

‘*QUAE LECTA CANISIUS OFFERT ET SPECTATA DIU*’:  
THE PICTORIAL IMAGES IN PETRUS CANISIUS’S  
*DE MARIA VIRGINE* OF 1577/1583

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First published at Ingolstadt in 1577 with a dedication to Albert V, Duke of Bavaria, Saint Petrus Canisius’s *De Maria Virgine incomparabili et Dei genitrice sacrosancta libri quinque* (*Five Books on Mary, Incomparable Virgin and Most Holy Mother of God*), the first Jesuit treatise on the Virgin Mary, constitutes the second volume of Canisius’s *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* (*Commentary on the Corruptors of the Divine Word*), the proposed three-part refutation of the *Magdeburg Centuries* upon which he labored for more than a decade [Fig. 1].<sup>1</sup> Erudite yet heartfelt, both compendious and readable, *De Maria Virgine* is a work of positive theology, written in imitation of the Church Fathers, not least Saint

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<sup>1</sup> On the *Mariale*, see Brodrick J., S.J., *Saint Peter Canisius* (Chicago: 1980; reprint ed., 1998) 716–748; Haub R., “Petrus Canisius: *Marientraktat*, ‘*Mariale*’”, in Baumstark R. (ed.), *Rom in Bayern: Kunst und Spiritualität der ersten Jesuiten* [exh. cat., Bayerisches Nationalmuseum] (Munich: 1997) 525–526, and “Petrus Canisius: Manuskript zum *Marientraktat*”, in *ibid.*, 548–549. In his autobiographical *Testament*, dictated between late 1596 and early 1597, Canisius explains that his aim in writing the *Mariale* was to restore the Marian piety of the Fathers, and by doing so, to strengthen faith in the orthodox Church and to oppose its new enemies, that is, the Magdeburg Centuriators; see Petrus Canisius S.J., *Das Testament des Petrus Canisius: Vermächtnis und Auftrag*, (eds.) J. Oswald and R. Haub (Frankfurt am Main: 1997) 51–52. As Brodrick rightly observes in *Saint Peter Canisius* 717, Canisius broadened the *Mariale*’s scope to encompass the entire history of Marian devotion; he aimed ultimately to refute not only the arguments of the Centuriators but also those of all anti-Marian heretics. On the *Mariale* in the context of the Counter-Reformation cult of the Virgin in Bavaria, see Heal B., *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany: Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500–1648* (Cambridge: 2007) 148–206, esp. 148, 150, 157, 189, and, on the crucial part played by Marian images in renewal of the cult, 162–188; see also, on Canisius’s efforts to renew religious life in Bavaria, Buxbaum E.M., *Petrus Canisius und die kirchliche Erneuerung des Herzogtums Bayern, 1549–1556* (Rome: 1973). On the *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis*, see Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* 680–711; Diez K., “Petrus Canisius als Theologe”, in J. Oswald and P. Rummels (eds.), *Petrus Canisius – Reformator der Kirche: Festschrift zum 400. Todestag des zweiten Apostels Deutschlands* (Augsburg: 1996) 178–193, esp. 188; and Haub R., “Petrus Canisius als Schriftsteller”, in Baumstark, ed., *Rom in Bayern* 540; “Petrus Canisius: Widerlegung der ‘Magdeburger Centurien’”, in *ibid.*, 547–548; and “Petrus Canisius: Manuskript zum Traktat über den Apostel Petrus”, in *ibid.*, 549–550.

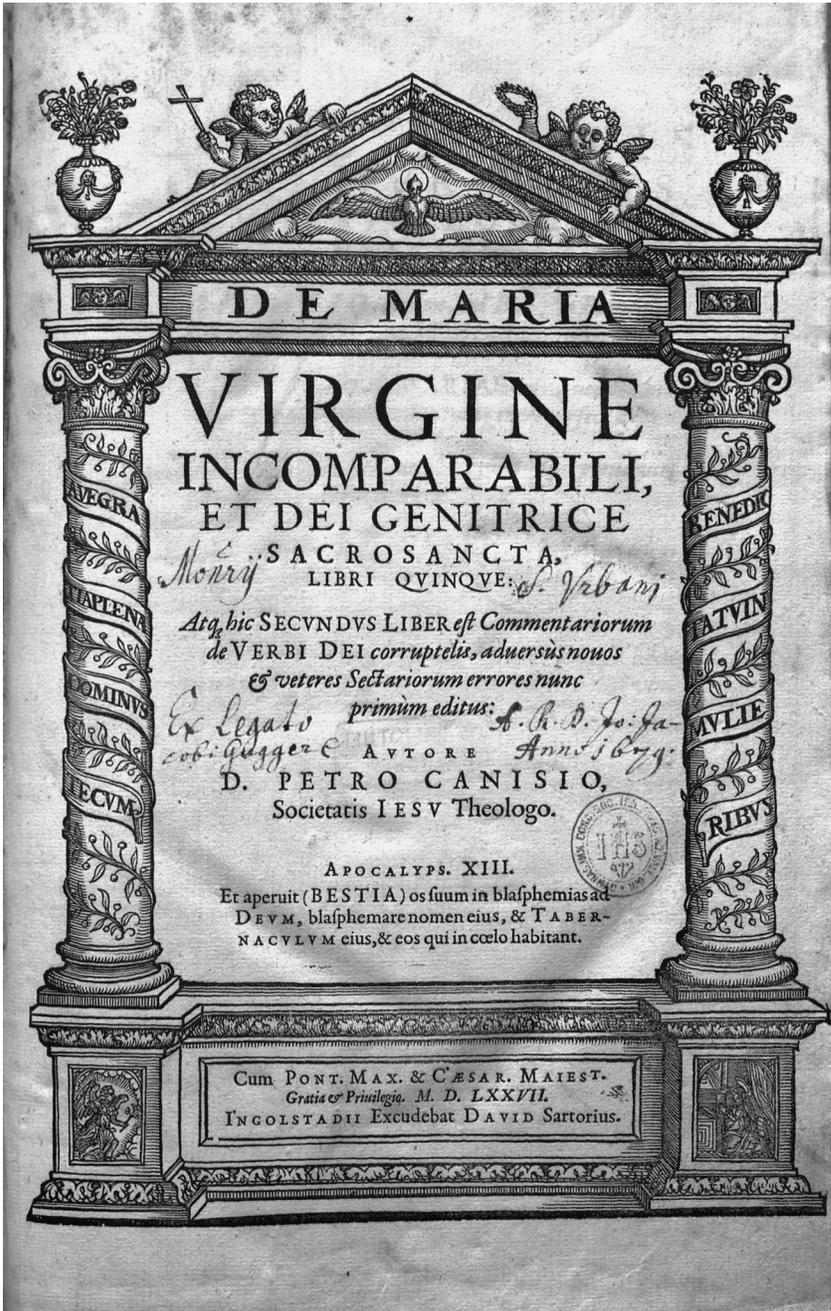


Fig. 1. Petrus Canisius, *De Maria Virgine incomparabili et Dei genitrice sacrosancta libri quinque* (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1577), title-page. Maurits Sabbelibiotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

Jerome. Having received papal support, it proved influential, perhaps more as a summa of Marian doctrine and devotion than as a controversialist instrument. As Pope Pius V and Father General Francis Borgia had encouraged Canisius to write the *Commentarium*, so Pope Gregory XIII and Father General Everard Mercurian urged him to extend it by writing a comprehensive *opus Marianum*. Canisius reissued *De Maria Virgine* in 1583, likewise at Ingolstadt, combining it with his earlier disquisition on Saint John the Baptist, *De sanctissimi praecursoris Domini Ioannis Baptistae historia evangelica* (*On the Evangelical History of John the Baptist, the Most Holy Precursor of the Lord*), in a revised omnibus edition of the *Commentarium* [Fig. 2].

Commonly known as the *Opus Mariale*, or simply, *Mariale*, the treatise offers a summa of Marian doctrine, but also doubles as a meditative text, whose five parts describe and justify the Virgin's *excellencia, nobilitas, virtus, sanctitas*, and *dignitas*. Prefacing each subsection is a woodcut print of a Marian icon or mystery, accompanied by a poem expounding the image and its relation to Canisius's text, the majority composed by Philippus Menzelius, Professor Ordinarius of Medicine at the University of Ingolstadt. In the 1583 edition, the sequence opens with a titular image attaching to the dedicatory and general prefaces, that conflates elements from three miracle-working icons of the Madonna: the *Salus Populi Romani* from Santa Maria Maggiore, the *Santa Maria in Vallicella* from the Roman church of the same name, and the *Madonna dei Mantellini* from the Sienese church of Santa Maria del Carmine, the latter based on a celebrated Byzantine icon of the *Hodegetria* type, also housed at the Carmelite Church in Siena [Fig. 3].<sup>2</sup> There follow images that introduce or distill, and in some cases bridge, the five books of the *Mariale*: the *Tree of Jesse* illustrating Book I on Mary's parentage and genealogy, birth and girlhood, exemplary life, morals, and

<sup>2</sup> In effect, Canisius promulgates a new Marian icon deriving from these distinguished predecessors. On the Lucan image of the Virgin, housed in the altar tabernacle of the Capella Paolina since 1613, and known as the *Salus Populi Romani* since the nineteenth century, see Belting H., *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, (trans.) Jephcott E. (Chicago and London: 1994) 68–69. On the *Santa Maria in Vallicella*, revered by Filippo Neri and Cesare Baronio as the chief Marian relic of the Oratorian congregation in Rome, and housed in the painted tabernacle by Rubens since 1608, see zur Mühlen I. von, *Bild und Vision: Peter Paul Rubens und der 'Pinsel Gottes'* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, New York, Paris, and Vienna: 1998) 139, 144–145. On the *Madonna dei Mantellini*, housed in the painted tabernacle by Francesco Vanni since 1595, see Krüger K., *Das Bild as Schleier des Unsichtbaren: Ästhetische Illusion in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit in Italien* (Munich: 2001) 144.



Fig. 2. Petrus Canisius, *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), title-page. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 3. Icon of the Virgin and Child. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), dedicatory and general prefaces, fol. b r. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

pursuits, and most importantly, Immaculate Conception [Fig. 4]; the *Icon of the Most Beautiful Virgin as Daughter, Bride, and Mother of God*, that mediates the transition from Book I to Book II on Mary's perpetual virginity and espousal to Joseph [Fig. 5]; the *Annunciation* illustrating Book III on the mystery of the Incarnation, and specifically on the angelic salutation, Mary's consensual response, and her divine motherhood [Fig. 6]; the *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* illustrating Book IV on the virtues of Mary and the human passions she experienced during the Nativity, Visitation, Presentation, Discovery of Christ among the Doctors, and the Passion of Christ [Fig. 7]; and the *Angelic Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin* illustrating Book V on Mary's death, Assumption, intercessory miracles, and cult [Fig. 8]. In addition, the *Virgo in Sole*, its symbols deriving from the Song of Songs, is repeated twice to mark relevant chapters of Books IV and V [Fig. 7], while others images, such as the *Visitation*, *Nativity*, *Presentation*, *Discovery of Christ among the Doctors*, and *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows*, complement the chapters on Mary's share in the infancy and Passion of Christ [Figs. 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13]. Canisius interweaves refutations of various anti-Marian heresies, both past and present, among all five books, but especially Books IV and V.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The 1583 edition contains fifteen illustrations, in addition to an illustrated title-page showing the *Icon of Maria Deipara*, as follows: *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin Holding the Christ Child* (fol. a5 verso; accompanies the *Epistola nuncupatoria*); *Icon of the Maria Deipara* (fol. b1 recto; accompanies the *In librum secundum de corruptelis verbi Dei...praefatio*); *Tree of Jesse* (fol. c6 recto; accompanies chapter 1 of Book I); *Icon of the Pulcherrima Virgo as Daughter, Bride, and Mother of God* (p. 111; accompanies *In librum secundum de Maria Virgine...praefatio*); *Annunciation* (p. 255; accompanies chapter 1 of Book III); *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* (p. 316; accompanies chapters 12 and 13 of Book III); repeat of *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* (p. 385; accompanies *In librum quartum de Maria Virgine...praefatio* and chapter 1 of Book IV); *Visitation* (p. 401; accompanies chapters 2 and 3 of Book IV); *Nativity with Adoration of the Shepherds* (p. 439; accompanies chapter 9 of Book IV); *Presentation in the Temple* (p. 453; accompanies chapters 8 and 9 of Book IV); *The Twelve-Year Old Christ Found among the Doctors by Mary and Joseph* (p. 478; accompanies chapter 14 of Book IV); *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows* (p. 547; accompanies chapters 26 and 27 of Book IV); *Angelic Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin* (p. 577; accompanies chapter 29 of Book IV and *In librum quintum de Maria Virgine...praefatio*); repeat of *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* (p. 648; accompanies chapters 7 and 8 of Book V); repeat of *Icon of Maria Deipara* (p. 791; accompanies chapters 24 and 25 of Book V). Poems by Phillipus Menzelius expound the *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin*, the *Icon of the Maria Deipara*, the *Tree of Jesse*, the *Icon of the Pulcherrima Virgo*, the *Annunciation*, the first repeat of the *Virgo in Sole*, the *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows*, and the *Angelic Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin*. Several of the prints are monogrammed as follows: *Icon of the Pulcherrima Virgo* (MF joined); *Annunciation* (MC, CM, MvC, or CvM superimposed, with a fluttering banner attached at left); *Visitation* (MF joined);

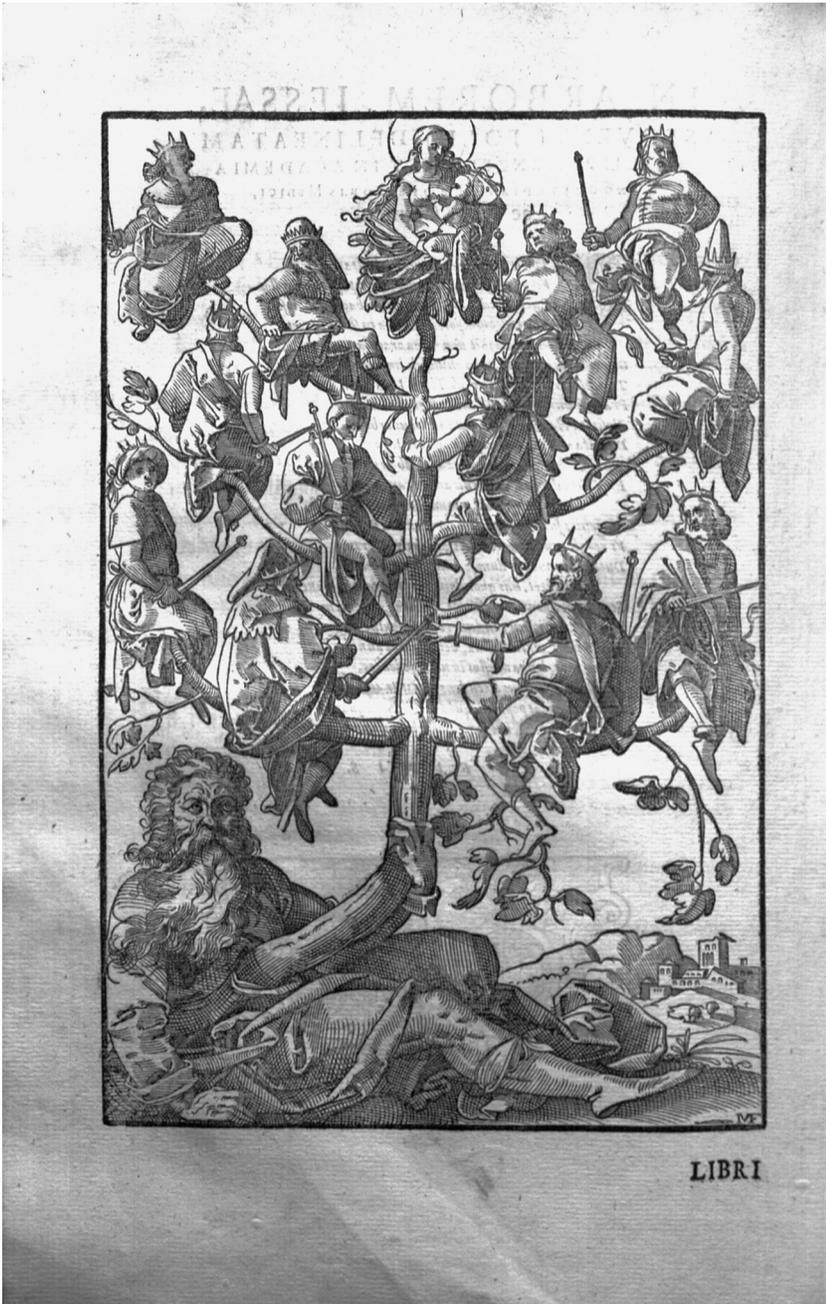


Fig. 4. *Tree of Jesse*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...], (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book I, chapter 1, fol. 6v. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 5. *Icon of the Most Beautiful Virgin as Daughter, Bride, and Mother of God.* Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book II, chapter 1, p. 111. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

