Bodies of Suffering: Discourse and Power in the Martyrs of Hagiography[*]

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> For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps …When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.[1]

This passage from the early Christian epistle of 1 Peter, which is not hagiographical, illustrates effectively the constitution of a particular Christian subject that has similarities and affinities to those represented in the narratives of hagiographical discourse. It is addressed to Christian slaves in the Roman Empire, who are asked to endure the injustices and violence of slavery with their bodies (*sōma*) as *imitatio Christi.*[2] While the Greek *sōma* is often employed in Greek literature in relation to the experience of death (or resurrection), the uniqueness of this text comes from the way in which *sōma* is represented as the means of salvation during the

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[1] 1 Peter 2:19-21, 23-24. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV) with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007). All subsequent biblical citations are from the NRSV except where noted.

[2] Although this text does not contain the usual (and mostly Pauline) language of imitating (*mimeomai*) a pattern (*typos*), for example as in 2 Thess 3:9, the concept implied by the terms used here, of following (*epakoloutheō*) an example (*hypogrammos*, translated as *exemplum* in the Latin Vulgate) is, in my view, synonymous.

crucifixion of Christ.[3] That is to say, *sōma* is what provides instrumentality to salvation. Not only is the relationship of *sōma* to salvation exceptionally rare for what would later become canonical writings for Christians, but it is also a use of *sōma* which has very few parallels in other Greek sources.[4] More important, however, is how this text attempts to empower a subject who has been completely subjugated by the dominant discourse. By willingly and corporeally experiencing slavery as Christ's suffering, the body of the Christian slave is discursively constituted as a site of resistance to injustice. The focus on the body, here in 1 Peter, should not be seen as necessarily compliant with hegemony, but as part of a cultural discourse that constitutes modes of power and social control.

Like this example from 1 Peter, body discourse in hagiography is concerned with social control and power. The intention of this essay is to explore the relationship between body discourse and power in some of the accounts of the martyrs of early hagiography, particularly the seven brothers and mother of 2 Maccabees 7, *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, and *The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*. This will necessarily include an examination of the effects of body discourse and how it constructs new modalities of power that have social and political implications.

The Maccabean Martyrs and the Scillitan Martyrs

Second Maccabees narrates the story of Jewish persecution and resistance to the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes from 168 to 164 BCE. The martyrdom of the mother and her seven

[3] Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1964), 1058.

[4] Only in the Epistle to the Hebrews (10:5,10; 13:11) is there a similar use of *sōma* connected to the notion of sacrifice. The TDNT states that "in texts with a strong Hellenistic tinge one can, of course, find a surrender of the body because what counts is the immortal soul. But in these the body is something alien, inauthentic and unimportant." *TDNT*, 1058.

sons, in 2 Macc. 7, is particularly significant because it represents, not only the literary model (plot, characterizations, etc.), but also a bodily subjectivity that many subsequent Christian hagiographers would adopt when writing the stories of Christian martyrs. Seven brothers and their mother are arrested and brought before the tyrant in order to perform a ritual that contradicts their religious convictions.[5] Each brother, and eventually the mother as well, are viciously tortured and killed for not forsaking their ancestral traditions. Central to this narrative is the opposition of the martyrs and the tyrant in terms of the body. The king's inability to control his own body, by "falling into a rage," frames the brothers stoic-like control over their own bodies even in the midst of horrific torture.[6] This posture is legitimated by appealing to the resurrection of the body in the after life, as the second brother states, "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws."[7]

The *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs,* a narrative of the execution of twelve Christian martyrs in the late second century CE, proceeds in a similar fashion to the Maccabean martyrs. The twelve are arrested and appear before a governmental figure, the proconsul Saturninus. In the ensuing terse dialog, Saturninus tries to persuade the twelve to perform the rites of the Roman emperor cult. They refuse Saturninus' appeals by asserting their Christian identity. The proconsul pronounces the execution indictment and has them beheaded.[8] While the *Scillitan Martyrs* follows the Maccabean account in its basic plot structure, it is missing the gruesome torture scenes and the portrayal of the tyrant as being enraged. Nevertheless, both the Maccabean and

[5] 2 Macc 7:1. That the act, which the tyrant is attempting to coerce the seven brothers and mother to perform, is not merely consuming pork, but the performance of 'ritual,' partaking in meat sacrificed to non-Jewish gods, is made explicit in the commentary at the end of the narrative (7:42), see also 2 Macc 6:18-23.
[6] 2 Macc 7:3,39
[7] 2 Macc 7:9
[8] Herbert Musurillo, ed., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 87-89.

the *Scillitan* martyrs provide a modality opposition to foreign domination and subjectivization in which the body, through the performance/non-performance of public rituals, is represented as having the capacity to resist the assimilation of community and self by hegemonic discourse and power.

