

The Apocalypse of Juan Ricci de Guevara. Literary and iconographical artistry as mystico-theological argument for Mary's Immaculate Conception in *Immaculatae Conceptionis Conclusio* (1663)

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RESUMEN

En 1663 el artista y fraile benedictino español Juan Ricci de Guevara (1600-1681) trató de proporcionar al Papa Alejandro VII la prueba teológica de la Inmaculada Concepción de María. Este artículo analiza el contenido y el contexto de tal texto. Ricci expone aquí una teología de tipo místico, sirviéndose del conocimiento y uso de diferentes tradiciones religiosas en que las imágenes sirven como acceso a las verdades espirituales más elevadas. Dedicada especial atención a profecías y visiones, tales como la profecía de Malaquías y el Apocalipsis. Haciendo uso de estas fuentes literarias y visuales, Ricci subraya la predestinación divina de Alejandro como defensor del misterio de la Inmaculada Concepción. La teología específica de Ricci, a pesar de apoyarse en diferentes tradiciones, le llevó hasta el límite de lo iconográfica y literalmente aceptable. Este artículo da cuenta de como su maestría supo reflejar un debate teológico y político.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Emblemática. Siglo XVII. Inmaculada Concepción. Misticismo. Apocalipsis. Iconografía religiosa.

ABSTRACT

In 1663, the Spanish Benedictine monastic and artist Juan Ricci de Guevara (1600-1681) submitted the theological proof of Mary's Immaculate Conception to Pope Alexander VII. This essay discusses the content and context of that manuscript. Through the knowledge and use of several religious traditions in which images were the key to the highest spiritual truths, Ricci demonstrates a mystical kind of theology. He demonstrates special attention for prophecies and visions, such as the prophecy of Malachy and the Apocalypse. Ricci applies these sources both literary and visually, in order to stress Alexander's divine, predestined role as defender of the mystery of Mary's Immaculacy. Although relying on several theological traditions, Ricci's specific theology brought him exceptionally close to the limits of what was iconographically and literary acceptable. This essay discusses how his artistry reflected a theological and political debate.

KEY WORDS

Emblematics. 17th Century. Immaculate Conception. Mysticism. Apocalypse. Religious Iconography.

In comparison with other pontificates during the Baroque Age, the pontificates of Urban VIII (1623-1644) and Alexander VII (1655-1667) are distinguished by an explicit use of artistic instruments in the communication and conviction of Catholic religious

truths and divine mysteries¹. Within the different disciplines of the broad artistic field, efforts were made to attract attention and promote authority through various mechanisms, including illusionism and theatricality, as an attempt to break away from reality and everyday life.

This happened for example in architecture, painting and literature. The combination of carefully chosen and displayed words and images enhanced the spiritual power and persuasiveness of these instruments. Through artistic use, images and words can refer to abstract concepts, such as the divine mysteries. The Jesuits played an important role in this matter. Encouraged by the *Spiritual Exercises* published by their founder, the Spanish knight Ignatius of Loyola, the Jesuits built up a strong international emblematic tradition that would reach a climax in the seventeenth century. By meditating with 'external' eyes on what is written and depicted, an inner eye is activated, thus opening the mind to religious mysteries.

The mystery of Mary's Immaculate Conception was an important seventeenth-century belief. It concerned the general idea that Mary was the first human being after Adam and Eve born free from original sin. This was a crucial condition to her suitability as the future mother of Christ – also free from original sin, yet also human – and so she had to be conceived by her parents Anne and Joachim without lust. The belief in her most exceptional status, although the cause and circumstances surrounding it were a mystery, was the most popular in Spain. In the last years of the sixteenth century, the belief in the purity of Mary functioned as a metaphor for the overall purity of the Catholic faith. From that point of view, the Spanish monarchy ardently carried out its devotion to the Immaculate Conception with the aim to connect the nation symbolically in a time of war and religious disunity². In this case, religion became a political instrument. It resulted in a tradition of Spanish missions to Rome by different monastic orders and in different ways, including documents such as text and images to increase the status of the mystery. The goal was to elide the mysterious character of Mary's immaculate state and elevate it to Catholic dogma.

As a key factor of the proclamation, Pope Alexander VII requested theological evidence for Mary's immaculate state. An attempt was made by the Spanish Benedictine monk, philosopher, theologian and artist Juan Ricci de Guevara (1600–1681). Juan Ricci had had a very active life in Spain as a theologian and artist. He and his younger brother Francisco (1614–1685) had learned to paint from their father Antonio³. Juan had studied philosophy in Irache and theology in Salamanca. He had lived in several Benedictine monasteries in Spain and had a successful monastic career. In the fall of 1662, Ricci travelled with an informal group of people on a sailboat from Barcelona to Rome⁴. The Benedictine did not know he never would return to his homeland. A few years after his arrival in Rome he wrote that the purpose of the trip to Rome was to attempt to formulate the evidence for the mystery of Mary's Immaculate Conception⁵. Ricci was committed to this mystery. He

had "written about this mystery *previously*" and would now make the ultimate attempt to prove the mystery literally, perhaps commissioned by the Pope himself⁶.

Through his Bull of December 8, 1661, *Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum*, Alexander VII had demonstrated his sympathy for the theme of the Immaculate Conception in general, but particularly the status of the mystery. In the Bull, he renewed the decrees by his predecessors about the Immaculate Conception and he recognized the popularity of the feast, but did not establish it as dogma. The official status of this document however was a victory for the instigators of the preparatory "embajada" –the Spanish king Philip IV and his ambassador Don Luis Crespi de Borja– and the whole Spanish nation⁷.

In 1663, Ricci wrote and illustrated *Immaculatae Conceptionis Conclusio*. This manuscript is the result of Ricci's attempt to provide the Pope with the theological proof that was needed for the declaration of the dogma. Alexander's main problem was the lack of a *theological evidence* for Mary's immaculacy –the popularity of the feast did not compensate for that requirement⁸. A copy of the manuscript is kept in the library of the Abbey of Montecassino (codex 590, pp. 38–47). The document has not yet been thoroughly studied, although an analysis of the texts and images gives an impressive understanding of the profound value of the artistic use of words and images in the era of the Baroque, regarding the conviction of divine mysteries.

Ricci's *Conclusio*, written in Latin, is spread over several large pages that are divided into six smaller, equally large, rectangular sections. Both whole rectangles as separate, short lines of text have clearly been cut and pasted. Apparently, the issue had been composed with great care, although the final appearance of the interventions is not suitable for a large or dignified audience. The question of who exactly was the intended reader of this type and size of publication, called a "librillo", and what was the aim of this transcript in handy format unfortunately remains unanswered. The Pope was probably sent an edition of higher quality. A clue for this is the large, leather-bound and gold-leaf decorated version of Ricci's *Epitome Architecturae de Ordine Salomonico Integro* (1663), also dedicated to the Pope, and preserved in the Vatican Library⁹. This text discusses the architectural Solomonic order that Ricci had previously described in his artistic treatise *La Pintura Sabia* (1659)¹⁰. The *Epitome* and the *Conclusio* have interdependent contents, because Ricci refers to the *Epitome* at the end of the *Conclusio*¹¹. The original *Conclusio* is written at or near the Basilica Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, on December 7, 1663, the eve of the feast of the Immaculate Conception. It is not known whether an original exists, which would likely be large



Fig. 1. Juan Ricci. Frontispiece *Immaculatae Conceptionis Conclusio*. 1664. BM codex 590, p. 39.

and highly finished. The version in Montecassino is a transcription, which was completed on January 28, 1664¹².

This essay will explain how Ricci applied drawing and literature as media to raise the Pope's awareness of the monastic's visionary evidence of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Ricci has done this in a way which is not easy to understand because it presupposes a thorough theological knowledge that subsequently is subject to a mystical interpretation. Through an artistic combination of carefully selected words and unconventional images, he constructed a proof of that major mystery of faith. He found the theological evidence in the mystical field where certain iconographical and literary juxtapositions indirectly refer to higher truths: his artistry becomes an artistic theology. In fact, Ricci does not show the proof but the way to reach it, which is opened through his special artistry. This essay will demonstrate how the creation and reception of his images reflect the intensity of the theological discussion concerning the status of the mystery¹³. Successively are discussed Ricci's use of ephemeral architectural drawings, literary topoi and innovative imagery.

