

**Horti Hesperidum**  
**Studi di storia del collezionismo**  
**e della storiografia artistica**

Rivista telematica semestrale

LE IMMAGINI VIVE  
coordinamento scientifico di Carmelo Occhipinti

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a cura di Carmelo Occhipinti

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## EDITORIALE

CARMELO OCCHIPINTI

Vide da lontano un busto grandissimo; che da principio immaginò dovere essere di pietra, e a somiglianza degli ermi colossali veduti da lui, molti anni prima, nell'isola di Pasqua. Ma fattosi più da vicino, trovò che era una forma smisurata di donna seduta in terra, col busto ritto, appoggiato il dosso e il gomito a una montagna; e non finta ma viva; di volto mezzo tra bello e terribile, di occhi e di capelli nerissimi; la quale guardavalo fissamente; e stata così un buono spazio senza parlare, all'ultimo gli disse: «Chi sei?»

G. LEOPARDI, *Dialogo della natura e di un islandese*

Poco prima che si chiudesse l'anno 2013, nel sito internet di «Horti Hesperidum» veniva pubblicato il *call for papers* sul tema delle «Immagini vive».

Nonostante la giovane età della rivista – giravano, ancora, i fascicoli delle sole prime due annate –, sorprendentemente vasta fu, da subito, la risposta degli studiosi di più varia formazione: archeologi, medievisti, modernisti e contemporaneisti. In poche settimane, infatti, il nostro *call for papers* si trovò a essere rilanciato, attraverso i siti internet di diverse università e istituti di ricerca, in tutto il mondo. Risonanza di gran lunga inferiore, nonostante l'utilizzo degli stessi canali, riuscivano invece a ottenere le analoghe iniziative di lì a poco condotte da «Horti Hesperidum» su argomenti specialisticamente meglio definiti come quello della *Descrizione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* (1567) di Lodovico Guicciardini (a proposito dei rapporti artistici tra Italia e Paesi nordici nel XVI secolo), e del *Microcosmo della pittura* (1667) di

Francesco Scannelli (a proposito del collezionismo estense nel XVIII secolo).

Evidentemente era il tema in sé, quello appunto delle «Immagine vive», a destare una così inaspettata risonanza. Tanta risonanza si dovrebbe spiegare – mi sembra – in ragione di una nuova e sempre più diffusa esigenza, molto sentita ormai da parte degli studiosi di storia artistica (sollecitati, più o meno consapevolmente, dagli accadimenti del mondo contemporaneo): l'esigenza, cioè, di indagare certa qualità 'attiva' che le immagini avrebbero posseduto nel corso della storia, nelle epoche, nei luoghi e nei contesti sociali e religiosi più diversi prima che esse diventassero, per così dire, gli 'oggetti' – in un certo senso 'passivi' – della moderna disciplina storico-artistica, prima cioè che le stesse immagini si 'trasformassero' in 'reperti', diventando, così, non necessariamente qualcosa di 'morto' (rispetto a una precedente 'vita' perduta), bensì diventando, in ogni caso, qualcosa di 'diverso' da ciò che originariamente esse erano state. Già per il solo fatto di essere 'guardate' sotto una prospettiva disciplinare come quella della storia dell'arte, che è vincolata a proprie istanze di astrazione e di scientificità (in funzione, per esempio, delle classificazioni o delle periodizzazioni), le immagini non hanno fatto altro che 'trasformarsi': ma è vero che, per loro stessa natura, le immagini si trasformano sempre, per effetto della storia e degli uomini che le guardano, e dei luoghi che cambiano; tanto più, oggi, le immagini continuano a trasformarsi per effetto dei nuovi *media* i quali, sottraendole a qualsivoglia prospettiva disciplinare, ce le avvicinano nella loro più imprevedibile, multiforme, moderna 'vitalità'.

Il fatto è che, immersi come siamo nella civiltà nuova del digitale – la civiltà delle immagini virtuali, de-materializzate, de-contestualizzate che a ogni momento vengono spinte fin dentro alla nostra più personale esistenza quotidiana per ricombinarsi imprevedibilmente, dentro di noi, con i nostri stessi ricordi, così da sostanziare profondamente la nostra stessa identità – ci siamo alla fine ridotti a non poter più fare a meno di questo flusso magmatico che si muove sul *web* e da cui veniamo visceralmente nutriti, e senza il quale non riusciremmo proprio a decidere alcunché, né a pensare, né a scrivere, né a comunicare, né a fare

ricerca. In questo modo, però, le immagini che per via digitale, incessantemente, entrano per così dire dentro di noi sono immagini del tutto prive della loro materia, del loro stesso corpo, perché internet, avvicinandocene, ce le impoverisce, ce le trasforma, ce le riduce a immateriali parvenze. Ma così diventa addirittura possibile – ed è questo per molti di noi, come lo è per molti dei nostri studenti, un paradosso davvero mostruoso – diventa possibile, dicevo, studiare la storia dell'arte senza quasi che sentiamo più il bisogno di andare a vedere le opere d'arte, quelle vere, senza cioè riconsiderarle concretamente in rapporto, per esempio, all'esperienza nostra del 'paesaggio' di cui esse sono state e continuano a essere parte: non può che venirne fuori, ormai, una storia dell'arte fatta di opere ridotte alla parvenza immateriale la quale, distaccatasi dalle opere d'arte 'vere', non conserva di esse alcuna idea di fisicità, né possiede la benché minima capacità di coinvolgimento emotivo che derivava anticamente dalla 'presenza', dalla 'corporeità', dal rapporto col 'paesaggio' e col 'contesto', nonché dalle tradizioni e dai ricordi che, dentro quel 'paesaggio', dentro quel 'contesto', rivivevano attraverso le immagini, vivevano nelle immagini. La storia dell'arte ha finito per ridursi, insomma, a una storia di immagini 'morte', staccate cioè dai contesti culturali, religiosi, rituali da cui esse provenivano: in fondo, è proprio questo tipo di storia dell'arte, scientificamente distaccata dalla 'vita', a rispecchiare bene, nel panorama multimediale e globalizzato che stiamo vivendo, il nostro attuale impoverimento culturale.

In considerazione di quanto detto, questa miscellanea sulle «Immagini vive» è stata pensata anzitutto come raccolta di testimonianze sugli orientamenti odierni della disciplina storico-artistica la quale – oggi come non mai afflitta, per di più, dall'arido specialismo accademico che l'ha ridotta alla più mortificante inutilità sociale –, ambisce, vorrebbe o dovrebbe ambire, alla riconquista dei più vasti orizzonti della storia umana, nonché alla ricerca dei legami profondi che uniscono il passato al presente e, dunque, l'uomo alla società e le civiltà, seppure lontane nello spazio o nel tempo, l'una all'altra.

Ebbene questi due fascicoli della V annata (2015) di «Horti Hesperidum», ciascuno diviso nei due tomi che ora finalmente presentiamo, raccolgono i contributi di quanti, archeologi, medievisti, modernisti e contemporaneisti, abbiano voluto rispondere al nostro *call for papers* intervenendo su argomenti sì molto diversi, però tutti collegati a un'idea medesima: quella di verificare, nel passato come nel presente, una certa qualità 'attiva' che sia storicamente appartenuta, o appartenga, alle immagini.

Esattamente come lo enunciavamo nel sito internet di «Horti Hesperidum», alla fine del 2013, era questo il contenuto del nostro *call for papers*:

La rivista semestrale «Horti Hesperidum» intende dedicare il primo fascicolo monografico del 2015 al tema delle “Immagini vive”. Testimonianze letterarie di varie epoche, dall'antichità pagana all'età cristiana medievale e moderna, permettono di indagare il fenomeno antropologico dell'immagine percepita come presenza “viva”, capace di muoversi, parlare, interagire con gli uomini.

Saranno prese in particolare considerazione le seguenti prospettive di indagine:

1. Il rapporto tra il fedele e l'immagine devozionale
2. L'immagine elogiata come viva, vera, parlante, nell'*ekphrasis* letteraria
3. L'iconoclastia, ovvero l'“uccisione” dell'immagine nelle rispettive epoche

Ora, una siffatta formulazione – cui ha partecipato Ilaria Sforza, antichista e grecista – presupponeva, nelle nostre intenzioni, le proposte di metodo già da noi avanzate nell'*Editoriale* al primo numero di «Horti Hesperidum» (2011), dove avevamo cercato di insistere sulla necessità di guardare alle opere d'arte secondo un'ottica diversa da quella più tradizionalmente disciplinare che, in sostanza, si era definita, pure nella molteplicità degli indirizzi metodologici, tra Otto e Novecento. Allora, infatti, ci chiedevamo:

Ma sono pienamente condivisibili, oggi, intenzioni di metodo come le seguenti, che invece meritano la più rispettosa storicizzazione? Ri-



muovere ogni «ingombro leggendario», auspicava Longhi, che si frapponesse tra lo storico e le opere. Considerare queste ultime con il dovuto distacco scientifico. Guardarle «in rapporto con altre opere»: evitare cioè di accostarsi all'opera d'arte – come però sempre accadeva nelle epoche passate – «con reverenza, o con orrore, come magia, come tabù, come opera di Dio o dello stregone, non dell'uomo». Negare, in definitiva, «il mito degli artisti divini, e divinissimi, invece che semplicemente umani». Queste affermazioni, rilette oggi alla luce di nuove esigenze del nostro contemporaneo, finiscono per suonare come la negazione delle storie dell'arte in nome della storia dell'arte. Come la negazione degli uomini in nome dello storico dell'arte. Come la negazione dei modi di vedere in nome della *connoisseurship*. Come la negazione, in definitiva, della stessa 'storia' dell'arte. Infatti la storia ha davvero conosciuto miracoli e prodigi, maghi e stregoni, opere orribilmente belle, sovrumane, inspiegabili, e artisti terribili e divini. Lo storico di oggi ha il dovere di rispettare e comprendere ogni «ingombro leggendario», senza rimuoverlo; dovrebbe avere cioè il dovere di sorprendersi di fronte alle ragioni per cui, anticamente, a destar «meraviglia», «paura», «terrore» erano i monumenti artistici del più lontano passato come anche le opere migliori degli artisti di ogni presente. Quell'auspicato e antiletterario distacco scientifico ha finito in certi casi per rendere, a lungo andare, la disciplina della storia dell'arte, guardando soprattutto a come essa si è venuta trasformando nel panorama universitario degli ultimi decenni, una disciplina asfittica, non umanistica perché programmaticamente tecnica, di uno specialismo staccato dalla cultura, dalla società, dal costume, dalla politica, dalla religione».

