petrarch Master closely followed Petrarch's text, admits that 'Petrarca nennt kein Beispiel einer Herrscherin, die so ihrem Leben ein Ende bereitet hätte'.⁴⁹

With this illustration as with others, it is not plausible to argue that the Petrarch Master was dependent on images of physical pain *because he had to translate a philosophical text into visual objects*. Petrarch's text offers

⁴⁷ Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* V, 113.

⁴⁸ Lucan, *Bellum civile* III, 709–722.

⁴⁹ Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 299.



Fig. 15. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 96, fol. CXXXIV.

generally a considerable amount of topics which could easily have been visualized. In the chapter on blindness, for example, the Petrarch Master could have depicted the blind seer Tyresias, the blind poet Homer, the blind philosopher Democritus, Saint Anthony visiting the blind man Didymus (including the mice and lizards of Anthony's argument), the blind philosopher Diodotus constructing geometrical figures with the help of Cicero's servants, the blind jurist Gaius Drusus receiving a crowd of visitors, the famous censor Appius Claudius Caecus presiding over the venerable Roman senate, the biblical hero Simson who, for his love of Delilah, had forsaken his duties and had been punished by God with blindness,⁵⁰ the brave soldier Tyrrenus heavily wounded in the battle of Massilia, and not in the last place the emotional story of blind King John of Bohemia who sacrificed himself in the battle of Crécy (1346), which could have been an especially impressive image with a large battle scene. Moreover, the Petrarch Master could have depicted just the pictorial type of the blind man in its various manifestations, such as the blind man in despair and distress, the blind man who has lost his orientation, or the blind man who became a beggar (as often was the case in the late Middle Ages). For images of the blind man the Petrarch Master easily could have drawn on the rich iconographical tradition from the Middle Ages ('the blind man'),⁵¹ with which he was very well acquainted, as is demonstrated by the background figure of the blind man on the left (blind man's stick, hat of tramp, 'Augenbinde'; additionally guide dog).

How, then, is the strange pictorial invention of the Petrarch Master, in which he focuses on physical pain in such an exaggerating way, to be explained? First of all, the Petrarch Master associates the topic of the chapter, blindness, with yet another wide-spread medical technique of the late medieval and early modern period, the so-called "Starstich" (literally 'piercing of the cataract'). Cataract ("grauer Star"), especially during old age, was at least as frequent in the late Middle Ages as it is nowadays. It implies a deterioration of the lens that progressively robs patients of clear eyesight and, in the end, leads to blindness. The cure that was applied for this illness was to remove the cataract by piercing

⁵⁰ *Book of Judges* 13–16.

⁵¹ Cf. *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. II (Zurich: 1999) col. 279, s.v. "Blindheit" (W. Jaeger).

the lens push it back into the eyeball.⁵² If the patient was lucky and the operation was done properly, he would regain his eyesight, yet since the lens had been displaced or partially destroyed, the patient would be unable to see sharply. As this short description already suggests, there was no guarantee that the operation would be successful, and even if the operation was done well, its success was limited. Moreover, the very poor hygienic circumstances in the late middle Ages frequently caused inflammations in operated parts of the body, which was all the more dangerous, of course, in the case of a delicate organ like the eye. It was no exception that patients died some time even after “successful” surgery. The problems were increased by the fact that there was no official or officially controlled ophthalmology.⁵³ As was the case with dentistry, eye surgery was done by strolling practitioners. They traveled from town to town, from village to village, were paid for their dubious skills and disappeared as quickly as they had appeared on the market place. There was no cure after the treatments and when inflammations or other complications occurred, the strolling practitioner was gone with the wind. Yet for late medieval patients of cataract who wanted to regain vision again, there were hardly any alternatives to visiting “Starstecher” (“cataract piercers”).

There is, then, a puzzling discontinuity between word and image. Whereas Petrarch deals with the mental consequences of blindness, the Petrarch Master discusses a medical cure for blindness which – painful as it was – did offer some hope of regaining eyesight. It seems unconvincing to construe the image as a kind of practical advice: if you lose your vision, visit a surgeon and have a cataract operation. The figure in the background (the blind man with guide dog) points exactly in the opposite direction, showing the deplorable results of the operation: it has failed completely, and the man became blind. Thus, the Petrarch Master in fact dissuades people from visiting cataract piercers. The figure in the centre (the woman about to commit suicide) probably reinforces this: if you trust a “Starstecher” you are in fact as mad as a

⁵² The “Starstecher’s” instruments (needles etcetera) are exhibited for example in the Pathologisch-anatomisches Bundesmuseum Narrenturm in Vienna. The piercing of cataracts was already practiced in antiquity, cf. Künzl E., “Der Starstich [...]”, in *Antike Welt. Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Urgeschichte* 35 (2004) 45–50.

⁵³ Cf. Hirschberg J., *The History of Ophthalmology*, vol. II *The Middle Ages, the 16th and 17th centuries* (1985); *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. II (Zurich: 1999) col. 1845–1859, s.v. “Chirurg”.

person trying to commit suicide.⁵⁴ Suicide was, of course, condemned by Christian religion, and punished as a crime by the confiscation of the suicide's possessions.⁵⁵ The bird scratching out the woman's eyes may hint at the madness or 'furor' ('Verblendung') of suicide. Yet the bird may also connect the *exemplum historicum* more closely with the client of the "Starstecher". The bird probably represents a starling, German 'Star' – a homonym of the illness from which the operated person suffers (Star, i.e. cataract).⁵⁶ The viewer discovers the terrible fact that the starling bird does exactly the same as the practitioner: it renders the "cured" person forever blind.

