



## Article

# The Demons of Judas and Mary Magdalene in Medieval Art

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**Abstract:** There are few specific studies on the demonic possession of Judas and Mary Magdalene, especially as regards the representation of these demons in medieval art. This article analyses the matter in order to subsequently carry out a comparative analysis of the two characters and thus respond to both the general and specific objectives put forward: the reason for the difference in quantity in the representations of Judas with his demons compared to Magdalena; the type of demons represented; their possible meanings; and some considerations related to gender issues. The analysis has been carried out with a cultural perspective, comparing images with texts, as well as putting these materials into context. Taking all of this into account, it is shown that the main cause behind the quantitative difference in the images of the two characters lies in their subsequent fates: Magdalene, exorcised, becomes an example of repentance, confession, and penance for the faithful, whereas Judas is condemned and never abandoned by the devil. The reason for the choice of Judas and Mary Magdalene is that they are two of the most important characters in the New Testament to have suffered from demonic possession, though there are also depictions of different exorcisms performed by Jesus. Furthermore, the antagonism of these characters forms a key feature in both art and religion in the medieval West, as demonstrated at the end of this article.

**Keywords:** Judas; Mary Magdalene; Christian art; Middle Ages; demons; exorcism; sins; sacraments



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## 1. Introduction

Judas and Mary Magdalene are two of the most controversial characters in Christianity. In the New Testament and in different apocryphal texts and legends, both appear as possessed or accompanied by the devil. They were chosen due to their importance in the key events of the New Testament and also due to the consequences of their possession both in terms of visibility and medieval religiosity. They are two contemporary characters with a strong connection with Jesus during his public life. They both had contact with the devil yet chose two completely opposing paths when faced with their temptation: Magdalene went from a sinner to a saint, whereas Judas went from an apostle close to Jesus to eternal damnation. These matters are explained at the end of the text. Thus, both characters are chosen in order to analyse their demonic possession and the representation of their demons. Although the monastic sources do not mention them, they are paradigmatic figures to study these issues. Furthermore, the characters mentioned in the medieval sources are anonymous. However, the features of their possessions and demons are integrated in the artistic representations of Judas and Mary Magdalene in medieval art. This research analyses some of the images in which these characters' demons appear. In doing so, it is essential to point out that there is a greater number of artworks in which the devil appears together with Judas, unlike the case of Magdalena, for whom it is difficult to find images showing her with demons or at the time of her exorcism. Specifically with regard to the Magdalene, eight works are studied here—out of the nine gathered—that respond to the criteria governing this research: the visual representation of demons, not only allusion to them. As for Judas, a total of thirteen works has been selected from the multitude of existing images—out of the sixty gathered—in different media, representing various moments of his life related to the devil.

The general aim is to analyse the demons of Judas and Mary Magdalene in medieval art, taking into account the sources to analyse them, as well as their cultural tradition. In addition, specific objectives have been set for each of the characters. In the case of Judas, the idea is to explain the abundance of representations with the devil intimately linked to him and represented via a variety of morphologies. As for Mary Magdalene, the intention is to answer the reason for her scarce appearance in art together with the demons that possessed her, as well as the role they play when represented, their anatomy, expulsion, and the consequences of their exorcism. Finally, there is the aim of explaining the relevance of these matters both in the art of the medieval West and in the society of the time.

Following this introduction, a brief clarification is provided regarding issues related to the representation of demons in medieval art. In the subsequent sections, the two figures are dealt with separately to then perform a comparative analysis and provide a cultural explanation of everything analysed, relating the images to their context, then rounding off with the resulting conclusions. Throughout all of this, it is important to underline the substantial size of the existing bibliography regarding demons in the Middle Ages, in both their theological and artistic aspects. Furthermore, in this bibliography a part is always dedicated to studying Judas and his relationship with the demon (Russell [1984] 1995; Aragonés Estella 1996; Barral Rivadulla 2003; Murray 1998; García Arranz 2019). However, in the case of Magdalene, as with the images of her, it is difficult to find studies concentrating on this aspect. Bennet (2002, p. 20) points out the lack of knowledge on the subject: “the portrayal of the demonic Magdalen is not well known in medieval art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries”.<sup>1</sup> Other studies in the few published in this regard are the texts by Begel (2012), Apostolos-Cappadona (2002), and Haskins (1994).

## 2. Demons in the Art of the Medieval West

The lack of written sources in the early centuries of Christianity detailing the morphology of demons made it impossible for artists to find models for their images. The information provided by the Church on the physical qualities of demons was scarce. The Fathers of the Church had been interested in clarifying the essence of the Devil and his power to act, rather than specifying his appearance. Faced with this lack of references, medieval artists resorted to Greco-Latin sources which, together with the few details provided by theology, made it possible to create an image of the evil one. This is one of the reasons why representations of the devil vary greatly, from great black anthropomorphic demons to small imps or goblins, red birds, or pale, livid demons related to death (García Arranz 2019, p. 14). Before the ninth and tenth centuries, the only difference between an angel and a demon—or fallen angel—was the dark colour, reflecting their rebelliousness (Yarza Luaces 1979, p. 300). This is seen in a mosaic from San Apollinare Nuovo (Ravenna, 520), where Jesus is accompanied by an angel and, to his left, a “blue-violet angel standing above the goats” (Russell [1984] 1995, p. 143).

The devil, profusely represented as of the ninth century, acquired a great presence in the mid-centuries of the Middle Ages. Until then, only the Council of Toledo (447) had provided information on his appearance: a large, black monstrous apparition with horns, hooves, donkey ears, fierce eyes, gnashing teeth, a large phallus, and a smell of sulphur. Additionally, demons were usually represented naked or with loincloths, thus relating them to animals, the wild, and sexuality. They were usually represented as black and dark in keeping with a universal Christian tradition: blackness, in contrast to the immaculate whiteness of the angels, represents evil and impurity, filth and moral contamination (Russell [1984] 1995, p. 75; García Arranz 2019, p. 313). Hence, colour became another element to emphasise the malevolent nature of demons, either because of the colour black or the red tones associated with fire and blood, as well as colours associated with death and disease, such as grey or brown. In addition, they also appear in blue or violet tones (Barral Rivadulla 2003, p. 222; Russell [1984] 1995, p. 147).

