*"Lend a Voice": The Humanistic Portrait Epigraph in the Age of Erasmus and Dürer**

by HARRY VREDEVELD

In the early 1500s, a genre of portraiture emerged in Northern Europe that combines bust portraits of humanistic intellectuals and patrons with elegant Latin and Greek epigraphs. While the likenesses have long had the benefit of expert attention, the same cannot always be said of the inscriptions. In consequence, many questions still go begging. It remains unknown, for example, who wrote these anonymous texts; whether the artists composed any of them and (if not) whether they got the wording right; and what exactly the epigraphs intend to say, or what models and conventions they follow. This article aims to supply some answers for the earliest and most influential of the collaborative portraits: Burgkmair's two woodcuts of Konrad Celtis; Metsys's medallion of Erasmus; Cranach's painting of Christoph Scheurl and his three Luther engravings; Dürer's engravings of Albrecht of Brandenburg, Frederick the Wise, Willibald Pirckheimer, and Philip Melanchthon; and Holbein's paintings of Bonifacius Amerbach, Erasmus, and Melanchthon.

1. INTRODUCTION

Early in the sixteenth century a genre of portraiture emerged in Northern Europe that combines bust portraits of humanistic intellectuals and patrons with elegant Latin and Greek epigraphs. Many of these works have long since become iconic: Metsys's Erasmus medallion (1519); Cranach's Luther engravings (1520–21); Dürer's engravings of Pirckheimer, Melanchthon, and Erasmus (1524–26); and Holbein's paintings of Amerbach (1519), Erasmus (1523), and Melanchthon (1535/36). Here the inscribed texts are often so eye-catching, so integral to the overall design, that they fairly demand equal time with the portraits themselves. In Dürer's Pirckheimer and Melanchthon, for instance, the Latin epigrams appear as if insculpted on a slab of stone that occupies the bottom quarter of the image.

For all their evident importance, the humanistic portrait epigraphs have attracted little attention from textual scholars. Indeed, among Neo-Latin philologists only Walther Ludwig has ventured into this arena in a stimulating paper that broadly surveys the inscriptions in scholar-portraits

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from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.[1] The upshot is that the epigraphical texts have not had the kind of sustained expert study that the likenesses themselves enjoy.[2] By default, they have largely remained the province of art historians. In consequence, even basic questions still go begging. It remains unknown, for example, who wrote these anonymous texts; whether the artists composed any of them and (if not) whether they got the wording right; and what exactly the epigraphs intend to say, or what models and conventions they follow.

The present essay hopes to provide at least a few answers to these questions. Unlike Ludwig, I will limit my inquiry to the humanistic epigraphs in the age of Erasmus and Dürer. What I envision here is a philological-literary investigation. A more inclusive analysis, with interpretation of the works' visual form and overall design, is a desideratum that, I fear, would burst the bounds of this article and — more importantly — of my expertise. But just as artist and writer worked closely together in Renaissance times to create a work that neither could have completed on his own, so too art historians and literary philologists must needs join forces now, each teaming up with the other to understand the collaborative portrait in all its dimensions. Let us start with the public media of prints and medallions and then turn to the more intimate sphere of paintings.

2. Konrad Celtis's "Death Portrait" (1503/04)

The symbiosis of printed portrait and verse inscription had its origins in 1503/04, when the arch-humanist Konrad Celtis (1459–1508) commissioned the Augsburg artist Hans Burgkmair (1473–1531) to create a commemorative woodcut for himself.[3] A tomblike monument, half Roman, half Christian in design, the print seems originally to have been intended as an illustration

[1]Ludwig, 1998 (2004–05, 2:183–228), with further literature. Cf. Rosenfeld; Robert, 2004. Bächtiger, 151–83; Schuster, 1983a and 1983b; Bodar; Löcher, cover some of the same ground as the present essay, from an art historian's point of view. So do Schmid, 1999; Skowronek, 42–61, 186–97; Silver; Matsche, 2011. For a historian's perspective, with a strong focus on Konrad Celtis, see Mertens, 1997.

[2]Cf. Wolkenhauer, 341.

[3]Panofsky, 1942, was the first to see the seminal role of Celtis's memorial image. See also Panofsky, 1971, 238; Schmid, 1999, 240–48; Silver, 9–10; Merkel, 56–58. Luh, 2001, 282–312, makes a strong case for the date 1503/04 and the image's intended role in Celtis's planned *Opera*. On the image, see further: Worstbrock, 16–24; Luh, 2002, 86–88; Robert, 2003, 482–85, 497–511; Wood, 102–06. For the older literature on the "Death Portrait," see Luh, 2001 and 2002. For the memorial image within the medieval-Renaissance culture of *memoria*, see Oexle; Worstbrock, 21–24; Mertens, 1997, 221–40; Hamm, 41–53.

for Celtis's collected works. Much to the humanist's chagrin, however, financing for that undertaking proved hard to secure. Besides, Celtis still had to finish some of the books he wanted to include. In the meantime, therefore, he made the best of it, and sent copies of the image all over the empire. The picture would advertise his achievements and keep his memory alive beyond death. An archetypal humanist, Celtis was keenly intent on fame. He was also a syphilitic who knew he did not have many years remaining.

Celtis's "Death Portrait" (*Sterbebild*), as it has come to be known,[4] shows a bust-length likeness of the humanist, wearing the full regalia of a laurel-crowned poet. With eyes lowered in death, he looks down on his major books: *Germany Illuminated*, *Amores*, *Epigrams*, and *Odes*. His hands are folded on the volumes. An arch, banderoles, and garlands frame the moribund figure. Poetry and eloquence, personified as Apollo and Mercury, mourn at the top left and right, while Love, in the form of putti, grieves at the bottom corners. Below the portrait, a plaque contains an epitaph of two Latin distichs, along with the humanist's name and title, "Konrad Celtis Protucius, Guardian and Bestower of the Laurel in Vienna."[5] Then follows the traditional, "Here he rests in Christ,"[6] a statement specifying the length of his life (forty-nine years), and the fictional year of death (1507).

The woodcut was much admired and treasured. Many copies are still extant. They have survived in three states.[7] The first and second of these bear the date, "[In the year] of salvation 1507."[8] Celtis seems to have picked 1507 because he would then be in his forty-ninth year, the "perfect age" (seven times seven), when the mind is at its prime. As one of the climacteric years, the forty-ninth was also believed to be an especially dangerous time of life.[9] For a syphilitic like Celtis, then, it seemed like a good year to shoot for. As it turned out, Celtis died shortly after the year he had projected, on 4 February 1508. In a third state, therefore, his friends changed the date to "1508" (fig. 1).

[4]The term *Sterbebild* appears as early as 1856: see Ruland, 143.

[5]"CHVN. CEL. PRO. VIENNĘ LAVREĘ CVSTOS ET COLLATOR". Text quoted according to the authorized second state of the woodcut. Except where otherwise noted, all translations are the author's. Celtis was head of the College of Poets and Mathematicians in Vienna. As such, he was entitled to bestow the laurel wreath on Maximilian's behalf. See Luh, 2001, 284–85.

[6]"HIC IN CHRIS. QVIESCIT".

[7]The three states are reproduced in Luh, 2001, figs. 34, 35, 54b. For the differences between them, see Luh, 2001, 282–83n5.

[8]"SAL. SESQVIMILL. ET VII".

[9]Luh, 2001, 303–04.

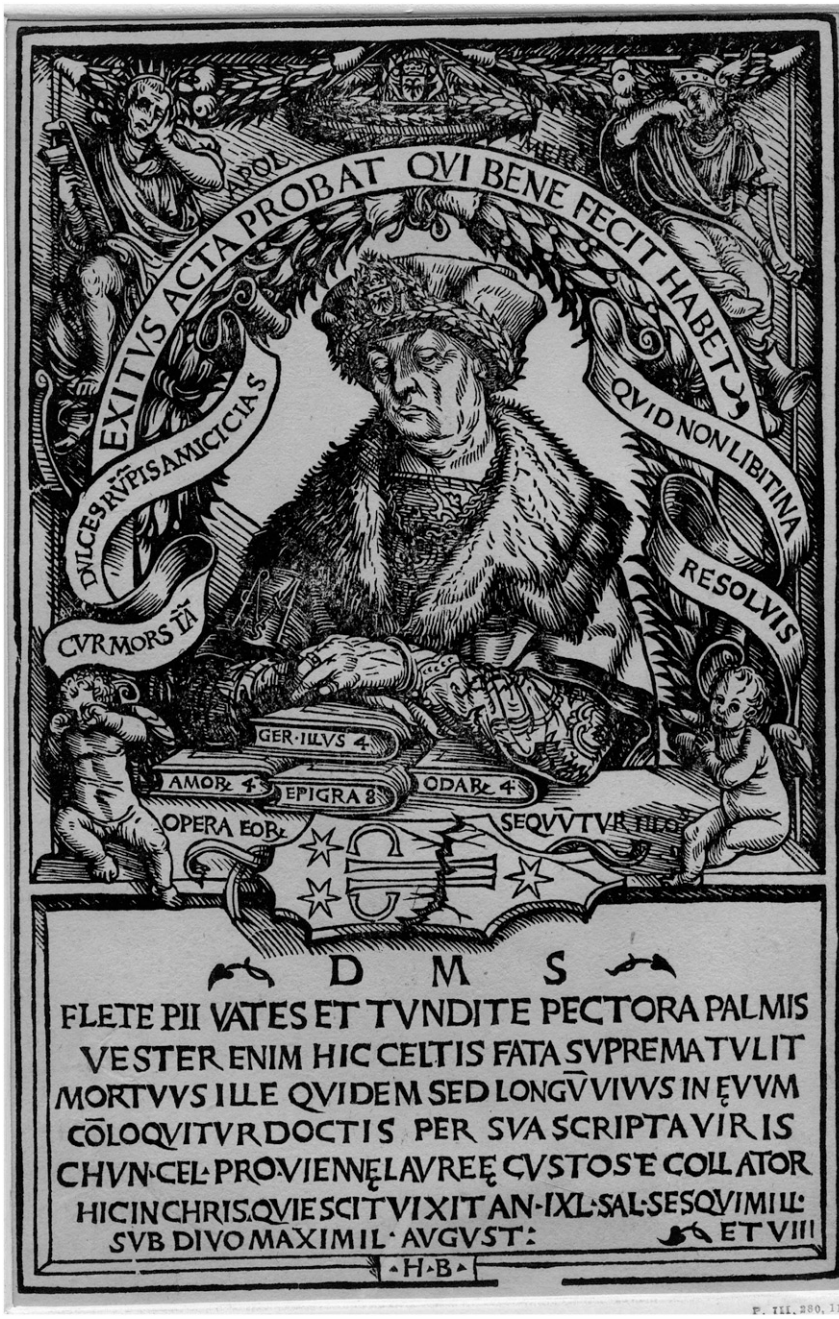

FIGURE 1. Hans Burgkmair. "Death Portrait" of Konrad Celtis, 1503/04. Third state. The British Museum, London. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

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Over the portrait, an arch contains two mottos: "EXITVS ACTA PROBAT" ("The end justifies the labors"), followed after a little space by the words, "QVI BENE FECIT HABET" ("Whoever has done good, has"). The first motto is a familiar one. Quoted from Ovid, *Heroides* 2.85, the text had been divorced from its original, quite skeptical context long before Celtis's time, and turned into an independent proverb.[10] The second motto has the look and feel of a familiar quotation too, but no source has ever been found: its meaning is unclear. Banderoles to the right and left of the portrait complete the niche-like space. In the print's first state, the left banderole declares, "The final urn calls all people."[11] In the second state the wording is revised to, "Why, Death, do you break up such sweet friendships?"[12] The banderole on the right contains another question, "What do you, Libitina, not tear asunder?"[13] Directly beneath Celtis's books one sees the inscription, "Their works follow them,"[14] as well as Celtis's personal emblem, now cracked and broken.

Of these texts, only the enigmatic "QVI BENE FECIT HABET" has caused trouble: "Whoever has done good, has." Here it is not at all apparent what the direct object of "has" might be. Some wring sense out of the motto by turning it into a relative clause attached to the preceding "acta."[15] They forget that the neuter plural "acta" cannot possibly be connected to the masculine nominative singular "qui." Equally impossible is Kurt Löcher's idea of linking "Qui bene fecit habet" to the banderole on the right, "Quid non Libitina resolvis" — impossible, because "Quid" is an interrogative, not a pronoun.[16] Harry C. Schnur, Franz J. Worstbrock, and Peter Luh rightly understand the phrases as distinct mottos, but they too are at a loss to explain the missing object of "habet."[17] To my knowledge, the first to move beyond the impasse is Berndt Hamm. In a recent essay, he argues that the words in

[10]Cf. Bächtiger, 155; Worstbrock, 20; Mertens, 2000, 83n34. For the expression's afterlife as a proverb ("the outcome justifies the actions"; "the end crowns all"), see *Thesaurus Proverbiorum Medii Aevi*, 2:464–69 ("Ende," nos. 45–194).

[11]"CVNCTOS VRNA SVPREMA VOCAT".

[12]"CVR MORS TA[M] DVLCES RV[M]PIS AMICICIAS".

[13]"QVID NON LIBITINA RESOLVIS". The first state has the erroneous reading, "RESOLIVS".

[14]"OPERA EOR[VM] SEQVV[N]TVR ILLOS". The translation is from the Douay-Rheims Bible.

[15]Bächtiger, 155, reads the mottos as a single sentence, but does not attempt a translation. Later commentators do take that leap. See, for example, Gisela Hopp in Hofmann, 90: "Das Ende gibt die Taten zu erkennen, die wohl geraten sind"; Silver, 9: "The end proves the test for the deeds, which have been well done."

[16]Löcher, 355: "Wer gut gehandelt hat, besitzt, was du, Todesgöttin, nicht vernichten kannst" ("Whoever has acted well, possesses what you, death goddess, cannot destroy").

[17]Schnur, 52: "wer Gutes tat, besitzt es"; Worstbrock, 20; Luh, 2001, 287.

the arch are separate mottos that make up a single pentameter. (Properly speaking, they are two hemistichs.) Hamm then explains the implicit object of "habet": whoever has done good deeds, has eternal life in heaven, in the memory of God, and at the same time, enduring fame on earth in the memory of humankind.[18] But that still does not answer why Celtis leaves the object unstated. He could have done so only if he were quoting a familiar saying.

There is but one way to solve the riddle: by going back to Ovid — not the Ovid that modern philologists have painstakingly restored, but the warts-and-all Ovid that Celtis and his friends still knew, practically by heart. For at the root of Celtis's phrase is a second Ovidian verse. At *Fasti* 2.379–80, the ancient poet explains why the Luperci run stripped at the festival of the Lupercalia: they do so in memory of one of Remus's exploits. In the Teubner edition, the distich now reads as follows: "forma manet facti: posito velamine currunt, / et memorem famam quod bene cessit habet" ("The manner of the deed lives on. They run stripped; and what turned out well has memorial fame").[19] Celtis, however, saw these lines in a contemporary printed edition (my emphasis): "*Fama* volat facti: posito velamine currunt, / Et memorem famam *qui bene gessit* habet" ("*The fame* of the deed flew. They run stripped; and *whoever acted well* has memorial fame").[20] Here, finally, is a solid line of attack. Celtis seems to be looking forward to posterity. Having acted well (*bene fecit*), he can depart life (*exitus*), in the conviction that future generations will supply the memorial fame that his works and deeds have earned for him.

