

“CLAUDE MELLAN’S *HOLY FACE*:”

*ostendatque etiam quae occultat*

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Paragone

Some years ago I published two essays dealing with different aspects of the same theme, the first called “The Sculptor’s Last Will and Testament,” the second “*Ex Uno Lapide*. The Renaissance Sculptor’s *Tour de Force*.”<sup>1</sup> I tried to isolate and focus upon an aspect of the familiar paragone tradition in which the comparison, or competition, was not between different media, as between poetry and painting, but between different artists working in the same medium, sculpture. The competition was a special case of the paragone in two respects. Pliny nowhere describes a direct competition between sculptors, as he does between the painters Apelles and Zeuxis. But many ancient sources express praise, even wonderment at the feat of carving large and complex works from a single block of stone---ironically, the most famous instance, the Laocoon, turned out to be pieced together when it was rediscovered in 1506 (Fig. 1). It is often forgotten that although the primary texts and exemplars were ancient, both the name the concept of the Paragone as we understand them, a formal disputation among the arts, were inventions of the Renaissance. The Renaissance sculptors themselves invented the competition in their field in order to test their own professional prowess against the ancients, and against each other. The second distinction of this competition is that it was not about the artistry of fiction, illusionism, the capacity to feign reality, as with Apelles and Zeuxis, but involved a conquest of reality itself, that is, the physical and intellectual challenges to the artists’ technical mastery and ingenuity posed by the difficult, unforgiving, lapidary raw material.

A third factor distinguished the *ex uno lapide* tradition as it emerged in the Renaissance. The competition in paragone in antiquity was essentially visual and mechanical, whereas for the Renaissance artist it had a distinct ethical, indeed religious content. For Vasari, to piece together a work of marble

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\* First presented at a conference on the Volto Santo, in Rome, March 8, 2001, this paper is a preliminary version of an essay that will be published as one of my series of Mellon Lectures delivered at the National Gallery of Art in May, 2004.

sculpture was not simply evidence of ineptitude, it was an immoral act, a deception beneath the dignity of a true artist. In this context, the victory over the other was also a victory over the self, and thus became, paradoxically but importantly, the supreme demonstration of humility and devotion. The virtue of dedicated, or rather devotional, craftsmanship was no doubt an important factor in the first of the great Renaissance feats of this nature, the David of Michelangelo, where the artist's unprecedented conquest of the huge block was a metaphor for the biblical hero's defeat of the monstrous evil giant (**Fig. 2**).<sup>2</sup> The biblical David's victory was traditionally and constantly understood as a divinely inspired act, not only of courage, ingenuity and skill, but of personal rectitude and humility. Even more incisive is the fact that the subsequent trophies in this paragone of devotional self-sacrifice involved the artists' own funerary monuments—Michelangelo's Florentine Pietà (**Fig. 3**), Cellini's nude Christ (**Fig. 4**), Bandinelli's Annunziata Pietà (**Fig. 5**)—and must thus be considered acts of professional expiation, as it were. This spiritual dedication of the *tour de force* was a legacy of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance artist merged the great, proud, individual creator of antiquity with the anonymous, humble medieval servant of God—the Jongleur of Notre Dame who one night, in the church alone, gave his utmost performance of his wonderful tricks before the altar of the Virgin, and was saved.

I am concerned here with what I consider the equivalent of this Renaissance *ex uno* tradition, in a domain in which it is generally overlooked, namely, drawing. The neglect is due in part, no doubt, to the fact that drawing was not conceived as an art unto itself in antiquity: Pliny often speaks of drawing and drawings, but has chapters only on painting and sculpture. And even in the Renaissance when the idea of Disegno was virtually divinized, drawing as such was the basis, but not the end of art. The paragone has a another, parallel history in this domain, however, which helped to inspire an incomparable graphic image that was intended by its maker to be, and remains to this day, unique. If there is a supreme graphic achievement in the *ex uno* mystique it is the single line used by Claude Mellan to create his engraving of the Holy Face, with which I have been involved for some time (**Figs. 6, 7, 8, 9**).<sup>3</sup> I use the word involved advisedly because anyone who begins to trace the convolutions of the single, continuous, undulating spiral line that evolves (or devolves, depending on the direction one follows) ultimately to fill the universal void of the paper sheet, cannot escape becoming, as I have been, entranced, enchanted, bedazzled, to the point of obsession with this profoundly moving image. By subtle variations of thickness

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<sup>1</sup> Lavin 1977-8, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Lavin 1993.

<sup>3</sup> The most important recent discussions of the engraving are those of Emmanuel Coquery in Bonfait and MacGregor 2000, 170-3, and by Maxime Préaud in Préaud and Brejon de Lavergnée 1988, No. 106, 92f., and in Préaud 1988, No. 21, 47; Barbara Jatta, in Morello and Wolf, eds., 2000, No. IV.50, 203; also Kemp 1994, 241f. A warm appreciation and some valuable insights will be found in an essay by the engraver Jean Sgard 1957.

and direction as it moves, the line delineates, in picture and in word, its own uniqueness and that of the image it represents.<sup>4</sup> Mellan's Christ is truly magical, and I can think of no other work that so richly and deeply evokes the dual nature of the Volto Santo as a miraculously created icon of that visage endowed with the thaumaturgic power to convert people, like the Jewish tax collector Levi who was transformed into St. Matthew the Evangelist and Martyr, at the very first glance.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from describing the actual physiognomy of Christ, there were traditionally two ways of evoking the appearance as well as the significance of the Veronica. The cloth itself might be shown suspended in some extraordinary way, floating in mid-air or displayed by angels, and the visage might be distinguished in some way from the surface of the cloth, extending beyond its limits, standing out by color or design, or remaining independent of the undulations of the cloth (**Figs. 10, 11**).<sup>6</sup> None of this is true of Mellan's image. The cloth is contiguous with the size of the sheet of paper so that, like the dual nature of the subject, it is both in and out of this world. The cloth that incorporates the image and the equivalent words curls up at the bottom, while the artist's signature and motto form part of the support.<sup>7</sup> Because the sheet of paper both is and represents the unique image that represents the unique face, the infinitely reproducible engraving becomes the printmaker's equivalent of Horace's famous boast of his poetical achievement in the classic paragone, "I have finished a monument more lasting than bronze and loftier than the Pyramid's royal pile."<sup>8</sup>

One of the uncanny effects of Mellan's all-encompassing line is that the image is actually woven into the metaphorical material that is both paper and cloth. Moreover, the gyrations are parallel and, since there are no crossovers, no surface plane is established: the line and the "background" are always visible

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<sup>4</sup> Pr aud in Pr aud and Brejon de Lavergn e 1988, 12, and Friess 1993, 144-54?), offer accounts of Mellan's procedure in executing the work.

<sup>5</sup> I refer here in particular to Caravaggio (paintings in the Contarelli chapel, London Supper at Emaus; also the Conversion of St. Paul in the Cerasi chapel, as I shall discuss in a forthcoming study) and Georges de La Tour (Penitent St. Peter), who portrayed the spiritual conversion in physiognomical terms (Lavin 1974a and b, 1980, 1993, 2000, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> On the Volto Santo and Veronica, see the excellent surveys, with references to the vast precedent literature, in Fagiolo and Madonna, eds., 1985, 106-26, Koerner 1993, 80-126, Kessler Gerhard Wolf, eds., 1996; Hamburger 1998, 317-82, Morello and Wolf, eds., 2000.

<sup>7</sup> The device appears in Mellan's engravings after drawings by Bernini of David Strangling the Lion for the 1631 edition of the poems of Urban VIII and the portrait pope of the same year (Ficacci 1989, No. 77, 279f., No. 79, 284). The motif may have been Mellan's intervention, since it does not occur in Bernini's drawing for the David composition.

<sup>8</sup> Exegi monumentum aere perennius / regalique situ pyramidum altius. Horace, *Carmina*, III, xxx, 1-2 (*Odes and Epodes*, 1968, 278f.). On the relationship between the print and the "imprint" of the Holy Face, see 24 below. A brief but perceptive appreciation of the relationship between form and content in Mellan's image may be found in Rebel 2003, 72f.

and both are infinitely extensible in all directions. In effect, the image is transparent, and the line reveals what it conceals: “We see in a glass, darkly, but then face to face,” (1 Cor. 13,12;<sup>9</sup> we shall see that Paul’s conceit was one of the essential ingredients in the pre-history of Mellan’s image). One of the most common of all metaphors for the duality of Christ’s nature was that his body was like a lantern that both conceals and reveals the light within.<sup>10</sup> The closest precedent I know for this effect Mellan must surely also have known—the famous self-portrait described by Vasari that Albrecht Dürer sent to Raphael as a token of his esteem: Dürer “sent him his own portrait, painted in water-colours, on cambric, so fine that it was transparent, without the use of white paint, the white material forming the lights of the picture. This appeared marvelous to Raphael.”<sup>11</sup> Given the notorious Christ-like nature of his famous self-portrait in Munich (**Fig. 12**), and his use in his gift to the Divine Raphael of guache and a cloth support, I suspect Dürer may himself have had in mind not only the Veronica but also the most wondrous of all manifestations of Christ’s visage, at the Transfiguration when, according to Matthew (17:2), Christ was “transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun.”<sup>12</sup>

The editio princeps of this graphic paragone is again Pliny, who tells two stories in which drawing is the central theme. One records a friendly competition between two of the greatest painters of Greece, Apelles and Protogenes, the first of whom drew for the other as a sort of calling card an extremely fine line (*lineam . . . duxit summae tenuitatis*). Protogenes responded by covering Apelles’s line with a still finer one of his own, whereupon Apelles triumphed by topping the last with a line so fine that it left no room for another (*Apelles et vinci erubescens tertio . . . lineas secuit nullum relinquens amplius subtilitati locum*).<sup>13</sup> The second story concerns the equally admired Parrhasius of Ephesus and

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<sup>9</sup> Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem.

<sup>10</sup> Lavin 2000, 365-9.

<sup>11</sup> Vasari 1963, II, 236: “. . . gli mandò la testa d’un suo ritratto condotta da lui a guazzo su una tela di bisso, che da ogni banda mostrava parimente, e senza biacca, i lumi trasparenti, se non che con acquerelli di colori era tinta e macchiata, e de’lumi del panno aveva campato i chiari: la quale cosa parve maravigliosa a Raffaello.” (Vasari 1963ff., IV, 189 )

<sup>12</sup> et transfiguratus est ante eos, et resplenduit facies eius sicut sol. Some of these themes have been discussed by Koerner 80-105, in relation to the numinous aspects of Dürer’s imagery and self-conception.

<sup>13</sup> Pliny NH XXXIV, xxxvi, 81-83 (Loeb ed. IX, 320-3):

A clever incident took place between Protogenes and Apelles. Protogenes lived at Rhodes, and Apelles made the voyage there from a desire to make himself acquainted with Protogenes’s works, as that artist was hitherto only known to him by reputation. He went at once to his studio. The artist was not there but there was a panel of considerable size on the easel prepared for painting, which was in the charge of a single old woman. In answer to his enquiry, she told him that Protogenes was not at home, and asked who it was she should report as having wished to see him. ‘Say it was this person,’ said Apelles, and taking up a brush he painted in colour across the panel an extremely fine line; and when Protogenes returned the old woman showed him what had taken place. The story goes

has the distinction of suggesting that by the standard of difficulty, that is, the difficulty of achieving the most with the least, drawing may even surpass painting. It is relatively easy, says Pliny, to give a sense of form in painting, and many have succeeded in doing so. But Parrhasius is unrivalled in the rendering of outline and it is a rare artist who is able delineate so as to use line to indicate what lies behind, and suggest even what it conceals (*desinere ut promittat alia post se ostendatque etiam quae occultat*).<sup>14</sup> I believe Claude Mellan saw the Trinity in the first story, the face of God in the second, and the hand of the creator in both.

FORMATVR VNICVS VNA

C-M ELLAN G. P. ET F. IN AEDIBVS REG.

1649 NON ALTER

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that the artist, after looking closely at the finish of this, said that the new arrival was Apelles, as so perfect a piece of work tallied with nobody else; and he himself, using another colour, drew a still finer line exactly on the top of the first one, and leaving the room told the attendant to show it to the visitor if he returned and add that this was the person he was in search of; and so it happened; for Apelles came back, and, ashamed to be beaten, cut a the lines with another in a third colour, leaving no room for any further display of minute work. Hereupon Protogenes admitted he was defeated, and flew down to the harbour to look for the visitor; and he decided that the panel should be handed on to posterity as it was, to be admired as a marvel by everybody, but particularly by artists. I am informed that it was burnt in the first fire which occurred in Caesar's palace on the Palatine; it had been previously much admired by us, on its vast surface containing nothing else than the almost invisible lines, so that among the outstanding works of many artists it looked like a blank space, and by that very fact attracted attention and was more esteemed than every masterpiece there.

Scitum inter Protogenen et cum quod accidit ille Rhodi vivebat, quo cum Apelles adnavigasset, avidus cognoscendi opera eins fama tantum sibi cogniti, continuo officinam petiit. . aberat ipse, sed tabulam amplae magnitudinis in machina aptatam una custodiebat anus. haec foris esse Protogenen respondit interrogavitque, a quo quaesitum diceret. ' ab hoc,' inquit Apelles adreptoque penicillo lineam ex colore duxit summae tenuitatis per tabulam. et reverso Protogeni quae gesta crant anus indicavit. ferunt artificem protinus contemplatum subtilitatem dixisse Apellen venisse, non cadere in alium tam absolutum opus; ipsumque alio colore tenuiorem lineam in ipsa illa duxisse abeuntemque praecepisse, si redisset ille, ostenderet adiceretque hunc esse quem quaereret. atque ita evenit. revertit enim Apelles et vinci erubescens tertio colore lineas secuit nullum. relinquens amplius subtilitati locum. at Protogenes victum se confessus in portum devolavit hospitem quaerens, placuitque sic eam tabulam posteris tradi omnium quidem, sed artificum praecipuo miraculo. consumptam cum priore incendio Caesaris domus in Palatio audio, spectatam nobis ante, spatiosae nihil aliud continentem quam lineas visum effugientes, inter egregia multorum opera inani similem et eo ipso allicientem omnique opere nobiliorem.

<sup>14</sup> Pliny NH XXXV, xxxvi, 67-8 (Loeb ed. IX, 310-11):

This in painting is the high-water mark of refinement; to paint bulk and the surface within the outlines, though no doubt a great achievement, is one in which many have won distinction, but to give the contour of the figures, and make a satisfactory boundary where the painting within finishes, is rarely attained in successful artistry. For the contour ought to round itself off and so terminate as to suggest the presence of other parts behind it also, and disclose even what it hides.

extrema corporum facere et desinentis picturae modum includere rarum- in succesu artis invenitur. ambire enim se ipsa debet extremitas et sic desinere, ut promittat alia et post se ostendatque etiam quae occultat.

### The Hand

The inscriptions have a sublime ambiguity that perfectly matches the uncanny effects of the image. On one level, the unique image of Christ, i.e., the Veronica portrayed in the engraving, is formed by a single *linea*. But *unicus* also refers to Christ Himself, whose nature is both human and divine, and *una* refers to the Virgin Mary, of whom *unigenita* was a common epithet. This is the meaning given to the text by the abbé Michel de Marolles, Abbé de Villeloin, Mellan's friend, who invented the motto. De Marolles says of the inscriptions, "*Formatur unicus una*, alludes to the beauty of the only son of God the Father, born of a virgin, and with a single spiral line by which the artist has so well drawn the portrait, with this other word written below, *Non alter*, because there is no one who resembles this First of the Predestined, and because the engraver of this image has made such a masterpiece that another would have difficulty to imitate it and create its equal."<sup>15</sup> But *unicus* may also refer to what the engraving represents, the *Volto Santo*, and in this sense *una* can only refer to the feminine noun *manus*, the hand of the maker. The *Volto Santo* is of course *acheiropoetos*, not made by *human* hand, so that in this sense *una* also has a double meaning, the hand of God who made the *Vera Icona* on Veronica's kerchief, and the hand of the artist who made its engraved counterfeit. In point of fact, the two hands, that of God and that of the artist, are not so far apart as at first they might seem.

The earliest post-classical entry into the draftsmanship competition appeared at the very origins of Renaissance painting, with an uncanny feat of manual skill recounted by Vasari, the famous story of the "O" of Giotto.<sup>16</sup> An emissary of the pope interviewing artists for an important commission, requested

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<sup>15</sup> Marolles 1656, 266:

"Mais en voicy encore un autre qui ne luy deplut pas pour une admirable Teste de Christ, gravée d'un seul trait par Claude Mellan, *Formatur unicus una*, faisant allusion à la beauté du Fils unique du Pere Eternel, nai d'une Vierge, et à la seule ligne spirale, dont le Peintre artiste a si bien dessiné le portrait, avec cet autre mot escrit encore au dessous, *Non alter*, parce qu'il n'y a personne qui ressemble à ce Premier des Presdestinez, et que le graveur de cette image en a tellement fait un chef-d'oeuvre, qu'un autre auroit de la peine a l'imiter pour en faire autant."

Cited after L'oeil 1988, 121.

<sup>16</sup> Vasari 1963, I, 72:

Pope Benedict IX [recte: Boniface VIII], who was proposing to decorate St. Peter's with some paintings, sent a courtier from Trevisi to Tuscany, to see what manner of man Giotto was, and the nature of his work. On the way the courtier learned that there were other excellent masters in painting and mosaic in Florence, and he interviewed a number of artists at Siena. When he had received designs from these, he proceeded to Florence. Entering Giotto's shop one morning, as he was at work, the envoy explained to him the Pope's intention, and the manner in which he wished to make use of his work, and finally asked Giotto for some small drawing to send to His Holiness. Giotto, who was always courteous, took a sheet of paper and a red pencil, pressed his arm to his side to make a compass of it, and then, with a turn of his hand, produced a circle so perfect in every particular that it was a marvel to see. This done, he turned smiling to the courtier and said: "Here is the drawing." The latter, who thought he was being mocked, said: "Am I to have no other design but this?" "It is enough and more than enough," replied Giotto; "send it

of the painter some sample of his work. In response Giotto, using his arm as compass, with a turn of his hand drew a perfect circle. Nonplussed, the courtier asked if there might be more, but Giotto assured him that the circle would be more than enough for the pope to judge. The courtier left dissatisfied and fearing he had been taken for a simpleton. But when the pope heard that Giotto had drawn the circle without moving his arm and without a compass he realized that the artist was indeed the greatest of his age. Vasari added a crucial comment that is generally, but I think inadequately, taken at face value, as a good joke: the episode, Vasari says, gave rise to a familiar proverb, "You are more simple than Giotto's O," referring not only to the shape of the drawing and the simple-mindedness of the courtier who failed to understand its significance, but also to the fact that in Tuscan dialect *tondo* refers not only to a circle but to an empty head.<sup>17</sup> To the extent that Giotto thought the emissary a fool, he may actually have intended

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in with the others and you will see if it obtains recognition." The messenger perceived that he would get nothing else, and left in a state of considerable dissatisfaction, imagining that he had been laughed at. However, when he sent in the other designs with the names of their authors, he included that of Giotto, and related how the artist had executed it without moving his arm and without compasses. From this the Pope and many of the well-informed courtiers recognised to what an extent Giotto surpassed all the other painters of the time in excellence. When the story became public it gave rise to a saying which is still used for people of dull wits: "You are more simple (*tondo*) than Giotto's O." This proverb deserves to be considered a good one, not only from the circumstances out of which it arose, but much more for its meaning, which is due to the twofold significance of the word *tondo* in Tuscany, that of a perfect circle, and slowness and heaviness of mind. Accordingly the Pope sent for Giotto to Rome, where he received him with great honour, and recognised his worth. He , caused him to paint for the choir of St. Peter's five subjects from the life of Christ, and the principal picture for the sacristy, all of which were executed with great care, and no more finished work in tempera ever left his hands; thus he richly deserved the reward of 600 gold ducats which the delighted Pope gave to him, bestowing many other favours upon him, so that it became the talk of all Italy.

Vasari 1966ff., II, 103f.:

Sono similmente l'altre figure di queste storie e le teste così de' maschi come delle femmine molto belle, et i panni in modo lavorati morbidamente che non è maraviglia se quell'opera gl'acquistò in quella città e fuori tanta fama, che Papa Benedetto IX [recte: Bonifacio VIII] da Trevisi mandasse in Toscana un suo cortigiano a vedere che uomo fusse Giotto e quali fossero l'opere sue, avendo disegnato far in S. Piero alcune pitture. Il quale cortigiano, venendo per veder Giotto et intendere che altri maestri fussero in Firenze eccellenti nella pittura e nel musaico, parlò in Siena a molti maestri. Poi, avuto disegni da loro, venne a Firenze et andato una mattina in bottega di Giotto che lavorava, gl'espose la mente del Papa et in che modo si voleva valere dell'opera sua et in ultimo gli chiese un poco di disegno per mandarlo a Sua Santità. Giotto, che garbatissimo era, prese un foglio et in quello con un pennello tinto di rosso, fermato il braccio al fianco per farne compasso e girato la mano, fece un tondo sì pari di sesto e di profilo che fu a vederlo una maraviglia. Ciò fatto, ghignando disse al cortigiano: «Eccovi il di segno». Colui, come beffato, disse: «Ho io a avere altro disegno che questo?». «Assai e pur troppo è questo, - rispose Giotto - mandatelo insieme con gl'altri e vedrete se sarà conosciuto». Il mandato, vedendo non potere altro avere, si partì da lui assai male sodisfatto, dubitando non essere uc[c]ellato. Tuttavia, mandando al Papa gl'altri disegni et i nomi di chi gli aveva fatti, mandò anco quel di Giotto, raccontando il modo che aveva tenuto nel fare il suo tondo senza muovere il braccio e senza seste. Onde il Papa e molti cortigiani intendenti conobbero per ciò quanto Giotto avanzasse d'eccellenza tutti gl'altri pittori del suo tempo. Divolgatasi poi questa cosa, ne nacque il proverbio che ancora è in uso dirsi agl'uomini di grossa pasta: Tu sei più tondo che l'O di Giotto. Il qual proverbio non solo per lo caso donde nacque si può dir bello, ma molto più per lo suo significato, che consiste nell'ambiguo, pigliandosi tondo in Toscana, oltre alla figura circolare perfetta, per tardità e grossezza d'ingegno.

the empty-headed joke reported by Vasari, as is generally assumed. But to the extent that Giotto felt sure the pope would understand his message, and award him the commission, I think commentators have failed to perceive the deeper and greater significance, not only of the gesture, but of the circle itself, in the sense that Giotto surely did intend: drawn by hand, the perfect circle, which Dante defined in the last Canto of *Paradiso* as God's image of man, represented the entire cosmos, and in this case the limitless capacity of the artist who could encompass it in a single outline.<sup>17</sup> One image that Giotto surely had in mind was the great medieval tradition of the creator of all things conceived as *Deus artifex*, or God the

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<sup>17</sup> For a recent discussion of the O of Giotto as a humorous anecdote, see Ladis 1986. Barolsky 1990, 134-7, discusses the story and understands the significance of the O as the "symbol of divine perfection, the traditional symbol for the wholeness of God"; but he dismisses the anecdote as an ex post facto elaboration by Vasari of Michelangelo's *impresa* and theory of art (Vasari himself makes no such connection).