As is the case with II, 94, the Petrarch Master's pictorial emphasis on pain has a polemical and satirical dimension, and is connected with the discourses of the *Ship of Fools* and the house book. The satirical polemic is directed against patients and practitioners alike. It accuses the strolling surgeons/practitioners of charlatanry and their patients of foolishness. Instead of curing patients, the untrustworthy surgeons will make them definitively blind. Instead of helping patients, they *torture* them. As the pictorial devices used by the Petrarch Master show, this last accusation is to be taken literally. The Petrarch Master represents

⁵⁴ I cannot exclude the possibility that the iconographical archetype of the woman committing suicide by stabbing a dagger in her breast was the Roman heroine Lucretia who was raped by Tarquinius Superbus (Livy, *Ab urbe condita* I, 57,6–59,6). But there is another, more plausible iconological tradition, that of Dido who stabbed a sword into her breast (Virgil, *Aeneis* IV, 642 ff.). The Petrarch Master was familiar with the pictorial representation of Dido's suicide. Compare his illustration to *De remediis* chapter II, 120 [Fig. 16]. For his image of Dido committing suicide, he imitated the woodcut illustration of the Virgil edition, Straßburg 1502 [Fig. 17]. As is the case with chapter II, 96, Petrarch does not mention the historical example depicted by the Petrarch Master. Two pictorial elements, the long hair and the crown [Fig. 18; detail of Fig. 15], strongly suggest that the historical example of the Petrarch Master's image of chapter II, 96 is Dido. Dido was a queen (whereas Lucretia was not) and Virgil describes her as wearing long hair (which was cut off by Iris; last lines of *Aeneid*, book IV). According to Virgil Dido committed suicide in an attack of madness ('effera', IV, 642; 'furibunda', IV, 646), a mental blackout so to say. Thus, her suicide has especially negative connotations. If the woman committing suicide in illustration II, 96 is Dido, winged Iris is replaced by the starling bird scratching out her eyes. It does not bring relief by death, as Iris did, but permanent blindness, i.e. long suffering on earth. This suffering may be expressed by the image of the strolling blind man on the left part of the woodcut.

⁵⁵ Cf. Wacke A., "Selbsttötung, – mord", in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. VII, col. 1727.

⁵⁶ That the illness 'Star' has different etymological roots (old German 'starablint', i.e. 'mit offenen, starren Augen blind', cf. Pfeifer W. [ed.], *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen*, [Munich: 2005, 8th edition] 1344) from the bird 'Star' (cf. ibidem), is of course less relevant for the Petrarch Master's pun.



Fig. 16. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney beider Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 120, fol. CLVIIIr.



Fig. 17. Dido committing suicide. Woodcut illustration in Sebastian Brant's edition of Virgil (Straßburg: 1502), at the end of book IV.



Fig. 18. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck [...]* (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 96, fol. CXXIV. Detail.

the patient lying *tied to a bench*. This is a curious distortion of the normal practice. The operations were normally done with both patient and surgeon sitting opposite each other. The patient was held from behind by an assistant, so that he could not move. When the Petrarch Master renders the patient lying tied to a bench he is referring to the widespread and well-known medieval instrument of torture, the rack. That the Petrarch Master knew about the rack is also suggested by his illustration of chapter II, 65, in which the victim in the foreground is stretched on the rack while water is being poured into its mouth [Fig. 19].

Patients who undergo torture out of their own free will are of course fools. The same is true for patients who believe that they will be able to read again after a cataract operation, as the book in the hands of the tortured person shows [Fig. 15]. Instead of being able to read again he will become blind forever, as the blind man in the background (of the left part of the image) suggests. That people who commit suicide are fools was already indicated above. It is even more foolish to choose the dagger or the sword as a means of suicide. This will certainly be very painful whereas it is uncertain whether the attempt will succeed. The woman committing suicide may well be modeled on Dido – the long, flying plaits point in that direction – and it is worth noting that Dido's attempt was not successful, and she was only relieved by Juno who, out of pity, sent winged Iris to her, in order to cut off the queen's long blond hair, the symbol of her life force.⁵⁷

Thus, in chapter II, 96 again, the Petrarch Master uses pain as a powerful means to drive his point home: to make his audience refrain from undergoing the cataract operation that was so widespread and popular. The painful torture of the violent eye operation on the rack and the painful suicide by stabbing a dagger into one's breast are meant to emotionalize the viewer and to make him receptive to the Petrarch Master's practical warning.

Whipping, Scourging, Torturing

The view that in his pictorial inventions the Petrarch Master tried to stir up the emotions of the reader is reinforced by the fact that he time

⁵⁷ Virgil, *Aeneid* IV, 693–705.



Fig. 19. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck [...]* (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 65, fol. LXXVIv.

and again represents *extreme forms of pain and violence*. In his woodcuts he repeatedly present the human body naked, that is in as vulnerable a state as possible (for example in chapters II, 7; 27; 28; 29; 46; 65; 67; 100; 105; 122; 124). The naked body is scourged or whipped (II, 7 [Fig. 20]; 29 [Fig. 21]; 67 [Fig. 22]; 100; 122), scratched (II, 27); pierced by arrows, swords or daggers (for example in II, 29; 46 [Fig. 23]); literally roasted (II, 65 [Fig. 19]), tortured by means of the strappado technique, the rack (II, 65 [Fig. 19]), the wheel or the cross (II, 122 [Fig. 24]), it will be torn into pieces by wild animals (II, 7), crucified, hanged or burnt alive (II, 122 [Fig. 24]). Several times tongues are cut off (Fig. II, 29 [Fig. 21] (left part of the image)); II, 103 [Fig. 25] (right part of the image)), eyes are gouged out (II, 60 [Fig. 26] (detail, left part of the image)), ears are cut off (II, 97) as well as heads (II, 102).

The pictorial inventions by the Petrarch Master are all the more remarkable since in most cases the text does not speak about those specific forms of physical pain or violence. In chapter II, 67 (“De exilio”) Petrarch discusses the grief caused by exile, which, from Antiquity to the early modern period, was considered one of the most severe punishments. The Petrarch Masters illustration, however, focuses on the scourging of a man with a naked back and his hands tied [Fig. 22]. The scourged man is represented with his mouth open, which suggests that he is screaming with pain. His bending forward, moreover, suggests that he is attempting to escape from the pain. Interestingly enough, there is no obvious juridical connection between the punishments of exile and scourging.

In II, 7 (“De servitudine”) Petrarch discusses the deplorable state mind caused by the loss of freedom and offers Stoic arguments against it. One can only free oneself if one deals with philosophy. Thus, the most important argument is derived from the Stoic paradox that ‘only the wise man is free’ (*solus sapiens liber est*). The Petrarch Master, however, presents the physical punishment of a servant by severe scourging. The servant is represented as a naked victim bound to a pillar and relentlessly whipped by two men, one behind the pillar with a ‘flagellum’ in his left hand, and by another man in the centre of the woodcut. The face of the victim shows the effects of physical pain. His mouth is open, which probably suggests that he is groaning from pain. His eyes are opened wide, which suggests fear of receiving yet another blow. His body is contorted as if he is trying to escape the intense physical pain afflicted on him. The cruelty of the scene is enlarged by the fact that the man



Fig. 20. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 7, fol. VIIIv. Detail, left part of the image.



