

THE UNUSUAL PROMINENCE OF THE BURIAL SHROUD IN THE *DEPOSITUR CHRISTI*  
*CORPUS E CRUCE* FROM THE *ADNOTATIONES ET MEDITATIONES IN EVANGELIA*

by

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## ABSTRACT

### THE UNUSUAL PROMINENCE OF THE BURIAL SHROUD IN THE *DEPONITUR CHRISTI CORPUS E CRUCE* FROM THE *ADNOTATIONES ET MEDITATIONES IN EVANGELIA*

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In this thesis, I analyze the iconography and the accompanied text of Hieronymus Wierix's *Deponitur Christi corpus e cruce* (Christ's body is taken down from the cross; Image 132, Chapter 105; hereafter referred to as the *Deposition*) from *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* (*Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*; hereafter referred to as *Adnotationes et meditationes*) by Jerome Nadal, originally published in 1595. I examine the unusual prominence of the burial shroud depicted behind Christ whereas in previous sixteenth-century deposition imagery, the burial shroud was either omitted or not given such prominence. Scholars in recent decades have devoted significant attention to the *Adnotationes et meditationes* and a number of its illustrations, but they have yet to explore in detail the *Deposition* and the emphasis placed on the shroud by the engraving's iconography and in the biblical passages, annotations, and meditation that accompany the image in Nadal's book. I focus on the significance of the burial shroud in relation to the Council of Trent's decree concerning relics and the renewed importance at the time of the Holy Shroud of Turin. I will likewise compare the shroud in Wierix's *Deposition* to other post-Tridentine images of the theme, among them Peter Paul Rubens' *Descent from the Cross* (1612). The iconographical study will expand the research on the engravings and text of the *Adnotationes et meditationes* along with relics and their significance to Christian theology and the art historical field.

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I would like to dedicate this to my mom, dad, brother, and grandparents, specifically papa. They all have given the greatest support in my academic goals.

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## Introduction

The Christian faith uses images to provide devotional guidance. The images include communal and intimate altarpieces, icons, and illustrated engravings, some containing devotional and biblical text. Illustrations add references through motifs and iconography to reinforce the themes of the devotional text. The devotee uses the images to read beyond the text and to identify theological doctrine. Medieval illuminated manuscripts, such as Psalters and the Book of Hours, provide a mnemonic function with images in addition to the devotional text. The sixteenth-century engraved illustrations continue this mnemonic function. These images are essential to devotional practice by providing the devotee with a visual basis that adds additional guidance for prayer.

The Society of Jesus, a religious order also known as the Jesuits, used images to aid in the visualization of a meditative prayer. St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) founded the exclusive male order in the mid-sixteenth century. In the following decades, Jesuit authors published various books for the instruction of devotional practices that produced a visual aid for contemplation. One of the more notable books was the *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* (*Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*), published in 1595, written by Jerome Nadal (1507-1580), a member of the Jesuits. The images and accompanying text provide a visual aid to support the devotee's contemplation, helping the practitioner to experience biblical stories. After the publication of the books, the images prompted artists to use similar iconography that encourage a similar meditative practice.

In this thesis, I concentrate on one engraving from the *Adnotationes et meditationes: Deponitur Christi corpus e cruce* (*Christ's Body is Taken Down from the Cross*, Image 132, Chapter 105; hereafter referred to as the *Deponitur*; figure 1) engraved by Hieronymus Wierix

(1553-1619), a Flemish engraver, after a drawing by Bernardino Passeri (1577-85), a Roman artist. I argue that Wierix's placement of the cloth behind Christ in the *Deponitur* alludes to the Holy Shroud of Turin, a relic of a fourteen-foot linen cloth used to wrap the body of Christ after he was lowered off the cross. The analysis of the engraving and its accompanying text emphasizes the burial linen's importance and encourages the devotee to meditate on the pain and suffering of Christ. I demonstrate the close relationship of the engraved image and text to the increasing popularity of the Holy Shroud by considering sixteenth-century literature that explains the significance of the relic. Wierix amplifies the theological doctrine presented by previous Deposition iconography and used by devotees for their meditation or prayers. Following the publication of the *Adnotationes et meditationes*, artists used the *Deponitur* as a source for their works.

In recent decades, scholars have devoted significant attention to Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes*. Research focuses on the iconography and compositions, while scholars investigate the reception and purpose of the images in conjunction with the text. Walter S. Melion is a prominent scholar within the field of meditative art and the *Adnotationes et meditationes*.<sup>1</sup> His research includes an introductory study for each of the translated narratives of the *Adnotationes et meditationes* and analyses of specific engravings and their text. Scholars have used Melion's research to aid in their arguments and research. For example, they have written about how these engravings prompted other artists to use similar iconography. Scholars have yet to analyze the

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<sup>1</sup>More of Melion's research regarding engravings and their accompanying text: Melion, Walter S. "Sublima dona-sublima mysteria: The Sublimity of Divine Speech in Jeronimo Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*" *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 8:2 (Summer 2016); Walter S. Melion, "Quod etiam Ecclesia curat: Responses to the Tridentine Decrees in Jeronimo Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* of 1595," in *The Council of Trent: Reform and Controversy in Europe and Beyond (1545-1700) Volume 3 Between Artists and Adventures* Wm Francois and Violet Soen (eds.), ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Gottingen: Vadenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 32-68.

*Deponitur*'s iconography and text in detail. Nor have they explored the allusion made in the engraving to the Holy Shroud. This iconographical study expands the research on the engravings and text of the *Adnotationes et meditationes*, relics, and their significance to Christian theology.

## Format, Function, History, & Circulation

The 153 engraved images of the *Adnotationes et meditationes* were first published independently as the *Evangelicae historiae imagines* (*Images of the Gospel Stories*), in 1593. This book was one of the earliest illustrated Jesuit books in Antwerp and was made to instruct Jesuit scholars in the practice of Ignatian meditative prayer.<sup>2</sup> Two years later, the images were incorporated into the *Adnotationes et meditationes* of which Nadal devoted one chapter to each.<sup>3</sup> These books illustrate the events of the Gospels through three narratives pertaining to the life of Christ: Infancy, Passion, and Resurrection. The images and texts are arranged according to the liturgical year.<sup>4</sup> By exploring the format and function of images and text within the *Adnotationes et meditationes*, I demonstrate how the devotee meditates on the images while using the text, and the reasons artists were prompted to use the images as a source for their artwork.

The combination of the images and text provides a guide for meditative prayer for readers, especially Jesuit novices.<sup>5</sup> The devotee accompanies Christ, Mary, or other biblical figures on their journeys through the Infancy, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ. They use the engraved images as a visual aid to position themselves within the events and the captions, gospel passages, annotations, and meditations provide guidance and a deeper understanding of the doctrine.<sup>6</sup> The devotee is meant to experience an emotional response to the events in the life of

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<sup>2</sup>Mia M. Mochizuki, *Jesuit Art: Brill's Research Perspective in Jesuit Studies*, (Brill, 2022), 78, 81.

<sup>3</sup>Nadal referenced a series of drawings by Livio Agresti made ca. 1555-6 when writing the text for the *Adnotationes et meditationes*. He attempted to have these drawings etched or engraved in Ausburg and Innsbruck, but ca. 1575 he decided that Antwerp produced the best product. After Nadal's death in 1580, Giovanni Battista Fiammeri drew the *modelli* ca. 1579-81 and then Bernardino Passeri made the final *modelli* ca. 1587. Melion, "The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*," Introductory Study to *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels: Volume 1 The Infancy Narratives* by Jerome Nadal, Trans., and ed. Frederick A. Homann. (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>4</sup>Jean Michel Massing, "Jerome Nadal's *Evangelicae historiae imagines* and the Birth of Global Imagery," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 80 (2017): 163.

<sup>5</sup>Melion, "The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*," 3.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Christ. Nadal encourages the devotee to use the annotations and meditations, which provide instruction the contemplation that the book presents:

...if you compare yourself to him, Christ Jesus will bring forth in your mind from holy mediation on his life, it is not enough to peruse the images with curiosity, nor to admire their artistry, but you should dwell upon each of them for whole, or even many days, reading through the chapters of annotations and meditations and carefully meditations, contemplating, pursuing each part of the prayer to its end...<sup>7</sup>

The text further explains the images for the devotee to create a meditative prayer. The captions describe the image, and then the text follows to emphasize the contemplation of the biblical figures and stories.

The images and text complement each other while they both describe the specific stories from the Gospels and create a setting for meditative prayer. The images are engraved by Hieronymus, Johan, and Antoon Wierix, Adrian and Jan Collaert, and Karel van Mallery, after drawings by Bernardino Passeri and Marten de Vos. The artists used panoramic images to illustrate the Gospel stories with a detailed background and sometimes have multiple scenes within a composition. Within each illustration, a sequence of letters (A, B, C...) corresponds to the captions below. A chapter containing text follows each engraving and includes the captions, the related Gospel passages, corresponding annotations (which range in length from a single sentence to multiple paragraphs), and an extensive meditation. Nadal included the Gospel passages that describe the illustrated events and are formatted into four columns, one for each of the gospels. This allows the devotee to compare and identify similar phrases or words. The annotations provide a more detailed account of the biblical event within the *Adnotationes et meditationes*. Nadal finishes the text chapter with a meditation that furthers the devotee's contemplation on the sacred theme(s) in the images and text. He uses rhetorical devices within

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<sup>7</sup> Massing, "Jerome Nadal's *Evangelicae historiae imagines* and the Birth of Global Imagery," 167.

the meditation to turn “places and events into objects of contemplation that also function as vivid tropes for...the contemplative prayer.”<sup>8</sup> Melion describes the rhetorical devices Nadal writes with as Apostrophe (for example, he addresses Christ directly), hypotyposis (he admonishes the reader to envision themselves in the geographical setting of the gospel story), and prosopopoeia (he speaks in the voice of Christ, admonishing the reader to follow his advice.)<sup>9</sup> The primary use of the *Adnotationes et meditationes* is to produce a meditative prayer for the devotee to envision themselves within the event and experience the emotions of the biblical people involved.