<sup>18</sup> *Paradiso* XXX, 127-45:

That circling which, thus begotten, appeared in Thee as reflected light, when my eyes had dwelt on it for a time, seemed to me depicted with our image within itself and in its own color, wherefore my sight was entirely set upon it.

As is the geometer who wholly applies himself to measure the circle, and finds not, in pondering, the principle of which he is in need, such was I at that new sight. I wished to see how the image conformed to the circle and how it has its place therein; but my own wings were not sufficient for that, save that my mind was mitted by a flash wherein its wish came to it. Here power failed the lofty phantasy; but already my desire and my will were revolved, like a wheel that is evenly moved, by the Love which moves the sun and the other stars.

Quella circolazion che si concetta  
pareva in te come lume riflesso,  
da li occhi miei alquanto circunspetta,  
  
dentro da sé, del suo colore stesso,  
mi parve pinta de la nostra effige:  
per che 'l mio viso in lei tutto era messo.  
  
Qual è 'l geomètra che tutto s'affige  
per misurar lo cerchio, e non ritrova,  
pensando, quel principio ond' elli indige,  
  
tal era io a quella vista nova:  
veder voleva come si convenne  
l'imago al cerchio e come vi s'indova;  
  
ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne:  
se non che la mia mente fu percossa  
da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne.  
  
A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;  
ma già volgeva il mio disio e 'l velle,  
sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa,  
  
l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.

Geometer, who first creates heaven and earth—*In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram.* (Gen. 1:1)—and then turns chaos into order by circumscribing it with a compass (**Fig. 13**).<sup>19</sup>

The quasi-mystic associations with the hand of the skilled artist have a long and illustrious history, especially in the context of drawing. Michelangelo's uncanny skill is illustrated by Condivi's story about Michelangelo's display of precocious genius in his response to a representative of a Medici cardinal, who learned he had been duped by a marble putto the juvenile artist had made and sold to him as an antique: To this courier's sly request to be shown something else, Michelangelo in effect confessed proudly to the crime by drawing a hand "with such skill that the gentleman was astonished."<sup>20</sup> As with Giotto the painter, here with Michelangelo the sculptor, the line and the hand that made it become the supreme demonstration of extra-ordinary physical dexterity and intellectual acumen. There are certain drawings of hands by Michelangelo that have been related to this story (**Figs. 14, 15**), one holding a book, the other with the index finger extended. The latter might be a kind of autographical self-portrait, since a similar hand appears in a portrait of the master attributed to Jacopino del Conte (**Fig. 16**).<sup>21</sup> In another astonishing drawing, Michelangelo seems to have drawn his own right hand drawing his left hand grasping what seems to be fold of drapery—strikingly similar to the hand of Jesus holding the perizoma in the newly discovered first version of his figure of Christ in *S. Maria sopra Minerva* (**Figs. 17, 18, 19**).<sup>22</sup> This association may be seen to have more than purely visual significance when one recalls the report of one of Michelangelo's followers, Raffaello da Montelupo, that although the master was left-handed he did everything with his right hand, except actions of force.<sup>23</sup> The right hand in the drawing may be a clever deceit done from a mirror reflection of the left, but more likely it is a demonstration of the creative mnemonic "power" of that preternaturally gifted right. The right hand shown here in the act of creation articulates explicitly an important aspect of the relationship between drawing and sculpting in Michelangelo's thought, since one of his great innovations was a graphic mode of creating form that

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<sup>19</sup> On this image and the theme see Lowden 2000, I, 47-9; Friedman 1974; Guest 1995, frontispiece, p. 54. The overlapping theme of *Deus Geometra* has been studied by Ohly 1982.

<sup>20</sup> Condivi 1976, 21. "Ma egli non avendo che mostrare, prese una penna (perciocchè in quel tempo il lapis non era in uso) e con tal leggiadria gli dipinse una mano, che ne restò stupefatto," Condivi 1938, 51.

<sup>21</sup> Perrig 1991, 40f.

<sup>22</sup> Danesi Squarzina, ed., 2001, 246-51; on the attribution of this famous and much-discussed drawing, see Tolnay in *Le Cabinet* 1967, 24f.

<sup>23</sup> "Qui si può metere ancora come io Disegno con la mano manca, e una volta sendo a Roma a disegnare alarco di Trasi da Coloseo, passò Michelagnolo e fra Bastiano del Piombo, si fermarono a vedere, e perchè luno e laltro era mancino naturale, inperò non facevao niente con la mancina salvo le cose di forza, e stetono un pezzo a vedermi, maravigliandosi forte; cosa che forse non à mai fatto nisuno di questa dua arte, che si sapia." Gaye 1968, III, 583; cited by Perrig 1991, 123 n. 35.

duplicated the parallel striations scraped into the stone by the toothed chisel.<sup>24</sup> The idea of the hand of the artist creating the hand of the Savior recalls Michelangelo's ironic self-parody in a sketch he drew to accompany a famous poem in which he laments his inadequacy to represent the face of God in the Sistine ceiling (**Figs. 20, 21**).<sup>25</sup> Michelangelo also contributed to the graphic debate by noting that the straight lines drawn by Apelles and Protogenese were inadequate demonstrations of virtuosity. They "might have been made by anyone skilled in drawing; the real test of artistry lies in making images: he took a pencil to paper and starting from the tip of a toe, drew the contour of a half figure, observing that if someone could made the other half equally well, he would judge him superior to the ancients; and his half was so beautiful that one could say only, it was his [i.e., unmatched]."<sup>26</sup> The engraver's burin was commonly thought of as a sculpting tool, and Mellan often signed his work accordingly, *sculpsit*, so that the *ex uno / una* theme was in fact a common denominator between the two media. Mellan may have been conscious of the divine origin of his art in a purely technical sense from the remarkable homology of the Latin word(s) for heaven and the engraver's burin, *caelum*, deriving respectively from the Greek word for sky and the Latin verb to incise. This providential verbal and conceptual coincidence found its exact graphic equivalent in Mellan's engraving of the *Holy Face*.<sup>27</sup>

These salient marks of membership in the pantheon of supernal draftsmanship also came together in the founding father of the Northern Renaissance tradition. Albrecht Dürer was said to have drawn a circle free-hand that was shown to be perfect when proofed by a compass, after which, he took a step beyond Giotto by marking a dot, again free-hand, at the exact center. On another occasion he was brought a portion of a crucifix, from which he was able to carve the complete figure matching perfectly the proportions of the original—therefore surpassing Michelangelo's feat of drawing.<sup>28</sup> And Dürer used his own hand to study its ideal proportions (**Fig. 22**). Michelangelo's hand may in turn have been at the

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<sup>24</sup> On Michelangelo's "graphic" mode in drawing and sculpting, see the article by my former student Martha Dunkelmann 1980a, b.

<sup>25</sup> On this drawing and its significance (including the reference to the underdrawing of the face of God in the Creation of the Sun and Moon, Fig. 21, see Lavin 1993, 36, 58, 220.

<sup>26</sup> Ritrouandomi un giorno a ragionar seco delle pitture antiche et dicendo di quella tauola di Protogene, doue furono fatte quelle linee così mirabile da lui et da Apelle, lui mi rispose, che non gli pareua gran cosa; et la ragione era, che l'arebbe potuto fare uno che non fosse stato pittore, ma solamene esercitato in tirar linee. Et preso in mano un lapis, comincio sopra un fogglio da un dito di un piede; et andando al'insu senza leuar mai il lapis di su la carta, fece un dintorno di una meza figura et disse: "Se adesso uenisse uno che facesse laltro mezo che stesse bene, io giudicarei che fosse meglio maestro di quelli"; et quel mezo dintorno che lui fece, io non ne dirro altro se non che era di sua mano, che giudico debbia bastare per testimonianza della sua bellezza. (Frey 1923-30, II, 64)

<sup>27</sup> On *caelum* as pun, see Cullers 1988, 39f.

<sup>28</sup> Hampe 1928, 5.

origin of the great florescence of the art and theory of draftsmanship in the Netherlands in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, which was one of the wellsprings of Mellan's inspiration.<sup>29</sup> The key figure in this development was Hendrick Goltzius, who gave rise to a veritable cult of the artist's hand as a quasi-divine instrument of creation and brought draftsmanship, *per se*, to its apogee as a "fine" art. The phenomenon again begins with an episode in the artist's life as told by van Mander. The biographer reports that the spirited boy was "so attracted to fire that when he was a year or so old and could walk by himself, he fell into the fire with his face over a pan of boiling oil and burned both hands in the red-hot coals, which his mother carefully tried to heal with splints, ointments and other things, and he was in much pain day and night, until a know-all female neighbor removed the splints saying that she could do better, she then bound only the *right* hand in a cloth on account of which the tendons of that hand grew together with the consequence that throughout his life he could never completely open that hand."<sup>30</sup> A number of drawings showing variously gnarled right hands have been related to this story (**Fig. 23**).<sup>31</sup> Certain of the drawings recall those of Michelangelo (including the one shown holding a book), and the Italian connection is reinforced by one that virtually duplicates a drawing by Bronzino that reappears in one of his paintings (**Figs. 24, 25**).<sup>32</sup> The precedence of Goltzius is important in our context for several reasons. In one of the drawings (**Fig. 26**) the hand is shown in isolation, and not as the end of the arm but as an independent, self-contained image, inscribed with the date, 1588, and Goltzius's autograph, which pointedly combines his signature as engraver's monogram and as his name in letters.<sup>33</sup> This ingenious composite monogram-signature is profoundly significant because it epitomizes Goltzius's self-identification as both a professional engraver and a creative artist whose *ingegno* incorporates both the technical and the conceptual ideal of *Disegno*—to use the formal terminology of the great Italian theorists, then much in vogue in the Netherlands. The composite signature, combining letters of the alphabet as design and letters as text, is what might be called the visio-verbal equivalent of the drawing

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<sup>29</sup> I am here indebted to the various contributions by Walter S. Melion on the theory and practice of Netherlandish drawing in this period: Melion 1989, 1992, 1993, 1995. After this essay was completed I became aware of a full and excellent discussion of the mystique of the artist's hand with respect to Goltzius and the tradition of calligraphy, in an unpublished MA thesis at the University of Hamburg by Annette Krüger (2001); I am indebted to Ms Krüger for providing me with a copy of her work. See also Leeftland 2003, 244-8.

<sup>30</sup> Van Mander 1994-9, I, 386.

<sup>31</sup> Reznick 1961, 452f., No. 432, pl. 89. It is a matter of conjecture, no doubt deliberately so, how such drawings were made, as demonstrations either of perfect ambidexterity or visual memory; a mirror (Melion 1993, 72) would have been useless.

<sup>32</sup> Goldner 1990.

<sup>33</sup> Reznick 1961, 305f., No. 165, pl. 86. Goltzius used the same graphic technique and the same signature in his drawing of Mercury, inventor of the arts, dated 1587 (see h (**Fig. 30**); Reznick 1961, 280, N. 119, pl. 75).

itself, for the image of the hand (*Disegno*) is created exclusively in the linear technique (*disegno*) of the engraver. It is an early exemplar of what can only be described as a new category of artwork invented by Goltzius: large, independent displays of draughtsmanly virtuosity—painting-like in conception, scale and chiaroscuro effect, but executed exclusively with the pen in the engraver’s technique of pure lines, parallel, cross-hatched, and reduced to dots as stippling. Here minimal means—lines and dots—are used to achieve maximum effect, and drawings become true “works of art,” sometimes monumental in scale, engendering their own, self-conscious vocabulary: *teyckenconst* and *pen-wercken*.<sup>34</sup> It is important to bear in mind that these proud and deliberately ostentatious works were the result of austere, painstaking, self-disciplined renunciation. The same considerations were important to Mellan, who also thought of himself as a painter and included that fact with his signature on the *Holy Face*, where his name is recorded in a similar, composite way: G.(allus) P.(inxit) et F.(ecit).

One further point must be emphasized for a full understanding of the meaning the great Dutch master must have held for Mellan. Goltzius’s hand as he portrays it in the drawing forms a particular image: with the thumb and bent forefinger separated, while the others are fused together as a single digit, the hand constitutes a triune instrument of manipulation whose powerful muscles and tendons fairly burst with the energy of creation. Goltzius must have felt his childhood agony as a sort of trial by fire, with sacrificial, not to say sacramental associations: he displayed on a wall in his house a monumental depiction of the Roman hero Mucius Scaevola who sacrificed his hand in an altar fire as a burnt offering to save his people.<sup>35</sup> The work was grisaille, suggestive of an ancient historical relief, and presumably a grandiose display of his virtuoso “pen-work.” In this sense, too, it served as a personal manifesto of the artist: as an instrument of creation, Goltzius’s mangled hand was a heaven-sent blessing in disguise. In fact, the configuration strikingly recalls that of the distorted hand of the medieval Pantocrator (**Fig. 27**), which Dürer had adopted for his own icon of himself.<sup>36</sup> It can be no accident that Goltzius’s drawing was understood in precisely this way by an unknown engraver of the period who copied it, placed it on a pillow as if it were a holy relic, and added an inscription that defines the hand as a Trinitarian instrument to praise God (**Fig. 28**):

MEA DEXTERA CHRISTI

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<sup>34</sup> On Goltzius’s monumental “pen-works,” see the publications of Melion, note 29 above, and Nichols 1992.

<sup>35</sup> Van Mander 1994-9, I, 394-7, Melion 1993, 70.

Ut mea tres tangens  
 Benedixit dextera Reges:  
 Sic haec sculpa trium  
 Tetigit quae corpora Regum  
 Te per me semper bene  
 Dicet, teque beab[t]if.

(My right Hand of Christ. Just as my right hand has blessed three kings by touching them, so this burin which has touched the bodies of the three kings, will always bless and beatify you through me.)<sup>37</sup>

The three kings refer to Goltzius's royal patrons (William V of Bavaria, Philip II, and Rudolf II), the Magi, and the triune fingers of the hand that made the engraving. The image and the text refer explicitly to the ancient tradition of the artist's creativity as divinely inspired, his hand identified with the *dextera dei*, particularly as it represents the passion: in a late medieval Passional illustration of the Arma Christi, the right hand of god appears between Christ at the beginning of the passion in the Garden of Olivette, and at the end of the passion in the Veronica (**Fig. 29**).<sup>38</sup> It is also important to bear in mind when trying to comprehend the significance of Goltzius's drawing and its effect on the mind of the viewer, that it poses an imponderable mystery: it is the *right* hand, and is therefore, like the hand of God, *achieropoetos*.

From a technical point of view, Mellan owes to Goltzius above all his use of undulating, parallel lines that swell and diminish in thickness as they move to create form. With rigid, exacting discipline, constraining virtually infinite flexibility within the narrowest limits he could conceive, Goltzius's hand manipulated the quill pen into the draftsman's equivalent of the painter's brush (**Fig. 30**). Mellan surely grasped from Goltzius the richness of the technique and had before he left Rome to return to Paris in 1636, developed it to the point of using exclusively parallel lines to achieve, with absolute efficiency, effects of great luminosity, continuity, elegance, and efficiency (**Fig. 31**).<sup>39</sup> In the same year, Mellan

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<sup>36</sup> The mosaic at Daphne was cited in relation to Dürer's self-portrait by Koerner 1993, 98.

<sup>37</sup> Reznicek 1961, 306. Never reproduced heretofore, as far as I know, the print seems to reflect an episode in which Goltzius, to prove his identity, displayed his crippled hand with a kerchief and his monogram: Goltzius "held out his crippled right hand and also showed ... his handkerchief which was marked with the monogram which is on his prints, that is H and G entwined" (Van Mander 1994-9, I, 393, Melion 1993, 67). The poem lacks the final verse required by the form (an observation for which I am indebted to the late Professor John D'Arms)—perhaps for lack of space, but perhaps deliberately, like the rest of the body, for the viewer to ponder.

<sup>38</sup> On the *Dextera Dei* see Kirschbaum II, cols. 211-4; on the Passional, Matejcek 1922.

<sup>39</sup> See the magisterial catalogue of Mellan's Roman work by Ficacci 1989. On the development of Mellan's graphic technique and its history see also the observations of the engraver Sgard 1957, and Kemp 1994.

made his famous engraved maps of the moon, a pioneering accomplishment in the history of scientific illustration and an astonishing display of celestial chiaroscuro, executed *ex una linea* in the sense that it consists entirely of parallel horizontal lines (Fig. 32).<sup>40</sup> But the technique was not truly minimal since it required a multiplicity of lines to create form. Mellan found a way to further simplification in a different, though related domain, that of cursive script in which single, continuous lines are used to create visual meaning in the form of words.<sup>41</sup> Not surprisingly, the Dutch writing masters of Goltzius's time were also developing pure linearity into a high art form. Calligraphy became the subject of treatises both practical and theoretical, in which the hand of the draughtsman, shown actually manipulating the pen (to illustrate the proper position), played a leading role (Fig. 33). Among the ways in which the penmen exalted the loftiness of their art (as professionals they were scribes and teachers) was to evoke the same philosophical concepts that animated the theoreticians of painting, sculpture, and architecture, as when David Roelands inscribes a bilaterally symmetrical illustration of the practise and principles of his work with the mottos *ARTEM TRIA PERFICIVNT* and *Ingenium, Doctrina, Exercitatio*, the trivium of art theory (Fig. 34), 1616). One of the most important of these art-writers was Jan van den Velde who defined his relation to the classical tradition by adopting as his signature a device that, in effect, combined in symmetrical arrangements of circles and ovals Giotto's "O" with the triple superimposed lines of Apelles and Protogenese (Figs. 35, 36).<sup>42</sup> It must be emphasized that these draftsmen were not also engravers,<sup>43</sup> but the Trinitarian common denominator between their highly personalized *tours de force* and Goltzius's Christ-like hand cannot be coincidental and must have been obvious to Mellan as well. Van den Velde, in particular, carried the penmanship tradition an important step further by actually delineating, in a floridly calligraphic style, i.e., one continuous line that loops round and about itself with perfect regularity, an image that suggests simultaneously an intricate mariner's knot and an East-Indiaman under full sail; Van

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<sup>40</sup> On the moon maps, see Pr aud in Pr aud and Brejon de Lavergn e 1988, Nos. 145-8, 115-9; Jaff  1990. Galileo's telescopic observations of the moon were central to current theological debates in Rome, especially about the Virgin Mary (see Ostrow 1996, and Reeves 1997, 138-83).

<sup>41</sup> On the fluorescence of Dutch calligraphy see Emmens 1963, Broos 1971, Croiset van Uchelen 1976, Worthen 1993; its importance for Goltzius has been explored by Melion (n. 29 above); Mellan's technique has been related to this tradition by Kemp 1994.

<sup>42</sup> Van den Velde drew a perfect circle (Figs. 35), in a volume dedicated to a friend, who added the inscription noting that it was done without a compass: "desen circul is gemaect van Jan de Velde, sonder passer." Ritter van Rappard 1856, 91; see Broos 1971, 163.

<sup>43</sup> The leading engraver of these works of calligraphy was Simon Frisius, concerning whom see Luijten 1993, 482f., no. 171; de Jongh and Luijten 1997, 141-4.

den Velde made the drawing for an official document for the Admiralty in Rotterdam, and later also had it engraved for his treatise on calligraphy (**Fig. 37**).<sup>44</sup>

A link between this calligraphic tradition and the theological conceit of Mellan's print expressing the nature of the Trinity in words and the image of a single line, is offered by an emblem book published in 1640 to commemorate the centennial of the establishment of the Jesuit order. (**Fig. 38**) Here the ideology of the Jesuits' pedagogical activity is illustrated by an image in which the student's hand is guided by the teacher's to form the single letter M with three legs, as an illustration of the triune God: "The Primary lesson of the Christian Faith: One God, in three persons; *Sic trinus & vnus Discitur*" (Thus three and one is divided).<sup>45</sup>

### Spiral

Claude Mellan fused these related but distinct graphic traditions into still another new art form, in which one continuous line, undulating, swelling, contracting, and never overlapping itself, creates a fully developed "picture." In doing so, he cross-bred this idea with one from still another related but distinct context, in which the spiral is the key figure. Among the countless permutations of "The Mystic Spiral,"<sup>46</sup> two are especially germane here. The most familiar and highly charged spiral form in the Christian tradition is that of the ancient near eastern version of the pyramid (**Fig. 39**), the Tower of Babel: its endless gyrations came to symbolize the blasphemy of attempting to reach God, who destroyed it and the communality of those who built it (**Fig. 40**).<sup>47</sup> The spiral form as such did not appear until around 1400, but in works of biblical typology the Tower was canonically associated with two fundamental New Testament antitypes: the Descent of the Holy Spirit at which, through the gift of tongues to the Virgin and apostles, God transmitted the wisdom and unity of faith to all humanity (**Fig. 41**); and Christ confuting the pagan astronomers and dialecticians (**Fig. 42**).<sup>48</sup> The antitypes might even be merged, rather than

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<sup>44</sup> Broos 1971, 161f.

<sup>45</sup> Bollandus 1640, p. 298. The emblem is discussed by Sherman 1999, 253-5; I am indebted to Peter M. Luckehart for calling this important precedent to my attention.

<sup>46</sup> Purce 1974. The literature on the spiral is immense; the following have been helpful here: Huntley 1970, Hartmann and Misslin 1985, Manna 1988, Hocke 1987, Lexikon 1987-94, VI, cols. 804f.

<sup>47</sup> On the Tower of Babel as language, Borst 1957-63, Enciclopedia 1991ff., II, 820-7; as architecture, Reallexikon 1937ff., I, cols. 1315-21; Minkowski 1991, Matsche et al 1991, Wegener 1995.