Fig. 21. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 29, fol. XXXVIIIr. Detail, left part of the image.



Fig. 22. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 67, fol. LXXIXr. Detail, left part of the image.



Fig. 23. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 46, fol. LVv. Detail, left part of the image.



Fig. 24. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 122, fol. CLXIIr.



Fig. 25. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 103, fol. CXXXr. Detail, right part of the image.



Fig. 26. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 60, fol. LXXIIr. Detail, left part of the image.

in the centre is so eager to scourge his victim that he uses even two whips, one in his right and one in his left hand [Fig. 20].

By constructing the image in this way, the Petrarch Master aimed at associating the punishment of the servant with the well known pictorial type of the flagellation of Christ, frequently depicted in late medieval painting from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. The pillar reminds the viewer of the column to which Christ was tied (see below). The two men scourging Christ are standard elements of the ‘flagellation’. For these elements compare for example Duccio’s “Flagellation of Christ” on the *Maestà* painted for the cathedral of Siena (1308–1311) [Fig. 28] or the Master of the Osservanza’s *Flagellation of Christ* in the Vatican Museum’s (ca. 1425–1450 [Fig. 29]). The late medieval “Flagellations of Christ” have a clearly religious meaning: they are part of the passion of Christ and thus, they belong to the summit of late medieval religious experience, the so called ‘Leidensmystik’. In the ‘Leidensmystik’ the believer is meant to identify with Christ and to re-experience the ‘unsägliche’ pain which He had to endure.

One wonders whether the Petrarch Master who was a Lutheran did participate in the late medieval ‘Leidensmystik’. Luther, in fact, had outspoken views on the way in which one should meditate on the passion of Christ. Quite a number of contemporary habits he considered as wrong or even dangerous. He certainly did *not* approve of far-reaching identifications with the pains of Christ. In his 1519 treatise *A Sermon Concerning Meditation on the Holy Sufferings of Christ* (*Sermon von der Betrachtung des heiligen Leidens Christi*), he wants the believer above all to identify with the torturers. The believer should focus on the thought that it is *he* who tortured Him, *he* who crucified Him: ‘Deeply believe and never doubt the least, that you are the one who thus martyred Christ. For your sins most surely did it. Therefore, when you view the nails piercing through his hands, firmly believe it is *your* work. Do you behold his crown of thorns, believe the thorns are your wicked thoughts’. Occupied with this thought, we will ‘view Christ’ and be ‘terror-stricken in heart at the sight, and [our] conscience at once sinks in despair. This terror-stricken feeling should spring forth, so that [we] see the severe wrath and the unchangeable earnestness of God in regard to sin and sinners’.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ For this article I have made use of an online translation, entitled “Christ’s Holy Sufferings”, published by the Christian Classics Ethereal Library, www.ccel.org/ccel/luther/sermons.iv.html, accessed 20 May 2008, italics mine.



Fig. 27. Fig. 20. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 7, fol. VIIIv. Detail, left part of the image.

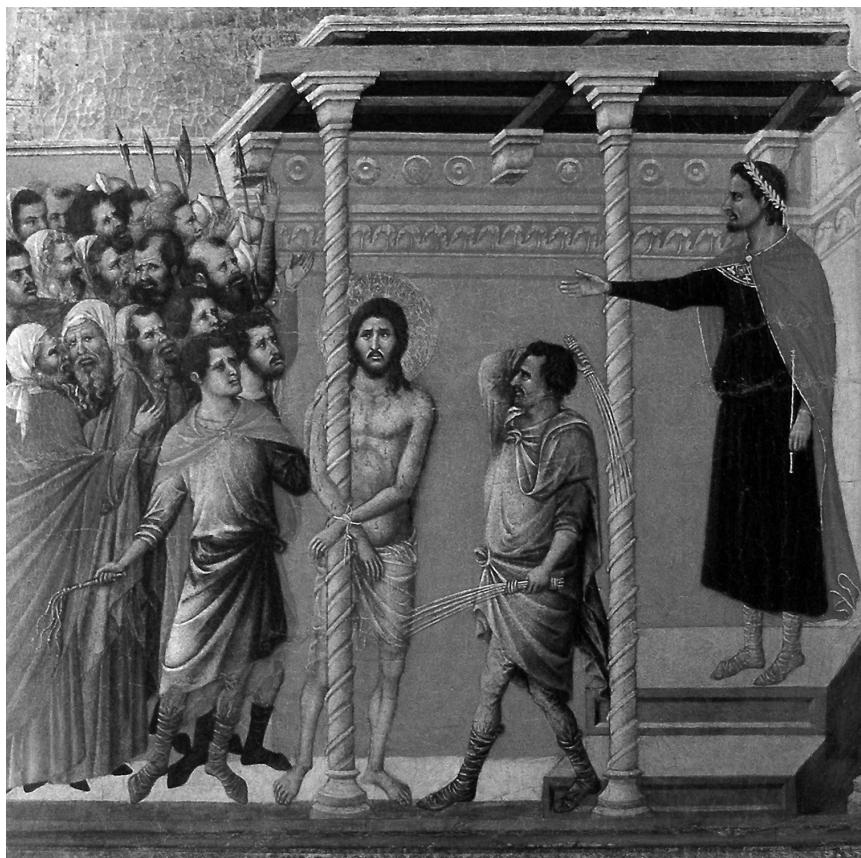


Fig. 28 [COL. PL. VI]. Duccio, "Flagellation of Christ", part of his *Maestà* painted for the cathedral of Siena (1308–1311). Tempera on wood, 99.6 × 53.2 cm. Siena, Museo dell' Opera di Duomo.



Fig. 29 [Col. pl. VII]. Master of the Osservanza, "Flagellation of Christ" (ca. 1425–1450). Tempera and gold on wood, 36.5 x 45.7 cm. Vatican, Musei Vaticani.