The Solomonic order as signifier.

In art history and art theory, Ricci earned his reputation from his definition of a complete architectural Solomonic order as outlined in *La Pintura Sabia* and the *Epitome*. The Solomonic order contains a column with a double twist, like a double helix, and an undulating pedestal and entablature. This last characteristic distinguished Ricci's order from existing orders with twisted columns, such as Vignola's. In the *Conclusio*, architecture is only summarily referred to. The sole depicted architectural element is the facade of the Pantheon in Rome, in front of which a fountain with a Solomonic column is placed (Fig. 1). This image on one of the first small rectangles of the *Conclusio* has been discussed in other studies on Ricci. The word "Faciam" that is written below the image does not indicate, as has been suggested, a scheduled execution of the depicted fountain¹⁴. The Solomonic column, which was carefully modular defined by Ricci in *La Pintura Sabia*, appears too sketchy here for the purpose of execution.

The Solomonic order had already been dedicated by Ricci to the Immaculate Conception in *La Pintura Sabia*. Ricci sees this order as the most important order, because it is based on elements from the divinely constructed ("de manu Domini") Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. This makes it the oldest order and also the only order of non-pagan origin¹⁵. Ricci's theological dedication thus qualitatively reflects the highest architectural hierarchy. Comparable symbolism had been related to Solomonic architecture before. In 1633, at the inauguration in Saint Peter's Basilica of Bernini's Baldacchino, which also includes Solomonic columns, a poem was published that identifies the Baldacchino with the Virgin Mary through the analogy with a bridal room and a divine treasury (*talamo*)¹⁶. In addition, the Temple of Solomon in its entirety was a familiar metaphor for the Immaculate Conception in the seventeenth century. The Franciscan Franciscus van Hondeghem wrote in 1660 how Solomon could only have built the Temple in times of peace. He thereby provided the analogous metaphor that the "holy temple" of the Immaculate Conception could only have been created through the "absence of sin". Here, the Virgin is referred to, like Jerusalem and the Temple, as a place of perfect peace¹⁷.

This is how the architectural metaphor of the Immaculate Conception functioned. It should be noted that Spaniards especially, particularly the Spanish Jesuits, in imitation of Ignatius' *Exercises*, depicted architectural designs from the Old Testament such as the Temple of Solomon and the Ark of Noah, and then, through devotion and contemplation, turned these images into instruments to retain visionary knowledge. In this tradition, for example, are the images of the

Spanish humanist Benito Arias Montano (1527–1598) and the Spanish architect and Jesuit Juan Bautista Villalpando (1552–1608)¹⁸. Actual seeing with one's eyes was considered necessary by them to see and understand spiritually¹⁹. The depiction of architecture discussed in the Bible gained an important function and meaning in this way.

Just like the Complete Solomonic order described in the *Epitome*, the depicted architecture in the *Conclusio* –the Pantheon– is a rhetorical construction designed to attract the attention of the Pope through the use of an architectural form that was dear to him²⁰. With his imagery, Ricci anticipates metaphorically the personal interests of the Pope²¹. The depiction of tangible architecture from the heyday of the Caput Mundi should have raised Alexander's attention during his operation to reform the city into a Roma Moderna (in which St. Peter's Basilica and the Pantheon were given explicit attention) and refers to a more abstract, higher meaning. In this way, Ricci shows his affinity to the Spanish emblematic tradition but also focuses his method explicitly on the person of Alexander VII.

The unconventional adaptation of literary motifs.

Ricci chose the literary motifs in the *Conclusio* carefully as well. He was aware that Fabio Chigi, long before he took the name of Alexander VII, had been a member of the literary Accademia dei Filomati in Siena in his youth and therefore was susceptible to this art form²². In designing the literary concetti of the *Conclusio*, Ricci used especially the book of Apocalypse from the Bible and the prophecy of Malachy. The use of the latter source appears curious for this purpose and in this context. The prophecy of the Irish Bishop Malachy was first published by a Benedictine monk in 1595. In the prophecy are described 111 popes by means of very short Latin descriptions. The church considered prophecies as a kind of astrology and therefore they were not part of Catholic doctrine²³. During the seventeenth century, however, they were tolerated. The first step towards this change took place during the pontificate of Urban VIII. In books about the history of the papacy, the prophecy was considered the most important evidence for the continuity of the papacy. At the same time, a tradition was started in which the reliability of the text could be investigated and thus publication of the prophecy subsequently was implicitly tolerated. The pontificate of Alexander VII was the first in which the Malachian prophecy referring to the present-day Pope, Montium Custos, has been communicated publicly²⁴.

The core of the *Conclusio* is a 'Solutio', which is presented by Ricci as a breach of a sevenfold sealed book and thus is an explicit reference to the Biblical apocalypse,

where a Lamb opens a book sealed with seven seals²⁵. Ricci copies the prominent term 'signaculi' (seals) literally. These 'signaculi' in the 'Solutio' are small texts with original combinations of historical events in which Ricci sees signs that can serve as evidence for the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. He calls his method literally an 'evidentia sacra' – exactly what the Pope deemed necessary to be able to set the dogma²⁶.

The number seven plays a major role in the proof. Two reasons for this follows: firstly, the number seven has a general Biblical value because there are seven sacraments and the world was created in seven days²⁷. Secondly, the number seven, according to Ricci, is strongly associated with the Immaculate Conception. He refers to the Biblical passage in which the servant of the prophet Elijah watches a small cloud rising from the sea at the seventh time. Ricci interprets from this information the number seven as a numerical metaphor for the Immaculate Conception²⁸.

In his 'Solutio', Ricci connects each seal to the corresponding day of Creation, with the specific accents of each day as described in Genesis, and to the corresponding popes by the name of Alexander. The latter also were seven. In the sevenfold connection of these two basic elements, Ricci found indications that legitimized the role of Alexander VII in the case of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception and made it seem inevitable.

The *Conclusio* is drafted as an *Apocalypsis Iohannis* – not by the Apostle John, but by the Benedictine Juan (John) Ricci. The text appears as the reflection of a vision that Ricci himself might have had, the divine origin of which he wanted to express in an appropriate literary form. Ricci has explicitly converted the concept of the divine mystery of the Immaculate Conception into a vision to generate the form, images and texts that could make the mechanism work in the other direction in order to convince people who saw and read the images and texts of the truth of the mystery. In his self-constructed prophecy based on the characteristics of the Apocalypse the effect is to be found mainly in the method, which consists of comparisons and associations, both literary and iconographical, rather than the outcome. Considering his arguments, Ricci's evidence is to be considered quantitative rather than qualitative: not all of his associations are conclusive, but there are many. It is also noteworthy that the evidence is strongly focused on the detection of Alexander's predestined role in establishing the dogma in addition to the section that focuses on the actual evidence that Mary was immaculately conceived. Ricci based his proof on visions and prophecies, especially the Apocalypse and the prophecy of Malachy. As previously mentioned, Villalpando felt that a visual reconstruction of visions was necessary for their comprehension²⁹. The artistic translation played a central and crucial role.

The striking, explicit support of Malachy's prophecy of Alexander VII, 'Custos Montium', is a crucial element of Ricci's proof. Malachy is the key employed by Ricci to convince Alexander VII of his divine mission since the prophecy identifies Alexander VII as the guardian³⁰. Ricci's rhetorical crescendo reaches its climax when he quotes Isaiah 21:11, "Watchman, what of the night?" in which the night serves as a metaphor for the period in which the mystery of the Immaculate Conception has not yet been proclaimed as dogma. The combination of these prophecies of Isaiah and Malachy was a blatant appeal to Alexander VII. With his juxtaposed texts, Ricci highlights the sacred evidence that Mary was free from all sins³¹.