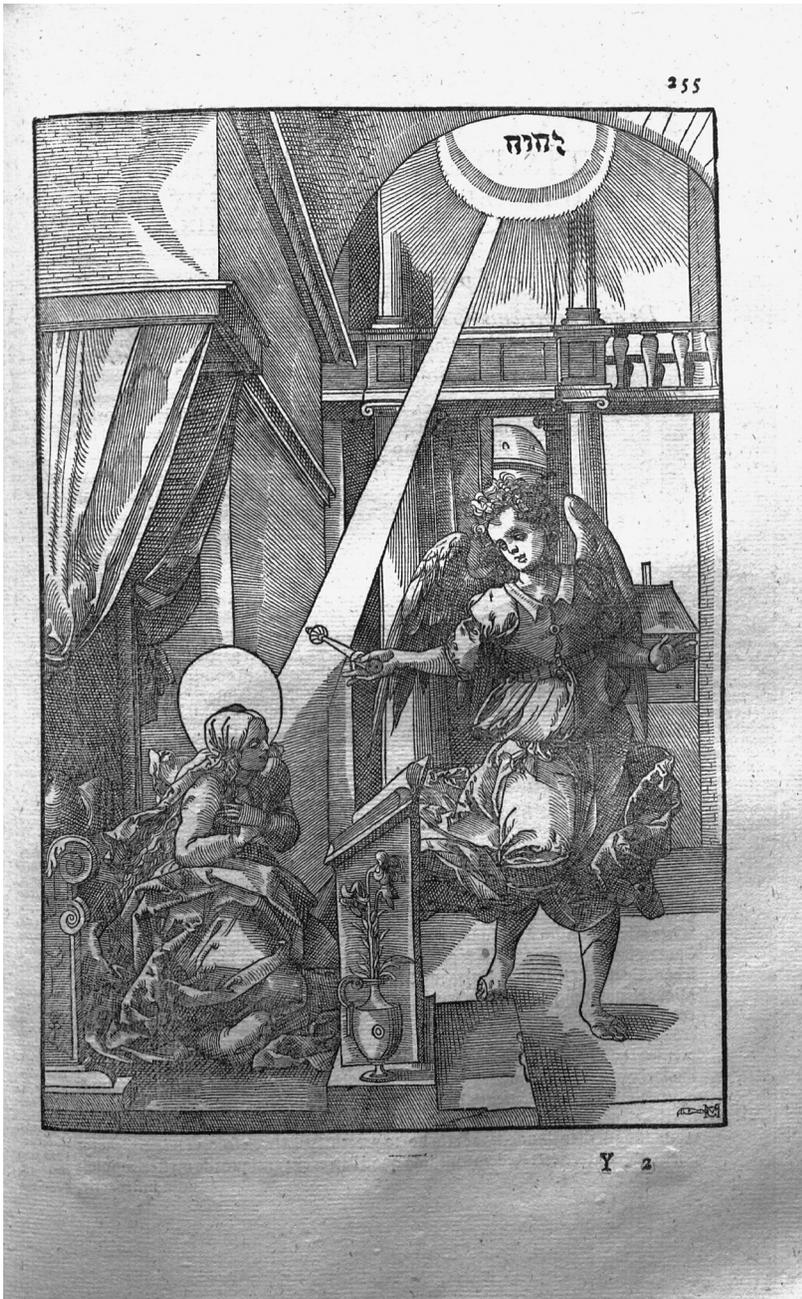


Fig. 6. *Annunciation*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's, *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book III, chapter 1, p. 255. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 7. *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 1, p. 385. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 8. *Angelic Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book V, chapter 1, p. 577. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 9. *Visitation*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 3, p. 401. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 10. *Nativity*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 9, p. 439. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 11. *Presentation*. Woodcut illustration in Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 11, p. 453. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 12. *Discovery of Christ among the Doctors*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 14, p. 478. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 13. *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 27, p. 547. Maurits Sabbethoek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

The prefatory woodcuts function as headings to Canisius's *prae-fationes*, serve to indicate how Marian doctrine is bound up with the cult of images, and certify that the *Mariale* issues equally from the author's reading of Marian texts and viewing of Marian images (*quae lecta Canisius offert et spectata diu*).<sup>4</sup> Canisius invites the reader-viewer to meditate on sacred images in imitation of Mary herself, whose practice of contemplative devotion grounds his own, as he poignantly implies on several occasions. My paper focuses on two illustrations – the *Pulcherrima Virgo* from Books I and II, and the *Annunciation* from Book III – that support Canisius's account of the Virgin as a viewer of images and an epitome of contemplative image making [Figs. 5 and 6]. Mary's expert use of all her senses, but especially of the sense of sight, offers a guide to users of the *Mariale*, mediating their encounter with the devotional prints that mark the treatise's chief subdivisions. Here I want to ask how and why Marian doctrine, for Canisius, is bound up with the cult of images, and specifically with the prayerful act of beholding the *effigies Mariae Virginis*, that proves central to the doctrinal and meditative program of the *Mariale*.

Introduced by Philippus Menzelius's epigrammatic poem *In iconem sequentem*, the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, that precedes Book II, is also closely linked to the argument of chapter 13, that closes Book I, "On the Studies, Morals, and Perfect Life of Mary, Especially before She Was

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*Nativity* (TS superimposed, i.e., Tobias Stimmer); and *Christ Found among the Doctors* (TS superimposed, i.e., Tobias Stimmer). The *Icon of Maria Deipara* and *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin Holding the Christ Child* were printed from the same blocks used for the 1577 edition of the *Mariale*. The other illustrations in the 1583 edition, though they repeat the subjects first illustrated in 1577, were recut: in all these cases, the compositions become more complex spatially, the chiaroscuro more subtle and varied, the figures' attitudes, gestures, and facial expressions more specific yet forceful, the play of drapery more elaborate. The pictorial style might best be characterized in rhetorical terms as more richly ornamented. The placement of the illustrations remains largely the same with the following exceptions: the *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* replaces the *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows* at the start of Book IV; and a repeat of the *Icon of Maria Deipara* replaces the *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin Holding the Christ Child* between chapters 24 and 25 of Book V. It is important to note that the two illustrations reused in 1577 and 1583 are images of images – the *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin* and *Icon of Maria Deipara*. The fact that the images were retained and improved in the 1583 edition suggests their functional importance to the book's argument. Both editions of the *Mariale* were published by David Sartorius.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Philippus Menzelius, "In sequentem effigiem carmen", in Petrus Canisius S.J., *De Maria Virgine incomparabili, et Dei genitrice sacrosancta, libri quinque* (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1577) 233. This poem accompanies the illustration of the *Annunciation*.

Greeted by the Angel".<sup>5</sup> And yet, the picture portrays Mary as mature rather than juvenile, thereby suggesting that the virtues expounded by Canisius informed all her life; having been perfected at an early age and then practised assiduously, they have secured the heavenly glory she is now seen to enjoy and also to offer, her eyes graciously lowered toward whosoever invokes her aid. The inscription identifies her in the second person as 'the most beautiful Virgin, unique among the company of women, at one and the same time daughter, bride, and parent of God'.<sup>6</sup> In a closely argued sequence of three stanzas, Menzelius begins by describing Mary – 'her spirit pure, her eyes modestly downcast, her speech most chaste' – as the living embodiment of 'splendid virginity' (*candida Virginitas*); she is the 'best imitatrix' who, even while subject to the fragile body (*fragili iam dum sub corpore*), for our benefit fashioned her life into an image of the heavenly life to come (*nobis [...] caelicolum praestas imitatrix optima vitam*).<sup>7</sup> Menzelius plays upon the implied antithesis of subjection (*sub corpore*) and triumph (*praestas*) reconciled in the person of Mary, the *imitatrix* who offered herself as an image to be imitated; viewed in this light, the icon of the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, approachable yet exalted, humane yet celestial, may be construed as a version of the living image Mary purveyed as a proleptic object of imitation.<sup>8</sup> It is in other words a doubled image, that is, an image of this Marian image.

Stanza two encourages us to view the icon through Mary's eyes, seeing it through the subjective lens of her self-experience in Christ. Menzelius states that the mystery of the Incarnation has a universal effect upon all creation, so stupefying mother nature that she recognizes nothing of herself in the wondrous conception of Christ (*stupuit partus Natura creatrix/ Miro, more novo, neque sese agnovit in ipsis*); yet this same mystery affects Mary intimately, causing her to recognize that the most inviolate Virgin who, being child, spouse, and mother to

<sup>5</sup> "De Mariae studiis, moribus & vita perfecta, praesertim antequam ab Angelo salutaretur," in Petrus Canisius, S.J., *Alter tomus commentariorum de Verbi Dei corruptelis, adversus novos et veteres Sectariorum errores. In eo libris quinque disseritur de Maria Virgine incomparabili, et Dei genitrice sacrosancta*. (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583) 98–109 [this edition hereafter cited as *De Maria Virgine* (1583)].

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 111: 'Foeminei tu sola chori pulcherrima Virgo,/ Una Dei pariter filia, sponsa, parens'.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Scilicet & fragili iam dum sub corpore nobis,/ Pura animi, deiecta oculos, castissima fando,/ Coelicolum praestas imitatrix optima vitam'.

Christ, enlightens and honors the physical world, is she herself (*illa tibi*), who begot the Holy Name shining beyond the highest heaven, immense and perfect beyond measure, by whom it was fit that she be cherished (*peperit clarum trans aethera nomen, / Exemplumque, coli quo te decet, edidit ipsa / Immensum, ac numero perfectum prorsus ab omni*). In this formulation, as Christ is to Jove the Thunderer (*Tonantis*), so Mary is to Juno his sister and bride (*sospite*).<sup>9</sup> Menzelius is implying that the icon operates as a meditative *speculum*, that allows Mary to visualize herself in a multiply specific relation to Christ (*illa Tonantis filia, sponsa, parens, eadem intactissima Virgo*), and further, incorporates us into this act of self-knowing. To behold the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, then, is look into the mirror of Marian virtue, as did Mary herself.

Stanza three reproves all those who, relying entirely on brute sense and incapable of discernment, resist efficacious Faith; calling them accusatory Jews, rabid heretics, and profane rationalists, Menzelius demands that they submit to the Truth, whose inextinguishable light this sacred page gives forth (*concedite Vero, / Cuius inextinctum sacra haec dat pagina lumen*). The term *pagina* refers to the page printed with the poetic *epigramma*, but also to the text of the *Mariale*, and no less to the imprinted image of the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, that offers enlightenment to these blind souls bound by darkness (*damnata tenebris pectora*). What they may discern by turns, if they read and see the *sacram paginam* with open eyes, hearts, and minds, is first the image of the Virgin as consummate *imitatrix*, then the image of the image she fashioned of her life and the mirror-image she fashions of herself, by applying her spirit (*pura animi*), face (*deiecta oculos*), and speech (*castissima fando*) to the task of meditative mimesis.

Menzelius's central conceit – that the Virgin, by fashioning and beholding the image of herself, devoutly epitomizes the act of sacred image-making – derives in fact from the argument of Canisius's chapter 13. His aim, as he states at the start, is to make clearly visible (*id vero evidentius fiet*) Mary's pursuits, character, and exemplary life (*studiis, moribus & vita perfecta*), as far as these may be observed from close reading of the Fathers (*quantum mihi sane in veterum lectione versanti, atque rem omnem*

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: 'Ergo etiam mundi regnator maximus ipse / Humanos quondam sibi quum circumdaret artus, / Ad tantum te legit opus, te sospite nasci / Instituit [...] / At tuus hinc duplicatur honos: iamque illa Tonantis / Filia, Sponsa, Parens, eadem intactissima Virgo, / Virgo decus rerum, Virgo lux altera mundi / Illa tibi peperit clarum trans aethera nomen'.

*diligentius pervestiganti licuit observare*).<sup>10</sup> Among other patristic sources, he cites Jerome's *Epistle to Laeta on the Institution of Daughters* and *Epistle to Gaudentius on the Education of Children*, in which precepts (*leges*), duties (*officia*), and studies (*studia*) for the rearing of maidens are enumerated.<sup>11</sup> All such rules, he avers, may be seen to have been perfectly expressed and enacted by the Virgin (*in nostra Virguncula ad unguem expressas reque ipsa comprobata habemus*), in whose education we may observe, by common consent, whatsoever wise men have deemed necessary for the advancement of maidens in sincere piety (*ad unguem observatum esse, quicquid sapientes [...] puellis ad sinceram pietatem recte provehendis unquam praescripserunt*).<sup>12</sup> Indeed, she is the paragon of all that Jerome prescribes: 'I have partially reiterated these things...wisely enjoined by Jerome for girls and virgins that they may live well and blessedly; the observance of which (*quorumque observatio*), as I have said, occurs properly [...] in noone as in the little Virgin Mary'.<sup>13</sup> Since the word *observatio* connotes observance, but also observation, Canisius is asserting that she

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 99. On Canisius as a reader of Jerome, specifically of his letters, see Meuwese A., "De uitgave van Hieronymus' brieven door Petrus Canisius", *Historisch tijdschrift* 4 (1925) 1–25; Lössl J., "Konfessionelle Theologie und humanistisches Erbe: Zur Hieronymusbriefedition des Petrus Canisius", in Berndt R. (ed.), *Petrus Canisius SJ (1521–1597): Humanist und Europäer* (Berlin: 2000) 121–153; and Pabel H.M., "Peter Canisius as a Catholic Editor of a Catholic St. Jerome", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 96 (2005) 171–197. As Pabel shows, Canisius's popular anthology of the letters, first printed in 1562, contains an extensive and explicitly confessionalized paratextual apparatus, that connects it to other patristic anthologies, such as the *Confessio Augustiniana* (1567), *Confessio Ambrosiana* (1580), and *Confessio Hieronymiana* (1585), that enlist the Fathers to combat the Protestant heresy. On the related issue of Canisius's confessional reading Saint Augustine, see Pabel H.M., "Augustine's *Confessions* and the Autobiographies of Peter Canisius, S.J.", *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007) 453–475. On Jesuit patristics as an instrument of confessional theology, see Sieben H.J., S.J., "Von der Kontroverstheologie zur Zusammenarbeit in der *Res publica literaria* (1546–1643). Jesuitenpatristik von Petrus Canisius bis Fronton du Duc", in Berndt (ed.), *Petrus Canisius* 169–201; and on the complementary issue of the relation between humanist and Jesuit scholarship on the Fathers, see Bertrand D., "The Society of Jesus and the Church Fathers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in Backus I. (ed.), *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, 2 vols. (Leiden: 1997) 2:889–895; Rummel E., *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany* (Oxford: 2000), esp. 44–49; and with specific reference to Canisius, Rädle F., "Petrus Canisius als lateinischer Autor in seinem Verhältnis zum Humanismus", in Berndt (ed.), *Petrus Canisius SJ: Humanist und Europäer* 155–168.