It will not have escaped the reader that the Renaissance edition of Ovid's text prints "gessit," not "fecit," as Celtis has it. The humanist, it appears, must be drawing on a secondary tradition. And indeed, though Ovidian in origin, Celtis's second motto is no more a direct quotation than the first one in the arch. It derives from an epitaph tradition that emerged from Ovid's verse but then carved an independent path. Already the sixth-century poet Venantius Fortunatus concludes an epitaph with the words: "Omnia restituit mundo quae sumpsit ab ipso, / sola tamen pro se quae bene gessit habet" ("He gave back to the world all the things he borrowed from it;

[18]See Hamm, 45. Cf. John 6.47 in the Vulgate: "qui credit in me habet vitam aeternam." Johannes Dantiscus versified this biblical text in 1539, as follows: "In Christum credens tota vi pectoris, is sic / Aeternam vitam, qui bene fecit, habet." See Dantiscus, 182 (*Carmina* XLII.2.375–76).

[19]Ovid, 1985, 37.

[20]See, for example, Ovid, 1497, fol. 66^{v}, where Antonius Constantius comments: "Nuditas Lupercorum propagat famam rei a Remo bene ac foeliciter gestae" ("The Luperci's nudity perpetuates the fame of the deed that Remus accomplished well and successfully").

but for himself he has only whatever good he did").[21] A fifteenth-century epitaph collection records this leonine pentameter, inscribed on the grave of a "woman of easy virtue": "Hic iacet Elizabeth. Si bene fecit, habet" ("Here lies Elizabeth. If she did good, she has").[22] As in Celtis's motto, the object of "has" is left unstated. Elizabeth's epitaph was widely quoted, in jest and in earnest. It serves as the title of a popular song that was appended to Jakob Hartlieb's mock-quodlibetal speech, *On the Fidelity of Prostitutes to their Lovers*, in 1505 and often thereafter.[23] During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the phrase was even rumored to have been inscribed on the tomb of Saint Elizabeth in Marburg.[24] A *Catechismus Christiano-Catholicus* of 1723 cites this epitaph: "Hic iacet Augustus. Si bene fecit, habet" ("Here lies August. If he did good, he has"). The author helpfully explains: "If he served God well, he has his reward, honor, beatitude. If he did not, he does not, but is damned eternally."[25] Celtis, therefore, took the motto from the epitaph tradition. In the "Death Portrait," as Hamm suggested, it points not only to eternal life in heaven, but also to immortal fame on earth.

The remaining mottos are unproblematic. "The final urn calls all people," used only in the print's first state, is taken from the concluding verse of Celtis's *Amores*, book 4. There it serves as the poet's valediction to the young people of Germany.[26] In the second state, the motto is replaced with the pentameter, "Why, Death, do you break up such sweet friendships?" — a far better match for the partial hexameter, "What do you, Libitina, not tear asunder?" Both questions are of Celtis's own composition. They lament the loss of dear friendships, the rending of human bonds. The inscription, "Their works follow them," comes from Revelations 14.13. As Franz J. Worstbrock has shown, the phrase is used in the Office for the Dead and thus has a commemorative function.[27]

All the inscriptions are arranged with exquisite care, especially in the second version. The two overarching mottos and the quotation below the

[21]Fortunatus, 1:150 (*Carmina* 4.19.7–8).

[22]Bertalot, 1:287 (*Liber de epitaphiis*, no. 41), under the heading: "Epitaphium Elizabeth impudice mulieris."

[23]See Olearius and Hartlieb, sig. C6^{v}; Zarncke, 87.

[24]Zeiller, 61; Hübner, 657.

[25]Heimbach, 716: "Si bene ministravit Deo, habet praemium, honorem, beatitudinem. Si non fecit, non habet, sed est aeternum damnatus."

[26]See Mertens, 1997, 238n43.

[27]Worstbrock, 20–21. Celtis refers to all the works — moral as well as literary — upon which poets like himself will be judged. Cf. Schmid, 1999, 241n51; Eigler, 26; Luh, 2001, 287.

books direct attention to the humanist's works and deeds, which are rightfully his until the end of time. The texts to the left and right of the sitter are addressed to Death, but celebrate the undying power of the heart and mind. Death may be able to break up friendships, but cannot destroy their memory. Libitina, goddess of funerals, can tear earthly bonds asunder, but has no power over works of genius.[28] Here Celtis's phrasing, as often noted, evokes the triumphant words of Horace in *Odes* 3.30.6–7: "I shall not all die, but a large part of me will dodge Libitina."

The twin themes of loss and memory, of death and enduring fame, are echoed in the elegiacs inscribed on the monument's base beneath the initials "D M S" ("Sacred to the Divine Shades").[29] The first distich recalls the laments of the banderoles; the second repeats Celtis's humanistic conviction that his writings will evade death: "Weep, faithful bards, and beat your breast with your palms, for this Celtis of yours has suffered the supreme fate. Dead he may be; but alive to future ages forever, he speaks through his writings to scholarly men."[30] Celtis will live on in his books.[31] There his voice will speak until the end of time.

3. Celtis's Woodcut Medallion (1507)

Around the same time as they were creating the "Death Portrait," Celtis and Burgkmair also collaborated on an allegorical woodcut that, in text and image, depicts the imperial eagle as bestower of the laurel wreath and fountainhead of the arts. The broadside was evidently intended as an advertisement for the College of Poets and Mathematicians in Vienna, created in 1501 by Maximilian I (1459–1519) and headed by Celtis

[28]Cf. Mertens, 2000, 82.

[29]The initials "D M S" stand for "Dis Manibus Sacrum." This was a conventional dedication on Roman tombstones, starting in the Augustan age. Celtis knew the pagan formula as early as 1498, for at Celtis, 280 (*Odes* 3.26.13–20), he recalls seeing ancient tombs in Trier, as well as "a final urn sacred to the shades of the dead" ("manibus sacrata functis / urna suprema"). Cf. Binsfeld; Wood, 102.

[30]"FLETE PII VATES ET TVNDITE PECTORA PALMIS / VESTER ENIM HIC CELTIS FATA SVPREMA TVLIT / MORTVVS ILLE QVIDEM SED LONGV[M] VIVVS IN ęVVM / CO[N]LOQVITVR DOCTIS PER SVA SCRIPTA VIRIS". I quote the text as given in the authorized second state. In the first state, the fourth line reads, "CO[N]LOQVITVR DOCTOS PER SVA SCRIPTA VIROS". Cf. Mertens, 2000, 82. The phrase "pii vates" in line 1 comes from Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.662, where it applies to the true poets who dwell in Elysium: "the faithful bards, the ones who sang songs worthy of Apollo." The second hemistich of line 1 is based on Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.481: "et tunsae pectora palmis."

[31]Cf. Robert, 2003, 505–06. For the ancient commonplace that poetry perpetuates, see Curtius, 476–77; Ohly; Pekáry, 43–52.

himself.[32] Beneath the eagle, an elegiac distich compliments the woodcut's cocreators: "Johann Burgkmair depicted this eagle with his art, and Celtis wove the lovely story."[33]

In early 1507, the same block, now somewhat worn down, was used to make a new set of prints.[34] In these copies, a woodcut medallion is inserted at the foot of the sheet, under the title, "Bronze coin with the symmetry of Celtis."[35] The obverse has a bust portrait of the laurel-crowned poet and the legend, "At age forty-eight."[36] The portrait image is identical to the one in the "Death Portrait," except that Celtis, still very much alive, now has his eyes keenly fixed on the viewer. The reverse bears the pentameter, "Lend the sound of his voice, this will be a second Celtis," and the date "1507."[37] It is the highest compliment a humanist can pay the artist: the image is so true to life, it all but speaks.

The pentameter has attracted little notice. To my knowledge, only Walther Ludwig has inquired into its credentials as a humanistic text.[38] In Ludwig's view, the emphasis on the missing voice proves that Celtis imitates a Greek distich preserved in the *Planudean Anthology* of Greek epigrams. First published by Janus Lascaris at Florence in 1494, this version of the *Greek Anthology* was reprinted in an augmented collection at Venice by Aldo Manuzio in 1503. There would be many reeditions, beginning in 1519.[39] As time went on, selected epigrams started appearing in Latin translation, often in bilingual florilegia.[40] For many decades, therefore, the

[32]Cf. Wuttke, 1985, 70, 88–89; Luh, 2001, illustration 33; Luh, 2002, 7–29, 86–93, illustration 3.

[33]"BVRGKMAIR HANC AQVILAM DEPINXERAT ARTE IOHA[NN]ES / ET CELTIS PVLHRAM [*wrongly for* PVLCHRAM] TEXVIT HISTORIAM". As in the "Death Portrait," Celtis designed the iconographic program, while Burgkmair was responsible for the artistic execution. See Luh, 2002, 5. For the meaning of "historiam" in the epigram, see Luh, 2002, 12n23.

[34]See Luh, 2002, 87–88. Three copies of this version are extant; see Luh, 2002, 12n22. For a reproduction, see Falk, 144, illustration 25; Luh, 2001, illustration 36a; Luh, 2002, illustration 4b.

[35]"NV[M]MVS AENEVS SYMMETRIÆ CELT". Panofsky, 1942, 42, translates the word *symmetria* as "countenance or features." Cf. Wuttke, 1967, 323, quoting Celtis, epigram 71.3, "Tantum in Symmetrię et Picture Albertus in arte / Norinbergensi nobilis urbe potest."

[36]"AN: VITAE XLVIII".

[37]"ADDE SONV[M] VOCIS CELTIS IS ALTER ERIT", followed by "M.D.VII". Cf. Falk, 51.

[38]Ludwig, 1998, 134n27 (2004–05, 2:196n27).

[39]Hutton, 37–38. Lascaris's edition prints the text of the *Planudean Anthology*. A better text was later discovered in a manuscript in Heidelberg. This version is known as the *Palatine Anthology*.

[40]The most popular of these was the *Epigrammata Graeca*, edited by Johann Soter at Cologne in 1525 and 1528: see Hutton, 38.

book's influence was by and large limited to those with Greek. Now the epigram to which Ludwig calls attention runs as follows: "Life painter, you steal only the external form, but you cannot capture the voice, for that will not obey your colors."[41] The epigram is not among the ones that the early translators and anthologizers took note of.

Ludwig's suggestion has the merit of locating Celtis's epigraph within the ancient tradition that portraitists can capture only the bodily features, not the sitter's mind or voice.[42] But the mere fact that the Greek epigram stands in that tradition is, of course, no guarantee that it served as Celtis's source. Skepticism is all the more warranted, as the commonplace can be found in earlier humanistic writers too, none of whom was ever acquainted with the *Greek Anthology*. Those authors, moreover, use it to compliment the artist, just as Celtis does, not to mock him, as in the Greek epigram. Thus Francesco Petrarch (1304–74) praises a polychrome stucco relief of Saint Ambrose in Milan by saying that "only a voice was lacking to make you see Ambrose alive."[43] Pope Pius II (r. 1458–64) mentions marble statues that lack only a voice to turn them into living beings.[44] In 1458, Janus Pannonius (1434–72) lauds Andrea Mantegna's double portrait of himself and a friend by declaring: "How little do these faces differ from the way they look in reality? How, except that those portraits lack a voice?"[45] A few years later, Giannantonio Campano (1429–77) salutes Andrea Guazzalotti of Prato for sculpting a portrait medallion of Pius II that appears so alive that one involuntarily believes it speaks with a living voice. If only this were not an illusion! For alas, Campano sighs, even supreme artistry cannot sculpt genius

[41] *The Greek Anthology*, 4:276 (*Epigrams* 11.433), as given in the *Planudean Anthology* (Ludwig, 1998, 133; 2004–05, 2:195).

[42] On this tradition, see Rosenfeld; Emmens; Speyer, 396–99; Pekáry, 101–09. Like Rosenfeld, Emmens traces the Renaissance and Baroque tradition back to various epigrams in the *Greek Anthology*. He concludes that the "voice formula" does not become a humanistic commonplace until the *Greek Anthology* gained a wide readership, that is to say, in the second half of the sixteenth century: see Emmens, 145–46. As will be seen, the humanistic renewal of the tradition takes its start from Ovid, not the *Greek Anthology*.

[43] "Vox sola defuerit vivum ut cernas Ambrosium." Quoted in Baxandall, 51. Cf. Petrarch, 130–31 (sonnet 78). Matsche, 2011, 216, was the first to link Petrarch's text to Celtis's woodcut medallion.

[44] Pius II, 2:336 (*Commentaries* 4.36.3): "vox sola deest animantibus."

[45] Janus Pannonius, 1987, 254 (*Elegiae in Italia scriptae* 1.11–12): "Nam quantum a veris distant haec ora figuris? / Quid, nisi vox istis desit imaginibus?" The poem is dated 1458 in Janus Pannonius, 1784, 276.

and eloquence.[46] And in 1483, Rudolf Agricola (1443/44–85) has this to say about a portrait of two lovers: "Look, art depicts eyes and mouths that are utterly true to life. How hard would it be for the gracious gods to give them a voice too?"[47]

No, it was not from the *Greek Anthology* that these humanists took the idea that, but for a voice, the portraits are alive. The model they had in mind was one they had all grown up with: Ovid's famed *Letters of Heroines*. Toward the end of *Heroides* 13, Ovid has the mythical heroine Laodamia write a verse letter to her beloved husband Protesilaus. She does not yet know that he is the first Greek to fall at Troy, but already she is full of forebodings. Unable to bear his absence, she has had a wax effigy made of him. It is no ordinary image, she assures her husband. Indeed, it is so wonderfully lifelike that she embraces it and kisses it and even speaks to it. If you lent it a voice, it would be Protesilaus himself. "But while you bear arms in a foreign war," she writes, "I keep a wax that recalls your features to my sight. To it I speak a lover's whispers, to it the words you rightfully deserve; it receives my embraces. Believe me, the figure is more than it appears. Lend a voice to the wax, it will be Protesilaus" — "adde sonum cerae, Protesilaus erit."[48]

Here is the true model for the medallion inscription, "Adde sonum vocis, Celtis is alter erit." In quintessentially humanist fashion, Celtis plays on a well-known text, but refashions it in his own image. Like Protesilaus,

[46]"Aere Pium Andrea caelas Pratensis et auro, / Vivo ut credatur vivus in aere loqui. / [*2 distichs*] / Ars tamen heu manca est umbrasque effingit inanes, / Nec summi dotes Principis illa capit. / Quippe animum invictum facundaque pectora nullo / Nec tractu potuit sculpere docta manus" ("You, Andreas of Prato, engrave Pius in bronze and gold so [beautifully] that one might believe a living man is speaking in the living bronze. [*2 distichs*] But alas, art is feeble and fashions empty shadows and cannot capture the gifts of the supreme Prince. Indeed, the masterly hand was in no way able to sculpt his matchless mind and eloquent breast"). See Campano, 2:131 (*Epigrams* 4.17.1–10). Guazzalotti produced the medallion in 1460.

[47]"Ecce dat ars oculos datque ora simillima veris. / Quantum erat ut vocem dii facilesque darent?" See Alaard of Amsterdam, 1539b, 306. The epigram was first published at Louvain in 1483. See Akkerman and Vanderjagt, 320 (*Carmina*, no. 7).

[48]Ovid, 1971, 180 (*Heroides* 13.149–54). Statius has a comparable line in *Silvae* 4.6.21: "locuturas mentito corpore ceras" ("waxes with illusionistic bodies that seem about to speak"). The Ovidian passage was much admired in the Renaissance. Giovanni Pontano imitates it in an elegy published at Naples in 1505 (*Parthenopeus*, 1.10.43–52); see Ludwig, 1994, 120 (2004–05, 2:94–95). Eobanus Hessus does so in 1514; see Hessus, 2004–, 2:290–91 (*Heroidum Christianarum epistolae* 12.205–12). Baldassare Castiglione emulates the Ovidian passage in a fictitious verse letter (published in 1533) in which his wife and son respond to a portrait of him (by Raphael) while he is far from home. See Hanning, 133; Ludwig, 1994, 109 and 120 (2004–05, 2:81, 94).

he will soon die. Of their mortal features, only a mute effigy will remain. But just as Protesilaus lives on in Laodamia's two memorial portraits, the wax she embraces and the letter she writes, so Celtis lives on in the all-but-speaking portraits and in his writings that will forever lend them voice.