A. G. Elliot, in her literary study of hagiography, *Roads to Paradise*, asserts that the martyr's emphasis on the after-life amounts to a "disdain" of the present world. In the martyr's view, "the life in this world was irrelevant in comparison with the passage to that to come."[9] This also would imply that the martyrs have a negative, or at least indifferent, view of their own bodies. Yet, this appears to be the case with neither the Maccabean nor Scillitan martyrs. In fact, it seems, on my reading, that both accounts place great importance on the body in its physical present. What Elliot appears to miss is the purity/impurity discourse, which is the fulcrum of conflict in both narratives. The martyr must maintain bodily purity in order to go on to the after-life by resisting the defiling ritual of the tyrant. As the seventh brother declares, "I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our ancestors, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by trials and plagues to make you confess that he alone is God."[10] The corporeality of ritual is also what provides the mode of identification as "Christian" in the *Scillitan Martyrs*. Both the proconsul and the martyrs define "Christian" or "Roman" based on the bodily performance of ritual.[11] Thus, in order to preserve the purity of their bodies in the present and the "future," they are willing to give up their life in the present. This is strikingly illustrated by the third brother who "when the question was put to him, he at once showed his

[9] Alison Goddard Elliott, *Roads to Paradise: Reading the Lives of the Early Saints* (Brown University Press, 1987), 19.
[10] 2 Macc 7:37
[11] Note especially the proconsul's edict where he states, "...they have been living in accordance with the rites of the Christians, and whereas though given the opportunity to return to the usage of the Romans they have persevered in their obstinacy." Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 89.

tongue, and courageously held out his hands, and spoke nobly: 'The God of Heaven gave these to me, but his laws mean far more to me than they do, and it is from him that I trust to receive them again."[12]

The martyr narratives also present the corporeality of ritual as inextricably connected to the martyrs' community, or social body. In the declaration of the seventh brother above, corporeality is not only linked to the ethical (the law) and the divine (God) but to the social ("our ancestors" and "our nation"). In the face of overpowering political and social oppression, this discourse represents the body as a site of resistance for the marginalized. In his assessment of the Maccabean martyrs, Brent Shaw argues this point:

> The theatrical confrontations between brutal foreign overlords and recalcitrant subjects so vividly inscribed in the books of the Maccabees provided charter-like archetypes of how to use one's body when there was no further possibility of resistance. The body was at the epicenter of this form of public display since, in order to make one's point, one had to accept the high probability of its obliteration.[13]

This bodily resistance is accomplished not only in the refusal to perform the ritual, but also in the accompanying execution; thus, as Castelli states it, the martyrs "removed themselves from the position of agent (sacrificer) to the position of victim (sacrificed)."[14] These victims, however, refuse to behave as the usual victim subject by having no apprehension about or even feel the pain of torture, and by expressing no remorse or fear. Acting in this manner would be a

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[12] 2 Macc. 7:10-11, The Revised English Bible (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). I have used the REB translation here because the NRSV incorrectly renders *hyperorō* as "distain." While the LSJ lexicon lists "distain" or "disregard" as possible meanings, the context does not seem to indicate ill will or contempt for the body. Thus, the REB's version captures more correctly the relative comparison between the law and the body; see Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. Henry Stuart-Jones, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940).

[13] Brent D. Shaw, "Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 275.

[14] Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 51-52.

performance of guilt and thus (retroactively) legitimate the tyrant's judgment. Instead, the martyrs bodies do the reverse and in doing so reject the subjectivization of the dominant system.[15] This new position of victim/martyr is discursively invested with power through the appeal to the divine judgment and retribution. Instead of death, judiciously inflicted by the tyrant, being an image of defeat, it becomes the moment of victory.

It must be noted, however, that the representation of identities in martyr narratives is typically founded on a strong opposition between the "Roman" tyrant and the "Christian" martyr (Christian). Elizabeth Castelli warns that these "identities" can be misleading as their constitution resides in a discourse that is designed to be "a major defense of the borders of 'Christianness' and that defense necessarily involved the production of a Roman imperial other whose political and cultural dominance bore the caricaturing stamp of oppositionality."[16] Thus, we must be cognizant that the resistance that martyrs embodied may not be entirely external to the Christian community but that it may also be evidence of a contestation of power within the community itself.

