

THE HASKINS SOCIETY JOURNAL  
STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY

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THE HASKINS SOCIETY JOURNAL  
STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY

EDITED BY WILLIAM NORTH AND LAURA L. GATHAGAN

Volume 24  
2012

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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First published 2013  
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978-1-84383-830-2

ISSN 0963-4959

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd  
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK  
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.  
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620-2731, USA  
website: [www.boydellandbrewer.com](http://www.boydellandbrewer.com)

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available  
from the British Library

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Printed in Great Britain by  
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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## Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> (67 vols., Antwerp/Brussels/Paris 1643–1884)
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
ANS	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i> (formerly <i>Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies</i> )
ASC	Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; normally cited from <i>Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel</i> , ed. Charles Plummer (2 vols., Oxford, 1892–99), with year and MS
ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
Bede, EH	Bede, <i>Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> , ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, rev. ed. 1991)
BHL	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i> , Subsidia Hagiographica 6 (2 vols., Bruxelles, 1898–1901)
Bk. of Fees	<i>Liber feodorum: the Book of Fees, commonly called Testa de Nevill</i> (3 vols., London, 1920–31)
BL	British Library, London
Bracton	<i>Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England</i> , ed. and trans. Samuel E. Thorne (4 vols., Cambridge, MA, 1968–77)
Bracton's Note Book	<i>Bracton's Note Book: a Collection of Cases decided in the King's Courts during the Reign of Henry the Third</i> , ed. F.W. Maitland (3 vols., London, 1887)
CCM	<i>Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale</i>
Cal. Chart. R.	<i>Calendar of the Charter Rolls, 1226–1516</i> (6 vols., London, 1903–27)
Cal. Docs. France, ed. Round	<i>Calendar of Documents preserved in France illustrative of the History of Great Britain and Ireland, I: A.D. 918–1206</i> , ed. J.H. Round (London, 1899)
Cal. Lib. R.	<i>Calendar of the Liberale Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office</i> (6 vols., London, 1916–64)
Cal. Pat.	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office</i> (London, 1891 and in progress)
Camb. Hist. Jnl.	<i>Cambridge Historical Journal</i>

<i>CCSL</i>	Corpus Christianorum, series latina (Turnhout, 1953–)
<i>CCCM</i>	Corpus Christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis (Turnhout, 1971–)
<i>Close R.</i>	<i>Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III preserved in the Public Record Office</i> (14 vols., London, 1902–38)
<i>Complete Peerage</i>	G.E. C[okayne], <i>The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, and Dormant</i> , new edn. by V. Gibbs and others (12 vols. in 13, London, 1910–59)
<i>Cur. Reg. R.</i>	<i>Curia Regis Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office</i> (17 vols., in progress, London, 1922–)
<i>DB</i>	<i>Domesday Book, seu liber censualis Wilhelmi primi regis Angliae</i> , [ed. Abraham Farley] (2 vols., London, 1783)
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. Leslie Stephen and Stephen Lee
<i>Dudo, History</i>	Eric Christiansen, trans., <i>Dudo of St Quentin: History of the Normans</i> (Woodbridge, 1998)
<i>EcHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>EHD</i>	<i>English Historical Documents</i> , I: c. 500–1042, ed. Dorothy Whitelock (2nd edn., London, 1979); II: 1042–1189, ed. David C. Douglas and George W. Greenaway (2nd edn., London, 1981); III: 1189–1327, ed. Harry Rothwell (London, 1975)
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>EME</i>	<i>Early Medieval Europe</i>
<i>EYC</i>	<i>Early Yorkshire Charters</i> , ed. W. Farrer and C.T. Clay (13 vols.: vols. i–iii, Edinburgh, 1914–16; index to vols. i–iii, and vols. iv–xii, Yorkshire Archaeological Soc. Record Ser. Extra Ser. 1–10 [1935–65])
<i>FSI</i>	<i>Fonti per la Storia d'Italia</i>
<i>Gesta Stephani</i>	<i>Gesta Stephani</i> , ed. K.R. Potter and revised R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1976)
<i>Glanvill</i>	<i>The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England commonly called Glanvill</i> , ed. and trans. G.D.G. Hall with guide to further reading by M.T. Clanchy (Oxford, rev. ed. 1993)
<i>GND</i> , ed. van Houts	<i>The Gesta Normannum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni</i> , ed. and trans. Elisabeth M.C. van Houts (2 vols., Oxford, 1992–5)
Henry of Huntingdon, <i>Historia</i>	Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, <i>Historia Anglorum: the History of the English People</i> , ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford, 1996)
<i>Hist. Res.</i>	<i>Historical Research</i> (formerly <i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i> )

<i>HSJ</i>	<i>Haskins Society Journal</i>
<i>JMH</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval History</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
John of Worcester, <i>Chronicle</i>	<i>The Chronicle of John of Worcester</i> , ed. and trans. R.R. Darlington, P. McGurk, and J. Bray (3 vols., Oxford, 1995–)
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
<i>AA</i>	<i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
<i>Epp.</i>	<i>Epistolae</i>
<i>LdL</i>	<i>Libelli de Lite</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Scriptores in folio</i>
<i>SSRG</i>	<i>Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, separatim editi</i>
<i>SSRG</i> , n.s.	<i>Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, nova series</i>
MS/MSS	Manuscript/Manuscripts
OV	<i>The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis</i> , ed. Marjorie Chibnall (6 vols., Oxford, 1969–80)
<i>PP</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
<i>Pipe R.</i>	<i>The Great Roll of the Pipe</i> (Pipe Roll Society), with regnal year
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia latina cursus completus</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne (221 vols., Paris, 1844–64)
Rec. Com.	Record Commissioners
<i>Recueil</i> , ed. Fauroux	<i>Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066</i> , ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1961)
<i>Regesta</i>	<i>Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154</i> , ed. H.W.C. Davis and others (4 vols., Oxford, 1913–69)
<i>RHC</i>	<i>Recueil des Historiens des Croisades</i>
<i>Doc.Arm.</i>	<i>Documents arménienes</i> (2 vols., Paris, 1869–1906)
<i>Gr.</i>	<i>Historiens Grecs</i> (2 vols., Paris, 1875–1881)
<i>Lois</i>	<i>Lois</i> (2 vols., Paris, 1841–43)
<i>Occid.</i>	<i>Historiens Occidentaux</i> (5 vols. in 6, 1844–95)
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Historiens Orientaux</i> (5 vols., Paris, 1872–1906)
<i>RIS</i>	<i>Rerum Italicarum Scriptores</i>
<i>Rot. de Lib.</i>	<i>Rotuli de liberate ac de misis et praestitis, regnante Johanne</i> , ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1844)
<i>Rot. Hund.</i>	<i>Rotuli hundredorum temp. Hen. III &amp; Edw. I</i> , ed. W. Illingworth and J. Caley (2 vols., London, 1812–18)
<i>Rot. Litt. Claus.</i>	<i>Rotuli litterarum clausarum in turri Londinensi asservati, 1204–27</i> , ed. T.D. Hardy (2 vols., London, 1833–44)
<i>Rot. Litt. Pat.</i>	<i>Rotuli litterarum patentium in Turri Londinensi asservati (1201–16)</i> , ed. T. D. Hardy (London, 1835)
RS	Rolls Series

Sawyer, <i>Charters</i>	P.H. Sawyer, <i>Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography</i> (London, 1968), with charter number
s.a. (no italics)	<i>sub anno/annis</i> [under the year/-s]
ser.	series
<i>Settimane</i>	<i>Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo</i>
Soc.	Society
Stubbs, <i>Charters</i>	<i>Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History from the Earliest Times to the Reign of Edward the First</i> , ed. William Stubbs (9th edn., revised H.W.C. Davis, Oxford, 1913)
s.v. (no italics)	<i>sub verbo</i>
Symeon, <i>Opera</i>	<i>Symeonis monachi opera omnia</i> , ed. Thomas Arnold, RS 75 (2 vols., London, 1882–85)
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
Univ.	University
unpub.	unpublished
VCH	<i>The Victoria History of the Counties of England</i> (in progress), with name of county
William of Malmesbury, <i>GP</i>	William of Malmesbury, <i>Gesta Pontificum Anglorum</i> , ed. and trans. R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (2 vols., Oxford, 2007)
William of Malmesbury, <i>GR</i>	William of Malmesbury, <i>Gesta regum Anglorum</i> , ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom (2 vols., Oxford, 1998–1999)
William of Malmesbury, <i>HN</i>	William of Malmesbury, <i>Historia novella</i> , ed. K.R. Potter and E. King (Oxford, 1998)
William of Poitiers, <i>Gesta</i>	William of Poitiers, <i>The Gesta Gvillelmi of William of Poitiers</i> , ed. and trans. R.H.C. Davis and M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1998)

## Voluntary Ascetic Flagellation: From Local to Learned Traditions

*John Howe*

Self-flagellation in the twenty-first century seems more masochistic than religious, and spirituality today has little place for the ascetical use of a whip or other instruments of torture.<sup>1</sup> Yet the practice will not quite disappear. We see it in film, and not just in medieval contexts such as Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957) or *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975), but also in contemporary manifestations such as Silas, the renegade Opus Dei member in Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), or the video images of Shi'ite pilgrims flagellating themselves with chains and slashing their foreheads with swords while they commemorate 'Ashura'.

Such forms of ascetic practice have long been studied in their Latin Christian context. According to the traditional narrative, which this study attempts to destabilize, self-flagellation was an ancient monastic expression of penance. How ancient has been debated, but certainly by the eleventh century it is well documented among Italian hermits. In the thirteenth century it would have entered lay society as part of the 'monasticization of the laity', the top-down process by which religious elites impose their values on the masses. In the words of André Vauchez, the preeminent authority on lay spirituality, 'The confraternities of penitents and flagellants were clearly animated by the desire to appropriate the spiritual resources of monasticism.... The most telling example of this was flagellation – a monastic practice which some lay people in the thirteenth century appropriated in order to win the rewards associated with it.'<sup>2</sup> The penitential confraternities of the Reformation may also be viewed as outgrowths of Franciscan and Jesuit spirituality.

