

## SAINTLY IMMOBILITY, THE GOUGED-OUT EYE, AND THE SEVERED BREAST: THE METAMORPHOSIS OF ST LUCY IN EARLY IBERIAN ART AND LITERATURE\*

**Andrew M. Beresford**

*Durham University*

[a.m.beresford@durham.ac.uk](mailto:a.m.beresford@durham.ac.uk)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9851-4592>

A commonplace of hagiographic construction is that saints evolve, and often in unpredictable ways. St George, for instance, was initially venerated as a megalomartyr, suffering four deaths and three resurrections, but as the result of a process of metamorphosis, he was transformed into a force of crusading prowess capable of vanquishing the enemies of Christendom. Grafted onto his martyrdom, the dragon episode, the most familiar aspect of his iconography, is not recorded before the eleventh century. We should not therefore be surprised that he has been viewed with suspicion, from the late fifth-century *Decretum Gelasianum* through to the eventual reclassification of his feast as an optional memorial (Dobschütz 1912: 3-13; Riches 2000). St Jerome, likewise, is commonly depicted with a lion and in the robes of a cardinal. While the former constitutes a borrowing from Androcles and the Lion, the latter builds on centuries of misunderstanding, with the office of cardinal priest, which had originally denoted a figure authorized to perform liturgical functions in a parish other than the one in which he had been ordained, transformed into a position between bishop and pope. Given that Jerome's hat, the *galerus ruber*, was not prescribed until 1245, while the red soutane was

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added in 1294, and the remainder of the costume in 1464, his depiction in art is anachronistic (Rice 1988; Beresford in preparation). Other saints, in contrast, become subject to more profound elements of instability. The legend of Quiricus and Julitta, for example, exists in two very different forms. In the earliest, Quiricus is characterized as a loquacious infant who vanquishes the Devil in debate before persuading his mother, Julitta, to embrace the path of martyrdom. Conversely, in later works, the polarity is inverted, as the focus of narrative attention falls on the torments to which Julitta is subjected. In some works, notably the *Durro Antependium*, the instability of characterization is such that Quiricus is envisioned both as a babe in arms and a mature adult. Far from problematic, audiences must have regarded this instability as a virtue, a conceptual unfixing capable of enabling the legend to adapt to changing social circumstances (Black 2007; Beresford 2023).

The list of saints whose cults evolve could easily be expanded, but a particularly thought-provoking case, which sheds light on the dissemination of hagiographic materials in Iberia, is that of St Lucy. In some artworks, which follow the sequential ordering of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, the most influential of the great medieval hagiographic compendia, Lucy is figured as a disciple of her illustrious Sicilian forebear, St Agatha, to whom she prays so as to solicit a cure for her mother's haemorrhage (Maggioni 1998: I, 49-52; Beresford 2010: 193-198; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 210-215). Having given away her inheritance to the poor, Lucy is denounced by her fiancé, who delivers her to the Consul, Paschasius, whom she engages in debate. On realizing that he will be unable to gain the upper hand, the Consul sentences Lucy to be gang-raped in a brothel, but when he attempts to have her dragged away (initially by men but thereafter by yokes of oxen) he finds that she is rooted to the spot. The episode, which constitutes the central point of conceptual interest (Réau 1958: 835-836; Santos-Bueso *et al.* 2014a), is followed by an attempt to have Lucy burned alive, but when this stratagem fails, one of his men stabs her in the throat. She thereafter remains alive long enough to receive the last rites before yielding up her soul.

Yet in the majority of early Iberian artworks, the emphasis of Lucy's legend is different. Depicted as a saint who was blinded before her vision was restored, her emblem, a pair of gouged-out eyes on a platter (or on top of a chalice), relates her to saints such as Agatha, who is represented by a pair of severed breasts on a dish, and Apollonia, whose teeth were pulled out with a pair of iron pincers. Although the torture is not mentioned in written sources, it plays on the etymology of Lucy's name, from *lux*, meaning *light* (Réau 1958: 833; Ortiz-Hidalgo 2021: 29), while relating her fate to that of a Nun

who, as we shall see, gouged out her eyes so as to avoid the sexual advances of a King. It becomes crucial accordingly to understand the reference to blinding and how the distinction between the branches of Lucy's legend can be approached in broader conceptual terms. The problem, however, is complicated by a third tradition in which the saint effectively becomes Agatha, suffering a forced mastectomy at the hands of her oppressors (Réau 1958: 836). Since this third branch, which appears to have been less widely circulated, complements the eye, which is a generic organ, with a reference to the breast, which is uniquely female, it can be related to the attempt to have the saint dragged away to a brothel. It plays thus on the broader significance of gender, inviting audiences to reflect on how the female body is sexualized and subjected to procedures of coercive subjugation.

The distinction between the branches of Lucy's legend invites consideration not just of how they combine and intersect, establishing a series of distinctively localized hagiographic traditions, but on the roles of art and literature. Although the two forms develop comparable narratives, counterpointing Lucy's development from disciple to martyr, they have seldom been discussed in tandem. In literature, Lucy is a fixed and immobile entity whose sexual integrity is protected by a miracle that roots her to the spot. She can be compared accordingly to saints such as Agnes, who, having been sentenced to suffer an identical fate, is protected by a gamut of sacred interventions (Beresford 2007; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: II, 80-86). Yet in the majority of artworks, the emphasis of Lucy's legend falls on vision and the faculty of sight (Cómez 1990; Santos-Bueso *et al.* 2014b; Santos-Bueso *et al.* 2014c). Depicted as a virgin martyr, with the generic palm of martyrdom in one hand and a reference to her passion in the other, Lucy stands partly as an individual, but also as a model of virginal innocence, and by extension, a refraction of the Virgin, and ultimately, of nurturing mother Ecclesia. Her eyes, restored by an act of divine intervention, are complemented by those on the platter, and as they gaze outwards disconcertingly towards the viewer, they play on questions of empathy and mimetic devotion, inviting observers to consider whether they would be prepared to emulate her example. Lucy could be regarded in this sense as two saints rather than one, with literature favouring her immobility, and art, her eyes. However, the third tradition, preserved in both art and literature, elides the distinction between the two. With Lucy transformed into her own role model, a new Agatha divested of the most quintessentially feminine aspect of her anatomy, she becomes a different type of saint, a mechanism for considering how identity is constructed through the body and how paradigms of gender can be destabilized by acts of

corporeal cruelty. It becomes crucial, therefore, to reflect on how her example offers insights into constructions of hagiographic selfhood and the distinction between different media.