Russell ([1984] 1995, p. 75) points out that the colour black would have originated in the Egyptian and Nubian deities: the god Anubis could be either a black jackal with a bushy tail or a black man with a jackal's head. On the other hand, the demon's dark skin was also due to the pharaoh's confrontation with an Ethiopian enemy, thus passing this association of black, Ethiopian, and demonic on to Christian tradition. In the New Testament, darkness and blackness are associated with evil and sin, but there is no reference in any passage to the blackness of the devil's skin, nor is there any reference to the dark tone of skin in the Old Testament or among the writings of the Fathers of the Church in the early centuries. It was in extra-canonical texts and medieval legends where the devil adopted the appearance of an Ethiopian (Blanc 2004, p. 43; García Arranz 2019, pp. 314–16). This is shown in *The Golden Legend* on explaining the confrontation between Saint Bartholomew and an evil creature, the latter being described as “an Ethiopian blacker than soot, with a sharp face, a thick beard, hair reaching down to his feet, blazing eyes that flashed sparks like a fire-reddened iron, shooting sulphurous flames from his mouth and sparks like a reddened iron, shooting sulphurous flames from his mouth and eyes. His hands were clamped in red-hot gyves behind his back” (Voragine 2012, p. 498).

With the growing dread of the year one thousand and the perceived impending apocalypse, it was about providing answers for the plagues, famines, poverty, and wars by connecting it with the increasing terror of Satan. Preachers and artists helped heighten the fear of demons and the devil, who had to be challenged by compliance with the sacraments and, ultimately, avoiding sin. The popularity of homilies and hagiographies in which demons played a prominent role also played a fundamental part in the rise of images of demons. Although interest in demons waned in medieval theology, the homiletic literature and hagiographies continued to mix theological dogmas with legendary themes to attract the attention of the faithful. This literature was mostly based on the stories of saints tempted by demons in the desert, who chose good over sin (Russell [1984] 1995, pp. 239–41 and p. 316; García Arranz 2019, pp. 29, 317).

As a result of the devil's fame in this literature, the monstrous, the bestial, and the extravagant proliferated in art, where the powers of Evil could arbitrarily adopt animal and/or human appearances, but which were always devoid of harmony and beauty. The absurdity and distortion of the forms and attitudes of these beings were the main resources that artists could use to reflect Evil, intimidating the faithful with the threat of the torments of hell (Russell [1984] 1995, pp. 144–236; García Arranz 2019, pp. 30–35). Among the most common characteristics of the demons are the goatee beard, claws and wings, bristling hair, or else in the form of a flame of fire that reminded one of hell (Barral Rivadulla 2003, pp. 221–22). In the 14th–15th centuries, the devil was represented either in hell or as a caricatured, mocking character linked to satire. In those centuries, as had happened in the years prior to the year 1000, monstrous apparitions and the grotesque again proliferated.

This study's cultural focus also includes matters of gender that are important when dealing with these characters themselves as well as with the matter of demonic possession. As for being possessed, women were considered to appeal more to demons owing to the gender's vulnerability and weakness in both physical and spiritual terms, as opposed to men. The consideration of women as more sexual but less rational or morally sound played a great part in this, since they were therefore more dubitative and susceptible to desire and carnality (Caciola 2006). Although what has just been said provides the general tone of the medieval mentality, the proposed comparative analysis will demonstrate how the cases of Judas and Mary Magdalene provide an exception to the outcome of possession, subverting the usual gender roles.

### 3. Judas

Judas Iscariot appears mainly in the canonical Gospels of the New Testament and is presented from the outset as a traitor, miser, and thief. The first time he appears, he does so as a follower of Christ, one of the chosen Twelve. In Matthew (3:13–19), before committing the betrayal, he is already identified as the one “who betrayed Jesus”. In the anointing in Bethany narrated by John (12:5–7), Judas opposes the waste of perfume, considering that the money could have been spent on the poor. However, he does not say so for that reason but “because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it”. In addition to these sins, there is suicide, with Matthew (27:3–8) indicating that “Then, he went and hanged himself”. The passage of the meeting between Judas and the high priests is narrated in all of the Synoptics, with Matthew (26:14–16) indicating that, faced with the reward claimed by Judas for betraying Jesus, the priests “paid him thirty pieces of silver”. Hence, not only is he accused of being a traitor, but he is also linked to greed for seeking a reward in exchange for treason. However, it is in the Gospel of Luke (22:1–6), narrating the same passage, where Judas appears for the first time linked to the devil: “Then, Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot”.

As for the Fathers of the Church, some are also of the opinion that the betrayal did not originate with Judas or the Jews, but with the devil. Origen of Alexandria points out that “the author of this sacrilege and the father of this crime is, without a doubt, the devil” (Homilies on the Exodus 8, 6). Likewise, Cyril of Alexandria explains that “in the traitor there was a place for Satan [ . . . ] his gateway was the passion of greed” (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 140). As regards the non-canonical gospels, specifically the Arabic Gospel of Infancy (chapter XXV, 1–2) (fourth–fifth centuries) narrates that Judas, as a child, was already possessed by evil and that Christ exorcised him with his weeping, the demon coming out of him in the form of a rabid dog. The aim of this story is to trace Judas’ wickedness back to his childhood and stress the relationship with Satan from the beginning of his life (De Santos Otero 1956, p. 323). However, no representations have been found in this vein.

Given the large prevalence of literary references presenting Judas with the devil, this analysis has selected images belonging to Judas’ meeting with the Sanhedrin, the moment that the betrayal is announced during the Last Supper, and the death of Judas, given that they are the only ones to visually show the demon. The images studied have been divided into these three groups. All of these images date from the period from the beginning of the 11th century to the 15th century, appearing in a great variety of media.

#### 3.1. Judas with the Sanhedrin

One of the first representations of Judas meeting the Sanhedrin with the devil present appears in the Eadwine Psalter (eleventh century) (Figure 1). Judas appears three times, since it is a panoramic cycle where several iconographic types appear in the same image. The demon accompanying him on his back is pale and livid, with curly hair like the flames of hellfire and a pointed nose (Russell [1984] 1995, p. 236; Barral Rivadulla 2003, p. 122). This morphology was soon to be abandoned in favour of the humanoid black demon or monstrous little devils. In the Italian sphere, Judas is also shown with the devil on his back in the frescoes of Giotto (Figure 2), but this time it is a human-sized, black one with a pointed chin and nose. This type of humanoid demon was to prevail as of the 14th century (Russell [1984] 1995, pp. 144–46; García Arranz 2019, pp. 30–31).





**Figure 1.** *Eadwine Psalter*, Ms. M 521, f. 10v, ca. 1055, Morgan Library, New York.



**Figure 2.** Giotto, *Pact of Judas*, ca. 1302–1305, Scrovegni's chapel, Padua.

Private patronage within churches was a booming phenomenon during the 14th century. The new bourgeoisie and its wealth from the market led such families to acquire spaces for private worship, as well as for burials within ecclesiastical buildings themselves. Furthermore, some of these families also built their own religious buildings. Such is the case of the Scrovegni family and the construction of the so-called Arena Chapel in Padua, dedicated to Santa Maria della Carità (the Madonna of Charity), whose visual arrangement for the frescoes was entrusted to Giotto (Lavin 1990, p. 43). These frescoes contain a cycle dedicated to the life of Jesus and another to the life of the Virgin. In the first one, several scenes are depicted in which Judas plays the leading part. In the pact he makes with the high priests, Judas is seen possessed by the devil and avarice, accepting the bag of coins in exchange for the betrayal. This scene is located near the altar where Enrico Scrovegni is buried, who in his life as a merchant had committed sins related to usury, envy, and avarice. Hence, the chapel acted as a means of redemption. Opposite the scene of Judas' pact there is the Visitation, generating tension and contrast: as opposed to the greed and disloyalty of Judas that will only lead to death, the Virgin and Elizabeth are depicted announcing joy and life (Bishop 2020, p. 43).