<sup>1</sup> Definitions are found in Louis Gougaud, 'La discipline, instrument de penitence', in *Dévotions et pratiques ascétiques du moyen âge*, Collection 'Pax' 21 (Paris, 1925), 175–199; Jean Leclercq, 'Disciplina', *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique* (17 vols., Paris, 1937–95), iii, 1291–1302 [hereafter DSAM]; Paul Bailly, 'Flagellants', DSAM, v, 392–408 (which includes a comprehensive bibliography of earlier studies); and Arnold Angenendt, 'Geißelung', *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (10 vols., Munich, 1977–99), iv, 1177.

<sup>2</sup> André Vauchez, *Les laïcs au moyen âge: Pratiques et expériences religieuses* (Paris, 1987),

Yet any ‘most telling example’ invites scrutiny, particularly if it serves to bolster a top-down vision of medieval spirituality that may be due for revision. Is there another way to understand the emergence of self-flagellation as an ascetic practice in the Latin West? Could religious self-flagellation, which was widespread in the ancient world prior to Christianity and Islam, have lingered on in marginal popular religious contexts until it later found places within more normative Christian and Islamic traditions? Tracing the possible paths by which flagellation might have entered world religious systems does not answer larger questions about how this form of self-sacrifice operates physiologically, psychologically, or theologically, but such an investigation could help clarify the history of one asceticism and also raise further questions about the limits of perspectives that treat Western spirituality as an elite system.

Self-flagellation was widespread in the ancient Roman world.<sup>3</sup> It was particularly associated with the East. In the Hebrew Bible, the priests of Baal, challenged by Elijah to a sacrificial contest, slashed themselves with swords and spears (I Kings 18:28). In the eastern Mediterranean world, flagellation that shaded into self-mutilation and emasculation was especially associated with priests of Cybele, Atargis, and other goddesses whose cults overlapped and varied over millennia in a long ‘process of religious assimilation and articulation’.<sup>4</sup> Eastern cults such as those of Ma Bellona and Cybele, slightly

101 [Engl. trans. *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, ed. Daniel E. Bornstein and trans. Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame, IN, 1993), 114 (note also the introduction to the translated edition by Bornstein, xviii)]. Along the same lines, see André Vauchez, *La saintéte en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 241 (Rome, 1981), 151 [Engl. trans. *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1997), 130].

<sup>3</sup> A broad but eccentric overview can be found in Georg Friedrich Collas [Carl Felix von Schlichtegroll], *Der Flagellantismus in Altertum* (Leipzig, 1913, repr., 1932).

<sup>4</sup> Maarten J. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis: The Myth and the Cult* (London, 1977), 97–100, 115, 121, 138; H.J.W. Drijvers, ‘Die Dea Syria und andere syrische Gottheiten im Imperium Romanum’, in *Die orientalische Religionen im Römerreich*, ed. Vermaseren (Leiden, 1981), 241–63; Monika Hörig, ‘Dea Syria-Atargatis’, in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 17 (1984), 1536–1581; Per Bilde, ‘Atartagis / Dea Syria: Hellenization of Her Cult in the Hellenistic Roman Period?’, in *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Period*, ed. P. Bilde et al. (Aarhus, 1990), 151–187; Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (Leiden, 2004), 53–82; and Hugh Bowden, *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World* (Princeton, NJ, 2010), 96–104. The words quoted are from H.J.W. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (Leiden, 1980), 80.

For inventories of major sources, see Vermaseren, *Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attidisque (CCCA)*, *Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain* 50 (7 vols., Leiden, 1977–1989); and Paul-Louis van Berg, *Corpus Cultus Deae Syriae. Vol. 1 (1–2): Les sources littéraires*, *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain* 28 (Leiden, 1972).

modified to fit Roman tastes,<sup>5</sup> earned grudging toleration as ‘organized subsystems of popular culture’,<sup>6</sup> and received increasing imperial patronage during the second and third centuries of the Empire.<sup>7</sup> They still retained their exotic priesthoods, and on March 24, the Day of Blood, the priests of Cybele and Attis, the *galloī*, would flagellate themselves until they were bloody.<sup>8</sup> A statue representing such a *fanaticus* survives in the Capitoline Museum and features a scourge with knucklebones.<sup>9</sup> This is the very instrument known to Apuleius (fl. late second century CE), who disapprovingly describes how wandering eunuch priests of a Syrian goddess would bloodily and theatrically whip themselves.<sup>10</sup>

Religious self-flagellation also appeared outside of the more exotic cults of Eastern deities, although in contexts still removed from more respectable Olympian religion. It was part of the rites of Bona Dea.<sup>11</sup> Lucian of Samosata associated it with the Cynics, whose ascetical traditions also fell outside of normal civic religion.<sup>12</sup> A marginal aspect of the Lupercalian rites, which existed as public spectacle in some form at least until Pope Gelasius attempted

<sup>5</sup> Kirk Summers, ‘Lucretius’ Roman Cybele’, in *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M.J. Vermaseren*, ed. Eugene N. Lane, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 131 (Leiden, 1996), 337–65.

<sup>6</sup> For the evidence indicating that in the Latin world the adherents of the cult of Dea Syria were ‘primarily in the lower social group’, see Richard Gordon, ‘Religion in the Roman Empire: The Civic Compromise and Its Limits’, in *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Mary Beard and John North (Ithaca, NY, 1990), 245–248; and Appendix III in *Apuleius Madaurensis Metamorphoses, Book VIII: Text, Introduction, Commentary*, ed. B.L. Hijmans Jr. et al., Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius (Groningen, 1985), 286.

<sup>7</sup> Gabriel Sanders, ‘Kybele und Attis’, in *Die orientalische Religionen im Römerreich*, 264–97, esp. 279–83; A.T. Fear, ‘Cybele and Christ’, in *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults*, 37–50.

<sup>8</sup> Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, 97–100, 115, 121, 38; Benko, *Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots*, 72–79. Regarding the name ‘Galloī’, see Lane, ‘The Name of Cybele’s Priests the “Galloī”’, in *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults*, 117–33.

<sup>9</sup> Vermaseren, *CCCA*, iii, 466; reproduced as fig. V(1), in Gabriel Sanders, ‘Kybele und Attis’, in *Die orientalische Religionen im Römerreich*, 296. For another image of such a whip, incorporated into a funerary portrait from the neighborhood of Rome, see Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 99.

<sup>10</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, VIII xxvi–xxxii and IX i–iv and viii–x, ed. and trans. by J. Arthur Hanson (2 vols., Cambridge, MA, 1989), ii, 112–119. Word by word commentary on these passages can be found in *Apuleius, Book VIII*, ed. Hijmans Jr. et al., 223–77; and *Book IX*, 33–105.

<sup>11</sup> H.H.J. Brouwer, *Bona Dea: The Sources and Description of a Cult* (Leiden, 1989), 336–7; H.S. Versnel, ‘The Festival for Bona Dea and the Thesmophoria’, *Greece and Rome* 39 (1992), 31–55, esp. 35.

<sup>12</sup> Lucian, *The Death of Peregrinus*, chapters xvii and xxviii, ed. M.D. Macleod, *Luciani Opera* (4 vols., Oxford 1972–1987), iii, 194 and 198. A translation is found in Lionel Casson, *Selected Satires of Lucian* (Chicago, IL, 1962), 370 and 375. Peregrinus is placed into both philosophical and Freudian contexts in E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge, 1965), 60–63.

to suppress them in 496, involved the naked lupercal runners whipping women who were seeking fertility.<sup>13</sup>

Did religious flagellation exist outside of urban centers? We know very little about the ‘superstitiones’ of Rome’s rural populations.<sup>14</sup> Apuleius claimed that exotic flagellant priests of Eastern goddesses could attract crowds and donations wherever they went.<sup>15</sup> Although he observed this in the course of a novel set in Greece, he may also have had other places in mind, including his North African homeland where Augustine would later deplore the presence of such priests.<sup>16</sup> And one account from northern Italy demonstrates that self-flagellating holy men remained part of late antique rural piety. Bishop Maximus of Turin (d. between 408 and 423), in a sermon written soon after 405, warns estate owners of northern Italy about the ‘devotees of Diana’ who frequent the rural countryside:

Such a priest prepares himself with wine for his goddess’ wounds, and since he is drunk the wretch does not feel his own pain. But they do this according to plan, so that they may be less troubled by their wounds on succumbing to the drunkenness of wine. Vain indeed is the soothsayer who thinks to add to piety with cruelty. And how merciful is such a god to others when he is so bloodthirsty to his own priests?

Let us briefly describe the appearance of a soothsayer of this kind. His head is unkempt, with long hair, his breast is bare, his legs are half hidden by a mantle, and, like a gladiator, he carries a sword in his hands and is prepared to fight. Indeed, he is worse than a gladiator because, while the one is obliged to struggle with someone else, he is compelled to fight with himself; the one seeks out another’s vitals, but he tears his own members to pieces; and, if it may be said, the gladiator’s trainer urges the one to cruelty but the demon urges the other. Judge whether this man, wearing this garb and bloodied with this carnage, is a gladiator or a priest.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> William M. Green, ‘The Lupercalia in the Fifth Century’, *Classical Philology* 26 (1931), 60–69. Some iconographic evidence for Lupercalian flagellation is presented in Henning Wrede, ‘Der Venus Felix Peinvolles Schicksal im Lupercal’, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung* 102 (1995), 345–348 and plates 82–83.

<sup>14</sup> On the city-centered nature of our sources, see Jacques Fontaine, ‘Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes dans la spiritualité des grands propriétaires terriens à la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle occidental’, in *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. J. Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (Paris, 1972), 571–95.

<sup>15</sup> See note 10 above.