### **The Immobile Saint**

One of the most notable paintings to adhere to the sequential ordering of the *Legenda aurea* is the *Retablo de Santa Lucía* produced by the **Master of Estamariú**. First identified by Chandler Rathfon Post (1941: 550-556), the artist is believed to have been active between 1360 and 1380 in a village near La Seu d'Urgell in the northernmost part of the Province of Lleida. His most well-known achievements are the *Retablo de San Vicente* and the *Retablo de la Virgen* from the Church of Santa María de Vilamur (Barcelona, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, inv. 015919-CJT; Bilbao, Museo de Bellas Artes, inv. 69/86, 69/87). In Post's eyes, the Master's works represent a «rude and countrified imitation» (1941: 551) of styles current in Catalonia, notably that of the Serras, which were themselves derived from thirteenth-century Italian antecedents. The paintings are conceived as designs in areas of largely unmodelled colours, with expanses of features and costumes reduced to virtually flat tones (Post 1930: 42-44; Gudiol/Alcolea i Blanch 1986: 66-67; Galilea Antón 1995: 46-57). The figures themselves are relieved against interior settings of smooth and brilliantly hued stretches of wall or conventionalized landscapes. Equally striking is a tendency to limit the number of protagonists so as to make patterns of juxtaposed colours in their forms and costumes more obvious, the treatment of hair, with wavy golden locks rendered by regular lines in pronounced highlights, and the depiction of ceilings, which are formulated by strong contrasts of light and dark. Post adduces, in view of this, that while the Estamariú Master «may have his shortcomings as a veracious draughtsman, he was an entirely self-conscious artist with a well defined theory of what painting should be and with a not inconceivable talent for putting his theory into practice» (1941: 551). More recently, Josep Gudiol and Santiago Alcolea i Blanch (1986: 67, no. 163) have linked the Master to Arnau Pintor (fl. 1357-1385), but as Pilar Silva Maroto (2023) recognizes, in the absence of a signature or commission documentation, the attribution remains uncertain.



Fig. 1. *St Lucy and Euthicia at the Tomb of St Agatha and the Vision of St Lucy*, from the *Retablo de Santa Lucia* by the Master of Estamariú, c. 1360-1380 (© Archivo Fotográfico Museo Nacional del Prado).

The Master of Estamariú's painting commences with a representation of Lucy and her mother, Euthicia, kneeling in prayer at the tomb of St Agatha (Fig. 1). According to the *Legenda aurea* (Maggioni 1998: I, 49-52), which was reworked into both Castilian and Catalan (Beresford 2010: 193-198; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 210-215), Euthicia had been suffering from a haemorrhage for four years, and since physicians had failed to stem the bleeding, Lucy (here identified by an oversized golden halo) urged her to pray at the tomb of St Agatha, who had been martyred in nearby Catania only a few years earlier. It thereby establishes a typological frame of reference, equating Euthicia with the woman with a haemorrhage in the New Testament while characterizing Lucy as an *ancilla Dei*, a figure who, like Agatha, serves as a conduit for divine power (Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48). Bedecked in robes of blue, Lucy and Euthicia evoke traditional representations of the Virgin. The latter's coif exudes a nun-like quality, characterizing her as a figure of piety, while an element of hierarchization is suggested by the golden thread inlaid into the former's garments. Euthicia's inner nature, counterpointed by the red dress beneath, is complemented by that of Lucy and the colour of Agatha's tomb, notably the columns on which it sits. The implication is that her bleeding, which, according to Leviticus 15:19-30, renders her ritually impure, is part of her female nature, but by soliciting the assistance of her daughter, who will soon face the prospect of rape, and Agatha, who suffered a forced mastectomy, she will be able to compensate for

the shortcomings of physicians by rendering herself clean and pure. Bonds of shared corporeality come thus to the forefront of the narrative, and since medievals believed that breastmilk was a form of transmuted blood, the painting could potentially be appraised in terms of the life-giving potential of the female body.

In the various medieval Iberian prose versions, Lucy falls asleep after her prayers and is visited by Agatha in a dream; Agatha then tells her that her faith has been rewarded and the ordeal is at an end (Beresford 2010: 193-194; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 210-211). In the *Retablo*, however, Lucy's eyes remain open, and so in place of a dream, an unreliable state conditioned by the hypnagogic vagaries of the flesh, she experiences a vision or *somnium coeleste*, a more reliable form of terrestrial/celestial interaction (Spearing 1976). Agatha, wearing the blood-red apparel of a martyr, but without her emblem, the severed breast, stands authoritatively on the right, her hand extended in blessing. As is the case of the literary tradition, which envisions her and Lucy as refractions of the same identity, they are depicted in almost identical terms. With lines of wavy golden hair parted in the centre, narrow eyebrows, and flawlessly pale countenances marked by touches of rouge, their appearance plays on the traditional *meollo/corteza* topos, with physical beauty serving as an external correlative of the inner beauty of the soul. The salient point is that just as Lucy imitates Agatha, and Agatha imitated Christ, those who contemplate the painting (especially young women) should look to their virtues and consider the path to salvation, incorporating themselves into the Agatha/Lucy typology by overlaying self onto other in an act of conscious mimetic imitation. The process extends outwards to the retinue that solemnizes Agatha's status. Replete with wings, the two outside figures are characterized as angels while those on the inside could be other female saints, their freshly idealized features and upright postures standing in contradistinction to Lucy's weariness and Euthicia's ailment. The dead are envisioned in this sense as being significantly more alive than the living, making it possible to characterize Lucy and her mother, as Paul Binski (1996) suggests, as members of the dead-to-be, beings trapped in a qualitatively inferior domain who have not yet negotiated the transformative threshold that death represents.

In the literary versions, Euthicia awakes from her dream and finds herself cured of her affliction; Lucy, in response, implores her to abandon her plans for a suitor and instead let her donate her inheritance to the poor (Beresford 2010: 194; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 211). The episode could potentially have been shaped as a discussion, but in its place, the *Retablo*

advances to a representation of Lucy, purse in hand, dispensing coins to an assembled gathering (Fig. 2). The repeated ceiling design suggests that the action unfolds in a nearby location, and as is the case of the literary accounts, from this point onwards Euthicia plays no further part in the narrative. Lucy, having removed her cloak, loses some of her association with the Virgin and stands instead as a second Agatha, her appearance all but indistinguishable from that of her forebear. In contrast to the first compartment, where her cuffs were marked by a black line, the artist adds a band of gold in this and subsequent representations, leaving patterns in the necklines of the saints as the only substantive difference between them. The purse in Lucy's hands is embroidered with pearls, and while this serves primarily as a reference to wealth, the status of pearls as symbols of salvation suggests that, by undertaking the action, she will progress more swiftly into the ranks of the elect.



Fig. 2. *St Lucy Disburses her Inheritance and is Brought before the Consul*, from the *Retablo de Santa Lucía* by the Master of Estamariú, c. 1360-1380 (© Archivo Fotográfico Museo Nacional del Prado).

The focus of composition falls thus on Lucy's charity, and although the figures with whom she engages have a respectable and well-groomed demeanour, the walking stick held by the dark-clad protagonist in front serves as a generic reference to disability, suggesting that, rather than intimate deceit, the artist has instead recycled characters from an existing repertoire. That said, a thought-provoking inclusion is the figure in red. His facial features, which are indistinguishable from those of Paschasius, who is depicted in the following panel, are complemented by an all-but-identical hat, marked in this

instance by a large transverse line. Although his inclusion could potentially be dismissed as coincidental, it seems most likely that, as is the case of other Iberian artworks, his interest is that of a furtive and untrustworthy eavesdropper (Beresford 2020: 180-182). He is characterized in this light as a force of weakness rather than authority, a devious and underhand figure who, concerned about the spread of Christianity, undermines his position in society by disguising himself (albeit unconvincingly) as one of the poor and needy.