In this same chapel, vices and virtues are represented in grisaille. Although Giotto did not include avarice, he did depict envy and, as opposed to it, charity, a virtue to which the chapel itself is dedicated. Hence, a pair of opposites is formed: while charity is crushing a bag of coins with her feet, envy is being burned by the flames of hell. Among other vices, *desesperatio* is notable where, instead of depicting Judas hanged as was usual in the 14th century, a woman was chosen to be depicted hanged with a demon taking her soul. Both in the origin of the betrayal in Judas' pact with the Sanhedrin and in the vice of *desesperatio*, Giotto shows the devil's intervention linked to these sins. Although Giotto's contemporary Duccio also represents a cycle of the life of Christ in the Maestà altarpiece (1308–1311) and another of the Virgin, at no time does he show the demons, nor in Judas' meeting with the Sanhedrin, nor at the Last Supper, nor at the arrest. Neither does he depict the condemnation of the hanged man with intervention from demons, typical of the avaricious, as can be seen in the Scrovegni chapel.

### 3.2. The Last Supper

During the Last Supper, the moment of the announcement of the betrayal takes place. In the Synoptics, Judas is exposed as the one who will betray Christ in a very similar way (Mk 14:17–21; Mt 26:17–25; Lk 22:21–23). The most relevant difference is to be found in John (13,27), where Judas is again linked to the devil: "As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him". This is also the case with the Fathers of the Church, such as John Chrysostom when he pointed out that, "once the offering [the wet bread] was accepted, the devil entered Judas" (Sermon on the betrayal of Judas, 1, 6). Likewise, both Cyril of Alexandria (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 140) and Augustine of Hippo (Treatises on the Gospel of John 62, 2) consider the devil to be the main cause behind the betrayal.

In the Bruchsal Codex (13th century) (Figure 3), Judas appears taking the wet bread accompanied by the demon in the form of a black bird. In the 14th century, in a Speculum Humanae Salvationis, the devil enters Judas in the form of an imp or black vermin (Figure 4). For its part, the panel by the Master of Sigena (Figure 5), from a 14th century altarpiece, presents the iconographic type of the Establishment of the Eucharist and the announcement of the betrayal, wherein Judas appears with a black devil with horns and hooves within him, making the same gesture and therefore blending in with him.





**Figure 3.** *Bruchsal Codex 1, “Last Supper”, f. 28r, ca. 1220, Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe, Germany.*



**Figure 4.** *“Last Supper”, Speculum Humanae Salvationis, XIVth century.*



**Figure 5.** Master of Sigena, *Last Supper*, ca. 1363, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC), Barcelona.

### 3.3. The Death of Judas

The death of Judas is narrated differently in the Gospel of Matthew from the Acts of the Apostles. After Judas has betrayed Jesus, Matthew (27:3–5) says that “he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests, and the elders ‘have sinned’, he said, ‘for I have betrayed innocent blood’ [ . . . ] So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself”. In the Acts of the Apostles (1:18), on the other hand, there is no repentance or suicide; Judas dies after a fall and his subsequent evisceration: “With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out”. The Fathers of the Church interpreted the suicide of Judas as an unforgivable act, another negative quality to add to the man who was already a traitor, miser, and thief. Jerome (Commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew 4, 27, 5) affirms that “To the first crime, he added that of his own suicide”. John Chrysostom (Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew 85, 2) points to the evil one as responsible for the suicide without Judas having the opportunity to rehabilitate himself with penance.

Some representations of the death of Judas with the devil are found in different capitals on French churches. In the bas-relief of San Lázaro de Autun (12th century) (Figure 6), there are two demons, one on either side of the traitor, pulling at the ropes around his neck. Similarly, one of the capitals on the Basilica of Saint Andoche de Saulieu (12th century) (Figure 7) shows a human-sized, emaciated demon pulling on the rope. The demons, in addition to being responsible for the betrayal, are now the executors of Judas’ suicide, actively participating in pulling the ropes of the noose and removing any possibility for repentance. In Italy, one of the copper plates on the doors of the Cathedral of Benevento (12th century) (Figure 8) shows Judas hanged, suspended in mid-air, while a winged demon resembling an angel hovers next to him, exerting weight on the rope to choke him.





**Figure 6.** *Judas' Death*, 12th century, Cathedral of Saint Lazarus, Autun.



**Figure 7.** *Judas' Death*, 12th century, Saint Andoche Basilica, Saulieu.





**Figure 8.** *Judas' Death*, 12th century, Benevento Cathedral, Benevento.

The Vulgate by Jerome (fourth century) combined the different versions of Judas' death, replacing the fall with the hanging while retaining the evisceration (Murray 1998, pp. 337–38; Lafran 2019, pp. 239–55). This was the version chosen by some exegetes such as Bede the Venerable (Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles 1, 18b) and the most common one in medieval legends such as *The Golden Legend* (Voragine 2012, pp. 168–69), in their translations at the time (Flos Sanctorum, Vines of Saints Rosselloneses) as well as in art. One example of this can be seen in the tympanum of Freiburg Cathedral (13th century) (Figure 9), with Judas eviscerated and hanged from a tree in whose branches there are two pale demons who are not only pulling on the hanged man's rope but also taking his soul—in the form of a child—straight to hell. As of the 14th century, the soul coming out as a child was to generally be a constant image. The holy and righteous souls used to be represented easily leaving the body of the deceased through the mouth, quickly detaching themselves from the body. However, the souls of sinners such as Judas were shown in contact with the dead body, having difficulty leaving it since it continued to be intimately linked to the body's destiny. Evil souls came out in the form of a large naked child through the wide-open mouth (similar to the mouth of hell in Leviathan (Job, 40)), or else through the thigh, through the severed neck and sometimes, as in the case of Judas, through the entrails since his mouth had kissed Christ and should not be sullied (Baschet 2016, pp. 126–28).