In effetti, dalla cultura figurativa contemporanea provengono segnali ineludibili – gli odierni storici dell'arte non possono non tenerne conto – che ci inducono a muoverci in ben altra direzione rispetto alle indicazioni enunciate da Roberto Longhi nelle sue ormai lontane *Proposte per una critica d'arte* (1950) alle quali ci riferivamo nell'appena citato *Editoriale* di «Horti Hesperidum» del 2011. Pensiamo, per esempio, a quanto si verificava in seno alla 55<sup>a</sup> Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Biennale di Venezia (2013), quando artisti e critici dovettero condividere il bisogno di ritrovare la fede – quella fede che, anticamente, era così sconfinata – nel 'potere' delle immagini, e di ritrovare, tentando di recuperarla dal nostro passato, «l'idea che l'immagine

sia un'entità viva, pulsante, dotata di poteri magici e capace di influenzare, trasformare, persino guarire l'individuo e l'intero universo»: d'altronde una tale idea non la si poteva affatto ritenere estranea alla tradizione culturale da cui noi stessi proveniamo nonostante che la modernità 'illuministica' abbia tentato di cancellarla, respingendola come vecchia, come appartenente a una «concezione datata, offuscata da superstizioni arcaiche».

Così, persino sulle pagine del catalogo della stessa Biennale del '13 (come pure su quelle dell'11, dove era fatta oggetto di rimpianto addirittura la potenza mistica di cui in età medievale era capace la 'luce', contro il buio introdotto da una deprecata età dei 'lumi'), l'urgenza di un rinnovato sguardo sul passato e sulla storia era già di per sé un fatto sorprendente e audace: tanto più se, per contrasto, ripensiamo all'altrettanto audace rifiuto del passato che lungo il XX secolo fu provocatoriamente mosso, in nome della modernità, da parte delle avanguardie e delle neo-avanguardie.

Del resto, «la parola 'immagine' contiene nel suo DNA, nella sua etimologia, una prossimità profonda con il corpo e con la morte: in latino l'*imago* era la maschera di cera che i romani creavano come calco per preservare il volto dei defunti»: ma visto che gli uomini del nostro tempo se ne sono dimenticati, serviva ricordare ai visitatori della Esposizione Internazionale che il mistero primigenio della scultura funeraria era, ed è, quello «di opporre alla morte, all'orizzontalità informe, la verticalità e la rigidità della pietra»<sup>3</sup>.

Di fronte a questa nuova disponibilità dei 'contemporaneisti' nei confronti della 'storia', gli storici dovrebbero, da parte loro, tornare a cercare nel contemporaneo le motivazioni della loro stessa ricerca. Sottratte alle rispettive dimensioni rituali, magiche, funerarie, devozionali e religiose – quelle dimensioni che la civiltà moderna, multimediale e globalizzata ha tentato di annul-

<sup>1</sup> *La Biennale di Venezia. 55ª Esposizione d'arte. Il palazzo enciclopedico*, a cura di M. Gioni, Venezia, Marsilio, 2013, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26.

lare definitivamente – le immagini sono diventate vuoti simulacri, come paiono esserlo quando le si vedono esposte, scientificamente classificate, dietro le vetrine o dentro le sale dei musei al cui interno esse hanno finito per arricchirsi di significati nuovi, certo, ma diversi da quelli che molte di esse possedevano al tempo in cui – citiamo sempre dal catalogo dell'esposizione del '13 – «magia, miti, tradizioni e credenze religiose contavano quanto l'osservazione diretta della realtà»<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 28.



THE ARTIST'S MEMORY:  
HOW TO MAKE THE IMAGE OF THE DEAD SAINT  
SIMILAR TO THE LIVING.  
THE *VERA EFFIGIES* OF IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA.

NINA NIEDERMEIER

«Començaré por el desseo que los Padres primeros de la Compañía tuvieron de tener un retrato al bivo de nuestro Padre Ignacio de santa memoria [...]»<sup>1</sup>. Written on behalf of Pedro Ribadeneyra in 1587 Christophorus Lopez starts his account about the genesis of the true image of Ignatius of Loyola with the first padres of the Society of Jesus desiring for a portrait of their defunct founder. The wanting of a portrait *ad vivum* is in this case identical with the wish for a 'true image' of Ignatius, that kind of portrait, which arised from the legend of Veronica und indicated all along the imprint of the Holy Face. The idea

1 MHSI 1960, p. 239. The original text is in Madrid, Biblioteca nacional, ms. 6525, pp. 129-137. Further editions are: CARTAS 1874, pp. 405-416; MHSI 1904, pp. 758-767. In the following MHSI 1960 is quoted.

of true images made a long way from this origin and increasingly took on a life of its own in the history of portraits. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the options of contextualisation manifolded and a complex terminology like *vera imago*, *verus vultus*, *wahre Abkonterfeigung* etc. named also images of humans, animals and plants, even maps<sup>2</sup>. In the case of the *vera effigies* of the new saints of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the concept of the true image is closely linked to the demand for a living image and therefore this continual correlation is outlined in the following by means of the particular constellation of the *vera effigies* of Ignatius of Loyola<sup>3</sup> (fig. 1, 2).

After making provision for the production of the *vera effigies* of Ignatius – among other things the procurement of a wax mask removed from the death mask and the production of a gesso bust corrected in accordance with the living appearance by Hermano Beltrán – the padres made an approach to Sanchez Coello, the prestigious portrait painter at the court of Philipp II, and expressed their constant concern for a *vera effigies*, «el desseo con que todos estávamos de tener un retrato verdadero del nuestro Padre»<sup>4</sup>. The following plot of Lopez's account describes the markedly successful production of the *vera effigies*, the euphoric consent of all, who the painting was presented to, together with the upmost appreciation, which was devoted to padre Ribadeneyra considering his efforts.

The proclaimed success of this image has not left any comparable traces in the remaining textual sources as one would expect. Even those editions of Ignatius's life, written by Ribadeneyra and edited after 1585, the year of the emergence of the image, did not revise completely the notorious pessimistic esti-

2 On *verae imagines* see CASINI 2000; NIEHR 2004.

3 On the *vera effigies* of Ignatius of Loyola see TACCHI VENTURI 1922, pp. 387-392; TACCHI VENTURI 1929, p. 18; DUDON 1934, pp. 647-649; LETURIA 1943; TACCHI VENTURI 1950, pp. 635-641; HORNEDO 1956; HENNEBERG 1967; KÖNIG-NORDHOFF 1982, pp. 46 and 66-76; ROM IN BAYERN 1997, cat. no. 23 (R. Baumstark).

4 MHSI 1960, p. 242.

mation of the general situation of the Ignatian iconography. Even though Ribadeneyra inserted from now on a passage referring to the new portrait<sup>5</sup>, at the end of the chapter about the Saint's physique and constitution he kept the expression of his general dissatisfaction. There is no portrait *ad vivum*<sup>6</sup> and all images of him circulating now are made after his death:

Nullam nos habere imaginem quae ipsum ad vivum referat; [...] Itaque imagines eius quae circumferuntur, ex quadam ductae sunt post ipsius mortem efficta<sup>7</sup>.

A passage quite similar is mentioned in Ignatius's life written by Giovanni Pietro Maffei. Ignatius's circulating images are not *ad vivum*, because he did not suffer portraying him, when he was still alive:

Effigies circumfertur illius, non admodum ad vivum, ut familiares affirmant; siquidem ex mortui demum facie, gypso imaginem expresse plastae, quoniam ipse, dum viveret, quamquam multorum precibus fatigatus, neq. pingi neq. fingi se passus est [...]<sup>8</sup>.

The same attitude is represented by the sixteenth century biography of Daniello Bartoli:

Effigie, che il rappresenti affatto simigliante al naturale, veramente non v'è [...] Le altre, come imagini tratte da lui già morto, e disforma-

5 «Quarum tamen omnium (meo quidem iudicio) proxime ad veritatem accedit ea quam Ildefonsus Sanctius, Philippi II regis pictor (quae exprimendis ad vivum rebus maxime excellit) me praesente et commonente, ex prototypo romano Mantuae Carpentanorum depinxit, hoc ipso anno salutis nostrae, 1585». Quoted from RIBADENEYRA 1965, p. 732. About the editorial history of the early lives of Ignatius see also pp. XI-XXIV and pp. 3-19, see further KÖNIG-NORDHOFF 1982, pp. 45 f.

6 The term *ad vivum* is used here and in the following in the very conventional sense Ribadeneyra suggests: being made from the living object respectively representing it alive. See further research on this many-faceted term: SWAN 1995; BAKKER 2011; FELFE 2013.

7 RIBADENEYRA 1965, pp. 730 et seqq.

8 MAFFEI 1585, p. 200.

to, mancano di spirito, e massimamente di quella maestà di volto, e di quella vivacità d'occhi, ch'era tanto sua propria<sup>9</sup>.