Nadal borrows from earlier text to create a meditative practice of the *Adnotationes et meditationes*. He wrote between 1568 and 1576; then refined the text until his death in 1580.<sup>10</sup> He wrote the annotations as an expansion of the *Spiritual Exercises* by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, published in 1548 by Antonio Blado in Rome.<sup>11</sup> The *Spiritual Exercises*, the first book published by the Society of Jesus, contains meditations, contemplations, and prayers which are divided into four weeks and meant to be read over a month.<sup>12</sup> The text focus on the sins of the devotee and aid in the creation of a personalized prayer based on a sacred theme.<sup>13</sup> The first publication of this book was for exclusive use by the society and it initially did not contain any additional images for devotional guidance.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Walter S. Melion, “Artifice, Memory, and ‘Reformatio’ in Hieronymus Natalis’s ‘Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia,’” *Renaissance and Reformation* 22, no. 3 (Summer, 1998): 6.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Melion, “The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal’s *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*,” 2-3.

<sup>11</sup>Massing, “Jerome Nadal’s *Evangelicae historiae imagines* and the Birth of Global Imagery,” 167; Melion, “The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal’s *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*,” 2; Mochizuki, *Jesuit Art*, 61.

<sup>12</sup>Mochizuki, *Jesuit Art*, 64.

<sup>13</sup>J.E. Canavan, “The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius,” *The Irish Monthly* 76, no. 901 (July 1948): 305, 307.

<sup>14</sup>Mochizuki, *Jesuit Art*, 65; Illustrated editions of the *Spiritual Exercises* were printed in the 1609 volume by Bartolomeo II Zanetti. The same year that the second edition of the *Adnotationes et meditationes* was published with a foreword.

More editions and translations of the *Adnotationes et meditationes* circulated after Martin Nutius published the first edition in Antwerp in 1595. Agostini Vivaldi wrote an Italian translation of the *Adnotationes et meditationes, Meditationi sopra li Evangelia*, published in Rome in 1599. This was then translated into French and German; however, those translations did not go into print.<sup>15</sup> In 1607, Jan Moretus published a second edition of the *Adnotationes et meditationes* with an addition of a foreword by Diego Jimenez, assistant to Nadal. This forward advises the devotee to dwell for several days on the themes presented to them.<sup>16</sup> The addition of the foreword correlated to the expansion of the book's readers, beyond Jesuit members. The book was published for a third time in 1707.<sup>17</sup> Many images were reproduced and copied into other devotional books. For example, Bartelmoeo Ricci copied the images in the *Considerationi sopra tutta la vita de NS Giesu Christo*, published in Rome three times: first in 1607, the same year the foreword was added to the *Adnotationes et meditationes*, and again in 1609 and 1610. Christoffel van Sichem copied the iconography from a large number of engravings in *Biblia Sacra*, a Dutch Bible, in 1657.<sup>18</sup> Jean Michael Massing notes that the widespread circulation and reproductions of the images in *Adnotationes et meditationes* made painters and sculptors familiar with the iconography.<sup>19</sup>

The format of the *Adnotationes et meditationes* encourages the devotee to visualize and contemplate the sacred theme present over a period of time. Nadal encourages the devotee to create a personal meditation and situate themselves in that biblical narrative. The book had a

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<sup>15</sup>Massing, "Jerome Nadal's *Evangelicae historiae imagines* and the Birth of Global Imagery," 167.

<sup>16</sup>Melion, "The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*," 4, 101-102.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, 1.

<sup>18</sup>Massing, "Jerome Nadal's *Evangelicae historiae imagines* and the Birth of Global Imagery," 168.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 169. Massing's article offers research about the images from the *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* and *Adnotationes et mediations* prompted artists across four continents to use similar iconography in various mediums, including sculptures, paintings, and prints.

significant impact; it circulated widely, and artists reproduced its iconography, often creating images that, like the engravings, encourage meditation.

## Unusual Prominence of the Shroud

The *Deponitur* illustrates Christ's dead body being taken off the cross while the reader accompanies Joseph and Nicodemus on their journey in preparation for the burial of Christ through the image and text descriptions on the contemplation of his earthly death. It is one of the final illustrations of Nadal's Passion Narrative and follows the engraving *What Christ did when He descended to Hell* (*Quae gessit Christus descendens ad inferos*; figure 2). The engravings display the different locations of his soul in hell and Christ's body on earth. After the *Deponitur* is *The Burial of Christ* (*De Christi Sepultura*; figure 3), which concludes the Passion Narrative with his entombment. Both images and texts use the shroud as a devotional aid. Wierix illustrated the shroud prominently in the *Deponitur*. This iconography coincides with the re-emergence of the popularity of the relic, the Holy Shroud of Turin. The next section of this thesis contains the analysis of the relic and its literature in the sixteenth century. Nadal explains Christ's earthly death and the journey in preparation for taking his body off the cross in the *Deponitur* and creates an immersive meditative prayer for the devotee.

The text of the *Deponitur* (figures 4a-c) reflects the gospel passages of Joseph's journey and his preparation of Christ's body. All four of the gospels describe the Deposition: Matthew 27: 57 to 59, Mark 25: 42 to 46, Luke 23: 50 to 53, and John 19: 38 to 39. These passages explain the journey of Joseph of Arimathea to collect burial preparations and the body of Christ. Matthew, Mark, and Luke explicitly mention the shroud – "*sindone*" in Latin. In Nadal's text, the captions explain the journey of Joseph, taking down the body of Christ, and they situate the event geographically. The annotations add further details that describe the burial preparations while highlighting the emotions of various significant figures, such as Mary. The following meditation focuses on the emotions that should be conjured while the devotee contemplates Christ's earthly death. He stresses that the devotee's sins were the cause of the pain Christ endured during the

Passion. As in the gospel sources, the word *sindone* is used in the *Deponitur* engraving's illustration and text, specifically in the illustration placed behind Christ's body being lowered off the cross and only written in caption 'B'.

In the *Deponitur*, captions 'A' and 'B' (figure 5) and the longer annotations that correspond to them establish the setting for the illustration and introduce significant biblical figures in the account. Caption 'A', located in the right background of the illustration, identifies the small group of figures standing in a courtyard as Joseph of Arimathea who asks Pilate for permission to take the body of Christ: "Joseph of Arimathea goes boldly to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus."<sup>20</sup> Nadal starts annotation 'A' to contextualize the previous illustration and text, *What Christ did when He descended to Hell*. He differentiates by describing the location of the Christ's body on earth and the soul in Hell as he states, "Christ was in limbo... where He held a celestial meeting in the underworld." He then explains Joseph's significance as Christ "inspired the rich and noble decurion Joseph of Arimathea, a good and just man who was a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews..." He describes environmental details of when Jesus was crucified on the cross and his death:

When Joseph saw the sun's eclipse and felt the earthquake, and heard that the saints' graves were opened and the rock split, and learned the other signs that Christ had done from the cross, and then of Christ's death.

The devotee uses annotation 'A' to situate themselves in the event Joseph experienced. They see the atmospheric effects illustrated in the background of the dark sky on the left and the sun on the horizon on the right. The devotee prepares themselves for the meditation and visualization by using caption 'A', its illustration, and relating annotation.

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<sup>20</sup>Jerome Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia: Volume 2 The Passion Narrative*, ed. and trans. Frederick A. Homann. (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2007), 271-275. Unless states otherwise, all quotes in reference to the captions, annotations, and meditation of the *Deponitur* are from volume two, pages: 271-275.

Caption ‘B’, found below ‘A’ in the right background, guides the devotee to the path with two figures in front of the group carrying ladders, as Nicodemus and again Joseph: “Nicodemus brings spices and Joseph a burial linen, to the cross.” Its corresponding annotation further details the journey of Joseph and Nicodemus, explicitly stating that “Joseph, with Pilate’s approval, and with a burial cloth”—*sindone*— “and Nicodemus with 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes for ointment came to remove the body of JESUS from the cross.” These are all items used in preparation for the burial. Nadal includes geographical details as they journey to Golgotha, where Christ was just crucified.

Caption ‘C’ (figure 6) refers to the focal point of the engraving and draws the devotee’s attention. Wierix places this scene in the top middle of the composition. Christ is located in the front center with four figures on ladders supporting His body. Wierix portrays the body of Christ as almost weightless with men that are not struggling to support His body. The shroud is given great prominence behind Christ. It flows outwards in different directions and is held by the same five figures holding Christ, two on each side of the cross and one beneath. The shroud gets entangled in the figures’ clothing and bodies while each of them supports the body of Christ. The shroud does not go unnoticed with its dynamic placement. The devotee recognizes the shroud by referring back to *sindone* in caption ‘B’.

