

JOHANNES MOLANUS ON PROVOCATIVE PAINTINGS

DE HISTORIA SANCTARUM IMAGINUM ET PICTURARUM, BOOK II, CHAPTER 42

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The first ecclesiastical writer to take the Tridentine decrees relating to the use and abuse of religious imagery¹ as a starting point for an analysis of the question of nudity in art was Johannes Molanus,² in his *De Picturis et Imaginibus Sacris* (Louvain 1570).³ It is true that Gilio da Fabriano had already published his *Dialogo degli Errori de' Pittori* in 1564,⁴ the year after the final session of the Council of Trent, but he does not mention its decrees concerning art at all, and the problem of nudity is dealt with only in the specific context of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*.⁵ Molanus, on the other hand, makes the first generalized investigation of this problem in the chapter headed 'In picturis cavendum esse quidquid ad libidinem provocat'.⁶

He is scarcely original; his attack on naked and indecent images consists almost entirely of citations from other ecclesiastical sources, and the conclusions he draws from currently popular theories of art such as those associated

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¹ These are translated into English in Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, *A Documentary History of Art*, ii, 1958, pp. 63-65.

² Johannes Vermeulen (Lille 1533—Louvain 1585) was educated in Diest in Brabant, and in Louvain, where he became professor in 1570 after taking his degree in theology and his appointment as a canon of St. Peter's. In 1578 he was rector of the university and in the following year he was appointed president of the newly created Collège du Roi. Besides taking over the chief editorship of the works of St. Augustine (Antwerp 1576-7) he produced a large number of theological works, including critical editions of the *Martyrologium* of Usuardus (Louvain 1568, 1573, 1583). Of greater historical interest is the *Indiculus Sanctorum Belgii* (Louvain 1573), which mentions the violence wrought by the *gueux* in 1566, and his *Historiae Lovaniensium* which P. F. X. de Ram edited in 1861. This work is not without a certain art-historical significance for its references to masters such as Roger, the Bouts, and Q. Massijs; (cf. E. van Even, *Nederlandsche Schilders vermeld in de omtuigegevene geschiedenis van Leuven van J. Molanus*, 1858). Besides the information given in P. F. X. de Ram's introduction to his edition of the *Historiae Lovaniensium Libri XIV* (Collection de Chroniques belges inédites), 1861, the fullest bibliographical and biographical references to Molanus are to be found in H. Leclercq's article in *D.A.C.L.*,

xi, cols. 1718-1727 and that of Alphonse Wauters, in *Biographie Nationale de Belgique*, xv, 1899, pp. 48-50.

³ Johannes Molanus, *De Picturis et Imaginibus Sacris, Liber unus, tractans de vitandis circa eas abusibus ac de earundem significationibus*, Louvain 1570. Subsequent editions all appeared under the title *De Historia Sanctarum Imaginum et Picturarum* (see also p. 230).

⁴ This work is most easily accessible in P. Barocchi, ed., *Trattati d'Arte del Cinquecento*, ii, 1961, which also provides a useful introduction and commentary.

⁵ The same may be said of Dolce as well; but the charges of Aretino he reproduced were inspired by personal animus rather than based on questions of morality, as is the case in both Gilio and Molanus; except when expedient they stem from the Renaissance concept of decorum. Cf. A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600*, 1968, pp. 123ff.

⁶ This occurs as chapter 33 in the first edition of 1570. It is one of the few chapters which occurs in the same form and without any additions (with one minor exception) in all the later editions, where it always reappears as chapter 42 of Book II. It takes as its starting point chapter 37 (chapter 29 in the first edition) headed 'Lasciviam omnem vitandam esse in sacris imaginibus'. Except for its title, this latter chapter does not deal directly with the problem of decency or nudity in art, as does the chapter here translated, and it contains very little that is either original or of relevance to historians of art.

with the concepts of decorum and *ut pictura poesis* can already be found in writers like Dolce. In addition, the first part of his work, directed against the iconoclasts of the time (and specifically provoked by those in the Low Countries from 1566 on), differs little from previous theological justifications of the use of images. Molanus himself acknowledges this reliance on previous apologists in his preface, but he also realizes that whereas the primary concern of pre-Tridentine polemicists like Ambrosius Catharinus and Conradus Brunus⁷ at the height of the *Bilderfrage* controversy had been to defend the use of images,⁸ he was the first to devote a full discussion to the abuses which the Council of Trent wished to eliminate.⁹ The chapter in which he deals with the problem of nakedness thus merits attention if only because of its place in the first of a series of works taking the Tridentine decrees as a basis for an analysis of the proper relations between morality and art. There can indeed be little doubt of his influence on writers like Paleotti, whose *De Imaginibus Sacris* appeared in 1594, and Federico Borromeo (*De Pictura Sacra*, 1624).¹⁰

Whether the appeal of the *De Picturis et Imaginibus Sacris* was solely confined to theological quarters cannot be established with certainty, but it is clear that it enjoyed widespread popularity. A substantially enlarged and revised version, with the title *De Historia Sanctarum Imaginum et Picturarum*, was published in Louvain in 1594 under the editorship of Molanus's executor, Henricus Cuyckius, and subsequent editions appeared under the same title in Cologne and Antwerp in 1617, Lyons in 1619, Antwerp in 1626, and Louvain once again in 1771.¹¹

⁷ Ambrosius Catharinus (Lancelotto Politi), Bishop of Minori and Archbishop of Conza, Siena c. 1484—Naples 1553, produced a series of works against the Protestants from 1520 onwards. Besides these, he wrote on a number of the controversial problems of his day, including Predestination, the Immaculate Conception, Grace, and the cult of Saints. His *De Certa Gloria, Invocatione ac Veneratione Sanctorum Disputationes atque Assertionibus adversus Impios* (Lyons 1542) and his *De Cultu et Adoratione Imaginum* (1552) are cited a number of times by Molanus, although often with reservation. He was sent as papal delegate to the Council of Trent in 1545, the year before his appointment to the bishopric of Minori. Cf. H. Hurter, *Nomenclator Literarius Theologiae Catholicae*, ii, 1906, pp. 1378ff. and M. M. Gorce, in *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, xii, cols. 2418–2434.

Conradus Brunus (Konrad Braun), Kirchen c. 1491—Munich 1563, opposed Luther at Speyer, Worms and Ratisbon and also wrote at length against the Protestant movement. His *De Imaginibus Liber unus* was published in Mainz in 1548. Cf. V. Ernoni, in *D.Th.C.*, ii, col. 1151. See also note 23 below.

⁸ For the most comprehensive accounts of the controversy surrounding the pre-Tridentine *Bilderfrage*, see H. F. von Campenhausen, 'Die Bildnisfrage in die Reformation', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, lxxviii, 1957, pp. 96–128, and H. Jedin, 'Entstehung und Tragweite des Trienter Dekrets über die Bilderverehrung', in *Theologische Quartalsschrift*, cxvi, 1935, pp. 143–88 and pp. 404–29.

⁹ After citing the relevant passage from the Trent statute, Molanus states in his introduction to the 1570 edition of the *De Picturis et Imaginibus Sacris*: 'cum itaque contra iconoclastas sacrarum imaginum usum multi doctissimi absolutissimis suis lucubrationibus defenderint, de abusibus vero nullius, quod sciam, extet aut liber aut iustus tractatus.'

