

THE *SIMULACRA AVORUM* IN TWO JESUIT LATIN POEMS.
FROM VERGILIAN IMITATION TO SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY
AND ART THEORY

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In a famous scene in Book 6 of the *Aeneid* (VI, 756-887), Vergil allowed his readers to visualize, together with Aeneas and his father Anchises, the whole line of Roman rulers down to Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus. This masterpiece of *enargeia*, underpinned by the ancient (and, from a Christian point of view, problematic) theory of the pre-existence of souls, was adapted in a number of interesting ways by certain Jesuit authors within a very precise generic frame: the genethliac allegorical poem in Latin hexameters. The two poems I will present in this article (by the Jesuits Jacobus Wallius and Ubertino Carrara), dating 1652 and 1678, give us striking examples of the way Jesuit classical and poetical *imitatio* dealt with underlying philosophical and theological points, that also relate to art theory.

Jesuit genethliac tradition

The large amount of Neo-Latin poetry produced by members of the Society of Jesus includes an interesting and little-studied tradition of genethliac poems; that is, poems composed to celebrate the birth of children¹ - in the Jesuits' case, usually the heirs of ruling or high-ranking Catholic families. The function of these texts is mainly encomiastic, and their two most common features, in conformity with Scaliger's instructions,² are the prediction of a glorious future for the child, and the praise of the glorious past of its family. The Latin language allowed for an international audience: the locally produced poems were potentially addressed to all of Catholic Europe; and professors from the *Collegio Romano* composed, performed and published verses for the birth of almost all European Catholic princely heirs.³ Since the goal

¹ On genethliac poetry, I allow myself to refer to my monograph: Smeesters A., *Aux rives de la lumière. La poésie de la naissance chez les auteurs néo-latins des anciens Pays-Bas entre la fin du XV^e siècle et le milieu du XVII^e siècle*, Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia 29 (Leuven: 2011).

² Scaliger Julius Cæsar, *Poetices libri septem* (Lyon, A. Vincentius: 1561), 155-156, liber III, caput CII [= CI] : *Oaristys, genethliacum*. Modern edition: Scaliger Julius Cæsar, *Poetices libri septem. Sieben Bücher über die Dichtkunst*, ed. L. Deitz, vol. 3 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: 1995), 100-105. On this particular chapter, see Smeesters A., "Le poème généthliaque selon les Scaliger, père et fils", *Eidolon* 112 (2015) 333-349. Scaliger writes: '[Genethliaci] duo [...] primaria capita : alterum a maioribus, alterum a spe ipsius infantis' ('A genethliac has two main themes, the one deriving from the ancestors, the other from the hope given by the child itself'). All translations of Neo-Latin texts are mine, unless otherwise stated.

³ Villoslada R. G., *Storia del Collegio Romano dal suo inizio (1551) alla soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù (1773)*, Analecta Gregoriana 66 (Rome: 1954), 264, 284-296. Comparing the indications given by Villoslada with the *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* by Sommervogel, we can assume that the main genethliac poems recited in the *Collegio Romano* during the 17th century are those by Diego Centurioni for the son of Philip III of Spain (1605), by Guglielmo Dondini SJ for the French Dauphin (1638), by Annibale Adami SJSJ and Giovanni Luccari SJ for the son of Philip IV (1658), by Carlo Bovio SJ and Gian Lorenzo Lucchesini SJ for the son of Louis XIV (1662), by Carlo Bovio SJ, Ottavio Cattaneo SJ and maybe also Gian Lorenzo Lucchesini SJ for the son of the king of Spain (1662), by Giovanni Luccari SJ for the son of the Emperor (1668), by Ubertino Carrara SJ and Carlo d'Aquino SJ for another son of the Emperor Leopold I (1678), by Carlo d'Aquino SJ for the son of the

was to unite people in common rejoicing, the texts may be expected to offer uncontroversial representations. The poems may have various forms; one of the most popular is the long poem in hexameters, totalling several hundred verses, and developing the praise of the family and prediction for the child within a narrative and often allegorical frame.

To build those stories, the poets mainly drew from the literary tradition - making sure, if necessary, that their accounts were in line with the Catholic faith. Of course, not every detail was expected to be theologically irreproachable: this would have been impossible, and anyway the Muses were allowed a certain freedom. There are even mythological Gods wandering in Jesuit poetry, as long as they are taken as allegories. But the general lines had to be Christian: the Jesuits would never, for example, have shown souls reincarnating. We might say that the story had to remain within the borders of the 'theologically correct for a large cultivated Catholic audience'. The word 'cultivated' here is important: the audience for Neo-Latin poetry had, by definition, a good literary training, and the capacity to balance poetic licence and religious truth. It was nevertheless a theologically well-informed audience: we know for example that the genethliac poems read in the *Collegio Romano* for the birth of princes attracted 'gran numero di prelatura'.⁴ So we may expect a certain degree of convergence between, on the one hand, the allegorical content of Jesuit genethliac poems, and on the other hand, the philosophical and theological theory taught at the same time in the Jesuit universities, and notably at the *Collegio Romano*, which followed the neo-scholastic tradition (at that time the reference philosophy of the Society and, more generally, of European universities). Much research remains to be done to better understand how poetic discourse and religious dogmas were combined, what kind of approximations were acceptable or not, what were the borders of the 'theologically correct' and if and how they varied over time.

A tempting model: Vergil, Aeneid, VI, 756-887

Looking into classical literature for famous descriptions of dynastic lines, the Jesuits could not but consider the Book 6 of Vergil's *Aeneid*, where Aeneas, having been admitted alive into the underworld, meets his father Anchises, who shows him the souls of his future descendants, 'illustris animas nostrumque in nomen ituras' (l. 758: 'glorious souls waiting to inherit our name').⁵ Anchises successively draws Aeneas' attention to various figures: 'ille vides...juvenis' (l. 760: 'the youth you see...'); 'proximus ille...' (l. 767: 'he next...'); 'huc geminas nunc flecte acies' (l. 788: 'turn hither now your two-eyed gaze')... Anchises then comes to the soul of the future Augustus Caesar: 'hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis' (l. 791: 'and this in truth is he whom you so often hear promised you'). A little later, Aeneas is struck by the vision of a young man, 'egregium forma iuvenem et fulgentibus armis

English king (1688), and finally by Giuseppe Ignazio Chiaberge SJ for the heir of Savoy (1699). Only the poem from 1668 apparently remained in manuscript.

⁴ Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano* 286, 288 (quoting from: Arch. Univ. Greg., ms 142 - *Origine del Collegio Romano e suoi progressi*).

⁵ I use the English translation by Fairclough, revised by Goold, in the Loeb edition: Vergil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid I-VI*, with an English translation by H. Rushton Fairclough revised by G.P. Goold (Cambridge (Mass.): 1999).