In the Holkham Bible (14th century) (Figure 10), the demon taking the soul of Judas from his entrails has an animalistic appearance similar to a bat. The demon accompanying Judas in the mural painting by Canavesio (14th century) (Figure 11) is similar, with horns, claws, wings, and a snake's tail. This artist painted the soul of Judas as male, highlighting the carnal nature of the betrayer, with a dishevelled beard and a prominent nose similar to that of Iscariot himself, in addition to the Judaic characteristics due to the prevailing anti-Judaism in Europe in the mid-centuries of the Middle Ages (Baschet 2016, p. 65). Two winged demons with claws and a tail as in Canavesio's painting are ripping Judas' soul from his body in the Varia Codex (15th century) (Figure 12). In the case of the wall painting by Nicholas Toruñ (15th century) (Figure 13), the demon is small, black, and has claws, similar to the ones that entered Judas during the Last Supper according to the Gospel of John.



**Figure 9.** *Judas' Death*, 13th century, Freiburg Minster, Freiburg.



**Figure 10.** *Bible of Holkham*, Add Ms. 47682, f. 30r, ca. 1327–1335, British Library, London.



**Figure 11.** Giovanni Canavesio, *Judas' Death*, ca. 1492–1530, Notre Dame des Fontaines, La Brigue.



**Figure 12.** Crisostomo de Predis, *Codex Varia 124*, ca. 1476, Biblioteca Reale Di Torino, Turin.

As we have seen, Judas is linked to the devil at different moments of his life: in his childhood, at the beginning of the betrayal in the meeting with the Sanhedrin, during the Last Supper and at the moment of his death. There are numerous textual sources that establish this relationship, as well as the artistic representations linking them. It was to be during the Middle Ages when the appearance of the devil next to the traitor became a constant in Western Europe, especially in France, Italy, and Spain. As for the morphology of demons, as has been shown, there is no standard type. Judas' demons appear pale and livid, humanoid and black, as black birds, small devils or grotesque, animalistic beings with claws, tails, bat wings, and horns. The abundance of images of Judas with the devil is the result of a desire to show that the traitor was linked to various sins such as betrayal, envy, greed, theft, suicide, and more.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes, both the representation of his soul and the demons' physique are similar to the features of Judas, acquiring a hooked nose and a prominent chin, just as the betrayer was represented in medieval centuries. These facial



features are due to the relationship established between Judas and the Jews, considered to be allies of the devil and guilty of the death of Jesus.



**Figure 13.** Nicholas Toruń, *Judas' Death*, ca. 1480–1490, Saints Peter and Paul Church, Kraków.

Judas contained all the sins within himself. Moreover, the numerous representations were intended to be seen by the faithful, since they are mostly presented in the public sphere such as in church doorways, capitals, and gates, but also in manuscripts for personal use. This gives rise to the demon linked to the sins of Judas appearing in a multitude of media, so that it could be seen by as many people as possible. It was usually women that were linked to being possessed by demons, as the gender was considered weak-willed and easily tricked by the devil. In this sense, although Judas was a male character, he is considered by the Fathers of the Church to be fragile and corruptible like a woman (Origen, Commentary on the Gospel of John 32, 19, 20–24; John Chrysostom, Homilies to the Gospel of Matthew 81, 1; Series of commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew 83), so that he was the one chosen by the devil from among the apostles to perpetrate the betrayal.

#### 4. Mary Magdalene

Unlike Judas, the number of images showing Mary Magdalene with demons is far lower and something similar occurs with the literary sources. The New Testament mentions the possession of the Magdalene in two passages: Luke (8:2) explains that Jesus was accompanied by the Twelve and a group of women “who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out”. In the context of the resurrection in the longer ending of Mark (16:9), it is narrated that Jesus “appeared first to Mary of Magdala from whom he had cast out seven devils”.

Based on the verse of Luke, the Latin Fathers of the Church created an entire exegesis that resulted in the consideration of Mary Magdalene as a sexual sinner. This construct by the Fathers of the Church, in which multiple confusions converge with other characters from the New Testament—Luke’s sinful woman (7:36–50); the woman who performs the anointing in the narratives by Mark (14:3–9) and Matthew (26:6–13); Mary of Bethany (Jn 12:1–9); the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:7–10) and the adulterous woman (Jn 8:3–7)—was a fundamental character in order to create normative profiles for women in Western Christianity. The exegesis on the seven demons plays a key role in this consideration, as it is one of the most transcendental elements obscuring the importance of Magdalene as a follower of Jesus, recipient of his teachings, witness of his death and resurrection, as well as an apostle of the apostles. In fact, in the first known image of Mary Magdalene (Baptismal Hall, Dura Europos, second–third centuries) (Grabar 1967, p. 70), she appears as the myrrhophore witness to the resurrection, far removed from later patristic contaminations.

Although her visual journey begins by placing importance on this role, her representation was to be oriented towards her life of sin as a consequence of the officialisation of patristic interpretations and the spread of medieval legends. Thus, the favourite episodes of her in art were to be her years of penance as a model of behaviour for the faithful, the moment of her conversion and her presence at the crucifixion.

In the construction of the Magdalene through her fusion with other women, the sinful woman from the text by Luke stands out—due to its sexual connotations—and is introduced just before the presentation of Magdalene (Lk 8:1–3). Due to this proximity in the text, together with the interests of the Latin Fathers of the Church and their discriminatory and sexual interpretations of the seven demons, the result was a patristic construct that would populate imagination in the Western world:

“The one that Luke calls a sinner, and that John names Mary, we believe that she is that Mary of whom, according to Mark, the Lord has cast out seven demons. And what are these seven demons, if not the universality of all vices? Since seven days suffice to embrace the whole of time, the number seven rightly represents universality. Mary had seven demons in her, for she was full of all vices. But now, having seen the stains that dishonored her, she ran to wash herself at the source of mercy, without blushing in the presence of the guests. So great was her shame inside that she could not see anything outside to blush”. (Gregory the Great, Homilia XXXIII, Lectio S. Evang. Sec. Luc. VII, 36–50)

The words of Gregory the Great, pronounced in the year 591, consolidated all of that prior tradition of interpretations while making the myth of the Magdalene official. This figure was expanded on by the different medieval legends which, in addition to mentioning the life of sin, narrated her penance in the desert—*Vita eremitica*, *Vita apostolica*, *Legenda aurea*—thereby broadening her legendary biography. The possession and the confusion with Luke’s sinful woman are the two main elements that end up establishing a sexually sinful Magdalene, specifically a prostitute most of the time.<sup>3</sup> Gregory the Great’s identification of the seven demons with the seven deadly sins was the interpretation that endured in art, highlighting lust due to the traditional Judeo-Christian association of female sin with sex. Lust was considered to be a particularly feminine vice, widely represented in medieval art. Similarly, in numerous sermons Mary Magdalene also appeared as an example of lust, as in the *Summa Praedicatorum*, a series of sermons compiled by the English Dominican John Bromyard in the 14th century (Haskins 1994, p. 149).