<sup>12</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 99.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.: 'Haec ego carptum ex Hieronymo repetivi [...] quae sapienter ille puellis & virginitibus ad bene beateque vivendum praescribit: quorumque observatio in aliam nullam, ut dixi, sicut in Mariam Virgunculam [...] proprie competit'.

is the visible embodiment – more precisely, the image – of Jerome's maidenly ideal. This image is what Canisius aims first and foremost to delineate, and so, he supplements Jerome by reference to the *revelationes* of Saint Bridget and of Mechthild of Magdeburg, paraphrasing the Marian visions they were privileged to behold.<sup>14</sup> These sources allow him to claim Mary's transparency of body and soul: 'She who was so great a care to the angels subjected her selfsame body to her soul, holding it in subjection, so that the one implicitly followed the other in all things, as if the soul were the body's mistress'.<sup>15</sup> This is why divine goodness permeated the Virgin's body, enabling it to exercise temperance in eating and drinking, in the holy vigils it kept, the balance it maintained between physical pleasure and displeasure and their causes.<sup>16</sup> So too, she tempered the loveliness (*venustas*) that made her delightful to all, with modesty of speech and gravity of gesture that curbed and overturned the lascivious and impure desires of those who beheld her (*quae spectantium lasciviam & impuram concupiscentiam facile reprimere atque profligaret*).<sup>17</sup> Canisius is emphasizing that the Marian image he purveys, like the Virgin's body that was seen as the very image of her soul, allows us to bear witness to the action of the Holy Spirit coursing through her and fully reconciling her internal and external motions of body and soul. The gifts of the spirit become visible in her every glance, gesture, speech, bodily attitude, and motion (*in eiusdem incessu, sermone, gestu, oculis, totoque corporis habitu*), miraculously illuminating everyone privileged to behold the Virgin, Canisius avows in a paraphrase of Gallatinus aimed against anyone claiming otherwise.<sup>18</sup> In truth, she is unaffected by the struggle between body and soul that afflicts humankind, even the saints, impeding them from advancing in the way of the Lord (*itaque non illam vel pupugit, vel polluit illa spiritus carnisque colluctatio, quae vel invitos etiam iustos & quamlibet sanctos exercet*).<sup>19</sup> On this account, to view her without is to view her within: 'And so by degrees God prepares His chosen instruments, causing their youthful spirits, even from the first, to be rightly and religiously formed, that thereby from adolescence they may more fitly bear the divine yoke

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 101: 'Corpus ipsum, quod angelis magnae curae fuit sic animae subiecit, subiectumque tenuit, ut illi velut dominae per omnia obsecundaret'.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 102–103.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

with which He most nobly graces their shoulders at a tender and delicate age'.<sup>20</sup> Implicit here is the notion that the soul is the image of God, which in certain exceptional cases He fashions into the exceedingly close likeness of Himself, so that the heavy weight of divine offices may be more patiently borne. Mary was thus shaped in the image of God more fully than any other human instrument, for as Canisius puts it, 'she more than any person enjoyed the singular and efficacious grace of the Supreme Creator'.<sup>21</sup> The image of Mary that Canisius aspires to represent, both verbally and pictorially, is the divine likeness made perfectly visible by her body and soul in concert, that together exemplify the heightened imitation of God.

Canisius readily admits that where Mary is concerned, he perforce supplements Scripture by recourse to the plausible conclusions of those authorities whom the Church sanctions, chief among them Jerome, Ambrose, Epiphanius, Nicephorus, and Cedrenus; more than this, he claims that tradition licenses the judicious use of the imagination, which furnishes matter beyond the scope of words: 'From which can easily be judged that the formation of this girl was excellent to the utmost degree, even if we nowhere read anything about it. For it is meet to observe in the education of Anna's very noble daughter [...] whatever the wise deem exigent on any account'.<sup>22</sup> Even where texts are available, images may provide the better testimony. Take the accounts of Mary's girlhood in the temple, composed by Cedrenus and Georgius Nicomediensis, both of whom affirm that she was nourished daily by angels. Canisius paraphrases Georgius, arguing that such a miracle exceeds the cognitive grasp of the rational mind; one must instead rely upon internal sight, for such things, being correlates to the mystery of the Incarnation, are ineffable, that is, not expressible verbally but rather to be evoked by images: 'But you, O man [...] hearing the admirable and singular account of the Virgin living in the temple, neither doubt nor examine with the

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 98: 'Sic electa sua organa paulatim praeparat Deus, ac pueriles illorum animos inde ab initio rite sancteque formandos curat, ut eo aptius ab adolescentia sua portent Dominicum iugum, quod illius tenerae ac mollis aetatis humeros pulcherrime cohonestat'.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*: 'ut si ullus unquam alius, Maria imprimis peculiari & efficaci summi Conditoris gratia frueretur'.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 99: 'Ex quibus de altero, quod dixi, iudicari facile potest, non vulgarem, sed excellentem & absolutam puellae huius institutionem fuisse, licet nihil de illa scriptum uspiam legeremus. Consentaneum est enim in hac tam nobili Annae filia educanda ad unguem observatum esse, quicquid sapientes [...] ratione ulla exigendum putarunt'.

rational intelligence (*ratione ea*) what cognition cannot grasp (*quae capere non potest cogitatio*). You see that selfsame Word of God having taken up residence ineffably (*modo ineffabili*) within her womb, and yet you ask whether that food truly consumed by Mary was material or immaterial. Seeing the Spirit overshadow her by consultation with the Father, do you still cast doubt on the ministry of angels?<sup>23</sup>

The Marian imagery that Canisius endorses, whether drawn from Scripture and the Fathers or from the sphere of imaginative decorum, derives ultimately from the Virgin herself, as he explains at length here and throughout the *Mariale*. She is a skilled maker of sacred images, which permeate her spiritual exercises, anchoring her daily practice of meditative and contemplative prayer. In other words, the images of Mary illustrated in the *Mariale* may be seen to correspond in kind with the images, both self-generated and revealed, that she utilized to engage fully in the devotional life. Canisius elegantly makes this point by juxtaposing two verses from the *Parthenice Mariana* of Baptista Mantuanus, that in turn complement the epigrammatic poem of Philippus Menzelius. Verse one describes Mary as a vigilant student of the patriarchs and prophets, Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah especially, and as an imitator of the Psalmist: she sedulously banishes her mind of idle cares, her days of sleep, resting not at all, while she learns the prophetic songs sung by King David (*carmina discebat, sanctique poemata Regis*).<sup>24</sup> Verse two describes her as an artificer, who 'paints wool with the needle, spins silken yarn, and weaves warp and weft into priestly veils'. (*Nunc lanam pingebat acu, nunc pensa trahebat/ Serica, & immisis per licia pendula filis/ Vela Sacerdotum sacros texebat in usus*).<sup>25</sup> Together these verses imply that her meditative prayers, fashioned after the psalms, in response to the prophets and patriarchs, attach to her art of sewing and weaving images. It is as if the works of her hands were prayerfully executed, and her prayers pictorially fabricated. Canisius further underscores the complementarity of both by observing that Mary both sings the psalms (*carmina discebat*) and sings while sewing (*ore sonans*).

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 100: "Tu autem ô homo [...] admirabilem & novam in templo vivendi rationem audiens Virginis, noli de eo dubitare: noli examinare ratione ea, quae capere non potest cogitatio. Vides ipsum Dei verbum modo ineffabili habitasse in eius utero: & contendes, fuerit ne alimentum, quo nempe Maria vesceretur, materiale, an expertum materiae? Vides paterno consilio Spiritus in ea adumbrationem: & de ministerio angelorum dubitas?"

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

These verses develop earlier references to Mary's visualization of the psalms, which she values, along with all sacred codices, like other women prize gems and silks. Alone in her retiring room (*in cubiculo*), she strives to emulate the king's daughter praised in Psalm 44:14, whose glory is entirely from within (*omnis gloria eius filiae Regis ab intus*).<sup>26</sup> Following Jerome's precepts for the perfection of virginity, she saw then loved the Psalmist's glorious *filiam*, admiring this scriptural image of a woman whose every speech, bearing, and action of walking are an instruction in virtue. The *filia* bodies forth for Mary the meditative image of herself that she strives to fashion as an object of emulation; again following Jerome, she visualizes neither her past nor present, focusing instead on the image of perfection to be fulfilled in the future, when she like the king's daughter shall be glorified *ab intus*, having been chosen as the dwelling place of Christ (*nescita praeterita, fugiat praesentia, futura desideret*).<sup>27</sup> Further, within her sanctuary she was seen, or alternatively seemed to herself, to inhabit paradise and to walk with God, as if she were the living likeness of that earlier Mary (*viz.*, Miriam, sister of Moses and Aaron) who sang praises to the Lord, showing herself as an exemplar to the Israelite women, after the crossing of the Red Sea (*ut in Paradiso sibi quodammodo vivere, & sola cum solo Deo suo ambulare videretur, non dissimilis priori Mariae*).<sup>28</sup> As Miriam, Canisius implies, is a type or similitude of Mary, so she delights in viewing herself as the image of this prototype, the companion of God who walks with Him in paradise, thus furnishing us, as did Miriam her people, with an exemplar to be seen and imitated. This reference to Exodus 15:20–21 complements other allusions to Mary's close and fervent study of Scripture, and especially of those passages describing the many admirable gifts and miracles conferred by God on His chosen people, not least His promise that the God of Israel would be born of a Virgin, as Savior of the world. The Virgin, having more perfectly recognized these things by sight (*quum vero perfectius agnosceret*), resolves entirely to withdraw herself from the eyes of her parents and friends (*tum a parentum, tum ab amicorum conspectu [...] sese subduxit*), the better to reflect on the fact that she is beheld by God her Creator, the spectator and judge of all life, upon whose act of beholding she must meditate

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

internally (*ut Deum suum creatorem, ac omnis vitae spectatorem & iudicem intelligeret*).<sup>29</sup> Single-minded prayer of this sort requires that she recollect the image of her every word and deed, evaluating its effect upon God, thus ensuring that she has committed no offense in His eyes; she also begs to live in the time of the Messiah's presence (*ut praesentis Messiae tempore vivere*), the term *praesens* implying a face-to-face encounter.<sup>30</sup> Her image-making faculty having been honed by spiritual exercise, she eschews temporal benefits and instead contemplates divine rewards: 'To such an extent was that sublime spirit continually contemplating (*subinde contemplabatur*) the rewards bestowed on the saved in heaven, which she preferred far more than any earthly riches, inasmuch as she saw and foresaw with a perspicaciously sharp mind (*claro mentis acumine providens atque perspicens*) how greatly true spiritual glory surpasses the pomp and splendor of the whole world'.<sup>31</sup>

Canisius infers that our image of the Virgin, like her image of herself, may be accessed solely through meditative and contemplative prayer, of which icons like the *Pulcherrima Virgo* are facilitative instruments [Fig. 5]. He compels us to view this icon as a portrait of the prayerful Virgin, who scrupulously embraced the contemplative life, choosing it as the best part (*partemque optimam electam studiosissime conservaret*), having devoted herself from infancy to seeing and tasting the goodness of God (*ut summo aeterno bono inde a primis annis intente vacaret, & vacando videret simul & gustaret*).<sup>32</sup> The stilled effigy with heavy-lidded eyes and somnolent gaze may be seen as the paragon of contemplative rigor that leaves its practitioners as if blind, dumb, or seemingly asleep (*surdi, coeci [...] adeoque dormientes esse videantur*), even while spiritually journeying in divine pilgrimage (*mirabiliter peregrinantur*).<sup>33</sup> Such contemplatives, among whom none was more adept than Mary, appear inactive when in fact their spiritual eyes are vigilantly trained on God: 'In the meantime they remain vigilant, keeping vigil with God and engaging in divine contemplation, attentive to nothing worldly, hardly even to themselves, while their spirit, as if severed from their body and

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 101–102: 'Quid sublimis ille animus, qui parata iustis in coelis praemia subinde contemplabatur, ac divitiis temporariis omnibus longe anteponebat? Utpote claro mentis acumine providens atque perspicens, quanto demum intervallo totius mundi pompam & splendorem vera spiritualisque gloria superaret'.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

conjoined with God, wonderfully peregrinates'.<sup>34</sup> Seen in this light, the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, precisely because she seems so still and drowsy, requires to be construed, that is, imagined in our mind's eye, as active and vigilant. The scintillant aureole that seems to disperse the banks of cloud, along with the circling hatches and crosshatches that enliven her features and drapery, evoke the mobility of spirit underlying her stillness and solitude. The heavenly radiance and clouds confirm that she is contemplatively united with God (*cum Deo coniunct[a]*), while also recalling that she was overshadowed by the Lord and illuminated by the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation. Her curiously bifocal eyes, the one looking down, the other up, perhaps allude to Gallatinus's image of the Virgin, endorsed by Canisius, her gaze habitually fixed on the ground, regarding nothing but spiritual matters, yet rising heavenward when she prays (*imo ut oculos nunquam elevarit [...] sed semper nisi Deum oraret, humi defixos tenuerit*).<sup>35</sup> Her physical beauty reminds us that Albertus Magnus describes Mary as lovelier than the prototypes – Esther, Judith, Rachel, and Rebecca – who represented her (*Mariae typum exprimentibus*); Canisius adds that as Christ was most beautiful among the sons of men, so Mary surpassed all women in natural beauty (*operante natura*), which consists in bodily measurement, elegant disposition and proportion of the limbs, and attractive coloring (*deinde in eleganti membrorum dispositione & proportione, postremo in coloris venustate consistit*).<sup>36</sup> The elaborate veil overlain with a mantling shroud underscores Canisius's oft-made point, that Mary, beautiful as she was, relished seclusion, desiring to be seen by God alone.<sup>37</sup> Her thoughtful expression, alertly watchful eyes, and internalizing gaze, illustrate what Canisius, following Luke 2:19, commends as her foremost attribute – her ability to conserve all she has perceived and to bear the exact likeness of these things in her heart (*non alia de re magis a Luca commendatur, quam quod omnia quae acciderent, sedulo, more suo videlicet, conservaret, & in corde suo accurate conferret*).<sup>38</sup> The elements that invite us to see the icon as a visionary image – the intensely brilliant light revealing and irradiating the Virgin from amidst billowing heavenly clouds – can also be interpreted as a

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Vigilant interea, sed Deo vigilant, divinaeque contemplationi, nulla mundi, sed vix etiam sui ratione habita, dum animus velut a corpore seiunctus, & cum Deo coniunctus, mirabiliter peregrinatur'.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 101, 104, 109.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

further attribute that alludes to one of her signal privileges; as Canisius animadverts, this time following Rupert of Deutz: 'God surely in no wise denied Mary, most holy, wise, and dear, the divine visions and celestial revelations that He miraculously disclosed to Paul, previously a blasphemer and enemy of the Church'.<sup>39</sup> The inscribed plaque, fully coordinated with the lighting scheme, serves to emphasize the artifice of this sacred image, attaching it to the argument of Canisius's text and embedding it within an emblematic construct comprised by the *imago*, the *inscriptio*, and Menzelius's epigrammatic *poëma*. The *Pulcherrima Virgo*, in other words, is not so much a visionary image; rather, it is an explicitly pictorial image of the contemplative Virgin, upon whose beauty of body and soul, mnemonic and imaginative faculties, privileged access to visions, and visual method of prayer, Canisius prompts us to reflect by way of the icon. Our view of Mary and the delight and consolation we draw from such a view, perforce derive from this meditative image that issues, as Canisius has made abundantly clear, from Holy Writ, the Fathers, and the process of sacred image-making; this process is licensed by the plausible hypothesis, again deriving from the Fathers, that Mary prayed in and through images, representing herself in the form of Old Testament types, such as Miriam and the Psalmist's *filia*, and visualizing the divine mysteries prophesied, fulfilled, and yet to come, in which she plays a crucial part. I shall turn shortly to one such mystery, the Annunciation, the Marian image of which Canisius richly expounds in a discussion of what constitutes a scriptural image.