The introductory words about the *vera effigies* found in the *Acta Sanctorum* finally express all in all the entirely unsatisfying situation of the Ignatian iconography: there is no *effigies*, which perfectly represents the Saint. Efforts seeking for an image which represents him *ad vivum* are in vain:

Nulla est effigies, quae Sanctum perfecte referat [...] Frustra laboraverit aliquis, ut nanciscatur alicubi imaginem Sancti pictam aut fictam adeo artificiosè ac feliciter, ut eum perfectè, & ad vivum, quod aiunt, referat<sup>10</sup>.

### *The corpse as model*

The crucial point of failing is the non-existence of a portrait painted from the still living Saint – the representational defect and the dissimilarity of the existing portraits, which are lamented in every edition of Ignatius's life, are argued by their inevitable production in front of the corpse. A perfect likeness of the living Saint can not be achieved in front of a dead body – the reasons are obvious: the muscular atony together with the unanimated body converts the former appearance to an unessential shell, which displays obvious differences to the living body. Bartoli frankly concedes, that Ignatius's corpse was already deformed when the artists started to sketch, although this happened very soon after his death<sup>11</sup>. In the same way Lopez's account tells us about altered details in the swollen dead face causing difficulties in removing the death mask: Beltrán was en-

<sup>9</sup> BARTOLI 1650, p. 580.

<sup>10</sup> AASS 1731, p. 522.

<sup>11</sup> Ignatius's embalmed corpse was already buried in the evening of the first of August, the day after his death. The removing of the death mask and the execution of sketches in front of the dead body must have proceeded rapidly – «giovandosi dell'aspetto della salma quasi ancor palpitante», as Tacchi Venturi assumed. See TACCHI VENTURI 1950, pp. 635 et seqq. and 639.



couraged to correct the swollen lips, the squeezed nostrils and the closed eyes accordingly to the living appearance when he was executing the gesso bust<sup>12</sup>.

Emphasizing the differences between the dead and the living appearance is astonishing in regard to the current idealization of the dead sacred body, which applies to the quattrocento. The saints' dead bodies bloomed in celestial beauty, whereas they often lived their lives with entirely plain appearances, as Urte Krass states<sup>13</sup>. Thus Antonino of Florence's dead face appeared more beautiful and cheerful, stated by eyewitnesses, than it had been during his lifetime: «videbaturque omnium iudicio venustior laetiorque in mortuo facies quam fuerat in vivo»<sup>14</sup>. Giovanni Tavelli's face was surrounded by celestial light during the time of his death, the expression of his face was joyful and merry. The angelic appearance of the corpse resulted out of the still lasting relation of the soul to its earthly body while the soul itself already was with God. The light of celestial splendor was reflected in the leftovers of the dead body. Also at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the dead saints' complexion is described more lively than kept in memory by intimates during their lifetime. The undecayed body of the hermit Francesco di Paola (canonized in 1519) was found much more shapely and colored than he was known living: «quod eum ita formosum reperit & melius (ut apparebat) coloratum, quam cognoverat dum viveret»<sup>15</sup>. Neither pain nor death left perceivable traces, his dead body appeared almost similar to the living<sup>16</sup>. A climax of vivaci-

12 «[...] Como al tiempo de la muerte los labios se hinchan, se le avía el labio alto hinchado y el baxo apretado con el yesso, y las ventanas de las narizes apretado con el mismo yesso, y torcido un poco, y los ojos cerrados». Quoted from MHSI 1960, p. 242.

13 KRASS 2012, pp. 42 and 175. About the beauty of the saints see further GIANNARELLI 2003, pp. 11-18.

14 Quoted from KRASS 2012, p. 175.

15 AASS 1675, p. 159.

16 «Il Servo di Dio sembrava addormentato in una pace celestiale: il suo volto pallido, ma fresco, non presentava il più lieve segno di alterazione: si sarebbe detto che, per il freddo bacio della sorella morte, avesse acquistato un'espressione di dolcezza e di maestà, che a vederlo moveva i cuori a devozione». Quoted from ROBERTI 1915, p. 655.

ty at the moment of death and the immutability of the aspect despite the influence of death as last impact still owed to the earthly life are classified as signs of sanctity, manifested most obviously by the constantly undecayed remaining body. The production of a true image in front of the beautiful corpse blooming in the splendor of sainthood seems to be the logical consequence and even the preferable option compared with the portrait from life.

*The desire for a living image*

In the case of Ignatius the idealization of the saint corpse has been rejected: his portrayed body is «già morto, e disformato»<sup>17</sup>. The distinctive term *disformato* describing the dead body is simultaneously used (in its negated form) to delineate the living Saint in the texts of his early lives. Ignatius's injured leg sustained during the defense of Pamplona and the slight limping resulting out of this event caused absolutely no distortion of his living appearance. Only a really attentive one would have noticed it: «claudicavit nonnihil [...], sed citra ullam deformitatem; ut nemo fere nisi curiosus animadverteret»<sup>18</sup>. His appearance during lifetime is glorified into an idealized figure whose defects are obliterated by the impeccable behaviour of the Saint.

The turn of the idealization from the corpse to the living body rendered the desire for a portrait *ad vivum* possible and also the complaint about the lack of an image made from the still living Saint. The ideal point in time for portraying was no longer the moment of death during which the supernatural beauty of heaven was appearing as the summa of a saint's life, but the whole space of lifetime in which the saint's ideal form and aspect was tangible and experienceable by encountering him subjected to

17 BARTOLI 1650, p. 580.

18 MAFFEI 1585, p. 200. A comparable wording is found in the Italian translation of Ribadeneira's life: «zoppicava un poco d'una gamba, ma però senza deformità, di maniera che con la moderata cura, ch'egli nel caminar poneva, à pena à gl'occhi de' riguardanti si dimostrava», quoted from RIBADENEYRA 1586, p. 445.

the flux of his own lifetime. The representational purpose of the *vera effigies* was no longer to exhibit the celestial saint, but to depict the exterior aspect of his past earthly life. Only life itself sufficed the demand for similitude. Bartoli merely accepted one single portrait – secretly done during lifetime – as «affatto simigliante al naturale», whereas the portraits made after Ignatius's death are throughout referred to as dissatisfying<sup>19</sup>.

The same scepticism about death portraits is experienced in the life of Carlo Borromeo. His biographer Giovanni Pietro Giussano mentions:

[...] con tutto che esse imagini si vedino dissimili assai dal naturale, non essendo arrivato alcuno a rappresentarlo naturalmente, per non haversi egli lasciato ritrar mai; però se ne veggono pur di troppo diformi, e lontanissime dalla sua vera similitudine<sup>20</sup>.

In the same way a representational disadvantage and a lack in authenticity of the posthumous images is deduced from the lack in a portrait from life.

The throughout extremely different estimation of portraits made from life and those made posthumously indicates, that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century a new interest awoke to represent the true images of the saints in the way they had been in lifetime. Nevertheless the classical death portrait, which represents the dead saint on the bier or deathbed, was produced further on – for example the portrait of Angela Merici, dated 1540, represents the dead Saint upright, but with closed eyes<sup>21</sup> (fig. 3). Equally the ideal concept of the *acheiropoieton* continued to be a common option of the saint's portrait<sup>22</sup>. But as early as in the late quattrocento the desire loomed to perceive the saints by means of their death

19 BARTOLI 1650, p. 580. Jacopino del Conte's portrait is mentioned there as the best we have today, but Bartoli's judgement, that none of the portraits is completely «al naturale», is also valid for del Conte's painting.

20 GIUSSANO 1610, p. 674.

21 The presumably most faithful copy of the lost original is reproduced in: RÜHL 2011, p. 116.

22 See the eyewitness account about the posthumously appeared portrait of Luigi Rabata, described and quoted by KRASS 2012, p. 189.

portraits as they had been in life. And that shape of the living saints, which already equalled the true celestial shape, became the essentially venerable object of devotion. In this manner Pietro Delfino tells us about the imprint of Ambrogio Traversari's death mask in 1490:

Every day I look at it and by the continual contemplation of this likeness I am encouraged to emulate and imitate this very significant congregational spiritual father – desiring to transform myself into the very same image, which he – now in heaven – already exposed during his lifetime<sup>23</sup>.

The facial features of the once living Saint are observed in the countenance of the dead Saint – which is the image of the imprint – and are subtilized into a sheer idea, which the interior spiritual shape of the devotional's soul can approach.

*The reawakening of the dead saint as vera effigies ad vivum*

The true image of the Saint Francesco di Paola, made by the French court painter Jean Bourdichon by means of the Saint's death mask in 1507, is known as a quite early “death portrait *ad vivum*”<sup>24</sup>. More precisely Bourdichon removed a second death mask at the moment of the transfer of the remains into a sarcophagus out of stone ten or twelve days after the burial. His aim was to depict a better likeness with the aspiration of maximum resemblance according to his true shape – «similitudinem vultus ejus, secundum veram figuram»<sup>25</sup>. By the means of the second death mask Bourdichon aimed to produce a more authentic and similar image of Francesco's face than maybe his first efforts

23 Delfino's letter is quoted at full length by KRASS 2012, p. 281.

24 PERRIMEZZI 1855; ROBERTI 1915; FIOT 1961; RUSSO 1964, pp. 1163-1175; KRASS 2012.

25 Quoted from FIOT 1961, p. 110. About Fiot's assumption that Bourdichon made twice approaches to Francesco's *vera effigies*, see FIOT 1961, p. 68.

had been: «ut certius et melius ipsum vultum depingeret»<sup>26</sup>. Whereas Bourdichon's original paintings are not confidently identified respectively presumed lost, the 'official' *vera effigies*, which Francis I sent to pope Leo X on occasion of Francesco's canonisation, survived by various prints, which implicate correspondent textual references to the original painting<sup>27</sup> (fig. 4). The prints represent the Saint upright, leaning with both hands onto a stick, his face bent forwards and framed by his cowl and a dense full beard. The ostentatious small detail of the face, the sunken pose of the head, the apparently relaxed jawline and the artificially half-opened eyes with the pupils turned upward indicate the production of the original painting in front of the defunct or the death mask. The turning upwards of the body, the opening of the eyes and the representation of the arms, looking ostentatiously dynamic – the hands embrace the stick extremely vigorously, with muscles and veins visible – seem to be purposeful interventions of the artist in order to resuscitate his dead model.