In contrast to the Iberian prose versions, where Lucy's fiancé is duped into assisting her, his only role in the *Retablo* is to denounce her to Paschasius (Beresford 2010: 194; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 211). As he clasps the saint by her arms, exercising an illusory form of patriarchal control, his youthful gullibility is suggested by his conspicuously beardless chin while his elegant black jacket, inlaid with vibrant tones of red, symbolizes an iniquitous disposition. As it parts at his navel, almost like a set of curtains, it throws emphasis on his crotch and genital regions, hinting at the prospect of sexual coercion and the use/misuse of phallogocentric authority. In front of him, Paschasius, his status symbolized by his beard and the sword at his side, raises a finger in judgement, the redness of his cloak anticipating the bloodshed to come. He is accompanied by a brace of retainers, one of whom raises a hand in disbelief. As is the case of other Iberian artworks, the assembled antagonists are not depicted as Romans, but are instead medievalized, transported chronologically forwards and arrayed in contemporary attire so as to render the painting more relevant to a fourteenth-century audience.

Although the ebb and flow of the exchanges between Lucy and Paschasius would have been impossible to capture in visual form, the shaping of the encounter in the Iberian prose versions provides cues as to how the *Retablo* should be interpreted (Beresford 2010: 194-196; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 211-214). Lucy, having disobeyed her husband-to-be, is invited to reaffirm her loyalty by sacrificing to the pantheon of Roman gods. Since to do so would constitute apostasy, sullyng herself with the filth of idolatry, she refuses, ridiculing the arguments of her antagonist by transforming them into interrogatives that he is too stupid to understand. Having been bested by a teenage female adversary, Paschasius, the seasoned inquisitor, undermines his authority by resorting to threats and blunt imperatives. The most significant of these extends the notion of inversion, focusing on the assumption that since Lucy has given away her fortune, she has become a public woman (in other words, a common harlot) and so should be treated as such. To that end, he sentences her to be dragged away to a brothel so that her chastity, which constitutes the source of her power, can be taken by force (Beresford 2010:



1951; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 213). Lucy, in typical hagiographic fashion, responds with reference to Cartesian dualism, affirming that her body cannot be defiled if her soul is unwilling. Paschasius, accordingly, gives voice to a more ruthless plan, inviting the youths of the city to rape her until she dies (Beresford 2010: 195; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 213). It becomes possible as a result to consider the sexualization of torture and the assumption, made most forcibly by early feminist scholarship, that the fear of rape represents a force of coercive domination exercised by the patriarchy so as to perpetuate mechanisms of subjugation.



Fig. 3. *St Lucy Unable to be Moved by Men*, from the *Retablo de Santa Lucía* by the Master of Estamariú, c. 1360-1380 (© Archivo Fotográfico Museo Nacional del Prado).

In the Iberian prose versions, the debate between Lucy and Paschasius represents a key point of interest, occupying approximately forty percent of the narrative (Beresford 2010: 194-196; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 211-214). The *Retablo*, in contrast, lavishes attention on its outcome, depicting the endeavours of men (Fig. 3) and then oxen (Fig. 4) to drag Lucy away. The two episodes, which are the only ones not to have been subdivided, occupy the entire central register, and so constitute the defining feature of Lucy's cult. In the first, the saint (bound by wrists and legs) stands erect in the centre, gazing impassively outwards as Paschasius commands his men to move her. In contrast to the figure in blue, who has lost his footing, the grey-clad henchman to his left trails ropes over his shoulders while the others attempt to move her with their hands. Their wearily downcast faces, combined

with contorted body shapes, notably their legs, which overlap in a chaotically disorganized manner, serve as references to the futility of Paschasius's mandate and the evilness of his intent. A comparable situation is explored in the second compartment, which depicts men with sticks goading oxen in an attempt to move them. Although it may be that the artist experienced difficulty in scaling the animals, their diminutive size reinforces the impression of ineptitude. It may also be that since oxen are associated with Christ, the one true sacrifice, their depiction hints at a broader gamut of considerations, with the animals envisioned in effect as a force capable of guiding the saint on her journey (Ferguson 1954: 22; Metford 1983: 188; Murray/Murray 1998: 171-172; Couchman 2012: 153).



Fig. 4. *St Lucy Unable to be Moved by Oxen*, from the *Retablo de Santa Lucía* by the Master of Estamariú, c. 1360-1380 (© Archivo Fotográfico Museo Nacional del Prado).

The crucial point is that, in each instance, the power of the Holy Spirit is such that it roots Lucy to the spot. An obvious parallel is with Agatha, who is characterized throughout her legend as a rock-like edifice that cannot be shattered or ground down (Beresford 2010: 185-190; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: II, 165-172). Most telling, however, is a relationship to relic miracles, notably that of St Cuthbert, whose cadaver came to rest in Durham, where, after more than a century of peregrinations, it became too heavy to move (Whitehead 2020). Conforming in this sense to her role as a member of the dead-to-be, Lucy serves as a type of living relic, a conduit through which the power of the divine is able to influence the ebb and flow of the terrestrial domain. It is possibly for this reason that the artist, simplifying the approach adopted by Voragine, resolved to reduce the number of men and oxen. The

key point is that since the number four tends to connote impressions of order, stability, and justice, Lucy's immobility should be appraised as part of a divinely sanctioned plan capable of emphasizing the power of Christianity while exposing that of Rome as an illusion.



Fig. 5. *St Lucy Burned and Stabbed in the Neck*, from the *Retablo de Santa Lucía* by the Master of Estamariú, c. 1360-1380 (© Archivo Fotográfico Museo Nacional del Prado).

In the Iberian prose versions, Paschasius, frustrated at the loss of reputation, attempts to have Lucy moved with spells and oil (Beresford 2010: 196; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 213-214), but when these actions fail, he has a fire lit beneath her and her head doused in flammable properties (Fig. 5). Lucy, belittling his efforts, remains resilient, affirming that her martyrdom will take away fear from the devout and the voice of happiness from those who oppose them. Having been depicted in previous compartments with an oversized sword of office suspended from a golden girdle, the Consul now grips a flimsy baton, his phallogentric power and authority eroded almost to the point of impotence. The vent between his legs also becomes much darker, suggesting that, as is the case of the unnamed fiancé, the colours black and red serve as mnemonics for identifying a corrupt and iniquitous nature. Lucy, in contrast, remains all but unchanged, a fixed point in the celestial/terrestrial hierarchy. In fact, the only substantive difference between this and the previous paintings is that her legs are now unbound, intimating that, far from a callous and inhuman torment, she embraces the fire as a mechanism for progressing her soul heavenward. Additional evidence of its duality is suggested by its curiously symmetrical form, which recalls that of a glory or

celestial aureole, a device normally deployed for evoking an impression of flux between this world and the next.

