

## The Founding of a Jesuit Imagery: Between Theory and Practice, between Rome and Antwerp

*Ralph Dekoninck*

The appearance of numerous studies on the relationship between Jesuits and imagery over the past three decades, beginning with the publication of *The Jesuits: Culture, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (1999), has allowed us to take stock of a long-debated question: Is there a Jesuit art?<sup>1</sup> This question has been asked about the era of Claudio Acquaviva's generalate (1581–1615), which corresponds to a period of transition in the evolution of art from late Mannerism to the baroque. Acquaviva's generalate was also an “exploratory” artistic period for the Jesuits, who promoted the arts and images as a means of communicating and infusing the truths of the faith. Rather than searching for a common denominator in Jesuit art, contemporary scholarship has instead emphasized the diversity and richness of the order's visual productions, which were presented in many different ways depending on their contexts. As historian Pierre-Antoine Fabre writes, the “art of the Jesuits” should be considered not as “a repertoire and a lineage of forms and figures but as the ensemble of visual manifestations with which the Society of Jesus—which had great power worldwide in the field of cultural representation—*surrounded* its activities, properly apostolic or pedagogic, civic, etc.”<sup>2</sup>

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1 See, among others, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, “*Le style jésuite n'existe pas: Jesuit Corporate Culture and the Visual Arts*,” in *The Jesuits: Culture, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 38–89; and Evonne Levy, “Early Modern Jesuit Arts and Jesuit Visual Culture: A View from the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1 (2014): 66–87.

2 Pierre-Antoine Fabre, “Histoire des arts visuels,” *Revue de synthèse* 120 (1999): 462–68, here 462.

It is from this perspective that numerous works<sup>3</sup> and exhibitions<sup>4</sup> have sought to interpret Jesuit art, resulting in a diverse body of work that has aimed to report not so much on the existence of a Jesuit art as on the relations between the Jesuits and early modern art in order to explore the interdependence and independence of these two spheres. Scholars working in this field have accordingly focused on nuancing certain long-held ideas, such as the first Jesuits' supposed indifference to artistic matters—Ignatius of Loyola (c.1491–1556) and his closest companions having never really taken a position on art—or the idea of an aesthetic *modo nostro* (our own way) expressed in the existence of an architecture specific to the order<sup>5</sup> as well as the notion that the Jesuits “invented” a unique artistic style that blended elements of the baroque. A persistent historiographical myth if ever there was one, this “Jesuit–baroque” equation postulated a coincidence between an art judged to be demonstrative and an order that was just as much so, and even a cause–effect relation between a religious sensibility and an artistic style. For people have not been content to note elective affinities between these two phenomena but have

- 3 The most recent and most general works are: Pierre-Antoine Fabre, *Ignace de Loyola: Le lieu de l'image; Le problème de la composition de lieu dans les pratiques spirituelles et artistiques jésuites de la seconde moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1992); Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Bailey, *Between Renaissance and Baroque: Jesuit Art in Rome, 1565–1610* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); John O'Malley and Gauvin Alexander Bailey, eds., *The Jesuits and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2005); Volker Remmert and Elisabeth Oy-Marra, eds., *Le monde est une peinture: Jesuitische Identität und die Rolle der Bilder* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011); Ralph Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem: Statuts, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 2005); Wietse de Boer, Karl A.E. Enenkel, and Walter S. Melion, eds., *Jesuit Image Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Werner Telesko and Herbert Karner, eds., *Die Jesuiten in Wien: Zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte der Österreichischen Ordensprovinz der Gesellschaft Jesu im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003); Walter S. Melion, *The Meditative Art: Studies in the Northern Devotional Print, 1550–1625* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2009); and Peter M. Daly and Richard G. Dimler, *The Jesuit Emblem in the European Context* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2016).
- 4 See in particular Reinhold Baumstark, ed., *Rom in Bayern: Kunst und Spiritualität der ersten Jesuiten*, catalog of the exhibition at the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich (April 30 to July 20, 1997) (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1997); and Alain Tapié, ed., *Baroque vision jésuite: Du Tintoret à Rubens*, catalog of the exhibition at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Caen (July 12 to October 13, 2003) (Paris: Somogy, 2003).
- 5 Giovanni Sale, *Pauperismo architettonico e architettura gesuitica* (Rome: Editoriale Jaca Book, 2001); *La arquitectura jesuítica: Actas del Simposio Internacional celebrado en Zaragoza*, ed. María Isabel Álvaro Zamora, Javier Ibáñez Fernández, and Jesús Criado Mainar (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2012); and Piet Lombaerde, ed., *Innovation and Experience in the Early Baroque in the Southern Netherlands: The Case of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).

sought to make the Jesuits the principal promoters, if not the inventors, of a style on the scale of their propagandist ambitions. This assimilation arose from the Jesuits' golden legend as well as from their black legend, the Jesuits having been accused from the seventeenth century onward of using art to manipulate souls.