Because of the popularity of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception in Spain, Malachy's prophecy 'Montium Custos', because of its implicit pressure on Alexander VII, received a new impetus in the Spanish-speaking literary world. Spain had a tradition of growing missions, both written and physical, in favour of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. It was mainly Spaniards, because of their loyalty to the mystery, who saw in the stemma of Alexander VII the prediction of his institutionalization of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. Examples of the Spanish ardour that was kindled by Malachy's prophecy are the chronograms and anagrams by the Spanish Franciscan Pedro de Alva y Astorga in his *Militia immaculatae conceptionis Virginis Mariae contra malitiam originalis infectionis peccati* from 1663³².

By means of an inventive play with letters, the chronograms and anagrams referred to the need for the institutionalization of the mystery. The above-mentioned Malachian prophecy was in this context a synergistic and compelling force for supporters of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception: it was an obvious sign. Alexander was alerted that he could only protect the mystery by institutionalizing it. Moreover, the prophecy attributes the "guarding" characteristic clearly to a person, a human custodian. By no means all Malachian prophecies are unmistakably interpretable as descriptions of persons³³. This may also explain the popularity of the prophecy during the pontificate of Alexander VII, because the pressure on the Pope himself was increasing. Ricci's *Conclusio* fits into a Spanish literary tradition of an original, artistic treatment of words, which transcends the boundaries between religious orders. Maarten Delbeke has demonstrated the link between the rise of the use of the prophecy and literary culture. Prophecies were not intended to be doctrinal truths, but on the other hand they were well suited to be part of a particular artistic, literary use, especially in the years of Alexander's papacy. This seems mainly to have been influenced by the

cultural background of Alexander VII. The prophecy became a popular, innovative and theological tool to demonstrate the Pope his predestined role in relation to the Immaculate Conception³⁴. Ricci's *Conclusio* shows that visions and prophecies in general, and in particular the Apocalypse, were a popular means to apply in the case of the institutionalization of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. Ricci had the *ingegno*, the artistic talent, to reveal the hidden truth in these texts and to process them into original images, texts, and combinations thereof.

Pintura eloquens.

Just as Ricci made an unconventional collage of texts, he also chose a remarkably complex imagery to complement the *Conclusio*. The motifs of the Ark and the Eucharist play important roles in the *Conclusio*.

Ricci clearly alludes to the theme of peace, which was important to Alexander, by depicting a dove at the beginning of the *Conclusio*³⁵. In the accompanying text, Ricci compares the resting of Noah's Ark with the Church that had come to rest because of Alexander's Bull. The literary and visual motif of the resting Ark of Noah is the starting point for the *Conclusio*. Ricci plays with the literal analogy of the 'Arca' of Noah in Genesis with the Ark of the Covenant ("arca testamenti ejus") from the Apocalypse. In the text of the Apocalypse, the heavenly vision of the Ark of the Covenant and the apocalyptic woman, who later has been identified with Mary, read as one. In the consecutive verses 11:19 and 12:1 is written that "the ark of the Lord's covenant was seen" and a "great sign was seen in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun". The text of the Bible thus links the Arca and the apocalyptic woman. To that, Ricci adds the analogy with the Ark of Noah and Mary. According to Ricci, Alexander can perfect his pursued peace policy by putting to rest the indeterminate state of the Arca, which functions here—in a circuitous way—as a metaphor for the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Ricci writes that Noah's ark rested in the seventh month on the mountains of Armenia³⁶. Then he cites the event as a foreshadowing of the birth of Mary, which took place in the same month, but is hidden in the words MONTES ARMENIAE. That literary game reinforces his argument. Even the intervention of someone from Siena (Mount Siena: Monte Senae) is predicted: M(ONTES) AR(MEN)IAE - MONTE(S){ARM}EN[I]AE). Here he connects the Chigi monti from the stemma to the mountain of Siena, to Mary and to the number seven. The legitimacy of Alexander's involvement in the case of Mary's Immaculate Conception is thus delivered.



Fig. 2. Jacob Masen. Detail of frontispiece *Speculum Imaginum Veritatis Occultae*. (Cologne, 1664). Collection VU University Amsterdam.

In order to formulate the evidence, Ricci seems to have drawn from the clues that were handed to him by the German Jesuit Jacob Masen (1606–1681) in *Speculum Imaginum Veritatis occultae* (1650), a book on iconomysticism. In iconomysticism, the truths of Creation are revealed through symbols. This Jesuit preference for image over text is explained by the greater universality of the former and the observation that the obscure nature of the images should encourage an interest in deciphering them. Masen's publication marks the beginning of a tradition of Jesuit *ars symbolica*³⁷. In the *Speculum*, which is dedicated to Fabio Chigi, Masen pays attention to – amongst other things – symbols that are based on the Chigi family coat of arms (the mountains, the star, the oak and the eagle) as well as symbols for the Immaculate Conception. The two subjects have one symbol in common: the ark that is stranded on the mountains. The image adorns the frontispiece (Fig. 2). Thus Ricci had iconomystical reasons for choosing this symbol as the ultimate pictorial prediction of Alexander's commitment to the Immaculate Conception³⁸. Moreover, it indirectly shows his special interest in mystical theology.

Another striking visual motif that often – but in a number of variations – returns in several of Ricci's manuscripts in Montecassino is that of Mary holding her child, flanked by Christ, who celebrates the



Fig. 3. Juan Ricci. Motif of Eucharist with Christ and Mary. About 1665. BM codex 469, p. 69.

Eucharist³⁹ (Fig. 3). Thus, Christ curiously appears twice in the image. Often, the persons are depicted behind an altar and occasionally they all wear a tiara⁴⁰. The motif is a fusion of the individual portraits of Christ and of Mary and Child between the text of the *Conclusio*⁴¹ (Fig. 4). Its important significance is also to be traced from the *Conclusio*.

In the *Conclusio*, Ricci alerts Alexander to his predestined role as protector of the Immaculate Conception. Ricci goes one step further by showing Alexander's relationship to Christ. To prove this relationship, he shows the literary parallel between the mountains of Zion and the mountains of Siena⁴². These mountains are an important component of the next metaphor Ricci cites. He repeats several times that “the bird lives in the mountains”, by which Ricci refers to the habitat of the eagle⁴³. In the text of the Apocalypse the woman who appeared, and later was identified as a symbol for Mary, receives eagle wings to fly to the desert. In this way, the motifs of the eagle and the



Fig. 4. Juan Ricci. Page from *Immaculatae Conceptionis Conclusio*. 1664. BM codex 590, p. 41

Immaculate Conception become intertwined. Through the mountains, which reference both Siena and the general habitat of the eagle, Alexander and the Immaculate Conception are again connected.

Ricci's comparison of Alexander with Christ is a rhetorical preparation for his next analogy, in which he compares Eve with Mary. It is this comparison that appears to be the key to the declaration of Mary's purity and the evidence of her immaculate conception. The core of Ricci's evidence is the fact that Christ's body and blood are Mary's body and blood, since they are mother and son (Fig. 4). Such as Christ as Second Adam was free from original sin, so must have been Mary, as the second Eve⁴⁴. Mary and Christ are each other's equivalent, like Adam and Eve⁴⁵. If Christ was not free from original sin, Mary was not either, according to Ricci's argumentation. The questioning of Mary's status would thus have equivalent consequences for Christ's status. Ricci enriches his text with Biblical passages about the value of body and blood and bread and wine. Particularly in the sacrament of the Eucharist, the manifestation of both the purity of Christ as Mary takes place⁴⁶. Christ and Mary merge in