It is not clear, of course, if, and to what degree, the Petrarch Master was acquainted with Luther's thoughts on the meditation on the Passion of Christ. In the case of image II, 7 it is clear, however, that the Petrarch Master did not aim at making the viewer identify profoundly with the victim, since he glorifies neither the victim nor pain. As is the case with the other images by the Petrarch Master, pain does not have any transcendent or positive meaning. It is something exclusively negative, inflicted by people who display morally questionable behaviour. Most probably, the Petrarch Master wanted the viewer to see the cruel master as a reflection of himself. Interestingly enough, it is indeed the master who watches the scene, standing in the door. By making the viewer identify with the cruel master, the artist puts forward a moralistic critique of the outrageous punishments inflicted by early modern servant keepers. The viewer who watches the flagellation of the servant should understand that he is not any better than the Roman hypocrite governor Pontius Pilatus, who ordered the flagellation of Christ. In this ingenious construction of the image, physical pain serves as a means of simultaneously moral, social, religious and political commentary.

An interesting and to a certain degree related example is chapter II, 29 "On bad servants" ("De servis malis"). In this chapter, Petrarch deals with the troubles that are caused by bad servants, who may turn out to be disobedient, to steal and to cheat. Petrarch's perspective clearly is that of the early modern master who suffers from the presence of this seemingly inevitable household staff. As an exception, Petrarch, in this chapter, does not so much engage in mental therapy, but offers practical advice. This may be due to the fact that in this case, he largely identifies with the position of *DOLOR*, i.e. the grief of the servant keeper. As a scholar, dedicated to *otium*, study and silence, he considered servants annoying and noisy. If one keeps many servants, as he puts it, one will house as many enemies. They will do their best to turn the scholar's life into hell. Thus, he dissuades the reader from keeping a large number of servants and advises him not to choose handsome, but rather ordinary and trustworthy servants: 'protect yourself by keeping only a few servants of the most ordinary sort. Throw out the handsome ones, throw out the refined and cunning ones, and throw out those who take pride in a pretty face, a sly wit, or their sophistication. Among a few servants – and the stupid and rude ones – you live safer, not because they are

better, but because they dare less, like snakes in the winter, hampered by their congealed venom and vile torpor of their numbness'.⁵⁹

As the last comparison shows, Petrarch was inclined to regard his servants as a kind of dangerous *domestic enemies*. Scheidig misses the point when he identifies Petrarch's view on the matter as follows: 'Man soll mit den Knechten freundlich, glimpflich und gütig umgehen, leben und handeln [...]. Man soll nicht gebrauchen der Strafe, nicht der Schläge, sondern der Worte'. These are in fact Seneca's words,⁶⁰ with which Petrarch vehemently disagrees. It is no coincidence that Petrarch's concept of 'domestic enemies' ('hostes domestici', 'hostes familiares') occurs in the first lines of chapter II, 29 ('non familiari solum exercitu, sed hostili'). A letter which Petrarch wrote to Sennucio of Florence makes the autobiographical vein of this chapter of *De Remediis* visible:

I have with me at home some three pairs of servants, or, to speak more modestly, of lower-class friends, or, to speak more truthfully, of *domestic enemies*. Of the first pair, one is tremendously doltish, the other dangerously sly. Of the second, one is rendered useless by his extreme youth, the other by old age. Of the third pair, one is shockingly mad, the other shockingly lazy [...]. Amidst such contrasts I used to be the overseer with the whip, but now, I just sit and observe them. Nor can I wonder enough about the purpose of those who consider throngs of servants as something glorious, and enjoy being forever besieged by those they feed, that is, their domestic plotters [...].⁶¹

Thus, in II, 29, Ratio surprisingly enough reinforces DOLOR's complaints about bad slaves and states that the best thing is in this case to reduce the evil somewhat, according to the lines quoted above.

The Petrarch Master, by contrast, presents a much different argument, in which he emphasizes rather the extreme cruelty of early modern masters towards their servants; the same thing he has already done in his illustration to chapter II, 7. *It is, in fact, the master who turns the servant's life into hell*. In the left part of the image [Fig. 30] a master in person cuts off the tongue of a servant who is tied to a column; on the right part, another master beats a servant so violently on his buttocks that the instrument of punishment, a birch, falls into pieces. The broken twigs of the birch are scattered all over the floor. By his focus on physical pain the Petrarch Master suggests that the punishments are morally

⁵⁹ Trsl. Rawski, vol. III, 85.

⁶⁰ Seneca, *Epistulae ad Lucilium* 47.

⁶¹ *Familiares* IV, 14 (ed. Rossi); trsl. by Rawski, vol. IV, 140 (italics mine).