As the stages involved in the creation of this myth have already been discussed elsewhere, they do not need to be retraced here; nor is there any need to deconstruct this historiography.<sup>6</sup> The question is no longer whether the Jesuits were the source of a "Counter-Reformation" art, but to take stock, across the cultural and formal intermixing to which they contributed, of the ways in which the order's members used and conceived of images. Hence rather than tracing the genesis of a specific Jesuit art, it is important to focus on the signs of the emergence of a visual culture—the ensemble of systems of representation governing the production and the reception of images. Although this visual culture did not specifically belong to the Society of Jesus, the Society was an important agent in its formation and dissemination.

### Theory: The Institution of the Church's Anti-idolatrous Image

One of the first artistic issues the Jesuits became involved with under Acquaviva's generalate concerned the controversy surrounding the status and functions of the image. Due to the violent iconoclastic crises in northern Europe during the religious conflicts of the sixteenth century, the question of the image's status, which the Jesuits would help resolve, became increasingly contentious. In response to the Protestants' criticisms of "Papist idolatry," the Jesuits were among the principal defenders of the cult of the image and of an understanding of the image as orthodox.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most notable figures to become involved in this controversy was the French Jesuit Louis Richeome (1544–1625), who served as Acquaviva's assistant in Rome and whose *Trois discours pour la religion catholique: Des miracles,*

6 See, among others, Evonne Levy, *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

7 See, among others, Pierre-Antoine Fabre, *Décréter l'image? La XXV<sup>e</sup> Session du Concile de Trente* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2013); Olivier Christin, *Une révolution symbolique: L'iconoclasme huguenot et la reconstruction catholique* (Paris: Minuit, 1991); Frédéric Cousinié, *Le peintre chrétien: Théories de l'image religieuse dans la France du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000); Christian Hecht, *Katholische Bildertheologie im Zeitalter von Gegenreformation und Barock: Studien zu Traktaten von Johannes Molanus, Gabriele Paleotti und anderen Autoren* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1997); Giuseppe Scavizzi, *The Controversy on Images: From Calvin to Baronius*, Toronto Studies in Religion 14 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992); Wietse de Boer, "The Early Jesuits and the Catholic Debate about Sacred Images, 1530s–1560s," in Boer, Enenkel, and Melion, *Jesuit Image Theory*, 53–73. Ralph Dekoninck, "The Jesuit *Ars* and *Scientia Symbolica*, from Richeome and Sandaeus to Masen and Ménestrier," in Boer, Enenkel, and Melion, *Jesuit Image Theory*, 74–88.

*des saints et des images* (Three discourses for the Catholic religion: miracles, saints, and images, 1597)<sup>8</sup> led to a polemic that would last until the *Panthéon Huguenot* of 1610.<sup>9</sup> In this period of about a decade, Richeome fought pugnaciously against two Protestant adversaries: François de Saillans (pseudonym of Bertrand de Loque [c.1540/50–after 1600])<sup>10</sup> and Jean Bansilion (1575–1637).<sup>11</sup> In the process, Richeome helped construct a Catholic conception of the image by opposing it to what he viewed as the idolatrous portraits of the Protestants. One of the principal strategies he used to do so was what can be called the reversed or deformed portrait—a portrait that attributes to the enemy the traits that the enemy denounces. At its heart, the polemic was based on the opposition between what Richeome regarded as the “true” image and the “false” image, a distinction that was not recognized by Protestants, who tended to view every image as a potential idol: “The naïve understanding of these two words [idol and image] is the foundation of all this dispute and the point of victory.”<sup>12</sup> The idol, a false image, “solid in matter but empty in meaning,”<sup>13</sup> represents something that does not exist,<sup>14</sup> unlike the image, which is defined as a representation of the truth.<sup>15</sup> Whether this truth is visible or not matters little, even if Richeome seems to give a clear preference to the mental or inward image, uncompromised by the appearances of the visible.

8 Louis Richeome, *Trois discours pour la religion catholique: Des miracles, des saints et des images* (Bordeaux: Simon Millange, 1597). See the forthcoming edition of the *Discours sur les images* annotated by Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Ralph Dekoninck (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, forthcoming). Ralph Dekoninck, “L’imagination idolâtre et l’idolâtrie fantasmée: La guerre des images entre L. Richeome et J. Bansilion,” in *Autour d’Henri IV: Figures du pouvoir, échanges artistiques*, ed. Colette Nativel (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais de Tours, 2016), 68–75. Ralph Dekoninck, “Des idoles de bois aux idoles de l’esprit: Les métamorphoses de l’idolâtrie dans l’imaginaire moderne,” *Revue théologique de Louvain* 35 (2004): 203–16.