4. Two Types of Portrait

Celtis's "Death Portrait" and woodcut medallion are, each in its own way, programmatic statements on humanist portraiture. It is as if Celtis is telling the viewer: Look! Before you are two representations of a scholar-poet. On the medallion is the man as he looked in life. But however true to life it may be, the image you are gazing at is not the part of me that matters. It portrays my mortal features only; it lacks soul and voice. Now look at the memorial image! I am dying before your eyes. Soon the body's voice will be stilled. But in the four books on which I rest my fame I shall go on speaking to you for all time to come. There you will find a more enduring likeness: the portrait of my mind.

The two kinds of image — the lifelike, but mute, portrait of the mortal features and the literary, speaking portrait of the soul — are, of course, not something that Celtis came up with on his own. They are staples of ancient Greek and Roman literature.[49] At the close of a biography of his father-in-law Cn. Julius Agricola, Tacitus remarks: "Like people's features, so too likenesses of those features are fragile and short-lived. The portrait of the mind is everlasting."[50] Earlier, Horace had made a similar comment: "the features of famous people come across no more clearly when sculpted in bronze statues than do their character and mind when portrayed in a poet's work."[51] In exile in Tomis on the Black Sea, Ovid has much the same thought. While duly grateful that his friends and admirers look longingly at portraits of him, he would rather have them read his writings, because "my poems show a grander portrait."[52] Martial tells a faraway friend that a painting now being made of him will be a splendid likeness indeed. But artistic depictions are subject to destruction, just like the sitter himself. The portrait revealed in the poet's writings will live forevermore: "My face will come through more surely in my poems. It cannot be obliterated by any hazards, by any length of years. It will go on living when the Apellean work has died."[53] Wistfully looking at the portrait of a beloved and admired

[49]See Rosenfeld; Emmens; Speyer, 396–99; Pekáry, 101–09.
[50]Tacitus, 114 (*Agricola* 46.3).
[51]Horace, 245 (*Epistles* 2.1.248–50).
[52]Ovid, 1963 (*Tristia* 1.7.11–12).
[53]Martial, 1993, 2:144 (*Epigrams* 7.84.6–8).

man, the same poet exclaims: "How I wish that art could portray his character and mind! There would not be a lovelier painting on earth."[54]

Until Celtis's time, the artistic and literary portraits had pretty much led separate existences, each in its own sphere. It was a stroke of genius, therefore, when Celtis and Burgkmair combined the two in a single representation. Their example was to prove enormously influential. Well into the eighteenth century, artists and poets would join forces to portray intellectuals and patrons in combined image and text.

Almost from the start, the portrait epigraphs split into the two tracks that Celtis had laid out. Texts in paintings mostly follow the pattern exemplified by the woodcut medallion. They foreground the illusion of reality and praise the all-but-speaking likeness. Mortality and commemoration are kept to the background. This pattern is inverted in the mass-disseminated portraits. Like the "Death Portrait," the representations in prints and medals are self-consciously memorial. Their texts, accordingly, praise the mortal likeness, but point beyond it to the immortal image of the sitter's mind and soul.

5. Metsys's Erasmus Medallion (1519)

In 1519 Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536) and Quinten Metsys (1465/66–1530) produced a medallion that on the obverse shows a profile of the Dutch humanist, along with the abbreviated name, "ER. ROT." (fig. 2). The rim bears the date "1519" and two mottos in Latin and Greek, the Latin one to the right, the Greek one to the left. It has gone unnoticed that they are arranged according to the sitter's line of sight. The Latin motto, which focuses on the mortal image, the one soon to be left behind, is fittingly placed behind the sitter: "IMAGO AD VIVA[M] EFFIGIE[M] EXPRESSA" ("Portrait stamped to create a living likeness"). The Greek motto, by contrast, looks to the future and hence is placed before the sitter's eyes: "ΤΗΝ ΚΡΕΙΤΤΩ ΤΑ ΣΥΓΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ ΔΕΙΞΕΙ" ("The writings will show the

[54]Ibid., 354 (*Epigrams* 10.32.5–6): "ars utinam mores animumque effingere posset! / pulchrior in terris nulla tabella foret." The distich is quoted on the cartouche in Domenico Ghirlandaio's posthumous portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni (1468–88), but with the reading "posses" ("you could") rather than "posset": see Pope-Hennessy, 24–28. Art historians often assert that the painter has deliberately adapted Martial's text in order to create a new meaning. Shearman, 112, insists that "the epigram becomes thereby an apostrophe to Art. . . . By the grammatical shift the epigram becomes both an assertion of rather extraordinary pride and an expression of frustration." The commentators overlook that the painter (or his advisor) used an incunable edition of the text, not one of our modern editions. Fifteenth-century Italian editions all offer the reading "posses," just as the painting does. See, for example, Martial, 1491, fol. 111^{v}.

FIGURE 2. Quinten Metsys. Bronze medallion of Erasmus, obverse, 1519. Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin — Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Photo via Europeana.

better one").[55] The reverse (fig. 3) shows the Roman god of limits (and hence of life's end), inscribed with the name "TERMINVS" and surrounded by the words, "CONCEDO NVLLI" ("I yield to none").[56] Around the rim are two further reminders of mortality: to the right, "MORS VLTIMA LINEA RERV[M]" ("Death [is] the finish line of things"), and to the left, "ΟΡΑ ΤΕΛΟΣ ΜΑΚΡΟΥ ΒΙΟΥ" ("Look to the end of a long life"). Both mottos are quotations from ancient poetry. The Latin one is from Horace, the Greek from Ausonius.[57] As on the obverse, the mottos are arranged in accordance with the figure's line of sight: the Latin one behind, the Greek in front.

Like Celtis's "Death Portrait," Erasmus's medallion is a commemoration of the humanist's life and works. The artistic image, so the Latin inscription on the obverse assures us, shows the sitter "to the life." For a "better one,"

[55]That is, "the better portrait," referring back to the Latin "imago." See, for example, Speyer, 400; Ludwig, 2003, 166 (2004–05, 3:494). Robert, 2004, 207, argues that "the better one" refers back to "effigiem." But that, as will be seen, is to misunderstand the idiomatic phrase *ad vivam effigiem*.

[56]Cf. Panofsky, 1969, 215–16; Bodar, 34. On Erasmus's use of the emblem, see Wind, 77–82.

[57]The Latin motto is a proverbial line from Horace, 228 (*Epistles* 1.16.79). For the Greek motto, see Ausonius, 207, 209 (*Ludus septem sapientum*, ll. 56, 85); E. Landolt and F. Hieronymus in Oeri, Wollmann, and Neuenschwander, 268. Erasmus had earlier adduced the phrase (in this form) at *Opera omnia*, 2.2:130, l. 84 (*Adages* 1.7.5), where see the commentary (131).

FIGURE 3. Quinten Metsys. Bronze medallion of Erasmus, reverse, 1519. Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin — Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Photo via Europeana.

the Greek text points to the humanist's writings. There Erasmus will lend the mute portrait a voice.

Such, in fact, is the interpretation that Erasmus's amanuensis, Gilbert Cousin (1506–72), gave for a very similar portrait, a woodcut medallion by Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/98–1543).[58] That image shows an older Erasmus, to be sure, but one still in profile. First published in the *Adagiorum opus* (Basel, 1533), the likeness was republished at the head of Erasmus's *Ecclesiastes* (1535), along with an epigram by Gilbert Cousin.[59] The poem starts off by lauding the depiction's lifelike quality: "If one has not seen the bodily form of Erasmus, the woodcut portrait will show it skillfully depicted to the life."[60] Alas, Cousin continues, the artist was not

[58]Cf. Gerlo, 62: "Ces vers en effet ne sont qu'une paraphrase étendue de la légende inscrite sur la médaille de Metsijs de 1519 et sur la gravure de Dürer de 1526, légende fournie par Erasme lui-même" ("These verses in effect are no more than an extended paraphrase of the legend inscribed on Metsys's medallion of 1519 and on Dürer's engraving of 1526, a legend provided by Erasmus himself").

[59]Erasmus, 1535, sig. a4^{v}. Cf. Gerlo, 60–62; Jardine, 50; Schmitt, 206.

[60]"Corporis effigiem si quis non vidit ERASMI, / Hanc scite ad vivum picta tabella dabit." The distich was reused in a first proof of Holbein's woodcut portrait of Erasmus with a Terminus. See Gerlo, 61n47. In poetic usage, *picta tabella* usually refers to a small painting. In Neo-Latin it can also mean a woodcut. See, for example, Brant, 1:262 (no. 161, l. 102): "ut supra picta tabella docet."

able to paint the voice: "If the artist's hand had rendered the voice in the same manner, you would simultaneously have also seen the portrait of his mind. But what the masterly hand was unable to accomplish, Erasmus himself has done more fully and accurately on his own." For in his many books, Cousin concludes, you will see his mind depicted as clear as in a mirror, a portrait worthier of contemplation than any artist's image.[61] A similar train of thought appears in Alaard of Amsterdam's epigram on a copy of the same woodcut (1538): "So vividly has the Leiden hand depicted Erasmus that, but for the voice, the likeness is alive." Alaard goes on to declare that the voice, missing in the portrait, can still be heard, sweet as a swan's song, in Erasmus's books. In them, he says, his mind yet speaks to us.[62]

The phrase "Imago ad vivam effigiem expressa" on Metsys's medallion is no longer as transparent to us moderns as it was to Erasmus's contemporaries.[63] In the context of portraiture, *imago* and *effigies* have

[61]"Si pariter vocem manus ingeniosa dedisset, / Vidisses simul et pectoris effigiem. / Sed quod docta manus praestare nequibat, ERASMVS / Plenius ac melius praestitit ipse sibi. / Ecce quot in libris tibi mentis imago relucet, / Vivaque nec fallax, clarius ac speculo. / Atque haec forma viri spectatu dignior illa / Quam finxit pictor, theca modo est animi." After a concluding distich, Cousin adds another epigram in Greek, to the effect that the portrait shows only Erasmus's old hide, not the man himself.

[62]Alaard of Amsterdam, 1538, sig. A3^{r-v}, edited in Kölker, 347. The poem opens as follows: "Sic Leydana manus graphice depinxit Erasmum, / Ut praeter vocem viva sit effigies. / Dulcia cygneae quae sint modulamina vocis, / [*2 lines*] / Plus satis e scriptis sunt manifesta libris. / In quibus audire est mentem cum voce sonantem." Reprinted in Alaard, 1539a, sig. A1^{v}, but with "Leydana manus" changed to "Heroina manus" ("the hand of [the printer] Hero [Alopecius]").

[63]Erasmus's phrase was often reused in sixteenth-century portraits, starting with Dürer's engraving of Erasmus in 1526 (Hofmann, 164–65, catalogue no. 67) and Holbein's painting of the astronomer Nicolas Kratzer in 1528 (Rowlands, 134–35, catalogue no. 30). Modern readers generally take it to mean "depicted from the life," that is, after the living model; see, for example, Preimesberger, Baader, and Suthor, 228–38 (with an elaborate argument, based on false premises). Hill, 125; and Ludwig, 1998, 126–29 (2004–05, 2:186–91), overturn that assumption. See also Ludwig, 2003, 163–64 (2004–05, 3:492–93). An illustrated book on the Roman emperors, first published in 1525, has the subtitle, "una cum imaginibus ad vivam effigiem expressis" ("together with [woodcut] portraits cut to create a living likeness"). See Huttich, title page. Because all the emperors portrayed in the book, with the sole exception of Charles V and his brother Ferdinand, were dead by 1525, it would be nonsensical to assert that "ad vivam effigiem" in the title can mean anything other than "ad vivum" ("to the life"). In the Erasmus engraving of 1526, Dürer can use the expression "imago ad vivam effigiem deliniata," even though he had not seen the Dutch humanist in six years. That he did not copy Erasmus's text blindly, but at the advice of Pirckheimer or some other humanist, is shown by the careful change from Erasmus's "expressa" ("stamped") to "deliniata" ("delineated, drawn"). It may be added here that Dürer originally miscopied Erasmus's Greek. Instead of "ΔΕΙΞΕΙ" he wrote "ΔΙΞΕΙ". He then corrected the error by inserting a miniscule "Ε".

much the same meaning. It seems strange, then, that Erasmus would use the two terms side by side in the same phrase.[64]

In his seminal article, Walther Ludwig rejects the now usual translation of "ad vivam effigiem" as "from the life, from nature," and persuasively explains the phrase as meaning "to the life, true to life." As such, it is the precise equivalent of *ad vivum*.[65] The expression, Ludwig emphasizes, focuses on the outcome of the artistic effort, not on the artist's procedure. In other words, far from being a dry statement that Erasmus sat for his portrait, it compliments the portraitist for creating an image that is all but alive. Recently, Jörg Robert has disputed this conclusion, on the grounds that *ad effigiem* in the sense of "to the life" goes counter to Latin usage.[66] In support of his argument, he cites Ludwig's observation that there are no parallels in ancient Latin with respect to artistic representations. But Robert misquotes. Ludwig was referring to *ad vivum*, a standard Middle and Neo-Latin phrase that corresponds exactly to the vernacular phrases *al vif*, *au vif*, and *to the life*. The idiom *ad effigiem*, by contrast, does have good precedents in ancient and Renaissance Latin. These will help us rediscover Erasmus's intent.

The early Christian apologist Lactantius writes that God first shaped a man into his own image ("ad similitudinem suam") and then molded a woman into the likeness of the man himself ("ad ipsius hominis effigiem").[67] Paraphrasing Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.654, that Dido's "imago" will go down to the underworld in all its greatness, the ancient grammarian Servius explains: "quoddam simulacrum . . . ad nostri corporis effigiem fictum inferas petit" ("a kind of ghostly image . . . fashioned into a likeness of our body goes to the underworld").[68] Here, as in the 1519 medallion, an "image"

[64]Cf. Preimesberger, Baader, and Suthor, 230–37; Robert, 2004, 207; Schmitt, 196–97. Schmitt connects "imago" exclusively to Roman ancestral images. In ancient and humanistic usage, however, *imago* refers to any "portrait" or "artistic representation," not just the subset of ancestral death-masks. He also overinterprets *effigies* as a likeness formed of clay. At 197 and 200 he misreads Allen, Allen, and Garrod, 4:304 (no. 1122, l. 18), to say that Erasmus deserves an image made of clay. Erasmus is actually saying that he himself — the body portrayed in a leaden medallion — is made of clay, or something even more worthless.

[65]See Ludwig, 1998, 126–29 (2004–05, 2:186–91). In support of Ludwig's argument, see Hoffmann; Niehr. The translation of *ad vivum* as "to the life" (i.e., "lifelike") was still the norm in Latin-English dictionaries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See also Hill, 125; Swan, 354n8, quoting the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

[66]Robert, 2004, 207, with n6, insisting that the phrase be translated in the usual way as "nach der lebenden Gestalt (nach dem Leben)" ("after the living model, from the life").

[67]Lactantius, 1:177 (*Divine Institutes* 2.12.1).

[68]Servius, 136.

is said to be "fashioned into a bodily likeness." Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.7.31, uses a quite similar expression, but now with the epithet "human": "oscilla ad humanam effigiem arte simulata" ("masks artfully made into a human likeness").[69] Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae linguae Latinae*, a first version of which was completed around 1440, adds the epithet *viva* (living). An "effigies," Valla writes, is "figura ad vivam alterius similitudinem, vel ad veritatis imaginem facta" ("a figure made into the living likeness of someone, or into the image of reality").[70] The definition reappears in Niccolò Perotti's best-selling *Cornucopiae* (1489) and thence in Ambrogio Calepino's even more popular *Dictionarium* (1502).[71] Erasmus himself uses the idiom in a translation of Lucian's dialogue, "Diogenes and Mausolus" (1506). When Mausolus boasts that his magnificent tomb possesses representations of horses and men carved to perfection ("ἵππων καὶ ἀνδρῶν ἐς τὸ ἀκριβέστατον εἰκασμένων"), Erasmus translates: "viris scilicet atque equis . . . ad vivam formam absolutissimo artificio expressis." Here Lucian's "to perfection" is quite adequately rendered as "absolutissimo artificio." But just to make sure the phrase has the force of "carved to the life," Erasmus idiomatically adds "ad vivam formam expressis."[72]

Erasmus's intent in the medallion should now be clear. He wants to compliment Metsys for the "portrait stamped to create a living likeness." But because even an all-but-living likeness can depict nothing more than the mortal body at a fleeting moment in life, he goes on to urge viewers to read his books. There they will see a better portrait: the image of his mind that will go on speaking eternally.