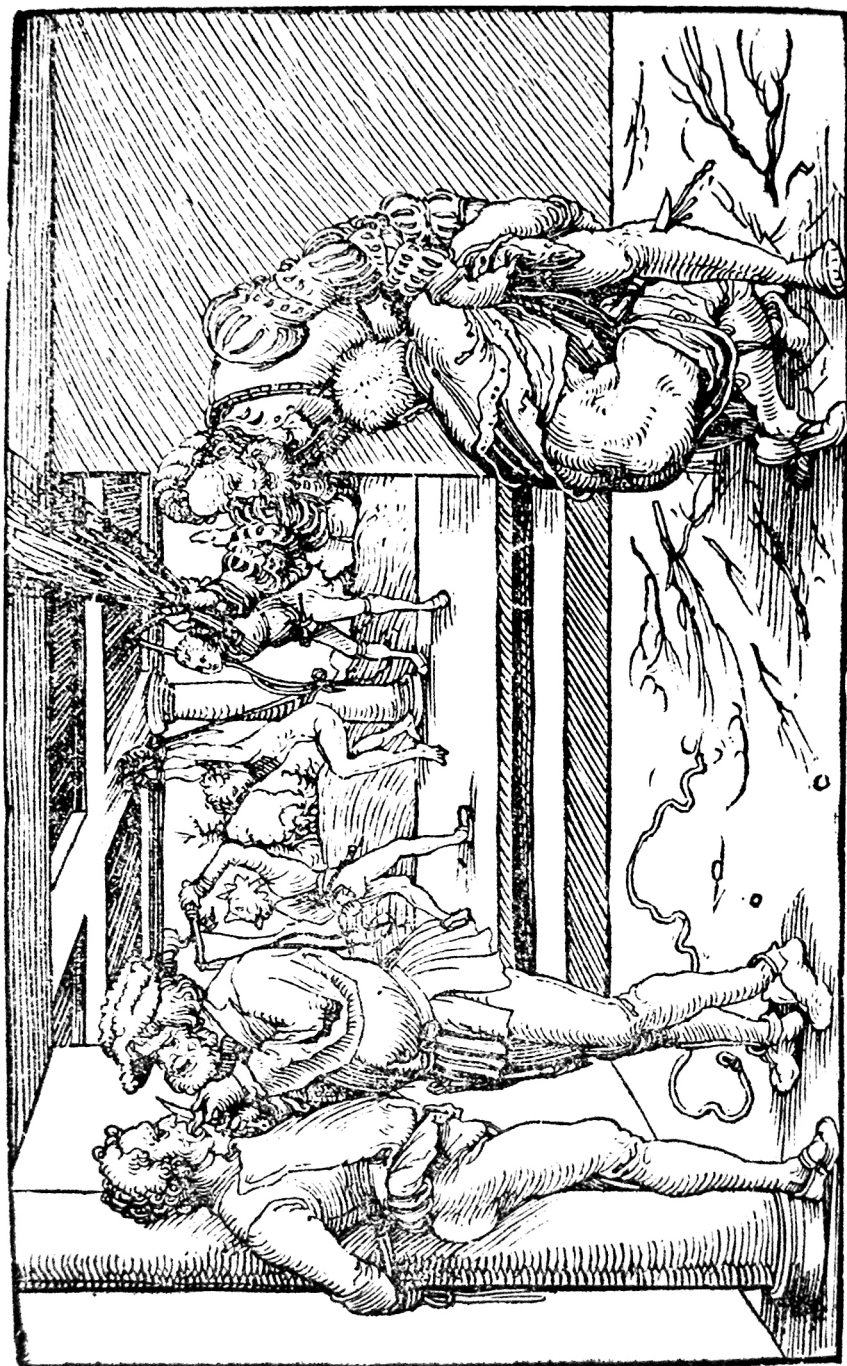


Fig. 30. The Petrarch Master; Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baldier Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 29, fol. XXXV^{III}r.

wrong, and that they are in fact tantamount to torture. The result of this spectacular rhetoric of pain is that the emotionalized viewer will feel compassion with the poor servants. This is meant to make the viewer embark on a moral meditation in which he will reconsider his behaviour towards his servants.

As is the case with II, 7, the meditative process activated by the Petrarch Master is essentially steered by the powerful religious image of the flagellation of Christ. The background scene shows a man, bound to and lifted up on a pillar, who is cruelly whipped by two tormenters. Here we have the standard elements of the traditional image: the column (the 'Geisselsäule' or 'flogging column'), the naked Christ, two (or more) tormenters with whips or flagella.⁶² In the late Middle Ages, this scene was also singled out for panels meant for private devotion ('Andachtsbilder'), for example in Piero della Francesca's "Flagellation of Christ" in the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino. The Petrarch Master who was, of course, well acquainted with the iconography of the flagellation of Christ,⁶³ drew on it in order to put forward a Christian moral similar to II, 7: 'Do not treat your servants in a cruel way. If you do so, you are not any better than the tormenters of Christ'. In II, 29, the Petrarch Master ingeniously connects the "Flagellation of Christ" of the background scene to the scenes in the foreground: the servant in the left corner whose tongue is cut out is tied to a pillar like Christ, whereas the servant on the right is flogged like Christ.

Generally speaking, the Petrarch Master's Christian moral may fit in with the discourse of a house book as well as that of the Christian meditative treatise. In both cases the viewer is made to ponder Christian values such as mildness, compassion and forgiveness. In a meditative treatise, this may be a stepping stone towards a more profound contemplation of the relationship of the individual towards other human beings, or of Christian living as such. In the discourse of a house book, the statement may have practical implications as well: if one treats one's servants well, they will repay with good behaviour. If one treats them cruelly, they might take revenge. That the Petrarch Master wanted

⁶² Kirschbaum E. S.J., *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* (Rome – Freiburg – Basel – Vienna: 1994), vol. II, 126–130, s.v. "Geisselsäule, Christus an der" and "Geisselung Christi".

⁶³ The fact that he adds the strappado technique to his "Flagellation of Christ" does not prove his lack of knowledge. On the contrary, the strappado serves as a means to surpass his iconographic forerunners by increasing the cruelty of the torture.

the viewer to consider this possibility is suggested by the fact that the servant on the right, who is beaten by a birch, stabs his master in his left leg with a knife. The cruelty of the revenge is emphasized by the blood splashing out of the wound [Fig. 30].

How is the Petrarch Master's use of the flagellation of Christ related to late medieval 'Leidensmystik'? Did the Petrarch Master use physical pain as a means to make the viewer identify with the passion of Christ? This question is difficult to answer. While it is true that the servants are tortured like Christ, the servant to the right does not display anything like Christ's endurance. Instead of suffering willingly, he stabs his master in the leg. Similarly, the boorish-looking servant on the left hardly seems a glorification of martyrdom. It seems more likely, therefore, that also in II, 29 the Petrarch Master wanted the viewer to identify with the cruel masters. In emphasizing physical pain, he aims to persuade his viewer to adopt a milder and more compassionate behaviour towards his servants. Thus, moral, religious and political commentaries are interwoven.

Cutting off Ears

In the illustration to chapter II, 97 "On the Loss of Hearing" ("De auditu perdito") the Petrarch Master once more presents an image of extreme physical pain, while Petrarch's treatment of the topic is similar to his discussion of blindness in II, 96 or the loss of teeth in II, 94. Chapter II, 97, however, is especially remote from the discussion of physical pain, since Petrarch, in fact, treats the loss of hearing as a blessing. In doing so, he closely associates the physiological defect with the most positive aspects of human life, namely study, silence and contemplation. The deaf person is not distracted anymore by people who ly, cheat, gossip, quarrel and shout, but is able to dedicate his life to contemplation, inner dialogue, reading books, writing, prayer and religious meditation. As *RATIO* puts it,

If one cannot converse with others, one can converse with himself, mindful of the Ciceronian maxim: 'Who can converse with himself does not need the conversations of another'.⁶⁴ Of course, even a deaf person can enter into discourse by reading and writing, for when we read we talk

⁶⁴ Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* VI, 117.

with the ancients, and when we write we talk to posterity. But when we read the books of sacred philosophy, we hear the Lord God, and when we pray we talk to Him. For these we need neither tongue nor ears – only eyes and fingers, and a devout heart. [...] Therefore, since you cannot hear the voices of your fellow men, you should read the books written by them and write books for them to read. And contemplate in silence the heavens, the earth, the sea – and the Creator of it all.⁶⁵