The text of caption ‘C’ identifies and repeats the title with more detail: They remove the body of Jesus with profound and reverent devotion.” The annotation begins to re-enforce the caption, similarly stating: “They take down Christ’s body with profound reverence and respect.” The emphasis of the annotation is on the quality of care when taking Christ’s body off the cross, a care befitting to His Godly and human nature. Nadal continues this heightened emotion by describing the removal of the nails and the crown of thorns. He provides text encouraging the

devotee to envision themselves in that moment and “see how with anguished care they pull out the nails little by little.” At the same time, he highlights the Virgin’s emotional response to the earthly death of Christ: “With her abiding great hope, Mary eases not a little the sorrow she knows from the death and loss of her son.” Nadal guides the reader beyond the top middle of the composition focused on Christ’s body being taken down to the people in the bottom of the composition. The figures, the women in the bottom right, one identified as Mary, are grieving His earthly death. Nadal expresses the surrounding emotions of this event as he states in the annotation: “grief and tears are everywhere.” He then reminds the devotee about where the soul of Christ is “in the underworld, and the divinity of His body” is still on earth. Nadal ends the annotation with the reminder not to focus on the death of Christ but on the hope of the Resurrection. Nadal contrasts the beholder’s hope with the reaction of the people in the engraving, who overlook the Resurrection and focus on Christ’s death: “Others falter, minding less His promise of Resurrection than their own terror in the presence of death.”

Captions ‘D’ and ‘E’ and their accompanying annotations identify the locations related to the burial and the Resurrection. Caption and annotation ‘D’ (figure 7) describe the city of Arimathea, recognizing where Joseph is from and how far he traveled to Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion. Wierix depicts Arimathea in the left background with city buildings on the horizon with a body of water. Caption and annotation ‘E’ (figure 8) identify the tomb’s location where Christ will be buried: “The place of the sepulcher and its entrance.” Nadal writes a short annotation explaining its significance further: “Sepulcher and Joseph’s Garden where they plan to bury Christ and later did so.” He guides the devotee to the next engraving and to the biblical accounts of Christ’s burial and the place of the Resurrection.

The meditation of the *Deponitur* recalls why Christ died on the cross for the devotee's sins and to consider Christ's suffering due to those sins. Nadal encourages the devotee to meditate by starting with the death of Christ and the suffering: "If we imitate in spirit the work of Joseph and Nicodemus, our sins were the nails." He speaks to the devotee calling out their sinful actions and stresses to them what Christ endured to save them. He confirms to the readers that their sins caused his crucifixion by stating, "yes, we crucified Christ by our sins." Nadal ends the meditation with an emphasis on the emotional response to His pain as he writes, "suffered at the hands of all" and was "crucified...by [the devotee's] sins." The meditation concludes the text by focusing on the pain and suffering Christ experienced, and the devotee contemplates their sinful actions, which were the cause of his crucifixion.

The shroud illustrated in the *Deponitur*'s illustration and text emphasizes the pain and suffering that Christ endured during the Passion and continues as a reminder in other engravings. Furthermore, it functions as evidence of the Resurrection in the following engravings illustrated by Hieronymus Wierix after Bernardino Passeri: one in the Passion narrative immediately after the *Deponitur The Burial of Christ* (figure 3), and the rest placed throughout the Resurrection narrative, *Angels Appear to the Holy Women* (figure 9), *Peter and John come to the Sepulcher* (figure 10), *Jesus Appears to the Holy Women* (figure 11), and lastly *First Sunday after Easter: Jesus Appears to the Disciples & Thomas* (figure 12).<sup>21</sup> The devotee is able to envision the shroud by revisiting its specific introduction in the Passion narrative, in the *Deponitur* engraving and accompanying text. The shroud has a mnemonic function to remind the devotee of not just the Resurrection, but also the Passion.

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<sup>21</sup> *De Christi Sepultura; Eodem die dominico angeli apparent mulieribus; Eodem die veniunt petrus et Ioannes ad sepulchrum; Eodem die apparent mulieribus; Dominica prima post pascha: apparet discipulis & Thomae*

The engraving directly after the *Deponitur* ending the Passion narrative, *The Burial of Christ* (figure 3) illustrates the shroud depicted underneath the body of Christ as Mary, Joseph, Nicodemus, and other disciples help prepare him for his burial. The devotee recognizes “*obuobunt Sindone*” as the linen illustrated in the *Deponitur*.<sup>22</sup> While following the alphabetical sequence, caption ‘C’ in the background of this engraving identifies figures that place Christ’s wrapped body into the tomb. This emphasizes the continued function of the shroud as a visual mnemonic marker displayed in the *Deponitur*.

The next four engravings within the Resurrection narrative mention the shroud in their accompanying text as a sign of the Resurrection. Melion writes on these four engravings, along with others, on how within their text they demonstrate how vision is used to confirm the deliverance of Christ through his crucifixion and the Resurrection, in chapter 2: “The Apparitiones Christi (Appearance of the Risen Christ) in Jeronimo Nadal’s *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*” in his book *The Meditative Art: Studies in the Northern Devotional Print 1550-1625*.<sup>23</sup>

The first of these four engravings that mention the shroud is *Angels Appear to the Holy Women* (figure 9). Nadal describes the Holy women’s reactions to the empty tomb that held visible signs of the Resurrection, such as the shroud and the veil. In caption ‘B’, he refers to the shroud as evidence of the Resurrection by stating “the women leave the tomb confused and fearful...And so they disregard...the shroud...”<sup>24</sup> The cause of their fear was the empty tomb and the missing body of Christ, which resulted in the women to overlook the physical signs and

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<sup>22</sup>Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia: Volume 2 The Passion Narrative*, 277-283.

<sup>23</sup>Walter S. Melion, *The Meditative Art: Studies in the Northern Devotional Print 1550-1625* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph’s University Press, 2009), 107.

<sup>24</sup>Jerome Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia: Volume 3 The Resurrection Narrative*, edited and trans. Frederick A. Homann. (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph’s University Press, 2007), 57-63. Unless states otherwise, all quotes in this paragraph are from volume 3, pages 57-63.

remnants of the Resurrection. The mediation of this engraving further continues supporting the shroud as evidence of the Resurrection by addressing their reactions:

Good women, tells us please, how you felt there within that holy cavern. Didn't the thought of a dead Christ laid to rest there in a clean shroud, with his head covered by a wrapping cloth devastate you? ... didn't a suggestion of the Resurrection and the light of a living Christ then take even tighter hold on you?  
Fear, trembling took over. You bolted in flight from the tomb.

Nadal uses the shroud as evidence of the Resurrection to the women while he stresses the emotion of the women within this engraving's text which can compare to the grieving women and others depicted in the *Deponitur*. The women forgot in that moment the promise of the Resurrection due to the overwhelming grief from Christ's earthly death. This repeated theme of focusing on the fear instead of looking forward to what will happen reminds the devotee to look forward in times of fear.

The next engraving mentions the shroud within a caption and its related annotation in *Peter and John come to the Sepulcher* (figure 10). Caption D first mentions the shroud as "John arrives at the tomb before Peter, puts his head inside the tomb, and see only the burial cloths..."<sup>25</sup> He waits for Peter to enter the tomb, as Peter was one of the prominent disciples of Christ. Nadal continues through caption and annotation 'E' by the devotee visualizing the event of Joseph and Peter looking to the tomb and seeing the remnants of the Passion and Resurrection:

On entering the cave, Peter saw the burial cloths...John too entered the cave and saw what Peter had seen. Peter already believed... now John does. Both believed that Christ had risen. Their inner faith assent grew; mystical knowledge of it is true Resurrection was born.

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<sup>25</sup>Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia: Volume 3 The Resurrection Narrative*, 65-71. Unless stated otherwise, all quotes in this paragraph are from volume 3, pages: 65-71.

The annotations guide the devotee to recognize the shroud was left in the tomb by Christ. It explains Peter and John's process seeing the shroud and believing in the Resurrection. Nadal's meditation directly positions the shroud as a sign of the Resurrection:

Peter and John don't remove the shroud...No they want that at this time everything in the tomb be left undisturbed, as signs of the Resurrection.

The devotee envisions themselves seeing the shroud left in the tomb and can refer to the shroud depicted first in the *Deponitur* and then *The Burial of Christ*. They associate the shroud to both the Passion within the *Deponitur* and the Resurrection within the multiple references to the shroud.