9 Louis Richeome, *L’idolâtrie Huguenote: Figurée au patron de la vieille payenne* (Lyon: Pierre Rigaud, 1608); Richeome, *Le Pantheon Huguenot découvert et ruiné contre l’Auteur de l’Idolâtrie papistique, Ministre de Vauvert, cy devant d’Aigues mortes, Dedié au Roy Tres Chrestien de France et de Navarre Henri IIII* (Lyon: Pierre Rigaud, 1610).

10 François de Saillans, *Response aux trois discours du jésuite Loïs Richeome, sur le sujet des miracles, des saints et des images* (La Rochelle: Jérôme Hautin, 1600).

11 Jean Bansilion, *L’idolâtrie papistique opposée en réponse à l’idolâtrie huguenote de Louys Richeome [...]* (Geneva: P. Marceau, 1608).

12 Richeome, *Trois discours*, 496.

13 Ibid., 505.

14 “showing something materially and visibly, it in truth represents only a nothing.” Ibid., 501.

15 “And then as it is certain, unchallenged by anyone, that the word Image signifies the semblance of a real and solid thing, it follows that Idol and Image are as different the one from the other as the names of truth and of falsehood, of light and of shadow, and that he who takes one for the other does the same as if he called truth by the name of falsehood and light by the name of shadow.” Ibid., 503.

This problem of the inward image is at the crux of Richeome's argumentation, which performs a strategic shift from the problem of the idol to the problem of idolatry. Passing from false gods to images adored as gods—that is, from a definition by the object (the idol) to a definition by use (idolatry)—allows Richeome to draw a distinction between material idolatry and spiritual idolatry.<sup>16</sup> According to Richeome, “the outward is an effect of the inward,”<sup>17</sup> which means that the inward image can exist without the outward image.<sup>18</sup> By revealing the presence of such an inward idolatry, Richeome sought to defuse Protestant criticism by defending the idea that every Catholic gazing upon images is moved by a righteous, that is, non-idolatrous, intention, and to turn the weapon against the Protestants by denouncing the bad intentions that make them the true idolaters. By attacking the supposed outward idols of the Catholics, in reality the Protestants were only expressing their own idolatrous fantasies. The iconoclastic *tabula rasa* therefore consists solely, according to Richeome, in setting up a “table d’attente”<sup>19</sup> for the erection of new idols that are wholly inward. In short, if one follows the logic of the reverse portrait, the idolater is not whom one thinks. Thus, according to Richeome, all heresy is an idol: “for as the Idol is a false Image; thus heresy is a vain imagination, which is yet less than the material Idol.”<sup>20</sup> Richeome deduces from this that the Protestant Church “is no Church; it is an Idol cast first in the brain of Luther and afterward chiseled by Calvin.”<sup>21</sup>

The heretic is consequently represented by Richeome as a painter of phantasmagorias: “these wicked ones [do not cease] painting and feigning against the Catholic Church.”<sup>22</sup> Henceforth, the Catholic Church, which had always fought against “idolatrous and infernal troops,”<sup>23</sup> was duty-bound to launch an attack on the Protestants, whose iconoclastic acts were only the other face of idolatry,

16 “Our theologians, explaining the meaning of all parts of this commandment, divide Idolatry in two: the one is inward, the other outward. The inward occurs when in the soul one recognizes and honors a creature instead of God. The outward is an effect of the inward and consists in the worship given by the body, such as bowing, lifting one’s hands, and showing like offices of honor and reverence to an Idol or sculpture which represents a false divinity. The first is engendered in the understanding and will; the second arises from the first. The heart casts its Idol inwardly and adores it spiritually and invisibly. The hand makes a corporeal portrait of it and adores it outwardly and visibly.” *Ibid.*, 521–22.

17 *Ibid.*, 521. See also chapters 5 to 9 of Richeome, *Idolâtrie huguenote*, 13–37.

18 “Inward idolatry can exist without outward; for to adore false Gods, even if one has no material Idols, is to be inwardly an Idolater and to transgress the law of God, as did several Pagan Philosophers, which Idolatry, as a principle, is also in first place forbidden.” Richeome, *Trois discours*, 522.

19 Literally “table of waiting,” *table d’attente* is a heraldic term denoting a bare escutcheon waiting to receive the coat of arms.

20 Richeome, *Trois discours*, 502.

21 *Ibid.*, 822.