The images analysed here have been divided into three typologies: first, the exorcism during the anointing at the Pharisee’s house; secondly, the representation of Jesus and Magdalene isolated at the moment of the exorcism; and finally, the possession represented allegorically. All of the images analysed date from the period from the 13th century to the beginning of the 16th, and with the exception of an Italian one and a German one, they are all of French origin. Nevertheless, thanks to the study by Bennet (2002, p. 20), it is known that there was at least one previous image belonging to the *Hortus deliciarum* by Herrad of Hohenbourg (c. 1175–1195), destroyed in the Strasbourg Library fire in 1870.

#### 4.1. The Exorcism in the House of Simon the Pharisee

These images are the ones with the greatest link to the sources, since they allude directly to the fusion of the Magdalene portrayed by Luke (8:2) as “healed of seven demons” with the anonymous sinful woman from the same Gospel (7:36–50), a fusion made official through Gregory the Great’s homily. Even so, although the presence of demons in the three images analysed follow the same typology, they have differences that are partly related to their origin and use. The first image (Figure 14) is a German stained-glass window from the first half of the 13th century, created in the Franciscan sphere. It is therefore an image intended for a public audience. Here, the diners appear together with Jesus while in the lower half, Magdalene is prostrated and surrounded not by seven but four small demonic beings of different colours.





**Figure 14.** Mary Magdalene at the Feet of Jesus and Being Freed from her Evil Spirits, ca. 1230–1240, Disalced's Church, Erfurt.

By the 14th century in Italy, the seven demons appeared in the mural paintings of the Guidalotti–Rinuccini Chapel (Figure 15). Again, the woman is represented kneeling before Jesus while at the top there are the demons that have already been expelled from her body. Hence, preference was given to the moment of anointing and conversion, leaving the exorcism scene to be evoked only by the demons in the upper strip. In this way, it can be understood that the exorcism is the result of repentance, confession, and forgiveness. In fact, the inscription itself states: *HIC HRISTUS CONUERTE BEATAM MAGDALENAM ET EICIT SEPTEM DEMONIA A DORSO EIUS*. [Here Christ converts the blessed Magdalen and expels the seven devils from her back]. So, in this fresco created for a Franciscan church, the demons are introduced taking flight. They are winged demons combining anthropomorphic forms with bat wings, dragon tails, and antlers.



**Figure 15.** Giovanni da Milano, *Mary Magdalene at the Feet of Jesus*, ca. 1363–1365, Guidalotti–Rinuccini Chapel, Santa Croce Basilica, Florence.

Begel (2012, pp. 347–48) points out in this regard that “the artist’s inclusion of seven demons being cast from the saint is unique in the iconography of the Magdalene”. The author affirms that the demons are not just another attribute of the Magdalene, but rather the image is an authentic exorcism scene. However, unlike typical compositions of exorcised women, this one “eschews many traditional elements of exorcism imagery, while at the same time subtly alluding to central aspects of the theme”. Bennet (2002, p. 24) also confirms this scene to be an exorcism, describing the demons that possessed Magdalene as follows: “Six bestial horned devils in a parade follow the leader, armed with mace and shield, the latter a mongrel of half demon and half human with blonde hair, suggesting the Magdalene’s appearance in her former state”. Thus, she detects how the leading demon acquires some of Magdalene’s physical characteristics, an aspect that does not appear in the other images analysed.

The importance Giovanni da Milano’s depiction of demons is even more relevant and innovative if one takes into account the relationship between this chapel and the artist with other chapels in the surrounding area. In the last third of the 14th century, with the generalisation of the aforementioned private chapels, the compositions of frescoes mostly followed the formats of the previous century, albeit with innovations. Such is the case of the Rinuccini Chapel, initiated by the Guidalotti family and whose frescoes were begun by Giovanni da Milano (Lavin 1990, pp. 90–91). The painter from Lombardy, who hailed from the workshop of Giotto’s disciple Taddeo Gaddi, was hired to create the paintings for the chapel precisely in the same church where Gaddi was painting the south wall of the sacristy. Milano’s work was interrupted by a lack of funds to continue with the project, having made only two of the paintings for the cycle. In 1370, work was resumed under the patronage of the chapel’s new owner, Francesco Rinuccini, a Florentine diplomat and merchant, who hired Matteo di Pacino to finish the cycle (Erhardt 2011, p. 314). Despite the change in the chapel’s ownership and also the change of artist, the Baroncelli Chapel

continued to be taken as an example, accurately painted thirty years earlier by Taddeo Gaddi. In the case that concerns us here, the Rinuccini Chapel is made up of two cycles that appear on each of the walls. One is dedicated to the Virgin and the other to the Magdalene, whose visual schemes begin with the moment before the beginning of their life of sanctity: in the case of the Virgin prior to the birth of Jesus; in the case of the Magdalene during her conversion. Hence, “both chapters technically are times of preparation. Beyond this thematic statement, the Rinuccini Chapel demonstrates two separate realms of patterning, that of order of interpretation, and that of compositional thrust, showing how they can operate separately or together” (Lavin 1990, pp. 90–92).

Thus, the frescoes show the life of the two most important women in medieval religiosity, and specifically in the Franciscan order, both considered perfect examples of meditation, particularly as regards the Passion. Another cycle on the life of Magdalene within the Franciscan sphere can be found in the Magdalene Chapel in the lower church of San Francesco in Assisi (c. 1320) (Erhardt 2011, pp. 317–22). The frescoes in this chapel were created by Giotto, the maestro of Taddeo Gaddi. Although the scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee also appears in the visual scheme in Assisi, with the Magdalene at the feet of Jesus in a compositional layout very similar to that of Giovanni da Milano, the demons are not depicted in this one or in any of the scenes that constitute the cycle. Thus, although both chapels show a narrative cycle of the sinner converted into a penitent saint, the depiction of the demons only occurs in the Florentine chapel, further raising the exceptional nature of Giovanni da Milano’s work.

In the French manuscript *La vie de la belle et clere Magdalene* (1516–1530) (Figure 16), Magdalene no longer appears in an attitude of proskynesis but kneeling, identified with a phylactery. Six of the demons are emerging from her back and immediately in front of her chest appears the seventh. The morphology of these demons is more similar to the ones in the first image than to the Italian winged demons. The text surrounding the image refers to the strength of Jesus and his ability to work miracles.



**Figure 16.** Godefroy Le Batave, “Christ exorcisant s. Marie-Madeleine”, *La vie de la belle et clere Magdalene*, f. 13, ca. 1516–1530, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.