6. Four Commemorative Portraits by Dürer (1519–24)

Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) created two engravings of Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg (1490–1545). The smaller one, dated 1519, is known as

[69]Macrobius, 1:80. The expression was well known in the Renaissance. See, for example, Boccaccio, 1:814 (*Genealogy of the Gods* 8.1.10): "oscilla, ad humanam effigiem ex cera composita"; Perotti, 4:147 (Cornu copiae 6.52, l. 24): "oscilla ad humanam effigiem formata"; Vergil, 336 (*On Discovery* 2.23.4): "oscilla, id est, parva ora ad humanam figuram formata." On the importance of Macrobius to humanistic culture, see Lecompte.

[70]Quoted in Baxandall, 173–74, with a translation on 10.

[71]Perotti, 6:43 (*Cornu copiae* 21.39, ll. 1–2): "effigies, hoc est signum ad vivam alterius similitudinem vel ad veritatis imaginem factum"; Calepino, sig. r6^{r}, s.v. "Effigies."

[72]Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, 1.1:581, ll. 1–2. For Lucian's Greek text, see Lucian, 4:227, ll. 6–7 (*Dialogues of the Dead* 29.1).

FIGURE 4. Albrecht Dürer. *Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg* ("The Small Cardinal"), 1519. The British Museum, London. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

"The Small Cardinal" (fig. 4); the second, "The Large Cardinal," bears the date 1523.[73] Both show a bust portrait, the one in half profile, the other in full profile. Both also display the sitter's coat-of-arms and identify him by name, rank, offices, and titles. In the 1519 engraving, a plaque-like space at the foot of the picture contains a Latin hexameter, "This is what his eyes, his

[73]See Hofmann, 142–43, 154–55, catalogue nos. 56, 62; Schmid, 1999, 224–28.

cheeks, his mouth looked like,"[74] followed by the sitter's age (twenty-nine) and the year ("M.D.X.I.X."). The verse reappears in the 1523 version, but now above the portrait, along with updated year and age.

It is well known that the hexameter is an adaptation of Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.490: "sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat." Because the bust image does not show the cardinal's hands, something had to be done with Virgil's word *manus* ("hands"). It was replaced with the metrically equivalent *genas* ("cheeks"). The new triad of eyes, cheeks, and mouth has ancient and humanistic cachet. Aulus Gellius (second century CE) comments that the three features that people specifically associate with the human face are "mouth and eyes and cheeks."[75] And in the celebrated *Tale of Two Lovers, Eurialus and Lucretia* (1444), Enea Silvio Piccolomini (the later Pope Pius II) tells how Eurialus adored his mistress's face: "now he praised her mouth, now her cheeks, now her eyes."[76] The adapted verse, then, has a distinctly humanistic ring to it, even as it directs attention to the sitter's face.

As is so often the case, the humanist who adapted Virgil's phrase is unknown. Dürer must have inserted the verse on the cardinal's authority, however, for a prosaic version of the line appears already in the medallion that Hans Schwarz (ca. 1492–after 1532) made for Albrecht of Brandenburg in the latter part of 1518: "This is what his cheeks, his eyes, his mouth looked like at age twenty-eight."[77] The metrical version in Dürer's engraving, however, restores Virgil's word order and more clearly recalls the line's origin in the *Aeneid*.

To modern-day readers, the Virgilian verse is a straightforward compliment to the artist: Dürer has depicted the cardinal just as he looked in life.[78] Humanistic contemporaries would have had a more complex reaction. They would have noticed at once that the cardinal wishes to be remembered as a friend of humanism, indeed, as a connoisseur of literature.[79] For the quotation is not a facile slogan, but anchored in the context of the

[74]"SIC. OCVLOS. SIC. ILLE. GENAS. SIC. ORA. FEREBAT". The same verse was added to Hans von Kulmbach's woodcut portrait of Heinrich Stromer (Auerbach), bearing the date 1518, and thence in a painted portrait dated 1527. See Koepplin and Falk, 2:693–95, catalogue no. 617.

[75]Gellius, 2:422 (*Attic Nights* 13.30.2): "os . . . et oculos et genas." Gellius does not like this limited sense of the word *facies*; but that is not to the point here.

[76]Piccolomini, 167, l. 1: "nunc os nunc genas nunc oculos commendabat."

[77]"SIC. ILLE. GENAS. OCVLOS. SIC. ORA. FEREBAT. ETATIS. XXVIII". See Maué, 351–53.

[78]Löcher, 363. Merkel, 66, even criticizes Dürer for failing to praise the cardinal's intellectual, moral, and other achievements in the two engravings.

[79]Humanistically educated, the cardinal was the patron of such humanists as Ulrich von Hutten: see Temme, 33–41.

Aeneid. During his wanderings over the Mediterranean after the fall of Troy, Aeneas and his people spend time in Epirus. Here Priam's son Helenus is now king, and Hector's widow Andromache his queen. When the time comes to say their farewells, Andromache looks at Aeneas's son Ascanius and sees in him the image of her own dead son Astyanax. Turning to Ascanius, she sadly says: "Oh you, the only image of my Astyanax that is left to me! This is what his eyes, his hands, his features looked like."[80] So too the features depicted in Schwarz's medallion and Dürer's engravings will live long after the cardinal has passed away. Like Celtis's "Death Portrait" and Erasmus's medal, then, the portraits must be regarded not just as portraits of the moment, but as commemorative images.[81] That purpose comes out more vividly in Dürer's "Small Cardinal," where the combination of lifelike depiction and epitaph-like *subscriptio* conveys a sense of death within life, but also of life beyond death in memory.

The same is true of Dürer's engravings of Duke Frederick the Wise of Saxony (1463–1525) and Willibald Pirckheimer (1470–1530), both dated 1524.[82] The engravings are pendants to each other. In the manner of a Roman tombstone, they show a bust portrait above a stone plaque containing a eulogizing inscription with names and dates. All these elements are intended to serve the sitter's *memoria*.

The elegiac distich for Dürer's Frederick opens with the dedicatory phrase, "CHRISTO. SACRVM." ("Sacred to Christ"). The words are reminiscent of the ancient tombstone formula, "Dis Manibus Sacrum," that Celtis had revived for his "Death Portrait." The funerary association is strengthened by an acronym that appears immediately above the date: "B.M.F.V.V." ("Bene Merenti Fecit Vivus Vivo," or, "The living made this for the living, who well deserves it"). These initials go back to a formula often found on Roman tombs.[83] The elegiac distich itself is in the style of an epitaph, a eulogy in brief: "He was deeply devoted to God's word, a man worthy to be remembered by posterity forever."[84] The main verb, *favebat*, is in the past imperfect tense. As for the pentameter, it recalls the concluding verse of an epitaph by the Italian poet Gregorio Tifernate (1414–ca. 1463/64), first published at Venice in 1498 and reprinted at Strasbourg in 1509: "A man

[80]Noted by Suhle, 15, speaking of Schwarz's medallion. Merkel, 54, suggests that the semi-quotation may have originated in Albrecht's desire to establish Trojan ancestry. Documentary evidence, however, is lacking.

[81]Cf. Temme, 77; Maué, 372–73.

[82]Hofmann, 156–59, catalogue nos. 63–64.

[83]See De Grummond, 350–52.

[84]"ILLE. DEI VERBO. MAGNA PIETATE. FAVEBAT. / . PERPETVA. DIGNVS. POSTERITATE. COLI."

worthy . . . to be remembered by distant posterity."[85] The distich for Frederick may well have been supplied, via the duke's secretary Georg Spalatin, by Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560).

Eulogy is the dominant note also in the epigraph for Dürer's engraving of Willibald Pirckheimer. It consists of a single pentameter: "We live through the mind. The rest will belong to death."[86] Pirckheimer provided the motto himself. As Dieter Wuttke has shown, he took it from a funeral poem for the great Roman patron of the arts, C. Maecenas (ca. 70–8 BCE).[87] The epicedion was widely read, for it formed part of the *Appendix Virgiliana*, a set of poems traditionally attached to Virgil's works. Here too, context is all. The ancient poet eulogizes Maecenas for a life devoted to the Muses and Apollo. That is the monument he will leave behind for the ages: "Homer's books outlast marble monuments. We live through the mind. The rest will belong to death."[88] So Pirckheimer too will live on, his voice speaking forever in his books.

7. The Inscriptions for Cranach's Engravings of Luther (1520–21): Literary Models

In the waning months of 1520, the Wittenberg court painter Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) made two engravings of the hugely popular, but increasingly embattled, Reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546). Structurally, both are modeled on Dürer's first engraving of Albrecht of Brandenburg.[89]

The first of the Cranach engravings shows Luther in half profile, his crown tonsured, his frame dressed in the Augustinian habit (fig. 5).[90] An empty background focuses the eye on the sitter himself, a resolute man of faith. The portrait seems not to have been published during the Reformer's lifetime. At a time of delicate negotiations with Church and empire, the

[85]Tifernate, sig. D1[r], "Epitaphium in Thomam Moronum Mediolanensem," concluding verse: "Dignus et a longa posteritate coli."

[86]"VIVITVR. INGENIO. CAETERA. MORTIS. ERVNT."

[87]Wuttke, in Kurras and Machilek, 57–58, catalogue no. 33. For the Latin text, see Schoonhoven, 82 (*Elegiae in Maecenatem* 1.38).

[88]"Marmora Maeonii vincunt monumenta libelli. / Vivitur ingenio. Caetera mortis erunt." I quote ll. 37–38 as printed in the early editions; cf. Schoonhoven, 114–15. Since Scaliger, the text has been often emended. Kirchhoff, 424–25, points out the importance of the distich's context. His translation of the text is supported by Domizio Calderino's glosses in Virgil, 1492, fol. 324[v]: "Meonii. id est Homeri. . . . Marmora. marmorea" ("Maeonian, that is, of Homer. . . . Marble, [that is] made of marble").

[89]See Warnke, 21–22.

[90]Koepplin and Falk, 1:91–92, catalogue no. 35; Hofmann, 110–11, catalogue no. 40; Warnke, 24–27.

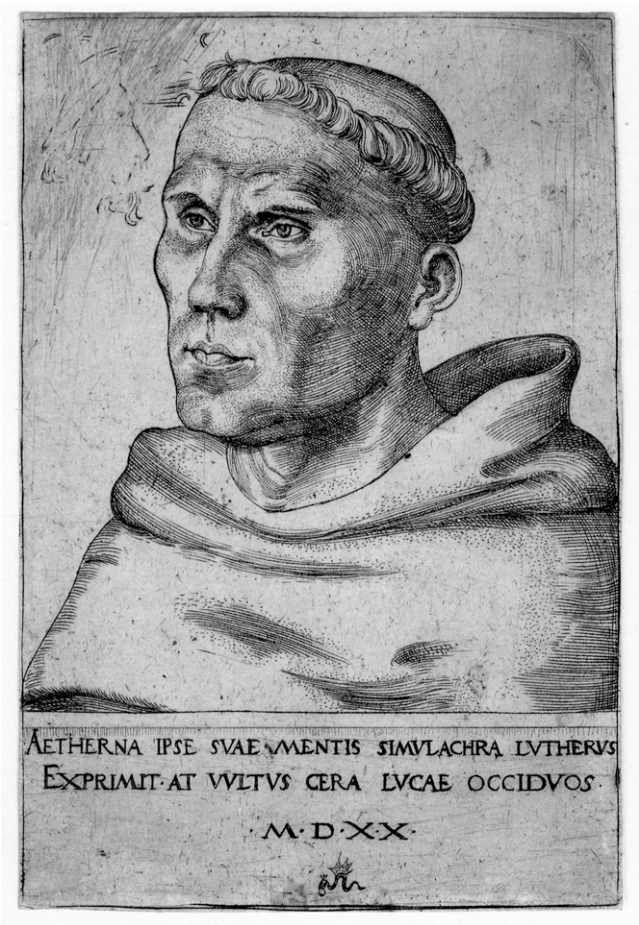

FIGURE 5. Lucas Cranach. *Martin Luther*, 1520. First version, intermediate state between the second and third. British Museum, London. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Wittenberg court may not have wanted to release an image of rugged intransigence. The published version of the portrait shows Luther in a conciliatory pose (fig. 6).[91] Standing in front of a niche, he appears to be explicating a point of theology. His left hand is placed on his breast; his right hand holds an open book, presumably the Bible. Despite the different poses, both portraits have the same epigraph, an elegiac distich. As in Dürer's

[91]Koepplin and Falk, 1:92–94, catalogue no. 36; Hofmann, 112–13, catalogue no. 41; Warnke, 27–31.

FIGURE 6. Lucas Cranach. *Martin Luther*, 1520. Second version. British Museum, London. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

"Small Cardinal," the inscription is placed directly below the image, along with the date "M.D.X.X." and Cranach's signature, the winged dragon. The distich reads: "Luther himself expresses the everlasting image of his mind, but the wax of Lucas his ephemeral features."[92]

Cranach's third engraving of Luther is dated 1521 (fig. 7). The portrait has the same layout as the first two, but with Luther in profile, wearing

[92]"AETHERNA IPSE SVAE MENTIS SIMVLACHRA LVTHERVS / EXPRIMIT. AT VVLTVS CERA LVCAE OCCIDVOS."

FIGURE 7. Lucas Cranach. *Martin Luther*, 1521. Second state. British Museum, London. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

the cap of doctor of theology. It is extant in two states.[93] In the first state, the background is blank. In the second, the background is darkly shaded. In both versions, an elegiac distich beneath the portrait declares: "Lucas's work is this short-lived likeness of Luther. The everlasting one of his mind he expresses himself."[94] Then follows the date, "M.D.X.X.I."

[93]Koepplin and Falk, 1:95, catalogue no. 38; Hofmann, 114–15, catalogue no. 42; Warnke, 40–49.

[94]"LVCAE OPVS EFFIGIES HAEC EST MORITVRA LVTHERI / AETHERNAM MENTIS EXPRIMIT IPSE SVAE". In the second state, the Latin words are separated by small diamonds.

Virtually identical in wording and thought, the two epigraphs must have been composed as variations on a theme, by the same poet, at about the same time.[95] But who that poet might have been, when precisely he wrote the verses, which literary models he followed — these are questions still imperfectly answered.

It is best to start with the last question. In his abovementioned survey of the portrait epigraph, Walther Ludwig argues that the inscriptions can be traced back to two ancient models.[96] One is *The Greek Anthology* 9.594: "Life painter, seeing that you have reproduced his outward form, how I wish you could also have cast Socrates's mind into the wax!"[97] The other is Tacitus, *Agricola* 46.3: "Like people's features, so too likenesses of those features are fragile and short-lived. The portrait of the mind is everlasting."[98] Ludwig is assuredly right in fingering Tacitus's text as a source. Indeed, if anything, he understates its importance, inasmuch as all the essential elements in the Luther epigraphs are also found in Tacitus's text: "the everlasting image of his mind" and "his ephemeral features" in the first inscription, "short-lived likeness" and "the everlasting [likeness] of his mind" in the second. In effect, the humanistic poet has done little more than versify Tacitus, adding only the names Lucas and Luther. This said, it still remains to account for "the wax of Lucas" in the first Luther inscription.[99]

Ludwig contends that the unusual metaphor was very probably suggested by the Greek epigram. As in the Luther inscription, it speaks of the artist's wax while juxtaposing the mortal likeness with the immortal image of the mind. However, the wax in the Greek epigram is not a wax bust, as one might assume, but rather the wax-based paint that late antique artists

[95]Ludwig, 1998, 134 (2004–05, 2:196).