In response to Lucy's resilience, one of Paschasius's henchmen plunges a dagger into her throat. Although even this action fails (at least in the short term) to put an end to her life, it suggests that since the Consul is no longer able to control his subjects, the power of Rome will shortly be at an end. Serving in part as a mechanism for alluding to Lucy's verbal dexterity, the knife pits violence against intellect in a futile attempt to silence her and thereby deny her subjectivity. Its most important function, however, is to recall the brothel episode, counterpointing the relationship between phallic penetration and the power of the State to subject victims to the prospect of coercive, sexualized violence. Indeed, as the blood drips down onto Lucy's pale skin from the gash in her throat, audiences are reminded not only of the prospect of a ruptured hymen, but of the fact that the colours red and white are indicative of Communion and the mark of the New Covenant. She becomes able in this way to preserve her virginity while engaging in a form of symbolic consumption, solemnizing her status as an immaculate *sponsa Christi*.

The figure who stabs Lucy occupies a curious position in the painting. His garments, combined with the specific shape and form of his beard, characterize him as an adjunct of Paschasius. Even his shoes and the rows of buttons along the front and sleeves of his jacket are the same. Yet his wavy golden locks, parted in the centre, relate him to Lucy, suggesting that, far from a casual or unremarkable protagonist, his identity is imbricated with that of both torturer and victim. He is envisioned accordingly as an essential part of the saint's hagiographic becoming, and ultimately, a part of her, a mechanism for transcending the terrestrial domain and accessing the delights of heaven. Although mortally wounded, Lucy does not die immediately, but as is the case of the brothel episode, remains rooted to the spot. The crucial point, which would by no means have been lost on observers, concerns the importance of the viaticum and the observance of rites of passage. Having resisted her antagonist, Lucy has revealed strength of character and independence of spirit, but despite her virtues, she remains dependent on the male-dominated clergy. To that end, she adopts a posture of pious reverence, kneeling to receive Communion from the hands of a tonsured priest (Fig. 6). Behind him, a tightly packed group of observers (including a figure in red, whose depiction vaguely recalls that of the man who stabbed her) contemplate her example with awe and reverence, encouraging extradiegetic audiences to do the same. The moment is solemnized by the tonsured novices on the right, their candles reiterating the etymology of Lucy's name as well as the Consul's baton of

office. The resultant impression is one of serene calmness, and as the blood from the saint's throat leaches outwards in the direction of the chalice, we are reminded not only of Euthicia's uncontrollable haemorrhage, but of the reciprocal relationship between Lucy and Christ. Indeed, just as Christ now enters Lucy in the form of Communion, Lucy's body will soon physically enter the Church in her sarcophagus, assuming a fixed and immobile position in the celestial hierarchy.



Fig. 6. *St Lucy Receives the Last Rites and is Laid in a Tomb*, from the *Retablo de Santa Lucía* by the Master of Estamariú, c. 1360-1380 (© Archivo Fotográfico Museo Nacional del Prado).

Confirmation of Lucy's status is offered by the final section, in which she is solemnly laid to rest. The similarity of her sarcophagus to the one that she visited with her mother produces an element of circularity, intimating that she has become the new Agatha, a virginal bride of Christ and member of the celestial elect. The wound in her throat, although significant enough to end her life, has barely made a stain on her neckline or dress. The result is that she seems very much at peace, and as the figures at each end lower her carefully downwards, the painting plays on the relationship between sleep and death, envisioning her travails as little more than a brief but necessary interlude on the pathway towards celestial fixity. The priest in the centre, recognizable as the one who administered the last rites, solemnizes her passing by reading from a stylized prayerbook while extending his hand in blessing. Immediately in front of him, a tonsured novice (again recognizable from before) adds solemnity to the occasion with a long-handled cross. The painting is completed by the group of mourners on the left. The protagonist in the nun's coif and habit could potentially be Euthicia, and while the painting in this

way establishes an element of circularity, a notable omission is the fate of Paschasius, who, according to the medieval prose versions, was arrested and decapitated on charges of theft (Beresford 2010: 196; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 214). The emphasis falls as a result on questions of reward rather than punishment, figuring Lucy as the substance on which the Church is founded. She serves in this sense as a focalizing nucleus for acts of identification, and ultimately, emulation, a fixed point in the firmament around which like-minded souls are invited to coalesce.

### **The Gouged-Out Eye and the Severed Breast**

Although the depiction of Lucy is selective, with some aspects of her passion either omitted or adjudged to be unsuitable, the *Retablo* closely adheres to the sequential ordering of the *Legenda aurea* and its Iberian reworkings. Inasmuch as Lucy is inspired by Agatha, the painting teaches its audience about the notion of community and the power of Christian bonds, and given that she is murdered for disbursing her inheritance, it inculcates a clear message concerning the value of charity and the importance of caring for the poor. Lucy could to some extent be interpreted as a mischievous or rebellious figure who undermines patriarchal hegemony by subverting the desires of her fiancé and then the Consul. Yet the fact that she does so to preserve her status as an obedient *sponsa Christi* merely sets one form of subjugation against another. As she is progressively assaulted by men and then yokes of oxen, the power of the divine, which flows through her because of her corporeal integrity, roots her to the spot. She is thereafter burned by fire and stabbed in the neck, and as she embraces her torments with patience and humility, she comes ever closer to solemnizing her union with the celestial lover. Her dutiful nature is underlined most eloquently by the last of the six compartments where, with blood spurting from the wound in her throat, she kneels to receive Communion from the hands of a priest. She is placed tenderly thereafter in the tomb, where, as is the case with Agatha, she becomes a fixed point of devotional orthodoxy. Her journey in this sense is from periphery to centre rather than centre to periphery, and having knelt outside that of Agatha at the start of the narrative, her sarcophagus doubles up in the mind of the observer as a type of nuptial bed, setting the seal on a strand of imagery in which the power of the State and the dominion of the phallus have been transmuted throughout into forms of sexually coercive violence.

In other works of art, the emphasis of composition is different. In the *Martirio de Santa Lucía* from the Parochial Church of Santa Llúcia de Mur, the

roles of Agatha, Euthicia, and the fiancé are eliminated as the focus of narrative attention falls more specifically on the torments to which Lucy is subjected. Although it may be, as we shall see, that some sections have been lost, the work as it stands is not meaningfully contextualized and has no introduction or conclusion. In the first of the four compartments Lucy stands before a medieval king, holding one of her eyes on a platter while pointing with her finger towards an opened, bleeding socket, a torture not mentioned in the *Legenda aurea* and it reworkings or explored by the Master of Estamariú. In the second, likewise, she appears suspended on a pole, suffering at the hands of a brace of henchmen, who twist ropes around her breasts, causing them to bleed profusely as they tear into her flesh. In the third compartment, in contrast, Lucy adopts a more recognizable posture, standing upright while two of Paschasius's men, having tied ropes around her legs, attempt to drag her away to a brothel. The last of the four is equally familiar, depicting a soldier holding a hand over the saint's mouth as he slashes her throat with a sword. In the absence of a reference to communion, burial, or the final act of solemnization, the fate meted out to Lucy seems so dissimilar in this respect that audiences might be forgiven for thinking that it is that of a different saint. Yet the fact that her name is inscribed in three of the four compartments militates against precipitous judgement, encouraging viewers to embrace the figure as Lucy, but not as they necessarily know her. It becomes important accordingly to discuss the work's origin and content, and to consider the reasons for such a spectacular divergence.