¹⁰ P. Prodi, in 'Ricerche sulla teorica delle arti figurative nella riforma cattolica', *Archivio Italiano per la storia della pietà*, iv, 1965, p. 137 quotes from a letter written by Paleotti to C. Borromeo as early as 1579: 'ho ritrovato il Molano de Picturis onde non accaderà che ella si scomodi di mandarmi il suo. . . .' See also C. Dejob, *De l'influence du Concile de Trente sur la littérature et les beaux-arts chez les peuples catholiques*, 1884, p. 260.

¹¹ J. N. Paquot, Molanus's 1771 editor and

Certainly Molanus's own interest in art was not exclusively academic or theological. Unlike the majority of the sixteenth-century ecclesiastical writers on the arts, personal experience forms the basis of much of his discussion, and despite his frequent citation of other sources, he takes pains to demonstrate that his acquaintance with specific works of art is not entirely theoretical.¹² Generalized statements are often backed up by more specific references,¹³ and when he refers to works he himself has not seen, he is able to cite the personal testimony of other scholars who have.¹⁴ Thus although the bulk of Molanus's argument in the chapter translated below is taken from traditional sources, the majority of his iconographical observations in the rest of the work at any rate are made with specific representations in mind.¹⁵ He also gives evidence throughout of a wide range of general

also a Louvain theologian, provides a fully annotated text as well as his own views on many of the problems treated by Molanus. Of interest here are not only his supplement to chapter 37 (see also note 6 above) in which he discusses various sorts of representations involving nudity, but also his introduction, dealing with the indebtedness of later writers to Molanus.

¹² For a full discussion of this aspect of Molanus's work, see Emile Neve, 'Des Travaux de Jean Molanus sur l'iconographie chrétienne', *Annuaire de l'université de Louvain*, xi, 1847, pp. 242-94. The same article is reproduced in *Analectes pour servir à l'histoire de l'université de Louvain*, x, 1847, pp. 86-138.

¹³ One of the most precise examples occurs on fol. 173 (this and all subsequent page references are to the 1594 edition), where a generalization about paintings showing the Crown of Christ is followed by an example at Nivelles: 'Veteres autem quondam imagines non habent in capite Christi coronam: aliquae habent regalem coronam. Qualem perantiquam ac grandem Nivellae vidi ad Sanctam Gertrudam refectam ac renovatam anno 1428.'

Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* provides an instance of the misrepresentation of St. Bartholomew: 'Nimium vero crasse ac lascive depingitur alicubi Bartholomaeus totus excoriatus velut monstrum quoddam, & vir sylvestris, gerens in baculo cutem suam, quasi sic, ut quidam ineptissime nugantur, Romam cucurrisset. Nec multum ab hoc pictura distat, quod Michelangelus Romae in secretiori sacello Pontificio, quod Xisti Quarti dicitur, Bartholomaeum in extremo iudicio pinxerit, cutem suam manu gestantem . . . (fol. 146v)'

¹⁴ Usually in the case of countries outside the Netherlands. Allegorical representations

of the Church in Worms and Fulda are described and discussed on fols. 177-177v: 'Et quia in mentionem picturarum Ecclesiae incidimus, placet ea adicere quae huc spectantia a Georgio Wicelio sunt observata. Vidit is Wormatiae ad templi primarii fores typum rarae antiquitatis, reginam veluti triumphantem, & iumento quadricipiti laetam insidentem, ad terrorem partis adversariae vivaciter effigiatam. Hanc autem reginam Ecclesiam non dubitari potest. . . . Vidit ac Fuldae in vetustissimo aulaeo inter prophetas & Apostolos eam consistentem, tamquam reginam in vestitu deaurato, gemmeoque pectorali insigniter exornatam, habentem in scheda scriptum: Ego dilecta meo & dilectus meus mihi. . . .'

Johannes Gravius, a fellow scholar who became librarian of the Vatican, provided him with a personal communication regarding pictures of the Assumption in Rome: 'Romae in diversis ecclesiis visitur, observavit, mihi-que communicavit, Johannes Gravius, adiungi Christum, qui gloriosissimam virginem matrem suam manibus defert in coelum. . . . (fol. 144v).'

¹⁵ He quotes Gerson on the 'falsa historia in Carmelitis & similes quae in ventribus earum unam habent Trinitatem, veluti si tota Trinitas in virgine Maria, assumpsisset humanam' and goes on to recall a painting he had seen at Diest: 'Vidi huiusmodi imaginem in Carthusia Diestensi, quae quantum memini eo allata ex Francia tempore bellorum (fols. 19v-20).

One way of representing St. John the Baptist is described as follows: 'Ioannes digito monstrat Agnum Dei, pedibus autem Herodem quem moriendo devicit, conculcat.' He knew of at least two such representations, in Bruges and Ghent: 'Huiuscemodi imago exstat Brugis in claustro canonicorum divi

reading outside the field of religious dogma. His awareness of contemporary non-ecclesiastical writing includes not only the emblem works of Alciati, Claude Paradin, Johannes Sambucus and Hadrianus Junius,¹⁶ but extends to a treatise such as Philander's commentary on Vitruvius,¹⁷ to which he refers the reader for an exposition of the 'vetustus usus tricliniorum'.¹⁸ Dürer, Alberti and Pomponius Gauricus are suggested for consultation when he disclaims his ability to make aesthetic judgements.¹⁹ In his treatment of iconographic problems he shows a more than cursory acquaintance with Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino,²⁰ and as a supplement to his discussion of pagan gods and philosophers, he recommends for further reading the works not only of Fulgentius and 'Albricus', but also of Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus, Ludovicus Coelius Rhodiginus, Politian and Angelo Decembrio.²¹

One should perhaps bear in mind such features of the work as a whole when considering how little of the discussion in the following chapter can be regarded as new. Grouped round the long passages from Erasmus are

Donatiani. Qua nullam putat esse Dn Pame-
lius in tota urbe vetustiore. Similem
observavi etiam Gandavi, dum Cathedralis
Ecclesiae reliquias & sacra impositoria perlus-
trarem (fol. 129^v).⁷

¹⁶ These are all mentioned on fol. 93^v,
in Book II, chapter 60, headed 'Imagines
Ethicas quas Pagani habuerunt, utiliter a
nobis conservari'. Claude Paradin's *Heroica
Symbola* is specifically cited both here and
Book III, chapter 39 in connexion with the
image of the archangel Michael worn by the
French nobility (fol. 151^v).

¹⁷ Gulielmus Philander, *Gulielmi Philandri
Castilionii Galli Civis Ro. in decem Libros M.
Vitruvii Pollionis de Architectura Annotationes*,
Rome, 1544.

¹⁸ The reference occurs after the statement
on fol. 191 that the marriage at Cana took
place in a *triclinium*: 'Qui autem vetustum
usum tricliniorum scire cupit, legat Annota-
tiones Gulielmi Philandri Castillioni in Vitru-
vii de Architectura sextum librum cap. 5 &
Petrum Ciacconum in libello de hac re
scripto.'