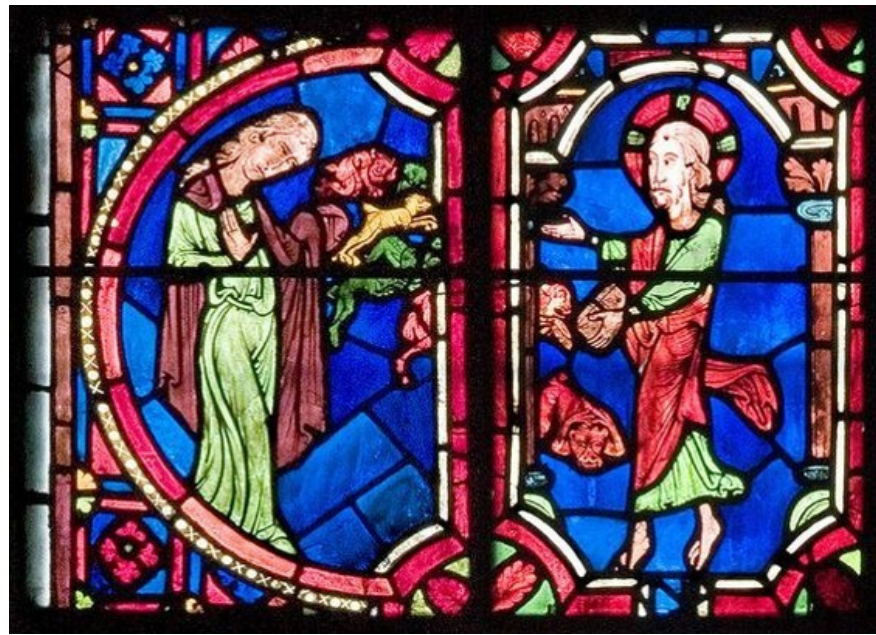
#### 4.2. Healer and Healed

All of the images of this typology come from French manuscripts, except for a stained-glass window. The first to appear (and the first in this article), which codifies the typology, belongs to a 13th century Bible moralisée (Figure 17): only Jesus, Magdalene, and the seven demons appear. Jesus is raising his hand to expel the demons that possessed the woman from Magdala, who is half-kneeling with the seven demonic beings emerging from her back. Their shape is anthropomorphic with antlers and they are all the same colour. The image falls within a typological context, so the accompanying text connects with the psalms: “Hic psalmus septimus est de psalmis penitentialibus qui sunt vii quia peccata nostras delentur septenari numero et isti psalmi sunt contra vii mortalia peccata” [This psalm is the seventh of the penitential psalms, which are seven because our sins are erased by the number seven, and these psalms are against seven deadly sins.] There is a very similar image to this one in a Bible moralisée of the time, archived in the Treasury of Toledo Cathedral. In this case, the text explicitly adds that “Christus eicit septem demonia de Magdalena” [Christ cast out seven demons from Magdalene.] (Bennet 2002, p. 27).



**Figure 17.** “Mary Magdalene Being Freed from her Evil Spirits”, *Bible Moralisée*, Ms. lat. 11560, f. 37v., 13th century, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

The same scene is repeated in the stained-glass windows of the Cathedral of St. Etienne de Bourges (Figure 18), with the difference that the demons are no longer being expelled from the woman’s back, but from her chest. They are shown in various colours (red, green, and yellow) and in forms that are more animal than human. In fact, among them one can see a yellow dog, a red devil and, closer to Jesus than to the exorcised woman, a creature similar to a red pig. The presence of the pig in medieval demonology often refers to female sexuality (Russell [1984] 1995, p. 73). Hence, sexual sin is again seen as predominant in the Magdalene before the exorcism.



**Figure 18.** *Mary Magdalene Being Freed from her Evil Spirits*, 13th century, St. Etienne Cathedral, Bourges.

The third image (Figure 19) returns to the sphere of illuminated books, accompanied by a text in Latin. The layout is practically the same as in the first image in this group, with Jesus raising his hand before a semi-kneeling Magdalene, from whose back seven anthropomorphic demons with animal-like features are emerging. The text accompanying the image focuses on the dangers of the flesh and the seven deadly sins, as well as the importance of penance to free oneself of them.



**Figure 19.** “*Mary Magdalene Being Freed from her Evil Spirits*”, *Oxford-Paris-London Bible Moralisée*, Ms. Bodl-270b\_00239, fol. 118r, ca. 1230–1240, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Lastly, in a book of hours (Figure 20), the exorcism is portrayed with a background, an aspect that had not appeared until then. Jesus and Magdalene are meeting in the gardens of a castle. This scenery could represent what is described in *The Golden Legend*, where it



is said that Magdalene, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, came from a rich family. In her luxurious palace, the woman “gave herself totally to the pleasures of the flesh”. Hence, Magdalene is portrayed as “very rich, and sensuous pleasure keeps company with great wealth. Renowned as she was for her beauty and her riches, she was no less known for the way she gave her body to pleasure—so much so that her proper name was forgotten and she was commonly called ‘the sinner’” (Voragine 2012, p. 375). After that, there is a brief mention that Jesus expelled seven demons from Magdalene. This exorcism occurs as follows: Jesus, dressed in his traditional attire, raises his arm towards a standing Magdalene, dressed as a lady of the time to clearly connect with the recipients of the books of hours and thus serve as an exemplum to the women who owned them. Another significant difference is that the demons, represented as small black vermin, are expelled through Magdalene’s bodily orifices: through her mouth and under her clothing, alluding once again to Magdalene’s sexual activities as a prostitute. As with the exorcism in the Santa Croce paintings, specialists also point to this image as a rarity (Apostolos-Cappadona 2002, p. 12).



**Figure 20.** “Mary Magdalene Healed by Christ”, *Book of Hours*, Ms. M. 54 f.18., ca. 1460–1470, Morgan Library, New York.

#### 4.3. The Possession in Allegorical Terms

The image created in allegorical terms (Figures 21 and 22) comes from the French manuscript *Mariage de Dieu et de l’âme pécheresse* (1491–1492), Jean de Eecoute’s main work. In the form of an allegorical novel, the text explains moral and mystical theology, studying the marriage of God and the soul in both its pure and imperfect state. The image corresponds to chapter XIII, with Magdalene chained by a demon with the appearance

of an ape with antlers, dragon wings, and a woman's breasts. This demonic morphology, in which both feminine and masculine physical attributes are combined, was also linked to the punishment of lust in hell. This type of hybrid being was to appear more in art in the 15th and 16th centuries, a time of great imagination and creativity regarding the demonic image (García Arranz 2019, pp. 322–41). In front of Magdalene is an allegory of death with a skull, a sword, and burning embers. Above, an angel is carrying a sword and a phylactery with which he is warning Magdalene of God's curse for being linked to the Devil: "Dieu te maudite plaine de pechie, le dyable est avecq toy". As in the previous book of hours, the scene has an architectural background. In this case, it is not an exorcism being shown, but in keeping with the theme of the book, the soul's struggle between purity and corruptibility. The former is clearly connected to the presence of the angel, an element that had not appeared until this time. In the Middle Ages, demonic possession became a battle between good and evil, exemplified by angels and demons, respectively. One such angel was St. Michael, considered to be the enemy of the Devil based on the Book of the Apocalypse. In this struggle, the angels carried swords to fight against evil and free possessed souls (Young 2018, p. 67).