Held at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya in Barcelona, the *Martirio de Santa Lucía* dates from between 1275 and 1315, some 42 to 110 years before the *Retablo*, but long after the *Legenda aurea*. Painted in egg tempera on boards, which have long since become separated, the work was commissioned for the Church of Santa Llúcia de Mur in the province of Alt Pirineu i Aran, approximately 116 kilometres (72 miles) to the south west of Estamariú. In view of their diminutive size, with each board measuring 68 cm in length by 25 cm in width, it is possible that they once formed part of a larger composition, but how it would have been constituted and what it might have contained are questions that are far from certain. In contextual terms, the painting belongs to a small but important group of protogothic works, the survival of which has often been described as miraculous (Gudiol/Alcolea i Blanch 1986: 25). Produced in the high Pyrenees, the paintings are primitive in character, and combine elements of stylistic archaism with traditional Romanesque iconography, albeit with a tendency towards greater expressiveness in the depiction of protagonists. It may be in this respect that they were

influenced by contact with itinerant artists from elsewhere, most likely north of the Pyrenees rather than to the South or the West.

A striking stylistic feature of the *Martirio* is the use of alternating background colours rather than incised or tooled gold, which became the dominant feature of Catalan and Aragonese painting in the fourteenth century. The four compartments, likewise, are devoid of any significant background detail, avoiding engagement with natural elements such as trees and flowers, or indeed, man-made objects or aspects of architecture (Post 1930). The major exception is the throne in the upper-left-hand compartment, which, by emphasizing the pre-eminence of kingly authority, functions as a reference to the power of the State. The result, again, is a degree of decontextualization and a sense of universalization. Far from distant events, the torments to which Lucy is subjected have been medievalized and transported chronologically forwards into the historical present, becoming more immediate and relevant to members of the devout, who are invited not just to think of her as one of their number, but to overlay their identities onto hers in a process of conscious mimetic identification. It becomes important accordingly to consider how the *Martirio* relates to the sequential progression of the *Legenda aurea* and its reworkings, and to reflect on the reasons why, even on the basis of the most fleeting of glances, it is shaped in such strikingly dissimilar terms.



Fig. 7. *St Lucy Presents her Eye to the King on a Platter*, from the *Martirio de Santa Lucia*, c. 1275-1315 (© Andrew M. Beresford).



The first of the four compartments explores the dominant motif associated with Lucy, representing her with a gouged-out eye on a platter (Fig. 7). Although the peninsular versions derived from Voragine make no reference to this torture, it is curious that the prefatory discussion of etymology, which is preserved uniquely in Castilian, focuses on questions of sight and vision, cementing Lucy's traditional position as patron saint of the blind (Beresford 2010: 193; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 210). The horizon of expectation established by these words is such that audiences are led to expect that the account that follows will focus on issues related to vision, and to some extent, they are proven right. When Lucy, for instance, asks permission to disburse her fortune to the poor, her mother responds by making reference to the need to cover her eyes (Beresford 2010: 193; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: I, 211 n 11). Equally significant are the actions of her fiancé, who, believing that he stands to gain from her activity, is duped into helping her, demonstrating that he is blind to the world around him. Yet with the exception of Paschasius, who reveals that he is equally blind to Lucy's virtues, the narrative that follows fails to build on this opening and is instead dominated, as is the case of the *Retablo*, by the question of mobility. The result is that while Lucy becomes a very different saint, Voragine's introduction defeats the expectations of its target audience, standing in effect as a preface without a volume.

The majority of Iberian portraits tell a very different story. Depicted as a figure with a pair of gouged-out eyes on a platter (or occasionally in a chalice), Lucy stands as a metonymic representation of the experience to which she was subjected (Capdevila 1949; Barbón García/Álvarez Suárez 2003; Perucho González *et al.* 2014). She can be compared accordingly to saints such as Apollonia, who is identified by a tooth extracted by a pair of long-handled pincers, but most notably by Agatha, whose emblem (a pair of severed breasts on a platter) counterpoints her status as patron saint of wet-nurses and those suffering from diseases of the breast. The assumption, which is not unreasonable on the part of the observer, is that just as Agatha's breasts were severed as part of the struggle against the tyranny of Rome, Lucy must have suffered a comparable fate, losing her eyes at the hands of Paschasius or one of his henchmen. The problem, however, is that in contrast to Agatha's forced mastectomy, which is often represented in brutal terms (a later Castilian example being the painting attributed to Gaspar de Palencia in the Museo de Bellas Artes in Bilbao) Lucy is not once depicted in the process of being blinded (Plasencia 1932: 25; Lasterra 1969: 86). A further potential problem is the possibility for misidentification, for as various critics have noted, Agatha's breasts were often mistaken for loaves of bread, leading to a situation

in which, rather bizarrely, she also became patron saint of bakers (Beresford 2010). It becomes important in view of this to disentangle the various threads of the legend and to resist the temptation to make aprioristic assumptions.

Uniquely among representations of Lucy, she is not in this instance depicted as a passive victim of torture (a figure whose eyes have been forcibly gouged out) but as one who actively gouges out her own eye and presents it on a platter to the King. This distinction may seem like a relatively small one, and potentially a product of the process of medievalization that dominates the painting, but since the emphasis of the compartment falls on disbelief rather than coercion, it is one that becomes important to explore. The most likely interpretation is that the King, desiring to possess Lucy on account of the beauty of her eyes, unwittingly sets off a chain of events in which one of them is presented to him thereafter as a gift. Lucy then signals with a finger to indicate what she has done and why, and as the eyes of the audience alight on a bloody, vacant orifice, we are offered an oozing, abject reminder of the horror of the body's interior and the drip-by-drip voiding of its concealed inner essence (Kristeva 1982; Binski 1996; Merback 1999). The King, who himself looks outwards, meets the gaze of the soldier who escorts Lucy with an air of unease and pregnant self-perception. Rather than display the haughty arrogance of a Roman inquisitor, he seems concerned at the outcome of events. The soldier, who gingerly escorts Lucy, simultaneously hands over a strange, red, herring-bone-like weapon, presumably the implement that she used to gouge out the eye from its socket. His facial expression seems not to categorize him as a jailer or executioner, but as a concerned and sympathetic third party. The painting functions in this respect almost like a hall of mirrors: just as Lucy and the soldier look at the King, the King looks back. Yet the eye on the platter also seems to continue its operation, looking outwards from the painting to gaze upon the beholder. The process is completed by the extradiegetic audience, which, by observing the complexity of the interaction between the protagonists, becomes absorbed into the violence and the pathos of the unfolding narrative.