22 *Ibid.*, 562–63.

23 *Ibid.*, 634.

or rather the physical manifestation of this inward idolatry. Inspired by the Evil One, all Protestant doctrine was an idol, beginning with its interpretation of the holy scriptures. In Richeome's words, Protestantism had assimilated the materials of the scriptures into gold and silver and had melted them to forge an idol, that is, a deceitful interpretation: "If someone caused to be melted the statue of a man and made monkeys out of it, the matter would be the same, but they would be monkeys, and not the statue of a man."<sup>24</sup>

In contrast to what Richeome viewed as the Protestant factory of idols, Catholicism conceived and promoted righteous and true images. And it was this factory of true images that characterized the Jesuits' artistic project. They would invest all the spaces and dimensions of Christian life—liturgy, teaching, preaching, private devotion, pilgrimages, congregations—with figurative representations as a means of promoting and exhibiting the tangible and visible signs of the faith with the aim of reuniting the Christian community—the visible body of Christ called to exteriorize and testify to its adhesion and complete submission to the church. Such a conception is consistent with the order's ideal of the church, one that was opposed to the Protestant ideal, for whom the "authentic" church, "inward and spiritual," was opposed to the "visible and outward" church, as the Spirit is opposed to the body and faith to corporeal goods. For Catholics, in contrast, it was vital to recognize and affirm the visibility of the church as a founding and essential value of the Christian community.

Robert Bellarmine's (1542–1621) *Controversies*, which explicitly discuss this subject, constitute a key work for grasping the Counter-Reformation's definition of the church and the criteria for "visibly" belonging to it. If, for Luther, visibility was a deficient mode of being that he sometimes confounded with the carnal in its affinity to the corporeal, the temporal, and the political, for Bellarmine, visibility was the touchstone of truth, reality's mode of appearing *par excellence*: "All inward joys, all the most sublime sentiments, all the visions that do not lead to loving in faith the mysteries of which the visible Church, the Roman Church, is the keeper are suspect and lead to error and to Satan."<sup>25</sup> The Jesuit controversialists, including Richeome, deduced from the theological principle that man was created in the image and likeness of God, and the Aristotelian principle that "nothing enters the soul but by the senses," that the suppression of all visible signs would lead to the disappearance of Christianity, and even worse: "he who would wish to abolish images would have to bring the world to nothingness."<sup>26</sup> Suppressing the image would thereby amount to a denial of the creation and the

24 Ibid., 814.

25 Robert Bellarmine, *Quarta controversia generalis de conciliis*, lib. III, cap. II (Paris: Vivès, 1870), 2:317–18.

26 Jean Gontery, *La réponse du P.J. Gontery, de la Compagnie de Jesus, à la demande d'un gentilhomme de la religion prétendue réformée, touchant l'usage des images* (Paris: Pierre Courant, 1608), 13.

incarnation, and consequently, of all the sacred stages of divine revelation. As Christ and the created world have imaginal reality, it follows that the knowledge one has of them depends on the image, which is the basis of all thought. The truth is visible presence, and only this truth is within man's grasp.

### Practice: The Antwerpian Invention of Jesuit Imagery

This conception of the image was not solely confined to the speculative domain of theology, but found numerous applications in the Jesuits' use of the image in this transitional era. However, while there have been numerous studies on the relationship between the Jesuits and the arts, and specifically architecture and painting, little attention has been paid to the importance of the printed image. As a result, the literature has tended to underestimate the impact of this medium on the evolution of the statuses, functions, and uses of the image. Yet the standardized and reproducible image, circulating with books or as a simple leaflet, ultimately played a more decisive role in the inauguration of a new regime of visual communication than the fixed image attached to places of worship.

In drawing attention to this medium, it is necessary to recall the essential role of Antwerp in the conception and diffusion of Jesuit imagery, a role that began around 1585 when the city was reconquered by Spanish troops. The period of Acquaviva's generalate was marked by the desire to build an iconography specific to the order, particularly in connection with the heritage of Ignatius of Loyola, and this iconography would be developed by Antwerpian artists, as we will see below.

The cornerstone of Jesuit imagery is the series of 153 engravings that retraced the Gospel story from the annunciation to the last judgment. Published in 1593 under the title *Evangelicae historiae imagines* (Illustrations of the Gospel stories)<sup>27</sup> by the Jesuits of Antwerp and completed a year later by Jerónimo Nadal's (1507–80) *Adnotationes et meditationes* (Annotations and meditations),<sup>28</sup> the "Bible of Nadal," as it became known, was widely disseminated across Europe and in the missionary territories. As such, it exercised a considerable amount of influence on evangelical iconography during the Counter-Reformation, as well as serving as the model for a number of other manuals and collections of illustrated meditations that the Jesuits would continue to publish until the nineteenth century. Given its importance, the book has already drawn the attention of numerous researchers, most notably Fabre and art historian Walter S.