<sup>48</sup> The traditional antithesis between blasphemous ascent and divine descent was epitomized in the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Lutz and Perdrizet 1907-9, 70, 151f., 172, 230, ill. 3, Breitenbach 1930, 242-4), and the *Biblia pauperum* (Cornell 1925, 99, 291). In some cases the image of Christ replaces the usual Dove of the Holy Spirit in the Descent, and appears atop the Tower, to illustrate the recuperation in the single voice of the Savior from the babel of tongues that was God's punishment for the builders' sacrilege (Fig. 31). The Tower-Paganism theme (see

simply juxtaposed, as when the young Jesus disputing with the doctors in the Temple was shown seated atop a spiral throne, dispensing his inspiring and irrefutable message (**Fig. 43**).<sup>49</sup>

The most famous instance of this conflation of the millennial tradition of Old Testament - New Testament fulfillment typology with respect to the assimilation and dispensation of Divine Wisdom was the spire designed 1651-2 by Borromini for his church of Sant'Ivo, the chapel of the Rome university called "La Sapienza" (**Fig. 44**). The themes of the Descent of the Holy Spirit and Christ as disperser of the New Law were relevant for a teaching institution governed by the ecclesiastical jurists, the Consistoral Advocates, and a church dedicated to the patron saint of lawyers. But it was not a foregone conclusion that the tower have a spiral form. Although the Christian church was commonly identified as an anti-Babel construction, except for the limited precedent of the painting by Butinone, which Borromini can hardly have known, the spiral tower itself had never before been associated in a positive way with the dispensation of Divine Wisdom.<sup>50</sup> In fact, in the closest precedent by far for Borromini's church design, the Babel tower depicted in the frontispiece of a Pentecost sermon delivered by a student at the Jesuit seminary in Rome in 1637, the spire is stepped, not spiroid (**Fig. 45**).<sup>51</sup> This feature of the design must surely have been Borromini's contribution, and I suspect it was inspired from other, quite distinct traditions, to which Mellan's *Holy Face*, made two years earlier, was also related. We know that Mellan was intimately familiar with the Sapienza and its program before he left Rome to return to France in 1636. In 1634 he, too, had designed a frontispiece for one of the Pentecost sermons delivered by students.<sup>52</sup>

It seems evident that the thought underlying Borromini's innovative conflation of the spiral Babel tower with the idea of Divine Wisdom lay in a new meaning attributed to its traditional spiral form: the true, rather than the false, spiral became the path both to and from the Godhead. In this sense Heaven and

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Fig. 32) occurs in the Bible moralisée: "Here the pagans make the tower of Babel against the commandment of God, and God strikes them down and turns their work to nothing." – "That the pagans began the tower of Babel against God's commandment signifies the astronomers and the dialecticians who make false proofs against the will of Jesus Christ, and He turns their work to nothing and blinds them and strikes them" (Bible 1995, fol. 3v., 57) .

<sup>49</sup> The relationship between the painting by Butinone and the Babel tradition was first noted by Minkowski 1960, p. 27, fig. 45 (Minkowski 1991, 140, fig. 79); see also Ost 1967, 133, who refers to the spire on which Jesus sits as the *sedes sapientiae*.

<sup>50</sup> On the Church as Anti-Babel, see Borst 1957-63, IV, 2031 n. 445; Ost 1967, 130ff., Rice 2000, 259.

<sup>51</sup> We owe this important contribution to Rice 2000 who, however, does not take note of the spiral deficiency. Connors (1996, 673, 682) observes that in Borromini's plan the spire is not a true spiral, but constructed by connecting semi-circles drawn alternately from a fixed and a displaced center. Connors suggested that the purpose was *l'inganno dell'occhio*; I suspect, rather, that the chief motive was to simplify the geometry and thus facilitate construction of the ramp.

<sup>52</sup> Rice 2000, 260, fig. 6.

Earth may be said to meet through the spiral, precisely the meaning of a spiral diagram representing the cosmos in Robert Fludd's great compendium of mystical philosophy, published in 1617 (**Fig. 46**). Twenty-two gires conjoin Heaven and Earth in Fludd's representation, which the caption explains as illustrating "the ascent of the soul from the sensible things of the world to unity . . . , beginning from earth and rising to God, that is, from multitude to unity."<sup>53</sup> Both the diagram and its meaning are astonishing prefigurations of Mellan's spiral line and its accompanying inscription, where humanity and divinity meet. The same may be said of Borromini's tower and with respect to vertical ascent, both works may also be said to rival in visual terms Horace's famous verbal monument, "more lofty than the pyramid." This way of understanding the spiral, and the *Bible moralisée* tradition in which the astronomical and disputational aspirations of the Babel tower were fulfilled in Christ, seem implicit in the inscription "Sapientia Babilonia" on a contemporary sketch of Borromini's tower.<sup>54</sup> It should also be recalled in this context that Mellan was a good friend and portraitist of some of the major scientific and philosophical thinkers of his day, notably Peiresc and Gassendi.<sup>55</sup> Mellan made the moon maps at their behest and he may well have been aware of such major enterprises as that of Robert Fludd. In any case, it seems clear that the conceptual innovation of Borromini's tower lay in its conflation of the two traditionally contrasting but here complementary notions of ascent and descent, aspiration and inspiration—a coincidence of opposites that had its closest precedence, as we shall see, in Mellan's engraving of Christ's own image. Here, as in Mellan's engraving, the relationship between the Eucharist, the idea of the veil, and the God hidden beneath the human image of Christ perceived by the worshipper, become one—the one referred to in the first inscription, and the "no—other" referred to in the second inscription, which I suspect alludes to a subsequent phrase of Isaiah, 45, 18: I am the LORD; and there is none else. (*Ego Dominus, et non est alius.*) There is, however, another sense in which the hymn and Mellan's engraving coincide to express the meaning exegetical tradition attached to God's demurral to show himself other than as the *Deus absconditus*. Philo of Alexandria is the point of departure of this tradition. Our capacity to know God only indirectly, from his derived manifestations, implies that our desire is perpetual and that he is inexhaustible; and precisely this pursuit, ever closer and never arriving, in itself provides the highest and most vital proof possible, that is, the experience of the Infinite and the Transcendent. For Gregory of Nyssa, in whom the tradition reaches its greatest flowering, he who wishes to see God sees the object of his desire in the perpetual pursuit, and contemplation of his face consists in the continuous progress

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<sup>53</sup> quomodò anima ascendat spirali ascensu à rebus mundi sensibilibus ad unitatem . . . ; incipiendo à terra, atque sursum ascendendo ad Deum, hoc est, à multitudine ad unitatem (Fludd 1617, 218); see Heninger 1977, 164f..

<sup>54</sup> Ost 1967, 133; Connors 1996, 676; Rice 2000, 259.

<sup>55</sup> On Mellan's intellectual circle see Pr  aud in Pr  aud and Brejon de Lavergn  e 1988, 105-42, Sgard 1957, 312-40.

toward him. In this sense, too, Mellan visualized the fundamental paradox of Christian faith in the matter of knowing the occult God. The uninterrupted and endless convolutions of Mellan's spiral line gave shape to the eternal aspiration expressed in the hymn to believe, hope, and love; and to perceive in this endless search God's very nature, now veiled in Jesus' context in which the endless spiral line reverses and converts the significance of the Tower of Babel, whose very infinitude constituted the futility and arrogance of the Babylonian attempt to reach God. This same infinitude becomes an index of true divinity when converted to the humble Christian's understanding, acceptance, and perseverance in the unending effort to achieve perfection. This paradoxical realization lay at the very heart of Christian tradition concerning God and man's capacity to know him in this world and in the mystery of his incarnation in Christ. The point of departure was in the convergence of two Old Testament formulations of God's nature. In Exodus 33, 20, 23, the Lord refuses to show his face to Moses and declares that he can be seen only in passing and in his posterior parts: 20 "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live"; 23 "And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen." The second formulation is the famous passage describing the hidden God in Isaiah 45, 15: "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." (*Vere tu es Deus absconditus, Deus Israël salvator.*)

From early Christian times, especially by St. Augustine, the first passage has been taken to refer to nature itself and all creation, behind which those who have eyes, i.e., faith, to see may discern the hand of God, and Isaiah's declaration has been understood as a precognition of the transubstantiation that takes place at the Eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>56</sup> These two modes or routes to knowing God and ultimately to salvation may be said to converge in the *Vera Icona*, the image of Christ left miraculously impressed on Veronica's veil. The veil itself thus becomes a special case of the natural world behind which God is hidden, special because it is the very image of the unique man in whom God's word became incarnate, and special because the suffering visage is the visible expression of that one man's sacrifice which, in the form of the Eucharist, offered redemption to all humanity. The coincidence of the paper and the veil, which reveals and obscures an underlying support, the absolute transparency of the design, the two-level inscriptions that refer to the incarnate deity, the design, and the artist—in all these ways, Mellan's engraving evokes the "impression" made on the Veronica and on men's souls by God's hidden mode of manifesting himself to those of his creatures who "see."<sup>57</sup> While many of these visual and ideological

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<sup>56</sup> I have considered the hidden or occult God in two papers dealing with Caravaggio and Georges de la Tour (Lavin 2000, 2001). The theme has been discussed in relation to Pascal by Texier 1988, and to Philippe de Champaigne's Veronica images by Marin 1995, and Armogathe and Coquery in Bonfait and MacGregor, 2000, 17-25, 174-5. It is interesting that Augustine discusses the subject in his treatise on the Trinity (Bk. II, Ch. 17), which he identifies as the Creator.

themes are traditional, Mellan's conflation of them into a new kind of Vera Icona is indeed unique. The uncanny merger of lucidity and profundity in a mystical reality is matched only in Blaise Pascal's equally obsessive concern with the conundrum of the deity both hidden and revealed by a veil. Since Pascal was only twenty-nine (b. 1623) when Mellan made his engraving in 1649, it would be difficult, though not impossible, to suppose that Pascal's thoughts were either formulated or known to Mellan. But there is every possibility that Mellan was independently aware of one formulation of the theme that is perhaps the closest verbal approximation to the effect and sense of his engraving, and that certainly affected Pascal, as well. This was a hymn recited in the office celebrated by the nuns of the abbey of Port-Royal on the Feast of the Sacrament, to commemorate their accreditation as the Daughters of the Holy Sacrament in 1647:

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas  
 Quae sub his figuris vere latitas . . .  
 Credo quidquid dixit Dei filius . . .  
 In cruce latebat sola Deitas  
 At his latet simul et humanitas  
 Ambo tamen credens atque confidens . . .  
 Fac me tibi semper magis credere,  
 In te spem habere, te diligere . . .  
 Jesu quem velatum nunc aspicio . . .<sup>58</sup>

(I adore you devoutly, hidden Deity,  
 Who truly hide beneath these features . . .  
 I believe whatever the son of God declared . . .  
 The Deity was hidden alone on the cross  
 But there was hidden also humanity  
 Both believing and confident . . .  
 Make me believe ever more in you,  
 Have hope in you, love you . . .  
 Jesus whom now veiled I see . . .)

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<sup>57</sup> The traditional metaphor of God's image "impressed" and "engraved" on nature or the soul has been perceptively related to Mellan's print by Coquery in Bonfait and MacGregor, 2000, 170-3.

Mellan's *Holy Face*, finally, is conceptually and technically indebted to another very similar formulation of a very similar theme from a Flemish engraver of an equally profound but less grandiloquent stamp, Crispijn De Passe the Elder. In 1631 De Passe issued a suite of engravings representing the passion of Christ, in the form of beautiful angels sadly displaying the Arma Christi, the instruments of the Passion. The suite has a frontispiece signed and dated by De Passe, who describes himself as *sexuagenarius* to emphasize the extraordinary feat of conception, skill and dedication the work entailed (**Figs. 47, 48**).<sup>59</sup> The trophy held by the angel in the frontispiece is indeed a wonderment: a framed, hemispherical mirror that is ambiguously either convex or concave, so that the spiral may rise or descend but does not distort the central image of the Man of Sorrows. The pathetically enthroned Savior is engulfed in darkness but faintly visible by the light of a single torch—once again, *Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem*. The enigma here is the paradox of Christ's humiliating personal sacrifice, which triumphs over death for all humanity; and the speculum is the same as that reflected in the title, which adopts Paul's mirror metaphor to define this image as well as the series as a whole: SPECVLVM PASSIONIS CHRISTI SALVATORIS MVNDI. Except for certain areas modeled by crosshatching, the speculum and the image it contains are created by one continuous spiral line that ends or originates precisely at the point where divine creation and human procreation meet, the genitalia. The same point was made in an illustration in the Occult Philosophy of Agrippa of Nettesheim (1533), where the familiar ideal of the Four Square Man, often applied to Christ, is illustrated by a figure inscribed in a square, the diagonals of which meet at the groin (**Fig. 49**).<sup>60</sup> De Passe's spiral line describes in graphic terms the generative potency of Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection, which Maarten van Heemskerck had illustrated "naturally" in his conception of the ithyphallic Man of Sorrows (**Fig. 50**).<sup>61</sup> In Mellan's hand the spiral line is isolated and purified, and De Passe's metaphor of the engraved image as the glass, the eye of God that reflects and reveals but does not distort reality—is transferred to the paper itself, which becomes far more than a metaphor, a kind of existential equivalent of the transparent veil of the Volto Santo.

In order to comprehend other distinguishing features of Mellan's work one must consider how it was constructed, which I suspect must have been influenced in part by Agrippa. Mellan first found the

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<sup>58</sup> The office was cited by Sellier 1966, 69, as one of the important inspirations for Pascal's ideas on the hidden God. The anniversary of the accreditation a decade later, in 1656, was the occasion for Pascal's most inspired disquisition on the hidden God, a famous letter to Mlle. Charlotte de Roannez, who intended to join the order.

<sup>59</sup> De Passe 1631, frontispiece; Hollstein 1949-, XVI, 21-3, No. 57ad.

<sup>60</sup> The same is true of Agrippa's image of the man inscribed in a circle; see Heninger 1977, 145-7. The symbolism of these images, some of which are ithyphallic, in relation to the tradition of the ideally proportioned "Vitruvian Man" inscribed in a circle and /or square, has been studied in an exemplary essay by Lücke 1991.

center of the sheet by drawing diagonals from the corners (**Fig. 51, A**). The point of intersection determined the center of the spiral, which he took as the tip of the nose.<sup>62</sup> This geometry was based on a crucial coincidence in the Old Testament accounts of God's mode of animating the image he created of himself. The coincidence originated with the origin of humankind, when God created Adam and "breathed into his face the breath of life" (*inspiravit in faciem eius spiraculum vitae*) (Gen. 2,7).<sup>63</sup> The *spiraculum vitae* entailed a portentous conjunction of meaning and form between the Latin *spiro*—to breathe, whence God's animating *spiritus*; and *spira*, from the Greek word for coil, whence spiral, the form traditionally identified as the aspiring path between humanity and divinity, the path to Divina Sapienza associated with Christ's teaching and the Descent of the Holy Spirit. In the spire of S. Ivo b evidently assimilated into one surpassing image the spiral form of Divine Inspiration, the serpentine flames of Charity and the fiery tongues Divine Eloquence associated with the *pro bono* legal practice of the saint, and the missionary spirit that filled Christ's followers at Pentecost. The unity of the concept is clearly articulated in the blazing crown at the apex, which consists of fifteen tongues of flame (the number of followers) in five groups of three—the pentagon traditionally associated with Christ's wounds, and the all-embracing Trinity.<sup>64</sup> Essential for Mellan was that from Genesis the nose became the locus of divine inspiration and, based on other Old Testament texts, the nose was variously taken as symbolizing divine inspiration (2 Samuel 22, 9), the presence of Christ (Isaiah 2, 22), the vital human spirit (Job 27, 1-4), the threatening sermon (Job 39, 20).<sup>65</sup> In two passages Job relates the nose in this sense to the

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<sup>61</sup> On the ithyphallic Man of Sorrows, see the seminal discussion by Steinberg 1996, 81-90.

<sup>62</sup> Sgard 1957, 49-58, gives an elaborate diagrammatic analysis of Mellan's print. Although Sgard carries the diagrammatic and mystical component much further than I, there are a number of important correspondences between his geometrical analysis and my own, and their relevance is underscored by the fact that my observations were independently, before I discovered Sgard's work.

<sup>63</sup> The Roman Catechism cites this passage in affirmation of the unity of body and soul and the creation of the human persona in the image of God: II. Corpore et anima unus. 362 Persona humana, ad imaginem Dei creata, simul est ens corporale et spirituale. Narratio biblica hanc realitatem sermone exprimit symbolico, cum asserit: "Formavit Dominus Deus hominem. pulverem de humo et inspiravit in nares eius spiraculum vitae, et factus est homo in animam viventem"(Gn 2,7). Totus ergo homo est a Deo volitus.

As far as I have discovered, only Jill Purce has intuited, without reference to Genesis or any other source, this fundamental point of Mellan's image: "the spiral line, winding us to the centre at the tip of Christ's nose, not only recalls the unique capacity of the sense of smell to evoke past and future—or, at the centre, to verticalize time—but as the point of breath and inspiration it refers to the linguistic connection between spiral, inspire and spirit." (1974, No. 26).

<sup>64</sup> The fifteen flames of Charity and Divine Eloquence were emphasized, but without the spiral and Trinitarian components, in the important study by Scott 1982.

<sup>65</sup> For the interpretive permutations of the nose, see Lauretus 1971, 710.

2 Samuel 22, 9: ascendit fumus de naribus eius et ignis de ore eius voravit carbones incensi sunt ab eo (There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.).

prophet's steadfast faith in God against all temptation and affliction—which is precisely why he was taken as a major Old Testament prototype of Christ suffering the passion. While lamenting that the Almighty “hath vexed my soul,” Job nevertheless cries out “the spirit of God is in my nostrils,” and “the glory of his nostrils is terrible.” Hieronymus Lauretus, actually related the “nose of the soul” to the divinity from which we draw its “interior force,” calling it the vent of faith, “spiraculum fidei.”<sup>66</sup> In another series of amazing associations Job concatenates the breath of divinity, the spiral, and the line as God’s measure of the earth. The Lord speaks to the prophet from a whirlwind (turbine) asking if he has understanding, if he knows who measured the earth by a line, and who laid its cornerstone:

Then the Lord answered Job out of a whirlwind, and said :

.....

Where wast thou when I laid up the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof.<sup>67</sup>

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Isaiah 2, 22: quiescite ergo ab homine cuius spiritus in naribus eius quia excelsus reputatus est ipse (Cease ye therefore from the man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for he is reputed high.[Douay])

Job 27, 1-4: addidit quoque Iob adsumens parabolam suam et dixit / vivit Deus qui abstulit iudicium meum et Omnipotens qui ad amaritudinem adduxit animam meam / quia donec superest halitus in me et spiritus Dei in naribus meis / non loquentur labia mea iniquitatem nec lingua mea meditabitur mendacium (Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,/ As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; / All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; / My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit).

39, 20: gloria narium eius terror (the glory of his nostrils is terrible.)

<sup>66</sup> Nares, aut nasus animae, vim ejus interiorem, qua divina haurimus, significare potest: & etiam spiraculum fidei. Lauretus 1971, 710

<sup>67</sup> Job 38, 1,4-7:

respondens autem Dominus Iob de turbine dixit

.....

ubi eras quando ponebam fundamenta terrae indica mihi si habes intellegentiam  
quis posuit mensuras eius si nosti vel quis tetendit super eam lineam  
super quo bases illius solidatae sunt aut quis dimisit lapidem angularem eius

The last phrase, *lapidem angularem*, is no less relevant since it was constantly applied to Christ as the four square man—by Albrecht Dürer, for example, who showed the suffering Man of Sorrows seated patiently on stone blocks as the frontispieces of his Passion illustrations.<sup>68</sup>

### Proportions

This metaphor of Christ's probity and steadfastness was in turn a determining factor in the underlying structure of Mellan's image, once the central point of inspiration at the tip of the nose had been established. The basic geometry of the design and the proportions of Christ's face were derived from the square formed by the top and sides of the plate, the center of which fixed the point of intersection between the eyebrows of the nose and the forehead (**Fig. 51, B**). This point in turn became the center of two concentric circles, the larger of which determined the diameter of the halo at the edges of the sheet, while the smaller circle outlined the upper part of Christ's head; the radius of this latter circle was determined by the distance from the nose point to the lower edge of the inscribed square (**Fig. 51, A-B=A<sup>1</sup>-B<sup>1</sup>**). The nose point was the center of a circle that determined the lower part of Christ's head from the outline of the forehead to the chin.

So far as I am aware, this organizational scheme is as unique as the technique. To grasp fully the subtlety, sophistication, and ultimately the meaning of the image, however, it is essential to realize that Mellan's method incorporated and combined two long and hallowed traditions for representing Christ's visage and the Veronica's Volto Santo. In depictions of the Volto Santo the center points of the rectangular format and the inner square had frequently established the upper and lower extremities of the nose (**Figs. 52, 53**).<sup>69</sup> In one particular case, the famous *Holy Face* by Jan van Eyck, which must have been one of the chief inspirations for Mellan's *Holy Face*, as it had been for Albrecht Dürer's self-portrait, both centers are combined in the same image (**Fig. 54**).<sup>70</sup> The relevance of Van Eyck's portrayal reaches well beyond its underlying structure to its underlying conception, as conveyed by the inscriptions on the version in Berlin. The signature, accompanied by the exact date, expresses the artist's personal, complete facture of this image (the painting) of the image (the Veronica) made by Him who referred to himself as the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega, borrowing the terms *primus* and

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<sup>68</sup> On Christ as the suffering four-square man, see I. Lavin, in Lavin and Lavin 2001, 57-60.

<sup>69</sup> See Morello and Wolf 2002, where similar points may be discerned in many of the images reproduced: pp. 86, 87, 117, 138, 139, 141, 142, 149, 157. Philippe de Champaigne also centered the tip of the nose in his engraving of the Veronica, Bonfait and MacGregor 2000, 173f.