Most likely in this respect is that the painting was influenced by a rival tradition, one that although familiar to scholars of literature, has often been overlooked. In this narrative, a virtuous woman, generally identified as a Nun, gouges out her eyes and presents them to a King rather than acquiesce to his lascivious advances. The tale, which circulated independently of the Lucy tradition, but has sometimes been read as product of it (with the Nun standing as a cipher for the saint) underwent various transformations in its circulation throughout Europe and was popular with believers. The text, as Ángel González Palencia (1942) recognizes, has a long history, and can be

traced ultimately to the *Thousand and One Nights*. In the most well-known Iberian version, a Nun gouges out her eyes and presents them to a King so as to punish him for his lasciviousness (Lacarra 1999: 309; Beresford 2016). The King thereafter feels guilty and undertakes penance for his wicked desires while the Nun awakes the following day to find that she has eyes that are more beautiful and radiant than those that she had had before. In view of the fact that Lucy's eyes are subsequently restored, it seems likely that this tradition, rather than Voragine or the traditional visual representation of the saint, has somehow influenced the painting. Striking in this respect is that, despite the fact that she is labelled in the upper margin as «Santa Lucía», the protagonist who stands below is not clearly identified by a halo. Conversely, in the compartment on the lower left her halo is given in red, while in the right-hand panel, its redness is complemented by white dots, echoing the design of the frame while recalling the salvific value of the Eucharist. Although it may be that the artist was somehow attempting to counterpoint Lucy's growth as a saint by making her halo more visible as she develops, it seems most likely that she has here become subject to a strange and potentially localized act of conflation, with the representation of the gouged-out eye addressing the lacuna produced by the *Legenda aurea* and its reworkings and then perpetuated thereafter by artists such as the Master of Estamariú.



Fig. 8. *St Lucy Suffers a Forced Mastectomy*, from the *Martirio de Santa Lucía*, c. 1275-1315 (© Andrew M. Beresford).

The question of conflation becomes all the more tantalizing in relation to the second compartment, which depicts a brace of henchmen in the process of torturing, and potentially severing, Lucy's breasts, an episode that, as is the case of the previous encounter, is not discussed by Voragine or developed in comparable terms in other Iberian artworks (Fig. 8). In the broader hagiographic tradition, the breast is a prominent feature, and amongst others, Theodisia of Tyre, Encratia, Victoria, Reparata, Dorothy, Barbara, and Sophia are all compelled to suffer the indignity of a forced mastectomy (Yalom 1997; Wolf 1999; Beresford 2010). What appears to have happened in this instance, however, is a second act of conflation, with Lucy becoming subject to the fate meted out to her forebear, Agatha, whose breasts were twisted with cords before being severed with a knife (Beresford 2010: 187; Garcia Sempere *et al.* 2022-2023: II, 169). Although the crudeness of the artist's technique (particularly the rigidity of the ropes and the absence of a blade) leaves room for doubt, it seems most likely that Lucy has not simply attempted to emulate Agatha, but has effectively become her. The gritted teeth of the executioner on the left even serve as a reference to the perverted psychosexual desires of Quintianus, who, unable to possess Agatha, resolves instead to mutilate the quintessence of her femininity. The conflation of the two saints is understandable: Lucy, as we have seen, is inspired by Agatha and decides to pray at her tomb; Agatha then appears to her and puts an end to her mother's suffering. Her feast is inseparable in this sense from that of Lucy and in various paintings the saints are paired, notably in the predellas of the medieval altarpiece where they serve as stylized representations of the obedient *sponsa Christi*. An additional correspondence is the development of parallel iconographic traditions, with Lucy bearing a pair of gouged-out eyes on a platter, and Agatha, a pair of severed breasts. The saints are united in this respect not just by national origin and the question of implacable female resilience, but by the function of the body as a signifying system that continues to operate even when its borders have been shattered and transgressed.

Although the strength of the relationship between Agatha and Lucy explains why they are paired, it does not explain why Lucy, who is again identified by a written inscription, has been transformed into a second Agatha. In her analysis, Marisa Melero-Moneo (2005: 81) comments on the relationship between the two extant panels, considering whether they formed part of a joint altarpiece, with those on the left representing Lucy, and those on the right, her illustrious Sicilian forebear. The problem, however, is that while the inscription, which has not been overpainted, identifies the figure as Lucy, the compartment beneath (as Melero-Moneo recognizes) depicts the fate meted out to Lucy rather

than Agatha. She adduces in view of this that there must have been an error in the identification and selection of the episode or that the painting was inspired by a narrative (as yet unknown) that differed significantly from that of the *Legenda aurea* and its reworkings. Given that a previously unrecognized variant of the same motif appears in the *Cobles fetes en laor de la beneyta senta Lucia*, an early sixteenth-century poem included by the Valencian poet, Miquel Ortigues, in his *Cançoner sagrat de vides de sants*, the most likely possibility is the latter (Massó/Foulché-Delbosc 1912: 317-322). It becomes important, in view of this, to consider the possibility of a hybrid local tradition.

As is the case of the *Martirio de Santa Lucia*, Ortigues's *Cobles* are arrestingly decontextualized. In place of the prefatory discussion of etymology and the account of the miracle at Agatha's tomb, the poem is shaped in terms of the opposition between the *senyor del cel*, to whom Lucy pledges her undying loyalty, and the *senyor infel*, whom she vigorously rejects. In an attempt to care for the poor and needy, Lucy persuades her mother, who remains unnamed, to allow her to disburse her inheritance. In a departure from tradition, the poem identifies this action, rather than Agatha's thaumaturgic prowess, as the catalyst that ensures her mother's return to health: «tanta fon vostra virtut / que la digna mare vostra / atenygué per vós salut» (Massó/Foulché-Delbosc 1912: lines 38-40). Although the specific nature of the ailment is not identified, the composition succeeds in eliminating Agatha's role and instead envisioning Lucy as a conduit for divine power. Lucy's fiancé, on realizing that he has been duped, denounces her to an unnamed Judge, who, having accused her of being a Christian, invites her, as is the case of the *Legenda aurea* and its reworkings, to reaffirm her loyalty by venerating the pantheon of Roman gods. When she refuses and thereafter vanquishes him in debate, he sentences her to be gang-raped in a brothel, but despite the best efforts of men and oxen, she remains rooted to the spot. The Judge then orders Lucy to be burned, but when the stratagem fails and his dejection becomes apparent, those gathered resolve to assist him by wounding her breasts with a knife:

La gent, per engraciar se  
del maligne president,  
vent aquell molt congoxar se  
de vos, verge tan prudent,  
estimant que vos, beneyta,  
los volieu fer despits,  
hun coltell la gent maleyta  
vos ficaren per los pits.