<sup>16</sup> Augustine, *City of God* II. iv and VII. xxvi. Augustine comments on these priests in the context of Carthage where they had a major temple: see J.B. Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford, 1995), 74–5.

<sup>17</sup> Maximus of Turin, *Sermo cvii*, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher, *CCL 23* (Turnhout, 1962), 420–421 [Engl. trans. Boniface Ramsey, *The Sermons of St. Maximus of Turin*, Ancient Christian Writers 50 (New York, 1989), 237]. The exact details of this bloody asceticism are lost in colorful rhetoric: ‘caput nuda habens pectora pallio crura semicincta, et more gladiatorium paratus ad pugnam ferrum gestat in manibus, nisi quod gladiatore peior est, quia ille adversus alterum dimicare cogitur, iste contra se pugnare conpellitur; ille aliena petit viscera, iste propria membra dilaniat; et si dici potest, ad crudelitatem illum lanista istum numen hortatur.’ J.N. Hillgarth,

Because Maximus assumes that his audience of land owners will know what he is talking about when he exhorts them to banish religious ‘gladiators’ from their properties, such infamous holy men must have been a recognizable part of the northern Italian religious scene.<sup>18</sup> The reference to Diana, however, should not necessarily be taken literally inasmuch as such language can be used for pre-Roman or marginal cults in general.<sup>19</sup> Rural paganism was particularly intractable in northern Italy.<sup>20</sup> Here, even at the end of the Middle Ages, barely Christianized ‘pagan survivals’ could still be found, as Carlo Ginzburg demonstrated in his accounts of the ‘good walkers’ (*Benandanti*) and of surviving fragments of pre-Christian cosmologies.<sup>21</sup>

In the post-Roman world, self-flagellation and mutilation may have continued in the same geographical areas, in both East and West. In the fifth century, the bishop of Edessa had to forbid his clerics from emasculating themselves,<sup>22</sup> and there are hints that castrated Syrian initiates of goddess cults could still be found in the eighth century.<sup>23</sup> Continuity of at least some

*Christianity and Paganism, 350–750: The Conversion of Western Europe* (Philadelphia, PA, 1986), 56, interpreting ‘ferrum’ in the more general sense of ‘weapon’, reads the passage as a direct description of self-flagellation: ‘he brandishes a weapon in his hand ... as his trainer works on the gladiator, so his god urges this man to self-flagellation’. Ramsey’s translation, the one quoted in the text, takes ‘ferrum’ as a literal sword and reads the passage as a description of self-mutilation. Maximus himself apparently did not see any need for greater specificity, perhaps because, like Apuleius and some other authors, he associated religious zealots of this sort with both self-mutilation and flagellation.

<sup>18</sup> On Maximus and his fight for Christianization, see Mark Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed: Social Environment and Religious Change in Northern Italy, AD 200–400* (Oxford, 1999), 175–77. For archaeological evidence relating to his elite Christian audience, see Gisella Cantino Wataghin, ‘Christianisation et organisation ecclésiastique des campagnes: L’Italie du nord aux IVe–VIIIe siècles’, in *Towns and Their Territories between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Gian Pietro Brogiolo, Nancy Gautier, and Neil Christie, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 9 (Leiden, 2000), 209–34.

<sup>19</sup> J. Dölger, ‘Christliche Grundbesitzer und heidnische Landarbeiter. Ein Ausschnitt aus der religiösen Auseinandersetzung des vierten und fünften Jahrhunderts’, *Antike und Christentum* 6 (1950), 313–19.

<sup>20</sup> Rita Lizzi, ‘Ambrose’s Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy’, *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990), 156–173; Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, 17, 186, 214–15.

<sup>21</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, MD, 1992); *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, MD, 1982), esp. 20–21 and 58–61; *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches’ Sabbath*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (Chicago, IL, 2004), esp. 13–14 and 296–97.

<sup>22</sup> Hans Drijvers, ‘The Persistence of Pagan Cults and Practices in Christian Syria’, in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. Nina G. Garsoian et al. (Washington, DC, 1982), 33–43, esp. 38.

<sup>23</sup> Frank R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization, c. 370–529*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 115 (2 vols., Leiden, 1993–94), i, 43, 171, and 314.

aspects of goddess lore is suggested by how much tenth and eleventh-century Islamic authors still knew about the cultic honors goddesses traditionally received.<sup>24</sup> In greater Syria, self-chastisement and self-mutilation became part of Shi'ite ideology of martyrdom and redemption. Today public processions commemorating the murder in 680 at Karbala of Husayn ibn Ali (Mohammed's grandson) feature pilgrims who bloody themselves with chains and swords in a ceremony of grief. The aim is to move people to tears, salvific tears in that those who weep for Husayn are believed to gain pardon for their own sins. Shi'ite historical theology and the prompt construction of a pilgrimage shrine at Karbala document early commemoration of Husayn's martyrdom, but because the Ummayids and Abbasids frequently suppressed the public rituals, and because the first Shi'ites left few historical records, it is unclear exactly when this mourning began to incorporate flagellant rites: face slapping and rhythmic chest beating are attested as ancient practices in the earliest extant sources, from around the millennium, but the bloodiest use of chains and swords in the current rituals is described with a vocabulary not found in Arabic sources prior to the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

When and where does ascetical self-flagellation first appear in Christianity? Although the 'black legend' of early monastic culture cavalierly assumes that this practice must have been early,<sup>26</sup> it has not actually been found in paleo-monastic or early Byzantine monastic literature. The *terminus ante quem* is its presence in eleventh-century Italian eremitical circles, where, as will be seen below, Peter Damian (d. 1073)<sup>27</sup> presents it as an ancient tradition, one 'by no means recently invented by modern ingenuity',<sup>28</sup> and

<sup>24</sup> Tamara Green, 'The Presence of the Goddess in Harran', in *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults*, 87–100, esp. 97–100.

<sup>25</sup> Mahmoud Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of 'Ashura' in Twelver Shi'ism* (The Hague, 1978), 141–59 and 181–91; Yitzhak Nakash, 'An Attempt to Trace the Origin of the Rituals of "Āshūrā"', *Die Welt des Islams* 33 (1993), 161–181 (suggests that Shi'ite flagellation might have been influenced by late medieval Latin Christianity!); James A. Bill and John Alden Williams, *Roman Catholics and Shi'i Muslims: Prayer, Passion, and Politics* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002), 72–73; Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ, 2nd edn, 2003), 141–62; Heinz Halm, *Shi'ism*, trans. Janet Watson and Marian Hill (New York, NY, 2nd edn, 2004), 48 and 138–41; Ali J. Hussain, 'The Mourning of History and the History of Mourning: The Evolution of Ritual Commemoration of the Battle of Karbala', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Near East* 25 (2005), 78–88.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Stephen Tomkins, *A Short History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2005), 54: 'There were now hundreds of thousands of monks and nuns throughout the deserts and countryside of Christendom.... They tied weights to their necks and groins, lived in trees or tombs and whipped themselves and each other.'

<sup>27</sup> For a revision of the traditional obit of 1072, see John Howe, 'Did St. Peter Damian Die in 1073? A New Perspective on His Final Days', *Analecta Bollandiana* 128 (2010), 67–86.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Damian, *Epist. 56, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. Kurt Reindel, MGH Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit 4(1–4) (4 vols., Munich, 1983–93), ii, 155 [trans. Owen J. Blum, with the

discusses or mentions it in sixteen different works.<sup>29</sup> Peter was responding to shocked contemporaries who considered it a novelty,<sup>30</sup> a line of argument that would be taken up again by Reformation and early modern critics who assert that it did not antedate Peter Damian.<sup>31</sup> Defenders of the practice's ancient orthodoxy, however, have identified its antecedents in the Bible,<sup>32</sup> in the spirituality of martyrdom,<sup>33</sup> in Irish penitential discipline,<sup>34</sup> in other

assistance of Irven M. Resnick on vols. 5 and 6), *The Letters of Peter Damian*, The Fathers of the Church Medieval Continuation 1–3 and 5–7 (6 vols., Washington, DC, 1989–2005), ii, 362 [volume references refer to series volume number].

<sup>29</sup> The total of sixteen works is a figure taken from Leclercq, *Saint Pierre Damien ermite et homme d'Église* (Rome, 1960), 100.

<sup>30</sup> These critics are known through Peter's letters of rebuttal, especially *Epist. 44, 45, 56, and 161, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 7–33; ii, 34–39, ii, 153–61, and iv, 135–44 [trans. Blum, ii, 221–43, 2:244–49, ii, 361–68, and vi, 131–41].

<sup>31</sup> Patrick Vandermeersch, *La chair de la passion: Une histoire de foi: La flagellation* (Paris, 2002), 137–86, esp. 178 and 186; 'Self Flagellation in the Early Modern Era', in *The Sense of Suffering: Constructions of Physical Pain in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen and Karl A.E. Enenkel (Leiden, 2009), 253–265, esp. 254.

<sup>32</sup> Theologians of asceticism from the High Middle Ages onward ingeniously argued that Jesus Christ is the supreme example of voluntary flagellation since, as God, He controlled his own fate and yet chose to allow Himself to be scourged. Moreover, in the Vulgate, Paul, when speaking of 'chastising his body' (I Cor. 9:27), employs the same word, 'castigare', that Benedict and others would use to designate whipping. For early versions of such arguments, see Peter Damian, *Epist. 44 and 56*, ed. Reindel, ii, 22–23 and 155–157 [trans. Blum, ii, 233 and ii, 362–64].

<sup>33</sup> Peter Damian, *Epist. 56, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 157 [trans. Blum, ii, 364]. This emphasis on martyrdom is contextualized in Kennerly Merritt Woody, 'Damiani and the Radicals', PhD dissertation (Columbia University, 1966), 49–50.