<sup>70</sup> See Morello and Wolf 2002, 187f.; on the several versions of Van Eyck's Holy Face see Panofsky 1971, 430f., Wolf 1995, 173. The relationship to Dürer's self-portrait has been explored at length by Winzinger 1954, and

*novissimus*, first and last, from Paul's reference to the first man Adam, who was made a living soul, and the last Adam, who was made a vivifying spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45: *factus est primus homo Adam in animam viventem novissimus Adam in spiritum vivificantem*). Van Eyck thus placed his painting in the same, unique category as its subject, and added his ambiguous motto, "As I Can."<sup>71</sup> Mellan grasped and adapted as his own the consonance Van Eyck had defined between the nature of the image and the nature of the artist's professional and devotional challenge to himself and to his successors. In the Byzantine tradition, as reflected in the Greek painter's Manual from Mount Athos, three concentric circles provided a kind of Trinitarian structure for the holy face (Fig. 55).<sup>72</sup> Also noteworthy in the Byzantine scheme, which was widely followed in the West, is that the radiuses of the concentric circles are multiples of the length of the nose, the extremities of which coincide with the centers of Mellan's circles. These striking references to much earlier, long-standing, and independent traditions, however Mellan came to be aware of them, cannot be coincidental. Nor can it be coincidental in this respect that, as we know from Mellan's recorded thoughts about his art, he was fully aware of the tradition of Giotto's O, to which he referred as the "golden eye": "He says that the true eye is that which without difficulty puts things where they belong. He reasoned that the golden eye is that which makes a circle without a compass and marks its center point by the eye alone, which finds the middle as if by using a compass."<sup>73</sup> I have no doubt that in Mellan's mind the artist's freely drawn perfect circle with its freely and perfectly placed center—his golden eye with its perfectly centered pupil—were equated with the perfect proportions of the Holy Face.<sup>74</sup> And I have no doubt that the conflation of these traditions with each other and with the spiral line itself was central to Mellan's programmatic effort to give structure, form, and meaning to his vision.

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Koerner 1993, esp. 99-108. Winzinger's schema, which is intended to equate those two works and makes no reference to medieval tradition, differs significantly from my analysis of Van Eyck and Mellan.

<sup>71</sup> The inscriptions are transcribed in Morello and Wolf 2002, 187, and discussed by Koerner 1993, esp. 106f.

<sup>72</sup> The method described in the Manual was reconstructed by Panofsky 1982, 74-81. The text dates from the eighteenth century, but no one doubts its general validity and medieval heritage. On the Manual, see also Belting 1994, 17-19.

<sup>73</sup> "Dice che l'occhio giusto è quello che senza pena pone ai suoi luoghi le partite. Ragionava che l'occhio d'oro si chiama quello che fa un circolo senza compasso et dentro a quello vi pone il centro o ponto tutto a vista di occhio, quale vi trova il mezzo di esso come se fosse fatto con il compasso." Mellan's thoughts on engraving were recorded in a treatise by Domenico Tempesti, who worked in Paris and knew the artist (cf. Di Denaro, ed., 1994, 141). I am indebted Dr. Roswitha Stewering of Munich for calling my attention to this important passage, which I had overlooked.

<sup>74</sup> I admire Fumaroli's formulation of the meaning elicited by the organization of Mellan's design, as analyzed by Sgard 1957, "Così, l'impronta dei lineamenti del Cristo in questo singolare 'velo di Veronica' mostra sì la sua Passione, ma al di là di questa stessa Passione (e i tratti ieratici da Pantocrator che Mellan ha impresso a questo volto sofferete ne sono la dimostrazione evidente) ciò che importa è l'Ordine spirituale che il sacrificio del figlio è venuto a ricordare ai ciechi dell'anima" (in Bonfait and MacGregor 2000, 31).

The inherent schemes of proportion and design serve to augment, greatly but subtly, the uncanny effect of the head, and help to explain the fascination of Mellan's work and its challenge to subsequent emulators.<sup>75</sup> One of these was the English hermeneutical philosopher Richard Saunders, who wrote a physiognomical treatise on what he called *Metoscopie*, the study of the forehead, in which he explained the significance of moles and their distribution on the face (Figs. 56, 57). The illustration in Saunderson's 1653 edition was schematic, but in the 1671 edition he had evidently discovered Mellan's engraving and, imitating the spiral design centered at the tip of the nose, understood that it had ulterior significance. Saunders's interpretation of mole 21, already in the first edition, is astonishing in the light of what we have seen about the way Mellan constructed his *Holy Face*. Saunders says that this mole, in the center of the forehead, the focus of man's rationality, indicates another in the genitalia, the focus of man's humanity—the quintessential features of the unique creature God made in his own image.<sup>76</sup>

One final distinguishing feature of Mellan's Veronica I want to mention is the X-shaped cross inscribed in the halo, the *crux decussata*, or more commonly, the cross of St. Andrew, after the apostle who was supposed to have been martyred in this way, to avoid replicating the manner of Christ's death. The form is that of the Greek letter chi, the first letter of the name Christos, meaning the Anointed One, given to the Messiah in the bible. Mellan in adopting this form specifically refers to the crucified Jesus as the One who fulfilled the messianic promise of the Old Testament. The sign was well-known as a pre-Christian symbol that appeared frequently in the catacombs, for example, and it is discussed by Antonio Bosio in his famous treatise on the underground Christian cemeteries of Rome, published in 1632. According to Bosio the mark was thought by the experts in hieroglyphics to denote “the preparation to receive the Holy Spirit.”<sup>77</sup> Between the tip of the nose and the center of the forehead I cannot imagine a more appropriate definition of Mellan's magical *Holy Face* than “la preparazione a ricevere lo Spirito Santo.”

Bosio refers here to one of the leading Flemish polymaths of the period, Jan van Gorp (Johannes Goropius Becanus), whose philological interests included hieroglyphics and their symbolism, and whose extravagant ideas included the theory that Flemish was the oldest of all languages! The passage in

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<sup>75</sup> More or less explicit emulations of Mellan's engraving are listed by Pr aud 1988, 47. The antiquarian bookseller of Brussels, Claude van Loock, showed me what may be the most recent attempt, of particular interest in our context because the author was a professional calligrapher; inscribed: Grave  par Boucquillon / D pos    la Direction / Ex cut  par un seul Trait de Plume / Par F. Magn e, Calligraphe du Roi, Instructeur des Ecoles R gimentaires.

<sup>76</sup> Saunders 1653, p. 2; 671, p. 310 (on the latter, Roob 1997, 579).

<sup>77</sup> Bosio 1632, 636: La Lettera X, credrei parimente che significasse la Croce che chiamano Decussata; come quella, nella quale f  crocifisso S.Andrea: se bene Gorpio nelli suoi Ieroglifici, vuole che dinoti la preparazione per riceuere lo Spirito Santo. Bosio cites Goropius, *Hieroglyphica*, Bk. II.

Goropius's *Hieroglyphica* to which Bosio refers is in fact an astonishingly imaginative disquisition on the graphic and phonetic shift from Tau to Sigma, whose triple nature he takes as the simulacrum impressed by God on all things, a sort of Trinity through which all things flow to God. Most importantly in our context, Goropius understands the sound of the S, whose shape was commonly identified as a spiral, as the perfect expression of the power and faculty by which God created the world, in accordance with the same passage in Genesis that inspired Mellan: *Formavit Dominus Deus hominem de limo terrae, et inspiravit in faciem eius spiraculum vitae* (Gen. 2,7). The single, triple voice denotes the Trinity, which animates, inspires, and conjoins all created things.<sup>78</sup> As the instrument with which to form his image of divine inspiration, Mellan's burin—*caelum*—must indeed have seemed heaven-sent.

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Omnes notunt vehementem ipsius Sigma sibilum, quo non video quae vis & facultas conuenientiùs queat denotari, quàm ea qua Deus mundum creauit. Formauit, inquit Moses, Dominus Deus hominem de limo terrae, & inspirauit in faciem eius spiraculum vitae. 'Viden' hîc spirantem Deum in vita homini danda? Quod hîc vides expressum, id de reliqua etiam cogita creatione, in qua omnibus rebus Deus suum cuique esse adspirat: quae ratio optimè per Sigma exprimitur. . . . . Hac itaque nota adiecta Spiritus sanctus, Patrem & filium amore colligans, exprimitur, & tota vox tribus litteris tres personas ea ratione exponit, qua filius ipsum Vnum omnibus afflat, & Spiritus sanctus ipsam vim, quae ipsum quod Vnum afflat & aspirat omnibus rebus creatis & ipsum Vnum inter se deuincit, & eo suo vinculo totam rerum colligat vniuersitatem.

Goropius 1580, *Hieroglyphica*, 23f. On Gorpius, who was famous in his day and whose theories echo through much of the philological literature of the period, see Voet ca. 1980ff., III, 1019-28, Borst 1957-63, passim, Volkmann 1969, 110f.

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Fig. 01 Laocöon

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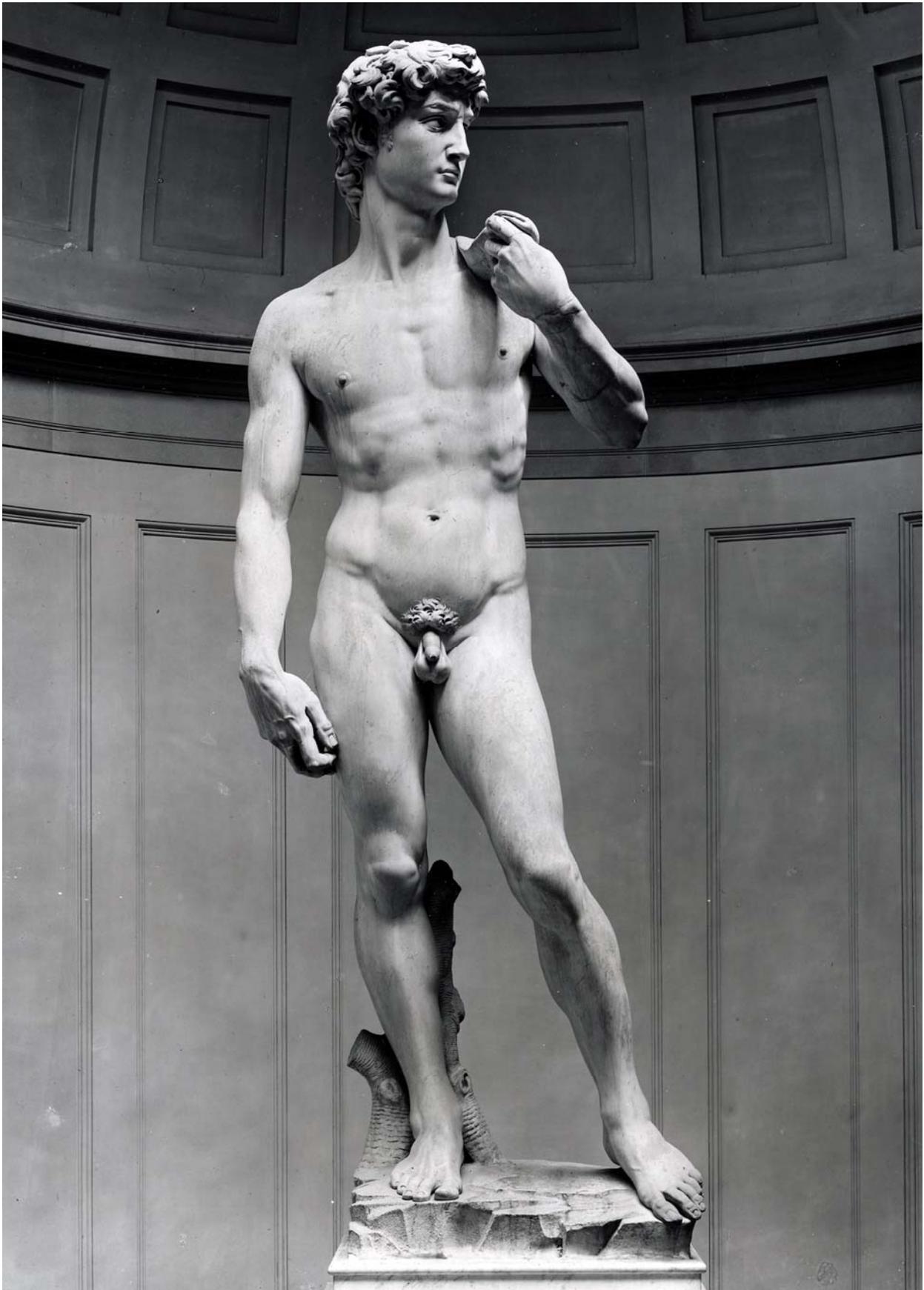


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Fig. 03 Michelangelo. Pietà, marble. Florence, Duomo [p. 77, Tolnay, V]

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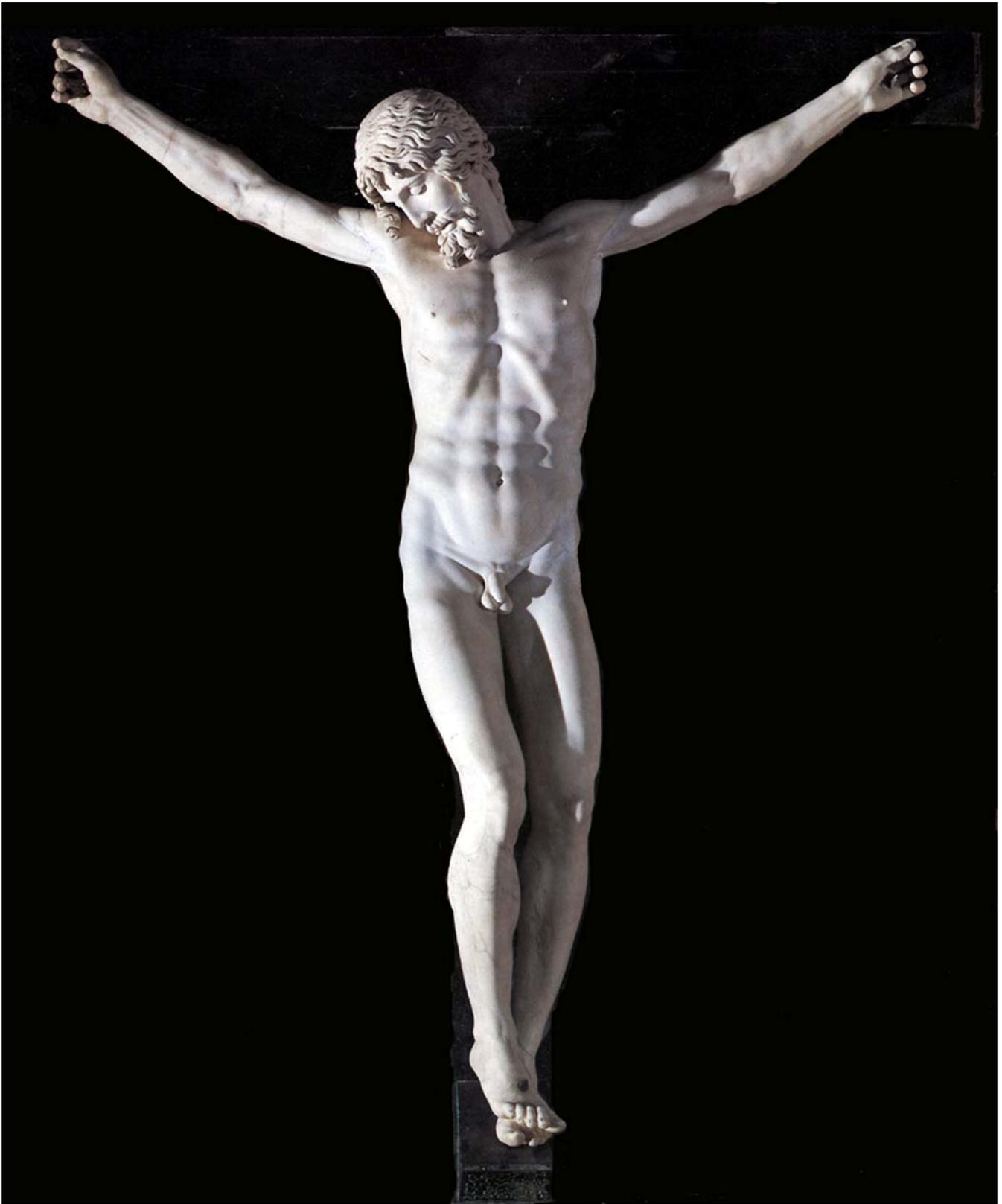


Fig. 04 Benvenuto Cellini. *Christ Crucified*. Marble. Spain, Escorial

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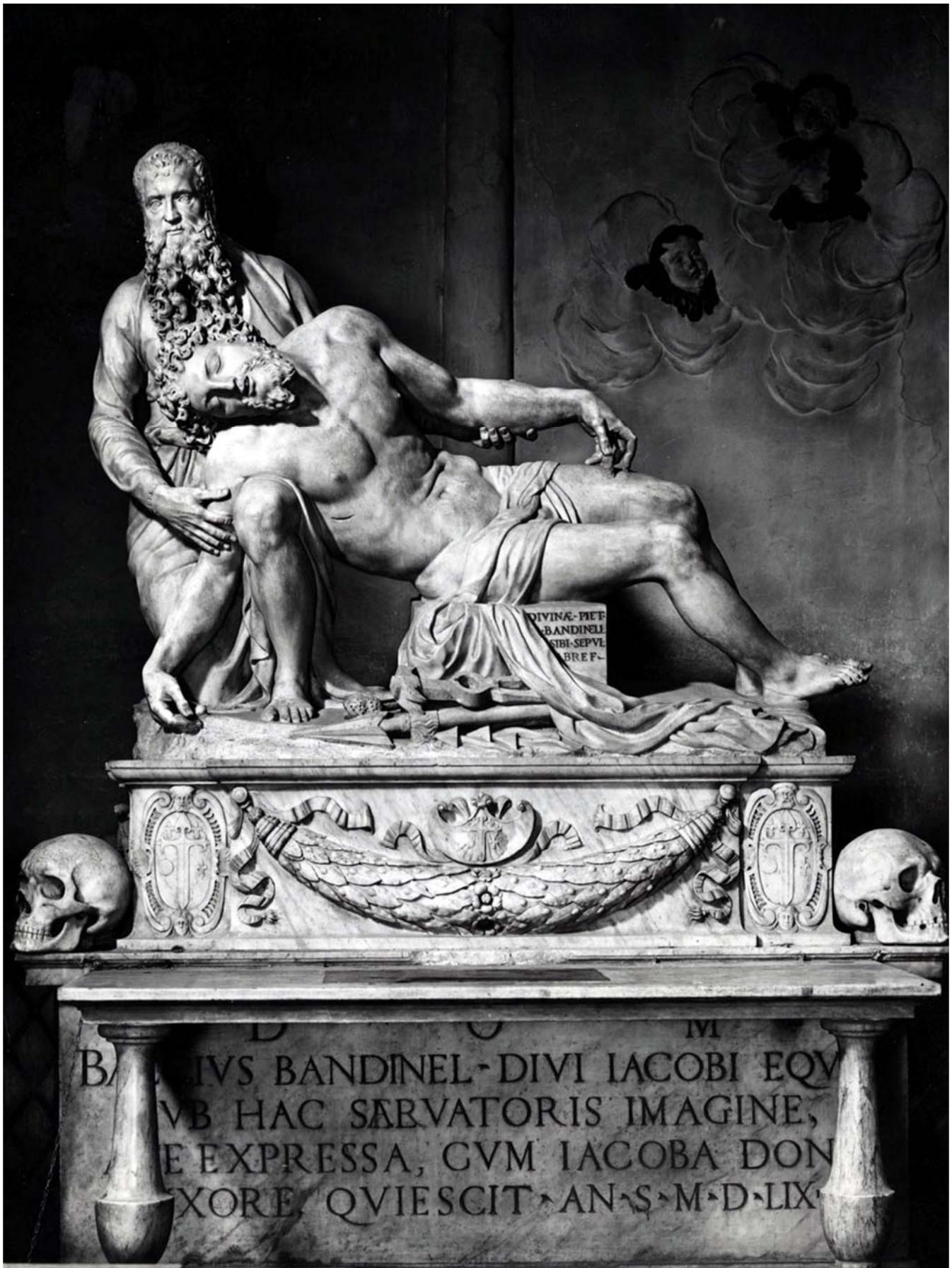


Fig. 05 Bandinelli . *The Dead Christ with Nicodemus*, Tomb, marble. Florence, SS. Annunciata, [pl. 65, Pope-Hennessy Ital HR&BSc, 1963],

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Fig. 06 Claude Mellan, Holy Face, engraving

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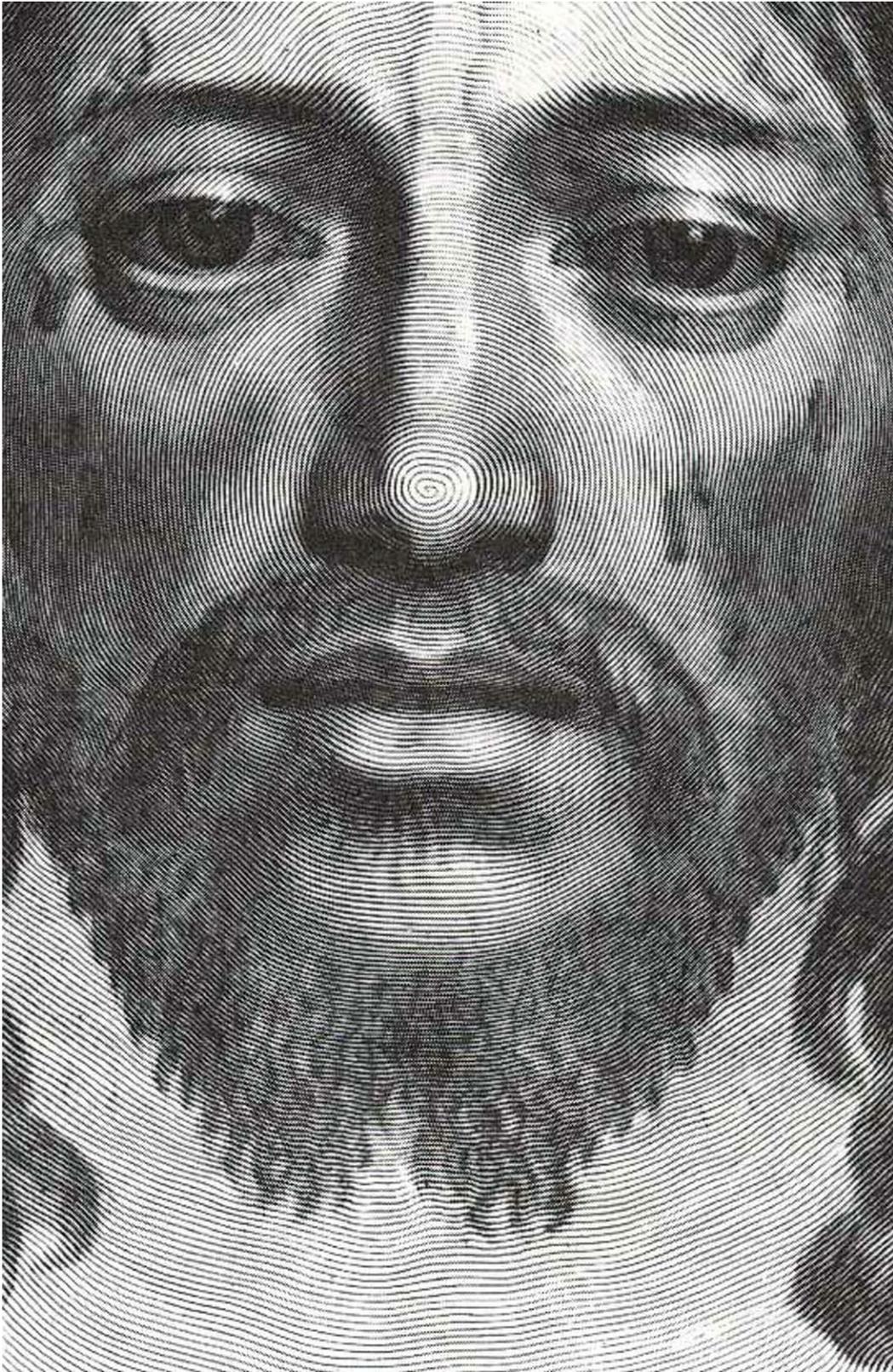