¹⁹ Book II, chapter 69 (fol. 104^v) headed
'Qui de arte pictoria scripserunt' opens as
follows: 'Praesenti autem libro nihil ago de
artificio artis pictoriae, aut reliquiarum
artium, quae picturam comitantur: quales
sunt ut statuaria, & plastica, fusoria, &
criptica. Statuaria, ex lapide, ligno, ebore
rerum imagines fabricat: eademque ex gleba
fingit plastes: Ars autem fusoria haec in
proplaste ex aere aliisque metallis exprimit.
Cripticus vero lapidibus & gemmis insculpit.
Scripsit de istis ex recentioribus Pomponius
Gauricus, Leo Baptista de Albertis Florentinus

scripsit de pictura libros tres. Albertus
Durerus edidit institutionum Geometricarum
libros quatuor pro pictoribus, lapicidis etc.'

He then mentions Pliny Book 35 and goes
on to quote Aelian xiv. 14: 'Ego vero ut
dixi, de artificio nec tractare volo, nec iudi-
care, non enim habeo oculos artis peritos, ut
discernere possim quae pictura cui sit prae-
ferenda.'

²⁰ Pico is cited on fol. 193 in connexion
with the 'imago de mysteriis Passionis
Domini': 'quae unde originem suam acceperit,
describit Ioannes Franciscus Picus, Miran-
dulae Dominus, & Concordiae Comes in
Heroico Carmine de mysteriis Dominicae
Crucis nuper in Germaniam delapsis, quod
scripsit ad Maximilian Augustum, Roman-
orum regem. . . .'

On fol. 125^v, some lines are taken from
Ficino's (here 'Platonicus ille Philosophus
Ficinus') *Liber de vita coelitus comparanda* as an
authority for the quadrangular form of the
cross used by the Egyptians before Christ.

²¹ Book II chapter 59 'De falsorum deorum
& philosophorum qui scripserint' has the
following concluding paragraph: 'De imagini-
bus vero falsorum Deorum multa leguntur
sparsim in patrium opusculis eorum qui
contra gentiles scripserint. De iisdem Flori-
legium Graecum, Planciades Fulgentius in
Mythologiarum libro, Albricus de imaginibus
deorum, Gregorius Gyraldus de Diis gentium,
Alexander ab Alexandro genialium dierum
lib. 4 capite 12. Ludovicus Coelius lib. 28
antiquarum lectionum capite 12 & lib. 25
capite 17. Angelus Decembrius part 68. Et
Angelus Politianus Centuriae primae capite
65 (fol. 89^v).

homiletic commonplaces which might have been found in apologists like Catharinus, Nicholas Harpsfield and Brunus, as well as in earlier authorities such as St. Antoninus and Durandus.²² Nevertheless, the few observations made *in propria persona* have a certain originality for the way they are used to marshal the various quotations, thus enabling one to define the various premises on which Molanus bases his attack on indecency in images. This proves to be an attempt at a systematic and developed argument rather than a random compilation of quotations, and whether coincidental or not, each one bears a close relation not only to other parts of chapter 42, but also to associated problems discussed elsewhere in the book.

The initial criticism for example, depends on the assumption that indecent images represent a complete distortion of the traditional justification of images as a means of arousing the devotion of the faithful,²³ as is quite clear from the Catharinus quotation; the associated belief that paintings served *ad instructionem eruditum* lies at the basis of much of what follows. And how important the Gregorian concept of paintings as the *libri idiotarum*²⁴ was for Molanus can be judged from the first chapter of the work devoted to practical considerations: 'Quod in libris prohibentur etiam esse in picturis, quod sint idiotarum libri' (fol. 16).²⁵ So it is not only because of the familiar parallel between *pictura* and *poesis* that Molanus is enabled to use as part of his argument the Tridentine decrees relating to books as well.²⁶ When he claims that indecency should not be tolerated even in profane images (in this respect Molanus is stricter than many ecclesiastical writers both before and after him), he provides himself with a pretext for citing Horace in support of a significant extension to the decrees.²⁷ Although in

²² Gulielmus Durandus (ca. 1220–1296), the Dominican theologian and Bishop of Meaux, called 'The Speculator', wrote on a number of aspects of Christian ritual, in his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*. A selection from Book I Chapter 3 headed 'Of pictures and images and curtains and the ornaments of churches' is translated in Holt, *op. cit.*, i, p. 121.

²³ One of the aims of painting attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas had long been 'ad excitandam devotionem'. The use to which this was put in the Reformation is discussed in H. F. von Campenhausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 98ff. The observations of H. Jedin, *op. cit.*, p. 161 summarizing the works of Catharinus and Brunus indicate how much the mode of argument adopted here and in the rest of the chapter owes to them: 'Wie Braun, so macht auch Catharinus bemerkenswerte Vorschläge zur Beseitigung der Misbrauchen . . . nach Braun sind von den Kirchen fernzuhalten profane Darstellungen . . . vor allem unanständige laszive Bilder. Sie alle widersprechen den Zwecken der kirchliche Kunst zu unterrichten und erbauen.'

²⁴ The Gregorian standpoint on images is

clearly delineated in the letters *Ad Serenum Massiliensem Episcopum*, in *S. Gregorii Papae I cognomento Magno Opera Omnia*, viii, 1771, p. 134 and p. 242.

²⁵ In a note to a similar demand made by Gilio, Barocchi, *op. cit.*, p. 578 discusses the use of the Gregorian dicta in this connexion by Durandus, Catharinus, Ghini and Possevino, and in the context of the equivalence between *pictura* and *poesis* by Varchi, Pino and Dolce. Even a work like Borghini's *Riposo*, although directed more specifically towards the artist, took as its basis his translation of Gregory's 'Quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat' (cf. J. Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, 1963, p. 273).

²⁶ These are reproduced in *Concilium Generalium Ecclesiae Catholicae Tomus Quartus Pauli V Pont. Max. Auctoritate Editus* Rome, 1612 (hereafter *Concilium Generalium*), p. 284.

²⁷ The same strictness with regard to pagan imagery as well as the use of the Tridentine decrees on books occurs when he is led to reject another well-known Horatian dictum. In the chapter mentioned above headed 'Quod in libris prohibentur prohibendum esse in picturis quae sunt idiotarum libri', he

an earlier chapter he had stated that what the church tolerated in books should also be tolerated in pictures, here he demands that once it comes to what should be *censured*, paintings should be subject to yet more rigorous strictures than books:²⁸ their effects, according to Horace, were much more powerful and immediate. The problem is considered solely from the spectator's point of view,²⁹ and his greater susceptibility to paintings than to books is one of the recurring themes in this treatise. Later on in the same book, for example, after quoting Erasmus on the doctrine that pictures are for the illiterate what books are for the learned, he states:

Imo doctus etiam interdum plus videt in tabula, quam in literis ac vehementius afficitur, veluti magis moveremur si conspiceremus Christum in cruce pendentem quam si legeremus illum crucifixum (fol. 81^v.)