The text of *Jesus Appears to the Holy Women* (figure 11) questions who removed the burial shroud from the tomb, the women or Peter upon visiting the sepulcher a second or third time. The meditation mentions the shroud as Nadal presumes the devotee knows about the Resurrection due to the previous accounts of biblical figures seeing the shroud left in the tomb:

Peter and John's report on their return had helped us a bit. Yet they told us nothing we didn't already know, save about the shroud...<sup>26</sup>

The last engraving, *Jesus Appears to the Disciples & Thomas* (figure 12), also uses the shroud as evidence of the Resurrection. In the gospels, Thomas misses the first appearance of Christ after his Resurrection to the disciples, and he doubts Christ's return. Thomas states that unless he sees Christ or touches his wounds, he will not believe of His Resurrection. The meditation of the engraving urges the devotee to believe and uses the shroud as a sign and evidence of the Resurrection:

'Because you have seen Me Thomas, you have believed. Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed' how well His words describe the church's faith! At first, so many visible signs invited belief in his Resurrection—the vision and words of the angels, an empty tomb, the shroud and headpiece, the feel of His wounds, the food He ate—that the

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<sup>26</sup>Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia: Volume 3 The Resurrection Narrative*, 81-89.

essence of faith might seem forgotten. No one would believe without an experience of those very events.<sup>27</sup>

Nadal indicates in the meditation and encourages the viewer to believe in the Resurrection of Christ through seeing the visible signs, including one being the Shroud.

The *Deponitur* guides the reader to accompany Joseph and Nicodemus on their journey in preparation for taking Christ's body off the cross and for burial. Nadal emphasizes the emotions and reminds the reader that Christ's suffering was due to their sinful nature. The shroud illustrated within the *Deponitur* is dramatic and is the focal point of the reader's attention. Nadal highlights that the shroud is a sign of the Resurrection through the engravings and texts proceeding the *Deponitur* that mention the object. The devotee refers back to the *Deponitur*.

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<sup>27</sup>Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia: Volume 3 The Resurrection Narrative*, 111-118.

## Holy Shroud of Turin Analysis

The most notable and holiest relics in Christianity are objects that the faithful believed that Christ touched or somehow came into physical contact with. There are various relics that hold a bodily impression of a part of Christ and therefore to have miraculous benefits. These include the Mandylion of Edessa and Veil of St. Veronica; the origin stories of which are very similar. They are both cloths offered to Christ that he pressed to his face resulting in an impression. The story of the Mandylion tells us how King Abgar of Edessa became sick and sent a letter to Christ asking to cure him. Christ sent a disciple with an impression of his face on a cloth that miraculously healed the king. The Veil of St. Veronica is associated with the Passion narrative and seen in higher regard due to the connection of the pain and suffering Christ endured. The veil was offered to Christ by Veronica while he was carrying the cross on his way to Calvary. When he wiped his face, an impression of his face transferred to the cloth in his blood and sweat. In the fourteenth century the object now known as Holy Shroud of Turin (figure 13) was believed to be the burial cloth in which Christ was wrapped after the crucifixion and said to hold a blood-stained impression of his wounds. This relic is considered to be earthly and divine and both a relic and an image.<sup>28</sup> In the later 1500's, the Holy Shroud's authenticity was accepted due to the promotion, endorsements of the clergy and the Counter-Reformation propaganda that supported the preservation of the relic.<sup>29</sup> Andrew Casper, in his book, *An Artful Relic: The Holy Shroud of Turin in Baroque Italy*, takes an art historical approach in analyzing the Holy Shroud. He argues the shroud's authenticity as a relic in early modern Christian terms.<sup>30</sup> I use the same approach as Casper to analyze the sixteenth-century literature about the Holy

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<sup>28</sup>Andrew R. Casper, *An Artful Relic: The Shroud of Turin in Baroque Italy*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021), 15.

<sup>29</sup>Casper, *An Artful Relic*, 11

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, 12.

Shroud and to demonstrate its increasing popularity. The literature of the relic supports the allusion to the Holy Shroud in *Deponitur*'s image and text.

The popularity of the Holy Shroud of Turin increased in the late sixteenth century, just before the publication of the *Adnotationes et meditationes*. The earliest record of the Holy Shroud was from 1355; it was owned by Geoffrey de Charny I.<sup>31</sup> The shroud was bequeathed to his daughter, Marguerite de Charny.<sup>32</sup> The Duke of Savoy acquired the relic through Marguerite in 1453.<sup>33</sup> The Shroud was then housed in Sainte-Chapelle, Chambéry before the Duke Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy made the decision to move the Holy Shroud to Turin in 1578. Turin then became the home of the relic, where ostentations, public viewings, and exhibitions took place for a multitude of pilgrims. The Duke of Savoy's intention was to move the Holy Shroud's location to bring the relic closer to Carlo Borromeo (1538-1584), a Cardinal and Archbishop of Milan who played a prominent role in the re-emergence of the importance of the Holy Shroud.<sup>34</sup>

Borromeo made four high-profile pilgrimages to view the Holy Shroud, the first in 1578. Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597), Archbishop of Bologna and Cardinal, and his younger cousin, Alfonso Paleotti (1531-1610), who succeeded him as Archbishop, accompanied Borromeo on his third pilgrimage in 1582.<sup>35</sup> Borromeo once more visited the Holy Shroud before his death in 1584.<sup>36</sup> These visits demonstrate the fame of the relic on account of important clerical members and, sixteenth-century authors note the significance of the visits.

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<sup>31</sup>Sheldon Grossman, "The Sovereignty of the Painted Image Poetry and the Shroud of Turin" in *From Rome to Eternity: Catholicism and the Arts in Italy, ca. 1550-1650*, ed. Pamela M. Jones and Thomas Worcester (Boston: Brill, 2002), 180 n.3.

<sup>32</sup>Ian Wilson, "Discovering More of the Shroud's Early History: A Promising New Approach..." (paper presented at Talk for International Congress on the Holy Shroud in Spain, Aula Magna of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain, April 28-30, 2012), <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/wilsonvtxt.pdf>

<sup>33</sup>Grossman, "The Sovereignty of the Painted Image: Poetry and the Shroud of Turin," 180 n.3.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid, 185.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid, 187.

<sup>36</sup>Grossman, "The Sovereignty of the Painted Image: Poetry and the Shroud of Turin, 186; Capser, *An Artful Relic*, 2.

In addition to his pilgrimages to the Holy Shroud, Borromeo is especially relevant to the present argument because he followed the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, supported the Counter-Reformation, and attended the Council of Trent. In one of the sections of the *Spiritual Exercises* titled “Events of the Life of Our Lord Christ,” events are split into three headings to help lead the devotee into meditation or contemplation. The second heading of the section “The Fourth Appearance” acknowledges the linen. It states Peter “going in [to Christ’s tomb] he saw nothing but the linen with which the body of Christ had been covered.”<sup>37</sup> Borromeo focused on the meditations of Christ’s Passion and would have seen the linen cloth as evidence of the Resurrection due to the reading of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Notably, he used this meditative practice while interacting with and studying the Holy Shroud of Turin.

In addition, he also used the *Spiritual Exercises* when he visited Sacro Monte di Varallo, a basilica with three-dimensional polychrome reconstructions of the Passion of Christ. He visited this often in his life, explicitly after his first and last pilgrimages to the shroud.<sup>38</sup> He associated the sculptures and devotional practices at Varallo with the Holy Shroud.<sup>39</sup> The Deposition sculpture (figure 14) does not include the shroud within the sculpture. However, Borromeo would be able to envision the relic within the scene due to the meditation practice used on the relic and the visitations to the sculptures. He engaged with the themes presented through the Passion by visual aid and meditation reflected in the spiritual exercises and the sculptures at Varallo.

Borromeo’s participation in the Council of Trent focused on indulgences and, more relevant to the matter at hand, on devotional sacred images. Borromeo’s participation in the third

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<sup>37</sup>St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, trans. Thomas Corbishley (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1963), 102.

<sup>38</sup> Capser, *An Artful Relic*, 33.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

and the last session means he must have been present for the 25<sup>th</sup> session held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> in 1563, “On the Invocation, Veneration and Relics of Saints and on Sacred Images.” This session contributed to the popularity and prominence of the Holy Shroud.<sup>40</sup> Its decree detailed and declared that all images were to be free of all “sensual appeal,” false doctrine, and superstition and should be focused on biblical accuracy and authenticity.<sup>41</sup>

Filiberto Pingone wrote the first official history of the Shroud, *Sindon Evangelica*, and acknowledged Carlo Borromeo and his pilgrimage. Duke Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy commissioned the book in 1581, fourteen years before the *Adnotationes et meditationes*. Pingone identifies the words “sindone” and “linteis,” both meaning burial shroud in Latin, used in the Gospel passages after the crucifixion as the Holy Shroud. The specific Gospel passages that Pingone notes are Matthew 27:59, Mark 15:46, Luke 23:53, and John 19:40.<sup>42</sup> All state that after the body of Christ was taken down it was wrapped in the cloth and all except John are part of the corresponding passages for the *Deponitur*. John 19:40 is the passage for the engraving *The Burial of Christ* immediately after the *Deponitur*. Pingone identifies the bloody impression on the Holy Shroud was from the handling of the wrapped body where the wound reopened during transport.<sup>43</sup> Pingone’s book aids in the visual and textual identification of the shroud within the *Deponitur* as the Holy Shroud of Turin.

The Holy Shroud is addressed in the *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images (Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane)* written by Gabriele Paleotti in 1582, a year after taking a pilgrimage with Borromeo to see the Holy Shroud. He also supported the Counter-Reformation

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<sup>40</sup>John W. O’Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 281; J. Waterworth, ed. and trans., “On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics, of Saints, and on Sacred Images.” In *The Council of Trent: The Twenty-fifth Session*, (London: Dolman, 1848), 233-237.