The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas

While the two previous examples of martyrdoms illustrate the body as the site of resistance, it is the *passio* of Perpetua that gives it a little more flesh (excuse the pun). In 2 Maccabees there is a hint that there is more at play with martyrs' bodies when the narrator comments regarding the mother of the seven sons: "She encouraged each of them in the language of their ancestors. Filled with a noble spirit, *she reinforced her woman's reasoning with a man's*

[15] *Pace* Kleinberg who argues, in his chapter on Perpetua, that martyrs are both "mechanisms of social control, a means by which a society forces individuals to act out its expectations," and "psychological safety nets." Aviad M. Kleinberg, *Flesh Made Word: Saints' Stories and the Western Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 77.
[16] Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 35.

courage…"[17] That this in the face of a tyrant who cannot control his emotions nor fully exercise his power over them demonstrates a gender blending of both, where the mother becomes a "manly" woman and the tyrant a "womanly" man. Throughout Perpetua's *Passio*, the martyr's body is also particularly emphasized and the issues and politics of gender are much more explicit.

The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas is a longer and structurally more complex narrative than either the Maccabean account or the *Scillitan Martyrs.* Several scholars attest that this narrative even relates the words of Perpetua herself.[18] There are three main divisions of the text, representing possibly two "voices" other than Perpetua. First there is the anonymous introduction, which provides some contextualizing information, such as who was arrested with Perpetua, how old she was, etc. (Para. 1-2). But the introduction also provides an interpretation of the meaning of Perpetua's passion via the interjection of allusions to and direct citations of Christian scripture. The second division is Perpetua's "diary" which relates in the first person four of her own visions, a vision by Saturus, dialogues with her father, and the trial before the proconsul (Para. 3-13). The final section of the narrative returns to a third person anonymous narrator and describes the last day of Perpetua and her companions before the final "battle" with the gladiators in the arena and their execution (Para 14-21).[19]

In several ways, Perpetua's *passio* follows a similar bodily discourse as the two martyr's accounts discussed above. The concern over maintaining purity of the flesh is manifest in the gladiators' arena where the crowd was "horrified" at seeing the naked bodies of the young

[17] 2 Macc 7:21, italics added.
[18] Most notably, see Kleinberg, *Flesh Made Word*, 54; Brent D. Shaw, "The Passion of Perpetua," *Past & Present*, no. 139 (May 1993): 3-45; Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater, 4th ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), 94; and L. Stephanie Cobb, *Dying to Be Men: Gender and Language in Early Christian Martyr Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 94; Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 104.
[19] Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 106-131.

women. The narrator also relates how Perpetua then maintains her ”modesty” during the contest.[20] That “perseverance of the flesh” leads to attaining heaven in the afterlife is made explicit in her first vision, where the “path” to heaven (the martyr’s death in the arena) is depicted as a bronze ladder:

> I saw a ladder of tremendous height made of bronze, *reaching all the way to the heavens*, but it was so narrow that only one person could climb up at a time. To the sides of the ladder were attached all sorts of metal weapons; there were swords, spears, hooks, daggers, and spikes; so that if anyone tried to climb up carelessly or without paying attention, *he would be mangled and his flesh would adhere to the weapons*.[21]

As well, we would be remiss to describe Perpetua’s view of her body as “distain.” Perpetua’s baby represents an attachment to the world of flesh and thus symbolizes her attitudes towards her own body. She does not treat her baby with indifference, as she states, “But as God willed, the baby had no further desire for the breast, nor did I suffer any inflammation; and so I was relieved of any anxiety for my child and of any discomfort in my breasts.”[22] Rather, her body is the very site in which she resists the Devil, who features prominently in the narrative in many of her visions (as a dragon, Egyptian, etc.). Thus, we see how through her “perseverance of the flesh,” her body is the instrumentality by which she attains victory over the powers of evil.

Perpetua’s identification with Christianity is also inextricably linked to her body. During her trial before the proconsul Hilarianus, her “identity” as a Christian is demonstrated by her performance/non-performance of the sacrificial rite to the Roman emperor. Interestingly, instead of the enraged tyrant of the Maccabean account, Hilarianus barely speaks at all. It is Perpetua’s father who displays emotion and pleads for Perpetua to perform the ritual and renounce Christianity. As an aside, one wonders if the beating of Perpetua’s father at the order of

[20] Ibid., 129.
[21] Ibid., 111, italics added.
[22] Ibid., 115.