Indeed many of the problems dealt with by Molanus had already been considered by Erasmus. That of the provocative element in art Erasmus saw in the same light as Molanus: in the *Modus Orandi* certain pictures of the Virgin and St. Agatha were classified as follows: 'sunt enim imo quae citius provocant ad lasciviam quam ad pietatem'.³⁰ So despite Erasmus's place on the Tridentine Index (ironically enough in this particular context) and the fact that Molanus later devotes chapters 54 and 55 to a refutation of a number of his views on the role of painting in the church, it is not surprising that Molanus finds long passages from him to reproduce in support of his general argument here. Besides the awareness of the greater affective powers of paintings than of words, there is much in it which is of direct relevance to what has preceded; in addition it raises issues which are not only important for the discussion which follows but also feature prominently in other parts of the work. Aristotle's call for official control of the arts cited here naturally became still more relevant after the council of Trent, whose decree on the ecclesiastical supervision of the arts was taken up by most of the

states: 'Neque ad sacras imagines extendendum est quod gentilis poeta dixit—Pictoribus atque poetis / Quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas. Imo, ne in prophanis quidem picturis quidlibet audendum est a pictoribus. Quis etiam nesciat obscenas imagines iure naturae perinde prohibitas esse atque libros sive haereticos sive obscenos. Quare eiusmodi imagines & sculpturae verum propositas rectissime per secularem magistratum omnes auferuntur & abolentur, dignae cum libris obscenis pereant: de quibus Patres a Synodo Tridentino dixerunt. . . .' (fol. 17).

Barocchi, *op. cit.*, p. 578 once again has a useful note on the same rejection of this Horatian dictum by Durandus, Catharinus, Brunus and Borghini. K. Borinski, *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunst-theorie*, i, 1914, pp. 196-7 discusses its rejection by Cennini.

²⁸ Already in 1557 Dolce had said that improper pictures, far more than improper books, should be placed on the *Index*; but

once again this pronouncement was made in the specific context of the *Last Judgment*. Cf. Rensselaer W. Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis*, New York 1967, p. 38 [repr. from *Art Bull.*, xxii, 1942].

²⁹ It is from this point of view that Molanus makes his criticism of nude figures. Because secular humanists of the Renaissance such as Alberti and Angelo Decembrio considered the artist's standpoint as well, they could advocate the depiction of naked limbs—as a point of departure for the artist's skill, either in connexion with his ability as a *simia naturae*, or for the sake of variety, or sometimes even as a condition of artistic immortality. Cf. M. Baxandall, 'A dialogue on art from the court of Leonello d'Este: Angelo Decembrio's *De Politia Litteraria* Pars LXVIII', this *Journal*, XXVI, 1963, pp. 307-8.

³⁰ *Desiderii Erasmi Opera Omnia*, ed. J. Clericus (Jean Leclerc), Leiden, 1703-6, Tom. v, col. 1120 A-B.

writers in the later half of the sixteenth century, including non-ecclesiastical theorists such as Lomazzo. In fact, even Catharinus and Brunus had already suggested this form of control, and their work was probably taken into account by the colloquium of Poissy in 1561, which stated bluntly: 'novas imagines inconsulto episcopo nullas erigi sinant'.³¹ This in turn provided a close precedent for the much fuller Trent decree,³² which was quoted by Molanus in Book II chapter 47, itself headed 'Novitas omnis diligenter est examinanda in picturis antequam approbetur' (fol. 73^v).

After censuring the indecent representation of the pagan gods (once again in the context of the greater affective powers of painting than of language as well as that of the need for especial care in the case of the young), Erasmus broaches another aspect of the Council's decrees also dealt with by Molanus. Although he did not really approve of the way in which saints were carried round in procession, Erasmus knew that such 'vestiges of ancient paganism' were a decided improvement on the worship of the pagan gods themselves.³³ Hence their mention here in connexion with religious festivals 'in quorum festis solenniter turpia agitabantur'. That the sort of distortion represented by the juxtaposition 'solenniter turpia' could not be tolerated in Christian festivals one sees not only in the unexpectedly sarcastic pronouncement made by the Council of Trent in the course of advocating the elimination of abuses: 'quasi festi dies honorem sanctorum per luxum ac lasciviam agentur', but also in Book II chapter 33 entitled 'Superstitionem omnem tollendam esse in sacrarum imaginum circumgestatione', which Molanus devotes to the same problem.

It is worth noting in this connexion how similar the language of Erasmus's reproach of pagan imagery is to that used by Clement of Alexandria in the passage paraphrased at the end of the chapter.³⁴ And in the quotation from Clement one also finds the use of the important parallel between the senses of sight and sound, and a few lines before, an almost identical reference to the licentiousness portrayed in public places and the problem of provocative imagery.³⁵

Although the excerpt from Clement forms a closely integrated part of the chapter as a whole, the same cannot be said of the closing sentence, in which reference is made to the treatment of similar material in Trithemius.

³¹ Quoted and discussed in Jedin, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

³² Its terms are worth comparing with that of the Poissy Colloquium, as well as suggestions made by both Erasmus and Molanus (cf. also n. 27 above): 'Haec ut fidelius observentur, statuit Sancta Synodus, nemini licere ullo in loco vel Ecclesia etiam quomodolibet exempta ullam insolitam ponere, vel ponendam curare imaginem, nisi ab episcopo approbata fuerit; nulla etiam admittenda esse nova miracula, nec novas reliquias accipiendas, nisi eodem recognoscente ac approbante episcopo' (*Concilium Generalium*, p. 284).

³³ Cf. E. Panofsky, 'Erasmus and the Visual

Arts', this *Journal*, XXXII, 1969, p. 208.

³⁴ Cf. the language used by Gilio as well as the Synod of Malines of 1570 quoted in n. 29 of the translation.

³⁵ Clement reproaches the Greeks as follows 'you are not ashamed in the eyes of all to look at representations of all forms of licentiousness which are portrayed in public places. . . . (Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, Chapter IV. Translated into English in Alexander Robert and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ii, *Fathers of the Second Century*, American edition revised by A. Cleveland Coxe, reprint, 1969, p. 189).

If Molanus added it simply for the sake of comprehensiveness, it would seem strange that he omitted to mention at least two of the most well-known issues associated with the problem of nudity in painting. But, as he himself knew, the nakedness of the angels and of Adam and Eve could be regarded as a testimony of their innocence and sanctity,³⁶ and might have been used to detract from much of the argument in this chapter. The reference to Trithemius, on the other hand, might have been used in support of it, and could thus not be left out. But its vagueness is surprising in a chapter where the other references, in addition to being precise, are collated in a way that makes Molanus's disapproval of indecent and provocative elements in art seem both clear and based on well-defined premises.

The text below is reproduced exactly as it appears in the 1594 and subsequent editions (see p. 230 above), but without the marginal references. These are either unhelpful or incorrectly placed, even in the carefully annotated version published by Paquot in 1771.

³⁶ In the chapter on the representation of the angels, Molanus quotes with approval the following passage from Petrus Thynus: ' . . . Nuditas in hominibus verecundiam parit; in Angelis virtutis argumentum est, sanctitatis inquam, castitatis, immortalitatis, & innocentiae. Quibus etiam primi illi parentes vestiti, nec ipsa nuditate confundebantur, cum non essent in corpore cui verecundia deberetur: nec quidquam putabant velandum, quia nihil sentiebant refrenandum.'