[96]Ibid., 135 (2004–05, 2:197).

[97] *The Greek Anthology*, 3:330; Ludwig, 1998, 133 (2004–05, 2:195).

[98]Tacitus, 114: "ut vultus hominum, ita simulacra vultus imbecilla ac mortalia sunt, forma mentis aeterna."

[99]Warnke, 37–38, summarizes a range of interpretations, from the literal to the fanciful: the wax recalls ancient writing tablets, or wax-based paintings, or ancestral images; it means that Luther's features are moldable as wax in the hands of a Cranach. The last idea leads him into further subtleties that do not bear scrutiny. Brinkmann, 186, catalogue no. 37, supposes that the artist may be "praising himself, as his skilful hand engraves the copper as if it were wax." The truth is that the humanist poet writes "cera" here, first, because it fits the meter, and secondly, because it is an elegant variation on "imago." In the second epigraph, he replaces it with "opus" because this time "cera" could not be made to fit the meter. Cf. Ludwig, 1998, 135 (2004–05, 2:197).

commonly used.[100] But no matter. Even if the modern poet used the *Planudean Anthology* and in so doing proved himself an excellent Grecist, how could he have expected his Greekless readers to understand "the wax of Lucas"? Such a trope could only have been attempted if the poet knew it would be instantly recognized by his humanistic audience. In short, there must be a much more accessible source somewhere in the Latin tradition.

There is no need to look far and long. The source is the same text that Konrad Celtis adapted for his woodcut medal: the Ovidian pentameter, "lend a voice to the wax, it will be Protesilaus." Just as Celtis lauds the all-but-speaking portrait, so the inscription on Cranach's first Luther engravings praises the artist for creating an effigy as perfectly lifelike as Laodamia's wax. At the same time, the Ovidian wax is a reminder that the representation lacks a voice. The viewer is invited to look beyond the mute likeness and contemplate the eternally speaking image of Luther's mind.

8. The Inscriptions for Cranach's Engravings of Luther (1520–21): Date and Authorship

Apart from educated guesses, the author of the Luther epigraphs has never been identified. Equally unknown is the exact date when they were written. All that can be said for sure is that the earliest two portraits were engraved sometime in the autumn of 1520. Though the first version was not published until after Luther's death, the second was already circulating at Wittenberg and Worms in late 1520. The third engraving, Luther in a doctoral cap, was finished a month before Luther set out for the Diet of Worms. This last bit of information comes from Luther's letter of 7 March 1521. There Luther tells his friend and adviser Georg Spalatin (1484–1545), who was already in Worms with Frederick the Wise: "Lucas has asked me to supply these likenesses with a *subscriptio* and send them to you. You will see to them."[101]

There has been much discussion about the exact meaning of these two short sentences. The consensus now is that Luther refers to the third of

[100]This meaning was well known in Renaissance times. See Perotti, 3:112 (*Cornu copiae* 3.303, ll. 4–5): "Cera aliquando pingere maiores nostri solebant. Quapropter et tabellae ita pictae caerae vocabantur" ("Our ancestors sometimes used to paint with wax, for which reason such paintings too were called waxes"). The statement reappears in Calepino, sig. h4^{r}, s.v. "Caera."

[101]Luther, 2:283 (no. 385, ll. 23–24): "Has effigies iussit Lucas a me subscribi et ad te mitti. Tu eas curabis."

the Cranach portraits, the one dated 1521. It is, however, conceded that he might just possibly also be referring to the two portraits of 1520.[102] Because Luther then asks Spalatin to see to the matter, it is presumed that he left the inscription-writing to Spalatin.[103] Closer reading reveals several problems with this interpretation. First, Luther does not say "this likeness," but "these likenesses" ("has effigies"), each still needing a *subscriptio*. There is nothing for it, then, but to infer that all three of the Cranach engravings — not just the third portrait dated 1521, but also the earlier two portraits — still lacked an epigraph in early March. Because the second print had been circulating for several months already, it must have done so without a Latin epigraph. The newly finished third portrait evidently also required a suitable text. By early March 1521, however, Cranach was getting anxious to publish his engravings in final form. Moreover, when Luther asked Spalatin in Worms to take the matter in hand, he must have realized that his friend was not the right man to write the inscriptions himself. An excellent Latinist who could manage a passable distich if he worked at it, Spalatin was no epigrammatist. That is why Luther did not tell him to produce the texts himself, only to take care of the business. Spalatin's task, in brief, was to enlist a professional poet who also happened to be a wholehearted supporter of Luther's.

Back in Wittenberg, the obvious candidate for the job was Luther's right-hand man Philip Melanchthon, as accomplished in Latin verse as he was in Greek. But if Spalatin did ask Melanchthon, this could not have happened until the late spring of 1521 at the earliest. Until then, he was simply under too much pressure at the Diet of Worms.[104] From March to early June, Spalatin did not write even once to Melanchthon, even though the latter had written him several times. On 2 March the Wittenberg humanist grumbles that he has no idea whether his letters are even reaching Spalatin.[105] On 30 March he complains that Spalatin has not written him for a long time now.[106] It was not until 11 June, after Spalatin had returned from Worms, that Melanchthon could finally acknowledge a letter from him (written at Coburg). In the meantime, he himself had stopped writing

[102]Cf. Flechsig, 56; Warnke, 38–39.

[103]Flechsig, 56, concludes that it was most likely Spalatin who then wrote the inscription for the third engraving. For lack of evidence, the attribution has never been challenged. The authorship of the distich for the earlier engravings is left open. Cf. Warnke, 38–39.

[104]See Höss, 187–202.

[105]Scheible, T 1:263 (no. 128, ll. 21–22).

[106]Scheible, T 1:266 (no. 131, ll. 5–6).

because he was thinking his friend would be back any day now.[107] Hence, if Spalatin asked Melanchthon to write inscriptions for the portraits, he could not have done so until mid-June of 1521.

Of course, the well-connected Spalatin knew other poets too, most particularly Helius Eobanus Hessus (1488–1540), the Erfurt humanist whom Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522) had dubbed "king of poets" after reading his *Letters of Christian Heroines* in 1514.[108] Spalatin had been the best of friends with Hessus since at least 1506. Besides, Hessus knew Cranach personally. The two had met at Wittenberg in the late autumn of 1513. Half a year later, Hessus had asked Spalatin to give his greetings to "Lucas, Germany's foremost painter, a friend, moreover, of our profession and fit to be immortalized by us [in verse]."[109] During Cranach's visit to the celebrated Gotha canon Mutianus Rufus (1471–1526) in late 1516, he delightedly wrote: "I hear that Lucas, that second Apelles, is paying you a visit. I know the man and greeted him at Wittenberg. He promised to paint a portrait of Eobanus in colors."[110] More importantly, Hessus was by now a fervent supporter of Luther and Melanchthon.[111] When Luther stopped at Erfurt on his way to Worms in early April 1521, Hessus met him several times and became so deeply impressed with the Reformer's personality and message that he promptly wrote a set of *Elegies in Praise and Defense of the Evangelical Doctor Martin Luther*.[112] Already on 1 June, he could send a printed copy to Spalatin. In an accompanying letter he says he is happy to hear that Spalatin has gotten back safely from Worms. Their mutual friend Justus Jonas (1493–1555), he adds, has just left Erfurt for Wittenberg.[113] Thus, if Eobanus Hessus had a hand in writing the epigraphs, Spalatin would not have asked him until at least mid-June, after he himself was back in Wittenberg and Hessus had sent him the Luther elegies.

Now on 26 July 1521, Justus Jonas wrote Hessus to let him know he had arrived in Wittenberg.[114] The academic atmosphere in this little town, he reports, is far more congenial than at Erfurt. And then, out of the blue,

[107]Scheible, T 1:297 (no. 145).

[108]For this book, see Hessus, 2004–, 2:101–435. For Reuchlin's compliment, see ibid., 3:5–8. On Hessus's views about contemporary artists, see Huber-Rebenich.

[109]Gillert, 2:371 (letter of 22 June 1514): "Saluta Lucam, pictorem Germaniae principem, nostri autem ordinis amicum dignumque, qui a nobis aeternus efficiatur."

[110]Gillert, 2:239 (no. 571). The promised portrait did not materialize.

[111]See Hessus's verse letter to Melanchthon of ca. 26 November 1520, printed in Hessus, 1539, 1:241^{v}–242^{v} (*Sylvae* 4.1); lacking in Scheible.

[112]Hessus, 1521.

[113]Gillert, 2:282, letter of 1 June 1521 (no. 605, Beilage 1).

[114]Kawerau, 1:67 (no. 59).

he reminds his friend: "I am looking forward to the poem for Lucas the painter."[115] In conclusion he asks Hessus to give his regards to their mutual friend Johann Drach (Draconites). Already in June, then, Hessus had promised Jonas to write some verses for the painter Lucas Cranach. The added *pictorem* indicates that the poem was intended for a painting, not an engraving. Two additional circumstances will help pin this allusion down. First, Cranach was just then working on a portrait commemorating the death of the jurist Henning Goede at Wittenberg on 21 January 1521. Secondly, Jonas was obviously keen to receive the epigram. His interest is understandable only when it is realized that he had gone to Wittenberg expressly to take Goede's place as university professor and provost of All Saints' Chapter. Cranach's portrait of Goede is no longer extant. A copy of the painting, with an updated epigram by Hessus, was made in 1536. For many years it hung in the *Stuba facultatis* of the Collegium maius at Erfurt.[116] Thus, if Hessus was working on a poem for Cranach's portrait of Henning Goede in late July 1521, it really is not so far-fetched to assume that he might also have been asked to contribute one or more inscriptions for Cranach's Luther portraits.

The conclusion that either Philip Melanchthon or Eobanus Hessus is the most likely author of the Cranach epigraphs can now be buttressed with unassailable documentation. For in a hitherto overlooked part of Hessus's correspondence,[117] published at Marburg in 1543 by the Lutheran theologian Johann Drach (1494–1566), there are three epigrams by Hessus "on a portrait of Luther," all of them in elegiacs. Immediately following these poems is a distich written by Philip Melanchthon: the famed inscription for Cranach's third engraving. Here are the four epigrams, in translation:[118]

HELIUS EOBANUS HESSUS ON A PORTRAIT OF LUTHER

You who read and would like to see the whole Luther,
imagine this face speaking from his living breast.

ANOTHER

In every way possible it portrayed the features of Luther.
His life the masterly hand was not able to depict.

[115]Ibid.: "Carmen ad Lucam pictorem expecto."

[116]See Bornschein, 79–80. For the epigram, see Hessus, 1539, 1:323^{r}–323^{v} (*Sylvae* 8.23). Line 15 of the poem explicitly states that the portrait was copied after Cranach: "Illius effigiem Lucae manus aemula pinxit" ("a hand emulous of Lucas painted his likeness").

[117]Drach, 255.

[118]For the Latin texts, see the Appendix.

ANOTHER

It was artful to represent in half view the whole Luther,
so long as you don't, perhaps, call this a portrait of Antigonus.[119]

ANOTHER BY PHILIP MELANCHTHON

Lucas's work is this short-lived likeness of Luther.
The everlasting one of his mind he expresses himself.

There can now be no doubt: it was Philip Melanchthon who composed the inscription for Cranach's third engraving of Luther. Because it is so similar to the inscription on the two earlier portraits, he must have written that one as well. Eobanus Hessus, too, had been asked to submit epigrams, but only for the portrait of Luther in profile. It has to be for that particular engraving, because his final epigram specifically alludes to the half-view portrayal.

Further conclusions are not so easy to come by. In Drach's edition, the epigrams are printed without any context or editorial guidance. Readers are left to make their own inferences. The circumstance that Drach prints the four texts together does, however, suggest that they were originally copied on a single sheet of paper, perhaps as a set of proposals given to Cranach and Spalatin in the summer of 1521. Because Hessus's epigrams appear to have been solicited in June or early July, but only for the portrait of Luther in profile, it is likely that by then Melanchthon had already submitted several alternatives for the first two Luther engravings. By July, one of those distichs had been selected for use in the 1520 portraits. When Hessus's epigrams arrived, Cranach and Spalatin rejected them, perhaps for reasons of continuity or style or because they did not mention Cranach by name. Whatever the reason, Melanchthon's second epigram was chosen. Thus, by August 1521, all three of Cranach's Luther portraits had the required inscription and were ready for publication in their final form.

How the four epigraphs ended up in a book of Hessus's correspondence is readily explained. The editor, Johann Drach, had been a member of Hessus's circle at Erfurt since about 1515. He became friends with

[119]Hessus alludes to Apelles's picture of the Macedonian general and satrap, Antigonus I Monophthalmus (the One-eyed). By painting him in profile, Apelles showed only the good side. See Pliny, *Natural History* 35.90. Cranach, Hessus says, has drawn Luther in profile. But by drawing that half ("medio") he has artfully depicted the entire face. Unlike in Apelles's picture, there is nothing unseemly to hide, for Luther is well sighted. It is worth emphasizing that Hessus indirectly calls Cranach an *alter Apelles*.

Melanchthon after paying a visit to Wittenberg, perhaps already in 1519.[120] A canon at St. Severus, Drach became an enthusiastic supporter of Luther's when the Reformer visited Erfurt in April 1521. After plague broke out a few months later, Drach went to Wittenberg to study Hebrew. He earned his doctorate in theology there in 1523. With close contacts to Hessus, Melanchthon, and Spalatin, Drach might conceivably have made a copy of the four epigrams in August of 1521 and even have taken part in the final discussions.

The two-portrait topos that Melanchthon adapted from Tacitus's *Agricola* can also be documented in other works of his. In the spring of 1521 he rhetorically asks: "By what Apelles could that man [Christ] have been portrayed the way he is depicted in this letter to the Romans?"[121] Precisely the same thought occurs in his Latin and Greek epigram for Johannes Agricola's scholia on the New Testament letter to Titus (1530): "The skillful Apelles could not have painted Christ the way Saint Paul depicts him with godly mouth."[122] Apelles, in other words, would have been able to depict only the mortal man, not the mind of God. Most interesting of all is an epigram that Melanchthon wrote in May 1526 above a dilettantish miniature portrait of Rudolf Agricola. Quite possibly he had copied the image himself from the original painting while he was in Nuremberg for a visit. The elegiac distich goes as follows: "This portrait of Rudolf that you are looking at was amazing. His writings portray the everlasting one of his mind."[123] The first half of the pentameter ("Aeternam mentis") is repeated from the epigraph for Cranach's Luther engraving of 1521. The distich as a whole restates the two-portrait topos that characterizes both of Melanchthon's Luther inscriptions, but without their emphasis on mortality. Agricola, after all, had been dead for over four decades already. Melanchthon once again gives the artist his due. The original portrait, he declares, was wonderfully lifelike. He also explicitly states what he had only hinted at before. It is in his books that Rudolf Agricola portrays the image of his mind. That is the portrait that will speak to us forever.

[120]Scheible, T 1:161–62 (no. 71).

[121]Scheible, T 1:279 (no. 138, ll. 11–12).

[122]See Agricola, title page; Bretschneider and Bindseil, 10:654 (no. 346).

[123]"Haec permira fuit quam cernis imago Rudolphi. / Aeternam mentis scripta referre solent." The epigram was discovered in the University Library of Basel (portrait collection) by Tilman Falk. It was published, with commentary, in Koepplin and Falk, 1:265, catalogue no. 165.