First, however, I want to pose a question about the kind of mental images Canisius approves, and connected to this, the nature of the relation he posits between such images and the pictorial image. He approaches this issue by reference to key passages in Ambrose's *Homilia in 4. Matthaei* (*Homilies on Matthew 4*) and *Homilia in Domini Hypapante* (*Homilies on the Presentation of the Lord*). He considers Ambrose exemplary because he more than the other Fathers esteems the Virgin's life as an image of virtue and source of universal moral instruction (*virtutis formam, omniumque disciplinam appellat*), calling it the shining sanctum of modesty, the ensign of faith, and the discipline of devotion (*in qua*

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.: 'Certe quod ad visiones divinas & coelestes revelationes attinet, quales Paulo licet ante blasphemio, & Ecclesiae persecutori Deus mirabiliter patefecit, eas tam sanctae, tam sapienti, tam dilectae matri haudquaquam denegavit'.

*secretum verecundiae, vexillum fidei, devotionis obsequium mirabiliter fulserint*).<sup>40</sup> The image of Mary he portrays, in the sense of ‘exposes to view’, is exceptionally perspicuous (*Mariae vitam quomodo Patres subinde nobis proponant, & imprimis Ambrosius*): ‘The Virgin, he says, was in neither body nor mind the sort of person who adulterates sincere affection with the false show of deception: humble in heart, grave in speech, prudent in spirit, sparing of words, and most attentive to reading, she placed her trust not in the uncertainty of riches but in the poor man’s entreaty; intent on labor, modest in conversation, she was wont to search not for men but for God, the mind’s eyewitness, the soul’s judge (*arbitrum mentis solita non hominem, sed Deum quaerere*)’.<sup>41</sup> The lengthy description continues in this vein, amplifying the image of Mary that Ambrose instills, as a votaress who conceives indeed visualizes herself as an image divinely seen and appraised: ‘Nothing stern in her eyes, nothing insolent in her speech, nothing impudent in her actions, nor was she weak in her steps, free in her gait, or petulant in her voice’.<sup>42</sup> Ambrose, then, is the source of Canisius’s conception of Mary as a paradigm of pious self-imaging, and he concludes, still paraphrasing his estimable source, with the assertion that she represents the perfected image of humankind: ‘That selfsame Virgin was the body’s likeness, the mind’s semblance, the very image of probity (*ut ipsa corporis species simulachrum fuerit mentis, figura probitatis*)’.<sup>43</sup> This same sentence might also be read as a statement of the Virgin’s transparency of body and soul, as follows: ‘That likeness of the body was the very semblance of the mind, the image of probity’. Howsoever one translates the sentence, it constitutes an epitome of the notion that she is best known as a visual image: in one reading, she herself represents in body and in mind the very image of virtue; in another, her body itself represents the image of her mind as the image of virtue. This verbal-visual construction affirms the semiotic convergence of *species*, *simulachrum*, and *figura* in the person of Mary. Ambrose then folds these terms for *imago* into a telling figura-

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.: ‘Virgo erat non solum corpore, inquit, sed etiam mente, quae nullo doli ambitu sincerum adulteraret affectum: corde humilis, verbis gravis, animi prudens, loquendi parcius, legendi studiosior, non in incerto divitiarum, sed in prece pauperis spem reponens: intenta operi, verecunda sermone, arbitrum mentis solita non hominem, sed Deum quaerere’.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 105–106: ‘Nihil torvum in oculis, nihil in verbis procas, nihil in actu inverecundum, non gressus fractior, non incessus solutior, non vox petulantior’.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 106.

tive image of her power to represent outside, or more precisely, upon herself, what is within. She is the vestibule that reveals the goodness of the house (*bona quippe domus in ipso vestibulos debet agnosci*), that is to say, she represents, in the sense of makes visibly apparent, all that she contains, teaching by visible example how life must best be lived (*ut unius vita omnium sit disciplina*), and fulfilling all the 'offices of virtue' (*omniaque demum virtutis impleverit officia, ut non tam disceret quam doceret*).<sup>44</sup>

Canisius now grafts Jerome onto Ambrose, surmising that this is why he held Mary forth to all virgins as a mirror for contemplation (*veluti speculum virginibus omnibus contemplandum praebet*), urging them to place her before their eyes and to think of her purity, that moved God to select her to be mother of the Lord (*propone tibi beatam Mariam, quae tanti exstitit puritatis, ut mater Domini esse mereretur*).<sup>45</sup> Mary is the supreme *speculum virginitatis*, since she herself speculates so effectively on the image of Christ, focusing on Him with the eyes of the spirit and the flesh. Canisius relies on Jerome and Peter Damian to make this point. According to Jerome, when the Virgin indulges in holy *otium* and devotes herself to contemplation, she most serenely abides with Him whom the angels desire to behold (*sola ut cum solo in quem desiderant Angeli prospicere, quietissime versaretur*).<sup>46</sup> Through contemplative prayer, Jerome implies, she expresses the angelic longing to see Christ. The more fully she withdraws from worldly affairs and concerns, the more fully she transforms herself into the image of Christ, conforming to the divine revelations and sacred contemplations she was accustomed always to receive, conserve, and cultivate (*ac tanto quidem illa divinis revelationibus sacrisque contemplationibus erat aptior, quanto plenius mundi curis ac negotiis sese omnibus abdicarat [...] quam citra conversiam constat, a primis infantiae pueritiaeque suae annis non solum accepisse, sed & conservasse, & excoluisse summa summi Dei munera*).<sup>47</sup> 'What could be more felicitous than Mary', Canisius concludes, 'who wheresoever she was, set before her eyes the eternal Godhead fit to be contemplated (*sempiternum illud numen ob oculos sibi contemplandum proponere*), inwardly revered its immense majesty, perpetually adored the Father in spirit and truth, imagined and preserved in her pure and holy heart only what was innocent and

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

divine?<sup>48</sup> If contemplation entails the viewing of divine images, so too does the active terrestrial life of the Virgin, as Peter Damian asserts in the *Sermo 3. de Mariae nativitate* (*Third Sermon on the Nativity of Mary*): she perfectly reconciles the active and contemplative lives, for having been exalted by the dignity of contemplation, she yet fixes her bodily eyes on the substance of God Himself – viz., on Christ Jesus – embracing and supporting Him, being embraced and supported by Him, in fulfillment of Canticle 2:6: ‘His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me’.<sup>49</sup> Peter Damian commands us to contemplate this truth: ‘Look attentively, he says, for it is she herself who, having been transported by the sweetness of contemplative excellence, fixed her ever more perspicuous eyes on the substance of God Himself (*in ipsius Dei substantiam lucidiores infixit obtutus*)’.<sup>50</sup> As deployed by Canisius, Peter Damian would seem to be arguing that Mary, who in life saw Christ incarnate and in spirit saw the image of Christ, perfectly unites the active and contemplative ideals of Christian piety. In turn, it is the devout skill with which she sees and envisions, that makes her infinitely worthy of our imitation and contemplative attention. Appreciated in these terms, she jointly embodies the perfections of Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, as Gregorius Nicomediensis declares: ‘since she had due and holy care for divine matters, yet did not disdain human affairs, she was as one who embraces both the offices of Mary and Martha’.<sup>51</sup> Peter Damian further explains that devoutly to imagine Mary is to see the full spectrum of image types available to the eyes: we may visualize her as a living person, but also as a scriptural type, making use of such similes, metonyms, or metaphors as the lily shining among thorns from Canticle 2:2, as well as the corollary images they license us to imagine: ‘Like the lily among thorns, so the most blessed Virgin shone forth among the daughters born from the thorny race of the Jews, glowed brightly white in cleanly chastity of the body,

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 104: ‘Quid vero Maria felicius, quae ubicunque degeret, sempiternum illud numen ob oculos sibi contemplandum proponere, tantam maiestatem intime revereri, Patrem in spiritu & veritate semper adorare, nihil nisi purum & divinum puro illo sanctoque pectore concipere atque conservare?’

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 108: ‘Laeva eius, inquit, sub capite meo, & dextera eius amplexabitur me’.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.: ‘Considera, inquit, quia ipsa est, quae in contemplativae dignitatis supervecta dulcedine, in ipsius Dei substantiam lucidiores infixit obtutus’.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 101: ‘ita ut quum rite sancteque coelestia curaret, humana tamen non despiceret, utrunque munus Marthae & Magdalenae complexa’.

yet blazed in mind with the twofold ardor of charity (viz., *amor Dei* and *amor proximi*), and burned everywhere with the fragrance of good works, tending toward sublime things by the continual inclination of her heart'.<sup>52</sup>

*Species, simulachrum, figura, speculum, exemplum, and imago*, the Virgin represents the mobilization of these images in action and contemplation. For Canisius, these kinds and degrees of image, and the action of image-making they connote, derive ultimately from the paradigm of the pictorial image, as becomes evident from his anchoring of Epiphanius's and Cedrenus's verbal portraits of Mary in the archetype painted by Saint Luke, a true copy of which, he avers, may be seen in Venice in the collection of the great painter Titian.<sup>53</sup> Canisius first enumerates the features elaborated by Epiphanius in his account of Mary's form, stature, and conduct (*de Virginis moribus, sed etiam de modo formae & staturae eius repetita est in hunc modum*): she was of middling height, her complexion the color of wheat, her hair reddish yellow, her eyes piercing, the pupils yellowish like an [unripe] olive, her eyebrows curving and becomingly dark, her nose rather long, her lips blooming, her face neither round nor pointed, but longish, her hands and fingers likewise elongated, her clothing natural in color; exceedingly affable, she was at the same time honorable and grave in everything she did, showing respect and goodwill toward all, being totally without scorn, irascibility, or perturbation of the passions, etc.<sup>54</sup> Canisius then analyzes one detail in this sequence: whereas the Latin translation after Epiphanius describes the young Mary as frank yet decorous in conversation with all men (*decenti dicendi libertate adversus omnes homines usa est*), the Greek original states simply that there was no boldness in her speech (*in loquendo cum aliis audaciam illi defuisse*).<sup>55</sup> Canisius's point is that the verbal record consists of plausible, albeit authoritative,

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 108: 'Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias. Sicut .n. lilium inter spinas, sic beatissima Virgo Maria enituit inter, filias quae de spinosa propagine Iudaeorum nata, candescebat mundicia virgineae castitatis in corpore, flammescebat autem ardore gemine charitatis in mente, flagrabat passim odore boni operis, tendebat ad sublimia intentione continua cordis'.

<sup>53</sup> On the veneration of Lucan icons of the Virgin after the Council of Trent, with specific reference to Canisius's defense of such images, see Bacci M., *Il pennello dell'Evangelista: Storia delle immagini sacre attribuite a san Luca* (Pisa: 1998) 336–37, 344, 363. As Bacci observes, Canisius identifies only two Marian images – the icons in Santa Maria Maggiore and Santi Domenico e Sisto – as true paintings by Saint Luke.

<sup>54</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 107.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

rather than verifiably true elements. He reiterates this point, using Ambrose, Cedrenus, and Anselm to corroborate Epiphanius. Cedrenus, for instance, describes the Virgin as dark in complexion (*subfusca*), although Epiphanius calls her light (*colore triticum referente*); and Anselm, whose account agrees ‘not badly’ with those of Ambrose, Epiphanius, and Cedrenus, characterizes her eyes as dark-colored (*fuscos*).<sup>56</sup> That these accounts, though they vary in some details, for the most part correspond, serves to demonstrate that the Fathers have fashioned an image of the Virgin that is reliable, consistent, and trustworthy. Their commendably simple words (*verbis quidem simplicibus*) contain the ‘many splendid, praiseworthy, and most rare ornaments of virtue that all posterity admires in this Virgin, but never sufficiently imitates’.<sup>57</sup> But the Lucan icon, originally painted after the life, copied by an unknown master, and now residing with Titian, constitutes the primary source of Canisius’s conviction that a relatively stable image of the Virgin is available. Marian imagery, both seen and imagined, may be situated along the continuous spectrum linking this pictorial image to the verbal images Canisius cites. All together, these sources offer a retrievable, adaptable, and plausibly veridical image, for they testify to the fact that the Fathers, and with them Canisius, have collectively aspired to paint a consistent portrait of the Virgin, that may be circulated among the faithful, as a spur to the meditative life: ‘Meanwhile, there are trustworthy witnesses acquainted with Titian, the most famous painter of our age, who say that an exemplar of the sacred picture painted after the archetype of Luke the evangelist, exists at his house in Venice (*exemplar sacrae picturae ex archetypo Lucae Evangelistae*). However that may be, in that [picture] are seen all those distinctive features portrayed not only by Epiphanius, but also by Nicephorus, whom we previously mentioned (*spectantur omnes illae notae, quas non solum Epiphanius, sed & Nicephorus iam a nobis commemoratus expressit*)’.<sup>58</sup> This picture serves to confirm, perhaps even to authorize, the verbal tradition, whose descriptions of Mary, Canisius ratifies as salutary by common consent:

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.: ‘vero rarissima, & singulari tamen commendatione digna continent ornamenta virtutum, quae tota posteritas in hac Virgine simul & admiretur, & nunquam satis imitetur’.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.: ‘Sunt interim fide digni testes, qui Venetiis noverint Titianum pictorem nostro seculo celebratissimum, apud quem extare dicunt exemplar sacrae picturae ex archetypo Lucae Evangelistae, ut arbitrantur, exceptum: Caeterum in eo spectantur omnes illae notae, quas non solum Epiphanius, sed & Nicephorus iam a nobis commemoratus expressit’.

[...] even if these shall fail to please the pious, they shall certainly cause them no offense, inasmuch as they acknowledge the apostolic canon: "Examine all things and retain whatever is good". Let him who will, believe that these are fabricated (*haec commentitia esse*): let us make use of these and other accounts passed down as if by hand, and confirmed by the suffrage of men neither superficial nor unreliable, since placing faith in them may bear great fruit and harbors little danger, so that I truly affirm them to be all the more worthy of belief. That shall indeed transpire, if as best we can, we come to know the most august mother of our Lord and God, as if [she were] depicted on panel by means of these certain lines (*si ex his velut quibusdam lineis, augustissimam Domini & Dei nostri matrem, velut in tabella depictam utcunque cognoscamus*), and what is more, if we often set this image firmly before the eyes of the mind (*ac saepe quidem ob mentis oculos propositam habeamus*). For there exists an Ambrosian precept that may fitly be impressed not only upon all virgins, but all Christians: "Let the virginity and life of Mary be described as if in an image, whence as from [the surface of a] mirror the likeness, integrity, and form of virtue shine brightly (*sit vobis tanquam in imagine descripta virginitas vitaque Mariae, de qua velut in speculo refulget species, castitas & forma virtutis*)".<sup>59</sup>

Canisius appends the similar injunction of Sophronius, who compares Mary to the mirror image of the form of virtue, in which are exemplified all the teachings of chastity and probity (*in qua velut in speculo refulget forma virtutis*).<sup>60</sup> Even during her life, Canisius notes, Mary was beheld as an object of pilgrimage, at whom the disciples of Christ would gaze reverently and admiringly, as if staring at a celestial prodigy or sacred spectacle (*eam velut coeleste prodigium, sacrumque spectaculum reverenter invisere*).<sup>61</sup> The references to pictorial means and ends scattered throughout these passages – to lines depicted, or more precisely, delineated (*depictam*), to a panel or tablet painted or drawn upon (*tabella*), to the act of impressing or imprinting (*inculcari*) – compel the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 107–108: 'at pios tamen multos si non oblectabunt, certe non offendent, utpote quum Canonem norint Apostolicum: Omnia probate: quod bonum est tenete. Credat qui volet, haec commentitia esse: ego vero tanto magis credenda dixerim, quo ipsorum fides minus habet periculi, quoque fructus maior potest consequi, si iis aliisque narrationibus veluti per manus traditis, nec vanorum ac levium hominum suffragio corroboratis, convenienter utamur. Id vero fiet, si ex his velut quibusdam lineis, augustissimam Domini & Dei nostri matrem, velut in tabella depictam utcunque cognoscamus, ac saepe quidem ob mentis oculos propositam habeamus. Extat enim Ambrosianum praeceptum, quod non modo Virginibus, sed & Christianis omnibus recte inculcari potest: Sit vobis tanquam in imagine descripta virginitas vitaque Mariae, de qua velut in speculo refulget species, castitas & forma virtutis'.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

reader-viewer to attach Canisius's comments to the woodcut illustration of the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, that he implicitly identifies as a plausible *commentitium* – a devised, fabricated, or imagined artifact – no less worthy of use than the Marian image painted by Saint Luke, the rhetorical images generated by the Fathers, or the contemplative images manufactured by the Virgin as devotional instruments. Conversely, the folio-size print, inscribed like an *ex-voto* (another meaning of the term *tabella*), its every line clearly visible (*ex his velut quibusdam lineis*), confronts us with an image of Mary (*praepositam habeamus*) as *coeleste prodigium* and *sacrum spectaculum*, that perfectly accords with the exemplary visual image(s) propounded by Canisius.