In her note to Gilio's similar statement on the nakedness of Adam and Eve, Barocchi, *op. cit.*, p. 601 quotes a passage from Brunus which closely parallels the one above from Thynus. In fact, even theologians of the Middle Ages like Hugh of St. Victor and Vincent of Beauvais had tolerated nudity in art for its figurative demonstration of man's basic weakness and frailty. (Cf. K. Borinski, *op. cit.*, i, p. 88.)

APPENDIX follows on page 238.

CAPUT XLII

In picturis cavendum esse quicquid ad libidinem provocat.

Porro, si in picturis omnis lascivia vitari debeat, quanto magis quicquid ad libidinem provocat?¹ Ut merito hic exclamet Ambr. Catharinus, Quod vero omnium est teterrimum, hac tempestate, in excelsis templis sacellisque offendas picturas tantae lasciviae, ut quicquid natura turpe occulit turpe nostrum ibi liceat contemplari, ad excitandam non devotionem sed cuiusvis demortuae carnis libidinem.² Quasi, inquit Olaus historicus Septemtrionalis, interior caro non sufficeret sibi in deiiciendo homine, in mille tentationes fragilitate tandem sua collapsuro, nisi & externae auferentur provocationes.³ Notum est pictores saepe infantem IESUM nudum sculpere aut pingere: sed ob hoc male audiunt a multis non exiguae pietatis & prudentiae viris. Quid enim in hac nuditate esse potest aedificationis?⁴ Atque utinam nulla hinc oriretur in parvulis destructio, nullum in pusillis scandalum. Viderint ergo pictores ne suo malo discant quid sit quod Dominus ait, Qui scandalizaverit unum de pusillis istis qui in me credunt, expedit ei ut suspendatur mola asinaria in collo eius & demergatur in profundum maris. Vae homini illi per quem scandalum venit.⁵ Certe si antiquas picturas consulere velint, facile advertent in eis puerum IESUM decenter & honeste depictum esse,⁶ ac sese multum a maiorum simplicitate degenerasse.⁷ His adde, quod Gulielmus Durandus Mimatensis Episcopus scribit de quibusdam Graecanicis Ecclesiis in Rationali divinatorum officiorum, Graeci, ait, utuntur imaginibus, pingentes illas ut dicitur, solum ab umbilico supra & non inferius, ut omnis stultae cogitationis occasio tollatur.⁸ Prohibet deputatio Tridentinae Synodi, omnes libros qui res lascivas seu obscenas ex professo tractant, narrant aut docent;⁹ cum non solum fidei, sed & morum, qui eiusmodi librorum lectione facile corrumpi solent, ratio habenda sit: quanto ergo magis prohibendae sunt huiusmodi picturae, non tantum in sacris imaginibus, sed etiam in prophanis? Nam ut recte dixit gentilis Poeta:

¹ All the Council of Trent itself had to say on the subject of *lascivia* in art was 'omnis denique lascivia vitetur; ita ut procaci venustate imagines non pingantur nec ornentur'; and these words occur in the course of naming other possible abuses such as *superstitio* and *turpis quaestus* (*Concilium Generalium*, p. 284). The heading of chapter 42 thus represents an extension of the problem of *lascivia* in art not specifically made by the Tridentine decree (cf. n. 6 above) as the opening sentence here makes clear. The first part is from the decree, whereas 'quanto magis quicquid ad libidinem provocat' is the further element to which Molanus devotes this chapter.

² Ambrosius Catharinus, *Disputatio de cultu et adoratione imaginum*, in *Enarrationes R. P. F. Ambrosii Catharini Politi . . . in quinque priora capita libri Geneseos. Adduntur plerique tractatus*

et questiones . . . Rome 1552, col. 144. With this statement one might compare Gilio's apposite quotation from Seneca 'Se ne tempi entriamo, deggiamo stare con divozione e timore'. (Barocchi, *op. cit.*, p. 80.)

³ Olaus Magnus (Olaf Mansson, archbishop of Uppsala, 1490-1557) *Historia de Gentibus septentrionalibus, earumque diversis statibus, conditionibus, moribus, superstitionibus, disciplinis exercitiis, regimine, victu, bellis, structuris, instrumentis, ac mineris metallicis, & rebus mirabilibus, necnon universis pene animalibus in septentrione degentibus, eorumque natura*, Rome 1555, p. 463. This statement is made after reproaching those who derive pleasure from images of naked women (cf. the passage Molanus takes from Clement of Alexandria below). This quotation from Olaus Magnus's immensely popular *Historia* is the only addition to the chapter as it first appeared in 1570.

Chapter 42

In paintings whatever stimulates lust should be avoided.

Furthermore, if all indecency should be avoided in paintings, how much more so should one avoid whatever stimulates lust?¹ In this connexion, Ambrosius Catharinus justifiably exclaims: 'The most disgusting aspect of this age is the fact you come across pictures of gross indecency in the greatest churches and chapels, so that can look at there all the bodily shames that nature has concealed, with the effect of arousing not devotion but every lust of the corrupt flesh.'² 'As if,' says Olaus the Scandinavian historian, 'the flesh by itself were not sufficient for bringing down a man, who is prone to a thousand temptations because of his human weakness, even without the stimulation of external provocations.'³ It is well known that artists often paint or sculpt the infant Jesus naked; but for this they are widely criticized by men of no little piety and wisdom. For what sort of edification can there be in this nakedness?⁴ All one can hope is that children are not endangered by this or little ones brought to harm. Painters should therefore beware: they may discover to their cost what our Lord meant by saying: 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged round his neck and that he were drowned in the sea . . . woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!'⁵ Certainly if these painters should look at the work of past time, they would soon observe that the boy Jesus was decently and modestly portrayed then,⁶ and realize how far they have degenerated from the simplicity of their ancestors.⁷ Add to this what Gulielmus Durandus the Bishop of Meaux writes about certain Greek churches in his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*: 'The Greeks', he says, 'use images, painting them (as it is said) only from the navel above, and not lower, so that there is no opportunity for brute thoughts to suggest themselves'.⁸ The commission of the Council of Trent forbids all books which deliberately discuss, recount or teach indecent or obscene matters,⁹ since account must be taken not only of the faith but also of the morals of those who may easily be prone to corruption from books of this sort: how much more then are paintings of this kind to be forbidden—not only in the case of sacred images but also

⁴ For medieval views of the naked Christ-child, however, cf. Borinski, *op. cit.*, i, p. 272, n. 5.

⁵ Matthew, xviii, 6–7. In his discussion of naked figures, Gilio introduces the same passage in a similar way: 'anco da le pitture vengono gli scandali. E chi non ara riguardo a lo scandolo, gli averra quello che disse il Signor nostro, che guai a quello per cui vengono gli scandali . . .' (Barocchi, *op. cit.*, p. 790).

⁶ One wonders whether Molanus realized how unsound a generalization this was. As Borinski, *op. cit.*, i, p. 91 points out, ever since the first catacomb paintings, the divine equivalent of naked putti had been the naked Christ-child on his mother's arm both in the North and the South.