9. Dürer's Engraving of Melanchthon (1526)

Eobanus Hessus and Philip Melanchthon teamed up again in May 1526, this time to celebrate the opening of the Humanistic School that Melanchthon had helped found in Nuremberg. The two men had been in contact with each other since at least 1520.[124] Those contacts grew stronger as time passed, especially after the University of Erfurt, ravaged by plague and racked by internal dissensions, fell into steep decline in mid-1521. By 1523, Hessus's professorship was becoming increasingly tenuous. Desperate to support his growing family, he started studying medicine, and even got as far as writing a bestselling dietetic poem. In the end, however, he had no choice but to leave Erfurt. Accordingly, when Melanchthon invited him to make a new start at Nuremberg as professor of poetics, Hessus jumped at the opportunity, all the more as he would be joining his friend Joachim Camerarius (1500–74), the school's director and professor of Greek.

Having visited Nuremberg already in November 1525, Melanchthon seized the opportunity to renew his friendship with Albrecht Dürer. Dürer responded with a pen-and-ink portrait that he eventually turned into the famed engraving. That same summer he also made a striking silverpoint drawing of Hessus, with whom he had become fast friends in the meantime.[125]

Dürer's original sketch of Melanchthon provides no space for an inscription. It was not until he recast the drawing into an engraving that he added a plaque below the image (fig. 8). It contains the date "1526," a Latin verse inscription, and the monogram "AD." The elegiac distich runs as follows: "Dürer was able to depict Philip's features just as in life. The mind his masterly hand was not able to depict."[126] A compact masterpiece, the epigram consists of two perfectly balanced parts: praise of the artist

[124]See Hessus, 1539, 1:241^{v}–242^{v} (*Sylvae* 4.1).

[125]The portrait is now in the British Museum, London. See Graepler, 12. About this portrait (or the woodcut made from it), Euricius Cordus (1486–1535) wrote an epigram that opens as follows: "*Magnus* did not want his portrait made by some everyday painter, but by the very best in that art." See Rupprich, 1:296, no. 11. "Magnus" is not the Nuremberg councilman Sebastian Groß, but Alexander the Great, who would only let himself be painted by Apelles. See Steiger, 80; Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, 2.7:239, ll. 145–46 (*Adages* 4.5.1), with note. So too, the "king of poets" Eobanus Hessus wanted to be depicted only by the modern Apelles, Dürer. The same conceit (applied to Dürer's engraving of Willibald Pirckheimer) is found in Erasmus's letter of 14 March 1525 (published in May 1525): see Allen, Allen, and Garrod, 6:45 (no. 1558, ll. 33–36).

[126]"Viventis. potvit. dvrerivs. ora. philippi / Mentem. non. potvit. pingere. docta manvs".

FIGURE 8. Albrecht Dürer. *Philip Melanchthon*, 1526. British Museum, London. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

for the lifelike depiction of the external features; and praise of the sitter, whose mind is beyond artistic portrayal.[127] In short, the verses restate the two-portrait convention.

The poet has not been identified, at least not with any degree of conviction. Dürer himself could not possibly have come up with it. Like his colleagues Hans Burgkmair, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Hans Baldung Grien, and Hans Holbein the Younger, he had no training in Latin, let alone in the technicalities of prosody. On such occasions, he invariably turned to one of

[127]Rosenfeld, 167–68.

his learned friends.[128] For the Melanchthon portrait, the sitter himself was out of the question, because he had long since left town by the time Dürer started work on the engraving. Willibald Pirckheimer was also not available. He was then a chronically ill and increasingly bitter man, especially so as the Reformation took root in his native city and made life difficult for his sister, the abbess Caritas. For Dürer, then, the obvious choice was his new friend Eobanus Hessus, who also happened to be best of friends with Melanchthon.

It was Otto Clemen who in 1920 first proposed Hessus as the distich's most likely author.[129] Hans Rupprich followed in 1956.[130] Neither Clemen nor Rupprich, however, were able to offer any proof apart from the inference that so elegant an epigraph could only have flowed from the pen of the king of poets. Indeed, with the exception of Joachim Camerarius, there was no one else in Nuremberg who could have written it. A close friend of Melanchthon's since their Wittenberg days together, Camerarius was expert not just in Latin, but also in Greek. For this reason, Walther Ludwig suspects that Hessus and Camerarius might well have collaborated on the inscription. In proof, he cites the two epigrams from the *Planudean Anthology* discussed earlier in this essay.[131] And truly, if the Greek epigrams (possibly another one as well) are at the root of the 1526 inscription, then it almost certainly would have taken a Grecist like Camerarius to point them out to Hessus.[132]

Ludwig's argument must ultimately bow to the facts. For Hessus, as is now clear, had to all intents and purposes composed the epigraph for Dürer's engraving already in the summer of 1521. One can imagine his impish delight when Dürer talked to him about contributing an inscription

[128]See Schmid, 1999, 251; Schmid, 2003, 43–44. Joachim Camerarius, who knew him well, says that Dürer had no training in Latin: "Litterarum quidem studia non attigerat." See Rupprich, 1:307, no. 22, l. 43. All the same, even scholars who should know better keep on attributing the epigraph to Dürer. See, for example, Price, 245–46. Schmid, 2003, 554, who is quite aware that Dürer had little Latin (ibid., 43–44), still slips into old habits when he speaks of the epigraph as the artist's own composition. In a corollary to Dürer's supposed authorship, art historians go on to suggest that the epigram expresses the artist's modesty, his sense of limits, self-criticism, self-praise, his sense of pride and equality with the humanists. See, for example, Schuster, 1983a, 123, 137–38; Preimesberger, Baader, and Suthor, 220–26; Price, 93, 245–46; Kirchhoff, 427. By adopting the humanistic epigram, Dürer does, of course, implicitly accept the praise of his own artistry and of Melanchthon's mind.

[129]Clemen, 36.

[130]Rupprich, 1:275, no. 98n1.

[131]See section 2, "Celtis's Woodcut Medallion (1507)," and section 7, "The Inscriptions for Cranach's Engravings of Luther (1520–21): Literary Models."

[132]Ludwig, 1998, 136–39 (2004–05, 2:198–202). In 1526, Hessus had not yet advanced much beyond a rudimentary knowledge of Greek.

for their mutual friend. After seeing his epigrams for Cranach's third Luther portrait passed over in favor of one of Melanchthon's, Hessus was now free to reuse them — oh, sweet revenge! — for Melanchthon himself.[133] All he had to do was to select the best of them and change a few words. And so, instead of "Omnibus expressit rationibus ora Lutheri, / Vitam non potuit pingere docta manus," he now wrote: "Viventis potuit Durerius ora Philippi, / Mentem non potuit pingere docta manus." At the hexameter close, "ora Lutheri" has become "ora Philippi." Inspired by Melanchthon's example in the Luther epigraphs, also because he had the highest opinion of Dürer, Hessus now also includes the artist's name. The changed dynamic of the verse meant he could jettison the pedestrian "Omnibus expressit rationibus" and replace it with the rhetorically far more effective, grammatically more transparent "Viventis potuit Durerius." The new phrasing focuses attention on Dürer's artistry and thus anticipates "docta manus" in the next line. With "viventis" opening the hexameter, Hessus had to do something about "vitam" in the pentameter. Since that word was more appropriate for Luther as a hero of faith, rather than for the scholarly Melanchthon, he replaced it with "mentem." These changes made, the opening words of each verse — "viventis" and "mentem" — are now linked by assonance, but contrasted by meaning, for the first hints at mortality, the second at eternal fame. As such, they are a perfect pendant to Melanchthon's second epigraph for Cranach's Luther.

The pentameter, "Mentem non potuit pingere docta manus," has an interesting prehistory. Six years before he wrote the Luther epigraph on which the verse is based, Hessus published a set of epigrams that poked fun at artists who fancy they can paint the unpaintable: for example, God, the Trinity, the color of the soul. The poems are attached, for variety's sake, to his *Paschal Hymn* (1515). One of the epigrams suggests a two-portrait theme: painters can depict Christ's physical suffering, not his divine mind: "Here is how God suffered in human flesh. Except from this aspect, no one can paint a picture of God."[134] Another epigram already contains the words, "potuit pingere docta manus": "What is beyond the ken of human thought and all eternity, that is something the schooled hand of an unschooled artist is able to paint."[135]

[133]Unaware of the actual connection, Rudolf Preimesberger notices the similarity between the Cranach and Dürer inscriptions. Believing the latter to be far more complex than the former, however, he infers that Dürer (yes, Dürer!) might be consciously, ironically seeking to outdo Cranach also in the epigraphs themselves. See Preimesberger, Baader, and Suthor, 226.

[134]Hessus, 2004–, 3:44–45: "Taliter humano Deus est in corpore passus. / Hac nisi parte Deum pingere nemo potest."

[135]Ibid., 46–47: "Quod neque mens hominum neque totum intelligit aevum, / Indocti potuit pingere docta manus."

Hessus did not coin the phrase *potuit pingere docta manus*. Some seventy years earlier, Janus Pannonius had written: "Offert picturas pingere docta manus" ("The hand masterful in painting offers pictures [for sale]").[136] While Hessus could not know that line (it was not printed until 1880), he certainly did read Giannantonio Campano's verses about a bronze medallion of Pius II (1460): "Quippe animum invictum facundaque pectora nullo / Nec tractu potuit sculpere docta manus" ("Indeed, the masterly hand was in no way able to sculpt his matchless mind and eloquent breast").[137] He was also well acquainted with Ercole Strozzi's epigram "On a Portrait of Lucretia," published in 1513, the second line of which reads, "Conata est dominam pingere docta manus" ("The masterly hand has attempted to paint my mistress").[138] Thus it is from the Italian tradition that Hessus took his cue. As for *docta manus*, ancient poets routinely employed the phrase to praise the artisan's deft hand. Ovid adopted it once for master sculptors. Via Ovid it became a standard trope for the masterful artist in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance.[139]

Hessus was to reuse the hemistich "pingere docta manus" several more times after 1526. In one of the epigrams he contributed to Camerarius's translation of Dürer's *De symmetria partium in rectis formis humanorum corporum* (1532), he says: "Or if it came to encircling cities with suitable walls, Dürer's masterly hand was able to depict them."[140] For a portrait of Duke Ulrich of Württemberg (1487–1550) he wrote a long inscription that opens with the words: "In this portrait the masterly hand has depicted the features of Duke Ulrich. It was able to paint nothing more."[141] Among the seven epigrams that Hessus submitted in 1539/40 for a portrait of his dear friend Johann Meckbach (1495–1555), personal physician to Philip of

[136]Janus Pannonius, 1987, 318 (*Elegiae in Italia scriptae* 19.88). The phrase is found already on a mid-thirteenth-century crucifix in San Domenico, Bologna: "Cuius docta manus me pinxit Iunta Pisanus." See Dietl, 97n104.

[137]See Campano, 2:131 (*Epigrams* 4.17.9–10).

[138]Strozzi, fol. 145^{v}. Also cf. Andrelini, 308 (*Amores* 1.9.51), about a picture of Cupid (1490): "Quam bene docta manus puerum te pinxit inanem!" ("How aptly the masterly hand painted you as a light-minded boy!").

[139]See Ovid, 1985, 81 (*Fasti* 3.832); Dietl, 84–100; Ludwig, 1998, 136 (2004–05, 2:198–99).

[140]Rupprich, 1:313, no. 22d, ll. 10–11: "Sive forent aptis cingendae moenibus urbes, / Düreri potuit pingere docta manus." The parallel was pointed out by Saran, 185. Eobanus Hessus applies *docta manus* to Dürer also in his *Epicedion* for the painter. See Hessus, 1990, 120 (*Epicedia* 3.48); Ludwig, 1998, 139 (2004–05, 2:202).

[141]Hessus, 1539, 1:338^{v} (*Sylvae* 9.28.1–2): "Hac ducis Ulrichi depinxit imagine vultus / Nil praeter vultus pingere docta manus." The epigram was written in the later 1530s.

Hesse, he also included this one: "If the artist's hand had been able to depict the mind, you, Meckbach, would now be alive in this picture."[142] As in Hessus's epigram for Dürer's Melanchthon, the distich compliments both the master's hand and the sitter's intellect. The artist has depicted Meckbach to the life. The portrait would speak, had he also been able to paint the mind.

10. Epigraphs for Painted Portraits

In the mass-disseminated prints and medallions, the inscriptions typically foreground the sitter's mind and character that live on in memory and writing. In paintings, by contrast, the epigraphs typically foreground the artist and the image itself. The likeness is so true to life that it all but speaks. Linguistic and visual cues, however, point to the portrait's memorial function and help depict the sitter's mind.[143]

To start with an early example: in 1509 Lucas Cranach painted his good friend Christoph Scheurl (1481–1542), then a twenty-eight-year-old.[144] A professor of canon law at the University of Wittenberg, Scheurl had studied at Bologna with such scholars as Filippo Beroaldo the Elder and Antonio Codro Urceo. Cranach shows the sitter in half profile. At the top right corner of the painting is Scheurl's personal motto, "FORTES. FORTVNA. FORMIDAT" ("Fortune dreads the bold"). Scheurl uses it, for instance, on the title page of his academic lecture on the preeminence of literature, *Oratio attingens litterarum prestantiam* (Leipzig, 1509). The motto's source, hitherto unidentified, is Seneca, *Medea* 159: "Fortuna fortes metuit" ("Fortune fears the bold").[145] By changing the verb from *metuit* to *formidat*, Scheurl creates triple alliteration. He has also changed Seneca's word order, probably to associate it with the proverb, "Fortes fortuna adiuvat" ("Fortune favors the bold").[146]

[142]"Si manus artificis potuisset pingere mentem, / Vivus in hac tabula nunc, Megobache, fores." The parallel was noted by Ludwig, 1998, 139n45 (2004–05, 2:201–02n45). For a text of all seven epigrams, see Krause, 1:278. The artist was Georg Thomas of Basel, who had been working at Marburg since 1534. The 1540 portrait is not extant. Thomas updated it in a woodcut of 1553 (used as an ex libris). It contains Eobanus's seventh epigram, but with the sitter's age revised. See Knetsch, 125, 132–33; Graepler, xlii, 10–11.

[143]For some earlier epigraphs in paintings, especially Italian ones, cf. Cranston, 15–61.

[144]Koepplin and Falk, 1:264, catalogue no. 164.

[145]Seneca, 1:356.

[146]Terence, 2:32 (*Phormio* 203). The connection to Scheurl's motto has often been noted. For the proverbial thought, see Otto, 144, no. 702; *Thesaurus Proverbiorum Medii Aevi*, 12:318–20 ("Wagen (Vb.)," nos. 21–77).

Directly below the personal motto are the majuscules, "A ⁎ A ⁎ A ⁎". The abbreviation was once a common formula on Christian tombstones, where it addresses the passerby: "Ave, Amice. Abi" ("Hail, friend. Go your way").[147] It thus tempers the youthfully optimistic "Fortune dreads the bold" with a discrete reminder of mortality. The triple initials "M M M" on the richly embroidered border of Scheurl's shirt may be expanded as "Memento, Mortalis, Mori" ("Remember, mortal, that you must die").[148] They thus serve the same purpose. In the top left corner of the portrait an epigraph identifies the sitter, his title ("I.V.D.," that is, "Iuris Utriusque Doctor," Doctor of both Civil and Canon Law), and his age at the time (twenty-eight). Then follows a Latin couplet that, just like the formula "A ⁎ A ⁎ A ⁎", addresses the passerby: "If Scheurl is an acquaintance of yours, wayfarer, which one looks more like Scheurl? This one here, or the one over there?"[149]

The couplet, for once, is not in elegiacs, but Phalaecian hendecasyllables. The poet has traditionally been thought to be Scheurl himself. For near the end of the dedicatory letter to his *Oratio* of 1509, Scheurl praises Cranach as a consummately realistic painter, indeed, as a second Apelles, who, like Albrecht Dürer, paints portraits so true to life that they lack nothing but breath and mind. He then says that he explicitly instructed Cranach to add the verses to his portrait.[150] But asking the painter to add a couplet is not the same as composing it himself. The fact is that Scheurl reuses an impromptu epigram by his old professor at Bologna, Antonio Codro Urceo (1446–1500). The verses are quoted in Filippo Beroaldo's dedicatory letter to Codro Urceo's *Orationes* (1502). The dedicatee Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio, so Beroaldo writes, had had Codro's portrait made by the famed painter and goldsmith Francesco Francia (ca. 1450–1517). After looking at it closely, the sitter made up this couplet right there and then: " If Codro is an acquaintance of yours, wayfarer, which one looks more like Codro? This one here, or the

[147]Nicolaus, 248.