Fig. 07 Detail of Fig. 6

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Fig. 08 Detail of Fig. 6

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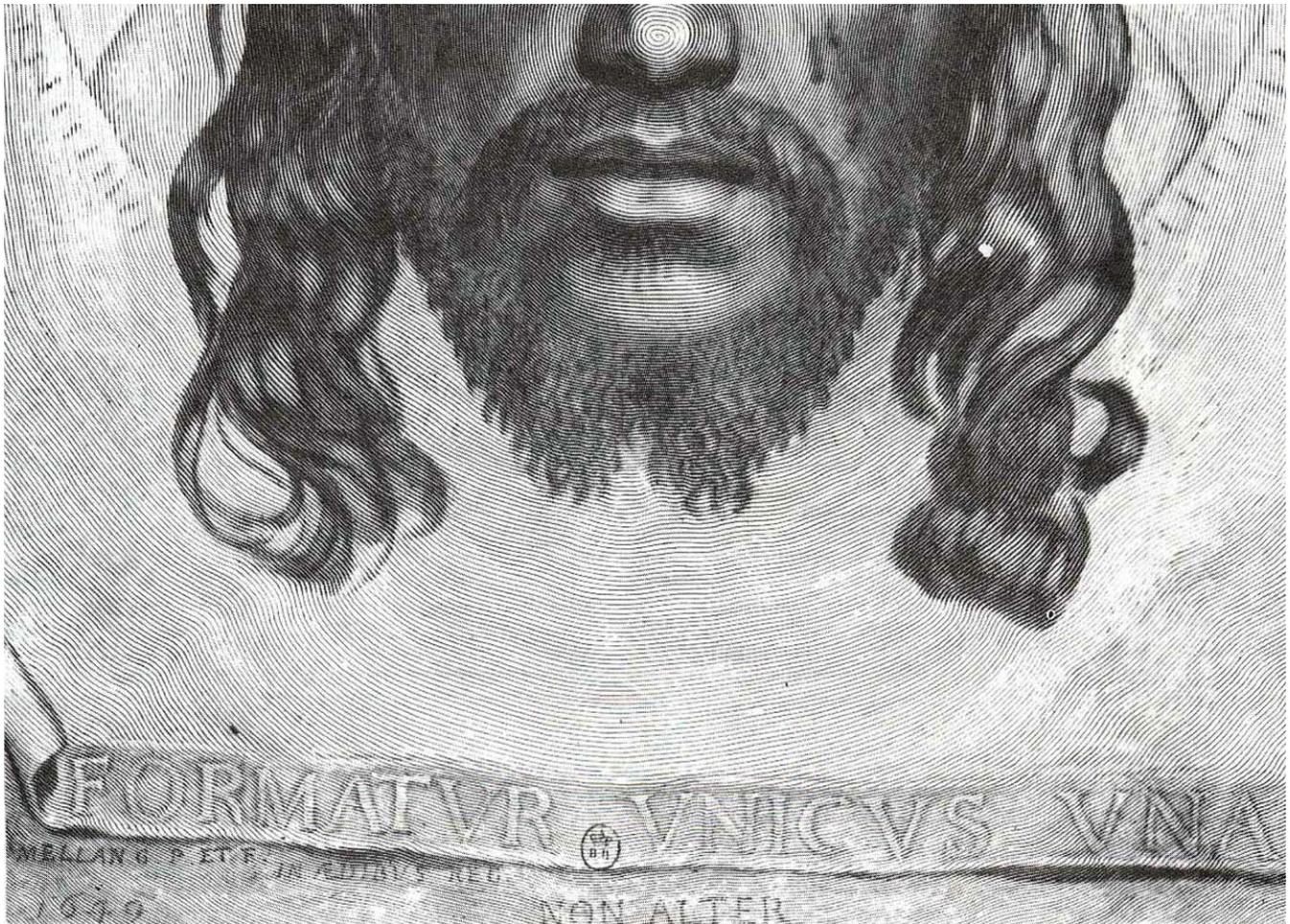


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Fig. 11 Master E. S., *St. Veronica and Angels Display the Sudarium*, engraving



Fig. 12 Albrecht Dürer, Self-Portrait. Munich, Alte Pinakothek

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Fig. 13 *Deus Artifex*. Bible Moralisée, Codex Vindobonensis 2554, frontispiece. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek



Fig. 14 Michelangelo, right hand holding book, drawing. Rome, Vatican Library



Fig. 15 Michelangelo, right hand with extended index finger. Florence, Casa Buonarroti



Fig. 16 Jacopino del Conte, Portrait of Michelangelo. New York, Metropolitan Museum

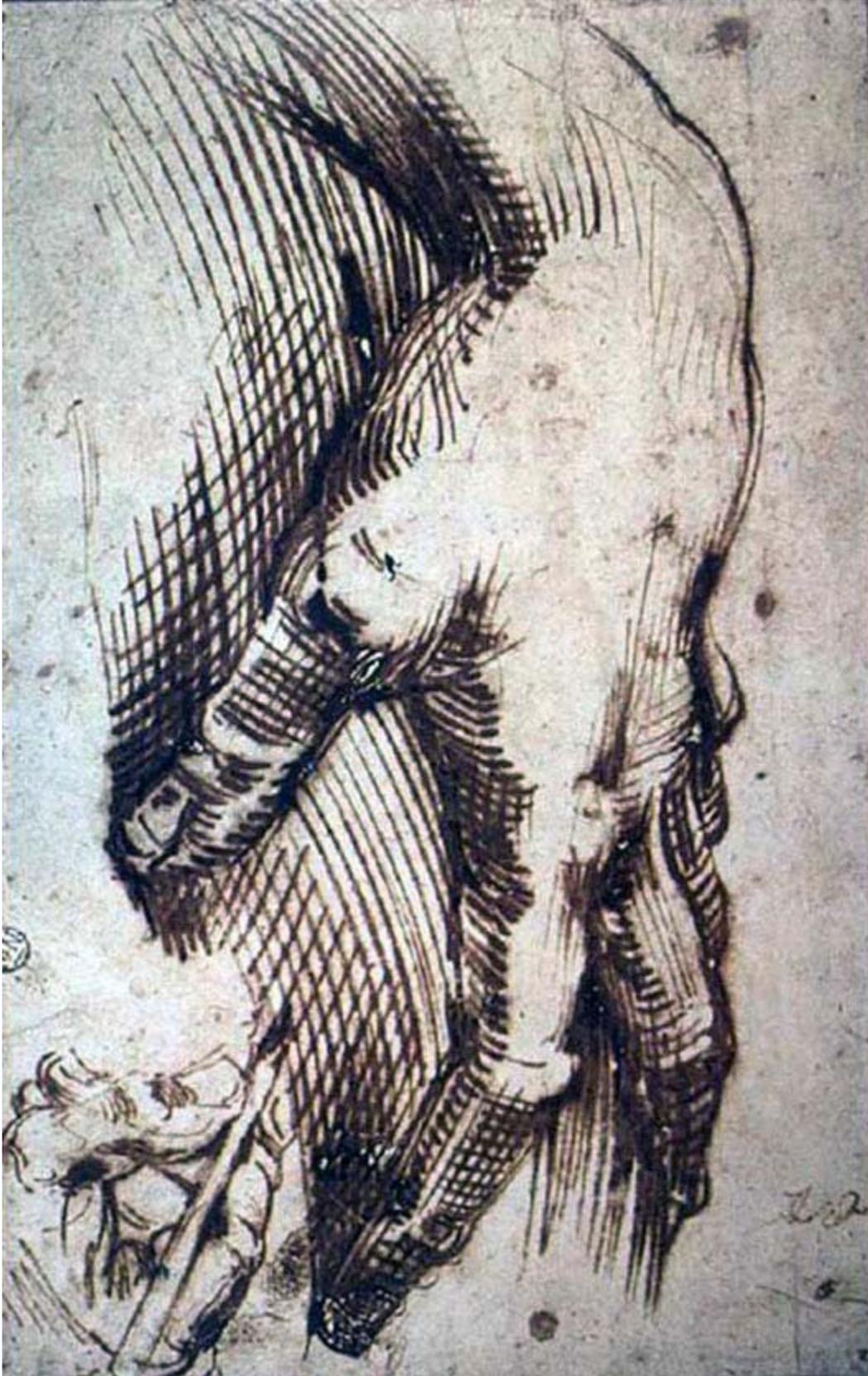


Fig. 17 Attributed to Michelangelo, right hand drawing left hand grasping soft material, drawing, pen and ink. Paris, Musée du Louvre

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Fig. 18 Michelangelo (finished by others), Resurrected Christ, First version. Bassano Romano, S.Vincenzo Martire

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Fig. 19 Detail of Fig. 18

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Fig. 20 Michelangelo, ironic sonnet and sketch on painting the Sistine Ceiling, drawing. Florence, Casa Buonarroti



Fig. 21 Michelangelo, *Creation of the Sun and Moon*, detail. Rome, Vatican Palace, Sistine Chapel (photo: Alinari 7509A)

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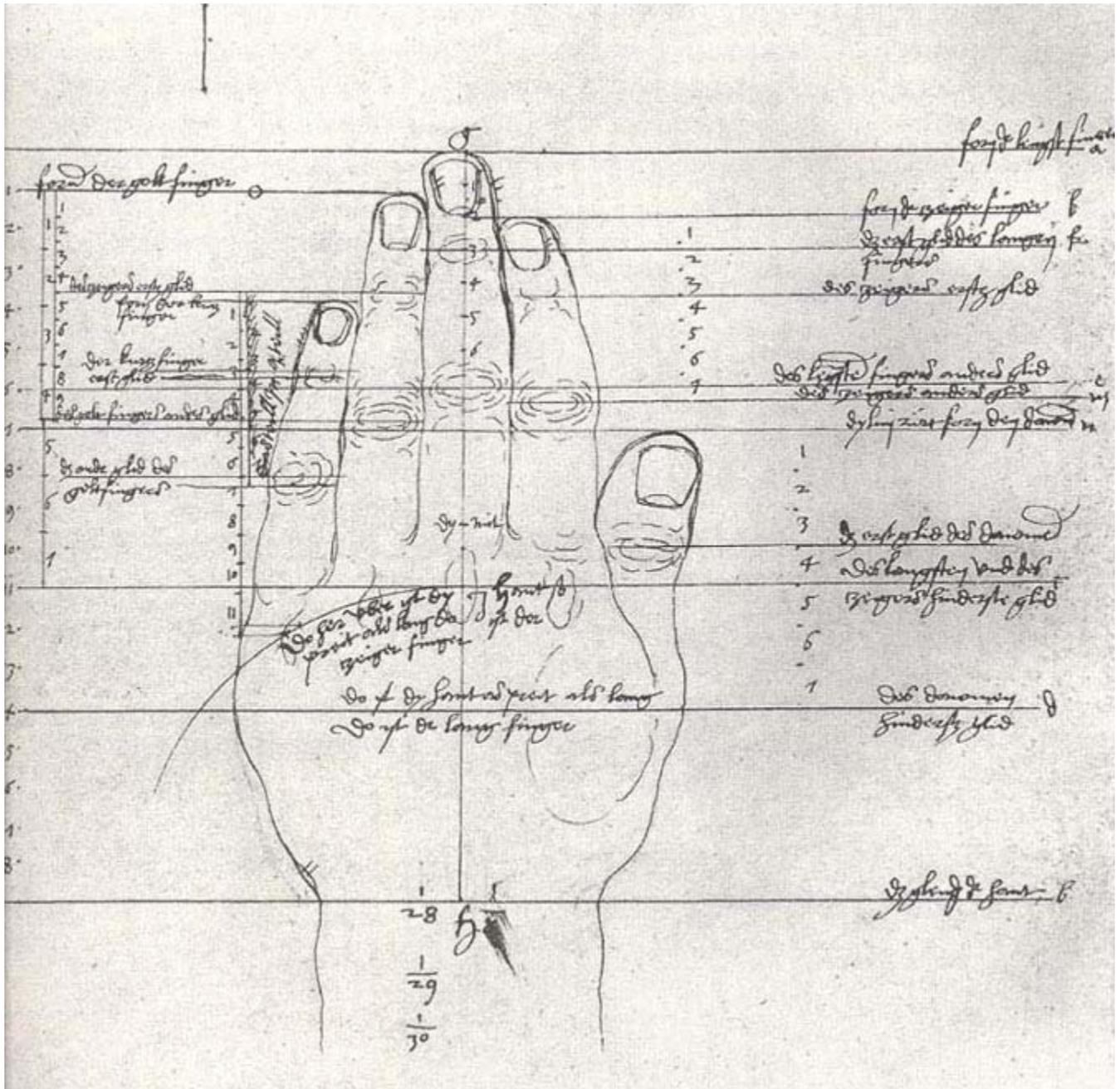


Fig. 22 Albrecht Dürer, proportions of hand, drawing. Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek



Fig. 23 Hendrick Goltzius, four studies of hands, drawing. Frankfurt, Stüdelsches Kunstinstitut



Fig. 24 Angelo Bronzino, hand, drawing. private collection, Munich (?)



Fig. 25 Angelo Bronzino, Deposition, detail. Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts Hendrick

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Fig. 26 Goltzius, hand of the artist, signed and dated 1588, drawing. Haarlem, Tyler's Stichting



Fig. 27 Pantocrator, dome mosaic. Daphne

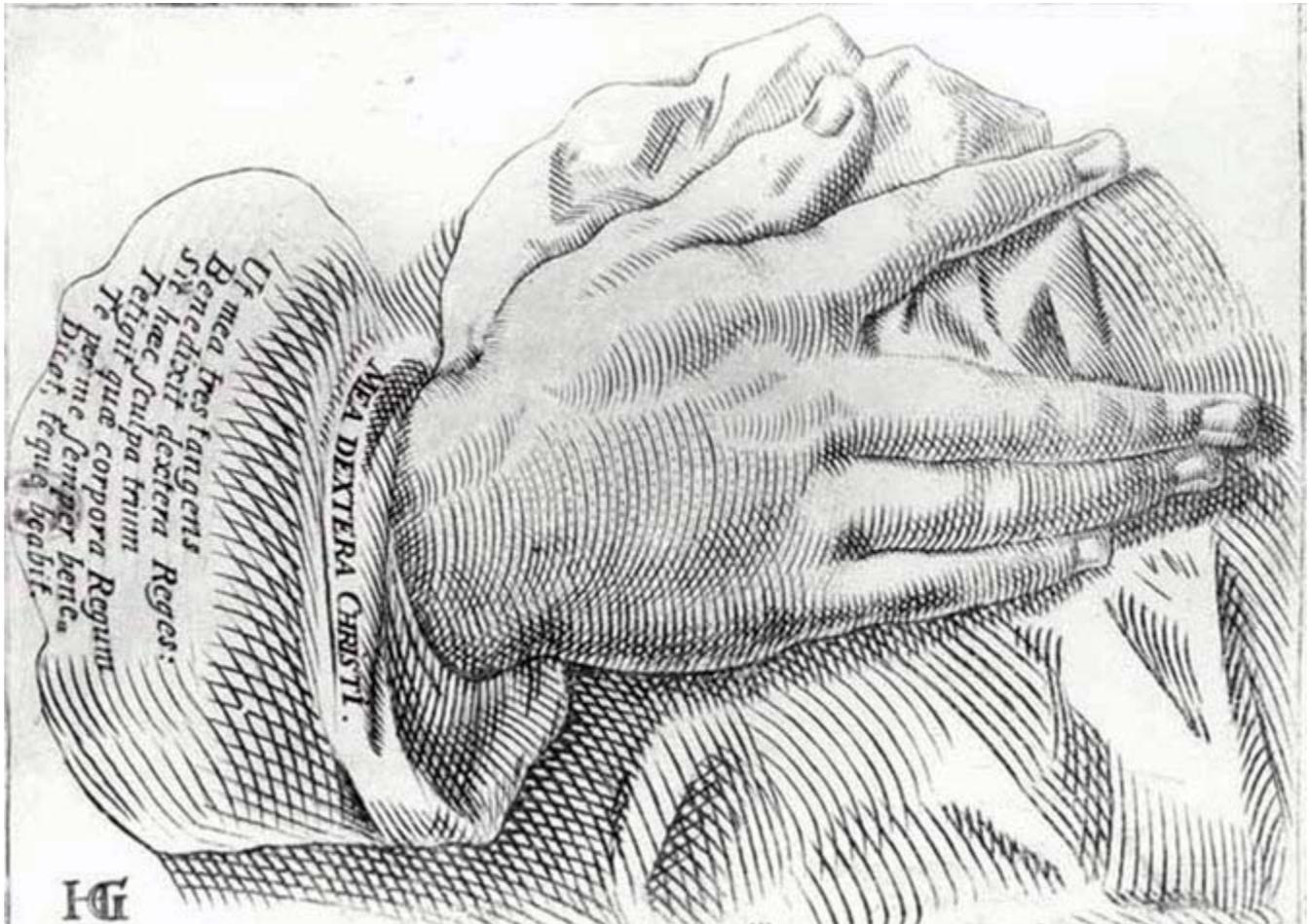


Fig. 28 After Goltzius, "Mea Dexter Christi," engraving





Fig. 30 Hendrick Goltzius, Mercury, drawing. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