<sup>34</sup> The Irish tradition is complex. Irish penitential and canonical sources that were written in Latin do not mention any form of ascetical flagellation: see Ludwig Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 5 (Dublin, 1963), *passim*, where the beating of a monastic exploiter provides the only possible exception (85). 'Blows' do appear in the sources written in Old Irish, whose language appears to be early but whose textual witnesses date from the end of the Middle Ages. On this, see D.A. Binchy, 'The Old Irish Penitential' and 'The Old Irish Table of Commutations', translations published as appendices to Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 258–283. These Old Irish sources do specify beating, whipping, and other disciplinary actions – sometimes required and sometimes optional – but they are not self-inflicted. John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principal Libri Poenitentiales and Selections from Related Documents* (New York, NY, 1938), 33 and 423, argue, not too convincingly, for a possible exception in the 'Customs of Tallaght' because of the requirement that a penitent wash his hands afterwards. Arguments based on linguistic details can be tricky to pursue; Rob Meens, 'The Historiography of Early Medieval Penance', in *A New History of Penance*, ed. Abigail Firey (Leiden, 2008), 73–95, esp. 94–5, warns that the editions in this field are still far from definitive.

penitential disciplines,<sup>35</sup> and in ecclesiastical legal discipline.<sup>36</sup> The case for a long mainstream tradition of voluntary ascetical flagellation has been most influentially argued by Louis Gougaud and Jean Leclercq, who attempted to document it in the lives of early medieval saints.<sup>37</sup>

Yet a more critical analysis of their dossier – ten examples in all – reveals major problems. Eight instances involve early saints attested in late sources, in hagiographies written only after the practice had already become widespread in Italy.<sup>38</sup> Only two of the examples cited by Gougaud and

<sup>35</sup> Some penitentials require flogging as a penance. See, for example, the early medieval Spanish penitentials in *Paenitentialia Hispaniae*, ed. Francis Bezler, CCSL 156A (Turnhout, 1998), 11, 35–36, 42(2x), 54, 64, 65, and 66(2x); or the Old Irish sources utilizing blows signaled in note 34 above. A possible bridge between legal penalty and ascetical practice could be the substitution of flagellation for canonical penances, as discussed in Hermann Josef Schmitz, *Die Bußbücher und die Bußdisciplin der Kirche* and *Die Bußbücher und das kanonische Bußverfahren* (2 vols., Mainz, 1883 and Düsseldorf, 1898), i, 150–2, but Schmitz sees substitutionary flagellation as a development of the tenth century or later, citing Peter Damian as his earliest example. One could push back this chronology. For example, ‘blows’ might be an optional penance in some Old Irish cases (see note 34 above) and are a possible ‘redemption’ for canonical penance in the *De Ecclesiasticis Disciplinis* composed by Regino of Prüm c. 906: *Reginonis Abbatis Prumiensis Libri Duo de Synodalibus Causis*, ed. F.G.A. Wasserschleben (Leipzig, 1849; repr. Graz, 1964), 389–92. These passages that would be reiterated c. 1015 by Burchard of Worms in his *Decretum* (references in *PL* 132, cols. 369–70).

Yet this sort of substitutionary flagellation was so unusual that Cyrille Vogel passes over it quickly in his ‘Composition légale et commutations dans le système de la pénitence tarifiée’, *Revue du droit canonique* 8 and 9 (1958 and 1959), 289–318 and 1–38, esp. at 9–14 [repr. with same pagination in *En rémission des péchés: Recherches sur les systèmes pénitentiels dans l’Eglise latine*, ed. Alexandre Faivre, Variorum Collected Studies Series 450 (Aldershot, 1994)], and omits it entirely in the sections on commutations in *Les ‘Libri Paenitentiales’*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 27 (Turnhout, 1978). Ludger Körntgen, *Studien zu den Quellen der frühmittelalterlichen Bußbücher*, Quellen und Forschungen zum Recht im Mittelalter 7 (Sigmaringen, 1993), 57–59, 157–62, and 167, offers a good discussion of substitutionary penance but finds little connection between institutional disciplinary penalties and penitential discipline.

<sup>36</sup> Traditional Western legal systems, following more ancient practices, include whipping as a possible penalty for certain criminals in certain cases. This is true in ecclesiastical as well as secular law. In Western rules for religious, including the *Regula Benedicti*, whipping is sometimes the recommended punishment for recalcitrant monks and canons. For examples, see Vogel, *La discipline pénitentielle en Gaule des origines à la fin du VIIe siècle* (Paris, 1952), 143; and Michael S. Driscoll, *Alcuin et la pénitence à l'époque carolingienne*, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 81 (Münster, 1999), 76–77.

<sup>37</sup> Gougaud, ‘Discipline’, 184–5; and Leclercq, ‘La flagellazione volontaria nella tradizione spirituale dell’Occidente’, in *Il Movimento dei Disciplinati*, 73–83 [repr. as ‘Saint Pierre Damien et la flagellation volontaire’, in his *Témoins de la spiritualité occidentale*, Tradition et spiritualité 5 (Paris, 1965), 112–25]. Their conclusions are accepted, for example, in Giles Constable, *Attitudes toward Self-Inflicted Suffering in the Middle Ages*, Stephen J. Brademas Sr. Lecture 9 (Brookline, MA, 1982), 16 [repr. with same pagination in *Culture and Spirituality in Medieval Europe*, Collected Studies Series 541 (Aldershot, 1996)].

<sup>38</sup> The asceticisms of Kentigern (d. c. 603) and William of Gellone (d. c. 812) are known from legendary materials written in the twelfth century or later. The reference for Kentigern

Leclercq are drawn from actual early medieval hagiographical texts. One is from the early ninth-century life of Bavo (fl. seventh century), but its statement that Bavo would ‘chastise himself with laceration of the body’ is imprecise about the form of asceticism involved and may be nothing more than general ascetical color (compare I Cor 9.27).<sup>39</sup> The other is from the life

comes from the life by John Capgrave (d. 1464), the end product of a complicated literary tradition analyzed in Alan MacQuarrie, ‘The Career of Saint Kentigern of Glasgow: *Vitae, Lectiones*, and Glimpses of Fact’, *Innes Review* 37 (1986), 3–24; that for William of Gellone (d. 812), from 1120–1130, as seen in Rombaut Van Doren, ‘Guigielmo, monaco a Gellone’, *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* (14 vols., Rome, 1961–70 and 1988), vii, 467–470. The example from the *miracles* of Virgil of Salzburg (d. 784) postdates 1181: see *Miracula Virgilii* (BHL 8682) xiii, ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach, *MGH SS* 11, 92. The *vita*e of Guido of Pomposa (d. 1046) and Theobaldus of Provence (d. 1066) were written by Italians in the later eleventh century and witness flagellation’s new eleventh-century vogue, not any earlier mainstream tradition. Guido of Pomposa (d. 1046) is described as a flagellant in the *Vita Guidonis Abbatis* (BHL 8876) ii. In *AASS*, Martii iii, 914, a text which alludes to eyewitnesses but has a number of strange lacunae; the *Vita Mathildis* by Donizo (fl. 1115) [ed. Ludwig Bethmann, *MGH SS* 12, 348–409 at 373–74] says Guido threatened to flagellate his nude body in front of the Marian altar unless Mathilda’s father Boniface reformed his conduct and undertook penance. On these sources, see Pio Laghi, ‘S. Guido, abate di Pomposa’, *Analecta Pomposiana* 3 (1967), 9–25. Theobaldus of Provence (d. 1066) practiced voluntary flagellation according to the *Vita Theobaldi* (BHL 8031 and 8032), probably originally written in northern Italy by Abbot Peter of Vangadizza between 1066 and 1068 [*AASS*, Junii v, 594]; and Luc d’Achery and Jean Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti* [hereafter ASOSB] (6 vols. in 9, Paris, 1668–1701), vi. 2, 163–75 (which contains additional Pauline justifications). On the dating, see John Howe, ‘Greek Influence on the Eleventh-Century Western Revival of Hermitism’, 2 vols., PhD dissertation (University of California at Los Angeles, 1979), i, 345 and ii, 573–4. Poppo of Stavelot (d. 1048) is perhaps an early example, but, given that his biography may have been written as late as 1064, its claim that Poppo flagellated himself to counteract temptations of the flesh, found in a laundry list of alleged secret ascetical practices, might represent either Poppo’s actual practice or the new popularity of self-flagellation in the 1060s. See Abbot Everhelmus of Hautmont (d. 1069) and Onulfus of Saint-Pierre of Ghent, *Vita Popponis* (BHL 6898), c.28, ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach, *MGH SS* 11, 291–319 at 312. Everhelmus was Poppo’s nephew who commissioned and contributed to the work; Onulfus was the actual author. On Poppo’s connections with Italy, see Reindel, *Briefe*, ii, 35.

Even later is the case of Walter of Pontoise (d. 1093), who, according to a posthumous *vita* and *gesta* from Marmoutier, is said to have had himself scourged by his monks in chapter. See *Vita Galterii* (BHL 8796) c. iii.13 and 15, *AASS Aprilis* i, 762; *De Rebus Gestis in Majori Monasterio Saeculo XI*, ASOSB, vi.2, 392.