⁷ Gilio's criticisms of modern painters is based on an almost identical respect for the

'ancients': 'Qual e questa antica consuetudine . . .? Il dipingere le sacre immagini oneste e devote, con que segni che gli sono stati dati dagli antichi per privileggio de la santita il che e paruto a moderni vile, goffo, plebeo, antico, umile, senza ingegno et arte. Per questo esse antepoendo l'arte a l'onesta, lasciando l'uso di fare le figure vestite, l'hanno fatte e le fanno nude; lasciando l'uso di farle devote, l'hanno fatte sforzate . . .' (Barocchi, *op. cit.*, p. 111).

⁸ Gulielmus Durandus (see note 22 above), *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, Book i, chapter 3. This work is translated into English by J. M. Neale and B. Webb, as *The Symbolism of Churches and Ornaments*, 1843. The passage here is also available in English in Holt, *op. cit.*, i, p. 120.

⁹ Cf. the *Decretum de editione & usu sacrorum librorum*, in *Concilium Generalium*, p. 205.

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures
Quam quae sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus, & quae
Ipse sibi tradit spectator.*¹⁰

Huc facit & illud Erasmi, quod ex institutione matrimonii Christiani, quia ea a Patribus Tridentinis non abs re damnata est, citatione mea conservare cupio; eo quod apud multos infirmos Erasmi autoritas & iudicium multum valeat.¹¹ Quemadmodum inquit, non decet in familia audiri sermonem lascivum, ita nec tabulas haberi convenit impudicas. Loquax enim res est pictura tacita, & sensim irrepit in animos hominum. Turpitudinis deliciis quidam ornant sua conclavia, quasi iuventuti desint irritamenta nequitiae. Membra quae verecundiae gratia celas ne videantur, cur in tabula nudas, & nunquam ea pateris abesse a conspectu liberorum?¹² Nec minus eleganter idem in institutione Christiani hominis,¹³ Aristoteles, ait, adeo putat picturas statuasque lascivas ad morum corruptelam facere,¹⁴ ut hoc velit per Magistratus publicis legibus caveri, ne quid imaginum sit in civitate quod admoneat turpitudinis: lingua loquitur auribus, pictura loquitur oculis; multoque loquacior est pictura, quam oratio; & frequenter altius descendit in pectus hominis. Quid memorem quanta sit in signis ac picturis licentia? Pingitur & oculis repraesentatur, quod vel nominare sit turpissimum. Haec argumenta prostant publicitus, in tabernis ac foro,¹⁵ & volentium nolentium oculis ingeruntur, quibus incendi iam frigidus aevo Laomedontiades & Nestoris hernia possint. O legum & Magistratum oscitantiam! Erravit autem graviter Philosophus, dum imaginum obscenitatem undique profligans, excipit deos quibus leges attribuunt turpitudinem. Sentit opinor de Venere & Cupidinibus nudis, de custode hortorum, de Satyris & Phallis Bacchi, in quorum festis solenniter turpia agitabantur. O novam Philosophi religionem! In diis permittit turpitudinem ubi maxime conveniebat abesse turpitudinem. Quamquam Aristoteles ab huiusmodi factis vult arceri teneram aetatem. Agamus gratias Deo quod nostra religio nihil habet non castum & pudicum.¹⁶ At tanto gravius peccant, qui rebus natura castis invehunt impudicitiam. Quid est necesse in templo depingere David contemplantem e fenestra Bethsabeam & ad stuprum evocantem;¹⁷ aut amplectentem ad se delatam Sunamitam; Herodiadis filiam saltantem? Argumenta sumpta sunt e divinis libris, sed in exprimendis foedis foeminis quantum admiscent artifices nequitiae.¹⁸ Et iterum ex Christiani matrimonii institutione; Artifices quidam cum pingunt aliquid ex Evangelica historia, affingunt impias

¹⁰ Horace, *Ars Poetica*, ll. 180–2.

¹¹ With this statement on Erasmus one may compare the opinion expressed on fol. 81, in the first chapter devoted to refuting the views of Erasmus (see p. 234 above): 'At vero sistendum hic est nonnihil propter ea quae Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus sinistro iudicio . . . de sacris imaginibus scripta reliquit . . . vanitas illorum redarguenda est, qui quibusvis Erasmi verbis etiam leviuscule dictis, perinde fere ac divinis oraculis addicti videntur . . . Publica quoque eaque ecclesias-

tica censura tam graviter opera eius ac libros reprehenderit ut non sit opus me anxium esse in nomine ipsius supprimendo.'

¹² *Desiderii Erasmi Opera Omnia*, J. Clericus (Jean Leclerc), ed., (hereafter *Opera*), v, *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio*, Leiden 1703–6, col. 696E. As in the case of the following quotations from Erasmus as well, Molanus sometimes fails to adhere strictly to the text and omits an occasional sentence. Such omissions I have indicated in the course of the translation.

of profane. For, as the pagan poet correctly said: 'What the mind takes in through the ears stimulates it less actively than what is presented to it by the eyes, and what the spectator can see and believe for himself'.¹⁰ I wish to preserve by quoting here a statement of Erasmus to the same effect, from his *Institutio Matrimonii Christiani*, because this work was not condemned by the Tridentine fathers without good reason; and also because the authority and judgment of Erasmus carry much weight amongst many of the weak.¹¹ 'Just as' he says, 'it is not becoming for indecent speech to be heard in the family, so it is not fitting to possess immodest pictures. A picture, silent though it is, can speak, and its influence gradually creeps over the mind. Some adorn their own rooms with obscene works of art, as if youth were lacking in incitements to wickedness. Why do you bare in paintings the limbs which you conceal for the sake of modesty . . . , and never suffer them to be out of the sight of your children?'¹² Equally good is what Erasmus says in the *Institutio Christiani Hominis*:¹³ 'Aristotle thinks that indecent paintings and statues make for such a corruption of morals that he wishes the magistrates to take precautions by means of public legislation that there be no image in the state suggestive of obscenity.'¹⁴ the tongue speaks to the ears and painting to the eyes. Painting is much more eloquent than speech, and often penetrates more deeply into a man's heart. . . . Why should I expatiate on the liberties taken in paintings and sculpture? What is disgraceful to name is freely painted and presented to the eyes. These subjects stand forth in public, in the taverns and market place,¹⁵ and are willy-nilly thrust on our view. They could even inflame Priam for all the coldness of his age, and rouse Nestor's loins. Yet the law and our magistrates still hesitate! However, while castigating the obscenity of images everywhere, Aristotle seriously errs by making an exception of the gods who are traditionally allowed indecency. I suppose he was thinking of Venus and naked cupids, about Priapus, about the satyrs and phalluses of Bacchus, on whose festivals indecencies were solemnly enacted. But this is a strange religion indeed! It allows lewdness in the case of gods, where above all one might expect lewdness to be absent. . . . And yet Aristotle wishes tender youth to be protected from things of this kind. Let us give thanks to God that our religion contains nothing which is not chaste nor modest.¹⁶ All the more grievous is the sin of those who introduce shamelessness into subjects that are chaste by nature. Why is it necessary to depict in a church David looking at Bathsheba from a window and luring her into adultery?¹⁷ Or embracing the Shunamite brought to him? Or the daughter of Herodias dancing? The subjects are taken from Holy Scripture, but how much wickedness the artists add in portraying the lewd women!¹⁸ To quote again from the *Institutio Christiani*

¹³ This is an error; the quotation is in fact once again from the *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio*.