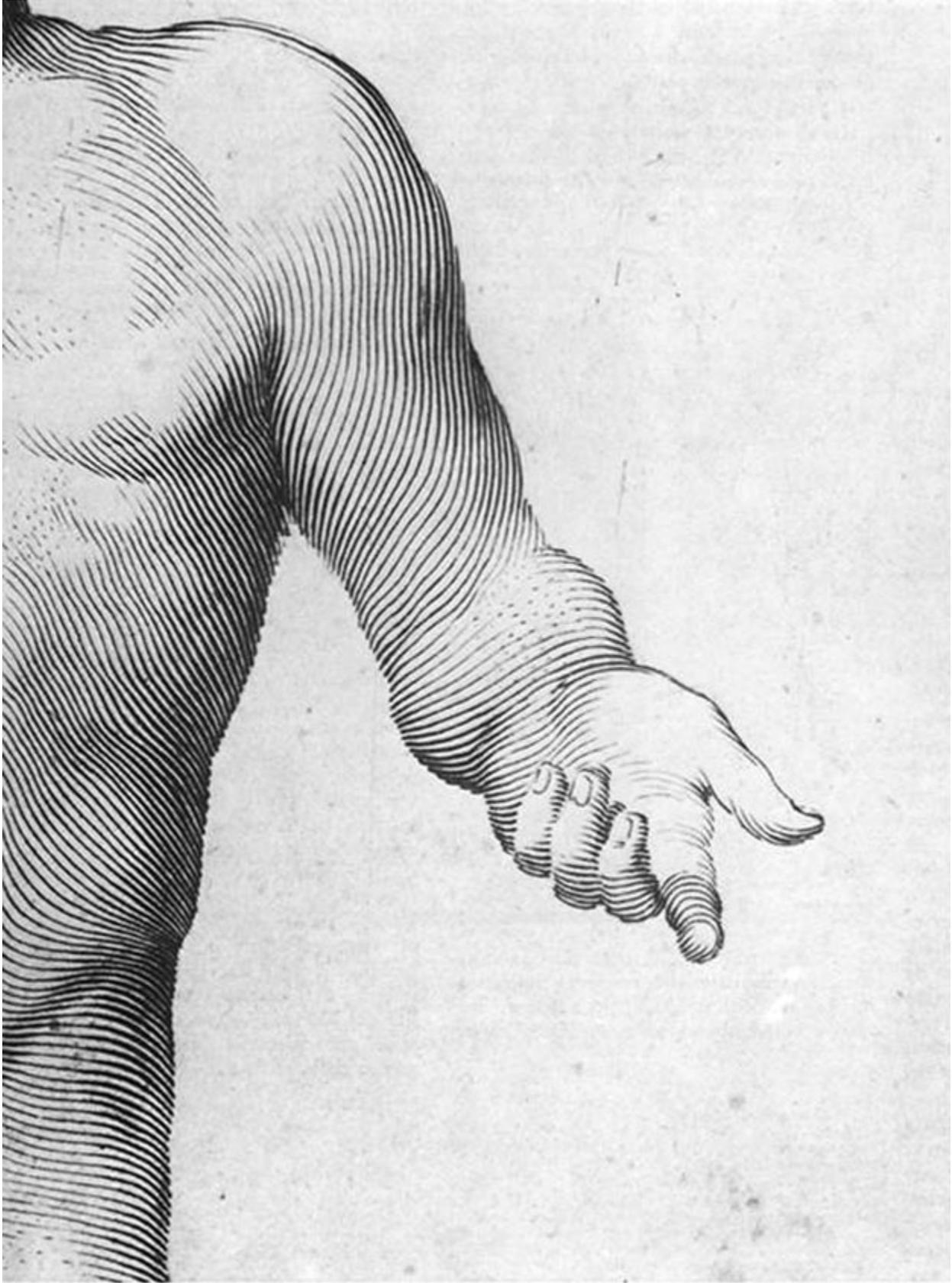


Fig. 31 Claude Mellan, Giustiniani Diana, engraving

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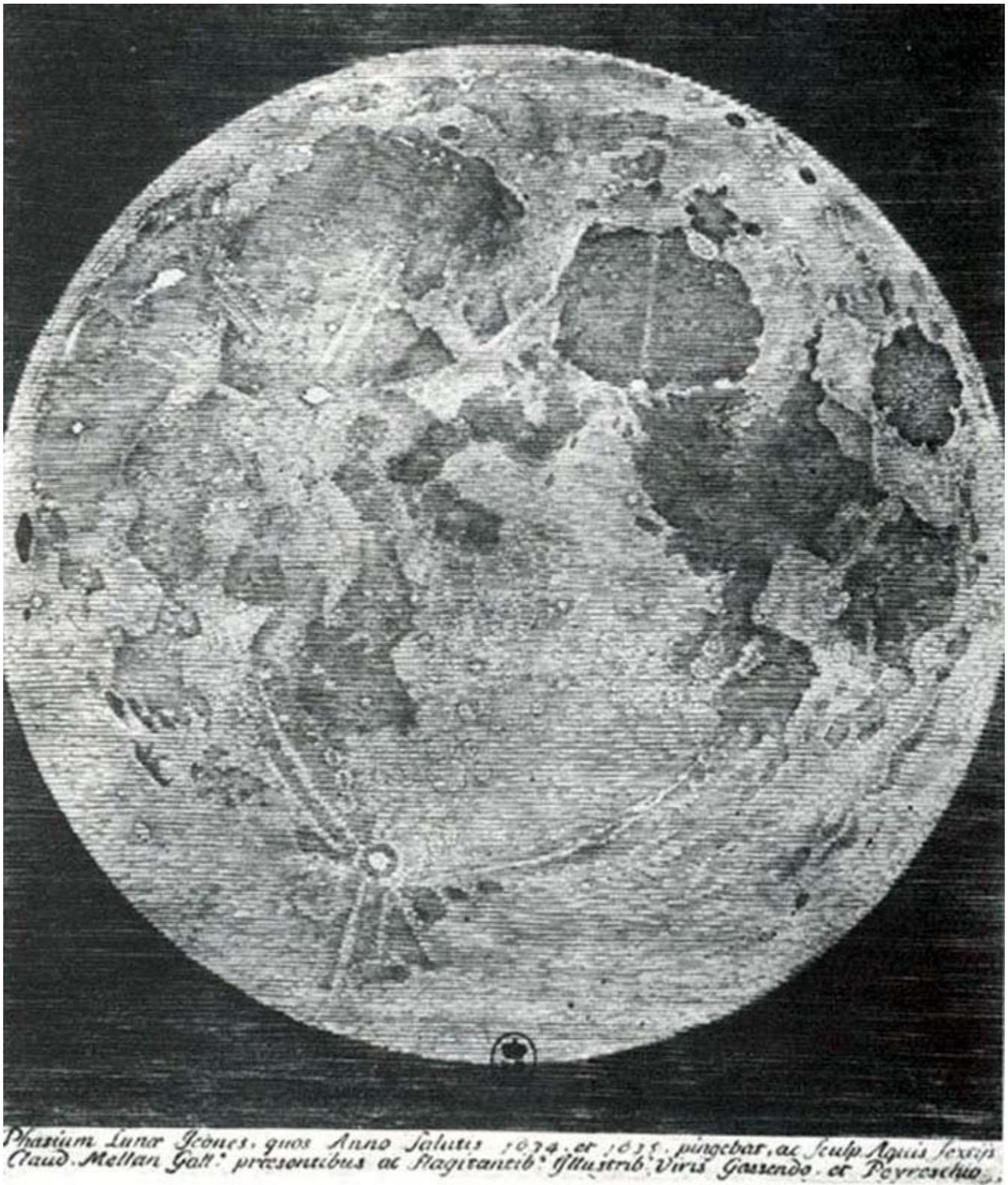


Fig. 32 Claude Mellan, The Moon, engraving

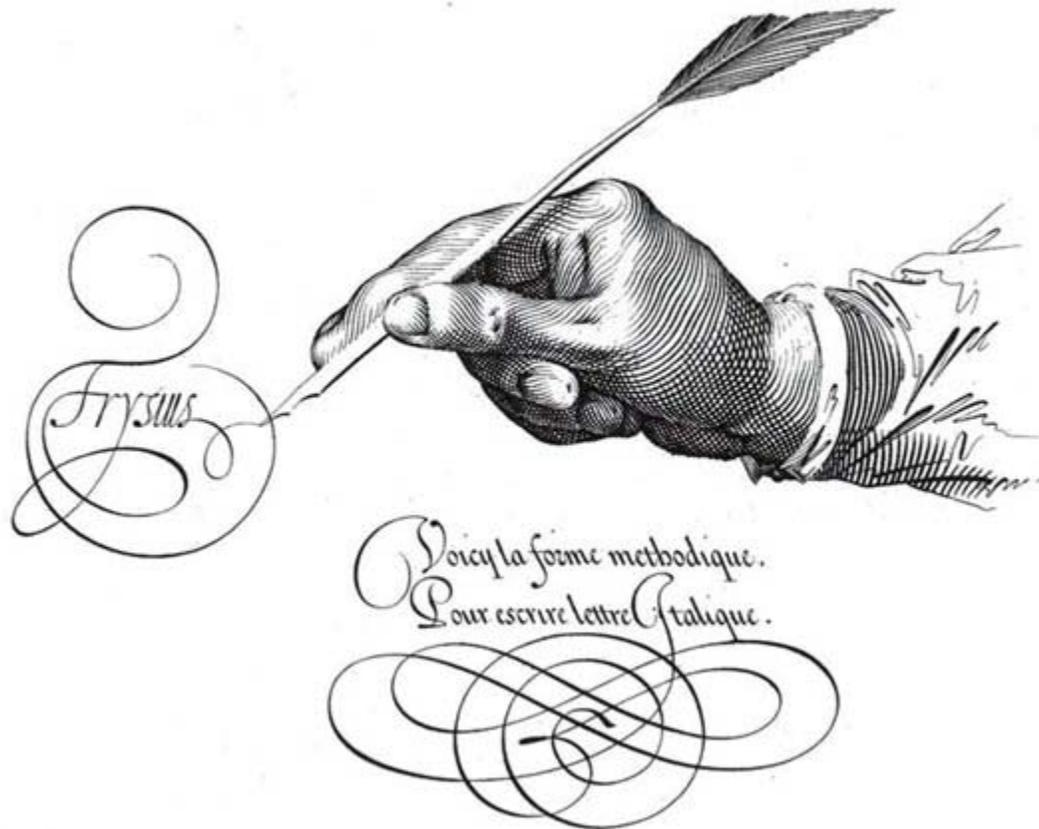


Fig. 33 Jan van den Velde, Pen-hold for the Netherlandish Hand, engraving by Simon Frisius, 1608

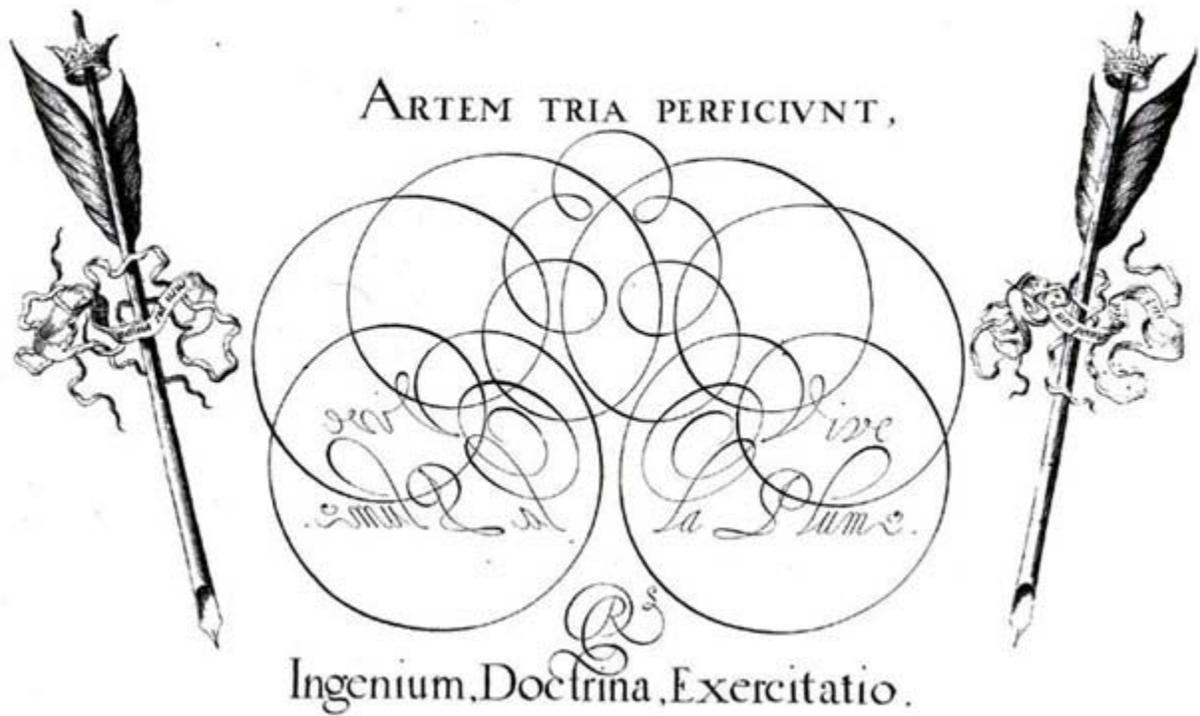


Fig. 34 David Roelands, *Artem Tria Perficiunt*, engraving

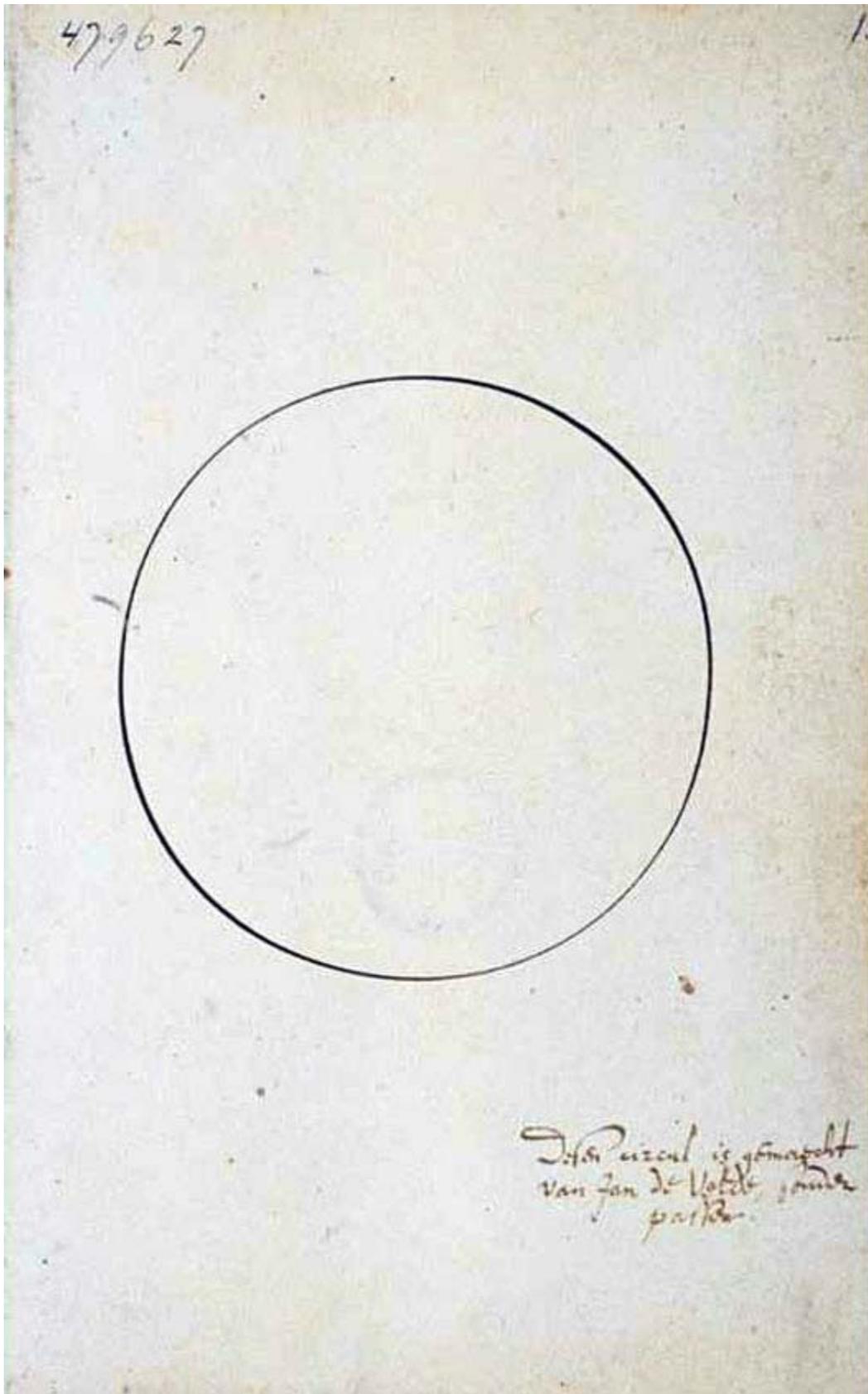


Fig. 35 Jan van den Velde, Perfect Circle, drawn without compass, probably 1617, drawing. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek

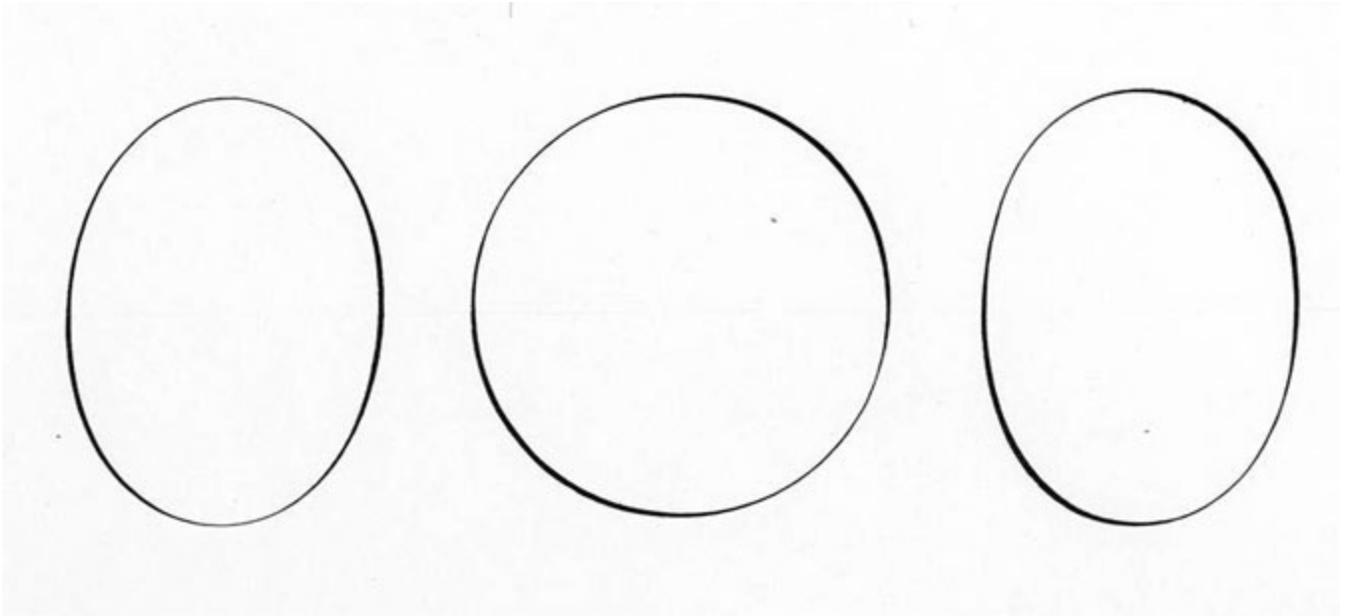


Fig. 36 Jan van den Velde, Circle flanked by ovals, engraving by Simon Frisius, 1605

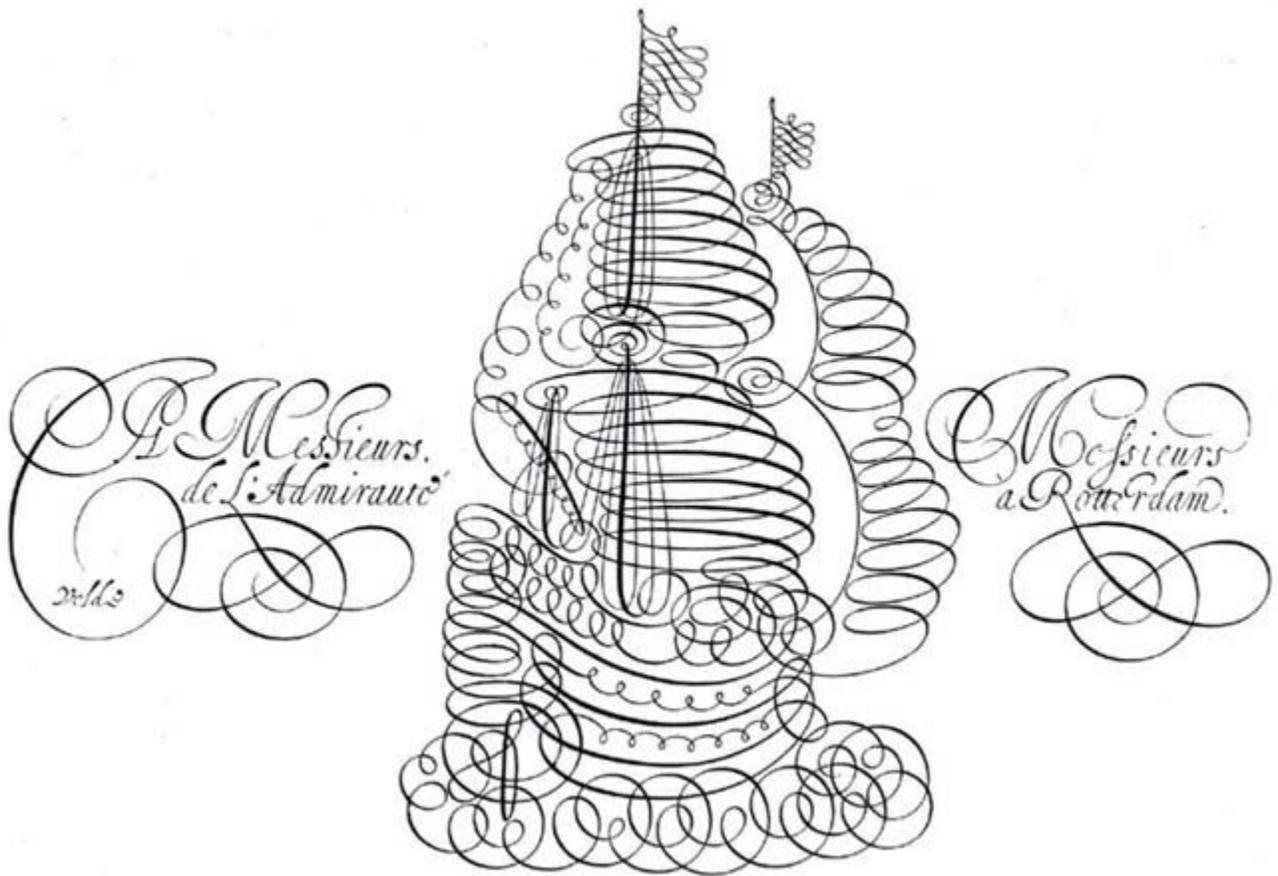


Fig. 37 Jan van den Velde, East-Indiaman, engraving by Simon Frisius, 1605



Fig. 38 God Teaching Writing (after Bollandus, Johannes, *Af-beeldinghe van d'eerste eewwe der Societeyt Iesv voor ooghen ghestelt door de Dvyts Nederlantsche provincie der selver Societeyt*, Antwerp, 1640, p. 298) (*Imago primi saecvli Societatis Iesv a provincia Flandro-Belgica eivsdem societatis repraesentata*, Antwerp, 1640)