<sup>39</sup> *Vita Bavonis* (BHL 1049) c. 5, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SS Rerum Merovingicarum* iv, 538: ‘Ardebat autem nimium animo ... ut semet ipsum magna laceratione corporis cum alacritate castigaret mentis.’ This language could refer to voluntary flagellation, but, since the same chapter goes on to describe Bavo as ‘multis tribulationibus se ipsum macerans’, it appears to refer to extreme asceticism in general. Note that whereas other ascetical practices such as tears, fasts, and vigils are specifically itemized, flagellation is not. The particular penitential context at issue here is described in Anne-Marie Helvétius, ‘Les modèles de sainteté dans les monastères de l’espace belge du VIIIe au Xe siècle’, *RB* 103 (1993), 51–67 at 61. On the cult of Bavo, see Adriaan Verhulst, ‘Saint Bavon et les origines de Gand’, in *Saint Géry et la christianisation dans le nord de la Gaule, Ve–IXe siècles: Actes du colloque de Cambrai, 5–7 octobre 1984*, ed. Michel Rouche [= *Revue du Nord* 269 (1986), 455–70].

of Pardulfus (d. 737?), written c. 750, describing a ritual where the saint was beaten by a whip-wielding disciple, a practice perhaps closer to the floggings prescribed for transgressions in Benedict's *Rule* than to an on-going tradition of self-inflicted ascetical penance.<sup>40</sup> Thus, although Gougaud and Leclercq argued that voluntary self-flagellation gradually developed out of early medieval penitential spirituality, these learned scholars never successfully documented that transition, nor have more recent researchers, despite the multitude of studies on Late Antiquity, the body, and asceticism stimulated by the work of Peter Brown,<sup>41</sup> No new examples are produced by searching for variations of *flagell\** and *disciplin\** in the electronic version of Migne's *Patrologia Latina*.<sup>42</sup>

Self-flagellation as an orthodox ascetical tradition in the Latin West certainly does appear in eleventh-century northern Italy. Here, as noted above, it was practiced and promoted by Peter Damian, the influential dean of the emerging college of cardinals.<sup>43</sup> Why mid eleventh-century Italy? Some

<sup>40</sup> *Vita Pardulfi* (BHL 6459/6460), c. 7, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, *MGH SS Rerum Merovingicarum* 7, 28. The apparently unprecedented nature of this anomalous example is also noted in Arnold Angenendt, 'Sühne durch Blut', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 18 (1984), 437–476 at 462. However, a similar later practice, not cited by Gougaud and Leclercq, is ascribed to Benedict of Aniane (d. 821) by his disciple Ardo, in his *vita* (BHL 1096), c. 6, *AASS, Februarii* ii, 616.

<sup>41</sup> For an overview, see the bibliography cited in Teresa M. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN, 1998), 255–84. A thorough analysis of Italian Christian asceticism, which does not identify instances of self-flagellation, is offered in Georg Jenal, *Italia Ascetica atque Monastica: Das Asketen- und Mönchtum in Italien von den Anfängen bis zur Zeit der Langobarden (ca. 150/250–604)*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 39 (Stuttgart, 1995).

<sup>42</sup> The *Patrologia Latina Database*, produced by Chadwick-Healey Inc., offers hundreds of occurrences of the words, especially of versions of the Vulgate's phrase '*flagella Dei*', but virtually nothing that pertains to this ascetical practice prior to the eleventh century. The one apparent exception is Augustine's *De Magnificentis B. Hieronymi* (BHL 3867), in versions from *PL* 22 and 33, which claims that Jerome 'Ter in die continue carnem diris verberibus flagellavit, ita ut ex ejus corpore rivuli sanguinis effluebant.' However, patrologists today do not accept this work as an authentic part of Augustine's canon: see *Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, ed. Eligius Dekkers and Aemilius Gaar, CCSL (3rd edn, Turnhout, 1995), 136 (#367). In fact, the manuscript tradition does not appear to antedate the thirteenth century: see, for example, Manfried Oberleitner, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der Werke des hl. Augustinus. I: Italien: Werkverzeichnis*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften phil.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 263 (Vienna, 1969), 355–57; and Rainer Kurz, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der Werke des hl. Augustinus, V: Bundesrepublik Deutschlands und West Berlin: Werkverzeichnis*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften phil.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 306 (Vienna, 1976), 357–61.

<sup>43</sup> Peter Damian received a relatively contemporary *vita* from his junior colleague John of Lodi, the *Vita Petri Damiani* (BHL 6706), ed. Stefan Freund, *Studien zur literarischen Wirksamkeit des Petrus Damiani*, MGH Studien und Texte 13 (Hannover, 1995). Peter's major writings on voluntary flagellation are cited below. The standard biographies of Peter Damian are Owen J. Blum, *St. Peter Damian: His Teaching on the Spiritual Life*, Catholic University of America Studies in Mediaeval History n.s. 10 (Washington, DC, 1947), 1–36;

scholars have linked the origins of the practice to Peter's own personal psychological idiosyncrasies that allegedly resulted from an unhappy childhood and from a guilt-ridden rejection of the whole physical world.<sup>44</sup> Others have situated it in a wider context, considering it a symptom of a more general ascetical and mystical enthusiasm that characterized eleventh-century reformers.<sup>45</sup> Others see it even more broadly as the product of an increasingly influential legal mentality which not only would have extended the use of scourging, a traditional penalty, but also would have allowed for its use as substitutiary penance.<sup>46</sup> All of these hypotheses assume that voluntary religious flagellation originated out of Western Christianity's elite social, religious, and intellectual traditions. But does a close reading of the sources support this?

Perhaps scholars should pay more attention to the non-elite holy men who surrounded Peter Damian. Peter never claimed to have invented voluntary self-flagellation, which he assumed was an ancient tradition. So when did he first encounter it? Peter's *vita*, written between 1076 and 1084 by his disciple John of Lodi (d. 1106), does not include self-imposed flagellation in the long list of private ascetic practices it attributes to Peter before he became a hermit, and it gives an ambiguous possible reference in a list of the ascetic practices of the young hermit. It offers a clear description of ascetical flagellation only in a final inventory of spiritual practices presented in conjunction with events that occurred after 1060.<sup>47</sup> The practice is also not emphasized in Peter

Fridolin Dressler, *Petrus Damiani: Leben und Werk*, Studia Anselmiana 34 (Rome, 1954); and Leclercq, *Saint Pierre Damien*. Materials for a more precise narrative are systematically assembled in Giovanni Lucchesi, *Per una Vita di San Pier Damiani: Componenti cronologiche e topografiche* (Cesena, 1972) [rpt. with the same pagination from *San Pier Damiano nel IX Centenario della morte (1072–1972)* (4 vols., Cesena, 1972–78), i, 13–179 and ii, 13–160. See also Stefan Freund, 'Forschungen zu Petrus Damiani, 1983–95', *Revue Mabillon*, n.s. 7 (1996), 289–9; Ugo Facchini, *Pier Damiani, un padre del secondo millennio: Bibliografia 1007–2007* (Rome, 2007), esp. 388–89; and William D. McCready, *Odiosa Sanctitas: St. Peter Damian. Simony, and Reform*, Studies and Texts 177 (Toronto, 2012).

<sup>44</sup> Henry Osborn Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind: A History of the Development of Thought and Emotion in the Middle Ages* (2 vols., 4th edn, Cambridge, MA, 1938), i, 263–70. The fragmentary surviving data on Peter's childhood is assembled in Lester K. Little, 'The Personal Development of Peter Damian', in *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Joseph R. Strayer*, ed. William C. Jordan, Bruce McNab, and Teofilo F. Ruiz (Princeton, 1976), 317–341 and 523–528, esp. at 336–40.

<sup>45</sup> Albert Dresdner, *Kultur- und Sittengeschichte der italienischen Geistlichkeit im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert* (Breslau, 1890), 291–300; Woody, 'Damiani and the Radicals', 49–50.

<sup>46</sup> A gradual development of self-imposed flagellation out of canonical punishments that included scourging is postulated by Gougaud, 'La discipline', 175–80, and Leclercq, 'La flagellazione', 74–75.

<sup>47</sup> John of Lodi, *Vita* cc. 2, 5, and 18, ed. Freund, 209–12, 218–23, and 251–53. The second list of Peter Damian's spiritual exercises has him excel in 'disciplinae videlicet metanoeis', but, given the ambiguity of the term 'disciplina' and the qualifier linking it specifically to 'prostrations', the meaning is more likely ascetical discipline in general. The final list, which

Damian's most important early writing, begun around 1042, his hagiographical life of Romuald (d. c. 1027), a nobleman from Ravenna who came to be honored as the founder of the Camaldoleses order. Peter wrote the *Vita Romualdi* at the urging of Romuald's well-informed followers at San Vincenzo di Petra Pertusa (near Furlo, in the province of Pesaro in the Marches). He turned this biography into a virtual encyclopedia of early Camaldoleses ascetical practices, adding for good measure many parallels from the lives of the desert fathers. If voluntary flagellation had been part of Romuald's spirituality, Peter ought to have described it. But he only mentions self-imposed flagellation in a somewhat ambiguous passage at the very end, and only in a marginally monastic context: 'But why do I speak of monks', asks Peter, 'when even their humble servants [*famuli*], those who are the guardians of their flocks, fast, keep silence, and perform acts of discipline in turn among themselves [*disciplinas inter se invicem facerent*] and for any idle words whatsoever require penance [*penitentiam flagitarent*]'. While one might speculate that the practices of the swineherds reflect those of their masters, Peter does not state this. Thus the first people reported as 'doing the discipline' are not the aristocratic Romuald and his friends but their servants.<sup>48</sup>

Voluntary flagellation makes its first prominent appearance in a letter Peter Damian wrote c. 1055 x 1057 to a Florentine hermit named Teuzo. Peter disapproved of Teuzo's urban life and celebrity status. To instill humility, he wrote to him about the heroic deeds of real hermits in real deserts. In his letter, he offers as examples of asceticism his colleagues at the priory of Fonte Avellana, discussing in great detail one Dominic Loricatus (d. 1060) and itemizing his extensive self-scourging. He preemptively defends the practice, apparently concerned that Teuzo would not recognize self-flagellation as standard spirituality.<sup>49</sup> Here Peter was right. He soon had to send another justification to scandalized monks of Florence,<sup>50</sup> and then an additional one to an otherwise unidentified 'Petrus Cerebrosus' ('Peter the Hothead').<sup>51</sup>

Since Peter Damian approvingly cites voluntary self-flagellation in this Florentine correspondence, some scholars have assumed that he introduced it into his monastery of Fonte Avellana.<sup>52</sup> Yet a reverse scenario is more likely. Fonte Avellana, a foundation located on the border between Umbria and the

includes clear detailed descriptions of the practice, concerns Peter's life after he had returned from his mission to Milan, i.e. after 1059–60. On the date of the *vita*, see Freund, *Studien zur literarischen Wirksamkeit des Petrus Damiani*, 180–82.