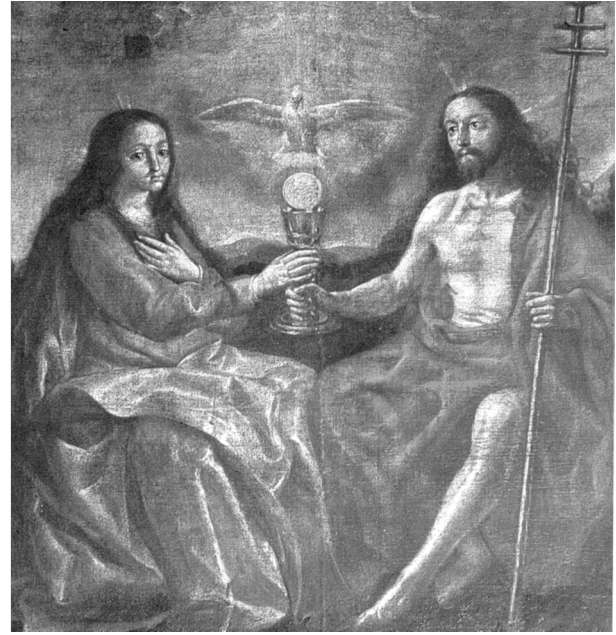


Fig. 5. Juan Ricci. *Christ and Mary*. 1666. Trevi nel Lazio, Collegiata of Santa Maria Assunta.

status – they are one, not only as mother and son, but also as husband and wife in a visionary marriage. Mary seems to be portrayed by Ricci as a “bride, the wife of the Lamb”⁴⁷. Only if one is familiar with the text of the *Conclusio* can one interpret this image. Ricci's motif is a visual manifestation of Mary's pure status, and in that form, a clear expression of Ricci's argument: as mother who shared her body and blood with her son, Mary is as pure as Christ. Ricci found the foundation of his evidence for the parallel between Mary and Eve – before the Fall – in the writings of the Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux, who wrote that ‘Deus Evam transfundit in Mariam’⁴⁸.

The motif of the celebration of the Eucharist with Christ and Mary, but without the child, is painted by Ricci in the chapel of SS. Cosmas and Damian in the Collegiata of Santa Maria Assunta in Trevi nel Lazio. In this chapel, the only known paintings completed by Ricci while he was in Italy are located (Fig. 5). The iconography that Ricci uses could indicate that the motif was too problematic to be executed exactly according to Ricci's designs in the manuscripts. It is known that Ricci's iconographic excesses caused debate among his patrons. For example, it is very likely that the canons in Burgos, Spain, had started a procedure to replace Ricci's painting of “The Ecstasy of Saint Francis” there for iconographic reasons⁴⁹.

Deus pictor or Pictor divinus?

The motif of the Eucharist in the chapel in Trevi nel Lazio differs in one important aspect from the drawings, namely, in the absence of the child. Yet the depiction of Christ and Mary clearly refers to the drawings in the *Conclusio*. Christ and Mary are depicted as equivalent, and together they hold a chalice above which a host appears. They literally share their body and their blood. The canvas in Trevi nel Lazio is therefore the pictorial counterpart of the central message of the *Conclusio*.

In the motif of the Eucharist, Ricci portrays Mary inconsistently, both with and without the Christ Child. That problem stems from the theological debate whether the woman who appears in the text of the Apocalypse, and is so graphically described, could be identified as Mary in her immaculate condition. The woman from the Apocalypse is often depicted with a child, which she bears according to the text. Mary, in her manifestation as the Immaculate Conception, generally is depicted without child. The sought-after analogy between the two women thus entails an iconographic problem, because of which confusion may arise.

However, besides the child there is another element that impedes the iconographic discussion, and that concerns the eagle wings. In Ricci's manuscripts in Montecassino are present several illustrations of the Apocalypse, including the battle between Michael and his angels and the seven-headed dragon⁵⁰ (Fig. 6). Above Michael, who is fighting, the apocalyptic woman is depicted with two eagle wings – along with the son to whom she had recently given birth⁵¹. Ricci's composition was inspired by a woodcut by Albrecht Dürer from 1498, which depicts the same episode (Fig. 7). Ricci places the woman in the central position, which is taken by God the Father in Dürer's print. Ricci's connection with prints by Dürer was previously demonstrated in *La Pintura Sabia*, where pictures and texts in the section on anatomy are based on texts and prints by Dürer, who is cited by Ricci himself⁵².

Contrary to what is shown in the print by Dürer, Ricci depicts the woman in the central place, and Michael, battling for the Church, is prominently displayed as well. Michael, the symbolic protector of all Christians, had already been cited by Ricci in the text of the *Conclusio* cryptically (Fig. 4) by means of the mention of *Quis ut Deus*, "Who is like God?", which is the literal translation of the name of the archangel Michael⁵³. Ricci's intention, as becomes clear from this image, is to establish an analogy between Michael, who according to the text of the Apocalypse protects the woman, and the "custodian" Alexander, who is destined to defend the Immaculate Conception.



Fig. 6. Juan Ricci. *Michael fights the dragon*. About 1670. BM codex 537, p. 23.

This image clearly shows how the woman of the Apocalypse iconographically can be confused with Mary. The core remains the image of a mother with her child. The Spanish painter Francisco Pacheco (1564–1644) had recommended omitting the child in the depiction of *Maria Immacolata*, to avoid confusion⁵⁴. The careful viewer, however, will see in this picture Ricci's allusion to the importance of this woman and her divine status because of the new and very prominent location of the woman.

Elsewhere Ricci portrays the apocalyptic woman again⁵⁵ (Fig. 8). This time she is depicted in combination with a date palm tree bearing fruit. Although the context here is different – not focused on the Immaculate Conception – Ricci again mentions both the equal status of Mary and her son ("blessed art thou among women and blessed is Jesus, the fruit of thy womb" – a reference to the dates of a palm tree) and Mary's connection with Eve and their contrasting relationship to the original sin. Eve had lost her sin-free status, but Mary never did. In this context, where there is no need to provide evidence for the Immaculate Conception, Ricci can easily use the



Fig. 7. Albrecht Dürer. *The seven-headed dragon*. 1498.

pictorial motif of the apocalyptic woman (with child in her arms) in a general Marian theme⁵⁶. When in an image the woman is not flanked by Christ, Ricci encounters no obstacles to follow the visual description of the Apocalypse.

However, in Ricci's motif of the Eucharist, the dual presence of Christ as adult and child is confusing. This complex image can be interpreted only by reference to the motifs that can be traced back to the text of the Apocalypse and more specifically, to the apocalyptic woman and child. Ricci's specific treatment of the iconography of the Immaculate Conception is exemplary for the vigour of the seventeenth-century discussion of the iconography of the Immaculate Conception and, moreover, the discussion about the institutionalization of the dogma itself. It will become clear that both discussions had no satisfactory and unambiguous outcome in the seventeenth century. In general, one then sees how Mary in her appearance as Immaculate Conception is even depicted with wings as in the description in the Apocalypse. This is also visible in Ricci's images, such as the image of the Solomonic triumphal arch in *La Pintura Sabia*, which he dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, and where he portrayed Mary as the apocalyptic woman with wings, flanked by Joachim and

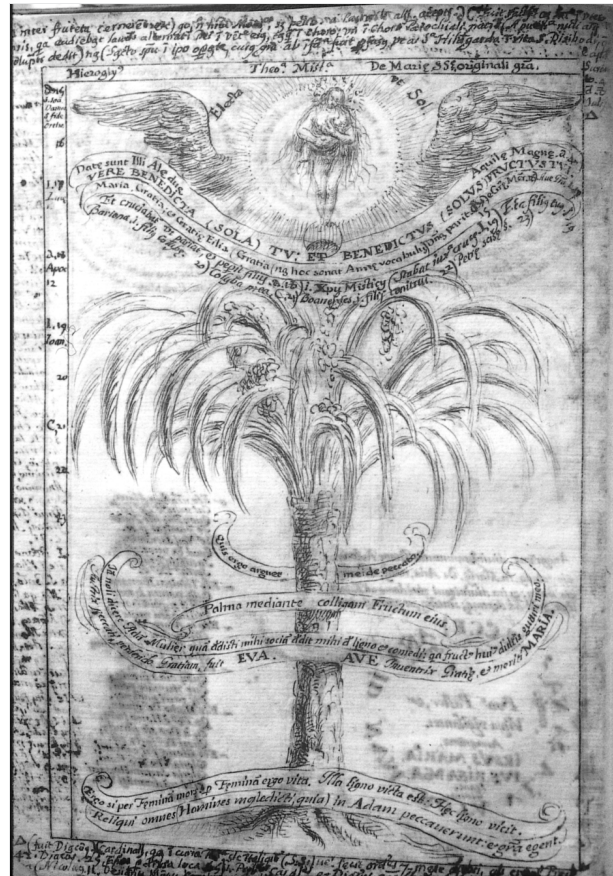


Fig. 8. Juan Ricci. *Palm tree with apocalyptic woman*. About 1670. BM codex 537, p. 10.