[148]"M. M." was a standard abbreviation of *Memento Mori*, often used on tombstones. See Nicolaus, 251. The added "M" yields the triple alliteration that so appealed to Scheurl: "Memento, Mortalis, Mori." For this expression, see Powitz, 177, with n10, transcribing Konrad Landvogt's owner's mark of 1488: "Conradi Lantfoudt liber: M M M."; Meyer and Unterforcher, 31.

[149]"SI. SCHEVRLVS. TIBI. NOTVS E[ST]. VIATOR / QVIS. SCHEVRLVS. MAGIS. EST. AN HIC. AN. ILLE". Flechsig, 86, notes that a restorer overpainted the (still-visible) word "viator" with the meaningless "maior." Following earlier scholars, he assigns the couplet to Christoph Scheurl.

[150]Scheurl, sig. A3^{r-v}.

one over there?"[151] Scheurl's reasons for adapting Codro's epigraph are not hard to fathom. He must have wanted to pay homage to his teacher, whose bon mot was well known among humanists. No doubt he also wanted to put Cranach on a par with the best of the Italian portrait painters, Francesco Francia, indeed on a par with the Greek Apelles and the German Dürer.

The compliment that Scheurl bestows on Cranach returns in the elegiac distichs that Dürer's student, Hans Baldung Grien (1484/85–1545), printed at the top of his painting of an unidentified young man in 1515. The sitter speaks: "This is what I once looked like, after I had lived some five lustra, exactly as the painting shows with magnificent artistry. A second Apelles, Baldung has depicted me so faithfully that anyone who sees me will believe I am alive."[152]

Epigraphs of this type are the norm in the painted portraits of Hans Holbein the Younger, starting in 1519 with his depiction of the humanist lawyer Bonifacius Amerbach of Basel (1495–1562).[153] To the right of the sitter, Holbein places a tablet attached to a fig tree. Two elegiac distichs praise the living likeness: "Although a painted face, I yield nothing to the living one, but look exactly like my master — a noble portrait, thanks to the precise little brushstrokes. As he completes eight *triads*, the work of art thus faithfully portrays in me that which belongs to nature."[154] In smaller letters, some concluding words note that Holbein painted Amerbach on 14 October 1519, that is to say, three days after his twenty-fourth birthday.

Amerbach composed the distichs himself. The sheet of paper on which he tried out a whole series of drafts is still extant.[155] Writing a suitable inscription was not so easy, even for a trained Latinist. Interestingly, the epigraph gives voice to the picture by making the portrait speak. All praise is reserved for the artist himself, for the portrait claims to be marvelously

[151]Urceo, sig. A2^{r}: "Si Codrus tibi notus est, viator, / Quis Codrus magis est? an hic, an ille?" Urceo's book was reprinted at Venice in 1506. Scheurl explicitly mentions Beroaldo's praise of Francesco Francia in his dedicatory letter to Cranach (1 October 1509), sig. A1^{v}–A2^{r}. Scheurl's borrowing from Codro Urceo was noted already by Haußleiter, 47–48n1. Haußleiter rather too harshly calls the borrowing "pure plagiarism."

[152]"TALIS. ERAM. LVSTRIS. OLIM. QVASI. QVINQVE. PERACTIS. / ARTE. VELVT. MAGNA. PICTA. TABELLA. TENET. / SIC. ME. BALDVNGVS. DEPINXERAT. ALTER. APELLES. / VT. VIVVM. QVI. ME. VIDERIT. ESSE. PVTET." See Von der Osten, 123–25, catalogue no. 32; Haag, Lange, Metzger, and Schütz, 30–31, catalogue no. 4. Cf. Heusinger, 52–53n227. The epigraph was not written by the artist himself, as is commonly assumed. Like his teacher Albrecht Dürer, Baldung Grien had no formal training in Latin.

[153]Rowlands, 126, catalogue no. 7; Bätschmann and Griener, 27–29.

[154]"PICTA LICET FACIES VIVAE NON CEDO SED INSTAR / SVM DOMINI IVSTIS NOBILE LINEOLIS. / OCTO IS DUM PERAGIT TPIETH, SIC GNAVITER IN ME / ID QVOD NATVRAE EST, EXPRIMIT ARTIS OPVS."

[155]See Bätschmann and Griener, 26.

true to life. Only upon close reading does one realize that the inscription also hints at the sitter's mortality and at an inner world that cannot be captured by the artist's brushstrokes, however fine and precise they may be. The second distich insists that the artist was able to capture only "that which belongs to nature." Whatever belongs to Amerbach's character and mind must forever elude the artist's brush. The inscription's temporal framework — "at age twenty-four," "on 14 October 1519" — points to Amerbach's youthful age. So does the fig tree behind him, well in leaf already and just beginning to bear fruit. But the fig tree is also a symbol of the fall from paradise, and hence, of mortality.[156] The reminders of mortality reinforce the portrait's purpose as a commemorative picture presented to Amerbach's siblings. At the time, Amerbach was planning to study at Avignon, then ravaged by plague. He could not be sure that he would come back safely.[157]

An elegiac distich in Holbein's portrait of Erasmus, painted in 1523, does not make the sitter or portrait speak, but rather the artist himself.[158] One can just barely make it out, that little inscription printed on the gilt edge of a book behind the humanist: "I [am] that [famous] Hans Holbein. Not so easily will anyone be a mimic [*mimus*] to me as he will be a critic [*Momus*] to me."[159] Like the earlier epigraphs for a painting, the text praises the artist's mastery. One will sooner criticize Holbein than imitate him. There is not a word about Erasmus's immortal mind, no allusion to the idea that a better portrait may be found in his writings. Such thoughts can be inferred, however, from the book upon which Erasmus, much like Celtis in the "Death Portrait," rests his hands. On the volume's edges are the words, plainly written for all to see, "The Herculean labors of Erasmus of Rotterdam."[160] The phrase alludes to Erasmus's Herculean labors in the realm of scholarly editing. The Dutch humanist speaks of them at length in his essay on the adage, "The labors of Hercules."[161]

[156]Bätschmann and Griener, 154.

[157]See Hartmann, 27.

[158]On the painting, see Heckscher; Rowlands, 128, catalogue no. 13; Bodar, 55–60.

[159]"ILLE EGO IOANNES HOLBEIN, NON FACILE VLLVS / TAM MICHI MIMVS ERIT, QVAM MICHI MOMVS ERIT". On the text, see Mähly; Heckscher, 133, 137 (reading "Iam" rather than "Tam"); Carstensen, 48–51. The opening phrase "Ille ego" is familiar not only from Ovid and other poets, but — to a humanist reader — especially from the proem to Virgil's *Aeneid*, a fictitious self-presentation written for a frontispiece portrait of Virgil, sometime in the first century CE. Cf. Mähly, 269.

[160]"ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΟΙ ΠΟΝΟΙ ERASMI ROTERO".

[161]Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, 2.5:23–41 (*Adages* 3.1.1); Bodar, 55–57.

As for the verse epigraph, it alludes to another of Erasmus's adages, one that was originally used by the ancient Greek painters: "People will sooner criticize than imitate."[162] A decade earlier Holbein's father, Hans Holbein the Elder (ca. 1465–1524), had included that very adage in his "Madonna Montenuovo" (1513).[163] The complimentary distich is usually attributed to Erasmus himself, but on nothing more than a guess.[164] Technically, the hexameter falls short of the great humanist's standards. The fifth foot ends in elision, an irregularity that Erasmus avoids in his own verse.[165] The line ending "facile ullus" is cacophonous and prosaic. Erasmus would also not have been pleased with the spelling *michi* for *mihi* in the pentameter. By 1523 he had not used that medieval orthography in well over two decades. Even the form of the name Holbein is suspect: in 1523 Erasmus himself called the artist "Olpeius."[166]

A metrical error in the hexameter can probably be laid at Holbein's door — always assuming, of course, that Holbein inscribed the Latin text himself. As Jacob Mähly remarked in 1868, a long syllable is lacking immediately after "Holbein."[167] Mähly remedies the lacuna by inserting "en" ("look"). While metrically possible, the conjecture seems unlikely. It is just a filler. In 1886, Gustaf Leithäuser filled the lacuna with the verb *sum* ("I am").[168] The conjecture makes excellent sense, though one has to wonder how Holbein could have overlooked the verb when copying the lines out. More recently, William S. Heckscher has suggested adding the nominative singular ending "–us" to "Holbein."[169] If so, Holbein overlooked the abbreviation "*9*" after his name in the copy text or mistook it for a comma.

[162]"Carpet aliquis citius quam imitabitur." See Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, 2.3:198–200 (*Adages* 2.2.84); noted by Mähly, 270. Cf. Carstensen, 38–55; *Thesaurus Proverbiorum Medii Aevi*, 10:66–67 ("Schelten," nos. 180–92): "Tadeln ist leichter als besser machen." Also relevant is the adage "Momo satisfacere" ("Satisfying [the god of censure] Momus"). See Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, 2.1:546–48 (*Adages* 1.5.74).

[163]Mähly, 270.

[164]Ibid. Later Holbein scholarship follows suit.

[165]Perhaps misunderstanding a comment by Erwin Panofsky, Heckscher, 137, criticizes "facile" as having a short first syllable. But the scansion is correct. It is the elision (also mentioned by Panofsky) that is problematic.

[166]See Heckscher, 138, with n27.

[167]Mähly, 270.

[168]Leithäuser, 18. He continues with some wild emendations.

[169]Heckscher, 138. The form "Holbeinus" was used, for example, by Beatus Rhenanus in 1526. See Rupprich, 1:296, no. 10, l. 5. In the 1530s, John Leland regularly calls him "Holbinus," or "Holbenus."

Because the focus is now on Holbein's lapses in Latin, it is appropriate to turn next to his roundel portrait of Philip Melanchthon, painted inside a small wooden box.[170] Created in ca. 1535/36, when Holbein was King's Painter to Henry VIII of England, the portrait was not taken from life, but from an unknown image. On the box's ornamental lid, an elegiac distich lauds the painter's art: "QVI CERNIS TANTVM NON, VIVA MELANTHONIS ORA, / HOLBINVS RARA DEXTERITATE DEDIT." ("You who look at the all but living face of Melanchthon: Holbein has rendered [it] with exquisite skill"). A contemporary replica of the portrait, now in the Sir William van Horne Collection at Montreal, has the same text, but with "Quae" rather than "Qui."[171] Puzzled by this variant, critics either shrug it off or ignore it completely. Despite the authority of the text copied down by Holbein, however, it is no heresy to ask if Holbein made another mistake in his Latin, or if the text in the replica offers a corrected reading.

In the version painted by Holbein himself, the sentence starts off with the relative pronoun "Qui" ("You who"). Unattached, the pronoun dangles uncomfortably and superfluously. Because there is no grammatical connection between the first and second verse, one is forced to add something like a colon at the end of the hexameter. But now a new problem arises: "dedit" in the pentameter has no direct object. To accommodate, one has to supply "ora" from the hexameter. That makes "ora" the direct object of two different verbs, "cernis" as well as "dedit." If, by contrast, the distich opens with "Quae," the object of "dedit" is "Melanthonis ora," while "ora" connects smoothly to the relative clause starting with "quae." The result is a syntactically solid, stylistically effective sentence that translates: "The all-but-living face of Melanchthon you are looking at, Holbein has rendered with exquisite skill." The correction, first made in the Van Horne copy, was proposed independently by Karl Hartfelder in 1892.[172]

As soon as one realizes that *Quae* is the intended reading, one can also recognize the model for the hexameter. It is Martial 9.76.1: "Haec sunt illa mei quae cernitis ora Camoni" ("This face you are looking at is that of my dear Camonius").[173] Imitating the same verse, Simon Lemnius (1511?–50)

[170]Rowlands, 143–44, catalogue no. 60; Bätschmann and Griener, 31; Trudzinski, 30–38. On the genre of the private portrait, see Dülberg, in particular 93–95, 272–73 (no. 269).

[171]Bradner, 833; Trudzinski, 32; Foister, 132–33.

[172]Hartfelder, 254n3. Ludwig, 1998, 127n11 (2004–05, 2:187–88n11), briefly mentions *quae ora*, but then defends the erroneous *qui*.

[173]Martial, 1993, 2:298.

opens an epigram on the portrait medallion of Achatius of Brandenburg with the words: "Haec sunt ora mei quae cernis, lector, Achati" ("This face you are looking at, reader, is that of my dear Achatius").[174] Joachim Camerarius adopts similar wording in an undated epigram on a picture of Philip Melanchthon: "Picta manu artificis quae cernis muta Philippi / Haec sunt ora. Loqui si cupis, adde libros" ("Depicted by the artist's hand, this mute face you are looking at is Philip's. If you want it to speak, add his books").[175] Most interestingly of all, the English court poet and antiquary John Leland (1503/06–1552) writes in another epigraph for Holbein's portrait of Melanchthon: "Quae cernis tantum non viva Melanctonis ora / Holbenus pinxit. Bella tabella nitet" ("The all but living face of Melanchthon you are looking at is Holbein's work. This painterly painting dazzles").[176]

When Leicester Bradner discovered the last-quoted distich — plainly a variant of the one Holbein adopted — he immediately used it to make a strong case for Leland's authorship of the Holbein epigraph. Bradner notes that Leland also composed epigraphs for Holbein's portraits of Henry VIII and Erasmus. He notes too that Leland was a great friend of Brian Tuke, the royal paymaster to artists and an art collector *par excellence*. To these observations, Meinolf Trudzinski and Susan Foister have added further arguments.[177] They point out that *rara dexteritate* is one of Leland's favorite expressions. At Epigram 50.4 and 184.2, for example, Leland writes, "Iuditii rara dexteritate boni"; at Epigram 223.8 he has, "Sic rara pinxit dexteritate manu."[178] For Holbein's portrait of the young Prince Edward he composed the distich: "Immortale decus pictorum Holbenus amoenum / Pinxit opus rara dexteritate manus."[179] For Holbein's portrait of Erasmus he contributed:

[174]Mundt, 2:126 (*Epigrams* 3.31.1), "De effigie Achatii Brandeburgensis," published in *Epigrammaton libri III* (1538). Mundt translates "Achatii" as "Achates" and then (because Achates was Aeneas's loyal companion) identifies him as Georg Sabinus from Brandenburg. However, the genitive of "Achates" is "Achatae," not "Achatii." Lemnius in fact alludes to a medallion made in 1537, when Achatius of Brandenburg (1516–78) was twenty-one. See Sallet, 87 (misreading Achatius's age as "XXXI" rather than as "XXI").

[175]Hessus, 1561, sig. P8^{v}; edited in Hartfelder, 254 (epigram 3).

[176]Bradner, 833; Trudzinski, 30; Foister, 143 (epigram no. 1). The first sentence translates literally as "The all but living face of Melanchthon you are looking at, Holbein painted." With "painterly painting" I am merely trying to capture something of the wordplay in Leland's "bella tabella."

[177]Trudzinski, 30–35; Foister.

[178]For the verses in context, see Sutton.

[179]Trudzinski, 29.