In what kind of manner a portrait painter can get from the death model to a portrait *ad vivum* is possibly displayed by two studies of Carlo Borromeo's *vera effigies*. The British Museum preserves two small-scale charcoal drawings of Carlo Borromeo's head, which Pater Sebastian Resta is said to have separated from a sketchbook of Ambrogio Figino, which he once possessed (according to his own notes). One of the studies reveals the subtly drawn profile of Carlo with closed eyes and it is inscribed by Resta on the upper border «S. Caroli effigies vera» (fig. 5). The second sketch is elaborated more distinctly and displays Carlo in three-quarter profile and with open eyes (fig. 6). Resta's note begins here as follows: «L'altro ritratto di S. Carlo è in morte, questo è in vita [...]». Katja Burzer interprets these words in her recently published study about Carlo Borromeo's iconography to the effect that the drawings must have been originated in front of Carlo's deathbed just before respectively just

<sup>26</sup> Quoted from FIOT 1961, p. 111.

<sup>27</sup> See further CAMPBELL 2008, p. 33.

after his death<sup>28</sup>. More probable seems however – considering the different degrees of elaboration – that the drawing *in vita* represents a revision of the one *in morte*. The principal takeover of the physiognomical details coinciding with particular modifications – like the turning into the three-quarter profile, the opening of the eyes, the repeated adjustments of the facial contour and the more lively configuration of the hair – suggests that the physiognomical information of the dead model was prepared here for a portrait *ad vivum*.

Likewise the pattern of a two-part work process is echoed in descriptions of the genesis of Ignatius's *vera effigies*. In the same way Hermano Beltrán's copy of the death mask was the revision of its failings and Jacopino del Conte's portrait of Ignatius was a corrected image obtained by two steps. The portrait was «e vultu quidem mortui exceptam, sed ex viventis perfectam imagine»<sup>29</sup>. *Vultu mortui exceptam* means a merely receptive period of the artistic realization, the relevant visual information is 'dissolved' out of the face of the defunct, what means also the exact representation of the measures and proportions of the death mask. The second, executing and accomplishing step, *viventis perfectam imagine*, describes a more active, intervening, modifying creative phase, which reflects the final result and its impact. But what is the counterpart to the dead face, what allows the artist to correct his image according to the living appearance?

Consulting relevant contemporaneous treatises about art theory entails an ever-growing list of rules and advices how to form the human figure to a vivacious effect. A common idea – if it is not in general the very ideal of drawing – is the combination of an accurately represented figure according to measure and proportion with a vivid attitude and expression of the eyes in harmony with the depicted plot. On this exemplarily Federico Zuccaro in *Idea de' Pittori, Scultori et Architetti*:

28 BURZER 2011, p. 34.

29 AASS 1731, p. 522.

[...] havere l'occhio alle tre parti del Disegno, nel capitolo secondo detto Anima, Spirito, e Corpo. Il Corpo è la forma esteriore: & à questo si deve dar proportioni di regola, e misura, delle quali ne tratteremo altrove. E perché questo sia compito e perfetto deve haver Anima, e Spirito. Lo Spirito è quella vivezza, e fierezza di moto che deve havere la figura nello sguardo, e gesti per far bene l'ufficio suo secondo i soggetti<sup>30</sup>.

Jacopino del Conte's efforts concerning this matter are subtle, but anyway distinct (fig. 1). Pose and clothes correspond to the living Ignatius. To open his eyes and to avoid the sleepy look typical for portraits made from death masks, he edged the shape of the upper lid intensely with dark lines defining the look sharply against the heavy bulges of the eye wrinkles pushing downward. The Saint seems to face attentively an object within reach, his labial angles and nasolabial folds show a light tension, as smiling. But are these standardized, arbitrarily repeatable interventions sufficient to help providing veracity to a portrait and to generate maximum similarity according to the represented person? Does not the veracity of the *vera effigies* arise as a result of a particular representational proximity to the individual person, which it represents? Assuming that the potential truth of the *vera effigies* is understood as the specific vivacity of its representational manner, a turn from the definite shape of the dead object to the multitude of representational possibilities regarding the living person is the consequence. The artist's stylisation generates similarity and at the same time it deviates from the dead model. The dissimilarity of the dead and the living body is the gateway of the artist's imagination and the space, in which his fiction of the living figure prospers. The claim for veracity by means of a representation *ad vivum* is all at once the common claim for reinstating painting in its original scope – now also valid for the realm of the saints' portraits. Painting is supposed to provide – in accordance with Alberti – extended life to the facial features of the portrayed defuncts by

<sup>30</sup> Quoted from ZUCCARO 1961, p. 14.

means of its divine power<sup>31</sup>. Merely mechanical, indexical techniques of representating natural, dead shapes like death masks or their imprints are absolutely insufficient under the influence of the *immagini vive*. The idea of the *acheiropoieton* accomplished by the intervention of higher powers is replaced by a new concept of the true image, which highlights the artist's performance recreating the lost vivacity as *alter deus*. Subsequently credit is given to the image and its mimetic efficacy for coping with the new claim for veracity and the current platonic criticism concerning the shadowiness of the images seems to be refuted. Instead the triad of painting, artist and image is holder and creator of a new concept of the *vera imago* – assuming that vivacity is truth<sup>32</sup>.

*The artist as new Veronica*

The artistic work step towards a lively representation, which is the step towards pictorial truth at the same time, receives verification by the artist in order to transform its fictitious nature into authenticity. Bartoli, the only biographer of Ignatius, who concretely refers to Jacopino del Conte's portrait, writes:

Pur ne habbiamo in Roma una di mano di Iacopin del Conte, dipintor eccellente, ricavata dal morto, ma corretta secondo l'effigie, che ne haveva in mente il medesimo dipintore, che stato lungo tempo suo penitente, spesse volte il vedeva: e questa, come ultima imagine del Santo, e di sì buon pennello, si ha comunemente per la migliore<sup>33</sup>.

31 «Nam habet ea quidem in se vim admodum divinam non modo ut quod de amicitia dicunt, absentes pictura praesentes esse faciat, verum etiam defunctos longa post saecula viventibus exhibeat, ut summa cum artificis admiratione ac visentium voluptate cognoscantur. [...] Itaque vultus defunctorum per picturam quodammodo vitam praelongam degunt». (Leon Battista Alberti, *De Pictura*, Liber II, 25.) See ALBERTI 2011.

32 A first attempt of this conceptual innovation can be seen by Jan van Eyck's portraits of the Holy Face. Van Eyck's signature substitutes the sudarium in the same way and moves his paintings close to the bourgeois portrait painted on commission. See WOLF 2002, p. 195.

33 BARTOLI 1650, p. 580.



The image of Jacopino's personal memory was the corrective of the image made from the dead Saint. The portrait painter was said to be particularly qualified for this purpose: he had been the Saint's penitent for a long time and therefore had seen him very often. His expertise and his special status as *familiaris* and spiritual pupil presented him closer to the Saint than most of the other potential recipients of the portrait may have been. Hence the artist's relationship constituted a potent argument for the authenticity of his portrait. The appearance of Ignatius – «quam tenebat is pictor animo impressam»<sup>34</sup> – had been impressed into the artist's mind, the same way a seal is impressed into mouldable wax. The analogy to the legend of Veronica strikes the eye: the face of Christ is unerasably impressed into a receptive medium, the attendant's Veil. In the same way Veronica stretches her Veil in front of the recipients, Jacopino's portrait – after being manifested by the painting process and legitimized by the authorship of the eyewitness Jacopino – presents the interior image, which the painter received in his mind while meeting the Saint.

Tracing the history of the authentic image the outstanding importance of the imprint as method of creating images is striking<sup>35</sup>. It starts with Veronica and the initial, direct and material contact between body and medium, the moment of touch, which Veronica can mediate permanently as image, which is the object of contact at the same time. The identity of matrix and real face is repeated by the technique of the death mask, although the magical moment of imprint, which could not have been created without divine intervention, is already missing here. Physical touch as act of supernatural transmission remains important in the realm of the secondary relics, even if medial images are not reflected in them. As Urte Krass states, the precept of physical touch is continued in reduced manner by printed graphics and medals as mechanical imprint – two media,

34 AASS 1731, p. 522.

35 See DIDI-HUBERMAN 1999; BELTING 2005, pp. 47 et seqq.; KRASS 2012, p. 275.

which belong to specific credibility because of their ostensibly objective production method – the artist's hand seems not to intervene into the mechanical process of imprint. But as there is no longer a direct contact between object and medium, the artist as mediator inevitably steps in. He actually provides models and drawings, from which 'magically' repeatable images are derived, no longer merely mechanically generated but produced under the aspect of mimesis. His eye as organ of perception, his mind as memory store and his hand as instrument of reproduction turn into the components, which substitute the direct touch. In the productional process the true authors are nevertheless concealed in order to suggest the objective credibility and validity of the images. In the case of Jacopino del Conte's portrait of Ignatius authenticity is not generated by the apparent non-involvement of the artist, but – in contrast – he and his effort of reproduction are highlighted as Bartoli's wording suggests. The imprint in his memory, which emerged in occasion of personal encounter – a kind of mediated physical touch –, is to be estimated as a completely immaterial imprint in one's mind and therefore it has to be lined up with the importance of physical touch and mechanical imprint concerning the authenticity of images. It ultimately supersedes the sheer mechanics of imprinting as solely accepted production method of the true image and finds as additional option the mimetic true image depending on sheer similarity and creation by an artist.