Anne. Since the Middle Ages, the woman of the Apocalypse has been associated with Mary. An important source for this is again St. Bernard of Clairvaux, this time his *Sermo in Dominica infra Octavam Assumptionis B.V. Mariae*⁵⁷. In the discussion regarding the iconography of the apocalyptic woman and Mary these different motives have been merged.

In 1995, Victor Stoichita wrote about the Biblical grounds for the pictorial fusion of the motif of the apocalyptic woman with the motif of the Immaculate Conception. Based on the combination of the texts from the Song of Songs "macula non est in te" and "electa ut sol" that refer to a bride who has been interpreted as the virgin Mary, the link was made with the apocalyptic woman who, according to the text of the Apocalypse, also was "amicta sole"⁵⁸. As a result, Mary in her appearance as Immaculate Conception was given wings as described in the Apocalypse.

At the same time there was the important idea that the vision of John is irreproducible by definition because it concerns a personal vision of the divine. When painters want to depict the image of that vision, they actually play

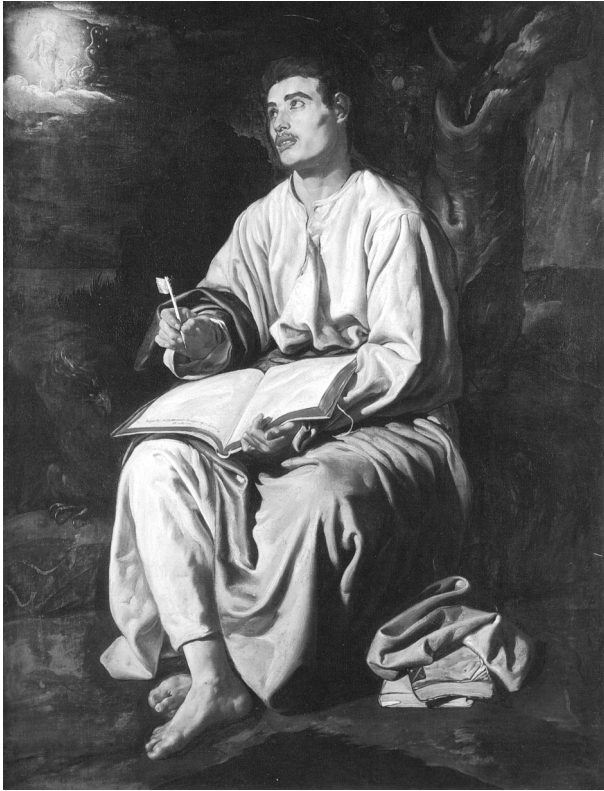


Fig. 9. Diego Velázquez. *Saint John the Evangelist on the Island of Patmos*. About 1618. London, National Gallery



Fig. 10. Diego Velázquez. *The Immaculate Conception*. 1618-19. London, National Gallery.

the role of God. The relationship between the *deus pictor* and the *pictor divinus*, however, is not equivalent. That is why the woman in the image of the vision (the woman only) is not depicted in the same manner as in the image of the event (the evangelist and woman together)⁵⁹. Two contemporary paintings by Velázquez show the difference between these two images (Fig. 9 and 10). The image of the apostle and the woman together preferably shows the woman depicted with wings, as she revealed herself to John. But she is an indicator for Mary in her appearance as Immaculate Conception, “sine macula”, and if a painter depicts only her, without the apostle, the wings (and the child) become problematic. The paintings by Velázquez show these different approaches and difficulties in the iconographical debate.

The iconographical problems reflect the problem in the theological debate regarding the Immaculate Conception, in which theologians were desperately looking for clear proof of Mary’s status⁶⁰. In this debate, as Ricci shows, the woman of the Apocalypse was used as a symbol for Mary. The preferable result, according to Ricci, is the seemingly inevitable iconographical product of an image of Mary *in her most divine form*, that is, with the characteristics of John’s *divine vision*. Precisely this

iconographic solution is possible because of the clear visual description in the text of the Apocalypse, legitimate because of the divine status of John’s vision and indisputable because of the status of the Bible as a source. But the odd result is only legible for those who are theologically well informed.

Stoichita writes that it was because of the ignorance of artists about this discussion that the Immaculate Conception was represented in both ways⁶¹. This argument can be rebutted, since Ricci is obviously aware of this discussion. The choice of representation seems rather to be a reflection of the commitment of the artist to the discussion: a “*tota-pulchra-image*” (that is without wings and child, because it is based on descriptions from the Old Testament, for instance from Proverbs and Song of Songs) was safe while an “*Apocalypse-image*” (with wings and/or child) was controversial because it reflected an unproven view that the artist took up in the theological debate. It is almost an iconographic emphasis on the divine status of Mary: the only human being free from original sin. Ricci’s explicit choice for depicting Mary with the child is a bold reference to the Apocalypse and the theological implications of his interpretation. The artistic use of images and text confirms Ricci’s evidence.

In the drawing of the Eucharist in Ricci's manuscripts at Montecassino Mary is depicted without wings. Depicting her with wings would not have been appropriate for this particular motif –where she is flanked by Christ– with the previously demonstrated specific purpose. But the presence of the child here basically means the same as the presence of wings. It remains an unmistakable reference to Mary in her most divine appearance with the pictorial characteristics of John's divine vision. The image that results from this visual argument nevertheless remains problematic –as the discussion about the mystery would remain as well.

Juan's brother Francesco, who fought this 'spiritual war' about the Immaculate Conception with him from Spain, chose a less controversial strategy in the debate⁶². He depicted Mary conventionally, yet still referred to the debate by showing in his works the Door of Heaven, the Mirror of Justice, and most importantly, the Ark of the Covenant (Fig. 11). This Ark and the other attributes are common symbols for Mary, but Francisco's emphasis on this attribute is remarkable and meaningful. The richest source for pictorial symbols for Mary is the Litany of Loreto. This commonly-used litany was officially approved for universal use in 1587 by Sixtus V and the text was validated in 1601 by Clement VIII. Mary is invoked in the Litany as the Mirror of Justice, the Seat of Wisdom, the Ark of the Covenant and the Door of Heaven. Some church fathers already had identified the Ark of the Covenant and other elements from the Old Testament, such as Sarah and Judith, as prefigurations for Mary⁶³. Other church fathers had connected the Ark that is mentioned in Psalm 131:8 to Mary⁶⁴. The Ark of the Covenant was a decorated wooden box containing the Word of God (the Ten Commandments) in stone, manna, and the staff of the high priest, Aaron. This Ark had become the ultimate metaphor for Mary's womb, in which God's Word was made flesh through Christ. Just like God is directly present in the Ark, he dwells in Mary – both literally bear God. It should be noted that the Ark, when the Temple of Solomon was completed, was housed there⁶⁵. For the Ricci brothers the Ark apparently was the best indicator for Mary's immaculacy.