¹⁴ Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, vii, 17; and the discussion on pp. 234-5 above.

¹⁵ Gilio also refers to the 'disoneste figure' encountered 'ne le stufe e ne l'osterie' (Barocchi, *op. cit.*, p. 111).

¹⁶ Once again one may compare a similar statement of Gilio's: 'Gli antichi non avevano la regione pura, casta e santa come noi . . .'

(Barocchi, *op. cit.*, p. 78). It is also made in reference to the indecency of pagan imagery (see note 29 below).

¹⁷ For a full discussion of the history of the representation of this particular theme, see Elisabeth Kunoth-Leifels, *Über die Darstellungen der Bathsheba im Bade: Studien zur Geschichte des Bildthemas 4. bis 17. Jahrhundert*, Essen, 1962.

¹⁸ *Opera*, v, *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio*, col. 719 B-E.

ineptias. Veluti cum exprimunt Dominum apud Martham ac Mariam exceptum convivio, dum Dominus loquitur cum Maria, fingunt Ioannem adolescentem clam in angulo fabulantem cum Martha, Petrum exiccantem cantharum. Rursum in convivio Martham a tergo assistentem Ioanni altera manu iniecta humeris, altera velut irridente Christum qui nihil horum sentiat. Item, Petrum iam vino rubicundum, cyathum admovere labris.¹⁹ Et haec cum blasphema sint & impia, tamen faceta videntur. De rebus sacris qualis debet esse sermo, talem decet esse picturam.²⁰

Et quemadmodum blasphemiae genus est sacras literas ad ineptos & prophanos iocos detorquere: ita gravi poena digni sunt, qui cum pingunt canonicarum Scripturarum argumenta, de suo capite miscent ridicula quaedam & sanctis indigna.²¹ Quid vero mirum, si obscoenae picturae tantum moveant, cum nonnullos etiam ad libidinem provocaverit picturae artificium absque manifesta obscoenitate? Unde apud Ezechielem Aholiba, cum vidisset viros Chaldaeos depictos in pariete accinctos baltheis renes & tyaras tinctas in capitibus eorum, formam ducum omnium, insanivit super eos concupiscentia oculorum suorum & misit nuncios ad eos in Chaldaeam.²² Similiaque legas apud Valerium Maximum, factorum ac dictorum memorabilium lib. 8.²³

Libidinosus vero picturis merito adiiicitur & ea, sacrilega simul ac fabulosa, de qua sanctus Augustinus scribit libro secundo, de civitate Dei. Apud Terentium, inquit, flagitiosus adolescens spectat

*Tabulam quandam pictam, ubi inerat pictura haec, Iovem
Quopacto Danae misisse aiunt quondam in gremium imbrem aureum.*

atque ab hac tanta autoritate adhibet patrociniū turpitudini suae, cum in ea iactat se imitari Deum,

At quem Deum? qui templa coeli summa sonitu concutit.

*Ego homuncio non facerem? ego vero illud feci ac lubens.*²⁴

Merito itaque in Confessionibus idem Doctor exclamat contra eos qui eiusmodi iuventuti praelegendo instillant. O flumen tartareum! iactantur in te filii hominum cum mercedibus ut haec discant.²⁵

Auscultemus igitur ad Canonem 100. sextae in Trullo Synodi:²⁶ Oculi tui recta aspiciant, & omni custodia serva cor tuum, iubet Sapientia.²⁷ Corporis enim sensus sua facile in animam effundunt. Picturas ergo quae oculos perstringunt & mentem corrumpunt & ad turpiū voluptatum movent incendia, nullo modo deinceps imprimi iubemus: Si quis autem hoc facere aggressus fuerit, deponatur.²⁸

¹⁹ All these elements can be found in the 1559 painting by Pieter Aertsen now in Rotterdam. Cf. P. K. F. Moxey, below, pp. 335–6.

²⁰ *Opera*, v, *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio*, cols. 696F–697A.

²¹ *Opera*, v, *De Amabili Ecclesiae Concordia*, col. 501D. The application of the concept of decorum in the sense of never breaking the necessary link between decency and religious subjects—whether with respect to expression, invention, or addition—has thus been fully dealt with by Erasmus. What hardly receives attention in this chapter, however, is the logically derivative question of fittingness to

place. But it is fairly extensively dealt with in Chapter 37 ('Lasciviam omnem vitandam esse in sacris imaginibus').

²² Ezechiel, xxiii, 14–16.

²³ Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilia*, Book viii, chapter 2. Fittingly enough, this chapter is headed 'Quam magni effectus artium sit', and the examples given in it are further instances of what happened to Aholibah: a horse neighs because he is aroused by a painted mare; a bull is driven to love for a bronze cow, and a youth falls in love with a statue made by Praxiteles.

²⁴ The lines from Terence come from the *Eunuchus*, iii, 5. The same picture is discussed

Matrimonii: 'Some artists, when they paint something from the Evangelists, add impious absurdities to it. For example, when they depict our Lord received to supper at the house of Martha and Mary, they show the young John secretly chatting in a corner with Martha, and Peter downing a tankard, while He is speaking to Mary. And again, at the supper, they show Martha sitting behind John with one hand thrown on his shoulder and the other as if making fun of Christ, who is unaware of it all. Also there is Peter already flushed with wine still putting a tankard to his lips.¹⁹ And although these things are blasphemous and impious, they still pass for humour. In sacred matters it is proper that the same standards apply to painting as to speech.'²⁰

'To twist sacred literature into unsuitable and profane jokes is a kind of blasphemy; for the same reason those who on their own initiative add details which are ridiculous and unworthy of the saints when they paint subjects from the scriptural canon deserve punishment.'²¹ Indeed it is no wonder that obscene pictures have so great an effect when pictures which are not even manifestly obscene provoke some to lust. For example when Aholibah saw Chaldean men portrayed on a wall as princes, with girdles tied round their loins and dyed turbans on their heads, her eyes made her rave over them, and she sent messengers to them in Chaldea.²² One can read of similar events in Book 8 of Valerius Maximus.²³

The mythological as well as sacrilegious picture about which Augustine writes in Book 2 of the City of God is also justly regarded as indecent. 'In Terence', he says, 'a dissolute young man looks at "a painted tablet, where the story of how Jove showered golden rain into the lap of Danae was depicted"; and he uses this great authority as a defence of his own misbehaviour, when he boasts that he is imitating God "and no ordinary god either—it was the supreme thunderer himself. As a mere man how could I do otherwise? In fact, I've done the same, and enjoyed it".'²⁴

Augustine was right therefore, to inveigh against those whose teaching allows them to indoctrinate boys with this sort of thing. 'O river of hell! Men are thrown into you together with their fees in order to learn these lessons.'²⁵

We should therefore listen to Canon 100 of the sixth Council in Trullo:²⁶ 'Wisdom bids you take care that your heart is kept safe and your eyes do not stray.²⁷ For the sensuality of the body easily spreads to the soul. We therefore forbid hereafter the making in any way of pictures which offend the eyes, corrupt the mind and kindle base pleasures. And if any one should try to do it, he must be excommunicated.'²⁸

by Augustine twice in the *De Civitate Dei* (ii, 7 and 13) and once in his letters (*Epistolae*, 202). The same passage from Terence is also used by Catharinus as part of his argument in favour of images. It is cited (along with the lines from Horace quoted by Molanus above) as a demonstration of the effectiveness of the arts in a devotional context. Ambrosius Catharinus, *De certa gloria, invocatione ac veneratione sanctorum . . .*, 1542, pp. 69–70.