*The vera effigies as image in the mind*

Looking ahead to future as well as back to the past confirms that the close relationship of the *vera effigies* with interior images of the imagination and personal memory is not crucial alone in this single case, but that it is a permanent phenomena, which stayed relevant for many periods of time. Hans Belting speaks of a changed attitude towards reproducing the image of Veronica concerning the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the anti-reformationist painting at the beginning of the following century:

Now it was no longer about the multiplication of the material sheet, which was venerated in Rome, but it was about its reproduction in the mind's eye blending the difference between sheet and face, between image and original, into a single impression. The image of fantasy or imagination was requested [...] The validity of the 'true image' did not have priority any longer and the true image became an effort of imagination because it had to be 'impressed' into the soul of the recipient<sup>36</sup>.

On this Belting brings in the numerous *Santa Faz*-images of Francisco de Zurbarán, whose varieties did not serve to provide an objective image of the Roman relic as much as to afford the possibility to the artist to paint the subject as an always changing inner vision. Either by a phantom-like representation of the face, whose lively expression creates a greater impact than the veristically painted *sudarium* so that two different realities emerge, each of them contrasting and reinforcing one another (Santa Faz, 1631, Stockholm, National Museum), or by extremely faintly facial features of Christ, whereby the recipient completes the true and holy face in his mind by meditative devotion (fig. 7). Here, too, two different realities are generating and reinforcing each other, namely the mimetic image and the one of the inner vision. The "death portrait *ad vivum*", the variability of its vivacious representation and the significance of the inward image as crucial benchmarks coincide with these new representational capabilities of Veronica's Veil.

The declaration of interior images as true likenesses has a long tradition within the Christian concept not only of the Holy Face, but also of portrayals of humans. Paulinus of Nola (354/55-431) is believed to be one of the earliest saints, who rejected to

36 «Es ging jetzt nicht mehr um die Vervielfältigung des materiellen Tuchs, das in Rom verehrt wurde, sondern um seine Reproduktion vor dem inneren Auge, vor dem der Unterschied zwischen Tuch und Gesicht, zwischen Bild und Original, zu einem einzigen Eindruck verschmolz. Man begehrte nach einem Bild in der Phantasie oder Imagination [...] Der Beweischarakter des 'echten Bildes' stand nicht mehr im Vordergrund, und das echte Bild wurde zu einer Leistung der Einbildungskraft, weil es sich in der Seele des Betrachters 'einbilden' sollte». See BELTING 2005, p. 120.

be portrayed. In the correspondence with his esteemed friend Sulpicius Severus, who requested a portrait of his friend, Paulinus unfolds a complex, moral theologically argued apology of his refusal<sup>37</sup>. This attitude will remain relevant as topos of humility for the saints of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, who were supposedly not portrayed during lifetime<sup>38</sup>. Important is here Paulinus's distinction of the celestial and the earthly image of humans, whereas the first mentioned is the one and only, which is true and worthy of representation. At the same time it is the image of God, which is inherent in every one and which constitutes the principal similarity of all men. Picturing it by means of an ordinary portrayal is hardly possible, because the individual features of each one precisely constitute the shapes of the earthly image, which are vain and useless. At the beginning of his letter Paulinus rebukes the friend, whose desiring clearly focused on an earthly portrait, with following words: «Severus, dear Severus, your great affection for me is driving you mad. You make a fool of yourself in your attitude to me»<sup>39</sup>. Comforting his friend he refers him to his celestial portrait already possessed by Severus's mind and which alone could lead to an acceptable likeness, if used as model and given that an artist is capable to transform his descriptions adequately into painting:

But thanks be to the Lord, because He has painted my portrait in a picture that lasts and lives, not on tablets that crumble or on wax that melts, but *in the fleshly tablets of your heart*. There, in the unity of faith and grace, I am impressed and fashioned after your soul; and you will keep me and behold me there with inseparable and everpresent regard, not only in this life but also in eternity. Even in this life, if you are fired with such a great desire to possess also the consolations of sight, you will be able to describe my appea-

37 PAULINUS 1967, pp. 119-124.

38 See BURZER 2011, p. 30. Federico Borromeo comments in his 1624 published treatise *De pictura sacra* the circumstance that there is no portrait of his cousin Carlo Borromeo made during his lifetime. He refers to the example of the early Christian saints like Paulinus of Nola telling that Carlo fled such moments of earthly vanities like they did. See BORROMEO 2010, pp. 106 f.

39 PAULINUS 1967, p. 119.

rance to painters, however inexperienced or ignorant, by sketching my outline which dominates your mind. You can lay before them your memory in which you keep my portrait, like a face to be copied from the clear features of seated models. But if the hand of the artist strays through being too ignorant to understand your description, in the eyes of others he will paint a poor likeness; but for you, who always think of me and embrace me in mind, it does not matter what likeness he paints with unskilled hand and calls Paulinus, for in your knowing heart it will still be I<sup>40</sup>.

The true likeness of Paulinus, which Severus already bears in himself, is the vivid painting of God, painted «in the fleshly tablets of your heart». The wording refers to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, in which – after negating the necessity of testimonials for the apostles – it is stated that: «Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart»<sup>41</sup>. Considering testimonials made by men for the scope of legitimation Paulus refers to the divine identity inscribed into men by God himself, which authorises him genuinely. Thus testimonials and likenesses of his exterior appearance become obsolete that way. Paulinus's «picture that lasts and lives» means the memory image of the friend, which is of personal and of divine origin, that means it derives from the spirit of the living God and coincides with the memory of Severus's own divine origin. Paulus pursues

40 PAULINUS 1967, pp. 123 f. The Latin version reads: «Gratias autem domino, quod perenni magis et vivente pictura imagines nostras non in tabulis putribilibus neque ceris liquentibus, sed in tabulis carnalibus cordis tui pinxit, ubi nos inpressos et animae tuae conformatos fidei et gratiae unitate custodiens, non solum istic sed etiam in aeterno saeculo individua semperque praesenti contemplatione conspicies. Hic etiam, si tantus amor est visibilia quoque captare / solatia, poteris per magistras animi tui lineas vel inperitis aut ignorantibus nos dictare pictoribus, memoriam illis tuam, in qua nos habes pictos, velut imitanda de conspicuis adsidentium vultibus ora proponens. Sed si forte ad intellectum verbi tui inscitior manus artis erraverit, dissimiles pinget aliis, tibi tamen nos semper animo consideranti et complectenti, quoslibet vultus sub nostro nomine inperitia sua pinxerit, tamen tua conscientia nos erimus». Quoted from PAULINUS 1998, pp. 716-727.

41 2 Cor 3:3.

further the antithesis of the dead epistle made of ink and the lively inscription in the heart on an additional semantic level: he transfers both metaphors to the Old and New Covenant und compares the epistle made of ink with the Tablets of Law, which Moses – so to speak as *acheiropoieton* manifested as text – had received from God. In contrast Christ inscribed the new mission into the apostles' hearts by means of God's living spirit, a message, which leads now to true splendor and vivacity: «who also made us sufficient as servants of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life»<sup>42</sup>. Paulus concludes the chapter with the prospect of men's metamorphosis into his own divine image: «But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit»<sup>43</sup>. This serves Paulinus as reason for his refusal of any portrait of him, because he regards this process of metamorphosis as not yet completed in his own case:

But I am poor and wretched, and since I am still caked with the filth of my earthly image [...] how shall I dare to paint myself for you when I am found guilty of denying the image of the heavenly man through earthly corruption?<sup>44</sup>

It is necessary to record that already in the early Christian debate the vivid, immaterial image, unveiling itself and inscribed into the human heart by divine power was believed to be superior compared to the fixed and inanimated, dead object.

Now you may wonder how the image of Ignatius in Jacopino del Conte's mind has to be interpreted («l'effigie, che ne haveva in mente il medesimo dipintore»): Is it God's painting *ad vivum* or is it an image, which was generated by Jacopino's memory autonomously? The corresponding passage by Paulinus reads as

42 2 Cor 3:6.

43 2 Cor 3:18.