<sup>48</sup> *Vita Romualdi* (BHL 7324) c. 64, ed. Giovanni Tabacco, FSI 94 (Rome, 1957), 105. That Peter Damian failed to associate voluntary flagellation with Romuald was noted by Dressler, *Petrus Damiani*, 25, but not by subsequent scholars.

<sup>49</sup> *Epist. 44, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 7–33 [trans. Blum, ii, 221–43].

<sup>50</sup> *Epist. 45, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 34–39 [trans. Blum, ii, 244–9].

<sup>51</sup> *Epist. 56, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 153–61 [trans. Blum, ii, 361–8].

<sup>52</sup> For example, Bailly, 'Flagellants', DSAM, v, 392. See also note 31 above.

Marches, already existed at the end of the tenth century.<sup>53</sup> Its traditions were established long before Peter Damian arrived there around 1035. Since there is little evidence for the practice of self-administered flagellation in his early career and writings, it is more likely he learned about it from Fonte Avellana's hermits than vice versa. Perhaps he learned it from Dominic Loricatus specifically;<sup>54</sup> certainly he found Dominic its preeminent practitioner, since he observes that 'by the example of this old man in taking the discipline, the custom spread in our area, so that not only men but even noble women eagerly took up this form of purgatory'.<sup>55</sup>

Who was Dominic Loricatus? According to Peter Damian's letters, which include a revision of a *vita Dominici* he had written right after Dominic's death, he was a priest who had renounced his ministry because his ordination had been procured through simony. The cured goatskin that was his parents' bribe indicates their poverty. Dominic became a hermit at Luceoli, on the Umbrian border north of Fonte Avellana, where for many years he was associated with a group of strict hermits who lived in eighteen cells under the direction of an otherwise unknown 'John of Montefeltro'. He became

<sup>53</sup> Pietro Palazzini, 'Fonte Avellana e Pier Damiani', in *Le Abbazie delle Marche: Storia e arte. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Macerata, 3–5 aprile 1990*, ed. Emma Simi Varanelli, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Macerata 66, Sezione 'Atti di Convegni' 20 (Cesena, 1992), 127–158, esp. 129–31.

<sup>54</sup> The only detailed reference by Peter Damian to voluntary flagellation which the scholarly tradition suggests might antedate his friendship with Dominic is in a hard-to-date description of the spirituality of Fonte Avellana, found in *Epist. 18, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, i, 168–79, esp. 173 and 175 [trans. Blum, 1:159–170, esp. 164 and 166]. Although Reindel dates this letter to the years 1045 x c. 1050, Woody, 'Damiani and the Radicals', 197, claims that there is no basis for the traditional c. 1050 *terminus ante quem*. He redates the letter to c. 1058 because it refers to Peter's ill-health and contains an inventory of possessions which Fonte Avellana acquired while Peter was prior, a listing suggesting that the audience might have included the priors left behind when he became cardinal. These circumstantial arguments fit both with the long sequence of monastic developments described and with the presence in this letter of passages that parallel others in letters that Peter certainly wrote in the later 1050s. For example, the material on the discipline is paralleled in *Epist. 50* (from 1057), *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 77–131, esp. 94 and 98 [trans. Blum, 289–334, esp. 301 and 304]. In *Epist. 50*, a section on Dominic does appear and the optional character of the discipline in hermit life is emphasized (ed. *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 100–3 and 109 [trans. Blum, ii, 307–08 and 312]). Yet even Reindel's early dating for *Epist. 18* would not necessarily destroy the case for Dominic as Peter Damiani's original model for flagellation, since even in this letter Peter does not claim to have created the customs described but only to 'rejoice if I am able to keep up with the footsteps of my brethren' (*Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, i, 170 [trans. Blum, i, 161]).

<sup>55</sup> *Epist. 66* and *109, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 247–79, esp. 275–76 and iii, 200–23, esp. 215 [trans. Blum, iii, 40–69, esp. 64–66 and iv, 207–26, esp. 219]. This use of 'purgatory' as a noun, in a letter written 1059–1060, fits poorly with the theory that 'purgatory' crystalized as a substantive notion only in the late twelfth century, as argued in Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, IL, 1984), 54–76.

famous for his extensive practice of ‘the discipline’, using a new type of whip made of leather thongs rather than bundles of twigs. He acquired his epithet ‘Loricatus’ by wearing a penitential cuirass (a *lorica*). Peter claims that Dominic, with the permission of his prior, had asked to be received at Fonte Avellana in order to be guided by Peter, who would accept him only as ‘a true philosopher and teacher’, ‘my father and master’, ‘my lord and teacher’.<sup>56</sup>

But Dominic was not unique. Holy men of non-elite backgrounds and limited literacy abounded in Umbria, Romagna, and the Marches. Among them was Romuald’s original master, Marinus, a simple untaught wandering holy man whose spirituality involved singing different psalms under different trees.<sup>57</sup> There was also the extraordinarily dirty Brother Martin Storacus who joined Peter Damian’s congregation at Fonte Avellana; he was so illiterate that he scarcely knew fifty psalms, but his distinctions included not only a notable lack of hygiene but also his ankle-length hair and two pet snakes.<sup>58</sup> Iron-clad hermits, quite untaught, wandered around.<sup>59</sup> When Peter Damian abandoned his original career as a teacher in the secular schools, he was convinced that God had chosen to convert the world not with ‘philosophers and orators’ but with ‘fishermen ... simple and unlettered [*idiotas*]’.<sup>60</sup>

Peter considered Dominic to be one of these: a holy man ‘whose speech, to be sure, is the vernacular, but whose life is truly accomplished and elegant’.<sup>61</sup> His distinction lay in the intensity and frequency of his ascetic practice.

For many years he wore an iron corselet next to his flesh and engaged in implacable combat with the evil spirits. This eager fighter was always ready for battle, armed not only in spirit, but also bodily went forth against the enemy lines. He was so accustomed to this way of life that hardly a day passed without chanting two psalters, beating his naked body with both hands armed with scourges ...<sup>62</sup>

Dominic’s ultimate record was thirteen psalters.<sup>63</sup> As long as he and the other hermits were not too self-destructive, Peter Damian accepted and, indeed,

<sup>56</sup> *Epist.* 109 final section (= *BHL* 2239), *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iii, 207–23, esp. 207–10 and 216 [trans. Blum, 4:211–26, esp. 214 and 216].

<sup>57</sup> *Vita Romualdi* c.4, ed. Tabacco, 20–21.

<sup>58</sup> *Epist.* 44, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 15–17 [trans. Blum, ii, 226–28].

<sup>59</sup> *Epist.* 56 and 109, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 159–60 and iii, 218–19 [trans. Blum, ii, 366–7 and iv, 222–23].

<sup>60</sup> *Epist.* 117, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iii, 316–29, esp. 319 [trans. Blum, iv, 318–31, esp. 321]. Peter Damian’s contrasts between foolish wisdom and holy fools are treated in Irven M. Resnick, ‘Attitudes towards Philosophy and Dialectic during the Gregorian Reform’, *The Journal of Religious History* 16 (1990), 115–125 at 116–17.

<sup>61</sup> *Epist.* 109, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iii, 210 [trans. Blum, 4, 214]. See also *Epist.* 44, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 21 [trans. Blum, ii, 231].

<sup>62</sup> *Epist.* 44, and 109, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 21 and iii, 211 [trans. Blum, ii, 232 and iv, 215].

<sup>63</sup> The highest of several record totals that Peter Damian lists in various letters over the years –

admired their ascetic practices.<sup>64</sup> Although the use of the discipline at Fonte Avellana was officially ‘voluntary’, it became institutionalized to a considerable extent.<sup>65</sup> It shows up in descriptions of some other exemplary monks. Leo of Preggio, an ‘*indoctus*’ who knew only the psalms, took up the practice at an advanced age after he had become a hermit there.<sup>66</sup> The future Bishop Rudolph of Gubbio (d. 1064), who entered around 1057 and acquired the practice, was a different case, a man whose family had controlled a *castello* and had given him the education proper to a bishop.<sup>67</sup> Rudolph, like Peter Damian and Peter’s other upper-class spiritual disciples, demonstrates the spread of the practice among people of higher social rank.

For self-flagellation to become accepted it needed an impeccably orthodox justification. When Peter Damian described Dominic to his elite correspondents, he framed Dominic’s penitential practices with the exalted purpose of imitation of Christ: ‘Our Dominic … bore in his body the stigmata of Jesus, and fixed the sign of the cross not only on his forehead, but printed it on every part of his body.’<sup>68</sup>

The aftermath of Peter Damian’s initiative is suggestive. Although he promoted flagellation among pious laymen and laywomen,<sup>69</sup> the surviving

twelve psalters and a start on a thirteenth – appears in *Epist. 66, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani* ii, 275–76 [trans. Blum, iii, 64–66].

<sup>64</sup> References in Blum, *St. Peter Damian*, 118–19. Penances which Peter Damian would not recommend were still tolerated so long as they did not cause too much harm: see, for example, *Epist. 44, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 15 [trans. Blum, ii, 227], where Peter disapproves of Martin Storacus’ long hair.

<sup>65</sup> *Epist. 133, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iii, 452–54, esp. 454 [trans. Blum v, 73–5, esp. 74] emphasizes the voluntary nature of flagellant devotion, but on its place in the monastic routine, both as an individual practice and in chapter, see *Epist. 18, 50, and 168, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, i, 173 and 175, ii, 94 and 98, and iv, 238–39 [trans. Blum, i, 164 and 166; ii, 301 and 304; and vi, 236–37].

<sup>66</sup> *Epist. 44, 117, and 153, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 20–21, iii, 325–26, and iv, 63–65 [trans. Blum, ii, 230–31, iv, 327–28, and vi, 67–68].