27 *Evangelicae historiae imagines, ex ordine Evangeliorum, quae toto anno in missae sacrificio recitantur, in ordinem temporis vitae Christi digestae* (Antwerp: 1593).

28 Jerónimo Nadal, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia quae in sacrosancto Missae sacrificio toto anno leguntur* [...] (Antwerp: Martinus Nutius, 1594). See Nadal, *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*, introduction by Walter S. Melion, trans. Frederick A. Homann, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2003–5).

Melion.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, the following simply recalls the principal stages of its genesis in order to grasp what was at stake for the Society of Jesus in the last third of the sixteenth century.

According to the dedication to Pope Clement VIII (r.1592–1605), the editorial enterprise was given to Nadal at the instigation of Ignatius of Loyola himself, as Loyola wanted to offer the students of the colleges an illustrated commentary and meditations on the Sunday Gospels. It would appear that preparatory drawings for the engravings had already been made, as the series of 148 pen and wash drawings discovered by art historian Maj-Britt Wadell at the National Library of Rome attests, a series previously preserved at the Roman College. On the basis of iconographic and stylistic comparisons, Wadell attributes the series to the Roman artist Livio Agresti (1508–80) and dates it to between 1555 and 1562.<sup>30</sup>

It was probably these sketches that were put at Nadal's disposal when he was asked to resume the project in 1566, which at that time was still conceived as an exclusively Roman project. It was in 1568 that mention was first made of publisher Christophe Plantin (c.1520–89) for the publication of the *Imagines* and of their commentaries, as Nadal seemed to opt, contrary to Francisco de Borja's (1510–72, in office 1565–72) wishes, for the work to be published in Antwerp, a city famed for the quality of its publishers and engravers. After Borja's death in 1572, the new Flemish superior general, Everard Mercurian (1514–80, in office 1573–80), took control of the "affair of the images" with the aim of seeing the project to a rapid conclusion. And under the combined influence of Nadal and Mercurian, Antwerp was ultimately chosen as the city for publication rather than the alternatives of Rome, Augsburg, Innsbruck, or Paris.

29 Fabre, *Ignace de Loyola*. Among the many articles Walter S. Melion has devoted to these volumes, see: "Artifice, Memory, and *Reformatio* in Hieronymus Natalis's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* of 1595," *Renaissance and Reformation* 22 (1998): 5–34; "The Art of Vision in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*," in Nadal, *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*, 1:1–96; "Haec per imagines huius mysterij ecclesia sancta [clamat]: The Image of the Suffering Christ in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*," in Nadal, *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*, 2:1–73; "Mortis illius imagines ut vitae: The Image of the Glorified Christ in Jerome Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*," in Nadal, *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels*, 3:1–32; "Parabolic Analogy and Spiritual Discernment in Jerónimo Nadal's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* of 1595," in *The Turn of the Soul: Representations of Religious Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature*, ed. Lieke Stelling, Harald Hendrix, and Todd M. Richardson, *Intersections* 23 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 299–338. See also Miguel Nicolau, *Jerónimo Nadal, S.J. (1507–1580): Sus obras y doctrinas espirituales* (Madrid: Urania, 1949), 114–170, here 114–20, 121–32, 166–70. Paul Rheinbay, *Biblische Bilder für den inneren Weg: Das Betrachtungsbuch des Ignatius-Gefährten Hieronymus Nadal (1507–1580)* (Egelsbach: Hänsel-Hohenhausen, 1995), 35–106. Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem*, 232–59.

30 Maj-Britt Wadell, "The *Evangelicae historiae imagines*: The Designs and their Artists," *Quaerendo* 10 (1980): 279–92; Wadell, *Evangelicae historiae imagines: Entstehungsgeschichte und Vorlagen* (Gothenburg: Eric Lindgrens Boktryckeri, 1985).

In 1576, Nadal sent his manuscript and some drawings to the Antwerp Jesuits who had been invited to engage in talks with Plantin. However, due to the political instability of those years, following the Calvinist takeover and the expulsion of the Jesuits of Antwerp, the negotiations had to be postponed. In the meantime, in order to update Agresti's drawings, which had been made about twenty years earlier, a second series of preparatory drawings was created. Today preserved in the Royal Library of Windsor, this series of drawings has been attributed to the Florentine Jesuit painter and engraver Giovanni Battista de Benedetto Fiammeri (c.1534–1617), a disciple of Bartolomeo Ammannati (1511–92). Between 1579 and 1582, Fiammeri used Agresti's sketches as the basis for more precise drawings that abandoned the horizontal format in favor of a vertical one in order to produce the *Imagines* as an illustrated book.