The unknown context of the commission of the decoration of the chapel in Trevi nel Lazio evidently deemed the elements from the Apocalypse in Juan's preferred and telling motif unfit for execution. Neither the child nor the wings nor the Ark of the Covenant were depicted. Ricci focused attention on the sharing of body and blood, and emphasized the connection with the Holy Spirit, which is a signal of the analogy between Mary and the Ark of the Covenant, which were both overshadowed by it. The painting seems, compared to the drawings in the manuscripts, a concession at the expense of an iconography that in Ricci's view would have reinforced

its message. The canvas in Trevi nel Lazio is a pictorial summary of the central message of the *Conclusio*, the proof of Mary's Immaculate Conception, but with greatly reduced expressiveness. It may indicate that Ricci's iconography was too problematic to execute, but it may also indicate that Ricci's iconomystical evidence of the Immaculate Conception had not been found convincing and that his mission had failed. Given his textual argumentation that is previously discussed, this is not surprising. The canvas in Trevi nel Lazio is an injured memory of a bold attempt to define the mystery at last. It becomes clear that Ricci was either impeded by his patrons or that the pictorial motif was not sufficiently convincing regarding the required dogma. The canvas remains, however, as a proof of Ricci's exciting artistic experimentation and theological exercise on the borders of acceptability.

The Apocalypse in the Immaculist debate.

In many ways Ricci's *Conclusio* can be considered the seventeenth-century Benedictine version of the Immaculist section of the prophetic *Apocalypsis Nova*, written in Latin by the Franciscan visionary and reformer Joannes Menesius da Silva (1431-1482), also known as Blessed (Pseudo-)Amadeus of Portugal. At a young age, Amadeus moved to Italy and founded several convents, which were referred to as convents of the Amadist or Amadean order after his death. The chief one was the convent of San Pietro in Montorio in Rome. The minister general of the order, the Franciscan Francesco della Rovere, took Amadeus under his protection. After Francesco became Pope Sixtus IV in 1471, he appointed Amadeus as his personal confessor and counsellor⁶⁶.

Sixtus IV had shown his affection for the Immaculate Conception in his Bull of 1476. Moreover, this Pope proved to be sensitive to prophetic writings⁶⁷. In Rome, Amadeus spent his time in a cave near San Pietro in Montorio, where he wrote the *Apocalypsis Nova*. Composed in a state of rapture, Amadeus describes his new revelations about the beginning and ending of the world, presented to him by the archangel Gabriel. The advent of a Pastor Angelicus was announced to Amadeus in addition to the confirmation of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. Gabriel confirms to Amadeus "that Mary was kept from sin 'ab aeterno', 'ex voluntate absoluta', not 'ex voluntate ordinata'"⁶⁸. The text provided a celestial confirmation of Mary's immaculacy, which was already argued by other Franciscans, including the theologian and philosopher John Duns Scotus⁶⁹. Hence, Amadeus was one of the first to provide a theological proof for Mary's immaculate status. Thus Amadeus was a useful source for Ricci. The motivation



Fig. 11. Francesco Rizi. *Immaculate Conception*. About 1662. Cádiz, Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes.

for the Virgin's appearance in Amadeus' *Apocalypse* is her declaration "that to the end of the world she would be bodily present in those images through which she performed miracles; present in much the same way as Christ in the Eucharist"⁷⁰. Through his revelations, Amadeus proved Mary's immaculacy and subsequently that it would work mainly in images, which consequently raised the status of Marian representations⁷¹. It is through this apocalyptic presentation by Amadeus that images of the Virgin are to possible be seen as proof of her immaculacy. Although the *Apocalypsis Nova* was censored because of its heretical character, Amadeus' visions still received support from several Spanish Franciscans⁷².

Ricci was not the first to use Amadeus' *Apocalypsis Nova* in the seventeenth century in the immaculist debate. Jaime Cuadrillo points out that Amadeus' evidence was "... an important basis for the report issued by the church of Seville in this same year of 1615 to petition the Holy See"⁷³. This was one of the Spanish missions sent to Rome to support the Immaculate Conception. It was also previously mentioned by Pedro de Alva y Astorga who demonstrated the high value of Amadeus' work in his encyclopaedia on the Immaculate Conception dating from 1648⁷⁴. It is very possible that Ricci had become acquainted with Amadeus' work through De Alva y Astorga's remarks: Ricci's anagrams reflect a familiarity with his work.

Ricci has copied this Franciscan apocalyptic presentation and many parts of the argumentation, including the

importance of the Eucharist and the parallel with Adam and Eve. But why should a Benedictine refer to this Franciscan example? Although it is hypothetical, there could very well be political reasons. As soon as Amadeus entered the papal court, he "gained papal support for his foundations and, even more, the patronage of the Catholic Kings, promising that their succession would thereby be assured"⁷⁵. The Spanish society suffered from polarisation and the monarchy considered support for the Immaculate Conception as the only means to unite the people and guarantee the continuation of the monarchy⁷⁶. If a Spaniard could raise attention for the immaculate cause at the papal court, this person deserved support. And this support would be welcomed. If Ricci could gain papal support through a successful presentation of this subject, which was of great importance for the Spanish monarchy, he could probably receive royal support to found a church, just like Amadeus had done.

Ricci had travelled to Rome by himself, not as part of a royal Spanish junta⁷⁷. Salvador Salort Pons has recently published a document, from which a remarkable goal of the journey occurs. Ricci turns out to have requested the Pope, on behalf of the dukes of Béjar and Híjar – for whom he worked at least until he travelled to Rome – the honour of an episcopate 'in partibus infidelium', with the main goal to found a church and dedicate it to the Madonna of Montserrat. This latter detail was expressly demanded by the dukes whom Ricci represented⁷⁸. It is unknown whether Ricci succeeded in this matter. Furthermore, it becomes clear that Ricci's text is a

Benedictine pamphlet. It uses Benedictine sources in a problem that was mainly discussed by Franciscans and Jesuits. Could Ricci have asked for papal attention for the Benedictine cause? Whatever the reasons may be, the Benedictine's reference to his Franciscan counterpart hints at political motifs.

Conclusion.

Ricci combined unconventional literary and pictorial motifs in his attempt to formulate theological evidence for the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The combined application of drawing and literary motifs was a requirement to arrive at this visionary knowledge. Artistry made possible what mere knowledge or faith could not. Ricci investigated the limits of what was iconographically and literary acceptable.

The arts play a significant role in Ricci's practice of theology. They are the media that provide Ricci and others insight into 'holy' evidence. Ricci considers his texts and images, his mystical poems and striking iconography as 'weapons'⁷⁹. And he believed to have found an appreciative audience in Alexander VII and Queen Christina of Sweden for this: "these two understand them all", he wrote⁸⁰. The literary background of these persons must have played a major role in this matter. But it is Ricci's extensive theological knowledge and his special practice that should not be forgotten when studying his texts.

Ricci's images and texts are mystico-theological iconographies and anagrams. For him, these iconographies and anagrams contain invisible divine deeds and truths. What is most striking in his use of drawing and literature is the extent to which he relies on faith in the divine truth of prophecies and visions⁸¹. They are the ultimate, direct evidence of God's existence⁸². Ricci

clearly demonstrates in his treatment of 'Custos Montium' the validity of Malachy's prophecy in particular and prophecies in general. Similarly, Ricci finds in the text of the Bible, particularly in the Apocalypse, the affirmation of Mary's immaculate status. He is convinced of the divine truth that is enclosed in these texts and images.

Ricci does not provide direct, clear arguments for the proof of Mary's Immaculacy, but derives theological authority from the artistic application of words and images. On the one hand this fits within overall Baroque Catholic propaganda techniques, but on the other hand it shows an exclusive, personal and unconventional method. At the fiercest time of the theological debate, Ricci sought to reach the limits of acceptability. And it is exactly this characteristic that makes his work so informative.

Marías has written that Ricci arrived in Rome too late to be able to influence the debate on the Immaculate Conception⁸³. That might be true, but soon thereafter the Spaniards did have success. What role Ricci – if he already had – exactly played in that matter is not known, but in December 1664 Alexander VII granted Spain the right to celebrate the service of the Immaculate Conception as a cult, and later on this right was extended to other Spanish territories. Through the canvas preserved at Trevi nel Lazio, dating from 1666, Ricci demonstrates his loyalty to the cause, although his evidence had not been sufficient for the institutionalization of the dogma by Alexander VII. Apparently, the Pope deemed Ricci's theological evidence, which remains controversial, inconclusive. The discussion revolving around the declaration of the dogma and the establishment of a public iconography returned to quieter, less unconventional paths, for the dogma of the Immaculate Conception would not be proclaimed until much later, in 1854.