/ sed frons laeta parum et dejecto lumina vultu' (l. 861-862: 'a youth of passing beauty in resplendent arms, but with joyless mien and eyes downcast') and he questions his father: 'Quis, pater, ille...? [...] Quantum instar in ipso! / Sed nox atra caput tristi circumvolat umbra' (l. 863 and 865-6: 'Who, father, is he...? What majesty is his! But death's dark shadow flickers mournfully about his head'). Anchises answers with sorrow that this young man will cause a bitter grief to Roman people: 'ostendent terris hunc tantum fata neque ultra / esse sinent' (l.869-70: 'only a glimpse of him will fate give earth nor suffer him to stay long'); but 'nec puer Iliaca quisquam de gente Latinos / in tantum spe tollet avos, nec Romula quondam / ullo se tantum tellus jactabit alumno' (l. 875-7: 'no youth of Trojan stock will ever raise his Latin ancestry so high in hope nor the land of Romulus ever boast of any son like this'). At the end Anchises gives the future name of the child: 'Tu Marcellus eris' (l. 883: 'You are to be Marcellus'). So this is to be Augustus's nephew, destined to die at a young age and never succeed his uncle.

Did Jesuit poets of the seventeenth century consider imitating this text in their genethliac poems, in order to present prestigious dynastic lines? The frame offered by Vergil was a highly efficient one: instead of simply giving a list of names, virtues and glorious deeds, it made each member of the dynasty appear before the eyes of the main character of the story, and hence, before the eyes of the reader (in an effect of *enargeia* or *evidentia*). The main theoretical problem, of course, was the philosophical point about the pre-existence and reincarnation of souls, which the Catholic Church strongly condemned. As the French Jesuit Nicolas Abram noted in his commentary to the *Aeneid* (1632), Vergil here 'alludit ad μετεμψύχωσιν Pythagoreorum et Platoniorum qui dicebant animas ex aliis corporibus in alia transmigrare' ('alludes to the metempsychosis of the Pythagorians and Platonicians, who said that the souls migrated from one body to another').⁶ But this aspect could easily be bypassed: the genethliac poems are located in time, not before the foundation of the dynasty concerned as in the *Aeneid*, but around the birth of its latest heir: so the ancestors are all already born (some dead, some still on earth). The problem, however, arises when the poet wants to make the child himself a character in the story. Narratologically, the child can be assigned two possible roles: that of Aeneas, and that of Marcellus.

The child in the role of Aeneas: a poem by Jacobus Wallius

In the first case, the child is led by his father to contemplate the figures of his ancestors. If we imagine the same scene with the child and father both alive and the ancestors represented by a collection of artistic portraits, it becomes quite easy to stage. This is what we find in the *genethliacum* composed in 1652 by the Flemish Jesuit Jacobus Wallius to celebrate the birth of a son of the Count of Schwarzenberg, an influential man in the government of the Low Countries.⁷ In lines 107-180, Wallius shows the young child crawling in the *aula* of the family house, while its father shows it the *majorum effigies*, presenting each ancestor one by one: 'ille,

⁶ Abram Nicolas, *Commentarii in P. Vergilii Maronis Aeneidem pars prior (et posterior)* (Pont-à-Mousson, Gaspard Bernardus: 1632) 436 note a, ad v. 680.

⁷ First edition: Wallius Jacobus, *Poematum libri novem* (Antwerp, Moretus: 1656) 76: *Ferdinando Philippo Guilielmo, Joannis Adolphi Comitiss Schwartzenbergii etc. Aurei Velleris Equitis filio, genethliacon*. Modern edition with French translation and analysis in Smeesters, *Aux rives de la lumière* 457-502.

vides?’ (l. 114: ‘This man, you see?’); ‘proximus ille’ (l. 120: ‘he next...’); ‘huc faciles nunc verte oculos’ (l. 132: ‘turn hither now your compliant eyes’). When he comes to the *proavus* Adolph of Schwarzenberg, the father notes: ‘Hic vir, hic est, qui saepe manu furialia Thracum / Agmina, Bistoniaeque infregit cornua lunae’ (l. 135-6: ‘And this in truth is he whose hand often smashed the furious battalions of the Thracians and the horns of the Bistonian moon’ – that is, the Turkish Muslims). The Vergilian imitation is clear, but the ancestors’ souls contemplated in the underworld have become *effigies* (probably busts) on display in the family house.

The contemplation of the *effigies* is an important moment in the text. Human artefacts appear to have a mnemonic function; they preserve the memory of glorious men of the past. As such, they can also stimulate new generations to imitate them: ‘I quo te vocant exempla tuorum’, Schwarzenberg tells his son (l. 111-113: ‘Go where the examples of your family are calling you’). Nevertheless, their value should not be overestimated. At the very beginning of the poem, the *effigies avorum* already appeared, but under a less positive light. Wallius, calling on the ancestors of the child, writes (l. 9-19):

Est aliquid vestros annosa per atria vultus
Ordine spectari; finitaque bella triumphis,
Et genus, et titulos, et res, et nomina regum
Subscribi statuis. Sed non simulacra vetustae
Laus sunt prima domus. Debent sculptoribus artem.
Omnia sint similes vultus, habitum, vigoremque,
Ardentesque oculos, nihil est in imagine vitae.
Hic puer, hic vestrae major virtutis imago est.
Vivitis heroes, series longissima, tanti
Sanguinis auctores, et adhuc superestis in illo
Pectore. Non toti fato cessistis et umbris.

It is something to contemplate the alignment of your faces in the old atrium; and to read, beneath the statues, inscriptions mentioning successful wars, family roots, titles, material goods, and royal names. But *simulacra* are not the first glory of an old house. Their art is due to sculptors. Be they perfectly alike, in the face, the appearance, the vigour, the shining eyes – there is no life in those images. This child instead is the greatest image of your virtue. You are alive, you long cortege of heroes, you authors of such a good blood, and you still survive in this chest. You did not surrender totally to fate and death.

With these opening lines, the poet at once makes clear that human art is inferior to divine or natural art, producing living beings through procreation. Not only are human artefacts devoid of life (‘nihil est in imagine vitae’), while natural generation produces living beings; but artistic portraits, however good they may be, only reproduce the outer appearance of individuals, while their children and grand-children can reproduce their inner virtue (‘virtutis imago’). In accordance with this conception, a large part of Wallius’ poem is devoted to an allegorical description of the work of Lady Nature, shaping the about-to-be-born child as a true heir of its

ancestors (l. 47-106). In lines 93-94, Wallius explicitly confirms that Nature has given the young child ‘similar gifts to the paternal ones, and the seeds of the ancestral flame’ (‘similesque paternis / in te fudit opes, et avitae semina flammae’).