²⁵ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, i, 16. Both quotations from Augustine show a special concern for the young, which was even more definite in the passages from Erasmus.

²⁶ The reference is to Canon 100 of the Trullan Synod ('Quinisext') convened by Justinian II in 692. Molanus here makes the

usual mistake of confusing the decrees of this Synod with those of the Sixth General Council (the Third Council of Constantinople, 680) which the Trullan Synod was intended to supplement. Cf. *D.Th.C.*, xiii, 1936, cols. 1581–1597.

²⁷ Cf. *Proverbs*, iv, 23–25.

²⁸ Similar decrees were passed by a number of Synods in Molanus's own lifetime. These too were undoubtedly motivated by the need for the Church to take a clear stand on the problem of imagery when iconoclastic movements were particularly rife. The examples given by Paquot in his note to the quotation from the Trullan Synod are some indication of how widespread the concern had become.

Et rursum ad verba Clementis Alexandriae presbyteri, qui post acrem reprehensionem paganorum, eo quod in cubili decumbentes Venerem nudam respiciunt in tabellis depictis, habeant quoque Paniscos & nudas puellas & ebrios Satyros & membrorum erectiones quae picturis nudantur,²⁹ tandem concludit, Horum non solum usus sed etiam aspectus & auditus deponendam esse memoriam vobis annunciamus. Scortatae sunt aures vestrae, fornicati sunt oculi.³⁰ Et quod est magis novum, ante complexum vestri adulterium admiserunt aspectus.³¹ Nescio autem an ad huiusmodi lascivias pertineat quod a Ioanne Tritthemio,³² tum alibi³⁴ tum praecipue in libro de claris scriptoribus Germaniae³³ notatum est, Ioannem de Hildeshem³⁵ Carmelitam, Lectorem & Priorem Casselensem, beati Petri Thomae Patriarchae Constantinopolitani, antea Generalis Magistri, in Avenione auditorem scripsisse in quemdam turpia pingentem librum unum, claruisse anno 1370.

Although the decrees passed at Malines in 1570 (see the following note) and Milan in 1573 were influenced by the Council of Trent, they were fuller and more specific. This is not surprising in the light of the fact that the Tridentine decrees were passed in haste and under pressure in 1563, three years before the start of one of the most serious iconoclastic movements of the century, with which Molanus was more specifically concerned.

²⁹ This reproach of pagan imagery is similar not only to Erasmus's and Gilio's (in Barocchi, *op. cit.*, p. 78), but also to that of the Synod of Malines referred to in the preceding note. The first paragraph of its *Titulus de Imaginibus* decreed: 'ut e templis ac locis sacris tollantur imagines, sculpturae, aulaea, quae gentilitatis aut mendaces Ethnicorum fabulas satyrorum, faunorum, syrenarum, terminorum, & nympharum ac id genus alia repraesentant' (Johannes Molanus, *De Historia SS. Imaginum et Picturarum*, ed. J. N. Paquot, 1771, p. 124).

³⁰ The terms of this warning (such as *usus*, *aspectus*, *auditus* and *memoria*) had by the time of Molanus become stock *topoi* in any discussion of religious art. Indeed they are not very different to those in which Henricus Cuyckius (in his *Epistola Dedicatoria* to the 1594 edition) justifies the use of religious imagery: 'Eas igitur imagines quae Christi beneficia exprimunt quae honestam amoris erga Divorum memorias habent testificationem & quorum aspectu atque usu ad illorum provocamur . . . quidni librorum loco habeant ac retineant Christiani?'

Cuyckius goes on to epitomize the works of Molanus as follows: 'Hic igitur verus imaginum apud Catholicos est usus ac huc pertinuit Molani nostri indefessus labor'. The true use of images is appended by Molanus himself in tabular form, under the heading 'sacrarum imaginum utilitates' amongst which one finds the *causa memoria*. The second part of the Thomistic formula regarding the worth of painting was that it

And once again, in the words of Clement of Alexandria, who after his harsh censure of the pagans for looking at naked Venus on painted panels while lying in bed, and also for having diminutive Pans, naked girls, drunken satyrs, and erections exposed in pictures,²⁹ finally concludes: 'We declare that not only the use of these but even the memory of the sight and hearing of them must be given up. Your ears are defiled and your eyes prostituted.³⁰ Still stranger is the fact that your looks commit adultery before your embrace.'³¹

I do not know whether what Johannes Trithemius³² noted (specifically in his book about the famous writers of Germany,³³ but elsewhere as well³⁴) pertains to indecencies of this sort: he states that John of Hildesheim,³⁵ the Carmelite, who lived round 1370 and was a Lector and Prior of Cassel and *Auditor* of St. Peter Thomas, (Patriarch of Constantinople, previously Master General of the Order) at Avignon, wrote a book against a man who painted obscenities.

could serve to strengthen *memoria*, and here in Clement *usus* is coupled together with *aspectus* and *auditus* in connexion with the role of painting in the *memoria* of the faithful.

Besides the preceding coupling of *aspectus* and *auditus*, the strongly worded last sentence reminds one of the Trullan Synod's decree concerning pictures 'quae oculos perstringunt'. Both phrases contrast clearly with the words of the fourth proverb cited at the beginning of this decree.

³¹ Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, chapter 4 ('The absurdity and shamefulfulness of the images by which the gods are worshipped'), translated in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., *The Ante Nicene Fathers Vol. II, Fathers of the Second Century*, American edition revised by A. Cleveland Coxe, reprint 1969, p. 189.

³² Some of the numerous works of the Benedictine abbot of Spanheim, Johannes Trithemius (1462-1519) are mentioned in

the following notes. See also *D.Th.C.*, xv, cols. 1862ff.

³³ Johannes Trithemius, *Catalogus illustrium virorum Germaniam suis ingenius lucubrationibus omnifariam exornantium*, Moguntiae, Petrus Friedberg, 1495. The reference to John of Hildesheim occurs on fol. xxxv.

³⁴ E.g. in *Dn. Iohannis Trithemii Abbatis Spanheimensis De Scriptoribus ecclesiasticis liber unus*, Balthazar Werlinus Colmariensis ed., Cologne, 1546, p. 262, and *Carmelitana Bibliotheca sive illustrium aliquot carmelitanae religionis scriptorum, ac eorum operum cathalogus . . . optimo ordine alphabetico digestus auctore R. P. Petro Lucio Belga Carmelitano Bruxellensi*, Florence 1593, p. 48.

³⁵ Besides the information about this German Carmelite author given by Trithemius in the references above, some biographical and bibliographical information is given in *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, vi, p. 564.