<sup>41</sup>O’Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council*, 244.

<sup>42</sup>Capser, *An Artful Relic*, 19.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

and was familiar with the *Spiritual Exercises*. He practiced this “contemplation of place” when he became an Archbishop.<sup>44</sup> He defines eight categories of sacred images and their criteria in his book. The second category defines

...anything that came in physical contact with the body or face...of our Lord...and that retained an impression of the shape of the Body; or whatever part was touched, will be called sacred.

G. Paleotti identifies images in this category with relics that contain an impression, such as the Veil of St. Veronica.<sup>45</sup> The comparisons of the relics within this category provide the reader with a correlation and parallel between the identifications. G. Paleotti directly references the shroud as the

sacred linen shroud in which the blessed corpse of our savior was wrapped after death leaving an imprint that is still visible today on the cloth, safeguarded with veneration in the dominions of the Duke of Savoy.<sup>46</sup>

He acknowledges the Holy Shroud’s history with the Duke of Savoy and the placement of the object within the Passion narrative. Gabriele defines the Shroud as a sacred image due to the physical contact with the entire body of Christ and retained impression left due to the handling of his body.

Alfonso Paleotti, cousin and successor of Gabriele Paleotti, wrote in his *Esplicatione del sacro lenzuolo ove fu involto il signore (Explanation of the Sacred Sheet that the Lord was Wrapped)*, of 1598 and 1599 described the pilgrimage he took with Borromeo and his cousin.<sup>47</sup> He recognized that the Holy Shroud is the cloth that Joseph of Arimathea immediately wrapped Christ’s body in after he was taken off the cross. This includes the accompanying woodcut

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<sup>44</sup>Paolo Prodi, “Introduction” Gabriele Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, trans. William McCuaig, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute: 2012), 23.

<sup>45</sup> Gabriele Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, trans. William McCuaig, 99-10.

<sup>46</sup>Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, 100.

<sup>47</sup>Grossman, “The Sovereignty of the Painted Image Poetry and the Shroud of Turin,” 191.

(figure 15) reproduction of the Holy Shroud that labels each of the wounds on Christ's body illustrated with an exaggerated outpouring of blood.<sup>48</sup> The letter sequence within the woodcut expands on the wounds by identifying trauma caused by the instruments of the Passion. This illustration and text functions similarly to the letter sequence used in the engravings of the *Adnotationes et meditationes*. The two-tone woodcut is one of the first pages, a large fold out-image. The act of unfolding the page and seeing the image would give the viewer a sense of being present at the ostensions of the shroud.<sup>49</sup> A. Paleotti encourages the devotee to meditate on the blood stains of the Holy Shroud to remember the pain and suffering that Christ endured in the Passion and the hope of his Resurrection within the future. The meditation of the *Deponitur* in the *Adnotationes et meditationes* reflects on the suffering and pain Christ withstood during his crucifixion which is echoed in blood stains of the Holy Shroud. Nadal's meditation emphasizes that Christ "suffered at the hands of all" and makes the devotee contemplate with "let [them] ever hold in [their] hearts...all his sufferings and his death."<sup>50</sup>

Sixteenth-century literature about the Holy Shroud increased the popularity of the relic and its importance within the *Deponitur* and its significance as a sign of the Resurrection. These texts were circulated to worshippers who often did not physically see the Holy Shroud.<sup>51</sup> The relic was not easily accessible to the public which resulted in its heightened importance and religious status.<sup>52</sup> The publications described and identified the Holy Shroud and its significance within the biblical passages as evidence of both the Passion and Resurrection within the crucifixion and the Deposition of Christ. The dramatization of the shroud in the engraving and

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<sup>48</sup>Capser, *An Artful Relic*, 24.

<sup>49</sup>Samantha L. Smith, "Truth and the Transunto: A Copy of the Holy Shroud in Sixteenth-Century Bologna" in *Acta ad archaeologiam et atrium historiam pertinentia* 32, no. 18 (September 2012): 59-60

<sup>50</sup>Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia: Volume 2 The Passion Narrative*, 275.

<sup>51</sup>Capser, *An Artful Relic*, 23.

<sup>52</sup>Smith, "Truth and the Transunto: A Copy of the Holy Shroud in Sixteenth-Century Bologna," 60.

text of the *Deponitur* reflects the identification and significance of the Holy Shroud. The literature written about the Holy Shroud, starting with the official history by Pingone, supports the re-emerging popularity. It suggests the reason of the placement of the cloth with Wierix's engraving to present its connection to the Passion narrative into the Resurrection and to the relic.

## Previous Deposition Iconography and Devotion

Artists in previous Deposition iconography exclude or do not visually emphasize the shroud. The iconography varies in how Christ is depicted and how his body is handled. Deposition iconography typically includes figures holding Christ's dead body, either in the process of taking him off the cross or on the ground below the cross. Figures, principal among them Mary, are shown grieving. Before the publication of the *Deponitur*, artists usually depict Christ wearing a loincloth with no shroud placed behind him. Wierix includes and dramatizes the placement of the shroud to further amplify the theological doctrine of the scene. The Deposition scene presents the pain and suffering Christ endured during the Passion and reminds the devotee of the salvation he created.

Rosso Fiorentino's (1494-1540) 1521 *Deposition from the Cross* (figure 17) enhances the iconography's reception in the sixteenth century while presenting Christ's relief from the pain and suffering he endured from the Passion. This altarpiece was first a Franciscan commission, then relocated to the cathedral at Volterra, and is now held in Pinacoteca located in Volterra, Italy.<sup>53</sup> Fiorentino uses the typical iconography of the Deposition: men on ladders lowering the body of Christ off the cross. He paints Christ's body as weightless with an exaggerated emotional response of the people within the composition. There is a vivid contrast between the depiction of Christ's relief in his dead body and the figures grieving his earthly death in the composition. Fiorentino illustrates Christ with a smile on his face to express his relief against the deathly green color of his skin. The figures only pay attention to the death of Christ and do not look directly at his content.<sup>54</sup> Fiorentino links the death of Christ to the hope of the Resurrection through the

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<sup>53</sup>Harvey E. Hamburg, "Rosso Fiorentino's Descent from the Cross in a Franciscan Context," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 579.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid, 583.

depiction of the weightlessness of Christ's body.<sup>55</sup> Wierix's *Deponitur* uses this similar iconography of Christ to display the same theology. While Fiorentino does not have a linen cloth within the iconography, Wierix includes the shroud to represent the death of Christ and then stresses the hope and sign of the Resurrection in the Deposition narrative.

The French engraving by Jean Duvet, the *Deposition* (figure 17) from *L'Apocalypse figurée* circa 1550, depicts the shroud within the busy composition; however, it is not placed behind Christ or illustrated dramatically like Wierix's depiction.<sup>56</sup> Like the St. Albans Psalter *Descent from the Cross*, Duvet's illustration was an addition to a devotional text not directly related to the life of Christ. It reminds the devotee of Christ's martyrdom with the twenty-three tablets depicting images from the New Testament book of Revelations. Within the composition, Christ is being lowered down as one figure is on a ladder removing the nail from his right hand. A figure underneath, presumably Joseph, holds a linen cloth up to the figure above.<sup>57</sup> At the bottom of this illustration, Duvet includes grieving women. Specifically, he continues basic Deposition iconography by including Mary fainting. This engraving includes the shroud, but in a small detail. It is important to note that this engraving was published in the mid-sixteenth century when the Holy Shroud was housed in France and before the move to Turin and its re-emergence of popularity. I suggest that Duvet would have known or been familiar with the Holy Shroud to include the linen within the Deposition iconography of the engraving. The devotee would understand the symbolism of the relic within the narrative: the pain and suffering of Christ as

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<sup>55</sup>Hamburgh, "Rosso Fiorentino's Descent from the Cross in a Franciscan Context," 588.

<sup>56</sup>Colin T. Eisler, *The Master of the Unicorn: The Life and Work of Jean Duvet* (New York: Abaris Books, 1977), 71. *L'Apocalypse Figuree* was modeled after Durer's *Apocalupsis cum figuris* of 1498. This Deposition within the book is also known as the crucifixion; however, due to iconography of the ladder and depicting of the process of taking the body of Christ off the cross, it can be a Deposition scene.

<sup>57</sup>Eisler, *The Master of the Unicorn*, 242.

well as the hope of the Resurrection. Wierix continues these themes presented in previous Deposition iconographies while amplifying the depiction and placement of the Shroud.

## *Deponitur*'s Iconography Impact After Publication

Artists use the iconography of *Deponitur* and its allusion to the Holy Shroud as a source for their artworks. The shroud not only reminds the viewer of these works as a sign of the Passion and Resurrection but also is a representation of the Eucharistic. The stark white shroud beneath Christ's dead body reflects the bread on top of the altar. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) represent their Depositions in this way while alluding to the Holy Shroud. The Eucharistic reflection within religious paintings followed the Counter-Reformation's meditative practices and liturgical devotion.<sup>58</sup> Scholars suggest Caravaggio and Rubens were familiar with Jesuit practices. The artists expanded the meaning of their altarpieces to the Holy Shroud. The portrayal of the relic reflects Eucharistic practices while similarly copying the devotional meditation of the *Deponitur*. Christoffel Van Sichem (1581-1658), a Dutch engraver, copied numerous engravings, the *Deponitur*; being one of them, from the *Adnotationes et meditaitones* into *Biblia Sacra*, a Dutch bible. I examine the representations of the shroud within these works to argue that artists borrowed the iconography from Wierix and the allusion of the Holy Shroud.