After Nadal's death in 1580, his friend and secretary Diego Jiménez (1530–96) assumed responsibility for the publication. In 1585, the year in which Antwerp was reconquered by the Spanish troops of Alessandro Farnese (1545–92), Jiménez charged Plantin, who had only just returned from Leiden, with the task of finding engravers who would be willing to move to Rome for several years to make the engravings on the basis of Fiammeri's drawings. A third Roman artist, Bernardino Passeri (c.1540–96), then stepped in, and around 1586 he created a new series of 154 *modelli*. Preserved at the Royal Library of Brussels, these drawings constituted the last stage in the preparation of the models that the engravers would use. But Plantin, despite his efforts, could not persuade the engravers to work for the Jesuits. The Antwerpian archtypographer therefore appealed to Pieter van der Borcht (c.1540–1608), Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617), Philip Galle (1537–1612), and Jan Sadeler (1550–1600), but to no avail, as the demands of the Roman clients concerning time and money as well as travel were too great for these artists. In 1587, this failure led Plantin to request that he be discharged from this mission and to propose, probably thinking of Fiammeri, that the drawings be engraved in Rome. The project consequently returned to the pontifical city, where it seems that the *Imagines* were still intended to be published in 1586, if we can believe the note, "Rome, at the College of the Society, year 1586," marked at the base of the plan of the frontispiece in the volume of Passeri's drawings. Finally, and despite Plantin's misgivings about them, the Wierix brothers, whose talent was equaled only by their dissolute life, accepted the task in return for significant remuneration and on the condition of working in Antwerp.

This chronicle offers a glimpse of the way in which the city of Antwerp established itself as the center of the production and diffusion of Jesuit engraving, thus preparing the way for the various iconographic projects that would later be developed in Antwerp or Rome. The progress realized in the artistic and technical mastery of engraving—progress that should chiefly be attributed to Plantin—made the names of the Antwerp workshops shine throughout all of Europe.

The expertise of Antwerp's publishers meant that it was also chosen for the production of further iconographic projects at the end of the sixteenth century, including the *vera effigies* (true likeness) of Ignatius of Loyola. Several researchers have already addressed this rich dossier, which was contemporary with General Acquaviva who played a decisive role in the "invention" of this portrait. We can content ourselves here with recalling its principal stages. After Ignatius's death, and against the wishes of the late superior general, who had refused to have his portrait done in his lifetime, his spiritual sons decided to make an imprint of his face (*vulto*) to obtain a death mask (*bulto*) and to paint some portraits<sup>31</sup> with the aim of ensuring the founder's survival as a guarantee of the order's identity in the context of the campaign for Ignatius's beatification and canonization.<sup>32</sup>

Under Acquaviva's generalate, the desire was affirmed to compose Ignatius's portrait by writings and by images on the basis of testimonies gathered in the various provinces from those who had known him personally. It was not a question of a simple duty of memory but of an effort to contribute to the cult of Ignatius, whose sanctity people were seeking to have recognized. And it happened to be the case that several of Ignatius's former companions lived within the Belgian province. Thus, in the period from 1598 to 1601, Rome and the Spanish Netherlands entered into a correspondence not only of letters<sup>33</sup> but also of portraits in order to authenticate the holy image.

The Jesuits of the Belgian province were first sent a portrait by the Florentine painter Jacopino del Conte (1510–98), a pupil of Andrea del Sarto (1486–1530). However, although Conte was a close disciple of Ignatius and had painted the portrait in Rome the same year Ignatius died, the Jesuits in the Belgian province contested its accuracy;<sup>34</sup> Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1527–1611), the first official

31 MHSI, *Fontes narrativi* (Rome: Historical Institute of the Society of Jesus [hereafter HISJ], 1943), 1:770. See Ursula König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola: Studien zur Entwicklung einer neuen Heiligen-Ikonographie im Rahmen einer Kanonisationskampagne um 1600* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1982). Emmanuel André and Michel Hermans, "Un portrait ancien d'Ignace de Loyola: Sa valeur et son odyssée," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* [hereafter *AHSI*] 60 (1991): 219–64. Pierre-Antoine Fabre, "Le profil d'un fondateur: Genèse du portrait d'Ignace de Loyola (1556–1622)," *Trois* 10 (1995): 5–24. Desider A. Stracke, "Over de *vera effigies* van sint Ignatius," *Ons geestelijk erf* 26 (1952): 225–42. Michel Dierickx, "Het beste, weinig bekende portret van St. Ignatius van Loyola?," *Ons geestelijk erf* 19 (1945): 199–209.