Hilarianus is a comment on an inherent incoherence of the Roman discourse.[23] Nevertheless, Perpetua's identification with Christianity is also connected to the performance of the definitive Christian initiation ritual, baptism. "For a few days afterwards," Perpetua states after the first encounter with her father, "I gave thanks to the Lord that I was separated from my father, and I was comforted by his absence. During these few days I was baptized, and I was inspired by the Spirit not to ask for any other favour after the water but simply the perseverance of the flesh."[24] Baptism is a ritual performed with the entire body by which "purity" is conferred onto the flesh of the initiate. It is this purity of the flesh attained through the ritual of baptism that is what must be maintained through strict attention to the body. Baptism is also a rite that symbolizes not only the initiate's death and resurrection, but also the sharing of the suffering of Christ's bloody death and the triumph of his resurrection, thus the later denotation of the death of the martyrs in the gladiatorial arena as a "second baptism." This "second baptism" by blood explicitly heightens the "spiritual" connection to Christ and resurrection as the legitimation for Perpetua's willingness to go through the death of a martyr.

The representation of the martyr's body as the site of resistance in Perpetua's *passio* not only takes on imagery that is more masculine but also emphasizes a different object of resistance. Perkins, in *The Suffering Self,* argues that the discursive effects of martyrs' stories elevated martyrdom to a social ritual because of the association with powerful masculine (suffering) victors: "In martyrdom, Christians could see vindicated the triumphant worth of suffering. Martyrs were conventionally described in second-century Christian documents as heroic athletes, warriors, and victors. Martyrs' struggles were described as being not with persecutors, but with

[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 109.

the Devil over whom they triumph through pain and suffering."[25] Thus, in order to legitimate martyrdom as a victory, representations of martyrs became increasingly masculinized and they also signified the oppressor, not as a social reality, but as a "spiritual" one. Both of these are explicitly evident in both Perpetua's journal and in the narrated final "battle." In Perpetua's famous vision of her battle with the "Egyptian" she not only "suddenly becomes a man," but is also fully represented as a male gladiator by being rubbed down with oil, fighting with her fists, and having assistants.[26] Her interpretation of this vision allegorizes her anticipated "contest" with wild animals to be a struggle with the Devil in which she would be ultimately victorious (that is, attain salvation). The narrative of the execution of Perpetua and the martyrs reifies her allegorical interpretation of her vision. Thus, it was the Devil who prepared a mad heifer for her[27] and her victory is demonstrated in that she has to "dispatch" herself, performing the final duty of a gladiator since the young gladiator was failing in his manly duty.[28]

The significance of Perpetua's gender transformation is not necessarily lessened because it occurs primarily in a "vision." In her analysis of saints and how they exemplify morality in and through their bodies, Edith Wyschogrod asserts that the body as a totality participates in the saintly experience functioning as a "sensorium."[29] While Wyschogrod's argument is based primarily on the examples of saintly ascetics, Perpetua's experiences, I think, can also be fruitfully understood as an experience of her whole body. Thus, using Wyschogrod's phrasing, Perpetua did not merely *see* a vision of a change of her own gender but "*felt* it with her whole

[25] Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in Early Christian Era* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 32.
[26] Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 119.
[27] Ibid., 129.
[28] Ibid., 131.
[29] Edith Wyschogrod, *Saints and Postmodernism: Revisioning Moral Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 17.

being."[30] Wyschogrod also points out that this has implications for the saintly body in how it perceives pain: "The pain pulses are, so to speak, the price paid for sanctity and may in some contexts become intrinsic to it…The entire body as a pain sensorium is suspended and becomes self-transcending just as vision transcends temporal and perspectival specificity by suspending them."[31] Perpetua feels no pain after being attacked by the heifer and there is a connection between ecstasy/vision and her transcendence of pain:

> She awoke from a kind of sleep (so absorbed had she been in ecstasy in the Spirit) and she began to look about her. Then to the amazement of all she said: "When are we going to be thrown to that heifer or whatever it is?" When told that this had already happened, she refused to believe it until she noticed the marks of her rough experience on her person and her dress.[32]

Daniel Boyarin in his study of Jewish and early Christian martyrdom, *Dying for God,* argues that the "gender-bending" discourse of narratives like Perpetua's "was a radical critique of Greco-roman gender discourses and sexual dimorphism *tout court*."[33] The blending of Roman gender models by both rabbinic Jews and early Christians undercut the hegemonic gender discourse that upheld Roman claims to power.[34] In other words, Perpetua's gender maneuvers as the "valorous, virilized gladiator" challenge the Roman masculinist politics within her own body. Perpetua does not, however, merely become a man as she also continues to embody femininity: "Perpetua went along with a shining countenance and calm step, as the beloved of God, as a wife of Christ, putting down everyone's stare by her own gaze."[35] This is not simply addition or switching of a gender identity as Aviad Kleinberg argues, "Perpetua does not simply lose her