Art, nature and immortality

The idea that children and grand-children better ‘immortalize’ a great man than artistic portraits of him also appears elsewhere in Jesuit genethliac production. It is even a sort of topos in the genethliac orations delivered by French Jesuits for the birth of princes in the royal family. One may compare, for example, the following three passages, in orations delivered respectively by Philippe Briet in the college of Rouen in 1639 for the birth of Louis XIV, by Pierre Boucher in the college of Paris in 1662 for the birth of Louis XIV’s first son (‘Le Grand Dauphin’), and by Joseph de Jouvancy in the college of Paris in 1682 for the birth of Louis XIV’s grandson (‘Le Petit Dauphin’):

Immortalem esse voluit hominem natura, reclamantibus licet elementis, et coelo quamvis, et terrena concretione renitentibus aeternitati vivere. Sed partem fere mater provida subducit, quia totum servare nequit; [...] Crescit pater in haerede, cui meliorem sui contulit partem [...] Appendantur ubique tabulae, fortitudinis stabunt mutae testes; dissecentur in statuas marmora, ars quae rigorem hinc abstulit non amovit stupiditatem; aurum liquescat in imagines, rigebit semper quanquam pretiosius [...]. Longe melius parentem magnum et Regem filius exprimit pictura loquens, imago mobilis, spirans simulacrum.⁸ [Briet, 1639]

Nature wanted man to be immortal, but the elements protested, and heaven as well as terrestrial matter refused to allow him to live forever. Then the provident mother, as she cannot preserve the whole, usually subtracts a part; [...] The father grows in his heir, to which he transmitted the best part of him [...]. Paintings may be hanged everywhere, they will be mute witnesses of a man’s value; marbles may be cut into statues, the art that softened them did not carry away their inertness; gold may be melted into images: however precious, it will always be rigid [...]. But a son far better expresses a great father and king: he is a talking picture, a moving image, a breathing *simulacrum* of him.

Consilium naturae atque vis, ut in seminibus ac stirpibus, ita procreandis liberis, ea est, similem ut sibi foetum et quasi fructum effundat parens, seque in eo quodammodo repraesentet totum. Rapimur, auditores, cupiditate immortalitatis, quam ut conciliare nobis memoria recte factorum, monumentorum magnificentia, aeris marmorisque perennitate, omni industriae genere ars studet: sic natura non rudia haec tantum vestigia hominis, non emortuum, non exterius, non caducum simulacrum quoddam, sed

⁸ Briet Philippe, *Panegyricus Delphino dictus ineunte anno Christi MDCXXXIX in collegio Rothomagensi Societatis Jesu*, in *Serenissimo Principi Franciae Delphino Xenia collegii Rothomagensis Societatis Jesu* (Rouen, Jean Le Boulenger: 1639) 1-18: 3-4.

expressam, intimam, vivam, spirantem in progenie imaginem parentum informat, ut perennem in illa vitam iisdem feliciore conatu propaget.⁹ [Boucher, 1662]

The plan and the potency of nature, in seeds and roots as well as in the procreation of children, is that the parent should produce an offspring, so to say a fruit, which is similar to him, and that he should, in a way, represent himself totally in this offspring. We are driven, dear listeners, by the desire of immortality, and art is trying to give it to us through the memory of right deeds, the magnificence of monuments, the durability of bronze and marble, and all kinds of industry. Nature, instead, not only gives such raw traces of a man, she does not deliver a dead, external and deciduous *simulacrum*, but through the offspring, she gives form to a clear, inner, living, breathing image of the parents, so as to extend their lives more successfully in it.

Laudo vos equidem, cives, cum positas a vobis passim in urbe statuas Ludovici Magni et vicis paene omnibus atque compitis additas ad ornatum aspicio: sed mihi credite, caduca sunt illa monumenta, emortuae imagines, muta et infantia regiae virtutis ac formae simulacra, quae neque illum, qualis est totus, indicant, neque divinas illius virtutes intuentibus exhibent: vivas ille spirantesque suae virtutis imagines desiderat, nec tantum corporis simulacra, sed mentis; nec ductus oris expressos aere ac marmore, sed animi dotes in posteris inditas ac ipsius naturae manu velut insculptas.¹⁰ [Jouvancy, 1682]

I praise you, citizens, when I see the statues of Louis the Great that you placed everywhere in the city, that you added as a decoration to almost every street and crossroads; but believe me, those are deciduous monuments, dead images, mute and silent *simulacra* of the royal virtue and beauty: they do not represent him totally, nor show his divine qualities to the viewers. He rather needs living and breathing images of his virtue: not only *simulacra* of his body, but also of his mind; not the features of his face expressed in bronze and marble, but the gifts of his soul introduced and so to say carved by the very hand of Nature into his offspring.

The filiation between the three French orations is obvious, even in the choice of words. More importantly, they express the same basic idea as in Wallius' poem: Nature produces better *simulacra* of kings than human artists do, and so she is better than art at immortalizing kings. Actually, if we think about it, the idea is quite paradoxical: Nature's productions may indeed have many advantages over art's productions (they are alive, they can breath, move, speak, behave with virtue, develop by themselves...), but certainly they are, in normal conditions, less long-lasting than artefacts like statues or even paintings. One of art's great historical functions is precisely to make survive through the centuries the appearance of individuals who were ephemeral by nature (even if the works of art themselves will eventually perish or fall into ruin,

⁹ Boucher Pierre, *Panegyricus augustissimo Delphino dictus Lutetiae Parisiorum in collegio Claromontano Kal. Octob. Anno MDCLXII* (Paris, Sébastien Cramoisy: 1662) 7-8.

¹⁰ Jouvancy Joseph de, *Serenissimi Principis Ducis Burgundiae genethliacum. Oratio extemporalis habita Parisiis anno MDCLXXXII mense sextili*, in Id., *Orationes. Tomus I* (Paris, veuve de Simon Benard: 1701) 128-154 : 137.

as baroque literature liked to remind us).¹¹ In the classical *topoi* related to the comparison of art and nature,¹² and in the traditional *paragone* between the arts,¹³ nature is admittedly often deemed superior to art – but not in her capacity to give terrestrial immortality to individuals; and visual arts are often deemed inferior in their capacity to express inner virtue – but inferior to literature,¹⁴ not to nature.¹⁵

The key to this strange motif is that our Jesuit authors are not concerned so much by the *immortalitas* of a single king as by the *immortalitas* of a dynastic line. The idea that some families were endowed with special moral qualities, whose transmission from father to son was ensured by blood,¹⁶ is of course age-old, and it was still the cornerstone of the privileged social position of nobility – and of the very principle of hereditary monarchy – in early modern Europe.¹⁷ More deeply, this conception is embedded in a basic assumption of traditional natural philosophy: Nature always strives for immortality; and as she cannot give it to individual beings, she achieves, at least, the immortality of species through the process of procreation. Dynasty is then conceived of by our Jesuit authors as a kind of natural species, maintaining itself through time with the same physical and moral characteristics, beyond the flow of its particular individuals.