"Holbenus pictor, quo non illustrior alter, / Exhibuit rarae sedulitatis opus."[180]

All this evidence points inescapably to three conclusions. First, in the epigraph for Holbein's Melanchthon, the intended reading is not "Qui," but "Quae." The replica has it right. Second, it was John Leland who wrote the epigraph.[181] Third, the variant rediscovered by Leicester Bradner is one of several versions that Leland proposed to Holbein for his approval. As became apparent with Cranach's Luther engravings, such advice and consent was normal procedure.

It remains to discuss the phrase *viva ora* in line 1 of the epigram that Holbein (or his patron) selected for the Melanchthon miniature. Leland uses a variant of the phrase in his epigram for a painting of Henry VIII (first distich): "If ever a hand has painted true-to-life features in a portrait, this vernal painting takes the prize in artistry."[182] There "true-to-life" is taken bodily from Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.848, of sculptors: "shall draw from the marble features true to life."[183] Leland may also have known the elegiac distich that appears in Holbein's painting of the merchant Georg Gisze (1532).[184] In that portrait the verses are written on a slip of paper attached to the wall behind the sitter. First comes the heading: "Distichon on the likeness of Georg Gisze."[185] Then follows the couplet itself, along with the sitter's age and year: "This likeness that you are looking at represents the features of Georg. This is what his eyes, this is what his cheeks look like in life. At age thirty-four, in the year of our Lord 1532."[186] The epigram as a whole invites the viewer to admire the painter's artistry. Its pentameter is based on Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.490: "This is what his eyes, his hands, his mouth looked

[180]Foister, 144 (epigram no. 5); Sutton, Epigram 140.3.

[181]Ludwig, 1998, 126–28 (2004–05, 2:187–89), ascribes the epigraph to Eobanus Hessus on the basis of some (rather weak) verbal parallels. There is in fact no evidence that, Hessus and Holbein were ever in contact.

[182]Sutton, Epigram 234.1–2: "Siqua manus pinxit vivos in imagine vultus, / Haec operis pretium verna tabella tulit."

[183]"vivos ducent de marmore vultus."

[184]Rowlands, 137, catalogue no. 38.

[185]"Διστνχιὸν i[n] Imagine[m] Georgij Gysem[m]i". Holbein appears to have miscopied "Δίστιχον". The sitter's name is generally read as "Gysenii" or "Gysemi"; but that is to overlook the graceful nasal bar above the final syllable. A motto on the wall behind the sitter says, "Nulla sine merore voluptas" ("No pleasure without grief"). The proverbial thought is a variation on Plautus, 72 (*Amphitryo* 635): "Ita dis est placitum, voluptatem ut maeror comes consequatur" ("This is the gods' will, that grief should follow pleasure like a companion").

[186]"Ista refert vultus, qua [*wrongly for* quā, *i.e.,* quam] cernis, Imago Georgi / Sic oculos viuos, sic hab[et] ille Genas / Anno ætatis suæ xxxiiij / Anno dom[ini] 1532".

like." Unlike Schwarz's medallion (1518) and Dürer's engravings (1519 and 1523) of Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg, all of which retain Virgil's *ferebat* in the imperfect past tense, Holbein's text uses the present tense, *habet*. The added epithet *vivos* underlines the all-but-living quality of his portrait.

11. Deciding Which Convention Goes Where

The humanistic portrait inscriptions are, by and large, elegantly worded commonplaces, individualized only by the personal names they contain.[187] Change the names, and they are transferable from one depiction to another. Codro Urceo's epigram is easily applied to Cranach's portrait of Scheurl (1509). Eobanus Hessus's submission for Cranach's third engraving of Luther (1521) is soon adapted to fit Dürer's Melanchthon (1526). A distich that Ursinus Velius wrote for a portrait of himself by Dürer (ca. 1515) is reused in Holbein's painting of Derich Born (1533). The main question to be decided, it seems, was which convention to apply to which image.

On this point there was never a hard and fast rule. The decision was always ad hoc. Still, distinct patterns quickly emerged. By far the strongest determining factor appears to have been the portrait medium. Because paintings can apply a far greater range of trompe l'oeil effects than monochromatic images, their epigraphs typically focus on the artist and hyperbolically emphasize the illusionistic achievement.[188] In the mass media of woodcuts, engravings, and medallions such hyperbole must often have seemed out of place. Here the texts generally follow the two-portrait convention. While still gracefully praising the artist, they contrast the mortal likeness with the immortal image of the sitter's mind and soul.

Economic value would have played a role too. Easily reproducible portraits were created and sold at relatively low cost.[189] Someone who acquired or received such a portrait would hardly be upset to learn from the accompanying verses that the artist could not depict the sitter's mind, or that a better image might be found in his books. In fact, one would expect nothing less when contemplating the likeness of a revered intellectual. Paintings are a different matter altogether, especially when done by a

[187]Cf. Ludwig, 1998, 135 (2004–05, 2:197). Speaking about the two epigraphs for Cranach's earliest Luther engravings, Ludwig remarks that they could be applied to the portrait of any intellectual whose writings are to be praised as immortal.

[188]See Löcher, 354.

[189]On the price of one of Dürer's graphic prints, see Schmid, 2003, 128.

Cranach or a Holbein himself. Such masterpieces are one of a kind.[190] Time-consuming to make, consisting of multiple layers of expensive paints and protective varnishes, they are a costly luxury item. Accordingly, if an epigraph is to be included in such a work, its wording has to enhance the portrait's value to the future owner. In Holbein's paintings, this is invariably done by extolling either the likeness or the artist himself. Indeed, it seems fair to say that Holbein insisted on this type of compliment. Other painters were not so insistent. When Cranach the Elder, for example, painted the Brandenburg court astrologer Johann Carion in ca. 1530, he included an epigraph lauding the sitter, not the likeness: "If any of you know of my renown by reading the books that my zeal has produced with ingenious labor, I am the Carion who treats of the constellations of heaven and made his name in the art of the stars."[191]

For all that, certain it is that early sixteenth-century artists were not passive recipients of humanistic texts. Untrained in Latin and Greek though they were themselves,[192] these masters were businessmen who made their living by selling art. As such, they had to make sound choices to fit their vision and their clients.[193] Sometimes it was they who approached the sitter for a suitable epigraph. Sometimes the sitter proposed one of his own accord. Often, the artist or the sitter would commission a professional poet. The poet would then, as a matter of course, submit a set of variations. Thus for every epigraph actually used, several others had to be discarded. Melanchthon offered at least two variants for Cranach's earliest Luther engravings. For the third Cranach engraving, Eobanus Hessus sent three more. In consultation with Spalatin and, conceivably, Melanchthon or

[190]I am, of course, speaking about the famed originals only, not the subsequent workshop replicas and inferior copies. The humanists did not write for the debasements, only for the original masterpiece.

[191]"Si qvib. est lectis mea cognita fama libellis / qvos mea solerti cvra labore dedit / ille ego sv[m] carion. coeli qvi sydera tracto / clarvs et astrorv[m] nomen ab arte fero". Koepplin and Falk, 1:266, catalogue no. 168. The portrait was painted in ca. 1532. The verses are invariably mistranslated. It does not help that the opening words are sometimes misquoted as "Quid est lectis" (overlooking "Si" and misreading "quib.," i.e., "quibus"). See, for example, Reisinger, 260.

[192]Matsche, 1994, 78, claims that Lucas Cranach, in contrast to Albrecht Dürer, was so well versed in Latin that he was able to select and even write his own Latin inscriptions. But Matsche misreads a verse by Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt (ca. 1480–1541) in Scheurl, sig. C5^{r}: "Cuius ab ore fluit sermo Latiusque sagaxque" ("From his lips flows speech that is both Latin and discerning"). The line refers to Christoph Scheurl, not Cranach.

[193]Cf. Koerner, 203–14; and especially Schmid, 2003, on Albrecht Dürer as a businessman.

Luther, Cranach rejected Hessus's submissions. At liberty to reuse his epigrams, Hessus modified one of them for Dürer's Melanchthon engraving. But the inscription that Dürer eventually selected must itself have belonged to a set of proposals, discussed with the poet and, quite likely, their mutual friend Joachim Camerarius. For a portrait of Johann Meckbach, Hessus submitted no fewer than seven different inscriptions. The same procedure can be glimpsed in Holbein's miniature painting of Melanchthon, for which John Leland wrote at least two versions. Too good to waste, the unused variant found a place in Leland's book of epigrams on English and Continental intellectuals.

12. Conclusion

The humanistic portrait epigraphs in the age of Erasmus and Dürer are a form of epideictic rhetoric. Like the title epigrams that contemporary poets so often wrote to commend their own or their colleagues' books, the inscriptions aim above all to laud the sitter or the artist, or both. They must do so with elegance of style, within the strict limits of convention and commonplace, and in the span of a few lines.[194] If the object of praise is a man of letters, the epigraphs extol him for speaking evermore in his books. If a man of faith or true nobility, he is worthy of eternal remembrance. If an artist, he is the equal of the ancient masters, a second Apelles[195] who creates depictions so true to life that they all but speak: "Lend a voice to the wax, it will be Protesilaus himself."

Adopted by such writers as Francesco Petrarch, Janus Pannonius, and Rudolf Agricola, the Ovidian verse becomes the ultimate humanistic compliment for a portrait. In Germany it first emerged in Celtis's portrait medallion. Thereafter it appeared, more or less closely imitated, in many different variations. In Holbein's 1533 portrait of the merchant Derich Born an elegiac distich proclaims: "If you added a voice, this would be Derich in very person. You would be in doubt whether the painter made him, or

[194]On the poetry of praise, see Hardison; Burrow. On the conventionality of humanistic praise of the artist, cf. Baxandall, 51–53; Parshall, 24; Shearman, 112–13; Matsche, 2011, 214–18.

[195]Cf. Wuttke, 1967, 324–25; Panofsky, 1969, 223, with n72; Parshall, 24. In art histories one often reads that the phrase *alter Apelles* can be traced back to 1455, when it appears on the tomb of Fra Angelico. See, for example, Bätschmann and Griener, 22. In fact, it can be documented as early as 1444. See Piccolomini, 73, l. 3, prefatory letter to Kaspar Schlick, praising the Sienese jurist Mariano Sozzini the Elder: "quasi alter Appelles sic pingit."

his father."[196] Ovidian in origin though it is, the wording itself is adapted from an epigram by the Silesian humanist Kaspar Ursinus Velius (ca. 1493–1539). In his *Poemata*, published at Basel in 1522, Ursinus praises a now-lost portrait that Dürer had made of him some seven years earlier: "If you added a voice, this would be Ursinus in very person. You would be in doubt whether the painter made him, or his father."[197] But Ovid's verse can be sensed wherever a humanist lauds the likeness as the very sitter himself.

Praise of the lifelike representation dominates the inscriptions for painted portraits. It recurs in the graphic portraits too, but then much more discretely, compressed into such phrases as *ad vivam effigiem expressa* ("stamped to create a living likeness"), *cera Lucae* ("the wax of Lucas"), *ora viventis Philippi* ("Philip's features just as in life"), *docta manus* ("the masterly hand"), and then relativized by contrasting the mortal body, which the artist is able to portray, with the immortal mind, which he can not.

In histories of art, the assertion that "the masterly hand" cannot portray the mind is widely misinterpreted. Under the impression that the artists wrote the epigraphs themselves, many scholars mistake the avowal as a gesture of modesty and humility on the portraitist's part, or as a critique of art's shortcomings. Others recognize these texts as the work of humanists, but understand the assertion as expressing disdain for the artist or skepticism of art itself. Still others see here a kind of competition, or *paragone*, between the arts.[198] All such interpretations are wide of the mark. As has been shown, not one of these epigraphs was written by the artist. They all flow from the pen of humanistic poets. To them, however, a portrait worthy of the name is, by definition, always illusionistically "to the life," *ad vivum*. The only real question was whether to embrace the illusion or to acknowledge it. The answer depends purely on the focus of praise. When lauding the artist, the humanists will embrace the illusion by highlighting the all-but-breathing, all-but-speaking image. When lauding the sitter, they will acknowledge the

[196]"DERICHVS SI VOCEM ADDAS IPSISSIMVS HIC SIT / HVNC DVBITES PICTOR FECERIT AN GENITOR". See Rowlands, 139, catalogue no. 44. Bätschmann and Griener, 31, strangely imagine that the epigraph is "a rejoinder to Erasmus' praise of Dürer: in this work of art Holbein has almost also painted the voice itself."

[197]Rupprich, 1:296, no. 9: "Ursinus si vocem addas ipsissimus hic sit. / Hunc dubites pictor fecerit, an genitor." The connection was noted in Gaus, 379n40. On Dürer's portrait of Velius, see Bauch, 21.

[198]Cf. Wolkenhauer, 327, speaking of sixteenth-century book illustrations: epigram and artistic image are not in competition, as is often alleged, but mutually complement each other.

illusion by contrasting the portrayable, but mute body to the unportrayable, but forever speaking mind.

Nowhere is this dichotomy more clearly expressed than in the writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam. A few months after Dürer died on 6 April 1528, Erasmus eulogized the master for his uncanny ability to paint even those things that cannot be painted, "the feelings, all the emotions — in brief, a man's whole mind shining through the body's outward features, and almost the very voice."[199] That is the essence of the humanistic inscription when it applauds the portrait: "Lend a voice to the wax, it will be Protesilaus himself." Change the focus, however, and the same Erasmus will tell you that even the most brilliant artist is unable to paint the sitter's mind. In an epitaph intended for a likeness of the deceased humanist Jérôme de Busleyden (ca. 1470–1517), Erasmus apostrophizes the painter: "O artist who drew the shape of this body so beautifully, you ought also to have done a portrait of the mind. Then we could have viewed on the ground of this one painting the lovely choral dance of all the virtues."[200] The epigram goes on to extol the virtues of Busleyden's mind: his reverent piety and dignified self-restraint, his honesty and erudition. That is the essence of the humanistic inscription when it eulogizes the sitter. True to life as they may be, artistic portraits cannot depict the mind. It is the poet's part to fill out the likeness and lend a voice to the wax.

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[199]Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, 1.4:40, ll. 897–900 (*De pronuntiatione*). For an analysis, see Panofsky, 1951; cf. also Panofsky, 1969, 224–27. Cf. Hessus, 1990, 120–22 (*Epicedia* 3.33–40, 73–80); Ludwig, 1998, 139–41 (Ludwig, 2004–05, 2:202–04). Like Erasmus, Eobanus Hessus eulogizes Dürer's ability to paint even the mind and soul (and practically the voice itself). But when the focus of praise is squarely on the sitter, as in the epigraph for Dürer's Melanchthon engraving, Hessus tells the viewer that Melanchthon's mind is beyond artistic portrayal, even by the masterly hand of a Dürer. In the funeral elegy, Hessus has by no means changed his mind about Dürer's artistic powers, as Ludwig asserts (1998, 140–41 (Ludwig, 2004–05, 2:203–04)). All that has changed is the object of praise.

[200]See Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, 1.7:236–37 (*Carmina* 68.1–2). The translation is by Clarence H. Miller, in Erasmus, 1993, 85:153. The model for the first distich may well be *The Greek Anthology* 3:330 (*Epigram* 9.594): "Life painter, seeing that you have reproduced his outward form, how I wish you could also have cast Socrates's mind into the wax!"

Appendix: Hessus's and Melanchthon's Epigrams on Cranach's Luther Engravings

HELIUS EOBANUS HESSUS IN IMAGINEM LUTHERI

Qui legis et totum velles vidisse Lutherum,
Hanc faciem vivo pectore finge loqui.

ALIUD

Omnibus expressit rationibus ora Lutheri,
Vitam non potuit pingere docta manus.

ALIUD

Artis erat medio totum retulisse Lutherum,
Ne forte hic pictum dixeris Antigonum.

ALIUD PHILIPPI MELANTHONIS

Luce opus effigies haec est moritura Lutheri,
Aeternam mentis exprimit ipse suae.

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