(Massó/Foulché-Delbosc 1912: lines 101-108)

The ambiguity of the text at this point is such that it becomes difficult, as is the case of the *Martirio*, to be certain whether Lucy's breasts are amputated or merely mutilated. An issue that is clear, however, is that, in contrast to the version of events outlined in the *Legenda aurea* and the *Retablo de Santa Lucía*, which focus on how the saint is wounded in the throat, the episode serves in this instance as her definitive *coup de grâce*. Lucy may well be identified thereafter as the patron saint of sight («lum de la vista», line 132), but since the poem makes no reference to the act of blinding, she is characterized in effect as a second Agatha, a figure whose breast is conceptualized as the defining aspect of her martyrdom.

Although the connection between the *Martirio* and the *Cobles* could be dismissed as coincidental, it is striking that comparable examples were produced elsewhere. Of particular note is a fragmentary altarpiece held at the Diocesan Museum in Lleida, which, as Chandler Rathfon Post recognizes, is now in a rather «lamentable state of deterioration» (1935: 516). Executed by the Master of Albatárrech at some point during the first third of the fifteenth century, the work consists of three extant narrative panels (Gudiol/Alcolea i Blanch 1986: 113, n.º 344, fig. 598). In the pinnacle, Lucy, dressed in robes of virginal white, stands on the right while men and yokes of oxen attempt to drag her away to a brothel. The chief interest, however, is in the compartments beneath. On the left-hand side, Lucy, having been stripped to the waist, adopts a posture of pious reverence while a man (whose face has been lost) plunges a dagger into her breast. Conversely, on the right, she kneels to receive the Eucharist from the hand of a tonsured cleric. Since the composition dispenses with the reference to Lucy's throat and instead presents the attack on her breast as the definitive aspect of her martyrdom, it becomes possible to posit the existence of a tradition of representation in which the saint, rather than conform to her conventional role as patron of sight, is envisioned instead as a second Agatha, a figure whose breasts were either mutilated or severed. Equally significant is that since the tradition appears to have gained particular popularity in the Catalan-speaking lands of the East, it could be regarded as the product of a localized and highly idiosyncratic form of veneration.



Fig. 9. *St Lucy Bound with Ropes*, from the *Martirio de Santa Lucia*, c. 1275-1315  
(© Andrew M. Beresford).

The order in which the compartments of the *Martirio* should be read is complicated by the image of Lucy bound with ropes (Fig. 9). For some critics, notably Melero-Moneo (2005: 81), the most logical sense of narrative progression would be to read from top to bottom and then from left to right, with the binding functioning as the second phase of a four-part passion sequence. This reading is not without merit, particularly as other works are arranged in this way. Yet by reading from left to right and then top to bottom, as is the case of the *Retablo*, it becomes possible to generate a more coherent sense of narrative progression. A key point concerns the traditional sequential development of Lucy's legend and the positioning of the binding episode as the climactic stage of her encounter with the Consul. In Voragine's account, Paschasius, as we have seen, threatens Lucy with a range of ordeals, encouraging men and then yokes of oxen to drag her away to a brothel. He then, in frustration, torments her with fire before witnessing her being stabbed in the throat (Fig. 10). It stands to reason that, unless the artist intended to produce a deliberate anti-climax, there would be no logical scope for locating the torture inflicted on Lucy's breast after the depiction of her binding. A second and perhaps more compelling reason can be adduced from a comparison with Agatha, whose breasts are restored, and the tale of the Nun, who wakes to find that her eyes are clearer and more radiant than those that she had had

before. Lucy, likewise, becomes subject to an act of glorious restoration, but in her case the miracle is twofold. Having gouged out her eye in the first compartment, she stares directly outwards towards the observer during the breast mutilation episode with eyes that have been restored. She then, having been rewarded in the third compartment with breasts that are more buxom than those that she had had before, is bound with ropes so that she can be dragged away to a brothel. The emphasis of the painting falls thus not just on torture, but on the power of the divine to render the body of the saint (and, by extension, that of the observer) hale and whole once more. The only exception is the final compartment, where a soldier definitely silences her by covering her mouth and slashing her throat, a twofold denial of her rhetorical and intellectual supremacy.



Fig. 10. *A Soldier Slashes Lucy's Throat*, from the *Martirio de Santa Lucía*, c. 1275-1315  
(© Andrew M. Beresford).

The fact that the painting does not include acts of miraculous restoration could also indicate that it is incomplete. In its present form, the *Martirio* consists of four compartments. These alternate in their use of colour in a manner consistent with other protogothic works, with red backgrounds bordered by grey in the first and final episodes, and grey backgrounds bordered by brownish yellow in the second and third. The result is a strident use of diagonals that, in addition to establishing an element of symmetry and proportion,



serves to enhance the mood of narrative progression. An additional element of structure is produced by the form of Lucy's dress, which is echoed by that of the executioners in the two central compartments. Although this detail could potentially be attributed to a limited palette or repertoire, it succeeds in counterpointing the complexity of the relationship between the saint and her executioners. The two parties, which rely on each other to achieve their objectives, become locked into a type of symbiosis, with Lucy drawing on the power of the State so as to progress her soul heavenward, and the State offering a public manifestation of its strength through the display of judicial authority. It becomes difficult in this respect to maintain a distinction between the opposing dichotomies of subject/object and self/other. The executioners, despite standing in diametrical opposition to all that is decent and normative, become the mechanism through which Lucy is able to become a saint. Lucy, in turn, stands partly as a unique and distinctive individual, but also as the product of a process of transformation in which her ontological particularity is elided by physical contact. It becomes possible as a result to appraise her antagonists as a functionally integral aspect of her inner desires and aspirations.

The corollary is that it becomes difficult to see how the four extant images could have been accompanied by additional compartments. Since the episode with Lucy's eyes is given first, it is doubtful that the left- and right-hand panels would have been separated, as is the case elsewhere, by a portrait of the saint with her eyes on a platter. Alternatively, since Lucy has effectively become Agatha, a comparable argument could be made in relation to her breasts, which, as we have seen, are restored in the third compartment. The common denominator is that the miracles to which Lucy is subjected are implicit rather than explicit, and so by avoiding a conceptually pointless series of repetitions, the artist succeeds in advancing a more lucid and memorable treatment of her fate. Two equally important considerations are that while the legend does not contain a more iconographically significant episode, the use of alternating colours based around a diagonal pattern would not have permitted a single panel with two images to be located between them. It therefore seems most likely that the painting has been preserved in its original form, or rather less plausibly, that the two extant panels would have been separated by two additional panels, each containing two episodes. The topics that they might have contained is a matter of speculation, but if they did exist, the key episodes that are not developed elsewhere are the disbursal of Lucy's dowry, which would have entailed the need to introduce her mother and fiancé, and the debate with Paschasius, which, as we have seen, cannot

easily be rendered in visual form. Conversely, since the roles of Lucy and Agatha have been conflated, it is unlikely that any additional narrative scenes would have engaged with the events of the vision and the cure for Euthicia's haemorrhage.