The idea of the quest for immortality through procreation was already present in the famous lines of Plato's *Symposium*: 'on reaching a certain age our nature yearns to beget [...]. It is a divine affair, this engendering and bringing to birth, an immortal element in the creature that is mortal'.¹⁸ In Aristotle's formulation, it becomes still clearer: 'For this is the most natural of all functions among living creatures [...]: viz., to reproduce one's kind, an animal producing an animal, and a plant a plant, in order that they may have a share in the immortal and divine in the only way they can; for every creature strives for this [...]. What persists is not the individual itself, but something in its image, identical not numerically but specifically.'¹⁹ The idea that each form's end is existence, eternal if possible, and if not, through generation in successive matters, later becomes a *topos* of Scholastic teaching.²⁰ It will even, in the sixteenth century,

¹¹ On this *topos* in the Latin poetry of another Jesuit, see: Israel M., "Jacob Balde et le thème de la *vanitas*", in Valentin J.-M. (ed.), *Jacob Balde und seine Zeit* (Bern – Frankfurt am Main – New York: 1986) 185-201 (191-194).

¹² Cf. Close A.J., "Commonplace Theories of Art and Nature in Classical Antiquity and in the Renaissance", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 30, 4 (1969) 467-486.

¹³ Cf. Vuilleumier-Laurens F., "Les leçons du Paragone. Les débuts de la théorie de la peinture", in Galand-Hallyn P. – Hallyn F. (eds), *Poétiques de la Renaissance* (Geneva: 2001) 596-610.

¹⁴ Neo-Latin poets liked to underline this inferiority, as appears in Dekoninck R. – Smeesters A. (eds), *Poèmes et tableaux. La reinvention de l'ekphrasis dans la République des Lettres* (Rouen: forthcoming).

¹⁵ We can further note that the expression *pictura loquens*, used by Briet to describe the children given by nature, is classically applied to poetry (since Plutarch, *De gloria Atheniensium*, III, 346f-347c).

¹⁶ Wallius mentions several times the quality of the child's blood in his poem: in l. 18 (quoted above) where the ancestors are praised as 'auctores tanti sanguinis'; in l. 31, where the child gives hope to show 'dignas sanguine vires'; in l. 96, where Nature is said to have filled the veins of the child with a generous blood ('implevitque tuas generoso sanguine venas').

¹⁷ On this topic, see Giuliani P., "Le sang classique entre histoire et littérature: hypothèses et propositions", *Dix-septième siècle* 239, 2 (2008) 223-242.

¹⁸ Plato, *Symposium*, 206c. Translation taken from: Plato, *Lysis. Symposium. Gorgias*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (London – Cambridge (Mass.): 1946) 191.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *On the soul*, II, 415a-b. Translation taken from: Aristotle, *On the soul. Parva naturalia. On breath*, trans. W.S. Hett (London – Cambridge (Mass.): 1957) 85-87.

²⁰ Des Chene D., *Life's Form: late Aristotelian conceptions of the soul* (Ithaca (N.Y.): 2000) 24.

find its way into Scaliger's *Poetics*. Scaliger, who was familiar with Scholasticism, writes in his chapter about genethliacs:²¹ 'Generatio parit immortalitatem, accepta parentum semina perficit, in quibus illos suapte natura deficientes redivivos repræsentat. Quot cotidiana individua poscenti dependunt fato, in aliorum subeuntium instauratione species restituit. Quid aliud est æternitas quam continuata generatio?' ('Generation engenders immortality: it fulfills the seeds received from parents, and in this way the parents, who are ephemeral by nature, are re-presented alive. The tribute of individuals daily paid to fate is being repaid by the species, that produces other individuals replacing the first ones. What else is eternity than continuous generation?').

To return to our texts, we can see that the particular motif we encountered in Wallius' poem and in the French Jesuit orations is at the crossroad of several well-known *topoi*, either literary and/or philosophical (immortalizing art, impermanence of art, nature better than art, visual arts' incapacity to render inner virtue, hereditary transmission of virtue, immortality of species through procreation), but that their combination is rather original – at the cost of a logical jump, as the 'immortality' concerned is not the same in the case of art (immortalizing the appearance of individuals) and nature (immortalizing the hereditary qualities of species or families).

With this digression on Nature and Art, we have moved far from Vergil's *Aeneid*. In the gap, one entire conception of the origin of human 'heroes' and great rulers has been replaced by another: in Vergil, the predestination and (re-)incarnation of exceptional souls; in Wallius and the French Jesuits, the rules of Nature immortalizing the qualities of great men through procreation. As we are dealing with Jesuit literature, one may be struck by the absence of the Christian God in this last explanation. In fact, God is clearly present elsewhere in the French Jesuit orations, and is duly thanked for the gift of a princely heir. In the poem by Wallius, God is much more discreet, but can be recognized in a brief allusion to a supreme ruler of heaven and earth (l. 212-217). In any case, the Jesuit authors of this time could not conceive of Nature's work independently of God's will. As Thomas Aquinas puts it: 'opus naturæ præsupponit opus Dei creantis' ('The work of Nature presupposes the work of the creating God').²²

In Wallius's allegorical poem, even if God is not present as a character, the work of Nature no doubt represents a part of God's plan for the world, and more precisely, the concrete modalities of application of his plan to time and matter. Our second genethliac poem, by Ubertino Carrara, will illustrate the other side of the same process: the conception of God's plan in the divine mind. As we will see, Carrara expresses this topic through an imitation of the same Vergilian passage, and by using once again an artistic paradigm.

The child in the role of Marcellus: a poem by Ubertino Carrara

In the genethliac exploitation of the Vergilian story, the second narratological option, after giving to the child the role of Aeneas, consists in putting him in the place of Marcellus.

²¹ See note 2.

²² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, III, 65. Ed. K. Allgaier – L. Gerken (Darmstadt: 1990). In Antiquity, Stoic philosophers considered the perennial order and artistic beauty of nature as an evidence for the existence of Divine Providence: cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum*, II, 22, 34 and 51.