**Figure 21.** Jean de Eecoute, *Mariage de Dieu et de l'âme pécheresse*, f. 004, ca. 1491–1492, Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 0243 (233).





**Figure 22.** Jean de Eecoute, *Mariage de Dieu et de l'âme pécheresse*, (detail), f. 004, ca. 1491–1492, Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 0243 (233).

Following all of this, it can be affirmed that the images of Magdalene with demons are shown in media were intended for both private and public use, the former being more predominant in number. In this way, in addition to the characteristics acquired by some of these images in representing the possession and exorcism in books (Figures 20 and 21), it can be concluded that they had a clear educational purpose, using Magdalene as an example of repentance and confession as a means to free herself from the possession. The image corresponding to the public sphere—the stained-glass windows—comes from the Franciscan world and the importance it provided to exorcisms. As for the morphology of demons, they vary, including multiple shapes and colours. Similarly, the place where they are expelled also varies, with the back and chest being the predominant body parts but not the only ones, as has been seen. Likewise, although Magdalene as a patristic construct possessed all of the sins, the representation of the demons demonstrates an insistence on the sexual kind, as has been shown by some of these images.

## 5. Judas and Magdalene in the Middle Ages: Cultural Analysis with a Comparative Perspective

After dealing with the two characters individually, a comparative analysis is now made of their demons' characteristics. Those accompanying Judas could be pale, black, and anthropomorphic, bestial, small devils, or grotesque figures with the body parts of various animals. Sometimes, as in the work of Giovanni Canavesio (Figure 11), the demon snatching his soul physically resembles him, with a pointed beard and a prominent nose. Both Judas and his demon share facial features with the Jews, stereotyped by the anti-Judaic sentiment that arose in the Middle Ages (Rodríguez Barral 2009). Similarly, one of the demons expelled from Mary Magdalene's body in the work by Giovanni da Milano (Figure 15) resembles the Magdalene by sharing her characteristic blonde hair. As for the connection between each figure and its demons, it is noteworthy that the demons expelled from the woman's body appear detached from her and far from her body, taking flight, and emerging from her back, chest, and bodily orifices. On the other hand, the demons accompanying Judas are linked to him, even inside him as in the panel of Master of Sigena. (Figure 4). Furthermore, Iscariot's sinful soul is snatched from his stomach since the betrayal had gestated in his innards. Neither the demons expelled from Magdalene nor those accompanying Judas respond to a homogeneous morphology. There is no pattern when it comes to portraying them; rather, they come in different shapes, sizes, and colours.

The demons in these representations fit the descriptions included in the Apocalypse (12:3–9), where they are described as looking similar to a dragon, while at the same time indicating that the dragon is called the Devil and Satan. In this regard, there is a noteworthy contrast between the importance of demons in medieval centuries and the difficulty of finding images of them before the 11th century, when they began to have that "monstrosity and animality, thereby manifesting an increasingly insistent hostile power" (Baschet 2003, p. 212). Such monstrosity is made visible through a corporality which, though often anthropomorphic, "has been perverted to the point of appearing monstrous due to the conjunction of deformity and the introduction of various animal characteristics (snout, fangs, horns, pointed ears . . . , bat wings as of the 13th century, tail, hairy body, claws or talons . . . )" (Baschet 2003, p. 214). In this vein, the representation of some of these demons with the tail of a dragon or snake alludes directly to the image of the original sin, where the snake, the Devil incarnate, appears tempting Eve with a body that mixes the tail of these creatures with a torso of feminine morphology, as occurs in *The Original Sin* by Hugo van der Goes (ca. 1467, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

The heterogeneity of the demons also coincides with what the sources of the time describe. In the 12th century, Peter the Venerable described demons as terrifying beasts, sometimes resembling pigs with huge tusks, emphasising that they could adopt many different forms: "They could be ugly and fearful", with "long hooked noses", linking directly with some of the images analysed (Figures 11 and 18). In addition, the Benedictine insists that the Devil seeks to possess souls by inciting vices or sins. In the Cistercian sphere of the 11th century, Herbert of Clairvaux also writes about demons, their origins, their strengths, and appearance. He deals mainly with the demons' physical aspect in relation to the dragon, due to its presence in the Book of Revelation. His ones also appear in other animal forms, such as snakes—due to Genesis—or apes, as happens in the last image of Mary Magdalene analysed (Figure 22), and others. Clairvaux also explains that the demons move in groups, in multitudes, and through the air (Ruys 2019, pp. 35–40), as happens in some of the Magdalene's exorcisms. This has its theological basis in various medieval texts, such as the writings of Peter Lombard (d. 1160) in which, taking Augustine as a point of reference, he explains that demons are animals of the air (Elliott 2010, pp. 128–30). This insistence on demons and the air confirms that this medium was a "frighteningly unknown place for medieval people" and that in demonology it was considered to be "the abode of fallen angels and so an inherently dangerous place" (Ruys 2019, pp. 35–36).

In the fourth century, John Cassian had already established some key elements of demons, an aspect that was to remain over time. In the 13th century, the Cistercian

Caesarius of Heisterbach described different exorcisms, pointing out the places through which demonic creatures could be expelled: the mouth, the feet or the knees, as well as through bodily fluids such as urine, semen, or gastric juices. In the images analysed, it has been seen that there are a variety of places for demons to depart, portraying Magdalene expelling the demons through her mouth (Figure 20) or the demons ripping Judas' soul out of his intestines (Figures 9–13). Similar to other monks of the time, Caesarius mentioned the great morphological heterogeneity of demons: dragons, pigs, dogs, and monkeys and predominantly black, a characteristic of the relationship between darkness and the Devil in medieval centuries (Ruys 2019, pp. 18–53). All of these physical traits have been seen in the images of both Judas and Magdalene.

In addition to the morphological diversity of evil, the association of demonic possession with sins is common to all of these sources. This demon–sin tandem appears in representations of both Judas and Magdalene. Both characters have been shown to share a life of sins and demons. The idea of vices or bad thoughts originated before the Christian era, in Greece. However, it was Christian thinking that developed and spread the idea in a general way. Sin, in early Christianity, was also rooted in Judaism with the Ten Commandments as the main point of reference. Within the Christian literature, the temptations of Christ in the desert (Mt 4:1–11; Lk 4:1–12) were the main texts upon which to develop the foundations of sin. Within this tradition, it is in the First Letter of John (5:16–17) where the distinction appears between mortal sins and those that are not, with Tertullian as the initiator of the distinction between sins that are committed in everyday life (lies or anger) and those entailing extreme gravity: murder, idolatry, blasphemy, or fornication. For his part, Augustine of Hippo stated that the three main temptations were gluttony, greed, and pride, singling out the latter as the origin of all other sins (Tilby 2013, pp. 21–47).