It is important to note that Canisius uses the terms *contemplatio* and *contemplari* to signify meditation based on images. He is of course cognizant of the more specific definition of contemplation as the highest register of mystical devotion that seamlessly unites the passive votary with the love of God. For example, he mentions in passing that Mary, no less than the Psalmist, was capable of seeing the indivisible and invisible Word of God, thereby transcending all intellectual visions (*super omnes visiones intellectuales ipsa unum illud invisibile videt*): 'Higher than the prophets, more elevated than the Magdalene, she sees and saw, tastes and tasted with a sober palate the one fountain of life, Him who is the one Good after whom all things strive'.<sup>62</sup> The crucial reference to Titian's Lucan icon, however, along with the portraits of Mary drawn from Scripture and the Fathers, clearly indicates that he has in mind a contemplative practice modeled after pictorial images – painted, drawn, and printed – that are imagined as if they were pictures being actually beheld.

Let us turn now to the scriptural image of the *Annunciation* that introduces Book III on the mystery of the Incarnation [Fig. 6]. Whereas the *Pulcherrima Virgo* is an icon of Mary that represents her as the epitome of Marian contemplation, the *Annunciation* is a scriptural image that narrates the sacred event recounted in Luke 1:26–38, consisting of the angelic salutation and colloquy and the Virgin's query and assent. I want to ask, first, how Canisius encourages us to read the picture as an exegetical lens onto Scripture; and second, how the pictorial image

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 109: 'merito ipsa quanto altior omnibus Prophetis, tanto perfectius videt, vidit, gustat & gustavit ipsum, apud quem est fons boni, qui solus est hoc unum bonum, quod omnia appetunt'.

comes to stand for the role played by images in the mystery of the Incarnation? The collateral poem by Philippus Menzelius, *In sequentem effigiem carmen* (*Song on the Subsequent Image*), leads the way, describing the *Annunciation* as one of the *pharmaca* (remedies) gathered by Canisius for our benefit from his reading of a thousand sacred texts, as also from his viewing of ancestral exempla (*sunt nobis pharmaca contra/ Mille sacris decerpta libris, veterumque parentum/ Congesta auspiciis*). Having seen and read these sources at length, Canisius now ingenuously offers us these assembled citations (*quae lecta Canisius offert/ Et spectata diu. Nulla hic sunt toxica fraudi*).<sup>63</sup> For Menzelius, then, the *Mariale* operates equally through its words and images, woven together, like a commonplace book, from multifarious verbal and visual authorities; this conviction justifies his complex sense of what it is that the pictured *Annunciation* reveals. Treating the image as the event itself, the poet apostrophizes the angelic messenger, as if he were seeing the angelic salutation with his own eyes, in the present time of Mary and Gabriel. 'O winged heavenly youth', he asseverates, 'at last you are boldly come, awaited by the pious who, banished into deepest darkness, prayed and longed eagerly to gaze at the news you now convey earthward as the messenger of the gods, sent down from Olympus (*Aliger ô coeli iuvenum fortissime, tandem/ Expectatus ades, quibus, heu, quantisque piorum/ Et votis, & desideriiis, dum nocte sub ima/ Extorres inhiant, quae tu demissus Olympo/ Nuncia iam ter-ris Superum caducifer affers*)'.<sup>64</sup> The term *inhiare* (to gaze at eagerly, regard with longing, or attend closely to) strongly implies that what we see here transpiring fulfills the proleptic image of the long-awaited event, harbored patiently and desirously by those votaries who fashioned that image while praying continually for salvation. Upon this prayerful image of the future, foreseen from the past, Canisius superimposes two further images, both retrospective: he refers to Elizabeth's song of praise, that recalls the *Annunciation* and affirms that the divine promises delivered by the angel will all come to pass (*quod praesaga futuri Helisabe cecinit*); and he expresses belief in the importance of the *Angelus*, the memorial prayer recited three times daily, that reenvisages and reenacts the *Annunciation* (*te verbis imitati: & ter tua dicta, piaeque*

<sup>63</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1577) 233. Although this subsection of my paper expounds the revised image of the *Annunciation* to be found in the 1583 edition, my text references to Menzel's poem and to Book III, chapters 1 and 15, are taken from the earlier edition of 1577, which here differs only slightly from the later.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

*Helisabes grato depromere pectore avemus*).<sup>65</sup> Menzelius layers these various prayers onto the *Annunciation*, viewing it from several temporal perspectives that converge in the sacred event, the pictorial image of which is seen by turns to anticipate the future from a point in the past, commemorate the recent past, or imitate the past in the present. The print, rather than merely illustrating this event, evokes the full scope of the mystery of the Incarnation – the coming into flesh of the divine Word – that encompasses the past, present, and future of salvation history. Or rather, the print functions as a meditative lens onto this mystery, whose nature and meaning may be glimpsed through the pictorial image that constitutes one of the *spectata* (things viewed) promulgated by Canisius for our use. How this image articulates with the *lecta* set forth in Book III is the topic we must now address.

The *Annunciation* represents the starting-point where any systematic account of this Gospel story must commence, as Canisius states at the outset of chapter 1, “On the Two Persons (the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary) Chiefly to be Observed in the Angelic Salutation, and What One to One He Began to Say to [Mary] Fit to be Hailed”: ‘With a view to speaking, as they commonly say, about the angelic salutation, we should begin from evangelical history, whatsoever the treatment or argument, and so we shall consider the person saluting, namely, Gabriel, and the person saluted, namely, the Virgin, in that same vestibule’.<sup>66</sup> He repeats this injunction midway through the chapter, insisting that consideration of the Gospels must start from a systematic account of persons (*ad totam historiam recte cognoscendam, utriusque personae, sicut in caeteris dialogismis, salutantis Angeli & salutatae Virginis rationem imprimis haberi oportere*).<sup>67</sup> The print supplies the essential features Canisius requires to make his case, and moreover, precisely since it is a pictorial image, knowable by visual experience, the *Annunciation* counters the anti-Marian heresies of those sectarians who strive to diminish the dignity of the Virgin, not least by opposing any appeal to the eyes as instruments of faith. As such, the prayer of salutation, *Ave*

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> “De duabus personis (Gabriele Archangelo & Maria Virgine) in Angelica salutatione primum observandis, & quod ille sit solus ad solam salutandam ingressus”, in *ibid.*, 235: ‘De angelica salutatione dicturi, ut vulgaris loquendi mos obtinet, tractationem & velitationem omnem ab historia Evangelica ordiemur, ideoque personam utramque salutantem nempe Gabrielem & salutatam Virginem, in ipso vestibulo expendemus’.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

*Maria*, and by implication, this image that the prayer evokes, are like a stake driven into the eyes of the Church's adversaries (*tantum ea non est sudes in oculis adversariorum*).<sup>68</sup> Canisius characterizes them as contrarians, 'who pervert everything in Scripture, habitually converting white into black (*nihil non in sacris literis depravantium, ut more suo vel candida in atra convertant*)'.<sup>69</sup> The *Annunciation* anchors his opposing view, for as he now explains, the mystery at issue, more specifically its protagonists, can best be understood in mimetic terms.

Take the angel Gabriel: his very name, since it signifies 'fortitude, or divine virtue' (*Dei virtus aut fortitudo*) represents nominally what Christ bodies forth substantially at the Incarnation (*qui hunc Angelus fortitudinem nuncupative: Christum autem sic etiam substantive dici non perperam admonet*).<sup>70</sup> Canisius paraphrases Jerome's *Liber de nominibus Hebraicis* and Bernard's *Homilia de laudibus Virginis*, further invoking the Synod of Ephesus to argue that Gabriel signifies 'God and man' (*Geber enim homo, El Deus*); on this basis, he claims that the angel's name also represents the nature of the miracle he has come to announce, distilling the meaning of his message (*nomine ipso significans, nuncium, quem apportat: quoniam is, quem Evangelizat, Christus Deus & homo erat oriturus, nomenclatura ipsa miraculum significat*).<sup>71</sup> Canisius emphasizes that these etymologies have a visual force that redound upon the image of the *Annunciation*: he incorporates Chrysostom's assertion in the *Homilia de incomprehensibili Dei natura*, that painters delineate Gabriel as winged, representing him to us in this way (*volitantem illum a pictoribus delineari nobisque representari*), not because God actually fashioned the archangel with wings, but rather, to suggest the sublime powers of his heavenly nature, and to make us reflect gratefully upon his transit from heaven to earth on our behalf (*atque ut illum e supremo domicilio [...] ad terram nostra causa devenisse, gratis animis reputemus*).<sup>72</sup> Other Fathers are marshaled to bolster this claim: Jerome on Gabriel's visible figure and form that made him look like a man when he spoke with the Virgin (*Gabrieli cum Virgine colloquenti aspectabilem viri figuram formamque fuisse*); Ambrose on his descent in the human semblance of maleness foreign to the angels

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Igitur quae salutatio Catholicis gaudium & solatium adferre consuevit, tantum ea non est sudes in oculis adversariorum, nihil non in sacris literis depravantium, ut more suo vel candida in atra convertant'.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 235–236.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

(*illum in forma viri descendisse, aut sexus virilis speciem peregrinam*); Augustine on his brightly rubicund face, glittering vesture, and spectacular entry, aspects of the archangel's appearance calculated to inspire awe (*hunc Archangelum facie rutilante, veste corruscante, ingressu mirabili, aspectu terribili apparuisse*); John Damascene on his change into the form deemed suitable by God for the revelation of divine mysteries to men (*transformantur Angeli, quomodocunque Dominator iusserit Deus, & sic hominibus apparent, ac divina revelant mysteria*).<sup>73</sup> (In chapter 13 of Book III, "Mary's Evident and Principal Privilege of Praise Is that She Is the True and Natural Mother of Christ God and Man, just as the Fathers and Even Certain Adversaries Acknowledge", Canisius returns to this theme, drawing the conclusion that angels, though they have neither flesh nor human nature, abide with us in the image of men (*multisque aliis sub humana specie apparuerint, humanoque more fuerint cum illis versati*); and so, they appeared to Abraham, Lot, Daniel, Zachary, and others, one having been seen to take food with Tobias, another to wrestle with Jacob at night.)<sup>74</sup> He tells us that their visible form (*angelorum aspectus*) is malleable, for they may also appear fearsome, striking terror into human hearts and rendering men incapable of thought or speech, as occurred to Daniel and Zachary, among others (*tantum horroris incussit, praesenti ut vix animo esse, & recte cogitare ac loqui quicquam possent*).<sup>75</sup> His specific point is that the mystery of the Incarnation is truly distinctive, for God actually fashioned the body of Christ from the Virgin's body, whereas He could have manipulated other elements into the merely human image of Christ, just as angels appear in the likeness of men and yet are not begotten by a father or mother. His broader point is that the Annunciation involves an angelic image, which Mary beholds, interrogates, and interprets. This image is food for thought; it prompts thought and speech. The *Annunciation* print therefore consists of an image of the Virgin juxtaposed to an image of the image of Gabriel, sent by God to edify and inspire her, to promote meditative prayer and divine colloquy, and most importantly, to secure her consent and conversion into the mother of God [Fig. 6].

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 237–238.

<sup>74</sup> "Illustrem ac primariam Mariae laudem praerogativam esse, quod Christi Dei & hominis vera & naturalis Mater existat, sicut non veteres modo, sed etiam ex adversariis quidam profitentur", in Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 317.

<sup>75</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1577) 238.

If Gabriel is construed as an image, so too is Mary, as Canisius emphasizes when he states in chapter 1 of Book III that Gabriel could not but have delighted in the Virgin, whom he found to be the likeness of himself in virtue and virginity (*cognata sibi virtute virginitate non potuit ea non plurimum delectari*).<sup>76</sup> Citing Bernard, he compares their encounter to that between Rebecca and Abraham's elder servant in Genesis 24, viewing the Annunciation through the lens of this typological image: just as the provident Abraham sent his servant to find the most chaste and beautiful maid whom God had prepared for his son Isaac, so God sent Gabriel to find the Virgin, and just as the servant drank gladly from Rebecca's water jar, so Gabriel delighted in Mary's beauty of body and soul. On this account, the New Testament event does not so much fulfill the Old, as re-present it as a work of divine artifice – an *opus* especially dear to its maker: 'Indeed, what work could be contrived for God more dear, for us more salutary, for [Mary] more worthy, for all generations more admirable and in like manner desirable?'<sup>77</sup> Mary's response is likewise carefully fashioned: as Canisius puts it, her words were delayed so that she might calibrate thought to speech, with due gravity and wisdom (*ne mentem lingua praecurrat, in loquendo autem tam provida & circumspecta, eius ut orationem tum gravitatis, tum sapientiae plenam*).<sup>78</sup> As the image of Gabriel inspires the Virgin to thought and prayerful speech, so Canisius avows that his eyes are fixed on the images of Mary and the angel, that elicit contemplation: 'Nor can I restrain myself, with eyes focused on contemplation of both persons (*in utriusque personae contemplationem defixus*), from feeling and saying with Bernard: O Virgin, who even now lives angelically, what ought you to see in the angel?'<sup>79</sup>

Canisius contrasts his readiness to view the image of the *Annunciation* with Luther's virtual blindness – his inability to see what Luke so plainly reveals, namely, that the Virgin was studying Psalm 44:11, applying to herself its injunction to see and hear the excellence of Christ, when she caught sight of Gabriel (*ingressus Angelus ad eam* [...])

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 237: 'quod opus demum Deo gratius & magis salutare nobis, ipsa vero dignius, omnibusque saeculis admirabilis, iuxta & optabilis possit excogitari?'

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.: 'Neque me continere possum, quin & ego in utriusque personae contemplationem defixus, cum Bernardo eadem & sentiam & dicam: Quid in Angelum videas ô Virgo, quum iam Angelice vivas?'