First of all, it must be underlined that the very words used by Vergil to present Marcellus had some success in the genethliac context. Even if Marcellus's fate had been terribly brief, the laudatory predictions uttered by Anchises were perfectly re-usable in the context of a princely birth. For example, when in 1626 Joost van den Vondel published his Dutch genethliac poem, *Geboortklock van Willem van Nassau*,²³ he let the booklet end with the Vergilian quotation 'Nec puer Iliaca quisquam de gente Latinos / in tantum spe tollet avos, nec Romula quondam / ullo se tantum tellus jactabit alumno' ('no youth of Trojan stock will ever raise his Latin ancestry so high in hope nor the land of Romulus ever boast of any son like this').²⁴ Another example is the already quoted oration delivered by the French Jesuit Jouvancy at the birth of the son of the Dauphin in 1682.²⁵ Jouvancy recalls to his audience the famous Vergilian words 'Tu Marcellus eris', relating that, in olden days, Marcellus' mother, reminded of her deceased son by the poet's words, was so affected that she fainted. He then goes on: 'Ego te, regie puer, [...] non absimili carmine compellare possum, immutatis paulisper vocibus, ad quas non exanimata luctu mater concidat, sed gaudio potius exultet: Tu Lodoicus eris' ('I myself can make to you, royal child, a similar poetical address, with only a slight change in words, so that your mother, rather than fainting in grief, shall exult and rejoice: You will be a Louis').²⁶

It is one thing to re-use Vergil's words about Marcellus and apply them to an about-to-be-born or new-born child; it is another thing is to re-use Vergil's narrative frame, and to make that child appear in the company of his line of ascent, all gathered in the same place, and *with the same ontological status*. It can be a very powerful image, and therefore it must have been very tempting. But how could it happen that already dead persons, and an unborn or just born child, are seen together (even without speaking of the still living members of the family)? Could their souls have met in heaven before the birth of the child? Catholic dogma was very clear-cut at this time: there can be absolutely no pre-existence of souls; each new soul comes to life within a body, and can lead a heavenly life only after bodily death.²⁷ So the Jesuits were forced to renounce the tantalizing story. Nicolas Caussin SJ in 1651 writes to the young Louis XIV: 'A vous voir, les Platoniciens diraient que vous êtes une intelligence enfermée dans ce beau corps ; que vous venez des Palais de lumière et des globes célestes, où vous avez conversé avec les Clovis, les Louis et les Charles, où vous avez vu Henri le Grand votre aïeul [...]; Nous ne pouvons croire avec Platon que votre âme ait été au Ciel avant que d'être en terre' ('Seeing you, Platonicians would say that you are an intelligence imprisoned in this beautiful body, and that you come from the Palaces of light and the celestial globes where you have been discussing with Clovis, Louis and Charles, where you have seen your grand-father Henry the Great [...]; But we can not believe with Plato that your soul has been in heaven before coming on earth').²⁸

²³ Vondel Joost van den, *Geboortklock van Willem van Nassau, eerstgeboren sone der doorluchtichste Princen, Frederick Henrick ende Amalia...* (Amsterdam, Blaeu: 1626). An edition of the text is available on the website www.dbnl.org.

²⁴ Vergil, *Aeneid*, VI, 875-877. Trans. Fairclough – Goold (see note 5).

²⁵ See note 10.

²⁶ Jouvancy, *Serenissimi principis Ducis Burgundiae genethliacum* 146.

²⁷ Cf. for example the ten propositions on the human soul by the Jesuit Francisco de Toledo (Des Chene, *Life's Form* 47-8).

²⁸ Caussin Nicolas, *Eloge du roy Louis XIV Dieu-Donné* (Paris, Bechet: 1651) 114-115.

If the story could not be staged in the world of souls, another Jesuit poet, later in the seventeenth century, Ubertino Carrara, found the solution: it could be staged in the world of Ideas. Ideas? Plato again then? No, not necessarily! There exists another, concurrent theory of Ideas: after the developments about Platonic Ideas made by Aristotelians, Stoïcians, Middle Platonists and Neoplatonists²⁹ (who all paved the way in many aspects), Augustine eventually proposed a Christian version of Ideas, that was to be developed by Thomas Aquinas, and then to continue its way through Scholastic philosophy, where it is traceable until at least the end of the seventeenth century.

A theological background: the Scholastic theory of Ideas

Augustine dedicates the 46th of his *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* to Ideas (*De ideis*).³⁰ He points out that, if Plato is considered to have invented the name *ideae*, he surely did not invent the thing itself, the *res* - that was probably known before him under other appellations. From a Christian point of view, according to Augustine, the *ideae* (translated in Latin as *formae*, *species* or *rationes*), exist inside the divine mind of God. They represent, and are the models for, ‘omne quod oriri et interire potest et omne quod oritur et interit’ (‘all that can be born and die, and all that is born and that dies’) - Ideas thus include as well *possibilia* as all past, present or future actual things.³¹ The Ideas themselves are eternal and immutable, because ‘in divina mente nil nisi aeternum atque incommutabile potest esse’ (‘there can be nothing but eternal and immutable in the divine mind’). We may note, together with Panofsky,³² that the theory of Ideas has been completely transformed in the transition from Plato to Augustine: whereas it had been conceived as a philosophy of the human logos (explaining how man could get true knowledge of the world), it has now become a speculation about divine thought and the history of the world – to be precise, the step of conceiving of the Platonic Ideas as ‘thoughts of God’ had already been made by Middle Platonism, as early as the first century B.C.³³

The theory of the Ideas in the divine mind is taken over by Thomas Aquinas in the *Prima pars* of his *Summa theologica*, question 15 (*De ideis*).³⁴ Thomas gives two functions to divine Ideas (which he conceives of as not really distinct from God’s divine and creative essence): they can function as *exemplar* (for the creation of things) or as *principium cognitionis* (principle

²⁹ Panofsky E., *Idea: contribution à l’histoire du concept de l’ancienne théorie de l’art*, trans. H. Joly (Paris: 1989) 53.

³⁰ Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, XLVI. Ed. A. Mutzenbecher (Turnhout: 1975) 70-73.

³¹ In traditional theology, the distinction between the knowledge of *possibilia* and that of actual creatures corresponded to the distinction between the *scientia simplicis intelligentiae* (which follows from God’s very nature: God knows that he is imitable in such-and-such ways) and the *scientia visionis* (which is based on God’s decrees for the world: God knows what he decided would actually take place in the world – whether in the past, present or future from our point of view). In the XVIth century, Jesuit theologians, especially Molina, added a third divine science, the *scientia media* (the knowledge of ‘what would happen under such-and-such conditions’, depending on free decisions made by human beings). Cf. J.M. Frame, “Scientia media”, in Elwell W. (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: 1984) 987.

³² Panofsky, *Idea* 55.