<sup>67</sup> *Epist. 109 (BHL 7282), Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iii, 202–7 [trans. Blum, iv, 207–11]. On Rudolf’s social context, see Elisabetta Archetti Giampaolini, *Aristocrazia e Chiese nella Marca del Centro-Nord tra IX e XI secolo*, Università degli Studi di Macerata Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia 38 (Rome, 1987), 233–35, 250, and 272.

<sup>68</sup> *Epist. 109, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iii, 222 [trans. Blum v, 226]. The christomimetic reference is also invoked in *Epist. 161, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iv, 137 and 140–44 [trans. Blum vi, 131–41, esp. 134 and 137–41]. The word ‘stigmata’ here refers to ‘marks’ in general without its later technical meaning. Peter Damian’s more general emphasis on Christ is described in Giandomenico Gordini, ‘La santità nelle biografie e nei sermoni damianei’, in *Fonte Avellana nella Società dei secoli XI e XII: Atti del II Convegno del Centro di Studi Avellaniti* (Urbino, 1978), 366–394, esp. 377–82. However, in the course of his many writings justifying ascetical flagellation, Peter Damian invokes many more holy precedents, described in Blum, *St. Peter Damian*, 114–20; Leclercq, *Saint Pierre Damien*, 100–5; and Vandermeersch, *La chair de la passion*, 48–52.

<sup>69</sup> *Epist. 66 and 109, Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ii, 276 and iii, 215 [trans. Blum iii, 66 and iv, 219].

documentation appears to suggest that he advanced it most successfully in the context of monastic chapter meetings at which monks confessed their faults and received lashes as public penance. At Montecassino, despite resistance to this practice, he won the field at least temporarily;<sup>70</sup> the canons at Velletri also adopted a similar practice.<sup>71</sup> Other communities ultimately followed, including the Carthusians, the Praemonstratensians, and even the Cluniacs.<sup>72</sup>

In a recent work, Patrick Vandermeersch argues that this form of flagellation, undertaken in a community setting and generally administered by another monk rather than by oneself, constitutes a penitential form of the discipline that differs in its psychological dynamics from self-flagellation. He goes on to claim that individual ascetic self-flagellation would not be accepted in orthodox circles until the Reformation period, when it would be popularized by Jesuits.<sup>73</sup> But Vandermeersch's attempt to treat individual monastic self-flagellation as a Reformation innovation fails when confronted with hagiographical testimonies concerning earlier ascetic saints from Dominic Loricatus forward.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, Peter Damian himself tended quite explicitly to distinguish public flagellation in chapter from private self-flagellation.<sup>75</sup>

In northern Italy, this form of ascetic spirituality made another dramatic advance two centuries later when lay flagellant confraternities began to whip themselves in public processions. Although Peter Damian had promoted ascetic self-flagellation among monks and canons and in pious prayer circles, it was still a relatively private affair. It is noteworthy that the first public ceremonies occurred right in Peter Damian's old neighborhood, so strikingly that it became a commonplace that 'Umbria gave birth ... to the flagellants'.<sup>76</sup> Around the beginning of the thirteenth century, the 'order of

<sup>70</sup> Epist. 161, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iv, 135–44 [trans. Blum, vii, 131–41]; Leo Marsicanus, *Chronica Monasterii Cassinensis* III.20, ed. Hartmut Hoffmann, in *MGH SS* 34, 386–387. Although the relevant section of the chronicle is not found in the surviving autograph of Leo's first recension, Hoffmann attributes it to him ('Einleitung', in *MGH SS* 34, xxi and xxvii).

<sup>71</sup> Epist. 168, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iv, 238–74, esp. 239 [trans. Blum, vii, 236–43, esp. 236].

<sup>72</sup> Henri De Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: Les quatres sens de l'Écriture* (4 vols., Paris, 1959–64), i, 53–54 [Engl. trans. Mark Sebanc and E.M. Macierowski, *Medieval Exegesis* (3 vols., Grand Rapids, MI, 1998–2009)], I, 22; Bailly, 'Flagellants', *DSAM*, v, 393–95.

<sup>73</sup> Vandermeersch, *La chair de la passion*, 111–14 and 16–65; Vandermeersch, 'Self Flagellation', 257–59.

<sup>74</sup> For some examples of the practice, see Vauchez, *La sainté en occident*, 406, 422, and 433 [trans. Birrell, 351, 365, and 374]; Michael Goodich, *Vita Perfecta: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 25 (Stuttgart, 1982), 114 and 132.

<sup>75</sup> An example is Peter Damian extolling the practices of Bishop Rudolph of Gubbio to Pope Alexander II in Epist. 109, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, iii, 205 [trans. Blum iv, 210].

<sup>76</sup> George Holmes, *Florence, Rome and the Origins of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1988), 69.

penitents' at Perugia included voluntary flagellation among its practices.<sup>77</sup> Then in Lent of 1260, a penitent visionary, Ranieri Fasani (d. before March 1282), warned the Perugians to take 'the discipline' in public procession or face divine retribution.<sup>78</sup> Soon flagellant penitent groups were appearing in many parts of Italy and came in several prominent waves: one in 1260 associated with Ranieri; another around 1300 associated with processions of white clad 'Bianchi'; and a third associated with the penitential activities in response to the Black Death.<sup>79</sup> Although penitential processions in which self-flagellation played a prominent role spread throughout Italy, and then into the regions of modern France, Austria, Germany, and even Poland, the vast majority of flagellant confraternities until the end of the Middle Ages were still found in northern Italy.<sup>80</sup>

What inspired Ranieri and his first followers? The Camaldoleses had houses in the Perugian area, but nothing connects them to the new enthusiasm.<sup>81</sup> Nor is there any obvious direct link to Franciscan devotions.<sup>82</sup> Flagellant processions

<sup>77</sup> Gilles Gérard Meersseman, *Dossier de l'Ordre de la Pénitence au XIIIe siècle*, Spicilegium Friburgense 7 (Freiburg, 1961), 49. For the ultimate institutionalization of the Perugian penitents, see Anna Belardinelli, 'L' "Ordo Poenitentium" à Perugia', in *I Frati penitenti di San Francesco nella Società del due e trecento: Atti del 2º Convegno di Studi Francescani, Roma, 12–13–14 ottobre 1976*, ed. Mariano d'Alatri (Rome, 1977), 309–324.

<sup>78</sup> 'Lezenda de fra Rainero Faxano' (BHL 7082d), ed. Emilio Ardu, 'Frater Raynerius Faxanus de Perusio', in *Il movimento dei disciplinati nel settimo centenario dal suo inizio (Perugia 1260): Convegno internazionale: Perugia 25–28 Settembre 1960*, Appendice al Bollettino 9 (Perugia, 1962), 93–98. This fourteenth-century *vita* emphasizes that the novelty was not the discipline itself but its public practice ('Dominus Jhesus ... vult quod disciplina, quam occulte diu fecisti, publice fiat in populis', 96). Ranieri Fasani is now known not only by his relatively late *life*, but also by contemporary Perugian documents discussed in Ardu, 'Frater Raynerius Faxanus de Perusio', 87–89. Research is summarized in G. Cecchini, 'Flagellanti', in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* (10 vols., Rome, 1974–1980), iv, 60–72. For the date of origin of the devotion, see Ardu, 'Frater Raynerius Faxanus de Perusio', 368–70.

<sup>79</sup> Étienne Delaruelle, 'Les grandes processions de pénitents de 1349 et 1399', in *Il movimento dei disciplinati*, 109–45; Daniel E. Bornstein, *The Bianchi of 1399: Popular Devotion in Medieval Italy* (Ithaca, NY, 1993); Catherine Vincent, 'Discipline du corps et de l'esprit chez les flagellants au Moyen Age', *Revue Historique* 615 (2000), 593–614; Andreas Dehmer, 'Passio und Compassio: Geissellungsrituale italienischer Bussbruderschaften im späten Mittelalter', in *The Sense of Suffering*, ed. van Dijkhuizen and Enenkel, 221–251.

<sup>80</sup> Pier Lorenzo Meloni, 'Topografia, diffusione e aspetti delle confraternite dei disciplinati', in *Risultati e prospettive della ricerca sul movimento dei disciplinati: Convegno Internazionale di Studio, Perugia, 5–7 dicembre 1969* (Perugia, 1972), 15–98 at 20 and 40[A]. The pervasiveness of ascetical self-flagellation at the end of the Middle Ages is illuminated in G. Alberigo, 'Contributi alla storia delle confraternite dei disciplinati e della spiritualità laicale nei secc. XV e XVI', in *Movimento dei disciplinati*, 156–252.

<sup>81</sup> Gary Dickson, 'The Flagellants of 1260 and the Crusades', *JMH* 15 (1989), 229–30 [repr. with same pagination in his *Religious Enthusiasm in the Medieval West: Revivals, Crusades, Saints*, Collected Studies Series 695 (Aldershot, 2000)].