Thus, “On the Loss of Hearing” is one of the most peaceful chapters of *De remediis*. In marked difference, the Petrarch Master once and again perceives the loss of hearing in the first place as an illness, and focuses on medical treatment and on pain. On the left part of the image, an officially recognized medical doctor treats the ear of a patient with an ointment. Most eye-catching, however, is the violent scene in the centre of the woodcut, which shows St Peter cutting off the ear of the high priest’s servant Malchus [Fig. 31]. The story is mentioned in all four Gospels (*Matth.* 26, 51; *Marc.* 14, 47; *Luc.* 22, 50), but most explicitly by John, who is the only one to give the servant’s name (18, 10). When the soldiers of the high priest came to Gethsemane, as John tells us, ‘Simon Peter, who had a sword drew it and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The name of the servant was Malchus’. It is a telling detail that the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke do not specify that it was Peter who struck off the servant’s ear. They understood very well that this was a crime and refrained from accusing Peter of it. Luke even tries to undo the act of violence by telling a miracle: He claims that Christ healed the ear by putting it back on the servant’s head.⁶⁶

The story of St Peter and Malchus is not only absent from Petrarch’s text; it is, in fact, irrelevant to the topic “On the Loss of Hearing” (“De auditu perduto”).⁶⁷ If an ear is cut off, this does of course not necessarily mean that one becomes deaf. The image by the Petrarch Master engages in totally different arguments, which are situated in two discourses. The first argument regards practical life: it connects the image of Peter’s sword cutting off the servant’s ear with the German proverbial expression ‘jemanden übers Ohr hauen’, which means to cheat someone in a

⁶⁵ Trsl. Rawski, vol. III, 240–241.

⁶⁶ *Luc.* 22, 51: ‘et cum tetigisset (sc. Iesus) auriculam eius, sanavit eum’.

⁶⁷ Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 300, admits: ‘Dieses Beispiel ist nicht gut gewählt, denn mit dem Abhauen des Ohres geht das Gehör nicht verloren’.



Fig. 31. The Petrarch Master; Woodcut illustration to Petrarca's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck [...]* (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 97, fol. CXXIIIr.

material or economic sense ('jemanden übervorteilen').⁶⁸ The proverbial expression is indeed derived from sword-fighting, and literally means 'to strike someone a blow on the ear' [Fig. 32]. In its proverbial, metaphorical sense the expression is akin to 'jemandem die Zähne ziehen', i.e. to harm someone, to get out money of him (cf. above). Thus, the Petrarch Master again launches an attack against contemporary medical doctors by warning their patients: if they hand themselves over to doctors in order to be treated for their loss of hearing, they will be cheated. The doctors will take their money, but the poor patients will stay as deaf as they were before.

On a second level, the polemic against doctors is superseded by an aggressive religious argument focusing on St Peter: it is Peter who will cut off the people's ear, i.e. who will cheat them. This argument was certainly relevant in 1520, the year in which the woodcut was probably made. It was in 1520 that the struggle between Peter's successor, Pope Leo X and Luther escalated. The papal ban against Luther which Leo X issued in the same year was published accompanied by an additional expression of support from the bishop of Augsburg, Christoph von Stadion.⁶⁹ It was also in 1520 that Luther himself published his pamphlet *Von dem Papsttum zu Rom*, in which he questioned the authority of the Pope, and argued against the financial exploitation of Germany by the Roman Church. As appears from a number of images, the Petrarch Master was an ardent Lutheran.⁷⁰ In several images, he attacks Peter as the first Pope and questions his legitimacy, for example in his illustration of *De remedüs*, chapter I, 13.⁷¹ Thus, the rhetoric of the image conveys a satirical warning against the Pope, Luther's archenemy.

In fact, the story, as told by St John, provides a beautiful and effective argument against St Peter and the Roman Pope, first because it proves that the first Pope was not infallible, as the Catholic Church claimed, but capable of unchristian behaviour. A true Christian should not physically harm his fellow humans, even less wound them. Second, St John's text demonstrates that Christ disagreed with the first Pope's behaviour. Christ in fact reproached Peter by telling him: 'Put back your sword'.⁷² It is no coincidence that the Petrarch Master's rendering

⁶⁸ Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, IV, 1113, s.v. "Ohr".

⁶⁹ *Bulla contra errores Martini Luther et sequacium, cum mandato Reverendissimi domini Episcopi Augustensis* (Ingolstadt, Andreas Lutz: 1520).

⁷⁰ Cf. Enenkel, "Der Petrarca des Petrarca-Meisters" 95–115.

⁷¹ For a discussion of this image see ibidem 95–104.

⁷² John 18, 11: 'dixit ergo Iesus Petro: mitte gladium in vaginam'.

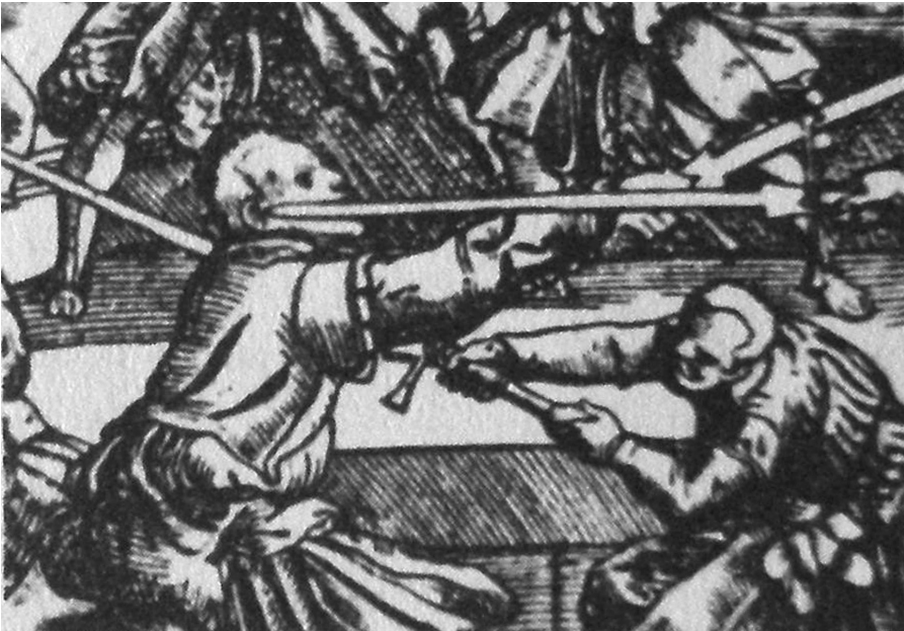


Fig. 32. “Übers Ohr hauen”. Illustration from Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, 1113.

of the scene goes back to the gospel of John, whereas it deliberately leaves out Christ's healing that is included in Luke's version.