The *Martirio* in this way offers a unique insight into the richness of the cult of St Lucy. The King, having objectified the saint through the power of the scopoc drive, experiences a form of libidinal enjoyment by transforming an innocent *sponsa Christi* into a sexualized plaything, a sparkly-eyed figure of lust. Lucy, in response, rejects the imposition of an unwarranted stereotype and instead sets his befouling gaze against that of Christ, who sees beyond the surface to the beauty that lies within. By opting to pluck out an eye and present it to the King on a platter, the saint denies the power of earthly vision, switching from passive to active by transforming the fantasy object into an empty and abject placeholder. It becomes possible as a result to read the encounter in Lacanian terms as a transition from the Imaginary to the Real (Homer 2005). Yet of greater significance is that her actions, although violent, are in accordance with the edicts of the New Testament, notably Matthew 5:29, which advises believers to tear out their eyes rather than see their bodies cast down into hell. They also accord with primitive superstitions such as the evil eye, which is here absorbed through a process of syncretism.

The result is paradoxical: while the loss of an eye renders Lucy ugly in the eyes of the King, but more beautiful in the eyes of the celestial bridegroom, the extradiegetic viewer admires Lucy's resilience but recoils from the horror of the empty socket, which, as a rupture in the topography of the body, invites the prospect of its liquescent interior spilling out before our eyes (Merback 1999: 113). Our vision in this sense combines admiration with nausea, and abject horror with an appreciation of the saint's ineluctable exemplarity. The process continues, albeit at a more specifically gendered level, in relation to the breast, which, as a uniquely female organ, establishes a more precise form of identification, and then the binding, which, as we have seen, focuses the attentions of the audience on Lucy's corporeal integrity. It then at last establishes an element of circularity by envisioning her throat as a generic manifestation of the ability to articulate resistance. The corollary is that, as a universal human figure as well as an everywoman, Lucy's reaction anticipates idealized fantasies of Christian service, encouraging viewers, male and female alike, to superimpose themselves upon her through a process of conscious displacement, an empathic awareness of the status of the human body and the sentient experience of suffering and pain. The eye, the breast, the vagina, and the throat are not just in this sense personal organs, but ones

become the collective property of all Christian souls, mechanisms for rising above the temptations of the world and instead focusing on a higher spiritual truth, the ultimate apophasis that is union with Christ.

Yet perhaps the external viewer sees further than that. Given that the *Martirio* is both specific and universal, envisioning Lucy and Paschasius in the guise of a medieval lady and a medieval king, it becomes possible to appraise its significance in broader conceptual terms. With the Church commonly depicted in the Middle Ages as a beautiful young woman (nurturing mother Ecclesia) it may be that the encounter was designed to be interpreted as an allegory of the clash between spiritual truth and worldly dominion, or Church and State. The important point is that while Lucy (or Ecclesia) may feel compelled to blind herself in order to maintain her purity, it is not she but the King, the State, who is blind, a figure unable to perceive the harm produced by his actions, or indeed, the reality of the entity before him. He stands accordingly as an embodiment of the allegorical figure of Synagoga, which, as Ecclesia's traditional iconographic antithesis, is most commonly depicted with a blindfold (Beresford 2016: 12-14). The relationship between Church and State is further strengthened by the forced mastectomy, which, by relating the blood from Christ's wounds to the milk from Mary's breast, alludes to the iconography of the Double Intercession and the notion of breastmilk as spiritual dogma. The most obvious testament to its success is the characterization of figures such as Thomas Aquinas, who, in a reading added to the most accomplished of the various Castilian reworkings of Voragine, is described as one who was «criado por las tetas de la dotrina de la iglesia e enseñado por la luz de la sabiduría divina» (Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS 780, fol. 147v).

The implication is that although kings may govern, the blood of the innocent must occasionally be shed in order to rid them of folly and return them to the path of righteousness. This more universal dimension transforms the *Martirio* into a comment on the relationship between individuals, the use and misuse of power, and the education of the ignorant; and it is perhaps for this reason that the King, although present in the initial compartment, disappears thereafter from the narrative as the saint is subjected to a gamut of additional torments. It follows in view of this that blindness is not just a convenient word, but a signifier capable of censuring those who oppose the authority of Lucy, and ultimately, the Church. It serves in this sense as a mechanism for compelling viewers to consider whether they too are blind, or whether their eyes remain truly open as they conduct themselves in the world. The evolution of St Lucy should be appraised thus not just as a curiously idiosyncratic

quirk of devotion, but as an illustration of the complexity of medieval hagiography and its implications for the study of identity more broadly. It shows in particular that we should be wary of focusing on simplistic synchronic aspects of production, or indeed, representations of saints that are confined exclusively either to art or to literature. On the contrary, to gain a full and proper impression of the surprising and often contradictory nature of a saint's overall hagiographic trajectory, it becomes important to address broader diachronic questions of evolution while resisting the temptation to condone the modern tendency towards the over-compartmentalization of research by discussing either art or literature in a critical vacuum. It calls, in short, for the adoption of an approach that is not just all-encompassing and sensitive to localized aspects of development, but which respects the often unpredictable and polymorphous reality of trends in everyday faith and devotion.

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SAINTLY IMMOBILITY, THE GOUGED-OUT EYE, AND THE SEVERED BREAST:  
THE METAMORPHOSIS OF ST LUCY IN EARLY IBERIAN ART AND LITERATURE

**ABSTRACT:** This article focuses on the representation of St Lucy in early Iberian art and literature, considering the extent to which her identity becomes subject to procedures of evolution. In some artworks, Lucy is characterized as the saint who could not be moved either by men or yokes of oxen. Yet in others she is presented either as the saint who was blinded, or more radically, as a figure who suffers a forced mastectomy. The article argues that her example, which raises broader implications for the study of hagiography and of identity in general, shows that we should avoid focusing on representations of saints that are confined exclusively either to art or to literature.

**KEYWORDS:** St Lucy. Hagiography. Torture. Identity. Art. Literature.

LA SANTA INMOVILIDAD, EL OJO ARRANCADO Y EL PECHO AMPUTADO:  
LA METAMORFOSIS DE SANTA LUCÍA EN EL ARTE Y LA LITERATURA IBÉRICA TEMPRANOS

**RESUMEN:** Este artículo se centra en la representación de Santa Lucía en el arte y la literatura ibérica tempranos, considerando hasta qué punto su identidad queda sujeta a procedimientos de evolución. En algunas obras de arte, Lucía se caracteriza como la santa a la que no podían mover ni hombres ni yuntas de bueyes. Sin embargo, en otras se presenta como la santa que quedó ciega o, más radicalmente, como una figura que sufre una mastectomía forzada. El artículo sostiene que su ejemplo, que plantea implicaciones más amplias para el estudio de la hagiografía y de la identidad en general, muestra que deberíamos evitar centrarnos en representaciones de santos o santas que se limitan exclusivamente al arte o a la literatura.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Santa Lucía. Hagiografía. Tortura. Identidad. Arte. Literatura.