Nevertheless, it was Evagrius the Solitary (345–399) who systematised the eight deadly sins, albeit referring to them as evil thoughts instigated by the Devil: gluttony, lust, avarice, sadness, acedia (sloth), vainglory, and pride. By the sixth century with Gregory the Great and his intense belief in hell, they became established at seven. Gregory the Great indicated that the human being lives in continuous tension between doing the good dictated by God and distancing oneself from one's own desires and temptations, encouraged by the Devil. In *Moralia sive Expositio in Job*, he describes the seven deadly sins, all of which stem from pride, described as the leader of the Devil's army. Therefore, it was with Gregory the Great that the seven deadly sins were established that the medieval Church would maintain (Aragonés Estella 1996, pp. 135–38; Tilby 2013, pp. 21–47; Carrasco Manchado 2011, pp. 51–80).

Most especially, it was at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) when the seven deadly sins were finally laid down. In that council, other issues stemming from earlier times that had not been made official until then were also set out: confession, penance, and communion. A century earlier, the attempt to specify the number of sacraments began, as well as the very notion of the term. The number seven, due to its specific symbolism, was considered to be the one that should govern the number of sacraments, thus establishing the septenary. However, it was not until the aforementioned council when the sacraments were established in document form based on the 71 canons arising from said conclave. Specifically, Canon 21 introduced the obligation of confession and annual communion for all the faithful, instituting penance as a central sacrament in the life of the faithful (Soto Rábanos 2006, pp. 413–17). As a consequence, the capital sins ceased to be confined to the monastic and ecclesiastical sphere to form part of daily life for all of the faithful. To do so, it was necessary to instruct the members of the clergy so that, aware of the capital sins, they could organise the sermons, confessions, and penances bestowed. In order to help in this task, the mnemonic rule SALIGIA was created, formed by the initials of each of the seven sins.

In this culture of sin, it was repentance, confession, and penance that played essential parts in pastoral writings, with sin taking the leading role. Within this literature, we can find the confession manuals, clearly linked to the sacrament of forgiveness instituted in the Fourth Lateran Council. It was precisely from the 13th century onwards that the



figure of Mary Magdalene began to opt for the side of penance, as a consequence of the Church's great concern for sin and repentance. Mary Magdalene was set out as one of the most important penitent saints of the time, as well as being the patron saint of all sinners. She is represented thus in books of hours and psalters (Figure 23), where she appears victorious over the seven deadly sins that had possessed her in the form of demons. She thus became the utmost exemplum for the faithful, on being the sinner who was exorcised after repenting, confessing, and obtaining forgiveness, becoming a disciple of Jesus and, after his death, dedicating herself first to preaching and then to penance.



**Figure 23.** “SALIGIA”, Liège Psalter-Hours, Ms. M.182, f.9v., ca. 1280, Morgan Library, New York.

As an exemplum of repentance, confession, penance, and communion, she was used in numerous sermons of the era. In the Iberian Peninsula, she was used “to explain the requirements that this sacrament [of confession] must have in order to be valid: overcoming shame on declaring sins, contrition and penance” (Español and Fité 2008, pp. 20–21). This is also the case in the rest of the medieval West, such as in the Italian peninsula, on which Jansen (2001, pp. 199–208) carried out a detailed study based on the preachings of the mendicant orders. For his part, Judas also acted as an example to be avoided, being, like Magdalena, a compendium of all sins but choosing, unlike her, the path of condemnation. The traitor, miser, thief, and suicide portrayed in public art numerous times was intended to influence the conscience of the faithful as the exemplum in preachers’ sermons (Weber 2002, pp. 165–88). The Devil, the main culprit behind the betrayal and suicide, does not allow Judas to repent, do penance, or redeem himself, but instead leads his soul to eternal damnation, reserving for him the worst place in hell.

Regarding gender issues, it has been mentioned that women were generally more vulnerable to demonic possession due to their irrationality, carnality, and weakness. Nevertheless, although Magdalene was possessed by the totality of sins according to the Fathers of the Church, thanks to her repentance, confession, and exorcism, she is triumphant over the sins. On the other hand, Judas was considered by the Fathers of the Church to be similar to a woman, which is why he was chosen by the Devil for the betrayal. Therefore, in the case of these two characters, the generalisations regarding gender and being possessed were outweighed by the importance of Magdalene not only as an educational instrument but also as a miracle of Jesus, having managed to heal the woman of the seven demons. In this way, the Nazarene's ability to work miracles and his willingness to forgive are stressed through the exorcism of the woman from Magdala.

## 6. Conclusions

After everything that has been said above, it can be affirmed that the quantitative difference between the representations of Judas and Magdalene with the demons largely responds to the fact that, whereas Judas never freed himself from the demons, Magdalene was exorcised. The importance of her exorcism does not stem so much from the possession itself but rather the protagonism shifted to the healing capacity of Jesus, his mercy, and the woman's conversion. Judas, on the other hand, despite being encouraged to confess on several occasions, kept on the path of sin and therefore his link with the Devil is perpetuated even on his death. To sum up, although both characters share the fact that they are sinners and possessed by the devil, there is a huge difference in their destinies: whereas Mary Magdalene is to end up as a saint, Judas is to be condemned.

Both characters were set out in medieval sources in such a way that they would be able to respond to the Church's need to provide the faithful with examples to follow or avoid. Mary Magdalene was constructed as a redeemed sinner, becoming the second most important woman after the Virgin, an exemplum in the sermons and preachings of the time; whereas, Judas groups together all the sins, adding one more sin at each step of his life, making it impossible to empathise with him and undoubtedly predicting an end of damnation for him. In short, both characters function as perfect examples due to their similarities and their different destinies, for the interests of the Church and for the faithful to understand.

Regarding the representation of demons, it has been verified that, in accordance with the sources of the time, they adopted greatly varied forms, from small, winged devils to monstrous hybrids with animal and human features. The ones accompanying Magdalene in some of her exorcisms and Judas at the Lord's Supper are usually small and similar to bats, birds, or pigs. Judas' demons in the passage of the meeting with the Sanhedrin and also in the episode of his death are bigger demons that dominate and persuade the traitor. The heterogeneity in the morphology of all of these demons and the arbitrariness in portraying them, as well as the different links with the characters studied, means they have only just begun to be studied, and that the matter is open to future research.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Bennet's study focuses on the *Bibles moralisées* from the 13th century onwards, analysing the presence of the demon-possessed Magdalene in typological relation to Old Testament passages.
- <sup>2</sup> For the conception of suicide in the Middle Ages as a sin for the Church and a betrayal of society, with its religious and legal consequences, see: (Murray 1998, 2000).
- <sup>3</sup> Through feminist theology (Ricci 1994; Schaberg 2004), great emphasis has been placed both on clarifying whether this confusion was irremediable as well as on the meaning of the demonic possession and exorcism—or healing—in the context of the first century.

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