44 PAULINUS 1967, p. 120.

follows: «your memory in which you keep my portrait»<sup>45</sup> («memoriam [...] tuam, in qua nos habes pictos»). It does not indicate the autonomous executing of an image in the mind, but merely the possession of it. The same verb *habere* is found in Bartoli's text, and in the Latin version of the *Acta Sanctorum* we even find the very passive verb *impressam*<sup>46</sup>, which suggests merely the receiving of the image in the mind. Allusions to a feeding-in of the image of Ignatius into Jacopino's mind by God remain nevertheless moderate, whereas in Bartoli's text the exposition of the earthly relationship between the artist and the Saint seems to have priority. His close relationship to Ignatius as his penitent and the numerous occasions to see him are instantly invoked to reason the exceptionally clear image of his memory<sup>47</sup>. Bartoli's assertion – which lacks further confirmation by other textual sources and therefore may be a completely fictitious argument – serves as a kind of assurance regarding a certain degree of similarity of the portrait. It is obvious that a painter, who had seen his model frequently, would only finish a tolerably similar image, and moreover at that time painting a portrait from memory was common practice and exercises of drawing without the attendance of the model were an often described discipline in the academic art literature. But not only the frequent observation of the model in the past mattered in the case of Jacopino, but also a close personal relationship was significant, a relationship, which demands an uniform spiritual alignment between confessor and penitent. This constellation reminds Paulinus's wording: «There, in the unity of faith and grace, I am impressed and fashioned after your soul; and you will keep me and behold me there with inseparable and everpresent regard, not only in this life but also in eternity»<sup>48</sup>. Identical shape of the soul and unity of faith are assumed here as conditions for receiving the true image of the other in the mind and

45 PAULINUS 1967, p. 124.

46 AASS 1731, p. 522.

47 BARTOLI 1650, p. 580.

48 PAULINUS 1967, p. 124.

to conserve it there as living memory image for good. A later passage of Paulinus describes this as perpetual embrace in the soul («nos semper animo consideranti et complectenti»<sup>49</sup>) – the maximum proximity to the model is completely relocated inward and is of an especially friendly and spiritual quality. And therefore Jacopino, the spiritual *familiaris* of Ignatius, seems to be predestinated for this kind of charge, and not only because he is the executing artist at the same time. The source of friction implied by Paulinus between the oral descriptions of Severus and the potential awkwardness and lack of sensitivity of a painter could be surmounted by Jacopino without loss, because he had no need of descriptions and also because he was a highly praised Roman portrait painter at that time<sup>50</sup>. Bartoli does not forget to add that his portrait is «di sì buon pennello, si ha comunemente per la migliore»<sup>51</sup>. This ideal constellation of Ignatius and Jacopino, in which *familiaris* and painter amalgamate in one person, is not an uniquely formulated argumentation of the authenticity of true images, but a common narrative pattern, which accompanies the genesis of true images particularly since the 16<sup>th</sup> century on to modern beliefs.

### *The artist as familiaris*

Considering the case of Francesco di Paola, Jean Bourdichon takes on this role. As painter of the French royal court he was like Jacopino a portrait painter of known expertise and he was linked to the hermit, who lived in the periphery of the royal court, by a close friendship. For this reason Bourdichon was able to frequent and observe him regularly. These circumstan-

49 Ibidem.

50 «[...] essendo stato infin dalla sua giovinezza molto inclinato a ritrarre di naturale, ha voluto che questa sia stata sua principale professione [...] Ha [...] fatto assai ritratti interi, vestiti e nudi, d'uomini e di donne, che sono stati bellissimi, però che così erano i naturali». Quoted from VASARI 1987, p. 222; see further BAGLIONE 1995, pp. 52-54 and 75 f.

51 BARTOLI 1650, p. 580.



ces are referred to in textual sources and the record of the witnesses' hearing<sup>52</sup>. An inventory of 1771 reads: «Bourdichon, who knew François very well» («Bourdichon qui connaissait beaucoup François»). Three different sources (an ancient notebook, two inventories) emphasize the friendly relationship of both by a similar wording: «Bourdichon son ami» and «Bourdichon ami du Saint» the artist is called there<sup>53</sup>. Numerous conversations of painter and monk are said to have taken place, which undoubtedly were of a spiritual sort. Fiot proceeds further and assumes an intensive influence of the Saint on Bourdichon<sup>54</sup>. He thinks to observe an accordance between the spiritual atmosphere and values in Bourdichon's oeuvre and the character and piety of the Saint<sup>55</sup>. In the course of the canonical process Bourdichon takes on the most important role as eyewitness, he is present at all stages of the canonization and during the exhumation he comes even physically closer to the Saint – by touching the dead face with his own one – than all the other attendants<sup>56</sup>. Bourdichon seems to tick all the boxes – regular meeting, friendship, spiritual alignment and maximum proximity to the corpse – and therefore is up to create – autonomously and without any instructions at third hand – a *vera effigies* of the defunct.

A similar constellation is handed down in the case of the genesis of Angela Merici's *vera effigies*<sup>57</sup>. As indicated in her life the painter Alessandro Bonvicino, alias Il Moretto, created her like-

52 FIOT 1961, pp. 18 f.; KRASS 2012, p. 161.

53 FIOT 1961, p. 18.

54 Quite similar Zeri pursued Bartoli's reference to Jacopino's spiritual discipleship: The supposed influence of Ignatius on the artist is believed to have caused him a markedly stylistic turn to an obvious artistic inferiority. Jacopino is said to have allowed Ignatius to use him for his counterreformational ambitions. See KÖNIG-NORDHOFF 1982, p. 175, note 548; ZERI 1957, pp. 35 f. Later authors have been quite critical of Zeri's conclusions based on a possibly mere hagiographical topos and aiming therefrom at statements about the actual stylistic development of the artist, see VANNUGLI 1991, p. 80.

55 FIOT 1961, p. 36.

56 See KRASS 2012, p. 161.

57 About the *vera effigies* of Angela Merici see DONEDA 1768; NEUSEE 1912; GUAZZONI 1981; MARIANI 1986; BEGNI REDONA 1988; RÜHL 2011.

ness during her lying in repose which took a whole month because of a squarel about the burial site. The exposition of the Saint's corpse in the lower church of St. Afra's in Brescia has already caused a remarkable stream of urban pilgrims. Considering the monochrome colour effect Anna Rühl suspects that Angela's death portrait was executed by Moretto locally respectively that he made drawings in front of the corpse for the purpose of elaborating them later in the atelier. The current state of research assumes that Moretto and Angela Merici knew each other due to a mutual friend – Agostino Gallo – and that Moretto cultivated a close relation to the order of the Ursulines, because his daughter Caterina joined them in 1572<sup>58</sup>.

Vasari's identification of the supposed earliest and single portrait of Dante made from him mimetically, what means from the living person, and his attribution of the image to Giotto can be classified as identical strategy. Vasari fabulated a friendship between Giotto and Dante – Dante is believed to be a close friend of Giotto<sup>59</sup>. By this argumentative device Vasari generated the fiction of irrefutable authenticity and thereby actually created the – merely fictitious – prototype of a new iconographic tradition. The efficacy and frequency of that sort of argumentation display the friendship between artist and model as common topos particularly concerning the authorisation of true images. Even modern beliefs about authentic portraits of saints reveal the unabated influence of this idea. Schamoni explains:

If the artist knew the saint personally and probably was deeply impressed by him, it is psychologically almost impossible that he, creating his opus, was not influenced by the memory image, which he had in mind. He would not have only unconsciously orientated himself towards him, most probably he would have conciously strived for similarity. [...] If it can be observed that the artist, who executed a certain representation of a saint, has known the saint personally, then

58 RÜHL 2011, pp. 122 f.

59 «Dante Alighieri, coetaneo et amico suo grandissimo», quoted from VASARI 1967, p. 97. See DIDI-HUBERMAN 1994; GOMBRICH 1979.

one has to assume that the image was expected to be similar and also that it has become similar in a certain way [...] <sup>60</sup>.

*The artist and the authority of the familiares*

Consequently the souls' accordance, friendly closeness and the presence of the memory image lay the foundations for the genesis of a true image and are assurances for its similarity as well. Three decades after accomplishing the portrait of Ignatius Jacopino del Conte, the ideal artist bearing all these capabilities and – together with his artistic expertise – being able to undertake the whole execution and conception of the *vera effigies*, is confronted with an unexpected competition: an entirely different concept of the *vera effigies* emerged (fig. 2). Namely another true image of the Saint, initiated by the Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneyra in consequence of the common dissatisfaction with del Conte's painting and the reinforced efforts concerning the canonisation process, was strived with renewed recourse to the death mask, what means that a completely new iconographic tradition was intended to be created. Ribadeneyra himself filled the role of the coordinator, the Saint's *familiaris* and the painter's assistant, he instructed the painter Sanchez Coello in front of the scaffold by his descriptions and organized the regular presentation of the half-completed as well as the finished painting to further *familiares* of Ignatius. According to their valua-

60 «Wenn nämlich der Künstler den Heiligen persönlich gekannt hat und von ihm wahrscheinlich sogar sehr stark beeindruckt war, ist es psychologisch beinahe unmöglich, daß er bei der Gestaltung seines Werkes von dem Erinnerungsbilde, das ihm vorschwebte, unbeeinflusst bleiben konnte. Er wird nicht nur unbewußt nach ihm gearbeitet, sondern höchstwahrscheinlich bewußt Ähnlichkeit angestrebt haben. [...] Wenn von einer Heiligendarstellung festgestellt werden kann, daß der Künstler den Heiligen persönlich gekannt hat, dann muß man annehmen, daß das Bild ähnlich werden sollte und daß es auch in gewissem Maße ähnlich geworden ist [...]». See SCHAMONI 1966, p. 89. In the same way Vasari assumed a personal relationship between Savonarola and Fra' Bartolomeo (Baccio della Porta), who painted his *effigies* around the year 1500: «per l'affezione che Baccio aveva a fra' Ieronimo, che fece in un quadro el suo ritratto che fu bellissimo». Quoted from VASARI 1976, p. 91, see further RÜHL 2011, p. 104.

tions numerous adjustments were made, as Lopez's account shows in detail. The *familiares*' network as superior instrument of authentication was intended to remove any doubts about the veracity of the image<sup>61</sup>. This group exclusively contained persons, who met Ignatius provably often during his lifetime and who could ensure ultimate credibility by themselves. Thus Gaspar de Quiroga (archbishop of Toledo, cardinal and *Inquisitor Generalis* of Spain) and even the Spanish King Philipp II appeared to verify Coello's painting. Their memory power was screened in detail and – in the case of Quiroga – was examined by an inquiry of inquisitorial sharpness. Quiroga's answer to Ribadeneyra, questioning how much he had known Ignatius («¿tanto le conocíó V. Sría. Ilma., que así se acuerda dél?»), was that he knew him so much as if they had met one hundred thousand times and that there had been no day during which they had not met each other: «Conoscíle tanto, que le deví de ver más de cien mil vezes en esta vida. No avía día que no nos viésemos, o en la Compañía, o en mi casa, o en la viña»<sup>62</sup>.