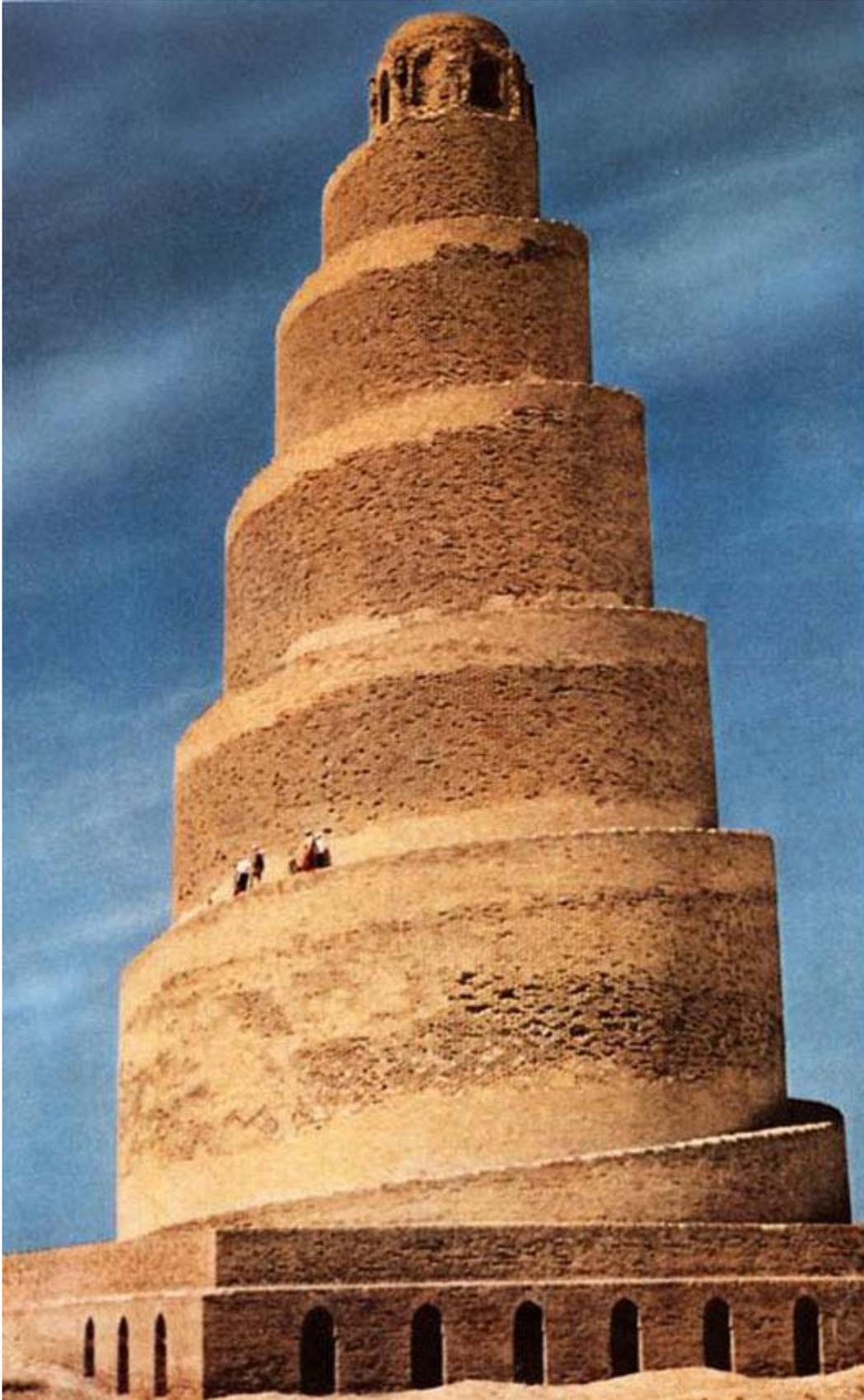


Fig. 39 Minaret, 848-52 A.D. Samarra, Iraq

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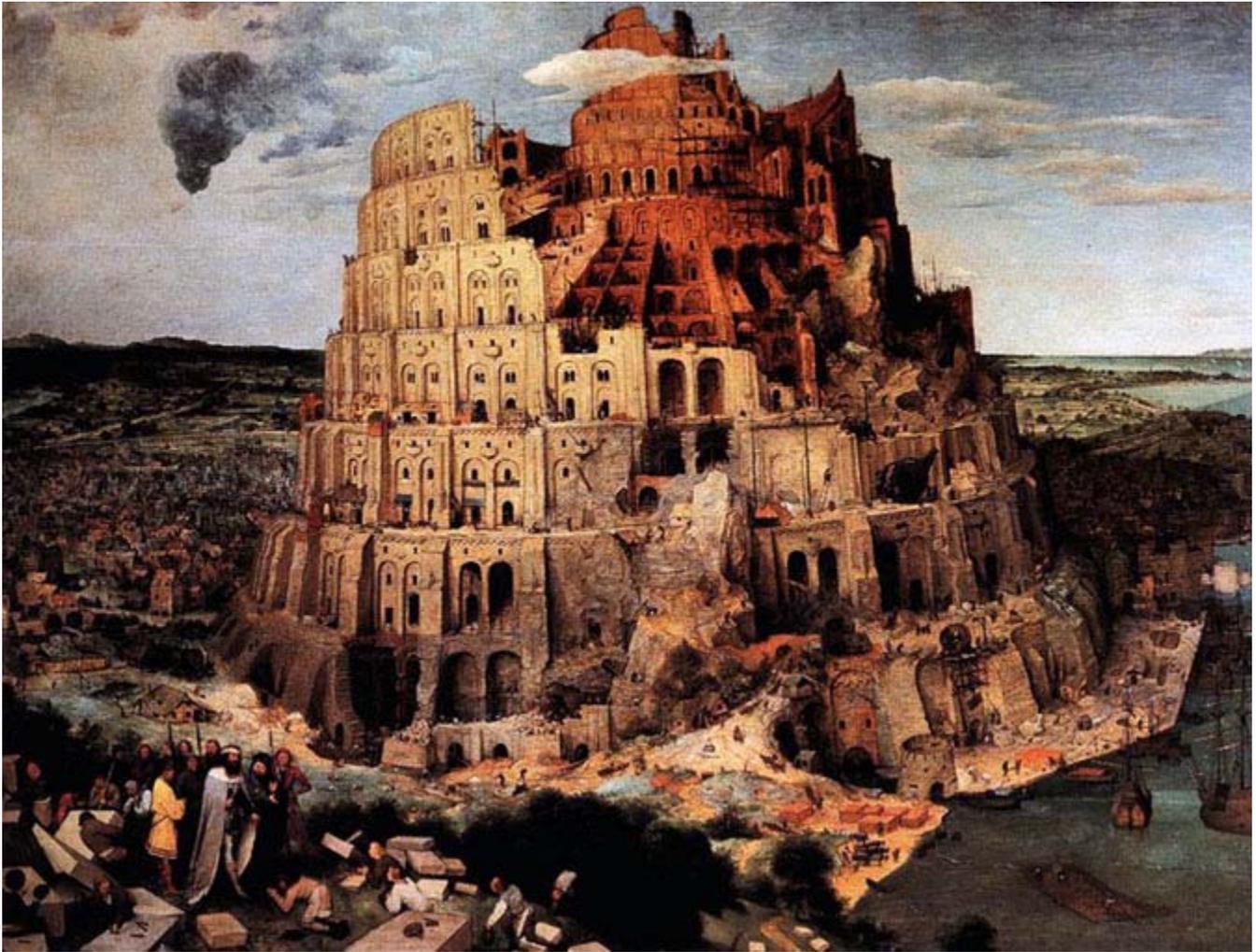


Fig. 40 Pieter Breughel, Tower of Babel. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum

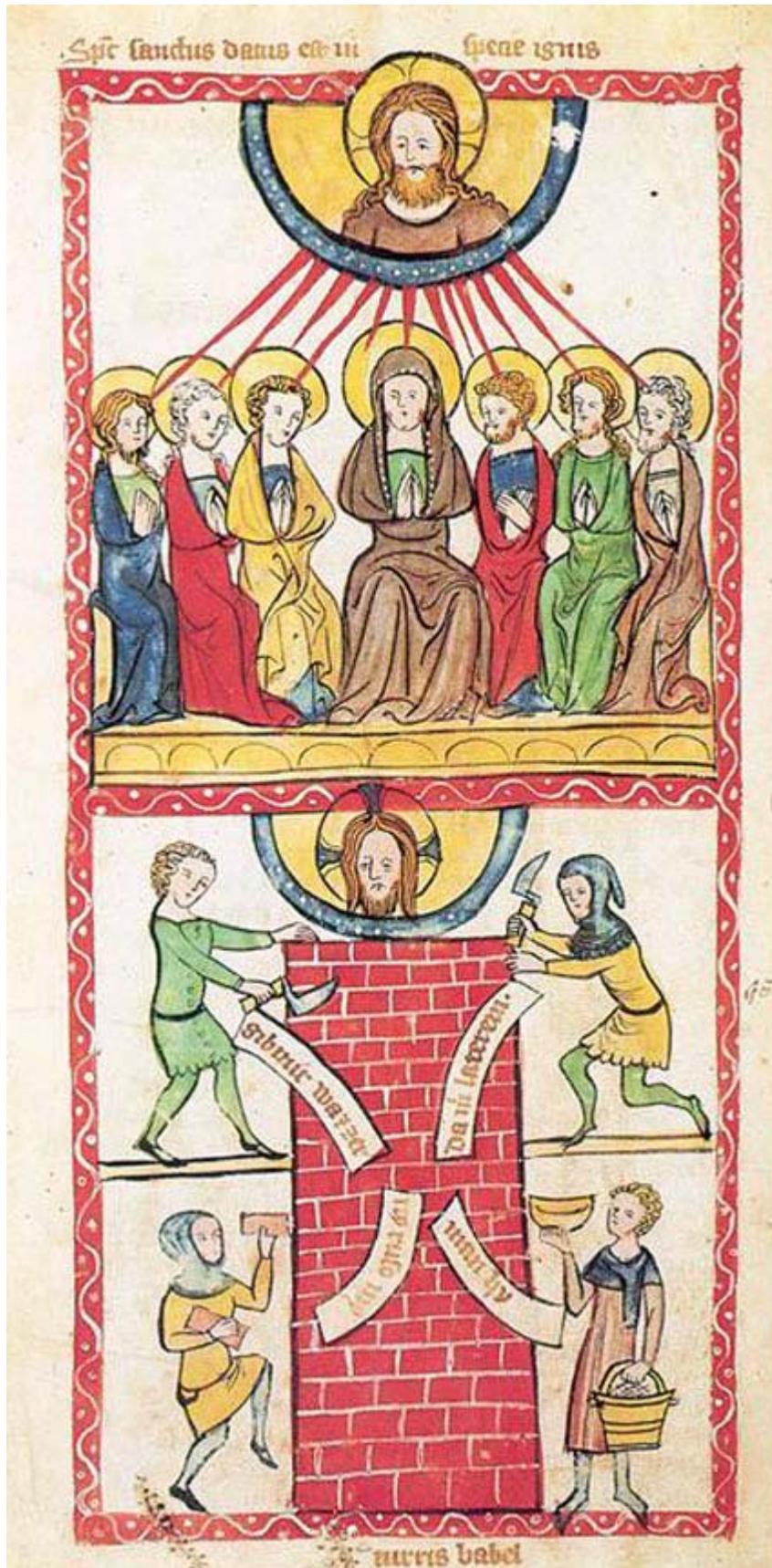


Fig. 41 Descent of the Holy Spirit and Tower of Babel, *Speculum humane salvationis*, MS 2505, fol. 64v. Darmstadt, Landesbibliothek



Fig. 42 Destruction of the Tower of Babel and Christ Confuting the pagans, *Bible moralisée*, Codex Vindobonensis 2554, fol. 3v, detail Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek



Fig. 43 Bernardino Jacobi Butinone, *The Christ-Child Preaching in the Temple*. Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland



Fig. 44 Francesco Borromini, Tower of S. Ivo alla Sapienza. Rome



Fig. 45 False Tower of Babel and True Tower of Pentecost., engraving. Gottifredi 1637, frontispiece

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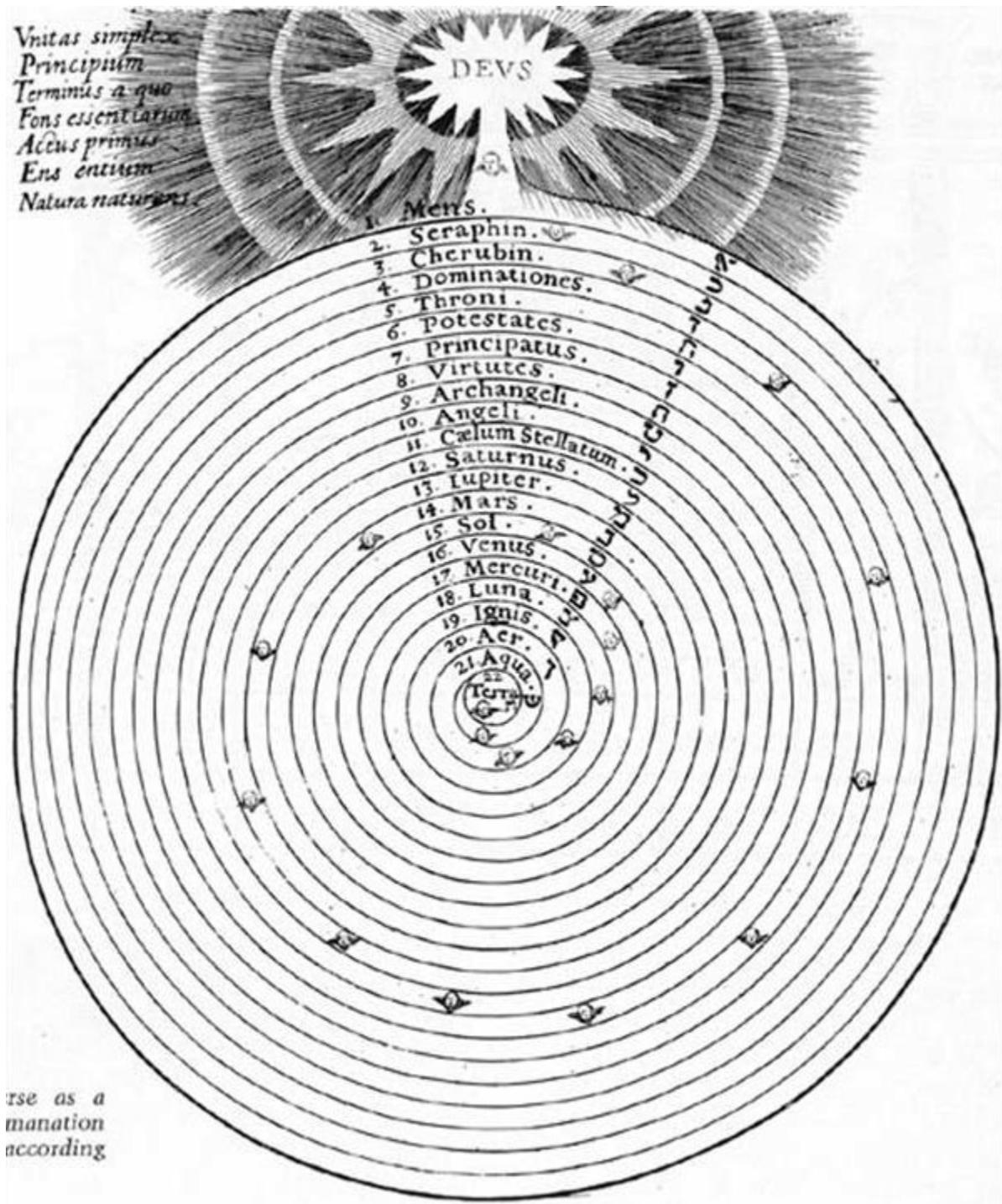


Fig. 46 The Universe as a Spiral continuum between God and Earth, engraving. Fludd 1617-18, I, 219



Fig. 47 Crispijn de Passe, Ecce Homo, engraving. De Passe 1631, title page

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Fig. 48 Detail of Fig. 47

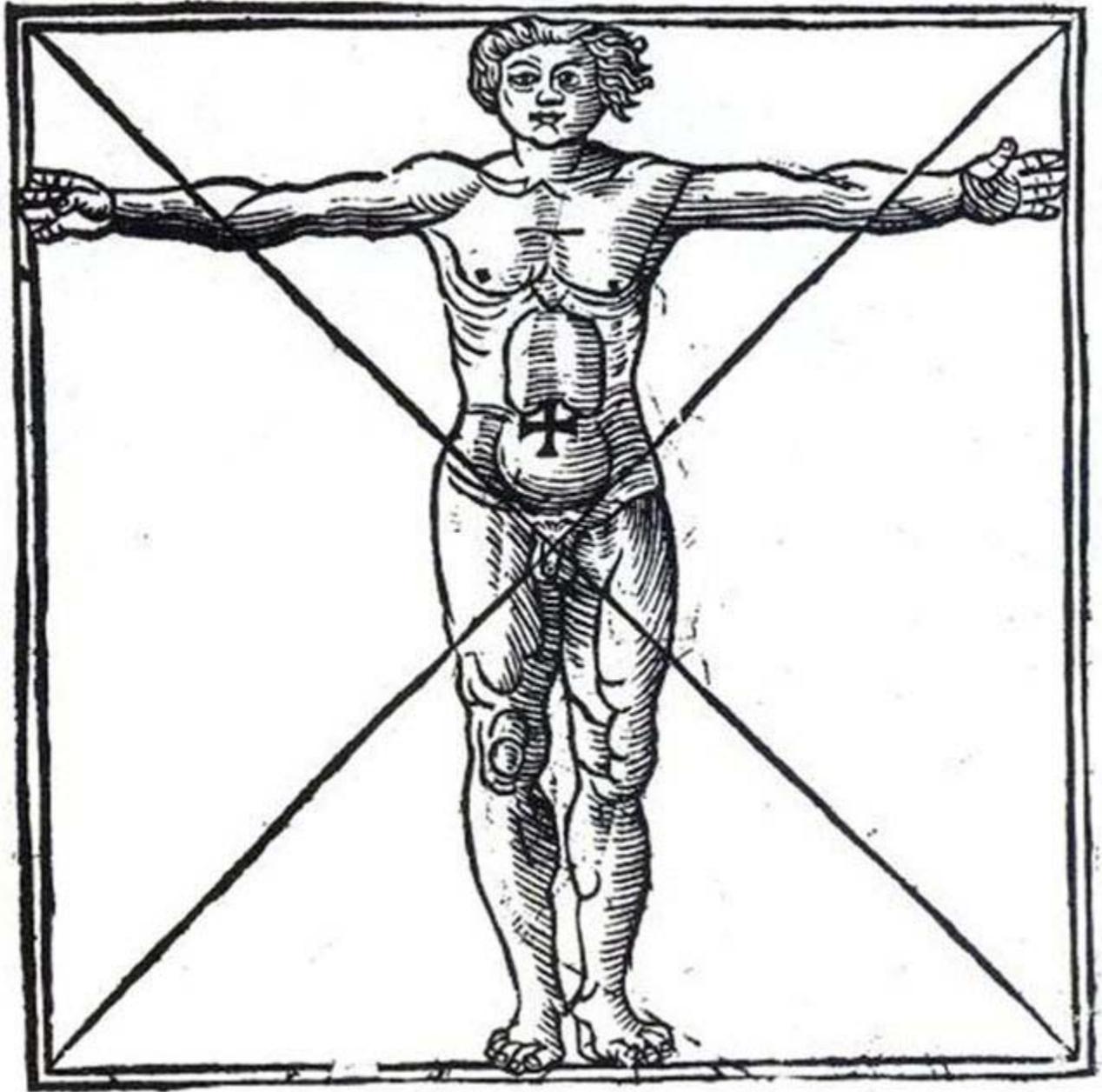


Fig. 49 Four Square Man. Agrippa 1533, CLXII

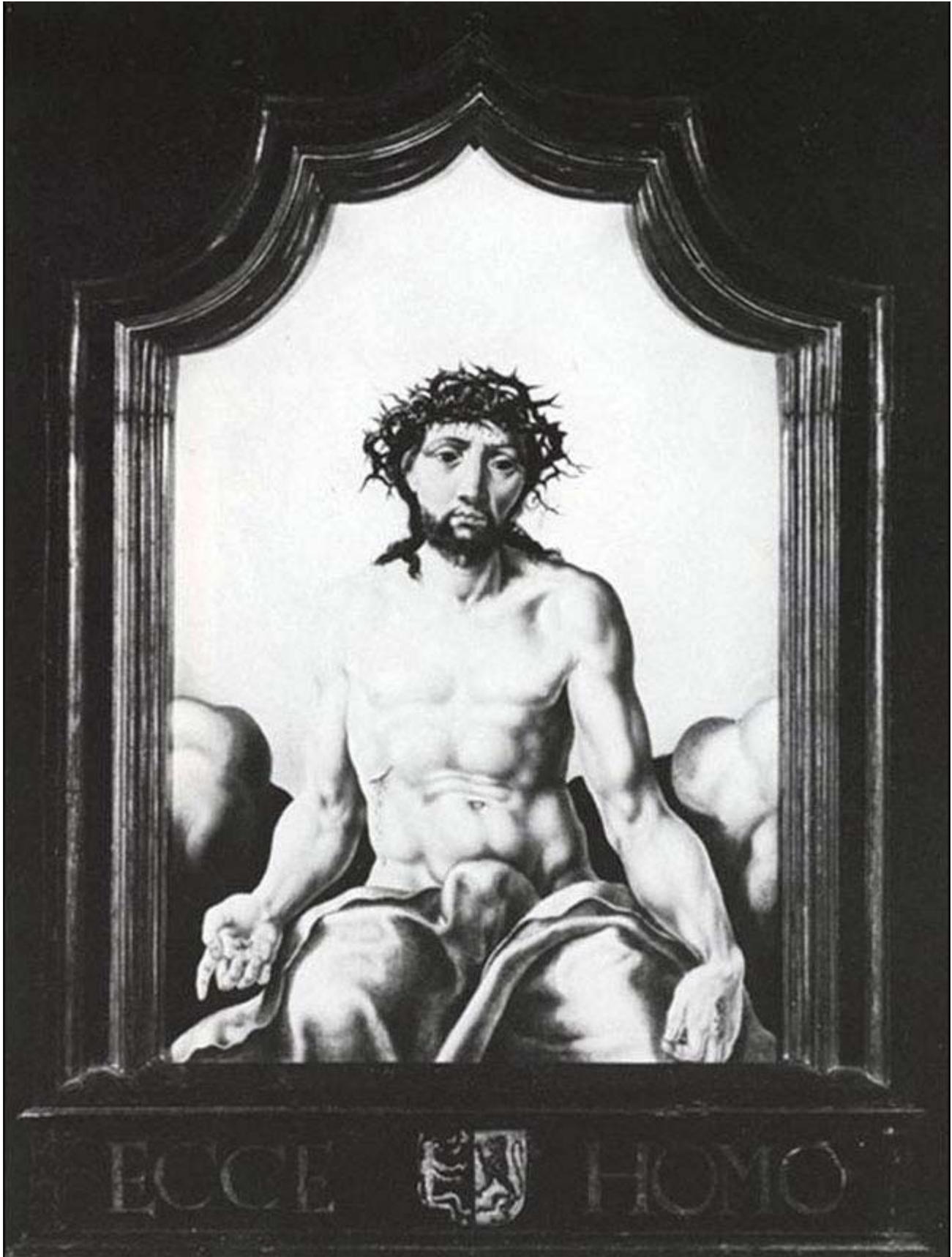


Fig. 50 Maarten van Heemskerck, *Ecce Homo*. Greenville, SC, Bob Jones University Art Gallery