<sup>82</sup> Roots in itinerant Franciscan traditions are often presumed: see for examples, Cyrilla Barr, 'The *Laude Francescane* and the Disciplinati of Thirteenth-Century Umbria and Tuscany: A Critical Study of the Cortona Codex 91', 2 vols., PhD dissertation (The Catholic University

do not seem to have evolved directly out of any existing clerically organized confraternities or penitential groups,<sup>83</sup> and they appear to have been popular rather than learned in origin. Although the evidence for the practices found in northern Italian chronicles tells us more about the devotion's spread than about its beginnings, the two which do discuss its roots suggest an eremitical, rather than clerical or monastic, milieu. The *Annals of Genoa*, which were continuously updated during this period, offer two conflicting origin stories that were circulating at the time:

it is said that the flagellation [which started in Perugia] had its beginning from a certain boy who was still in his earliest years [a conflation of flagellant enthusiasm with the children's crusade stories current at this time]; others say it was started by a certain hermit who was living a strict life in these regions in a certain cave, who is said to have claimed that he heard through an angelic message that if the men of Perugia would not do penance their city would be destroyed [a version congruent with the legend of Ranieri, but with more elaborate eremitical background].<sup>84</sup>

A chronicler from Asti, Guglielmo Ventura, claims that 'in the year 1260 ... hermits going out from their "tombs", came to the cities, preaching the Gospel, just as Jonas the Prophet had preached in Nineveh, and they were saying: "Do penance since the Kingdom of Heaven will be at hand." Then I saw men, from the greatest to the least, hitting their shoulders vigorously with whips ...'<sup>85</sup>

If Ranieri the Penitent had lived as a hermit or had eremitical contacts,

of America, 1965), esp. i, 5–7; also Réginald Grégoire, 'Movimenti di spiritualità in Umbria nei secoli XIII e XIV', in *La Spiritualità di S. Chiara da Montefalco; Atti del I Convegno di studio, Montefalco, 8–10 agosto 1985*, ed. Silvestro Nesi (Montefalco, 1986), 37–68, esp. 43–48. However, the early emergence of penitential groups in the area suggests a preexisting movement ultimately absorbed by rather than created by Franciscan spirituality: see Belardinelli, 'L'"Ordo Poenitentium" à Perugia', esp. 309–14. Moreover, when the Franciscans did arrive in Perugia, they do not seem to have immediately taken the lead in organizing flagellant groups: Meersseman, 'Disciplinati e penitenti nel duecento,' in *Movimento dei Disciplinati*, 43–72 at 60–61, has demonstrated that the Perugian flagellant confraternity dedicated to Francis and connected to the Franciscan church appears only shortly before 1280, even later than its Dominican counterpart.

<sup>83</sup> Raffaello Morghen, 'Ranieri Fasani e il movimento dei disciplinati del 1260', in *Movimento dei Disciplinati*, 29–42 at 32, separates the 'moto spontaneo di popolo' from the confraternities that were part of contemporary lay spirituality; Meersseman, 'Disciplinati e penitenti nel duecento', *Movimento dei Disciplinati*, 49–50, contrasts them with organized groups of penitents. Barr, 'The *Laude Francescane*', demonstrates that the songs associated with flagellant processions are simple vernacular hymns very different from the learned musical traditions of the era.

<sup>84</sup> *Annali Genovesi di Caffaro e de'suoi continuatori*, new ed. Luigi Tommaso Belgrano and Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, FSI 11–14 (4 vols., Rome, 1890–1926), iv, 39–40.

<sup>85</sup> *Memoriale Guilielmi Ventura Civis Astiensis*, ed. Ludovico Antonio Muratori, *RIS* (28 vols., Milan 1723–38, 1751), xi, 153. For additional chronicle references concerning the spread of the devotion, see Arsenio Frugoni, 'Sui flagellanti del 1260', *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratori*, 75 (1963), 211–37.

it would not be too surprising. Around this time, sixty-eight hermits and recluses in the neighborhood of Perugia were listed as receiving public stipends.<sup>86</sup> Others may have been off the dole or outside the *contado*. Indeed, back in Peter Damian's day, Rodulfus Glaber had observed with regard to a hermit in monastic dress that 'Italy abounds with such men'.<sup>87</sup> It does not seem unreasonable to think that the same substratum of popular religiosity that was influential in the mid-eleventh century remained a dynamic force in the mid-thirteenth.

Exotic forms of ascetic practice needed orthodox justifications, and the lay flagellant processions unsurprisingly promoted their practice as a form of christomimesis. To emphasize this connection, some pilgrimages lasted thirty-three days, inspired by the number of years Christ lived on earth.<sup>88</sup> The phrase 'in memory of the Passion of Christ' appears in the statutes of virtually all flagellant companies, and many met on both Fridays and Sundays, emphasizing respectively the Passion and the Resurrection.<sup>89</sup> The art and ritual of flagellant confraternities consciously and consistently invoked the suffering of Christ.<sup>90</sup>

This present study is not concerned with the later history of religious flagellation, upon which much has already been written.<sup>91</sup> Suffice it note that in Spain, Counter-Reformation flagellant confraternities developed out of those established by the Genoese in Valencia in the late fifteenth century,

<sup>86</sup> Mario Sensi, 'Incarcerate e recluse in Umbria nei secoli XIII e XIV: Un bizzocaggio centro-italiano', in *Il movimento religioso femminile in Umbria nei secoli XIII–XIV: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studio nell'ambito delle celebrazioni per l'VIII centenario della nascita di S. Francesco d'Assisi, Città di Castello, 27–28–29 ottobre 1982*, ed. Roberto Rusconi, Quaderni del 'Centro per il Collegamento degli Studi Medievali e Umanistici nell'Università di Perugia' 12 (Florence, 1984), 105–6.

<sup>87</sup> Rodulfus Glaber, *Historiarum Libri Quinque* III iv, ed. John France, OMT (Oxford, 1989), 102–3.

<sup>88</sup> Franz-Reiner Erkens, 'Busse in Zeiten des Scharzen Todes: Die Züge der Geissler,' *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 26 (1999), 485–513, esp. 495.

<sup>89</sup> John Henderson, 'The Flagellant Movement and Flagellant Confraternities in Central Italy, 1260–1400', *Studies in Church History* 15 (1978), 147–160 at 157.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, Kathleen Giles Arthur, 'Cult Objects and Artistic Patronage of the Fourteenth-Century Flagellant Confraternity of Gesù Pellegrino', in *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, ed. Timothy Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse, NY, 1990), 336–359; E.K. Lee, 'Art and Ritual Drama of the Flagellant Confraternities in 13th–15th Century Italy', *Arte medievale* 4 (2005), 69–82.

<sup>91</sup> On the Early Modern period, see Cyrille Vogel, 'Le pélerinage pénitentiel', in *Pellegrinaggi e culto dei santi in Europa fino alla I<sup>a</sup> crociata, 8–11 ottobre 1961*, Convegni del Centro di Studi sulla Spiritualità Medievale 4 (Todi, 1963), 113–53, esp. 151 [repr. with same pagination in *En rémission des péchés*]; Robert A. Schneider, 'Mortification on Parade: Penitential Processions in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France', *Renaissance and Reformation*, n.s. 10 (1986), 123–146; and Ann W. Ramsey, 'Flagellation and the French Counter-Reformation: Asceticism, Social Discipline, and the Evolution of a Penitential Culture', in *Asceticism*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (New York, 1995), 576–87.

while in France the pioneers are associated with another Genoese confraternity headquartered in Marseille.<sup>92</sup> First the Franciscans and then the Jesuits promoted the practice, both as a form of private devotion and as part of the spirituality of public confraternities. In Spain Easter week processions continued to be central, with the emphasis on christomimesis sometimes enhanced by additional rites connected to the feasts of the Discovery of the True Cross and the Exaltation of the True Cross.<sup>93</sup> The passion of Christ remains at the core of related devotions in the New World such as the shrine cult of El Señor de Wank'a near Cusco and the much-discussed 'Penitentes' of New Mexico.<sup>94</sup>

What can be concluded from this survey of the history of ascetic self-flagellation in the greater Roman and post-Roman world? Its ancient geography, insofar as this is known, centers on Syria and Italy, closely paralleling the core geography of analogous traditions in the medieval world. Is this a coincidence? Connections are difficult to document because there were no incentives for sophisticated monotheistic religions to acknowledge any borrowings from their polytheistic predecessors, and any cultural transmissions would naturally have been reinterpreted as traditional orthodox practices. Thus, in the Syrian Near East, self-flagellation emerges in Shi'ite Islam linked to mourning for Mohammed's grandson Husayn; in the Latin West, it reappears as a way to imitate Christ, first among Italian hermits, and later among lay flagellant companies.

Grass-roots origins for ascetic customs were actually quite common. Ancient religious practices involving sacred places, healing shrines, votive offerings, sacrifices, vigils, pilgrimages, penitential processions, and other rituals all found niches in later world religions. Perhaps self-flagellation should be added to this list. That possibility has broader consequences for the study of the medieval Latin Church. Scholars have traditionally interpreted medieval spirituality using a top-down model that envisions active clergy molding a more passive laity. The practice of self-flagellation, according to André Vauchez, was the 'most telling example' of this dynamic. In more recent decades, however, there has been much more emphasis on 'circularity', which, as Carlo Ginzberg describes it, postulates that 'between the culture of the dominant classes and that of the subordinate classes, there existed, in preindustrial Europe, a circular relationship composed of

<sup>92</sup> Vandermeersch, *La chair de la passion*, 116 and 225; Vandermeersch, 'Self Flagellation', 256.

<sup>93</sup> Vandermeersch, *La chair de la passion*, 17–19 and 218; Vandermeersch, 'Self Flagellation', 257–61.

<sup>94</sup> Michael J. Sallnow, 'Pilgrimage and Cultural Fracture in the Andes', in *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, ed. John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow (London, 1991), 137–153, esp. 144–45; J. Manuel Espinosa, 'The Origin of the Penitentes of New Mexico: Separating Fact from Fiction', *The Catholic Historical Review* 79 (1993), 454–77, esp. 456–59.

reciprocal influences which traveled from low to high as well as from high to low.<sup>95</sup> This perspective is being increasingly, and productively, applied to penitential practices in general.<sup>96</sup> If popular traditions and humble hermits did, in fact, play a role in the acceptance of self-flagellation as an approved ascetic practice, as the available evidence seems to suggest, then the model of religious development that emphasizes ‘circularity’ between high and low classes and cultures in the flow of practices and sensibilities receives further support.

<sup>95</sup> Ginzburg, ‘Preface to the English Edition’, in *The Cheese and the Worms*, xii.

<sup>96</sup> See Abigail Firey, ‘Introduction’, and Rob Meens, ‘Historiography of Early Medieval Penance’, in *New History of Penance*, ed. Firey, 1–18, esp. at 4, and 73–95, esp. at 88 and 92–93.