According to expectation Ribadeneyra appears as witness of the first rank regarding Ignatius's aspect in Lopez's account. The confirmation of his qualification as *familiaris* with the highest memory power and the closest relationship with Ignatius is put into the mouth of an apparently independent person, Padre Diego de Guzmán: «Who, if not Padre Ribadeneyra, can remember our Padre?» Lopez added: «And, apart from his vivid memory, no one of those who live today was associated with him closer than he was»<sup>63</sup>. About himself Ribadeneyra said that he beared the figure and aspect of Ignatius so perfectly in his

61 «Y sin duda en esto nos hemos de fiar de las personas que más le conocieron, y mejor juicio pudieron hazer dél». Quoted from MHSI 1960, p. 244.

62 MHSI 1960, p. 244. About Philipp II it is stated: «Y como él era niño de nueve años, pudo hazer memoria y quedársele el rostro de el Padre; y en esto de conocer, sabemos ha tenido y tuvo S. M. Felicidad; y al que vio una vez, no perderle jamás de la memoria». Quoted from MHSI 1960, pp. 245 f.

63 «¿ Quién ay que se pueda acordar, como el P. Ribadeneyra, de nuestro Padre ? – Pues, dexado aparte su memoria, que es grande, ninguno lo trató más, de los que oy biven, que él». Quoted from MHSI 1960, pp. 248 f.

mind as if he were there present such as living<sup>64</sup>. In the case of the second *vera effigies* Ribadeneyra assumed the role, which Jacopino filled creating the first portrait. Accordingly his presence in front of the scaffold is described even more extensively than Coello's activity. Ribadeneyra is said to have assisted many hours per day and to have remained in front of the image even when they allowed the paint to dry<sup>65</sup>. As true coordinator of the proceedings he was superior to the artist and ruled the further advancement of the artistic origination process.

In contrast to Jacopino, Ribadeneyra's memory performance was consolidated by the *familiares'* confirmation or corrective criticism and therefore founded on the base of a collective memory consensus, which was apparently accepted by as many witnesses as possible. Lopez's account as written veracious document, which was exactly written for the reason to create that impression, was ensured in a similar way. Towards the end of the text Lopez appears in some cases – to enhance the impression of authenticity dramatically – as witness himself and in the ending of his account he points out that Ribadeneyra and P. Francisco de Porres took note of his text and that they were highly pleased with its content<sup>66</sup>. This network of mutual confirmation and reassurance was obviously intended to serve as bulwark of authenticity affirming the veracity of the image.

64 «Al P. Ribadeneyra le he oído dezir muchas vezes que tiene tan en la memoria y presente y viva la figura y rostro de nuestro Santo P. Ignacio, como si le tuviesse oy presente y vivo». Quoted from MHSI 1960, p. 247.

65 «Assistía el P. Ribadeneyra siempre a ello, estando a la mañana tres horas, y a la tarde otras tantas, y esto por todo el tiempo que el retrato duró, advirtiéndolo al pintor lo que le parecía que no yva tan bien». Quoted from MHSI 1960, pp. 243 f.

66 «Escriví esto en Madrid el año de 1587, el mes de março, y lo mostré al P. Ribadeneyra, y le pareció que era bien que se supiesse, y me agradeció este trabajo, y no menos el P. Francisco de Porres, Viceprovincial, y otros muchos de los Padres graves que ay aquí y en Toledo». Quoted from MHSI 1960, p. 249.

*The vera effigies as image of memory consensus*

Ribadeneira's *vera effigies* bases on the memory of many witnesses and the obvious blemish of Jacopino's image, which was generated merely on the basis of an individual memory, is skillfully inverted into the mainstay of Ribadeneira's argumentation. Ignatius's *vera effigies* is an object of memory in two different ways: in terms of historic memory – it was expected to initiate the portrait gallery of the future Jesuit generals<sup>67</sup> – and in terms of personal devotion, because it was intended to develop prototypically the iconography of all devotional images produced from then on. Each function is assumed towards a huge quantity of potential recipients, whose memory images should coincide with the *vera effigies* to the extent that the true image is accepted as a consensual memory image and that their own individual memory is shaped by its further reception<sup>68</sup>. Therefore the images of personal memory are intended to reveal the true image and to become layered by it eventually. This process of image acceptance and the displacement of many other images are already displayed during the genesis of the *vera effigies* by means of Ribadeneira's numerous inquiries of the *familiares* and the subsequent correction steps, as if to show that this *vera effigies* is able to be the total sum of memory also in the further process of circulation and reception.

Jacopino's portrait has to be completely defeated by this kind of argumentation. It remains the image of a single, biographically shaped memory, which can only argue by its spiritual dimension and personal intensity. Contrasting to this is however Jacopino's autonomy as artist – he is able to create his memory image

67 KÖNIG-NORDHOFF 1982, p. 68.

68 In Lopez's text the accordance of personal memory image and the *vera effigies* is revealed by effectively staged moments of recognising the defunct when faced with the presented portrait. Gaspar de Quiroga is said to have bowed low at the sight of the finished portrait and to have exclaimed: «Ha ! Éste sí, éste sí →». See MHSI 1960, p. 244.

‘at first hand’, whereas Ribadeneyra has to mediate his memory by words.

*Turning back to the acheiropoieton*

The problematic artistic development of Ribadeneyra’s *vera effigies*, which could only take place via verbal mediation, was compensated by a consciously metaphysical mise-en-scène of this event in Lopez’s account. Sanchez Coello already invoked God’s aid and the assistance of the Saint at the moment accepting his order – already during the preliminary stages he seemed to take the view that he will not break this task only by his artistic capacities: Besides of his artistic efforts he emphasised that he hopes in God and the Saint helping him to accomplish a good result: «yo offrezco de hazer de mi parte lo possible; y espero en Dios y en la intercessión de su sancto bendito que me ayudará a hazer cosa que sea buena»<sup>69</sup>. The artist’s frequent invocations guaranteed the divine concourse and the assistance of the defunct Saint during the painting process and Ribadeneyra even conducted divine services for the purpose of a successful outcome<sup>70</sup>. This spiritual companionship was secured with great persistence to legitimize the portrait as intended by God, who prevented a portrait during lifetime<sup>71</sup>. Only with the help of God it could be achieved, and the success visualized the consilience with the will of God, who marked out the image as *vera effigies*.

But not only God and Ignatius were Coello’s willing hands. The King of Spain, discovering the portrait of Ignatius amongst

69 MHSI 1960, p. 243.

70 Coello invoked frequently: «Sancti bendito, ayudadnos en esta labor, pues es para gloria de Dios y honrra vuestra», see MHSI 1960, p. 243.

71 See Lopez’s account of an attempt to produce a portrait of the living Ignatius, which was commissioned to a portrait painter called Morga. His art failed because he was not able to keep the observed in mind. Finally he blamed the miscarriage of the likeness to God’s unwilling concerning a portrait of the living Saint. See MHSI 1960, p. 240.

Coello's recent paintings and wondering about its vivacious appearance, asked Coello who is represented on it and how he did it<sup>72</sup>.

Coello mentioned the wax mask available to him, from which he adopted the proportions, but held the assistance of Ribadeneyra responsible for the felicitous *ad-vivum*-quality of the portrait, who dictated each single painting step. Thus a constellation of four protagonists emerged<sup>73</sup>. Besides the general favour of God and Ignatius as patron of the project Ribadeneyra acted as scrutinizing supervisory body, whereas the painter contributed the will to break this task employing all his artistic capacities. Coello was appreciated almost exclusively for his motivation and not at all for any artistic concept of the portrait, which was generated by the remaining protagonists.

Contrary hereto is Jacopino del Conte's presentation. Textual sources describe him frequently as outstanding portrait painter, who rendered most aptly a hugh quantity of famous persons<sup>74</sup>. The same style is found on the rear notice of his Ignatius portrait describing it as «fatta da Giacobino del Conte, eccellente Pittore di quei tempi»<sup>75</sup>.

These completely different depictions of the artist concerning the development of the *vera effigies* suggest that each portrait re-

72 «Preguntó el rey : – ¿ Qué retrato es éste ? – El dixo quién era. – Pues ¿ de dónde le avéys sacado ? – Señor, de uno de cera, vasiado por otro de yeso que se sacó del mismo rostro, después dél muerto. – ¿ Pues, cómo de aquel muerto le podistes vos hazer al vivo ? – Señor, estando presente, mientras yo le hacía, un gran discípulo suyo, que está aquí, que se llama Ribadeneyra, el qual me yva diziendo : aquí tenía esta color, aquí estas canas, aquí esto, aquí esto otro ; y con esto y con las facciones que por el de cera yo veía, y tomava los tamaños, le saqué como vuestra magestad vee →». Quoted from MHSI 1960, p. 245.

73 «Con el cuydado y asistencia del P. Ribadeneyra, y con el desseo y trabajo de Alonso Sánchez, y con la gracia del Señor principalmente y intercessión de su sancto, salió el retrato tal, que, a juicio de los que le conocieron, es el más acertado que se ha hecho». Quoted from MHSI 1960, p. 244.