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., 18.
[32] Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 129.
[33] Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 75.
[34] Ibid., 78.
[35] Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 127.

feminine identity; rather, a masculine identity, the identity of Jesus is *added* to it. Jesus does not abandon Perpetua; he suffers with her, since he has joined her during the battle… There is no need to explain how Perpetua has become a woman again. She never stopped being one."[36] Rather, as Boyarin hints at with the term "bending," there is a blurring or blending of gender markers with Perpetua. It is the breakdown of gender boundaries by simultaneously embodying them that enables a resistance to power claims legitimated by Roman notions of gender.[37]

Perpetua's representation as a gladiator is not her only challenge to female subordination. The encounters with her father also demonstrate her masculinity. Perpetua's father is portrayed as losing control of his emotions,[38] "worn with worry," and asserting his *dependence* on Perpetua.[39] This characterization contrasts to Perpetua's stoic-like, and thus masculine, control over her emotions. The most striking picture of Perpetua's increasing "manliness" and her father's feminization and subordination occurs when, in the midst of tears, he prostrates himself before Perpetua; in Perpetua's words, "This was the way my father spoke of love for me, kissing my hands and throwing himself down before me."[40] This Christian gender blending discourse was not solely aimed at an external object. Stephanie Cobb asserts that there is also an intra-communal function of these representations; they evidence an internal concern over the role of women (and men) within a Christian community. She notes, "Feminine characteristics such as modesty and submissiveness continued to be idealized within the Christian communities that produced these texts, and so the authors eased the gender tension by illustrating the women's

[36] Kleinberg, *Flesh Made Word*, 76. Italics original.
[37] Gender blending, however, is not a specifically Christian invention. As Cobb points out, "ancient constructions of sex allowed more ambiguity, because the terms "masculine" and "feminine," "male" and "female," "manly" and "womanly," described types of individuals, not simply their anatomy. In fact, one of the most important aspects of ancient sex construction is its insistence on the fundamental similarities between male and female bodies." *Dying to Be Men*, 25.
[38] Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 109.
[39] Ibid., 113.
[40] Ibid.

femininity alongside their masculinity."[41] One wonders, however, if it is not so much an easing of tension as Cobb states but rather a legitimating of female voices within the community. Caroline Walker Bynum, in her study of medieval women ascetic saints, argues "women *had* to stress the experience of Christ and manifest it outwardly in their flesh, because they did not have clerical office as an authorization for speaking."[42] While the particular historical context for Perpetua *passio* is different than the historical contingencies of the medieval church, the instrumentality of using the body, through suffering, resistance, and gender blending, likewise validates Perpetua's religious experience and voice as legitimate within the Christian community.

Resurrection

The relationship between discourse, power, and martyr's bodies is not, however, merely contained within the hagiographical accounts. These discourses had effects that "reached beyond the grave." That is to say, they affected social and cultural roles and practices. The bodily discourse in all three accounts that we have examined, 2 Maccabees 7, *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, and *The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas*, legitimated a particular view of the body based on the belief in an after-life. In some sense, we can affirm that the martyr's desire for salvation, as resurrection after death, was fulfilled. Kleinberg points out that "[i]f the martyrs lived on, then their biographies did not end with their bodily death. Saints went on performing miracles and expressing their will, not only in acts but also in words, which were transmitted to the community by visionaries and dreamers always ready to serve as the saint's mouthpieces."[43]

[41] Cobb, *Dying to Be Men*, 93.
[42] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 195. Italics original.
[43] Kleinberg, *Flesh Made Word*, 41.

It is not only in "words" or cultural memory that they continued to exist and thus affect power relations, but also in a vivid materiality, where their bodies continued to "act" and exert power. In other words, the martyrs' victory over dominance and subjugation is evidenced in the creation of a new institution that maintained and promoted the power in martyrs' bodies: the relic. Peter Brown succinctly explains how the cult of the relics "creates" the after-life so desired by martyrs:

> The relic is a detached fragment of a whole body… But it is precisely the detachment of the relic from its physical associations that summed up most convincingly the imaginative dialectic we have described. For how better to suppress the fact of death, than to remove part of the dead from its original context in the all too cluttered grave? How better to symbolize the abolition of time in such dead, than to add to that an indeterminacy of space?[44]

Through the fragmentation in the form of relics and the continued performance of miracles, martyrs' bodies "eternally" displayed their victory over oppression in that they continued to embody power, discursively and materially, even after their brutal and painful deaths.

[44] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 78.

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