In his composition, the Petrarch Master focuses on Peter's unchristian behaviour and even enlarges it by his sophisticated use of the iconography of the scene. Scheidig has criticized the Petrarch Master's composition: 'So steht denn auch diese Gruppe (i.e. St Peter with Malchus) mit dem unmotiviert fliegenden Mantel des Jüngers fast wie ein Fremdkörper in der Komposition'.⁷³ Far from being 'unmotivated', Peter's floating cloak is in fact linked to the core of the Petrarch Master's interpretation. Moreover, the very fact that the scene looks unmotivated at first glance, is part of the Petrarch Master's pictorial rhetoric. For the construction of his image, the Petrarch Master could draw on a rich iconographic tradition, since the "Arrest of Christ", like all scenes of Christ's Passion, was depicted many times, especially in the Late Middle Ages. The scene was generally known, not in the last place because it was shown on many altar pieces in medieval churches. It is beyond doubt that contemporary users of the *Glücksbuch* would have immediately recognized it.

It should be noted that the scene of Peter cutting off Malchus' ear was always part of a larger composition in which Christ, the soldiers of the high priest (many a times in aggressive poses), and the kiss of Judas are to be seen. In many cases the emphasis is put on Judas' kiss, and hence on the betrayal of Christ. The very fact that the Petrarch Master singled out the scene with Peter and Malchus is vital to his iconographic construction and therefore to his argument, since the immediate result is that Peter's act of violence appears entirely unmotivated. There is no Christ anymore to be defended by his follower. There is no betrayal and there are no soldiers threatening Peter's master. Thus, in the Petrarch Master's image, it is Peter, not the high priest's henchman, who appears as the aggressor.

A second important device is that Peter strikes Malchus' ear while the poor servant lies on the ground, and does not struggle against Peter, nor bear any weapon. His hands hold a larger object which is not easy to identify at first glance, but, as other representations of the scene show, e.g. by Jan Joest of Kalkar, must be a lantern [Fig. 33]. The fact that Peter is bending over to strike Malchus as hard as possible emphasizes Peter's cruelty. By means of the floating cloak, the Petrarch Master

⁷³ Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 300.



Fig. 33 [COL. PL. VIII]. Ascribed to Jan Joest of Kalkar, "Arrest of Christ" (ca. 1500). Altar table, 173 × 111 cm. Wittenberg, Schloßkirche.

succeeds in focusing attention on Peter's violent movement. It looks as if Peter is about to chop off Malchus' head. This is also suggested by the fact that Peter has seized the victim Malchus by the hair with his left hand. In fact, the scene comes close to an execution by sword. Malchus not only is lying helplessly on the ground, but also does not show any sign of resistance, defence or emotion (fear, surprise, pain). It looks as if he has patiently agreed to be beheaded.

Only if one compares the Petrarch Master's image with its iconographic forerunners do the subtlety, argumentative force and uniqueness of his visual construction become clear. There is not a single work of art that renders the scene in the same way. Indeed, the Petrarch Master makes idiosyncratic use of certain elements in the iconographic tradition of the scene to build up his argument. Malchus lying on the ground, for example, was part of the iconography as early as in the tenth century (Codex Egberti). Yet this was normally presented *as the result* of Peter's blow. It is never suggested that Peter was about to chop off the poor servant's head. If Malchus is depicted as lying on the ground, (from the thirteenth century on) he normally shows signs of defence, pain or emotional behaviour. Also, Peter is mostly depicted in an upright position, as for example in the painting of Duccio on the *Maestà* [Fig. 34],⁷⁴ on a Dutch altar table from Roermond (1435) now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam,⁷⁵ on the altar of monastery Tempzin in Mecklenburg (1411) [Fig. 35]⁷⁶ or Jan Joost of Kalkar's "Arrest of Christ" (ca. 1500) [Fig. 33].

There is one iconographic forerunner, however, on whom the Petrarch Master drew in particular: Dürer's woodcut with the "Arrest of Christ" of 1510 [Fig. 36]. The Petrarch Master is likely to have known this woodcut, since Dürer's passion cycle was published in 1511 (by Benedikt Schwalbe). In my view, the Petrarch Master's Peter is an imitation and further development of Dürer's Peter. He copied Dürer's depiction of Peter's movement, but enlarged the figure of the apostle, especially by adding the floating cloak in order to increase the violence of the movement [Fig. 37 Dürer versus Fig. 38 Petrarch Master]. In Dürer's woodcut, however, Peter's act of violence is motivated by the fact that Christ is surrounded by aggressive and fierce-looking soldiers. Dürer

⁷⁴ Cf. Weber A., *Duccio di Buoninsegna, um 1255–1319* (Cologne: 1997) 78.

⁷⁵ Depicted in Kirschbaum, *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. III, 82.

⁷⁶ Krüger R., *Altdeutsche Tafelmalerei* (Berlin: 1974) no. 5.



Fig. 34 [COL. PL. IX]. Duccio, "Imprisonment of Christ", part of his *Maestà* painted for the cathedral of Siena (1308–1311). Tempera on wood, 102 × 76 cm. Siena, Museo dell' Opera di Duomo. Detail, left part of the painting.