32 The fifth general congregation of the order (November 3, 1593, to January 18, 1594), which was held at the instigation of Ribadeneyra, officially took a position in favor of Ignatius's canonization. Cardinal Bellarmine and his friend cardinal Caesar Baronius (1538–1607) on July 31, 1599, the anniversary of Ignatius's death, suspended a portrait on his tomb, thereby inaugurating the "popular" cult from which there had to be testimony in order to initiate the processes for beatification.

33 MHSI, *Fontes narrativi*, ed. Candido de Dalmases (Rome: HISJ, 1959), 3:440–57.

34 This portrait is still preserved at the General House of the Jesuits in Rome. This painting is reproduced in König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola*, fig. 103.

biographer of Ignatius and as such the first literary “portraitist” of the saint,<sup>35</sup> had also refused to recognize Ignatius in the portrait. In 1585, Ribadeneyra therefore commissioned a new portrait from the Madrilenian painter Alonso Sánchez Coello (1531–88), one of the principal portraitists of the court of Philip II (1527–98), made on the basis of a copy of the death mask and instructions from the Spanish father,<sup>36</sup> an “identikit portrait” largely reconstructed from memory and reproduced thanks to several copies. This painting was immediately sent to the Belgian fathers and in particular to their provincial, Olivier Mannaerts (1523–1614), a former companion of Ignatius. Yet we learn in a letter from March 20, 1598 that Mannaerts was satisfied neither with the Roman portrait nor with the Madrilenian portrait, and he instead had a copy made on the model of the effigy preserved in Rome in the chapel of the superior general, which he then sent to Acquaviva.<sup>37</sup>

This image had already been recognized as “the one that most resembled Ignatius during his life” (*viventi simillimam*) at the provincial congregation in Tournai in 1597 by several fathers who had known him and who are cited by name on an engraving made in 1633 by Jean-Baptiste Barbé (1578–1649).<sup>38</sup> A statement dating from the same year traces the model for the image back to an engraving made by Carel de Mallery (1571–c.1645) around 1593. This raises the possibility that the portrait the Belgian Jesuits recognized as the most authentic is in fact a print,<sup>39</sup> although this is contested by historians Emmanuel André and Michel Hermans, who claim it is a copy of a preexisting painting.<sup>40</sup> In 1600, Acquaviva would again send two portraits to the Belgian Jesuits to ask them about their likeness to Loyola. While they recognized certain qualities in one of them, on the initiative of Francis Coster (1532–1619) they proposed correcting its errors by having a new portrait completed that would also be sent to Rome for approbation.<sup>41</sup> And it is this latter portrait that seems to have won the support of the general and of the Society of Jesus as a whole, thus assuring it the status of *vera effigies*.

35 His own portrait shows him very early holding in his hands, rather than his biography of Ignatius, the portrait of the saint. König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola*, fig. 54.

36 See *ibid.*, fig. 104. The success of Sánchez Coello's portrait derives, according to Ribadeneyra's biography, from the fact that the image of Ignatius had been infused by God into the painter's soul. One finds here the theme of divine inspiration as the guarantee of the image's sanctity. See Fabre, “Les voies d'une canonisation,” 145–46.

37 Acquaviva wrote in 1586: “Those who have known our Father say that this portrait [that of Sánchez Coello] does not resemble him; it does not represent well the likeness of which it is the portrait” (MHSI, *Fontes narrativi*, 3:237).

38 König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola*, fig. 138.

39 Acquaviva in 1599 thanked Mannaerts for images representing Ignatius that the Dutch Jesuit had had engraved (MHSI, *Fontes narrativi*, 3:444).

40 André and Hermans, “Un portrait ancien,” 224–25.

41 This portrait is generally identified as the one preserved in the provincial house of the Flemish Jesuits in Brussels. König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola*, fig. 101.

This exchange between Rome and Brussels highlights the important place of the Belgian province in the process of authenticating the holy image. Indeed, Fabre even goes so far as to speak of the “Flemish invention of Ignatius.”<sup>42</sup> By claiming the authority of their portrait, judged “truer” and more “pleasing,” offering a “speaking and living” image “of the founder,” the Belgian fathers affirmed themselves as the “authors” of that image, consequently rivaling the Roman center of the Society where the prototypical image should logically have taken its place. Whether the central government had ruled in their favor or not, what is certain is that the Antwerp engravers, beginning with the Wierix brothers, would establish themselves as the principal creators and disseminators of Ignatian imagery, not only in the form of portraits but also in the form of his life story in images.

