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**Tensions in Textual Exegesis: Word and Picture in an Illustrated Manuscript of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi***

The famous Franciscan devotional text, the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, has long been cited by art historians as a source for late medieval iconographic innovations. This paper explores the tensions between text and image in a manuscript that offers rare insight into the *Meditationes'* visual exegesis: Paris Bibliothèque Nationale Ms. Ital. 115. The earliest known illustrated copy of the *Meditationes*, Ms. ital. 115 was likely made in or near Pisa circa 1350 for an unknown group of Poor Clare nuns. The manuscript contains evidence of textual interpretation in the form of instructions to the artists in its margins and captions or *tituli* within its illustrations. The instructions and captions were written by the same person, apparently an "advisor" who was responsible for planning the manuscript's image program and later checking it. This person, probably a friar serving as a spiritual advisor to a Poor Clare convent, thereby acted as a translator of the *Meditationes*. The unknown artists of Ms. ital. 115 generally followed the advisor's instructions, but at times they misunderstood or disregarded his wishes. My study of the interface of the text itself, the advisor's instructions, his captions, and the artists' renderings reveals that the text of the *Meditationes* was only one of many influences in this manuscript's creation.