NOTAS

- ¹ The research that forms the base of this essay was partly made possible through the generous help of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome. I would like to thank Ellen Prokop (New York University), Maarten Delbeke (Leiden University / Ghent University) and Freek Schmidt (VU University Amsterdam) for their help and suggestions.
- ² Adriano PROSPERI, "L'Immacolata a Siviglia e la fondazione sacra della monarchia spagnola", in *Studi Storici*, n° 47, 2006, pp. 491-492, 508.
- ³ David GARCÍA LÓPEZ, "Pintura y teoría de las artes en el siglo XVII español. El cuarto centenario del nacimiento de fray Juan Ricci, rememoración y nuevas aportaciones", in *Anales de Historia del Arte*, n° 10, 2000, p. 103. For more information on the Spanish period I would like to refer especially to I. GIL-DÍEZ USANDIZAGA (ed.), *El pintor Fray Juan Andrés Rizi (1600-1681): Las órdenes religiosas y el arte en La Rioja*, Logroño, 2002; Ellen PROKOP, *Fray Juan Andrés Ricci and the commissions at San Millán de la Cogolla and the cathedral of Burgos (Spain)*, New York, 2006; Ellen PROKOP, "Fray Juan Ricci, Mateo Cerezo the Younger, and the Commission to Complete the Retrochoir of the Cathedral of Burgos", in *Hispanic Research Journal: Iberian and Latin American Studies*, n° 8, 2007, pp. 409-423; and David GARCÍA LÓPEZ, *Arte y pensamiento en el barroco: Fray Juan Andrés Ricci de Guevara (1600-1681)*, Madrid, 2010.

- ⁴ The journey is described in: Biblioteca del Monumento Nazionale di Montecassino (hereafter: BM) codex 590, p. 67. Erroneously, Ricci has written down the year 1663 instead of 1662. I think it is out of the question that Ricci could have made the journey from Barcelona to Rome in 1663 again.
- ⁵ BM codex 590, pp. 370-371. Here, Ricci did correct the year 1663 to 1662 (see previous note).
- ⁶ BM codex 590, p. 371. The papal commission, although hardly imaginable, could be derived from the remarkable note that Ricci had come to Rome as soon as possible ('più presto'). See the transcription of this *Peticion* in Salvador SALORT PONS, "El viaje de Fray Juan Rizi a Italia: las obras y un documento nuevo", in GIL-DÍEZ USANDIZAGA (ed.), *op. cit.*, 2002, p. 116.
- ⁷ Fernando MARÍAS, "La vida errante del monje fray Juan Andrés Ricci de Guevara", in: Fernando MARÍAS and Felipe PEREDA (eds.), *Ricci de Guevara, Juan Andrés, La pintura sabia*, Toledo, [2002], p. 35.
- ⁸ Suzanne L. STRATTON, *The immaculate conception in Spanish art*, 1994, pp. 102-104.
- ⁹ David García López has recently corrected a misconception on the format of the *Epitome* in BAV. GARCÍA LÓPEZ, *op. cit.*, 2010, p. 14.
- ¹⁰ Joaquín BÉRCHEZ and Fernando MARÍAS, "Fra Juan Andrés Ricci de Guevara e la sua architettura teologica", in *Annali di architettura*, n° 14, 2002, p. 268.
- ¹¹ BM codex 590, p. 46, fifth section.
- ¹² For the date, see BM codex 590, p. 46. For the location, see BM codex 590, p. 40.
- ¹³ PROSPERI, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 486.
- ¹⁴ The interpretation of the word 'Faciam' under the image of the fountain has been subject of discussion. E. TORMO Y MONZÓ et al. *La vida y la obra de Fray Juan Ricci*, Madrid, 1930, volume 1, p. 58; S. SALORT PONS, "Fray Juan Rizi en Italia", in *Archivo Español de Arte*, n° 289, 1999, p. 3 and GARCÍA LÓPEZ, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 143 have considered it as a serious project. A. RODRIGUEZ GUTIÉRREZ DE CEBALLOS, "Fray Juan Andrés Ricci Guevara en Roma (1662-1666): encuentro con Alejandro VII y Cristina de Suecia", in MARÍAS and PEREDA (eds.), *op. cit.*, [2002], p. 129 has not, but he doesn't give a reason for it. The cutting and pasting provide the solution. In his texts Ricci uses the common feature of catchwords – words at the bottom of a page which announce the first word of the next page. A similar construction is to be seen in the section in the upper right of the page. Apparently the drawing of the fountain was initially intended to precede the section which is now left of it. This section starts with 'Faciam illum columnam in Templo Meo' (Apocalypse 3:12). This has recently been noted by GARCÍA LÓPEZ, *op. cit.*, 2010, pp. 335-336 – he has adjusted his previous opinion.
- ¹⁵ BÉRCHEZ and MARÍAS, *op. cit.*, 2002, pp. 264-267.
- ¹⁶ Maarten DELBEKE, "Framing history. The Jubilee of 1625, the dedication of new Saint Peter's and the Baldacchino", in S. BONNEMAISON and C. MAY (eds.), *Festival Architecture*, 2008, pp. 143-144.
- ¹⁷ Maarten DELBEKE, "A Note on the Immaculist Patronage of Alexander VII: Chigi and the Pilgrimage Church of Scherpenheuvel in the Low Countries", in *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome*, n° 71, 2001, pp. 190-191.
- ¹⁸ Guy LAZURE, "«Un vehemente deseo de comprender la imagen de aquel famoso Templo se adueña de mí»: Seeing and understanding the Temple of Solomon according to Juan Bautista Villalpando S.J. (1605)", in *Word & Image*, n° 24, 2008, pp. 413-415.
- ¹⁹ LAZURE, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 420.
- ²⁰ A clue for the hierarchic rank of Saint Peter's and the Pantheon is their prominent presence among the architectural prints in Giovanni Battista FALDA, *Il Nuovo Teatro*, 1665.
- ²¹ In the summer of 1662 Alexander's plans for the square were presented in a clay model. The execution took place from March until July 1666 (Richard KRAUTHEIMER, *The Rome of Alexander VII, 1655-1667*, Princeton, 1985, pp. 107 and 185). At the moment of writing the *Conclusio*, the plans were not yet executed. Therefore, Ricci ensured himself of the Pope's attention. I refer to Krautheimer for the Pope's special interest in these two projects. On Alexander's plans for the Pantheon, see Tod A. MARDER, "Bernini and Alexander VII: Criticism and Praise of the Pantheon in the Seventeenth Century", in *The art bulletin*, n° 71, 1989, pp. 628-645.
- ²² Maarten DELBEKE, *La fenice degl'ingegni. Een alternatief perspectief op Gianlorenzo Bernini en zijn werk in de geschriften van Sforza Pallavicino*, 2002, p. 294.
- ²³ Maarten DELBEKE, "The revelatory function of the image-text: The prophecies of S. Malachy during and after the papacy of Alexander VII", in *Studi Secenteschi*, n° 46, 2005, pp. 232-233.
- ²⁴ DELBEKE, *op. cit.*, 2005, p. 246.
- ²⁵ Apocalypse 5 ff.
- ²⁶ BM codex 590, p. 39, section 3.
- ²⁷ Further on, on BM codex 590, p. 46, Ricci additionally cites a line from the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*: "the seven-fold gifts of grace are thine".
- ²⁸ I Kings 18:44.
- ²⁹ LAZURE, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 413.
- ³⁰ In 1663 the hope for a dogma proclamation by Alexander VII seemed to have reached a climax. An author recalls that the Virgin became aware she should not confide in the sea as Stella Maris, but in the (Chigi)mountains as Stella de'Monti. DELBEKE, *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 200.
- ³¹ 'Igitur, ex Signaculis VII ... eviderter infertur haec Conclusio. Maria immunis fuit ab omni mortali, veniale et originale peccato.' BM codex 590, p. 46, section 5.
- ³² DELBEKE, *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 198.
- ³³ The seventeenth-century discussion about the problematic reception of the 'contingencies' that are put up in the interpretation of obscure prophecies, is discussed in: Maarten DELBEKE, "Art's Deceit and Prophetic Truth in Seicento Rome" (forthcoming). Citing S. PALLAVICINO, *Del Bene libri quattro*, 1644, he argues that the use of prophecies in a religious context was tolerated – not as truth, but because of 'religious profit'.