³³ Dillon J., *The Middle Platonists. A study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: 1977) 95; Philo of Alexandria, *On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses*, introd., trans. and comm. by D. T. Runia (Leiden-Boston-Cologne: 2001) 50-51 and 151-152.

³⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, Ia, quaest. XV. Ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: 1853).

of knowledge of the things).³⁵ Thomas also uses the comparison between God conceiving the world and an architect designing the project of a house.³⁶ The theory of divine Ideas was then refined by Scholastic philosophers, including the famous Jesuit Francisco Suárez (1548-1617). Suárez touches on the question in the third book of his *De Deo*, whose chapter V is entitled: ‘An in Divina scientia practica sint ideae creaturarum omnium, et quot, quarumque rerum sunt’ (‘If practical divine science contains the Ideas of all creatures, and how many Ideas, and of which things’). There he states: ‘Ideas esse, quia idea nihil aliud significat, quam exemplar ad cuius imitationem artifex operatur, ostensum autem est, Deum operari ut supremum artificem, oportet ergo ut suas ideas habeat’ (‘There are Ideas, because an Idea is nothing else than the model at whose imitation an artist works; and it has been shown that God works as a very good artist; so he must have his own Ideas’).³⁷ Suárez elsewhere deals with *idea*e as *causae exemplares*, in reference to the Aristotelian theory of causes.³⁸

The main difference, for our purpose, between the Platonic and Christian traditions of Ideas is that Platonic Ideas are generic, whereas Christian ones may also be related to individual beings. In Plato’s theory, Ideas are the common, general form shared by many particular things. For later Platonists, who locate Ideas as models in the divine mind, Ideas, gaining a similar function to that of the Stoic *logoi spermatikoi* (seminal reason-principles),³⁹ correspond to species – the same immutable natural species which, as we saw in the first part of this paper, are perpetuated by generation beyond the flow of transient and various individuals.⁴⁰ Christian thinkers however admitted that divine Ideas could include the models for each individual being. The question is dealt with in a letter by Augustine to Nebridius.⁴¹ Nebridius had asked

³⁵ Art. 1, resp.

³⁶ The motif of the mental project of the architect is taken from Aristotle (*Met.*, VII, 7, 6sq). It was already applied to Biblical Creation by the Hellenistic Jewish Philo of Alexandria, *On the Creation of the Cosmos*, 4, 16-20 (where the image is that of an architect planning a whole city). We find for example in the *Artifex evangelicus* of the Jesuit M. Sandaeus (Cologne, apud Joannem Kinchium: 1640) 53: ‘Architectus in Idea fabricam praeconcipiens, Deus’ (Sandaeus gives Philo as his source).

³⁷ Suárez Francisco, *Opera omnia*, ed. D. M. André, 28 vol. (Paris: 1856-1878) I, 210.

³⁸ *Disputationes metaphysicae*, n°25 : *De causa exemplari*. The *causa exemplaris* is there reduced to a kind of *causa efficiens* (as summarized in *Opera omnia*, I, 214). The connection of the theory of Ideas with the Aristotelian theory of the four causes had been discussed since Antiquity: cf. for example Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae morales*, 7, 65, 7 (Seneca has just expounded the four Aristotelian causes): ‘His quintam Plato adicit exemplar, quam ipse ideam vocat; hoc est enim, ad quod respiciens artifex id, quod destinabat, effecit’ (‘To these four Plato adds a fifth cause, - the pattern which he himself calls the “idea”; for it is this that the artist gazed upon when he created the work which he had decided to carry out’). Trans. R. M. Gummere (London – Cambridge (Mass.): 1953) 449).

³⁹ Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* 95, 159.

⁴⁰ Cf. the letter of Seneca quoted above, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae morales*, 7, 65, 7, reporting the (Middle) Platonic doctrine: ‘Haec exemplaria rerum omnium deus intra se habet [...]; plenus his figuris est, quas Plato ideas appellat, immortales, inmutabiles, infatigabiles. Itaque homines quidem pereunt, ipsa autem humanitas, ad quam homo effingitur, permanet’ (‘God has within himself these patterns of all things [...]; he is filled with these shapes which Plato calls the “ideas”, - imperishable, unchangeable, not subject to decay. And therefore, though men die, humanity itself, or the idea of man, according to which man is moulded, lasts on’). Trans. Gummere 449). See also Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae morales*, 6, 58, 19 (also about Platonic Ideas): ‘Talia ergo exemplaria infinita habet rerum natura, hominum, piscium, arborum, ad quae quodcumque fieri ab illa debet, exprimitur’ (‘Such patterns, therefore, nature possesses in infinite number, - of men, fish, trees, according to whose model everything that nature has to create is worked out’). Trans. Gummere 449). On these letters: Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* 135-139.

⁴¹ Augustine, *Epistulae*, ed. Goldbacher (Pragae: 1895-96), I, 32-35 (*Epistula* 14).

Augustine ‘utrum summa illa veritas et summa sapientia [...] generaliter hominis, an etiam uniuscuiusque nostrum rationem contineat’ (‘whether the supreme truth and wisdom contained only the general Idea of man, or also the Idea of each of us’). ‘Magna quaestio’, admits Augustine; he concludes that the Creator, in order to create our universe, must have had the Idea of each part of this universe – that is, even of the individual Nebridius, who is a ‘pars huius universi’ (‘a part of this universe’). Thomas Aquinas comes to the same conclusion: ‘Individua vero, secundum Platonem, non habebant aliam ideam quam ideam speciei [...] Sed providentia divina non solum se extendit ad species, sed ad singularia’ (‘The individuals, according to Plato, did not have an extra Idea apart from the Idea of their species. [...] But the divine providence does not only look toward species, but also toward individuals’).⁴² Suárez is still more explicit: ‘Habere Deum ideas rerum singularium, scilicet Petri, Pauli et ceterorum’ (‘God has the Idea of each single thing – that is, of Peter, Paul, etc.’).⁴³ It thus means that, for Scholastic thinkers, if individual souls are created by God on an *ad hoc* basis (at the same time as their body), there also exists an eternal and ideal model for each human being in the mind of God.⁴⁴ This is how we probably have to read, for example, this statement of Father Caussin about the long awaited birth of Louis XIV: ‘il estoit caché dans le sanctuaire des idées de Dieu, dans la Majesté de ses destins; il a fallu charger tous les Autels de vœux, et remuer toutes les puissances célestes, pour l’obtenir’⁴⁵ (‘He was hidden in the sanctuary of God’s Ideas, in the majesty of his fates; we had to load all altars with vows and to move all celestial powers in order to get him’).