*sacris vacantem studiis, quod ad se quoque pertinere putaret divinum oraculum: Audi filia, & vide, & inclina aurem tuam*).<sup>80</sup> Further, she was envisioning what prior visionaries had seen, 'rejoicing in the present integrity of a thousand eyewitnesses of good conscience' (*quum bonae conscientiae mille testium praesenti synceritate gauderet*), who had glimpsed what she was now privileged to behold.<sup>81</sup> The Annunciation, as Mary experiences it, aligns with this proleptic image and also with the regal image of the *filia* invoked in Psalm 44. For the viewer, then, the *Annunciation* calls to be experienced as an image of the Virgin's pious engagement with images [Fig. 6]. This is the true image that Canisius juxtaposes to the false image painted by Luther who, denying that the Virgin was engrossed in spiritual exercises (*ac sacris meditationibus & precibus operam daret*) when Gabriel appeared, alleges that she was neither alone nor praying at home.<sup>82</sup> Canisius refers to the image of Mary that Luther disseminates:

For Luther it is not enough to portray (*affingat*) her parents as obscure, their condition vile, their life all but sordid, abject, and contemptible: but now when she is visited by the angel, he depicts (*depingat*) her saying I know not what, or applying herself to some culinary or agrarian chore, so that surely in casting aspersion, he may seem rather to satisfy his libidinous desire, than to take account of virginal beauty, least that of so great a Virgin. And indeed, Ambrose suppresses this inane figment of Luther's imagination (*hoc inane Lutheri figmentum*), declaring perspicuously in more than one place: Alone in the inner rooms where noone might espy her, the angel found Mary.<sup>83</sup>

In this place, Ambrosius concludes, quoting a famous Stoic adage, she continually reflected on *bonas cogitationes*, seeming to herself in solitude least alone.<sup>84</sup> If Canisius is admonishing us to embrace the *Annunciation* print as a true image of the Virgin that does battle with the false

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 239: 'Haud illi satis est, quod illustri Virgini parentes obscuros, conditionem vilem, vitam tantum non sordidam, abiectam & despectam affingat: nisi nunc etiam quum ab Angelo invisitur, eandem nescio apud quos fabulantem, aut rei fortassis culinariae vel agrariae incumbentem depingat, nimirum ut suae in maledicendo libidini potius inservire, quam tantae Virginis, vel ullius decori rationem habere videatur. Retundit autem hoc inane Lutheri figmentum, nec uno quidem in loco Ambrosius, clarissime pronuncians: Solam in penetralibus, quam nemo virorum videret, solus angelus reperit'.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.: 'quin etiam tum sibi minus sola videbatur, quum sola esset'.

picture purveyed by Luther and his ilk, he also offers it as a template for our meditative image-making. As such, it allows us to identify with both *dramatis personae*: having retired into solitary prayer, in imitation of Mary, we may envisage the coming of the angel, or rather, angelic image that makes known the mystery of the Incarnation; or alternatively, we may see ourselves in the image of Gabriel, penetrating the Virgin's retreat, entering the solitary place of chaste repose, and delighting to discover her out of sight yet visible to us, her pure hands raised in fervent prayer (*vident levare puras manus in oratione*). Canisius advises us to visualize these things on the model of Bernard's *Homilia 3. de beata Virgine*, whose *bonas cogitationes*, attaching to these salutary sights, will engender our own good thoughts.<sup>85</sup>

Canisius develops his argument concerning the exemplary image of the Annunciation to be counterposed to sectarian, that is, heretical images, in chapter 12 of Book III, "On the Reasons Why the Catholic Custom of Saluting Mary Is Especially Censured in Our Day, and How in Those Same Words of Angelic Salutation, the Manifold Dignity and Excellence of Mary Are Contained". Although the sectarians admit that what God accomplished in and through Mary must be contemplated, that is, beheld, observed, and considered, they purposely neglect to bear witness to her person (*hi in Maria quid fecerit Deus, contemplandum quidem esse pronunciant, sed personam ipsam fere negligunt*); it is as if they were looking closely at an inanimate thing, notable only for its manifest effects, but itself worthy of little or no honor (*perinde ac si rem inanimatam ob illustres quosdam effectus velint considerari, honorari autem minime*), or again, as if they regarded her as justified and sanctified solely by divine commission, without personal merit or agency (*aut quasi ex mera Dei imputatione iustam illam sanctamque tantum faciant*).<sup>86</sup> The *Annunciation* print answers to the distortions in this sectarian image, remedying them by calling forth a different manner of beholding [Fig. 6]. First, Mary is seen to move animatedly: as the presence of God enlivens her soul, so her body quickens; her fluttering hair and mantle, its rotary folds spiraling around her right thigh, suggest that she has just executed simultaneous yet opposing motions, falling backward from a kneeling position and at the same time bending forward, her arms crossing at

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> "Quibus ex causis usus Catholicus in Maria salutanda hodie potissimum improbetur: quomodo itidem salutationis Angelicae verbis multiplex Mariae dignitas & excellentia contineatur", in Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 314.

her heart. The billowing veil and the concentric hatches shadowing her face register a double motion: her head seems to swing away from Gabriel and the bright beam of divine light, but conversely, also to swing toward both. Similarly her eyes, the eyelids brightly lit, seem to fix upon the open book, or alternatively to descend, or yet again, to begin to rise. Reconciled in the person of Mary, these contrary motions evoke the full spectrum of events encompassed by the Annunciation: her initially startled response to the angel, from whom she draws back, but also her attentive response to his message, every word of which she leans forward to hear. On the one hand, her bent body expresses the impulse to react humbly, modestly, and obediently; on the other, gesturing toward herself, her hands indicate the desire to question the angel, to know how she a virgin might conceive Jesus. Her arms intersect, making the sign of the Cross, that stands for her willingness to carry the burden of Christ; this gesture signifies the crucial moment of consent. That her eyes connect to the book implies that she has been meditating on Psalm 44, just as Canisius avers; that light shines brightly onto the crown of her head, raking her lowered eyes, even while shadows cover much of her face and torso, alludes to Luke 1:35, in which the angel declares that Mary will be illuminated by the Holy Spirit and overshadowed by the power of the Most High. Enhanced by the elaborate layering of hatches and cross-hatches, her complex pose and drapery show that she is ornate, elegant, and adorned with an abundance of divine gifts (*ornata, elegans [...] divinis opibus exaggerata & exulta*).<sup>87</sup> Second, the *Annunciation* print not only mobilizes the Virgin, insisting that she is no *rem inanimatam*, but also demonstrates that she plays an active role in the mystery of the Incarnation, being no mere instrument of the divine will: signaling this truth, the print evenly distributes the pictorial foci along a diagonal axis anchored above by the Holy Name of God resplendent at the apex of the archway, and below by the jointly shadowed and illumined Virgin at the base of the canopied sanctum. Gabriel's scepter, symbol of the sovereignty of the Word, transects this diagonal that marks the passage of divine light between God and the Virgin.<sup>88</sup>

Poised between light and shadow, Mary may further be seen as a liminal figure who demarcates the threshold of the visible: according

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. *ibid.*: 'Quod lumen ac decus ex hoc orbe nostro prodiit illustrius, ac prodire unquam potest?'

to Canisius she is the living horizon, free of all corruption, whence following the dense night there rises Christ the heavenly Sun – destroyer of sin, conqueror of death, restorer of life, and teacher of all justice. (*Quid inde pollutum ac foedum oriatur, unde peccati destructor, mortis profligator, vitae restitutor, omnisque iustitiae praeceptor, velut Sol e coelo post densam noctem apparet.*)<sup>89</sup> This image of Mary as source of spiritual sight derives chiefly from the imagery of reciprocal vision in Psalm 18, that describes the relation between the lightsome Lord who enlightens His people's eyes and the faithful servant whose heartfelt meditations remain always in the Lord's eyes. Canisius appends additional scriptural images taken from Psalm 18 and the Song of Songs. Mary is the mountain from which the stone cut by no human hands is hewn, the bridal chamber out of which the bridegroom emerges, revealing himself as brother, mediator, and leader, the living temple within which the Holy of Holies rests joyfully.<sup>90</sup> This layering of visual metaphors represents the many senses of Scripture implicit in the mystery of the Incarnation first announced by Gabriel, then reiterated by Elizabeth, and most importantly, confirmed by the Holy Spirit (*tam multa ac magna illic mysteria & admiranda sensa mirificus Angelus, & post illum Elizabetha sancta, imo Spiritus divinus conclusit.*)<sup>91</sup> In the *Annunciation*, the light that streams into the Virgin's chamber, sharply delimiting zones of shadow, works in tandem with the many sharp-cornered surfaces that meet at right angles – the podium, prie-dieu, canopy, and pier wall. That the Virgin is positioned on axis with the corner pier and canopy serves to emphasize that she defines the threshold between the Old Law (further symbolized by the worn and cracked step in front of the prie-dieu) and the New, that arises into vision at this crucial juncture. She embodies the condition of visibility that makes this sacred image and its corollary images available to sight. Canisius considers such images authoritative, as he suggests in the excursus to chapter 12 of Book III: so many are the *mysteria*, so many the *sensa* contained by the *Annunciation*, that the commentaries written on the angel's words and on Mary's, 'seem merely to exhibit some small part of the treasure of Marian virtue and glory, rather than expounding them' (*qui de his verbis conscripti extant commentarij [...] Marianae virtutis & gloriae opes non explicare, sed parte saltem ex*

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 315.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

*aliqua tenuiter ostendere videantur*).<sup>92</sup> If exegesis fails to penetrate the mystery of the Incarnation, doing no more than expose it to view (*ostendere*), then the theologian's words and the picturer's images share common ground, for both represent what cannot be fully apprehended. Or perhaps it would be truer to say, as Canisius implies, that in certain transcendent matters of faith, discursive verbal instruments cede precedence to the affective pictorial effects of epideictic instruments, such as the *Annunciation* print.

Canisius poses the obvious question, what constitutes an acceptable pictorial image, at the start of chapter 12, where he distinguishes between imaginative license and decorum, the former wielded by heretics, the latter by true Christians.<sup>93</sup> License issues from excessive liberty of the imagination, that in turn originates from the conviction that sacred matters may be understood by anyone and everyone:

Today there thrives principally the liberty of judging sacred things, the most pernicious of all plagues to religion, which has now perverted the otherwise felicitous thoughts of many men, so that moved by the authority neither of the Fathers nor the Church, they arrogate it for themselves in whom they trust above all. From this liberty, or rather license (*ex hac libertate, aut potius licentia*), some of them visualize (*intelligunt*) the angel saluting the Virgin as if he were wishing her well in the manner of common folk at a first encounter. Whence Marbachius interprets the [angel's] opening words in this way – *Frew dich und sey güter ding* – that is, “Hey there! Joy and good cheer to you, let it please you to unknit your brow”. Albeit I know not what further meaning and emphasis the German possesses, still I ask, what is this but to translate and transform angelic words into common, nay, rustic speech, of the sort used by even the lowest of men.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Canisius's critique of exegetical license undoubtedly derives from Jerome's famous letter to Paulinus decriing the *scripturae tractatores imperitos et temerarios* who claim the right to interpret Scripture, even though they have no training in biblical studies; on this letter, *Epistola 53*, in Canisius's anthology edition of Jerome's letters, see Pabel, “Peter Canisius as a Catholic Editor” 184.

<sup>94</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 310: ‘Primum hodie viget libertas de sacris iudicandi, pestis una in religione omnium perniciosissima, quae multorum hodie ingenia nequaquam infelicia depravavit, eoque deduxit, nulla ut veterum aut Ecclesiae autoritate commoveantur, sibi vero sumant ac fidant plurimum. Ex hac libertate, aut potius licentia, quidam non aliter Angelus hic salutantem intelligunt, quam qui voluerit, ut omnium fere gentium mos est, in primo congressu Virginem salutare, eique salutando fausta precari. Unde Marbachius hoc modo prima verba Germanice interpretatur, *Frew dich und sey güter ding*/ hoc est, Eia lactare, bono animo esto, sive frontem porrige, teque iucundam praesta, etsi Germanicus idiotismus, nescio quam

These salutations call to mind the toasts exchanged at drinking bouts, that for their part resemble the calls to arms traded among soldiers on the front line (*sicut boni milites in acie ad feriendos hostes, sic ipsi ad siccandos cyathos iisdem fere verbis sese mutuo excitant*). On the contrary, the Christian imagination, tempered by the authority of the Church, shall envision Mary and Gabriel in a manner neither coarse, stolid, nor gross (*procul tam crassae mentis, tam pinguis & stolidi imaginatio*).<sup>95</sup> Free of mundane thoughts and idle desires, they shall be seen to converse purely and wisely about the holiest things, not as Erasmus or Johannes Agricola imagine them, but rather, as scriptural usage and the rule of decorum allow (*sensum [...] Christianum veraeque pietati consentaneum inducere*).<sup>96</sup>

Canisius is referring to Erasmus's reading of 'praised' (*laudatam*) for 'blessed' (*pro benedicata*), and to Brentius's reading of 'good fortune' (*bonam fortunam*) for 'benediction' (*benedictio*), that improperly convert an elevated image of the Annunciation into a trite and commonplace image. In his opinion, they absurdly indulge their own judgment—the judgment of the flesh — over propriety and the sense of Scripture (*vero carnis iudicio contra omnem decori rationem & Scripturae morem ridicule indulgere*). Authors of this persuasion carry poetic license too far, substituting a monstrous fiction for scriptural truth (*hoc plusquam Poëticum atque portentosum commentum*).<sup>97</sup> Agricola, for instance, conceives of Gabriel as a youthful lover, of Mary as his beloved: 'Whosoever shall wish to see with devout curiosity how it may have been, let him meditate in spirit on a lone youth, elegantly attired, speaking sweetly to the Virgin, the door shut, whom he openly declares by word and gesture to be the object of his desire'.<sup>98</sup> To visualize the Annunciation in such terms, impudently turning Gabriel into a hopeful suitor, is to judge the event falsely (*perperam iudicare*) by granting profane license the privilege of mocking religion (*atque ex hac prophana in sacris ludificandi licentia*).<sup>99</sup> What is worse, this false image begets other absurd

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maiolem vim & emphasin tenet. Quid vero istud est aliud quaeso, praeterquam ad usum civilem, imo & rusticanum, quo vel infimae sortis homines utuntur, angelica verba transferre ac transformare?'

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.: 'Meditetur apud animum suum, qui volet, pia curiositate, quid sit videre comtululum adolescentem solum cum puella clauso cubilis ostio dulciter alloquentem Virginem, quam se ambire nihil obscure & gestu & oratione declarat'.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

images: Pseudo-Arians, to name one heretical subgroup, allege that Christ intercedes for us in the form of a man, suppliant and prostrate before the Father. This *phantasma* (delusional image) is nothing short of impious, since the mediation of Christ is unbounded: rejoicing in the advocacy of the saints, He makes them prominent (*excludat*), empowers their prayers and other good works, and chooses to help us by means of them.<sup>100</sup> Having countered the Pseudo-Arians, Canisius now refutes the patently nonsensical image promulgated by the Pseudo-Epicureans, who deny the possibility of intercession by the saints, claiming that their souls, having been separated from their bodies, can neither heed us nor render assistance. They would have us imagine the heavenly souls shorn of sense and intellect, asleep and snoring Canisius knows not where until the day of resurrection from the dead (*usque ad resurrectionem carnis, sine sensu & intellectu nescio ubi dormire & stertere*).<sup>101</sup> Canisius now offers an alternative image deriving from Eucherius and Maximus. The saints see everything, not only those things seen with open eyes and then seen in the mind's eye when the eyes are shut, but also all those things from which they are absent in body (*non solum si oculos claudant, verum etiam unde sunt corpore absentes*); that is to say, their efficacious merits are unconfined by place.<sup>102</sup> They are like the prophet Eliseus who could see his absent servant Giezi accept a forbidden gift, even though they were far apart. That being the case, we may rest assured that the saint who requites our prayers and dispenses his good offices renders himself present as an effective advocate in proportion as our faith is pious. Canisius is admonishing us to imagine intercessory saints as proximate, since our prayers call forth their presence; he paraphrases from Maximus's *Sermon on Saints Nazarus and Celsius*: 'What is diffused by merits is unconfined by place. You have everywhere invoked the Martyr, and he who is thus honored as Martyr perceives you everywhere. And so, this being the case, the present likeness of the efficient sponsor who answers your prayers and bestows his gifts shall be rendered, inasmuch as the recipient's faith is fervent (*in tantum vicina praesentia efficacis praebetur advocati, in quantum fuerit fides devota suscepti*).'<sup>103</sup> In opposition to Eunomius and Vigilantius, Canisius further

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.: 'Non clauditur locis, quod diffunditur meritis. Invocasti ubique Martyrem, ubique te exaudit ille qui honoratur in Martyre. Moderante itaque eo, qui pensant

insists that the saints' spiritual bodies (*in illo corpore spirituali*) that dwell in heaven and yet inhabit their tombs are capable of becoming manifest to their brothers and co-members in Christ.<sup>104</sup> If we may represent the saints in our prayers, he intimates, how much more should we represent Mary and Gabriel, whose colloquy marks the moment when we are fashioned as Christians.