- ³⁴ DELBEKE, *op.cit.*, 2001, passim.
- ³⁵ See for example Hans OST, "Studien zu Pietro da Cortonas Umbau von S. Maria della Pace", in *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, n° 13, 1971, pp. 231-285.
- ³⁶ Genesis 8:4.
- ³⁷ Ralph DEKONINCK, *Ad imaginem. Statuts, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVIIe siècle*, 2005, pp. 58-62.
- ³⁸ I have consulted J. MASEN, *Speculum imaginum veritatis occultae*, Cologne, 1664, in which the author refers to the Bull of 1661.
- ³⁹ BM codex 469, pp. 67, 69, 71, as published by SALORT PONS, *op.cit.*, 1999, p. 21. In the same codex are more variations than are reprinted by Salort Pons. These are reprinted in TORMO Y MONZÓ et al., *op.cit.*, 1930, volume 1, figures cxxxiv, -v, vi, -vii; as part of the commentary on Genesis. Another variation is to be found in BM codex 590, p. 49.
- ⁴⁰ SALORT PONS, *op.cit.*, 1999, p. 18, is responsible for the publication of these images, but has not interpreted them.
- ⁴¹ BM codex 590, p. 41.
- ⁴² Ricci paraphrases Psalm 98:2 : DOMINUS IN SI(E)[O]N(A).
- ⁴³ BM codex 590, pp. 39 and 37.
- ⁴⁴ The analogy between Christ and Adam is made by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:45 and Rom. 5:14.
- ⁴⁵ BM codex 590, p. 40.
- ⁴⁶ This could explain Ricci's fascination for the motif of the chalice with host. See BM codex 537, pp. 13 and 14.
- ⁴⁷ Apocalypse 21:9 as cited by Ricci on BM codex 590, p. 41.
- ⁴⁸ As cited by Ricci on BM codex 590, p. 41 and BM codex 590, p. 46. Ricci refers to Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones de Tempore*, De Laudibus Virginis Matris, Homilia II ('The new Eve'), in particular §3. The analogy between Mary and Eve has previously been made by several Church Fathers, among which St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, St. Augustine and St. John Damascene. Ricci seems to have put from the Eastern Church fathers more often.
- ⁴⁹ PROKOP, *op.cit.*, 2006
- ⁵⁰ Apocalypse 12:7. BM codex 537, pp. 23 and 24.
- ⁵¹ Respectively Apocalypse 12:5 and Apocalypse 12:14.
- ⁵² David GARCÍA LÓPEZ, "La Pintura Sabia y los manuscritos italianos de fray Juan Ricci. A vueltas con lo salomónico", in *Goya: Revista de arte*, n° 286, 2002, p. 32.
- ⁵³ BM codex 590, p. 41, section 4.
- ⁵⁴ F. PEREDA, "Pictura est lingua angelorum: fray Juan Andrés Ricci, una teoría teológica del arte", in: MARÍAS and PEREDA (eds.), *op.cit.*, [2002], p. 58 (note 73); STRATTON, *op.cit.*, 1994, p. 96.
- ⁵⁵ BM codex 537, p. 10.
- ⁵⁶ I do not know of a painting of the Immaculate Conception by Ricci. The suggestion that the Immaculate Conception above the main altar of the convent of San Vicente in Oviedo is made by Ricci, is outdated. TORMO Y MONZÓ et al., *op.cit.*, 1930, volume 2, p. 118.
- ⁵⁷ GARCÍA LÓPEZ, *op.cit.*, 2002, p. 31.
- ⁵⁸ V.I. STOICHITA, *Visionary experience in the golden age of Spanish art*, London, 1995, p. 109.
- ⁵⁹ STOICHITA, *op.cit.*, 1995, pp. 106-119.
- ⁶⁰ STRATTON, *op.cit.*, 1994, p. 97 connects the iconographical variations with the status of the theological debate about the dogma.
- ⁶¹ STOICHITA, *op.cit.*, 1995, p. 117.
- ⁶² BM codex 469, p. 221.
- ⁶³ Athanasius of Alexandria, *Homily of the Papyrus of Turin*; Gregory the Wonder Worker, *Homily on the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin Mary*.
- ⁶⁴ Among which St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, *The First Homily on the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin Mary*; and later St. John Damascene, *Sermon 1 & 2 on the Assumption*. Note that it were mainly these Eastern Church fathers (and their neoplatonism) who defended the legitimacy of images at an early point in time. Jaime CUADRIELLO, "The Theopolitical Visualization of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. Intentionality and Socialization of Images", in: Ronda KASL (ed.), *Sacred Spain. Art and belief in the Spanish world*, exhib.cat. Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2009, p. 121.
- ⁶⁵ I Rg 8:6-11.
- ⁶⁶ Anna MORISI, *Apocalypsis nova. Ricerche sull'origine e la formazione del testo dello pseudo-Amadeo*, Rome, 1970, p. 4.
- ⁶⁷ CUADRIELLO, *op.cit.*, 2009, p. 124.
- ⁶⁸ Anna MORISI-GUERRA, "The Apocalypsis nova: A Plan for Reform", in: Marjorie REEVES (ed.), *Prophetic Rome in the High Renaissance Period*, Oxford, 1992, p. 38.
- ⁶⁹ David Anthony BRADING, *Mexican phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe. Image and tradition across five centuries*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 28.
- ⁷⁰ As cited in BRADING, *op.cit.*, 2002, p. 4.
- ⁷¹ CUADRIELLO, *op.cit.*, 2009, p. 125.
- ⁷² BRADING, *op.cit.*, 2002, p. 29.
- ⁷³ CUADRIELLO, *op.cit.*, 2009, p. 137.
- ⁷⁴ CUADRIELLO, *op.cit.*, 2009, p. 124.
- ⁷⁵ CUADRIELLO, *op.cit.*, 2009, p. 124. This text by Cuadrillo describes the political aspects in the debate on the Immaculate Conception, from the Franciscan point of view, quite clearly.
- ⁷⁶ CUADRIELLO, *op.cit.*, 2009, p. 123.

- ⁷⁷ This contradicts the work of García López, who wrote that the information on BAM codes 590, p. 370 indicates that Ricci was part of a Royal junta. GARCÍA LÓPEZ, *op.cit.*, 2002, note 47. This information is also to be found in PROKOP, *op.cit.*, 2006, p. 111. In the book that was edited by Marías and Pereda in 2002, both positions are mentioned. I believe the right one is written down there by Rodríguez Gutiérrez de Ceballos.
- ⁷⁸ SALORT PONS, *op.cit.*, 2002, pp. 95-97. Salort Pons has provided transcriptions of the documents.
- ⁷⁹ BM codex 590, p. 5.
- ⁸⁰ BM codex 590, p. 5: 'estos dos los comprehenden todos'.
- ⁸¹ Above the painting in Trevi nel Lezio is another canvas by Ricci, that depicts Abraham's theophany (Genesis 18:1-2). It could very well be considered as an accent on the theological power of visions and divine manifestations. Ellen PROKOP, *Fray Juan Ricci's 'Theologia Mystica'*, lecture Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2009.
- ⁸² 'Pintura eloquens', as cited by Pereda in: MARÍAS and PEREDA (eds.), *op.cit.*, [2002], p. 50.
- ⁸³ MARÍAS, *op.cit.*, [2002], p. 35.