In the texts I have quoted, the image of artistic creation often appears: Ideas in the divine mind are compared to projects in the mind of an artist. This image could lead to a highly positive appraisal of artistic practice, and it was not ignored by Early Modern theoreticians of art. But it should be made clear that, in Scholastic doctrine, there is no suggestion at all that the ideas in the mind of human artists might come from God, or from a kind of access artists might have to eternal Ideas. The reasoning goes the other way: since we know from experience that artists, before creating something, must have the idea of what they want to create (whether an external idea, that is a model, or, if they are more experienced, an internal and mental idea), then we can infer that God, who is a *perfectissimus artifex*, must have had a mental idea of the universe, and of each part of it, before he created it. Divine Ideas are not used to explain the artistic process, but artistic experience is used to understand the divine creative process.⁴⁶ As for the origin of human mental ideas, Scholastic philosophers were very far indeed from a reminiscence of a contemplation of divine Ideas (in the Christian tradition, this contemplation is restricted to the case of mystical vision).⁴⁷ Philosophers from this school taught that knowledge came from the

⁴² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia, quaest. XV, art. 3, ad 4.

⁴³ Suárez, *Opera Omnia* I, 212.

⁴⁴ This point could be favourable to the standpoint of predestination, but until now I have not found any Early Modern text addressing the question in these terms.

⁴⁵ Caussin, *Eloge du roy* 7.

⁴⁶ Cf. Suárez, *Opera Omnia* XXV, 899: ‘hoc ipsum facile demonstrari potest ex humanis artificibus’ (‘This very point [=the presence of Ideas in God] can easily be demonstrated from the example of human artists’).

⁴⁷ Panofsky, *Idea* 199-200 (note 80). Already Augustine, at the end of his chapter *De ideis* (*De diversis quaestionibus*, 46, 2), notes that the rational soul, closest to God among all creatures, can, if it adheres to God, be pervaded by the intelligible light and see by its intelligence the divine Ideas (‘istas rationes’), whose vision will make it *beatissima*.

senses, and that some cognitive faculties of the soul had the ability to build and store mental representations from sensorial data.

The most famous example of the recovery of the Scholastic theory of Ideas by a theoretician of art is provided by Federico Zuccari (1542-1609), whose concept of *disegno interno* has been studied by Panofsky.⁴⁸ In *L'Idea de' Pittori, Scultori et Architetti*, Zuccari expounds, under the subtitle 'Del disegno interno in Dio' (book I, chapter 5), the same theory as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas about Ideas, with the very same references to the textual locations in Augustine and Thomas.⁴⁹ Panofsky rightly acknowledges the Aristotelian and Scholastic heritage of Zuccari's treatise; he nevertheless tries to give a Neo-Platonic touch to his theory, claiming that, for Zuccari, the presence of ideas in man would be prior to sense perceptions, and that the *disegno interno* would be a kind of gift and emanation from divine grace.⁵⁰ But Zuccari is very clear on this point: admittedly, the ability to conceive a *disegno interno* (as a way of knowledge and a model for creation) may result from God's gift; but the *disegno* itself has no other origin than the senses - in total harmony with Neo-Scholasticism:

[Dio], havendo per sua bontà, & per mostrare in picciolo ritratto l'eccellenza dell'arte sua divina, creato l'huomo ad imagine & similitudine sua, quanto all'anima, [...] volle anco dargli facoltà di formare in se medesimo un Disegno interno intellettivo, accioche col mezzo di questo conoscesse tutte le creature [...] & in oltre accioche [...] potesse produrre infinite cose artificiali simili alle naturali [...]. Ma l'huomo nel formar questo Disegno interno è molto differente da Dio ; perche ove Iddio ha un sol Disegno [...], comprensivo di tutte le cose, il quale non è differente da lui [...], l'huomo in se stesso forma varii Disegni [...], e però il suo Disegno è accidente, oltre il che hà l'origine sua bassa, cioè da i sensi.⁵¹

God, after having, as an effect of his goodness and in order to show a little portrait of the excellence of his divine art, created man in his own image and likeness, as for the soul, [...] also wanted to give him the faculty to shape in himself an intellectual *disegno interno*, so that he could, by this way, know all creatures [...] and also in order that he could produce an infinity of artificial things similar to the natural ones. [...] But man, in the shaping of this *disegno interno*, is very different from God; because where God has a single *disegno*, including everything and not different from him [...], man shapes in himself various *disegni* [...], and his *disegno* is accidental, besides the fact that it has a low origin, coming from the senses.

⁴⁸ Panofsky, *Idea* 107-115.

⁴⁹ Zuccari Federico, *L'Idea de' Pittori, scultori et architetti* (Turin, Agostino Disserolio: 1607) 8-10.

⁵⁰ Panofsky, *Idea* 112-113 : 'Ce n'est pas la perception sensible qui est à l'origine de la formation des idées ; c'est au contraire celle-ci qui [...] met en mouvement la perception sensible ; les sens ne sont en quelque sorte convoqués que pour éclairer et animer les représentations intérieures [...] Le Dessin intérieur, qui a la propriété [...] de recevoir des perceptions sensibles sa clarté et sa perfection, se présente comme un don et même comme une émanation de la grâce divine'. This claim by Panofsky is criticized by Kieft G., "Zuccari, Scaligero e Panofsky", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 33 (1989) 355-368 (esp. 357-358).

⁵¹ Zuccari, *L'Idea* 14.

From the various quotes I have given, it clearly appears that the theory of Ideas as thoughts of God was widely diffused in Early Modern Europe, among philosophers as well as theoreticians of art. However, this diffusion should not be overstated: in the schoolbooks of Scholastic philosophy, the topic cannot be said to be really central. Yet in 1677, Ottavio Cattaneo, then professor of *Theologia Scholastica* at the *Collegio Romano*,⁵² deals with divine Ideas in the second volume of his *Cursus Philosophicus*.⁵³ Again, we find here all the previous theory of Ideas, more or less the same as in Suárez. The interesting point is the very concrete and visual vocabulary Cattaneo sometimes uses to describe divine Ideas: God bears in his intellect ‘rerum omnium imagines et simulacra’ (‘the images and *simulacra* of everything’),⁵⁴ images that he built (‘fabricatus fuerat’) inside himself ‘ante omnia saecula’.⁵⁵ In the first volume of Cattaneo’s *Cursus Philosophicus*, we also hear about Ideas. Cattaneo mentions the interpretation sometimes given to Plato’s theory of Ideas, according to which Ideas would exist somewhere, outside the divine intellect, ‘in spatiis imaginariis’ (‘in imaginary spaces’).⁵⁶ Cattaneo doubts whether Plato really meant it this way; anyway, this would be a ‘splendidus error’, an opinion ‘rather appropriate to be sung by poets among the Muses, than to be recited by philosophers in a school’ (‘sententia [...] modulanda potius a poetis inter Musas, quam a philosophis in Lycaeo recitanda’).⁵⁷ The allusion here to the distance between poetic expression and philosophical truth is of course to be underlined. We can further note that Cattaneo, besides his job as professor of theology, was also a Latin poet, and that he produced fifteen years earlier, in 1662, a long *genethliacum* for the birth of a Spanish prince,⁵⁸ including the allegorical character of the Goddess *Pronoea*, that is Divine Providence, the keeper of the fates of the world.