Caravaggio's *Deposition* (figure 18), also known as the *Entombment*, relates the white linen in the illustration to the Holy shroud and corresponds with the re-emergence of the relic's popularity. In his 1600 altarpiece, he combines iconography from Depositions, lamentations, and entombments while paying particular attention to the narrative of the gospel.<sup>59</sup> Joseph F. Chorpenning, in his article "Another Look at Caravaggio and Religion" suggests that Caravaggio was familiar with the Exercises through the Augustinians, who were advocates of Ignatian

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<sup>58</sup>Joseph F. Chorpenning, "Another Look at Caravaggio and Religion" *Artibus et Historiae* 8, no. 16 (1987):154, 156.

<sup>59</sup>Capser, *An Artful Relic*, 83.

spirituality, which resulted in having a meditative practice reflected in his works.<sup>60</sup> Similar to other Deposition scenes mentioned, he presents this subject matter as a reminder of the pain and suffering Christ endured while highlighting the hope of the Resurrection through the illustration of the white shroud. Sherman Grossman in his chapter “The Sovereignty of the Painted Image: Poetry and the Shroud of Turin” and Casper in *The Artful Relic*, both maintain that Caravaggio had made this painting for the audience to recognize the white burial cloth as the Holy Shroud.<sup>61</sup> This altarpiece produced a contemplation of Christ’s death within the Passion and its connection to the relic.<sup>62</sup> Rubens’ *The Entombment* (figure 19) is a 1610 altarpiece with identical iconography to Caravaggio. It also has a similar significance of the Holy Shroud and the Eucharist. Casper argues the inclusion of the Holy Shroud in the Deposition altarpiece enhances the Eucharistic practice. Caravaggio’s *Deposition* reflects Wierix’s *Deponitur* and Nadal’s written accompanying text through the meditative reception of this piece and its allusion to the Holy Shroud.

Rubens is known for being a prominent artist to use the iconography and meditative practices from the *Adnotationes et meditaitones* images and is seen in his 1612 altarpiece *Descent from the Cross* (figure 20).<sup>63</sup> Rubens’ *Entombment* altarpiece and the *Descent from the Cross* both use the similar iconography of the shroud placed behind Christ and meditative practice. Rubens worked with Jesuits and was familiar with the *Spiritual Exercises* of St.

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<sup>60</sup>Chorpenning, “Look at Caravaggio and Religion” 149.

<sup>61</sup>Grossman, “The Sovereignty of the Painted Image Poetry and the Shroud of Turin,” 193; Casper, *An Artful Relic*, 85-88.

<sup>62</sup>Casper, *An Artful Relic*, 82.

<sup>63</sup>More on comparisons of Rubens and the images of *Adnotationes et meditationes*: Barbara Haeger, “Rubens’ Rockox Triptych: Sight, Meditation, and the Justification of Images,” *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 55: Rubens and the Netherlands (2004): 116-153.

Ignatius. Through his familiarity with the Jesuit Order and their devotional readings, he created art that imitated their practices.

He uses the iconography of the dramatic placement of the shroud behind Christ as his body is lowered down off in his altarpiece from Wierix's *Deponitur*. Wierix depicts Christ as weightless, whereas Rubens takes the realistic route. He depicts Christ's body as heavy and lifeless, where the men struggle to hold him. The color within Rubens' painting emulates the earthly death of Christ with the very muted and grey skin color versus the soul depicted in the light behind Christ. Both emulate a reminder to the devotee that Christ's death was the price for their salvation and their sins. Like Caravaggio's *Deposition*, *The Descent from the Cross* displays Christ's body on the white shroud as a parallel to the Eucharist. The audience understands that Christ offered his body for the salvation of the world and now is practiced through the sacrament held at the altar.<sup>64</sup> The devotee would have understood the shroud's placement behind the dead body of Christ in the *Deposition* as a mirror for the Eucharist. The altarpieces further amplify Wierix's iconography in reminding the viewer of the pain and suffering of Christ in the Passion, their salvation, and the Resurrection with the allusion of the Holy Shroud.

Berthold Kress' 2013 article, "Passeri, Rubens, and Reynolds—A Neglected Source for the Antwerp *Descent from the Cross*" discusses the similarities, specifically the placement of the shroud, within the iconography of Wierix's *Deposition* and Peter Paul Rubens' *Descent from the Cross*. Kress supports this comparison by using Sir Joshua Reynolds's *A Journey to Flanders and Holland*, first published in 1797, where Reynolds writes:

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<sup>64</sup>Richard Viladesau, "Counter-Reformation Theology and Art: The Example of Rubens's Paintings of the Passion," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 28/1 (2012): 37.

The composition of this picture is said to be borrowed from an Italian print: this print I never saw; but those who have seen it, say that Rubens has made no deviation from it...<sup>65</sup>

This quote has been used to identify the compassion between the engraving and the altarpiece.

Kress discusses the modification of the linen's placement behind Christ. In Rubens' sketch in comparison to the altarpiece, he depicts a different placement than the painting. He sketched the shroud over the left beam instead of the right. Ultimately, he painted the altarpiece closely similar to the iconography of the *Deponitur*.<sup>66</sup> This further supports Rubens' usage and familiarity of the *Adnotationes et meditationes* and its meditative prayer.

One of Rubens' previous altarpieces, the *Elevation of the Cross* (figure 21) supports the borrowing of the iconography and meditative practice of the *Descent from the Cross* (figure 24). Scholars famously note this altarpiece due to the unconventional nature of the scene and its similar iconography seen in Nadal's *Raising of the Cross* (figure 22). Rubens used the description from the "composition of place" found in an Ignatian meditation by St. Francis de Sales in 1583:

...So now from where I am located, I imagine that I see this holy crucified figure raised into the air, little by little, and that the cross is secured in the hole made for this purpose.<sup>67</sup>

Melion argues Rubens painted with the practices of liturgical and meditative prayer in mind and focused on the contemplation of the dead body of Christ, *Corpus Christi*. Additionally, Rubens' used the *Spiritual Exercises* as a template for the meditative prayer.<sup>68</sup> Both altarpieces are held in the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp. The theme of the pain and suffering of Christ continues

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<sup>65</sup>Berthold Kress, "Passeri, Rubens, and Reynolds—A Neglected Source for the Antwerp *Descent from the Cross*," *Note in the History of Art* 32, no. 2 (Winter 2013): 35. The ideas written in this article were presented in a course Kress took on Ruben at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, supervised by Professor Ulrich Soding.

<sup>66</sup>Kress, "Passeri, Rubens, and Reynolds," 38.

<sup>67</sup>Viladesau, "Counter-Reformation Theology and Art: The Example of Ruben's Paintings of the Passion," 32-33.

<sup>68</sup>Walter S. Melion, "Ex libera meditatione: Visualizing the Sacrificial Christ in Jeronimo Nadal's *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*," *The Passion Story: From Visual Representation to Social Drama*, ed. Marcia Kupfer (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 98-99.

from the *Elevation of the Cross* into the Deposition scene which has been amplified due to the placement and stark whiteness of the shroud. This further emphasizes the borrowing of the iconography as well as the meditative practice seen within the *Descent from the Cross*.

The *Biblica Sacra*, a Dutch bible published in 1657, contains copies of the engravings within the *Adnotationes et meditationes*. Christoffel van Sichem engraved 797 images in the *Biblia Sacra* and is known as the “Dutchman Durer.”<sup>69</sup> Van Sichem’s engraving of the Deposition (figure 25a) is very similar in composition to *Deponitur*. He places the shroud behind Christ, like Wierix, in the same dramatic manner flowing in different directions. The scene is placed in the upper right on the page and is smaller than the one seen in the *Adnotationes et meditationes* as it is accompanied by additional three images on the page with text captions (figure 25b). The background iconography is similar to the Wierix’s, with city in the left background and the sun on the horizon in the back right. Van Sichem almost copies the composition to various details, which conveys the same meditative devotional practice. The Shroud in the *Deposition* in *Biblia Sacra*, like the *Deponitur*, correlates to the Holy Shroud due to the illustration and recognition of the shroud evidence of the Resurrection.

The caption below the *Deposition* in the *Biblia Sacra* explains the events while supporting the meditative practice and recognition of the story: Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus, Nicodemus comes with the ointments, and Joseph has a linen cloth; they take the body of Christ done with “great respect and sorrow.” This translation reflects the Gospel narrative of the Deposition and the text of the *Deponitur*. The text, like Caption and Annotation B of *Deponitur*, recognizes and directly references the shroud. The author also draws

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<sup>69</sup>Arpine Simonyan, “The Stylistic and Pictorial Peculiarities of ‘The Last Supper’ and ‘Washing of the Feet’ Engravings in the Vanadetsi Publications,” *Rev Etudes Sud-Est Europe* 57, 1-4 (2019): 262.

attention to the figures, mostly the women in the bottom right grieving his death, one being Mary, like Nadal in the meditation and Wierix's illustration.