74 See note 50.

75 Quoted from: ROM IN BAYERN 1997, cat. no. 23 (R. Baumstark). The complete text of the note affixed to the back of the painting reads: «Vera effigie del Beato p<sup>re</sup> Ignazio Fondatore e p.<sup>o</sup> Generale d.<sup>a</sup> Comp.<sup>a</sup> di Gesù fatta da Giacobino del Conte, eccellente Pittore di quei tempi, l'istesso giorno che il Beato rese la sua santa Anima a Dio all'ultimo di Luglio dell'anno 1556, di età di anni 65».



presents another concept of the true image. As Jacopino's painting is – explicitly and according to its inscription – created by himself, Ribadeneyra's concept approaches the classical idea of the *vera imago*, the image created by divine concurrence. The impression suggests itself that the secular concept of Jacopino as Veronica, who mediated his personal memory as true image, directed the artist as *alter deus* in a far too innovative manner, what provoked in times of the Council of Trent by necessity a counter reaction<sup>76</sup>. Accordingly Ribadeneyra overtly offered criticism against del Conte's image, which in his view did not meet the requirements of a saint's portrait, not to mention the requirements of a true image. Lopez refers to portraits, which were produced in Rome after the death mask, but they were executed in many different ways and some of them were even faithless: «tan varios y diferentes, y algunos tan indevotos, que es compasión. En el aposento de los Generales está uno dellos»<sup>77</sup>. In the chamber of the Jesuitic general was one of them, whereby Lopez certainly referred to Jacopino del Conte's portrait. Thus there was an early heterogeneous portrait tradition, which – as faithless images – did not meet the post-Tridentine requirements of a saint's representation or devotional image. The criticism against Jacopino's image was getting more concrete: In the year 1584 the procurator P. Francisco de Porres brought a copy of Jacopino's portrait to Madrid and showed it to the Jesuits of the college, amongst them Ribadeneyra. This presentation is said to have disappointed the attendants, Ribadeneyra's words have survived: «Este retrato no es de nuestro Padre ; más parece de algún muy regalado y relleno, o algún labrador, que no de nuestro Padre». To Ribadeneyra the portrait seemed to represent some corpulent clergyman or peasant, but not the Saint<sup>78</sup>. Porres was prohibited from presenting the image from there on

76 About the influence of the Council of Trent on the Jesuit use of images, see ZUR MÜHLEN 1997.

77 MHSI 1960, p. 241.

78 MHSI 1960, p. 241. The edition of 1874 reads subtly different: «Este retrato no es de nuestro Padre; más parece de algun clérigo muy regalado y relleno, ó algun labrador, que no de nuestro Padre».

and Ribadeneyra subsequently initiated his project of a second *vera effigies*.

Against the background of the time of creation, at the moment of Ignatius's death, it is comprehensible, that Jacopino's portrait aimed at the representation of his physical presence instead of religious exaltation, because at this moment the visual capturing of the defunct had priority compared with the staging of the Saint. Ribadeneyra's dismissive judgement on the portrait as completely dissimilar and impious displays the changed expectations on the *vera effigies* in post-Tridentine times.

In the same way the unconditioned authority and capacity of the artist regarding the creation of the true image was no longer in line with Ribadeneyra. Although the resemblance and artistic quality of Coello's portrait was praised by many voices in Lopez's account, Ribadeneyra conceded that it does not equal the living Ignatius in all details: «aunque no tiene toda aquella gracia y suavidad y vida que nuestro Padre tenía; y esto es imposible alcançarlo el pintor, si Dios no se lo infundiese»<sup>79</sup>. Producing an image, which is identical to the living person and which is capable to represent his appearance without any differences, is impossible to achieve by the painter, especially if the benevolent influence of God is absent. In Ribadeneyra's view the *ad-vivum*-quality of a *vera effigies* is never generated by an artist, but supplied by divine concurrence or by the living memory of a former *familiaris*.

The general distrust towards images and their ability to reproduce also determines the final judgement of the *Acta Sanctorum* on the *vera effigies* of Ignatius. The ability of painting to represent a person truly und 'wholly' and therefore similar to the living one is denied there<sup>80</sup>. The 'whole' Ignatius, his true likeness,

<sup>79</sup> MHSI 1960, p. 247.

<sup>80</sup> «At facilius est jactura, quod veros oris totiusque vultus sancti Patris ductus, ac spirantes eorumdem characteres ad vivum perfectamque imitationem ars pictoria perducere haud potuit; postquam simillimam prototypo suam ipsemet nobis quodammodo depinxit imaginem in scriptis suis, in quibus non secus atque in pictura quadam singulares ejus naturae ac gratiae dotes, & ut verbo dicam, totus Ignatius reluceat». Quoted from AASS 1731, p. 523.

what means the image of his virtue, is radiated by his works, namely the Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions. This scepticism towards the medium ‘image’ relativates the need to possess a true portrait *ad vivum*. On the one hand it releases from the embarrassment to signalise *one* of the images as the ‘truest’, on the other hand it frees from the necessity that this one has to be without blemish. The concession that the mimetic performance of images lags behind reality makes it optional to adjudicate even a criticisable image to be the *vera effigies*. Possibly this reason motivated Ribadeneyra to reduce the claim to total resemblance as well as the motive to defend himself from accusations of idolatry and to present his project in accordance with post-Tridentine ideas of approaching images.

### *Conclusion*

Regarding the *vera effigies* of Ignatius two different concepts of the true and living image meet, each of them drawing their liveness upon memory, but pursuing contrasting paths of iconic legitimation. The credibility of Jacopino’s portrait is solely based on the credibility of the artist, whereas the authenticity of Ribadeneyra’s *vera effigies* is confirmed by numerous testimonies of the *familiares* and its genesis is legitimated by the accordance with the will of God.

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*Figures*

- Fig. 1. Jacopino del Conte, The *vera effigies* of Ignatius of Loyola, 1556 – Rome, Curia Generalizia. © photographed by P. Roy Sebastian Nellipuzhayil.
- Fig. 2. R. Escrivano, Copy of Sanchez Coello's *vera effigies* of Ignatius of Loyola (original destroyed in 1931), after 1585. © SJ-Bild.
- Fig. 3. Copy of Alessandro Bonvicino's *vera effigies* of Angela Merici, after 1540 – Desenzano del Garda, vestry of the cathedral. © Per gentile concessione dell'ufficio stampa del Comune di Desenzano del Garda.
- Fig. 4. Michel Lasne, Portrait of Francesco di Paola after Jean Bourdichon's lost true image of the Saint from 1507, 1644 – Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinets des Estampes (INV. N2 François de Paul). © Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Fig. 5. Ambrogio Figino, The *vera effigies* of Carlo Borromeo with closed eyes – London, The British Museum. From: BURZER 2011, p. 34.

Fig. 6. Ambrogio Figino, The *vera effigies* of Carlo Borromeo with open eyes – London, The British Museum. From: BURZER 2011, p. 35.

Fig. 7. Francisco de Zurbarán, Santa Faz, 1658 – Valladolid, Museo Nacional de Escultura. © Museo Nacional de Escultura, photographed by Javier Muñoz y Paz Pastor.





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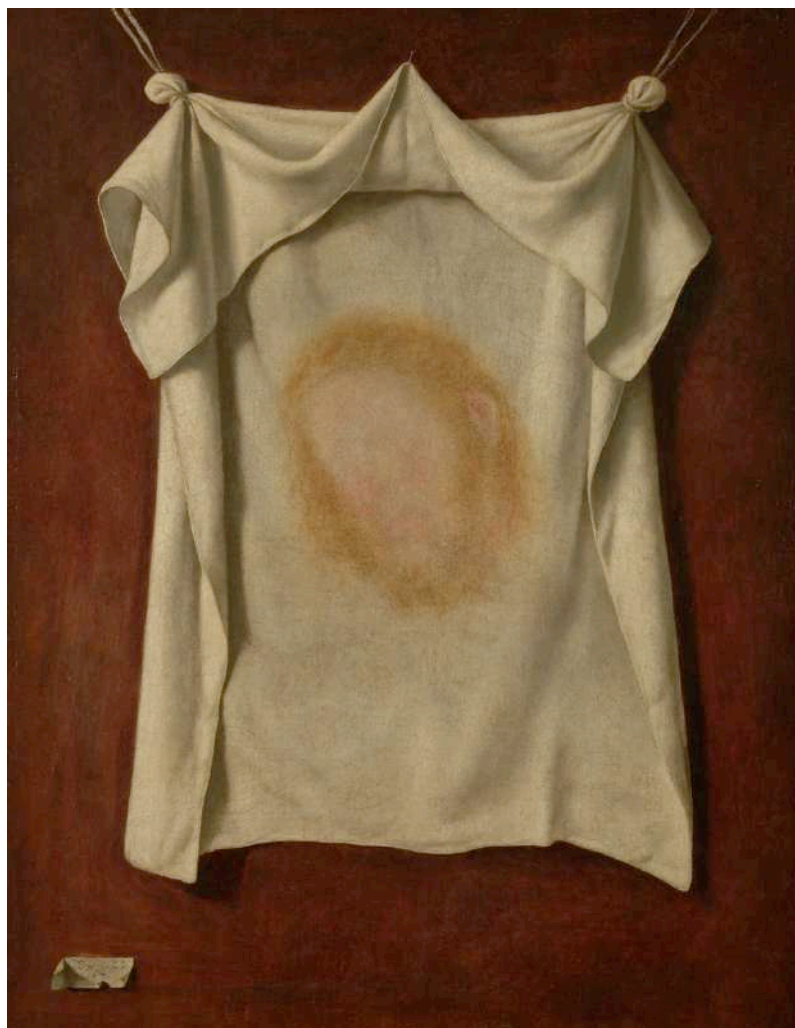
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