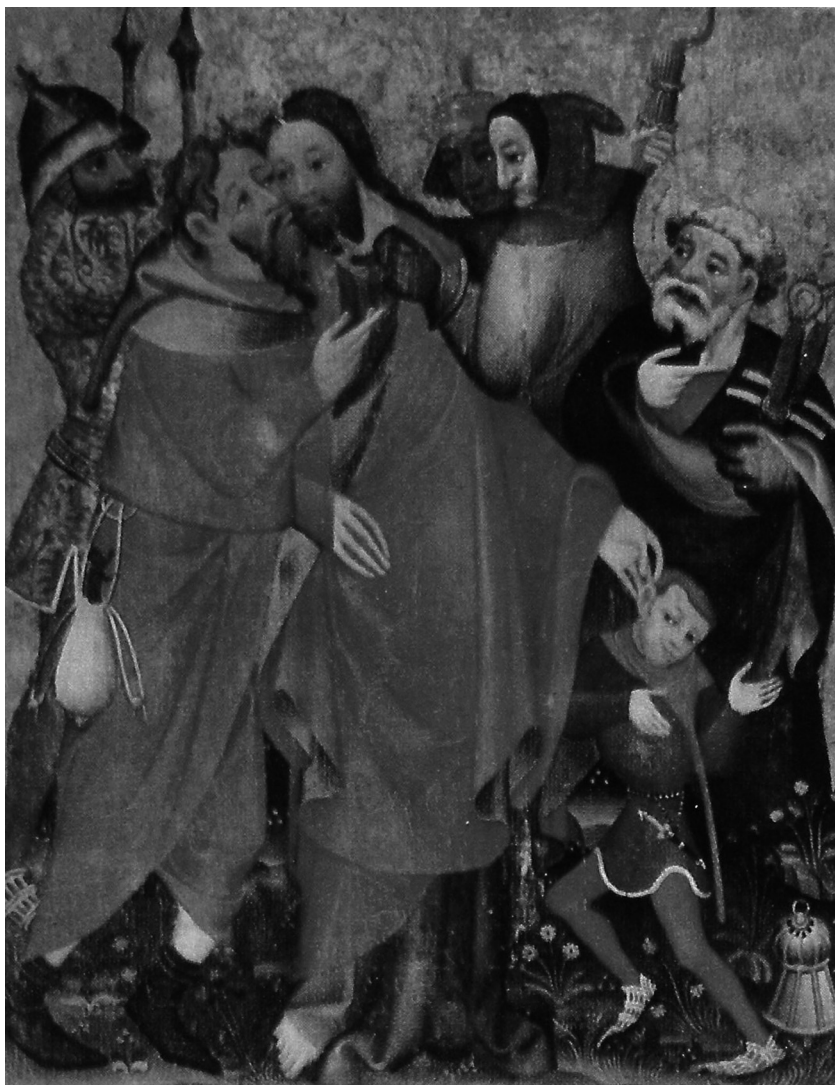


Fig. 35 [COL. PL. X]. Anonymous, Altar of monastery Tempzin (Mecklenburg, 1411). Tempera on wood, 180 × 204 cm. Schwerin, Staatliches Museum. Detail.



Fig. 36. Dürer, "Arrest of Christ", from the *Large Passion*. Woodcut, 39.1 × 27.7 cm.



Fig. 37. Dürer, "Arrest of Christ", from the *Large Passion*. Woodcut, 39.1 × 27.7 cm. Detail.



Fig. 38. The Petrarch Master, Woodcut illustration to Petrarch's *Von der Artzney baiden Glueck* [...] (Augsburg: 1532), book II, chapter 97, fol. CXXIIIr. Detail, central part of the image.

emphasized the threat of the soldiers by depicting a large number of weapons, more than 40 (!), halberds, spears, pikes, axes, swords, daggers, stars, clubs and so on [Fig. 36]. It is a telling detail that Malchus, too, has a weapon in his right hand: a large club, which he apparently had lifted up with the intention of hitting Peter. It seems only logical that Peter seizes Malchus' right hand to prevent him from doing so. Furthermore, Malchus' face shows a blend of fear and aggression. Thus, Dürer's scene depicts a fierce physical struggle, rather than the slaughtering of a helpless victim. The Petrarch Master, however, re-interpreted the gesture of Peter's left hand, which now seizes Malchus' hair. Since his Malchus does not show any signs of aggression, resistance or defence, the result is, of course, the opposite: his scene does not portray a fight, but a *cruel execution*.

By means of his intriguing play with the iconographic forerunners of the scene, the Petrarch Master launches a fierce polemical attack on the Roman Pope, suggesting that he is a violent aggressor, a ruthless slaughterer, a pitiless executioner, or in short: the Anti-Christ whom true Christians should fear, as Luther argued. If they erroneously support the Anti-Christ, they will be cruelly hurt by him, just like the poor victim lying on the ground. In his rhetoric of physical pain, the Petrarch Master makes the viewer identify with Malchus, not with Peter. He emotionalizes the viewer, so as to make him fear and hate Peter and the Roman Pope. Thus, in this image, physical pain functions as a trigger for religious polemic. In this sense, the image accompanying chapter II, 97 looks like a Lutheran pamphlet against the pope.

Conclusion

The Petrarch Master attributed to physical pain meanings and functions that differ markedly from Petrarch's text. This may be due partly to the vernacular context in which the artist worked, partly to the various discourses in which his pictorial inventions are situated (the Ship of Fools, and a range of proverbial expressions), and partly to the historical context of confessional strife in the crucial year of 1520, which caused an increased interest in political and religious propaganda. Petrarch's Christian Neo-Stoicism, however, conveyed a message that uneducated people would have found difficult to understand. In his images, the Petrarch Master did not try to illustrate Petrarch's thought, or to

explain it to the uneducated, but showed a remarkable independence by conveying radically different ideas. For this, he invented a powerful rhetoric of physical pain which functioned as a means to achieve various goals. Through the Petrarch Master's intensive use of physical pain, the Stoic striving against the emotions, the *passiones animi*, is superseded by other discourses, such as practical advice for daily life in the manner of a house book, social and religious criticism, political satire and aggressive Lutheran religious polemic. In his pictorial inventions, the Petrarch Master sometimes uses pain in order to make the viewer identify with those who suffer from it. Sometimes he wanted the viewers to identify with those who inflict pain, in order to make them change their behaviour. By emphasizing physical pain, he stirs up emotional reactions such as fear, distress or grief, by which he makes his audience receptive to his advice and to his warnings. In his political and religious polemics he uses physical pain to incite hatred against the most powerful, among others the Emperor and the Pope. The Petrarch Master makes the viewer feel the violation, and indeed the humiliation of the human body, partly in order to make him question existing structures of power. In this sense, the remarkable focus on physical pain to be seen in the Petrarch Master's images is connected with the increased tension of political, religious and social life around 1520, a crucial year in the history of the Protestant Reformation.

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