

Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris, eds. *Mary Magdalene: Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*.

Studies in Religion and the Arts 7. Leiden: Brill, 2012. xxxv + 454 pp. \$228. ISBN: 978-90-04-23195-5.

Although Mary Magdalene was one of the most popular and frequently represented female religious figures in devotional art between the late Middle Ages and the Baroque and has been the subject of important studies in recent decades, editors Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris note that no comprehensive examination of the saint's representation in visual art has been published. Their volume aims to address this void by focusing "on the iconography of pivotal cycles and images" (3) devoted to the Magdalene produced between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries both north and south of the Alps. While the comprehensiveness of the subject's treatment in an anthology is dependent on the particular topics discussed in individual essays, this collection nonetheless contributes new perspectives on the imagery of Mary Magdalene by exploring her complexity and iconographic flexibility within multiple contexts. A conflation of several biblical women, the Magdalene possessed a multifaceted character as "saint, sinner, penitent, witness, and advocate" (11), each of which is considered in this collection.

Sixteen essays are organized into five parts: part 1, "Iconographic Invention in the Life of Mary Magdalene"; part 2, "Mary Magdalene as the Reformed Sinner"; part 3, "Noli Me Tangere: Mary Magdalene, the Witness"; part 4, "Patronage and Privilege: The Magdalene as Guardian and Advocate"; and part 5, "Fusion and Flexibility: The Magdalene's Role Transformed." While devoted to diverse facets of the Magdalene's imagery, the essays engage in a dialogue through references to each other that draw out connective threads and enhance the cohesiveness of the volume.

In part 1, Michelle A. Erhardt interprets the iconographic program of Giovanni da Milano's fourteenth-century cycle of the Magdalene in the Guidalotti-Rinuccini Chapel in the sacristy of Santa Croce in Florence as a reflection of Franciscan theology that focused on conversion and penance, the *vita mixta* of the active and contemplative lives, and preaching. The Anointing scene from this cycle is also examined in part 5 by Andrea Begel who considers its unique inclusion of cast-out demons within the context of exorcism's role in early Franciscan tradition and argues that the conflation of episodes from the Magdalene's life visually emphasizes the connection between penance and spiritual healing. While iconographic invention in Magdalene imagery is often associated with the influence of mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans in major urban centers, Joanne W. Anderson (chapter 2) calls attention to a late medieval Magdalene cycle in a small parish church in Rencio in the Alpine region of Northern Italy, where cycles drew upon alternate iconographic sources, identifying the influence of German-language religious dramas performed in the Alto Adige region of Rencio.

The volume emphasizes the malleability and accessibility of the character of the Magdalene. Barbara Baert traces the emergence of *noli me tangere* imagery and explores the concept of touch in its gendered and theological connotations, while other contributors examine this iconography through a feminist reading (chapter 8) or a Calvinist perspective (chapter 9). Magdalene imagery was manipulated to serve the diverse agendas of patrons (part 4), as in the case of an illuminated manuscript depicting the *Vie de la Magdalene* (1516), discussed by Barbara J. Johnston, in which scenes were inventively tailored to reflect the life of its patron, Louise of Savoy, and to glorify her son, Francis I. Other essays (part 5) demonstrate how iconography of the Magdalene transformed over time. Vibeke Olson examines the power of tears in late medieval devotional practice and art, arguing that the exemplar of a contrite, tearful Magdalene empowered women to achieve a direct experience with the divine; essays by Annette LeZotte and Michelle Moseley-Christian discuss evolutions of Magdalene iconography within the domestic environment and in the context of a growing taste for representations of female nudes and landscapes between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Beautifully produced, the volume is generously illustrated with black-and-white and color illustrations and amply documented with informative footnotes and bibliography. It is distinguished by its chronological and geographic scope and by the multiple perspectives from which the iconography of the Magdalene is examined, revealing new insights into the complex figure of Mary Magdalene.

MARILYN DUNN

Loyola University Chicago