The iconography from Wierix's *Deponitur* of the shroud's placement and intense illustration continued through the artworks by Caravaggio, Rubens, and Van Siche. They expanded the Deposition scene's implications of the Eucharist as illustrated with Christ's dead body against the stark white shroud. All three artists had familiarity with Jesuit devotional practices, specifically a meditative prayer led by a visual aid such as the *Adnotationes et meditationes*. As in the *Deponitur*, the devotees used the image of the Deposition scenes to create a contemplative prayer on the relic seen behind Christ.

## Conclusion

The iconographical and textual analysis of *Deponitur Christi corpus e cruce* demonstrates the allusion of the Holy Shroud, which prompted artists to follow similar iconography. The shroud seen in the *Deponitur* symbolizes the pain Christ endured in the passion. This symbolism continues into engravings after the *Deponitur*, in the end of the Passion narrative and within the Resurrection narrative. The engravings' accompanying text mentions the shroud as a sign of the Resurrection. The shroud has dual meanings as it represents both the Passion and the Resurrection within the *Adnotationes et meditationes*. The illustration and text of the shroud in the *Deponitur* and others reflect the increasing popularity of the relic. The relic of the Holy Shroud of Turin amplify the representation of the pain and suffering Christ endured during the Passion and Resurrection. The circulation of the sixteenth-century literature displayed the shroud through images and descriptions to those who did not have direct visible access. The literature aided the devotee in situating the use of the relic within the Gospel narrative. The literature of the Holy Shroud explained its history and the identification of the blood impression wounds left on the shroud. Devotees used a meditative practice when worshipping the relic. They stress the pain and suffering Christ endured due to their sins by reflecting on the blood stains left by Christ's wounds from the Passion. The illustrations acted as a reproduction of the relic to the devotees. The readers recognized the linen illustrated dramatically, placed behind Christ in the *Deponitur* as the Holy Shroud due to the literature. Wierix's illustration and Nadal's text continue and amplify the sacred themes presented from previous Deposition iconography and the relic.

The placement of the shroud behind the body of Christ follows through to other artworks of the Deposition scene and through the entombment iconography. Artists used *Deponitur*'s illustration and text as a source for their work. The work of Caravaggio and Peter Paul Rubens

amplified the meditative practice and gave additional devotional guidance in a representation of the Eucharist. The artist's familiarity with Jesuit practices aided in the creation of a contemplative prayer about the pain and suffering of Christ and his Resurrection. They used the placement of the shroud seen in Wierix's deposition to stress the reflection of the Eucharist. Van Sichem copied the iconography to highlight the accompanied text. The popularity of the Shroud continued through the production of these altarpieces and engraving. The devotee would recognize the imagery as the relic and connect the sacred themes. These illustrations continued the allusion to the Holy Shroud and the meditative practice of the anguish Christ endured during the Passion and the hope of the Resurrection perceived in the *Deponitur*'s iconography and text.

DEPONITVR CHRISTI CORPVS E CRVCE. 132  
 Matth. xxvij. Marc. xv. Luc. xxij. Ioan. xix. cv



A. Venit ad Pilatum Ioseph ab  
 Arimathia audacter; &  
 petijt corpus IESV.  
 B. Venit Nicodemus cum unguen-  
 to, & Ioseph cum sindone

ad crucem.  
 C. Deponunt corpus IESV sum-  
 ma cum pietate ac dolore.  
 D. Arimathia oppidum.  
 E. Locus sepulcri cum vestibulo.

Figure 1. Hieronymus Wierix after Bernardino Passeri, *Deponitur Christi corpus e cruce* (Christ being taken off the cross) in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, Jerome Nadal, engraving (in-folio) The Newberry Library.



Figure 2. Wierix, *What Christ did when He descended to Hell (Quae gessit Christus descendens ad inferos)* in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio) The Newberry Library Chicago.



Figure 3. Wierix, *The Burial of Christ (De Christi Sepultura)* in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio) The Newberry Library Chicago.

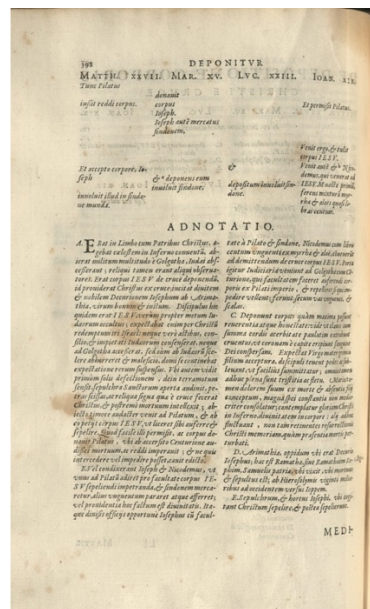
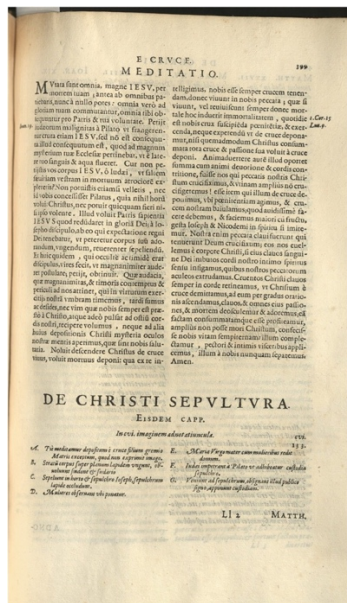
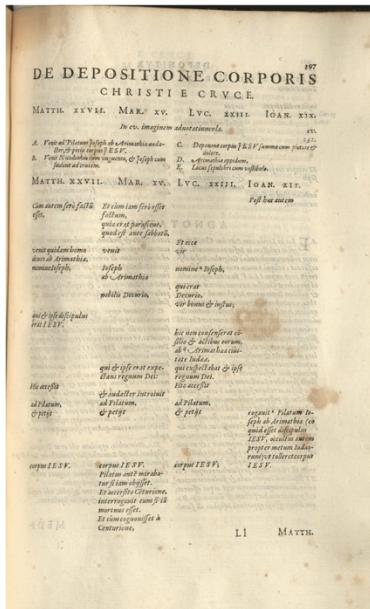


Figure 4a, b, c. Text of Gospel passages, Annotation, and Meditation of *Deponitur Christi corporis e cruce* in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, The Newberry Library Chicago.

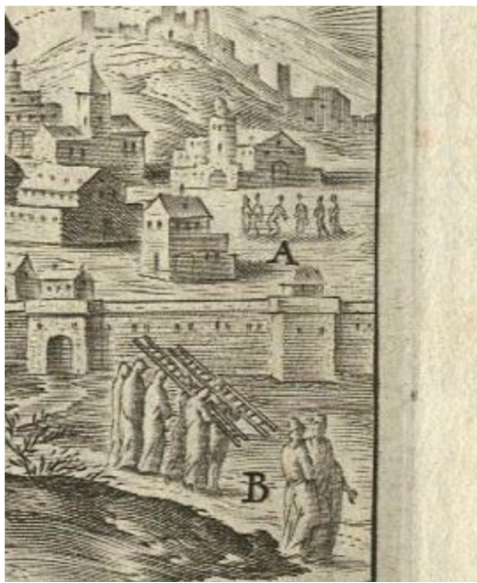


Figure 5. Detail of A & B from the *Deponitur Christi corpus e cruce* (Christ being taken off the cross?) in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio) The Newberry Library Chicago.



Figure 6. Detail of C from the *Deponitur Christi corpus e cruce* (Christ being taken off the cross?) in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio) The Newberry Library Chicago.

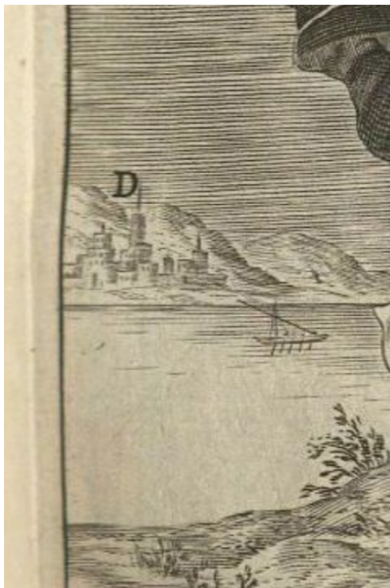


Figure 7. Detail of D from the *Deponitur Christi corpus e cruce* (Christ being taken off the cross?) in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio) The Newberry Library Chicago.

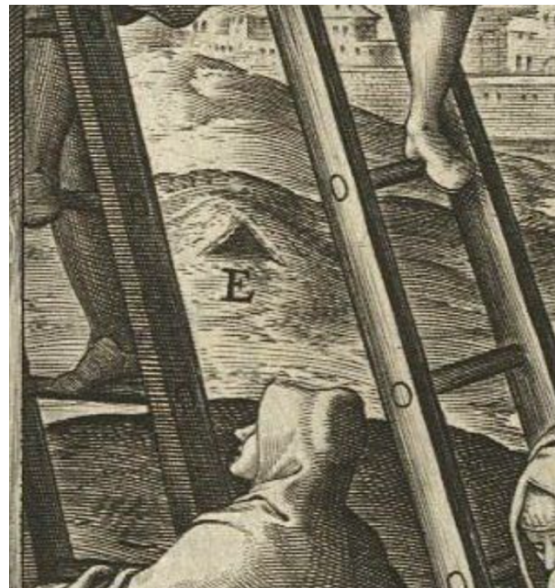


Figure 8. Detail of E from the *Deponitur Christi corpus e cruce* (Christ being taken off the cross?) in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio) The Newberry Library Chicago.