As a commonplace of hagiographic literature would have it, the true portrait of a saint is not to be sought in a death mask or a painting, but in his life, according to the biblical principle that man alone is in God’s image and that this image is most perfect in those who have attained the state of sainthood, that is, those who have approached the most perfect image there is, Christ. In the wake of the campaign for beatification and sanctification, the story of the life of the future Jesuit saint, recorded in the official biography that Ribadeneyra produced in 1572, was to be completed by a story in images much more in tune with a life that was also filled with miracles and visions,<sup>43</sup> proofs *par excellence* of sainthood, and therefore even more likely to arouse, by its reproduction and circulation, support for the cause of canonization. Among the first series, it is important to recall the one published in 1609 in Rome by the Zanetti family the very year of Ignatius’s beatification, which was republished in 1622 for his canonization.<sup>44</sup> While the work therefore appeared in the pontifical city, its production was confided to artists from the north. The engravings have been attributed to the young Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) on the basis of two preparatory drawings in which several critics, starting with Julius Held, claimed to recognize the hand of the Antwerp master. Rather than considering, as does Held, that the collection might have been produced at Antwerp before being sent to Rome, and that

42 Fabre, “Les voies d’une canonisation,” 144.

43 See Pierre-Antoine Fabre, “Les visions d’Ignace de Loyola dans la diffusion de l’art jésuite,” *Modern Language Notes* 114 (1999): 816–47.

44 *Vita Beati P. Ignatii Loiolae Societatis Iesu Fundatoris* (Rome, 1609). One can find a complete reproduction of the seventy-nine engravings that compose this collection in *Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola en imágenes*, ed. Antonio M. Navas Gutiérrez, S.J. (Granada: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Granada, 1993). See also König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola*, fig. 344–88. Ursula König-Nordhoff, “Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der *Vita Beati P. Ignatii Loiolae Societatis Iesus Fundatoris Romae* 1609 und 1622,” *AHSI* 45 (1976): 306–17. Julius Held, “Rubens and the *Vita Beati P. Ignatii Loyolae* of 1609,” in *Rubens before 1620*, ed. John Rupert Martin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 93–134.

Rubens, returning from his first stay in Italy, might have only reworked certain of the drawings attributed to Pieter de Jode (1570–1634), art historian Ursula König-Nordhoff proposes situating the origin of the project in Rome in the years 1605–6, under the supervision of two Jesuit fathers, Filippo Rinaldi and Nicolas Lancicio, when Rubens was still in Italy.

According to König-Nordhoff, the task of translating the drawings into engravings may have been given to Jean-Baptiste Barbé (who also stayed in Rome and allegedly collaborated with Rubens). This hypothesis was adopted by several authors who claimed to see the decision to give Barbé this task as a sign of the Society's attachment to his house in the city of Antwerp, whose artistic achievements had made it the principal center of the creation and dissemination of Jesuit imagery. Moreover, that it had appealed to Rubens would indicate the Society's precocious interest in the young artist's talents and would confirm at the same time the tight connections that Rubens established very early with the Society for which he later worked, fulfilling numerous orders, starting with his contribution, beginning in 1615, to the decoration of the Antwerp church<sup>45</sup> and the two full-size portraits of Ignatius and of Francis Xavier (1506–52) for the same church.

Beyond the uncertainties that still linger about these attributions, one thing is certain: the confirmed link between Rome and the Southern Netherlands in the genesis of Jesuit imagery. During a period that largely coincides with Acquaviva's generalate, the Society of Jesus progressively forged an "image" of itself that was ostentatiously exhibited in the *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Jesu* (Representation of the first century of the Society of Jesus, 1640), the splendid volume published by the Moretus presses.<sup>46</sup> The city of Antwerp, which achieved a dominant role in publishing in the early modern era, and the intense literary activity of its Jesuits, thus contributed decisively to the "invention" of this "image."

45 John Rupert Martin, *The Ceiling Paintings for the Jesuit Church in Antwerp*, Corpus Rubenianum 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968).

46 *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu, a provincia flandro-belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata* (Anvers: Balthasar Moretus, 1640). John W. O'Malley, ed., *Art, Controversy and the Jesuits: The Imago primi saeculi (1640)* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2015). Lydia Salviucci Insolera, *L'imago primi saeculi (1640) e il significato dell'immagine allegorica nella Compagnia di Gesù: Genesi e fortuna del libro* (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2004). Ralph Dekoninck, "The Society of the Spectacle: The Jesuits and the Visual Arts in the Low Countries," in *The Jesuits of the Low Countries: Identity and Impact 1540–1773*, ed. Leo Kenis and Rob Faesen (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 65–82.

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