Canisius means by this that Mary, when she agreed to become the mother of God, became also the mother of us all, for as Christ was formed in her womb, so it became possible for us to be formed in His image as Christians:

Catholics value the angelic office of salutation as worthy always to be preserved, repeatedly and assiduously renewing it, that forgetfulness may in no wise steal upon us, and that forever there may flourish the grateful memory of this high benefice, whereby to initiate human redemption God in heaven looked down upon his handmaid and glorified her above all saints, choosing her to be the most excellent mother and through her fashioning us as Christians in Christ (*nosque per illam in Christo Christianos effecit*). Therefore we judge it pertinent to our Christian duty, that following Gabriel the officer of the Son of God, we should hold Mary in the highest reverence who at that time was made the immortal parent of Christ and of ourselves (*Mariam & Christi & suam parentem iam immortalem effectam*), second to none in heaven, and whom by these words brought down from heaven, as also in other ways, we courteously salute.<sup>105</sup>

If the daily prayer known as the Angelus represents the sublime embassy undertaken by Gabriel that begins the mysterious work of human redemption, it does so in both word and deed, because the sublime mystery of the Incarnation surpasses what the words alone of the Annunciation conveyed or allowed to be seen (*Gabriëlem summi mysterij & divinissimi operis nuncium ac interpretem, non humano more, sed ex Dei voluntate, & longe quidem sublimius, quam haec salutationis verba prae se*

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vota tua & dispensat munera sua, tantum vicina praesentia efficaciae praebebitur advocati, in quantum fuerit fides devota suscepti'.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.: 'Quod salutantis Angeli officium tanti apud Catholicos valet, ut istud sibi perpetuo retinendum, ac novo subinde studio in usum revocandum putent, nulla ut obrepat oblivio, sed grata vigeat semper memoria summi beneficij, quo Deus ut redemptionem ordiretur humanam, hanc suam ancillam e coelo respexit, et in electissimam Matrem elegit, ac prae Sanctis aliis glorificavit, nosque per illam in Christo Christianos effecit. Igitur ad Christianum officium pertinere arbitrantur, ut filij Dei Gabriëlem ducem sequentes, Mariam & Christi & suam parentem iam immortalem effectam, nullique coelitem secundam reverenter admodum habeant, atque cum aliis modis, tum his etiam verbis e coelo delatis officiose salutent'.

*ferunt, suam obiisse legationem*).<sup>106</sup> Opposition to the Angelus, the prayer that represents by reenacting the Annunciation, constitutes a kind of iconoclasm, for it forecloses the devout utility of meditative and theatrical images. This is why Canisius uses metaphors of blindness – dense fog, enveloping mist – to describe the sightless hate of those sectarians who would deprive people of this prayer that bolsters faith in the communion of saints (*complures ab huius etiam salutationis usu & amore avocari, adeoque abhorreere, nimirum circumfusus istis Sectariorum velut nebulis, densaque caligine miserandum in modum impeditos*).<sup>107</sup> Here he alludes to the notion that just as the image of the saints becomes visible to those who ardently invoke them, so the image of the Annunciation becomes visible to those who pray the Angelus, and more than this, the image of themselves united with their fellow Christians in observance of this daily supererogation. Viewed in these terms, the *Annunciation* print becomes the image of the Angelus: it can be seen to portray this representative prayer, the performance of which unites us with the saints and affirms the principle of unity that binds the members of this mystical community [Fig. 6]. We might put this differently, as follows: the *Annunciation* represents the image of Mary and Gabriel that we ourselves aspire to represent in the Angelus; as such, this pictorial image stands for the act of performative representation by means of which we visualize, as far as is humanly possible, the mystery of the Incarnation that exceeds the mimetic scope of mere words. Put simply, the *Annunciation* is the sacred image that allows us prayerfully to imitate more than we could possibly say.

Mary and Gabriel were themselves performing representative actions, as Canisius makes clear in chapter 13 of Book III. Gabriel actively and verbally represents the Trinity that brings to pass the mystery of the Incarnation. He does this first of all by means of a periphrasis that evokes images of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: when Mary inquires how she a virgin should bear a child, the angel responds, ‘The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the most High shall overshadow you; and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God’.<sup>108</sup> This imagery, by turns abstract and concrete, of hovering, overshadowing, and birth

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 317: ‘Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te, & virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi: ideoque & quod nascetur ex te sanctum, vocabitur Filius Dei’.

reveals the action of the Holy Trinity in the mystery to be fulfilled: 'By which verbal periphrasis Gabriel clearly distinguished between the three persons of the most Holy Trinity and exhibited their singular operation in the sacrament of mysterious conception (*qua verborum periphrasi Gabriel tres in sanctissima Trinitate personas non obscure discrevit, ac singularem earum in Sacramento arcanae conceptionis operationem ostendit*).'<sup>109</sup> Periphrasis is one device marshaled to ensure that Mary willingly and knowingly elects to become the mother of the Savior (*praesenti fide completeretur sciensque ac volens fieret mater Emanuelis*). Another is the angel's splendid act of salutation (*nuntiat luculenter*), that signifies that 'the author of this most sacred and extraordinary work could only be God and the most blessed Trinity. And for this reason', continues Canisius after Cassianus, 'the angel, when he instructs the Virgin mother, radiantly announces and as it were declares, "In you, Mary, shall all the majesty of God descend, for from you shall be born the Son of God"'.<sup>110</sup> The *Annunciation* print, by showing Gabriel's scepter immersed in the ray of divine light extending from the Holy Name of God to the Virgin, illustrates the notion that he salutes her *luculenter*, revealing the connection between what transpires in her and its majestic source on high. Gabriel's open mouth and left-hand gesture of address indicate that he is speaking to Mary; the scepter he holds tilts up toward God in heaven, points into the radiance that signifies the Spirit coming over the Virgin, and also hovers above her as she conceives the Christ. Gabriel is portrayed, then, in the act of representing in word and deed the Trinitarian mystery of the Incarnation. In this sense, the image of Gabriel is fully representational.

The same is of course true of Mary, whose cooperation in giving us 'that man clothed in her substance (*si Virginem cooperantem spectes, quae de sui corporis substantia virum illum nobis dedit*)', Canisius encourages us to behold, in chapter 15, "From Texts of the New and Old Testament It Is Demonstrated that the Human Nature of Christ Ought to be Attributed to Mary and to Noone Else, in Whom and through Whom the Eternal Word Was Made Flesh". He draws a parallel between her act of bodying forth Christ, and the Spirit's action of showing its efficacious agency (*quatenus illic Spiritus sanctus vim & postestatem suam Dominicae*

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.: '& idcirco Angelus de hac Dei virtute tam nuntiat luculenter, quum Virginem matrem instruit, perinde ac si dicat, In te Maria Dei maiestas tota descendet, quia ex te nascetur Filius Dei'.

*incarnationis effectricem exercuit & ostendit, qui propterea Virgini dicitur obumbrasse*).<sup>111</sup> She provides sufficient visual evidence to certify her signal contribution to the mystery of the Incarnation (*quis ergo non videat, quantum ad Christi generationem Maria contulerit*).<sup>112</sup> Canisius elaborates upon this point, referring to the First, Second, and Third Servant Songs in Isaiah 42, 49, and 50, especially Isaiah 49:5: ‘And now saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant’. He explains that Christ’s vocation of service derives from Mary’s exemplary virtues of humility and obedience, that is, from the title of servant (*ancilla*) she claimed when she bore Him in her womb. He construes her affirmation of service as a kind of generative botanical image-making: ‘Wherefore just as the form of a shoot issues from the nature of the plant, and wood is wont to produce what is proper to its species, so the mother of Christ, like a flowering branch, begot from the substance of her flesh a man like unto (*viz.*, in the likeness of) herself’. (*Quare sicut germen de natura eiusdem virgulti prorumpit, suaeque naturae formam accipit: & quemadmodum lignum ex eo quod sui generis est proprium, non aliud ex alio quotidie producere solet: ita Christi mater, veluti virga florem germinans, e sua substantia hominem sibi similem procreavit*).<sup>113</sup> The metaphor and simile of the flowering branch comes from Isaiah 45:8, in which the prophet calls upon the clouds of heaven to open and rain forth justice, that the Savior, sprouting from the earth, may flower and bear fruit: ‘Let the heavens descend from on high, and the clouds rain down justice: let the earth be opened and germinate the Savior. Certainly this passage once again signifies the Messiah, begotten from Mary as if from holy ground, and called by that same prophet the shoot and the fruit of the sublime earth’.<sup>114</sup> Two elements in the *Annunciation* print correspond to this rich complex of images from Isaiah: first, the long-stemmed lily beside the prie-dieu, that alludes both to Mary as the *virga ex radice* and to Christ as the *flos ex virga*; second, the Virgin’s bent pose, combined with her crossed arms, that signifies her readiness to bear Christ like a willing handmaid who embraces her condition of servitude. As

<sup>111</sup> “E scripturis novi ac veteris Testamenti demonstratur, Christi naturam humanam non alteri, quam Mariae tribui oportere, in illaque & ex illa Verbum aeternum incarnatum esse”, in Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1577) 303.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Rorate coeli desuper, & nubes pluant iustum: aperiatur terra, & geminet Salvatorem. Nam hoc etiam loco Messias indicatur, ex Maria velut benedicta terra procreandus, qui germen & fructus terrae sublimis ab eodem Propheta nuncupatur’.

Canisius notes, Mary, Christ, and the Cross bear the weight of the Incarnation, for the body assumed by Christ and borne by Mary is the same sacrificial body borne aloft by the Cross and there humiliated, before being raised to the summit of honor (*huius enim corpus non solum de matre assumptum, sed etiam post crucis ignominiam ad summum honoris fastigium erectum fuit*).<sup>115</sup> Stooped as if bearing a burden, the Virgin makes the sign of the cross, thus perfectly embodying the weighty vocation of service she imparts to her Son.

Isaiah undergirds Canisius's account of the representational status of Mary and Gabriel, as he stresses in chapter 13 of Book III. At issue is the mimetic trajectory of the angel's words and the Virgin's reply: when he announces that she shall conceive a Son – *Ecce concipies in utero & paries Filium* – he is alluding to the famous prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 – *Ecce Virgo concipiet & pariet Filium* – that he now shows to be fulfilled in Mary (*ad quae verba velut alludit Gabriel, quum hoc vaticinium non in alia foemina nisi in Maria complendum ostendens*).<sup>116</sup> Her response – *Ecce ancilla Domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum* – doubles his mimetic allusion by adapting the allusive words, *Ecce concipies*, into the statement of consent, *Ecce ancilla*. In fact, her phrase is closer to Isaiah's, for both consist of an interjection followed by a nominative. Her choice of words reveals that she is fully aware of this sequence leading from prophecy to allusion, and finally to fulfillment: 'Accordingly, how could she not be blessed, who not only believed the angel's promise, but also experienced it as being fulfilled in herself, when she furnished Christ with as much of her most pure and virginal blood as was sufficient to form the human body of a man, not by the will of the flesh, nor human will, namely, not by conjugal union or the male seed, nor any sensual desire, but by the Father's good will and the Holy Spirit's co-operation'.<sup>117</sup> So the Virgin was aware of the representative value of her words, as also of the angel's, but more than this, Canisius avers, she knew by experience the image of Christ to be portrayed by Paul in Romans 1:3: 'In truth, Paul depicts such a Christ (*talem vero Christum*

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid: 'Proinde non potuit non beata esse quae non modo credidit, sed & ipsam Angeli promissionem in se compleri experta est, quando non ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, id est, non ex coniugali congressu aut virili semine, neque cum ullo sensu libidinis, sed ex Patris bona voluntate & Spiritus sancti cooperatione tantum virginei purissimique sanguinis Christo praebuit, quantum ad hominis humanae corporis formationem sufficeret'.

*nobis Paulus depingit*), Who was fashioned a man according to the flesh of the seed of David, that is to say, was formed and conceived from the purest blood of the Davidian Virgin, by the work of no man'.<sup>118</sup> The mimetic chain – *Ecce Virgo, Ecce concipies, Ecce ancilla* – each link of which refers to the act of beholding, thus anchors in a Pauline image of Christ born of the Virgin, that Mary sees as a vatical image at the moment she conceives a Son. This visual image fulfills the verbal images of the prophet and the angel, that Mary then adapted into a verbal image of herself. Seen in this way, the *Annunciation* print may be construed as the Virgin's self-image of the mystery of the Incarnation, her image of herself as the Virgin of the line of David, in whom the Christ is fashioned by the will of God, at the moment when her verbal-visual colloquy with the angel draws to its close.

I have been discussing two illustrations from the *Mariale*, that allow us to discern the rich image-theory informing the treatise. I now want to situate this discussion within the larger context of Canisius's pro-image position, or better, his anti-iconoclastic arguments, as these are set out in chapter 22 of Book V, "On Ancient and Modern Iconoclasts, whose Furious Assaults upon Images and Sanctuaries Are a Wholly Intolerable Error Justly Condemned by the Church; and How on the Contrary, the Early Church Always Used and Honored Images of the Virgin Mother of God, which Were Sometimes Divinely Commended by Miracles". Canisius launches a multi-pronged apology; he refers explicitly to venerable icons, such as the *Salus Populi Romani* preserved in Santa Maria Maggiore, but his defense encompasses other types of images, including pictures of the exemplary deeds of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. Citing the Second Nicean Council, he calls upon all Christians to pay their respects to the Lord's apostolic and prophetic images, as also to the saints' images, but chiefly those of the Holy Mother of God, all of which instruct us in good works and offer examples of Christian faith and the imitation of Christ (*salutamus sanctas Dominicas Apostolicas & Propheticas, item Sanctorum, praecipue autem Dominae nostrae Deiparae imagines, quae nobis veluti exemplaria sunt & institutiones bonorum operum, imitationis & fidei erga Christum*).<sup>119</sup> The sanctity and

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.: "Talem vero Christum nobis Paulus depingit, qui homo ex semine David secundum carnem factus sit, hoc est, qui ex Virgine Davidica, & e purissimis eius sanguinibus, licet sine ulla viri opera, formatus fuerit atque conceptus".

<sup>119</sup> "De veteribus & novis Iconomachis, quorum in sacras imagines & aedes irruentium furor sit plane intolerabilis, et error ab Ecclesia iure damnatus. Deiparae autem

excellence of these *exemplaria* are further commended by the Greek Father, Archbishop Photius of Constantinople, who admonishes the faithful to revere and cherish these sacred images of Christ, Mary, and the saints.<sup>120</sup> Following scholastic convention, Canisius incorporates a reference to the theologian Gabriel Biel, who explained that the honor paid to *ipsas imagines* passes through their accidental, that is, representational properties to the prototypes represented, who alone are worthy of veneration (*ipsae imagines per accidens honorantur, non propter virtutem, potentiam ac gratiam eis inexistentem, sed propter repraesentationem eorum, quibus talia insunt*).<sup>121</sup> By means of these sources, Canisius insists that the beholder, whether viewing holy icons or sacred images, must remain alert to their pictorial status as representations of that which they portray. His account of the representational character of Mary and Gabriel in the *Annunciation*, like his viewing of the *Pulcherrima Virgo* as the contemplative image of the Virgin's self-image, arises from the conciliar and orthodox conviction that such *imagines* are valuable precisely as mimetic instruments.