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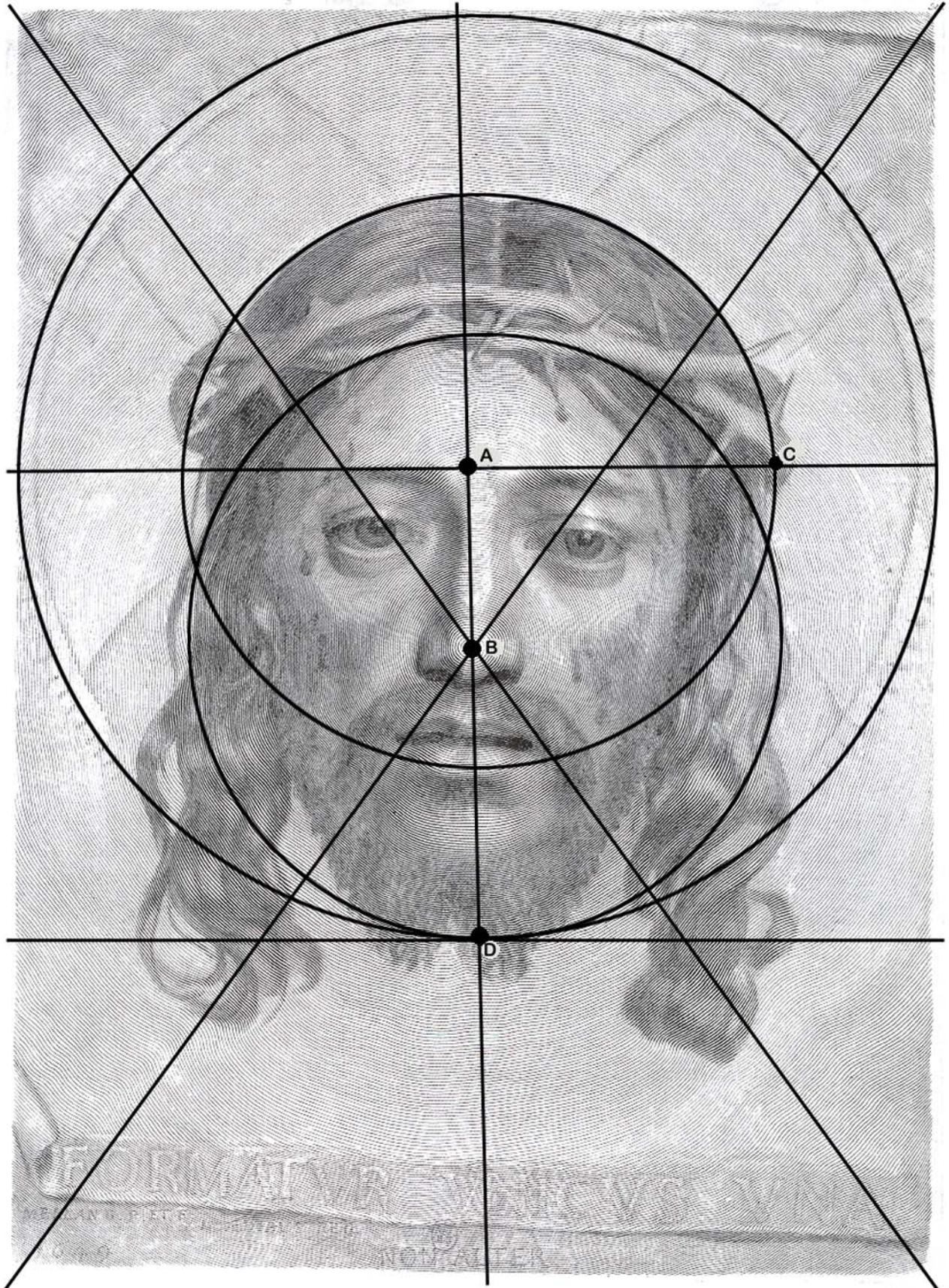


Fig. 51 a,b,c Claude Mellan, *Sainte Face*, diagram showing centerings and circular design scheme

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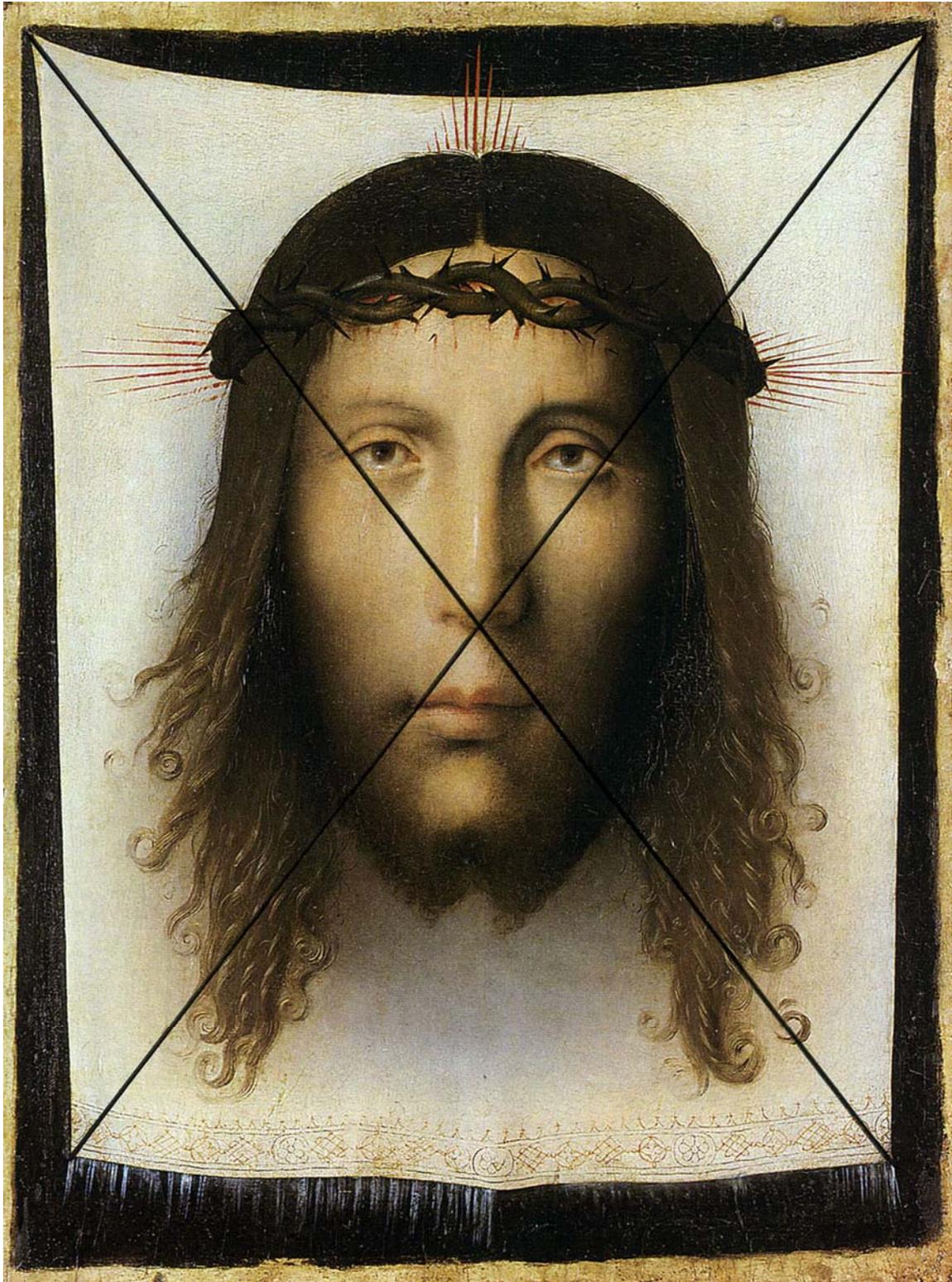


Fig. 52 Bernardino di Bosio Zaganelli, *Holy Face*, diagram showing centering of nose tip. Philadelphia, PA, The Philadelphia Museum of Art

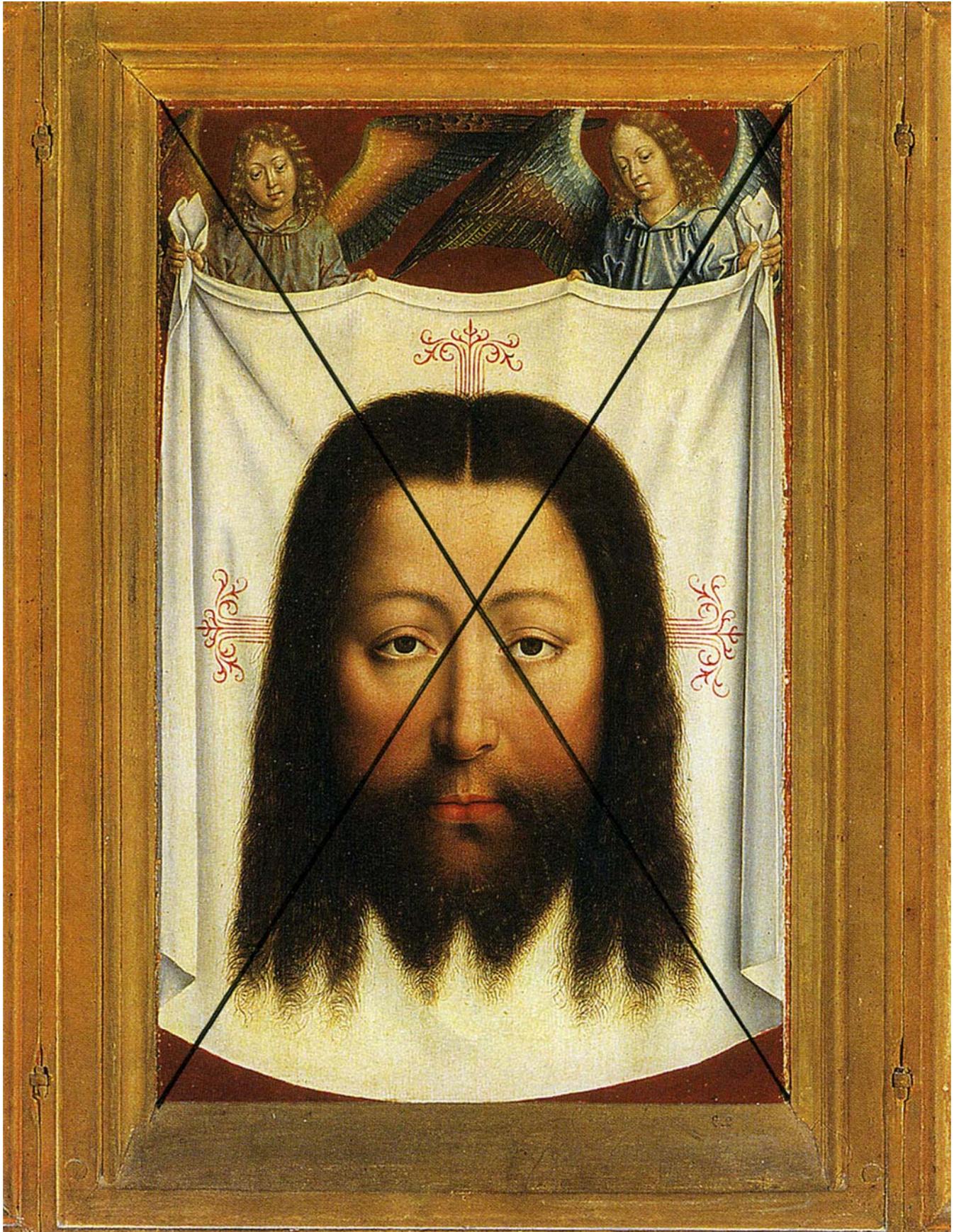


Fig. 53 Flemish Master, *Holy Face*, diagram showing centering of root of the nose. Venice, Galleria Manfredian

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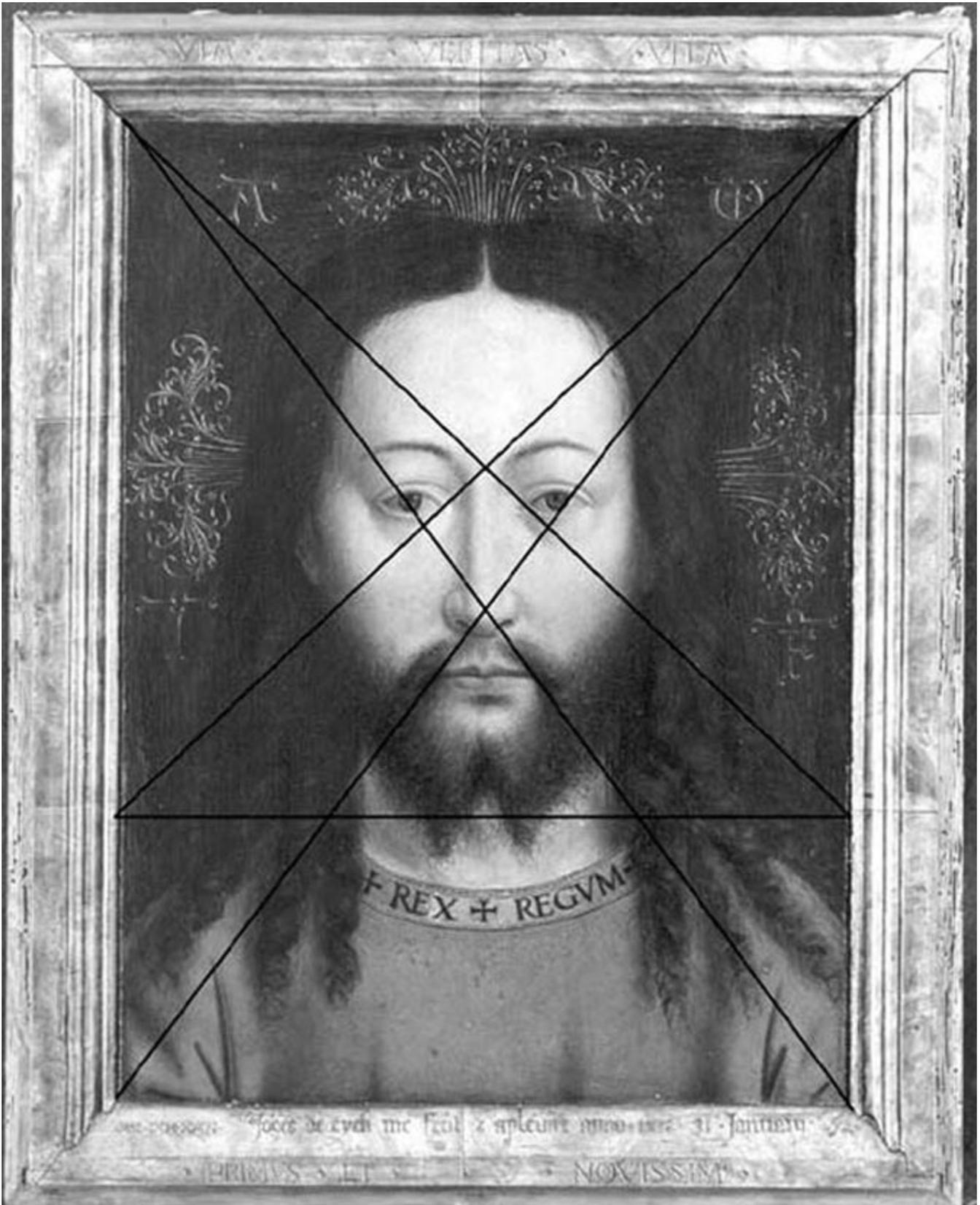


Fig. 54 Attributed to Jan van Eyck, *Holy Face*, diagram showing centering of tip and root of the nose. Berlin, Staatliche Museen



Fig. 55 "Three-Circle Scheme" of Byzantine and Byzantinizing Art. Panofsky 1982, 79, text ill. 2

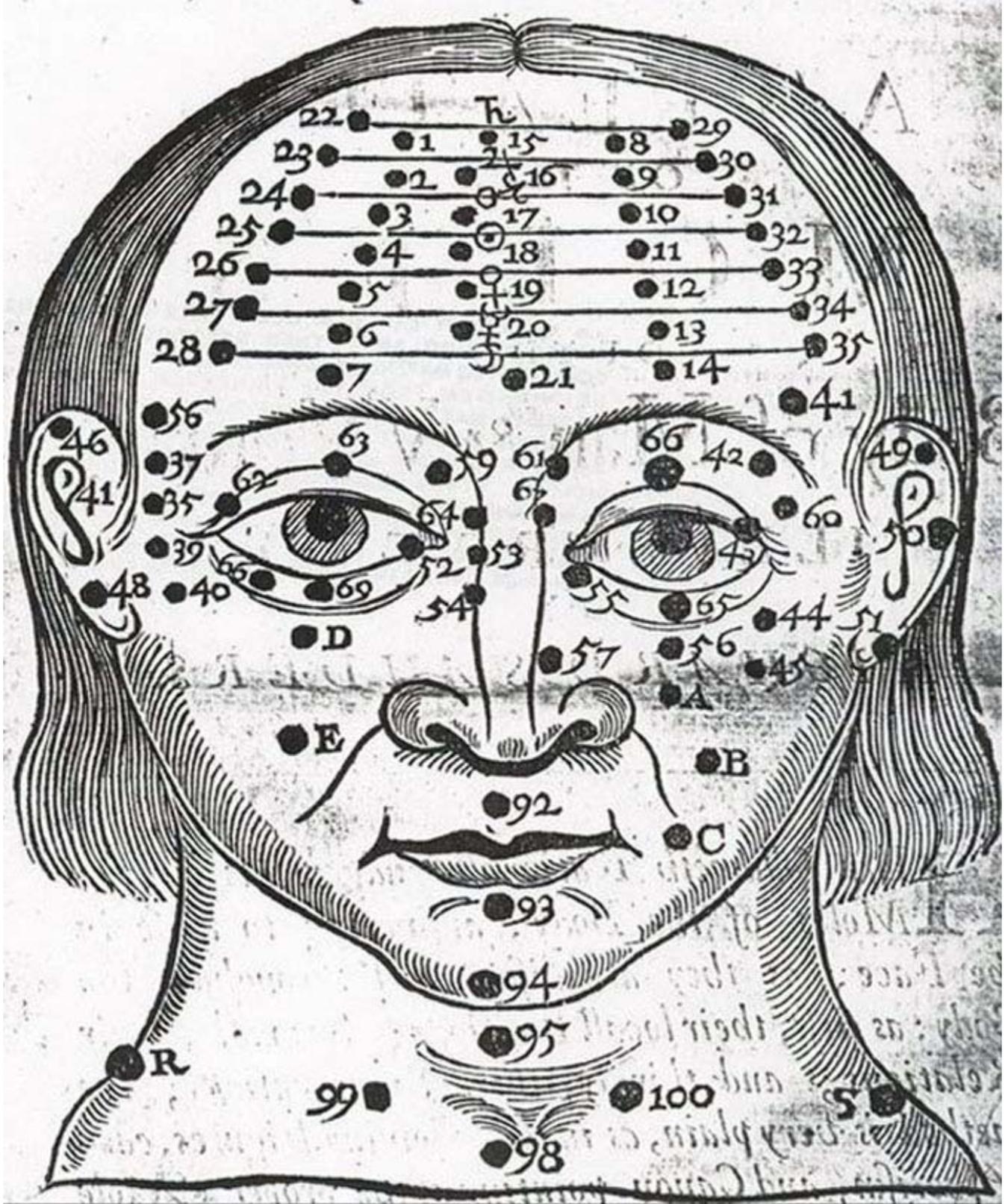


Fig. 56 Physiognomy of Moles. Saunders 1653, p. 2

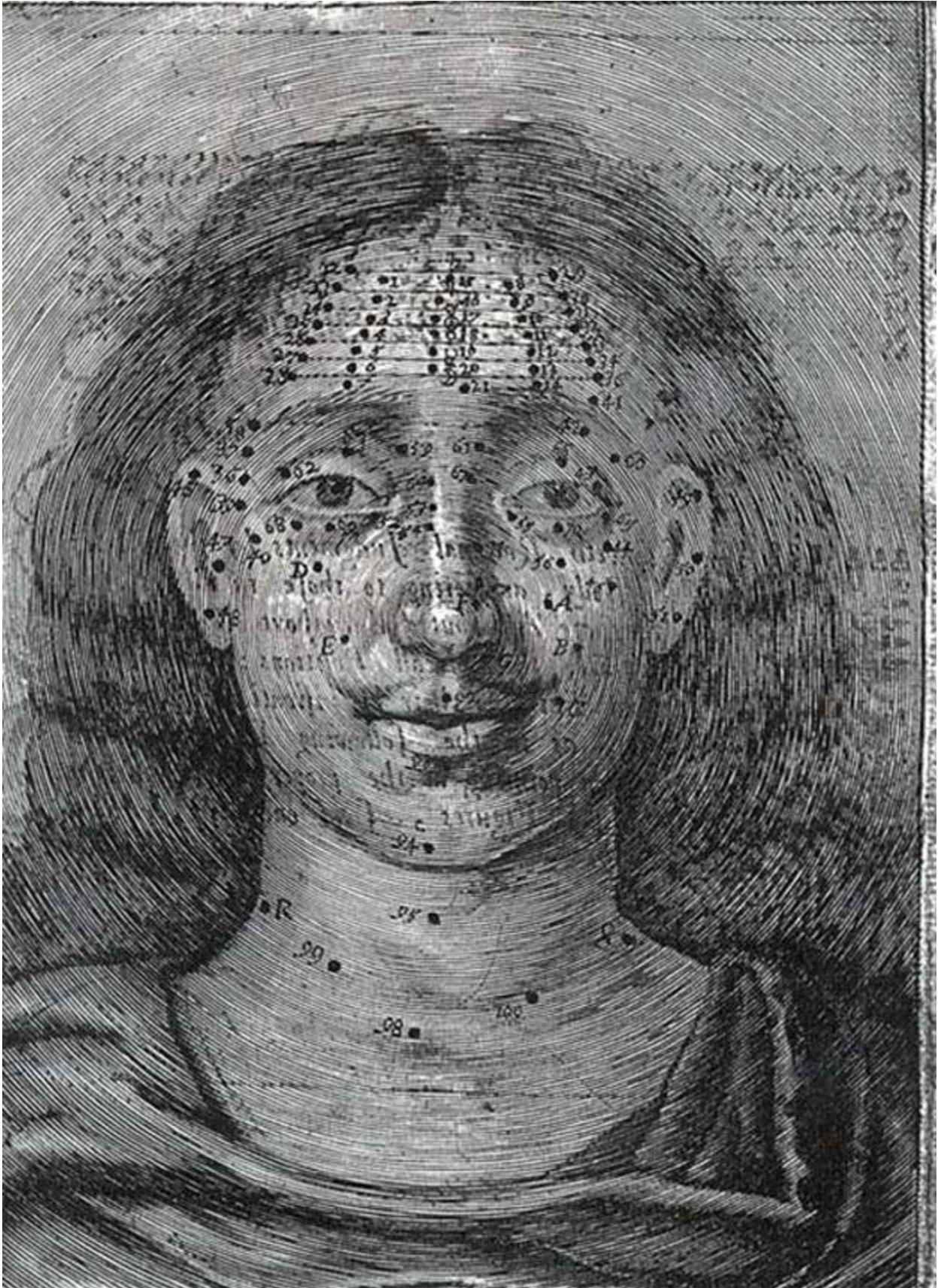


Fig. 57 Physiognomy of Moles. Saunders 1671, p. 310

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