Figure 9. Hieronymus Wierix after Bernardino Passeri, *Angels Appear to the Holy Women (Eodem die dominico angeli apparent mulieribus)* in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio), Antwerp.

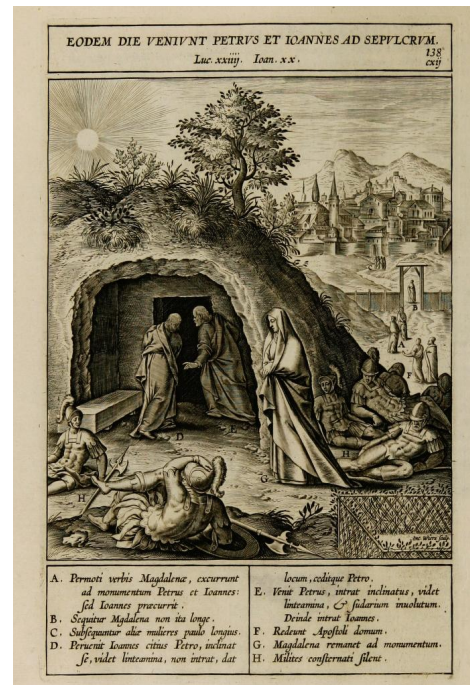


Figure 10. Hieronymus Wierix after Bernardino Passeri, *Peter and John come to the Sepulcher (Eodem die veniunt petrus et ioannes ad sepulcrum)* in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio), Antwerp.



Figure 11. Hieronymus Wierix after Bernardino Passeri, *Jesus Appears to the Holy Women (Eodem die apparet mulieribus)* in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio), Antwerp.



Figure 12. Hieronymus Wierix after Bernardino Passeri, *First Sunday after Easter: Jesus appears to the Disciples & Thomas (Dominica prima post pascha: apparet discipulis et Thomae)* in *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio) Antwerp.

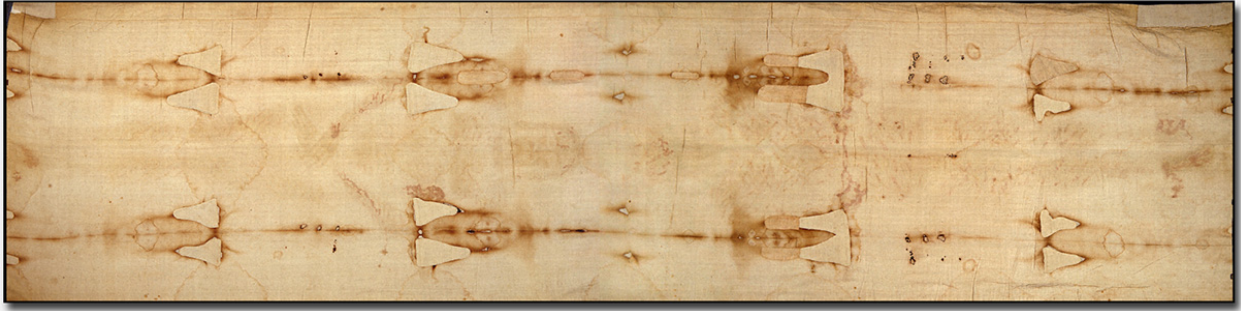


Figure 13. Holy Shroud of Turin, Linen, Chapel of the Holy Shroud, Turin, Italy, 13 to 14<sup>th</sup> Century.



Figure 14. Chapel of the Deposition from the Cross. Sculptures by Giovanni d'Enrico and Giacomo Ferro, Frescoes by Melchiorre Gilardini (il Cerano). Completed before 1491. Photo by Finestre sull'Arte.

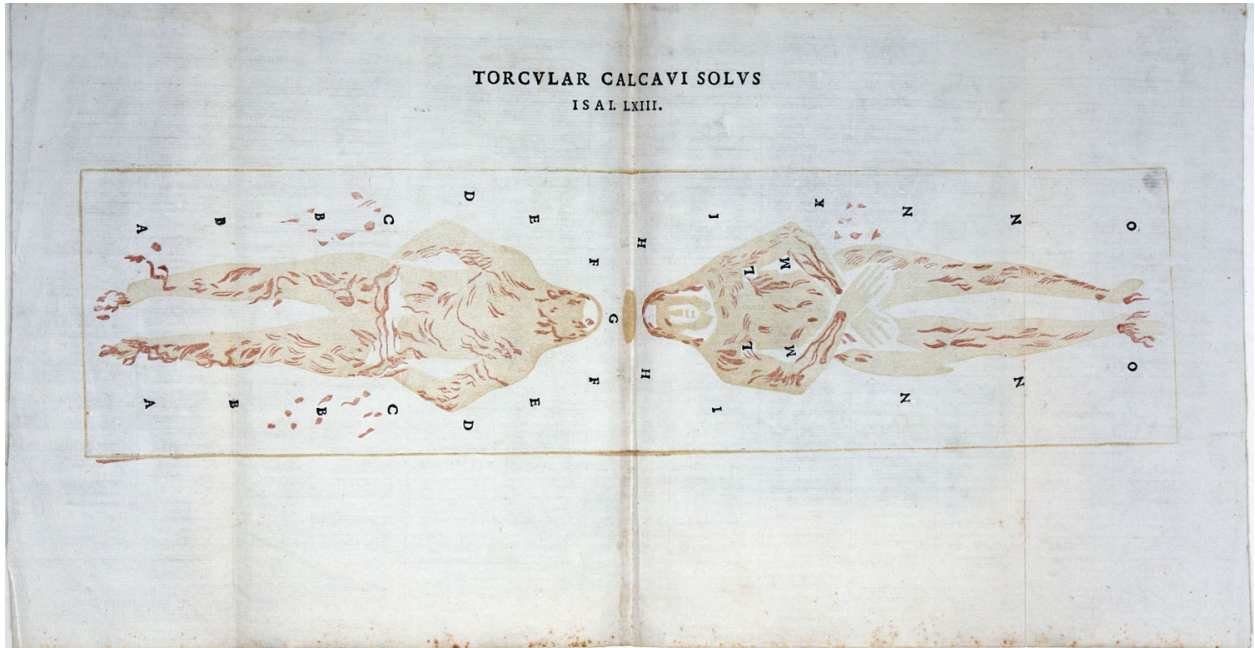


Figure 15. Woodcut illustration of the Shroud of Turin in Alfonso Paleotti, *Esplicatione del sacro lenzuolo ove fu involto il signore*. 1599



Figure 16. Rosso Fiorentino, *Deposition (Descent from the Cross)*, 1521, oil on wood, Volterra, Italy.



Figure 17. Jean Duvet, *The Deposition*, c. 1550, Engraving, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1925.



Figure 18. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Deposition (or Entombment)*, oil on panel, 1600.

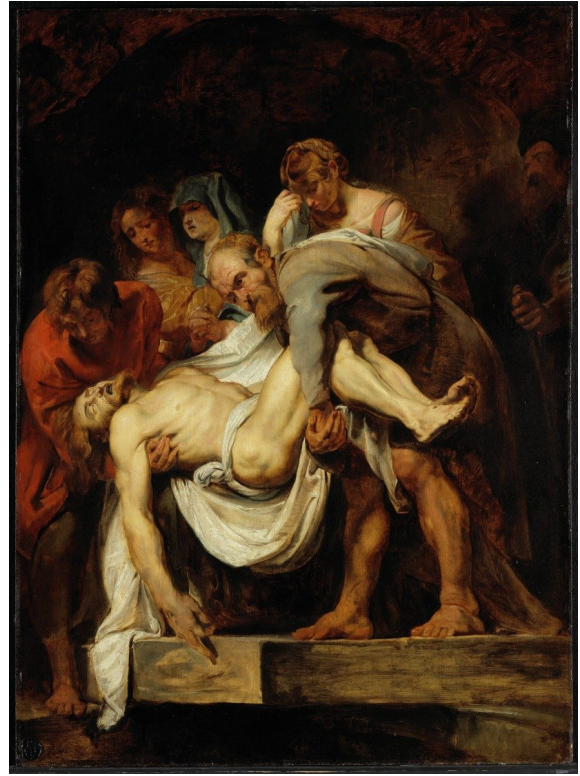


Figure 19. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Entombment*, c. 1612-1614, oil on oak, National Gallery of Canada.



Figure 20. Peter Paul Rubens, *Descent from the Cross*, 1612, Oil on Panel, Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp.



Figure 21. Peter Paul Rubens, *Elevation of the Cross*, 1610, oil on panel, Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp,



Figure 22. Hieronymus Wierix, *Raising of the Cross*, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, engraving (in-folio), Antwerp.



Figure 23 a & b. Christoffel van Sichem II, Folio and Detail of the Deposition from *Biblia Sacra*, 1657, woodcut, Antwerp.

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