Canisius makes the corollary claim that the close and intimate relation between Mary and Jesus ensures that any image of the Virgin will double as a sign of God in Christ: 'Basil rightly teaches that by honoring our fellow servants, we signify the good will we hold toward our common lord: and by showing honor to the sign or image of the mother of God (*honorem signo seu imagini exhibemus*), in like manner we attest our good will toward God Himself, for according to the Ambrosian dictum, he who crowns the emperor's image, most certainly honors him whose image he has crowned (*qui coronat imaginem Imperatoris, illum utique honoret, cuius imaginem coronavit*).'<sup>122</sup> In this formulation, *imago* and *signum* are compared to *conservus*: if we honor a Marian image by crowning it, we are really honoring Mary herself, the handmaid of Christ the Lord; and since to honor the Lord's servants is to honor Him, we are also paying homage to God, which is to say that the

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Virginis imagines in veteri Ecclesia semper usitatas & honoratas, nonnunquam & miraculis divinitus commendatas fuisse", in Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 759.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 764–765: 'Recte autem Basilius monet, honorem quem conservis exhibemus, benevolentiae erga communem Dominum esse significationem: ac proinde quem honorem Deiparae signo seu imagini exhibemus, etiam benevolentiae in Deum ipsum est testificatio, quum secundum Ambrosij dictum, qui coronat imaginem Imperatoris, illum utique honoret, cuius imaginem coronavit'.

image of Mary functions as it were as a servant of the Lord, and in this respect functionally represents her self-image as *ancilla Domini*.

If Marian images are defensible as *exemplaria* and *servitudinis Dei signa*, they chiefly merit to be treated reverently because they make visible what first became representable through the mystery of the Incarnation. Canisius quotes Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, who implicitly compares images of Christ to relics of the Holy Face – Abgar’s veil and the sudarium – and then justifies images of Mary as tokens of the virginal flesh whence was begotten the flesh of Christ:

Firm in faith, we delineate the imprint of Christ’s flesh, saluting that which we deem worthy of seemly worship and honor, as a remembrance of the vivifying and inimitable divinity of His humanity (*sanctae Christi carnis characterem in imaginibus delineantes salutamus, & cultu & honore omni quo decet dignamur, nec aliud nisi in recordationem divinitatis illius vivificae & inexpressae humanitatis*). [...] For the same reason, we represent the likeness of the holy and inviolate Virgin mother of God (*intemeratae eius iuxta carnem matris sanctae Deiparae Virginis similitudinem referimus*), thus showing that she, a woman according to nature, by no means foreign from us in body, conceived in her womb and from herself bore incarnate the invisible God who holds all things in his hand, beyond the judgment of men and angels (*Deum invisibilem, & omnia manu sua continentem, ultra omnem & hominum & Angelorum existimationem in ventre suo conceperit, & ex se incarnatum genuerit*).<sup>123</sup>

As the image of Christ was miraculously imprinted, so we portray Him, the invisible God made representable by the mystery of the Incarnation, and so too, we portray His mother, whose likeness to womankind represents her Son’s humanity, the affinity He shares with us in the flesh. This imitable humanity is inextricably united with His living and inimitable divinity, a truth that images of Christ, and at one remove, images of Mary compel us to recollect. More than this, worshipful praise bestowed on Christ either directly or by way of the Virgin is not only mediated by images, but is itself like the act of picturing the image of His flesh (*Christi carnis characterem in imaginibus delineantes salutamus*). So Marian images perforce remind us of the God we could not see, as also of Christ whose human form certifies that the Word was made flesh through the Virgin.

Then again, Marian images are warranted because Saint Luke, intimately familiar with the Virgin (*Mariae admodum familiaris*), first por-

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 759.

trayed her by hand after the life (*quam divus Apostolus Lucas suis ipse manibus depinxit, illa adhuc vivente*), and more importantly, because Mary herself beheld this Lucan image and transmitted to it her beauty of form (*tabulam ipsam vidente, gratiamque adeo illi formae suae immittente*).<sup>124</sup> Luke did this, Canisius infers, since so many early Christians burned with desire to see Mary face to face, and seeing her, to admire and venerate what they were privileged to behold. He is referring to Dionysius the Areopagite, who so longed to lay eyes on the mother of God and speak with her, that he journeyed from Athens to Jerusalem; and also to Ignatius of Antioch who, himself intensely desirous of seeing Mary with his own eyes, equated Christian faith with this desire visually to admire her (*quem enim non delectet eam videre & alloqui [...] si sit nostrae fidei & religioni amicus*). The image Luke wrought was a pious and prudent device that enabled the multitudes of her admirers to receive the portrait of her face on panel (*ut Mariae vultum saltem in tabella depictum exciperent*), as a perpetual monument whence they might draw consolation, wheresoever they were, and which they could circulate among themselves (*hocque perenne monumentum, tum praesentes tum absentes ad suum solatium retinerent, aliique aliis invicem communicarent*).<sup>125</sup> From the Lucan original, first installed in the so-called Tribunal erected in Constantinople by Pulcheria Augusta, derive the truthful copies that survive to this day, whose fidelity is confirmed by their close correspondence to the descriptions of Nicephorus and Epiphanius: ‘Moreover, the exemplar of this sacred picture, faithfully transcribed from the Lucan archetype (*sacrae picturae huius exemplar, quod ex archetypo Lucae fideliter exceptum est*), is still to be seen, and as they say, found in Venice at the home of the most famous painter Titian, wherein may be discerned all the distinguishing features of the most holy Virgin’s form and stature that, as previously noted, Nicephorus recounts and expounds according to the description and judgment of Epiphanius (*in eoque spectari aiunt notas omnes, quas Nicephorus memoratus alio in loco exposuit, ubi staturam formamque sanctissimae Virginis ex Epiphaniij sententia describit*).’<sup>126</sup> Since Simon Metaphrastes ascribes to Luke the first portraits of Christ, the Marian

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 760.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Caeterum sacrae picturae huius exemplar, quod ex archetypo Lucae fideliter exceptum est, in hunc usque diem extare, & Venetiis apud celeberrimum pictorem Titianum inveniri dicitur, in eoque spectari aiunt notas omnes, quas Nicephorus memoratus alio in loco exposuit, ubi staturam formamque sanctissimae Virginis ex Epiphaniij sententia describit, ac nos eandem alibi recensuimus’.

archetype, adduced by Theodorus Lector as having been made after the life, may possibly have resembled these earlier works executed in wax or delineated with lines (*ut Simon etiam Metaphrastes affirmat, cera & lineamentis Christi figuram expressit, atque, ut Theodorus Lector exponit, imaginem quoque genitricis Dei ad vivum depinxit*).<sup>127</sup>

How then does Canisius address the question of authenticity, given the fact that multiples of these Lucan images exist in various churches, a point mockingly made by Flacius Illyricus in the *Ecclesiastica historia* (viz., the *Magdeburg Centuries*)?<sup>128</sup> Canisius first of all asserts that nothing prevents us from supposing that Luke, an excellent painter, zealously executed several Marian icons of this sort, either upon request or by his own accord, as a service to fellow Christians (*nec esse quicquam incommodi, si credamus, egregium pictorem Lucam sive ultro, sive rogatum, plures unius generis Icones, quae Mariam exprimerent, in aliorum gratiam cupide depinxisse*).<sup>129</sup> Even if we concede that he produced only one archetype, we could then legitimately assume that the derivative images, especially the earliest of them, having been made after this original, retained the beloved name of their authoritative source (*licet aliena manu factae fuissent, Lucae nomine commendari potuerunt: quoniam cum primae inter vetustissimas ad Lucae archetypum essent expressae*).<sup>130</sup> This same icon, whether the one fashioned skillfully after the life by Luke's hand or one of the images rendered after it, was already preserved in the Roman church of Santa Maria Maggiore during the papacy of Gregory the Great.<sup>131</sup> Canisius imagines an unbroken chain of images after images anchored to this Lucan first image, all of which are ultimately united by their common reference to the prototype Mary.

He similarly imagines a chain of pious beholders extending from Luke to himself, a Christian lineage comprised by Ignatius of Antioch and Dionysius the Areopagite, by the Greek and Latin Fathers, by the participants at the Second Nicene Council and the Synod of Frankfurt, and by the many individuals – high and low, lay and clerical – whose examples Canisius cites: Stephen Martyr who placed healing

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 761, for Canisius's paraphrase of Flaccius's contention.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.: 'Illud constat, aetate Gregorij Magni hanc ipsam imaginem Lucae Evangelistae, sive illam quidem eius manu affabre elaboratam, sive ex ea quam ipse fecit ad vivum expressam Romanis notissimam simul & celeberrimam, & iam tum in aede Deiparae ad praesepe in Exquilis sitam, eximia populi religione servatam fuisse'.

images of Christ and of Mary before an Armenian invalid;<sup>132</sup> Gregory the Great who conferred Marian images upon those men he deemed worthy of this highest honor;<sup>133</sup> John the Anchorite whose prayers before an image of the Virgin and Child rendered his votive candle miraculously inextinguishable and thus strengthened his faith;<sup>134</sup> Andronicus Senior who sought refuge with the Hodegetria when his grandson stormed the imperial palace at Constantinople;<sup>135</sup> Heraclius who armed himself with an icon of the Theotokos in his battle against Cosdroes;<sup>136</sup> Emmanuel Comnenus who placed an image of the invincible Mother of God in his triumphal chariot after defeating the Pannonians, and then processed behind it;<sup>137</sup> Constantine Paleologus who humbly ceded pride of place to this same image after retaking a captured town;<sup>138</sup> Louis the Pious who affixed copies of a venerable Marian icon to trees in the forests and solitary places whither he repaired to hunt and to pray;<sup>139</sup> Thomas More who endorsed the thaumaturgic image of the Virgin in sight of which Roger Wentworth's daughter was finally exorcised;<sup>140</sup> the nameless monk who, heeding the advice of Abbot Theodorus Aeliota, abjured the devil's blandishments and instead continued to pray before an image of Mary holding the infant Christ;<sup>141</sup> and all those who, knowledgeable of the distinction between image and prototype, piously and prudently venerate neither the painting nor the painter, but rather the person represented (*non tam de auctore sive pictore, quam de persona per imaginem repraesentata sibi curandum esse sciunt*).<sup>142</sup> Canisius's zealous defense of *imagines sacrae* attaches him to these paragons of Marian piety, whose public and private, triumphant and therapeutic, penitential and consolatory recourse to images the *Mariale* invokes, convokes, and figuratively emulates. The treatise is a repository of verbal and pictorial images deployed to underscore the legitimacy and justify the efficacy of visual devotion; they serve as well to demonstrate the author's resolute faith in such devotional

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 763.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 762.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 763.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 760–761.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 762.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 761.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 764.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 763.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 764.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 762.

auxiliaries: like Stephen Martyr, Canisius offers them as sources of healing; like Gregory the Great, he honors us by conveying them; like John the Anchorite he confirms them as instruments of the Virgin's miraculous agency; like Andronicus Senior he shows us that they are our refuge; like Heraclius he uses them to battle against heretics; like Emmanuel Comnenus, he triumphantly lauds them over their detractors; like Constantine Paleologus, he brandishes them against usurpers of the Church; like Louis the Pious, he installs and circulates them in the public and private places visited by his book; like Thomas More he certifies their validity and potency; like the anonymous monk, he insists on praying before them; like his fellow image-users, he venerates Christ, Mary, and the saints by way of their likenesses, through which his devotion transits. As he interacts with images, implicitly accompanied by this communion of beholders, so he invites us to attend the Virgin by fixing our gaze on her images and thereby joining this virtual congregation.

Canisius construes such participation as an act of faith based neither in doctrine nor injunction, but rather in consensus: 'as has often been the case elsewhere, so also here we give assent to the faith of the forefathers (*in fide Maiorum libenter acquiescunt*), judging it far wiser to do this than to serve the disputatious. For the Church neither teaches nor requires that faith be fixed in such things (*certam enim fidem de his rebus nec docet, nec exigit Ecclesia*); yet it is characteristic of the exceedingly arrogant, the absurdly knowing, and the vainly and foolishly curious, that they contradict the commonly held and received belief of good men (*communi autem & receptae bonorum opinioni*).<sup>143</sup> In this passage, he expressly sanctions the use of Marian images by common consent, having previously justified the many attributions of Marian icons to Saint Luke (*nihil offendit, similes imagines Virginis pluribus in locis conspici, ac eidem auctori Lucae a multis ascribi*).<sup>144</sup> That his terms of condemnation directed at iconoclasts – *nimum arrogans, praepostere sapiens, vane & insulse curiosus* – derive from the earlier discussion of illicit *licentia* (and of its licit antonym *imaginatio*), intimates that the hatred of sacred images

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.: 'ita hic etiam in fide Maiorum libenter acquiescunt, multo id esse consultius, quam deservire contentionibus arbitrantes. Certam enim fidem de his rebus nec docet, nec exigit Ecclesia: communi autem & receptae bonorum opinioni contradicere, aut nimum est arrogantis, aut praepostere sapientis, vel alioqui vane & insulse curiosi?'

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

originates in their licentious misuse, as also in the presumptuous and unbridled impulse to question their sanctity, pedigree, and authority. In this sense, *imagines sacrae* function in the *Mariale* as a synecdoche for the Church.

Whereas images strengthen the memory of Christ, Mary, and the saints, and shore up faith, having been applied to this end from the earliest days of the Church (*primis aetatibus Ecclesiae [...] piarum imaginum usum a Christianis agnatum receptumque fuisse, praesertim ut Christi, Mariae & Sanctorum grata memoria in credentium oculis perpetuo ferretur, & hinc Ecclesiae fides ac religio magis magisque stabiliretur*), the iconoclasts guard against any vestige of the old piety, and judging it glorious to have stripped Christian sanctuaries of their ornaments, convert them all into an abomination of emptiness (*sed pro Christianis templis abominationem desolationis facere ac retinere sibi gloriosum etiam arbitrantur*).<sup>145</sup> Opposed to *imaginatio*, iconoclastic license confronts us with the unimaginable sight of a form without form – churches shorn of images, that resemble Jewish temples and Muslim mosques: ‘How is it that in our day their strange piety has grown and visibly progressed to such an extent, that they think themselves to have acted truly and admirably, when they impose a truly formless form, or if you will, a Jewish and Mohamedan face upon Catholic churches, which thus overlaid they preserve (*si formam prorsus informem, aut si mavis, Iudaicam & Mahometicam faciem Catholicis templis inducant, inductamque conservent*)’.<sup>146</sup> Canisius expresses horror at this paradoxical sight that seems peculiarly to arise from the very action of erasure. Even Luther interdicts these barbarians whose attacks on images the devil propagates for slaughter’s sake and the spilling of blood (*per quod sanguinem profundat, & caedes faciat in orbe terrarum*).<sup>147</sup> Against this vile end, Canisius promulgates a reflexive visual remedy: he imagines an historical *catena* of sacred images reverently beheld by pious viewers who cast their gaze toward Mary – mother, daughter, and bride of Christ, and more than this, herself the consummate beholder of the *Deiparae Virginis imagines*.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 758.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.: ‘Quid quod nova istorum pietas ita crevit, tantosque progressus nostro seculo demonstravit, ut secum illi praeclare & prorsus Evangelice agi putent, si formam prorsus informem, aut si mavis, Iudaicam & Mahometicam faciem Catholicis templis inducant, inductamque conservent?’.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 757.

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