Back to Carrara’s poem

The Jesuit Ubertino Carrara, in the *genethliac* poem he wrote in 1678 for the birth of Joseph, son of Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor,⁵⁹ took up the challenge to allegorize the Scholastic ‘world of Ideas’ and to make it the stage of his own version of the Vergilian narrative. Carrara was then professor of rhetoric at the *Collegio Romano*,⁶⁰ and according to the title of the publication, his *genethliacon* was recited by himself in the *aula maxima* of this institution.⁶¹

⁵² Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano* 325.

⁵³ Cattaneo Ottavio, *Cursus philosophicus in quatuor tomos divisus* (Rome, Nicolaus Angelus Tinassius: 1677) II, 462-7.

⁵⁴ Cattaneo, *Cursus* II, 464.

⁵⁵ Cattaneo, *Cursus* II, 465.

⁵⁶ Cattaneo, *Cursus* I, 400.

⁵⁷ Cattaneo, *Cursus* I, 400.

⁵⁸ Cattaneo Ottavio, *Carmen genethliacum pro Serenissimi Hispaniarum Principis Caroli Philippi ortu felicissimo, dictum in aula Collegii Romani Societatis Jesu* (Rome, Ignatius de Lazaris: 1662).

⁵⁹ Carrara Ubertino, *Austriae proli Archiduci Austriae genethliacon. In aula maxima Collegii Romani dictum ab auctore* (Rome, Joannes Baptista Bussottus: 1678).

⁶⁰ Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano* 336.

⁶¹ Cf. also the ms. 142 of the Arch. Univ. Greg., quoted by Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano* 289 : ‘1678. – Il P. Carrara recitò in salone un bel poema per la nascita del figliuolo dell’Imperatore Leopoldo’.

The main character of Carrara's poem is the allegory of Austria. She is lamenting the absence of an heir to her throne, when another female allegory comes to comfort her. The second woman has an ill-defined identity: she is first presented as the 'Diva arbitra regnorum' (l. 93-94: 'the Goddess arbitrator of kingdoms'); she then calls herself the 'divinae mentis filia' (l. 99: 'daughter of the divine mind') and the 'rerum maxima molitrix' (l. 99-100: 'great planner of things'); people call her *Fortuna*, but mistakenly (l. 100-101). In fact, she is not changeable at all (l. 105-109):

... placent, semperque placebunt
Quae placuere semel, cui sola placere necesse est
Optima : libertas nec ob id, vel summa potestas
Creditor esse minor; mea me decreta coercent,
Quod non posse volo, solum me posse negabo.

What I liked once, I still like and will always like – because I necessary like what is the best; and I'm not considered less free or less powerful therefore: I'm only bound by my own decrees; I will deny being capable of something only when I don't want to be capable of it.

The whole passage is based on a text by Seneca, where the Stoic philosopher speculated about God ('quid sit Deus').⁶² In a phrasing very close to that of Carrara, the Senecan text states of God: 'necesse est eadem placere ei cui nisi optima placere non possunt. Nec ob hoc minus liber est ac potens ; ipse est enim necessitas sua'⁶³ ('He who cannot like anything but the best must necessarily like always the same. And he is not less free or powerful therefore; he is indeed his own necessity').⁶⁴ In the Lipsian edition of Seneca with notes by Libert Fromond (a professor of philosophy in Louvain), the latter comments: 'Vero hoc et Christiano sensu' ('This is valid also in the Christian sense').⁶⁵ From all this information, we can conclude that our female allegory represents God's mind in its particular function as planner of human kingdoms. For the sake of clarity, we will nevertheless call the allegory 'Fortuna' in this paper.

After a long speech summarizing the historical journey of the imperial crown from Rome to Austria, Fortuna promises that the Empire will not be left without an heir. Better: this heir is already in conception: 'Iam Numen et ipsa laboro / magnam animam' (l. 169-170: 'God

⁶² Seneca, *Naturales quaestiones* 1, Pref. 3: 'Equidem tunc rerum naturae gratias ago, [...] cum disco [...] quid sit deus [...], liceat illi hodieque decernere et ex lege fatorum aliquid derogare, an maiestatis deminutio sit et confessio erroris mutanda fecisse' ('I, for one, am very grateful to nature, [...] when I learn [...] what god is; [...] whether it is possible for him to make decisions today and to repeal in part any sort of universal law of fate; whether it is a diminution of his majesty and an admission of his error that he has done things which had to be changed'. Trans. T. H. Corcoran (London-Cambridge (Mass.): 1971, 3-5).

⁶³ Following the used edition (previous note), 'these are two marginal comments [...] which should be eliminated from Seneca's text' (4 note 1; cf. Alexander W.H., "Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones*. The text emended and explained", *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 13,8 (1948) 241-332: 251). But Carrara certainly considered these lines as Seneca's, as they appear in the seventeenth century editions of Seneca.

⁶⁴ Translation is mine.

⁶⁵ Seneca, *Opera quae exstant omnia, a Justo Lipsio emendata et scholiis illustrata. Editio quarta [...] aucta Liberti Fromondi scholiis* (Antwerp, ex officina Plantiniana: 1652).

and myself are working at his great soul'). In order to illustrate her sayings, Fortuna invites Austria to accompany her to the place where the *imago* of the young heir reigns among the *simulacra* of his ancestors (l. 172-5: 'ducam qua dulcis Imago / prolis adorandae Leopoldo proxima regnat / inter maiorum simulacra augusta suorum'). Austria will then be able to start loving him in the guise of a *simulata imago*, and to give him false kisses as a prelude to real ones (l. 175-6: 'illic erudies simulata in imagine amorem / falsaque cum dederis proludent oscula veris'). The vocabulary used here (*simulatus*, *falsus*) is strikingly disparaging: contrary to Plato's theory (but also to the Christian tradition of mystical contemplation), to see the Idea of a being is deemed only a consolation prize.

So our two goddesses start their journey to the place above the stars where Fortuna has her throne (l. 184-5). It is here that Fortuna chooses the kings who will reign on earth (l. 187: 'regesque legit queis cuncta regantur').

At prius ad vitae quam lumina proferat, umbrat, 188
 Et parit ideas; animas mox jura daturas
 Ducit ab exemplo, similique ab imagine condit.⁶⁶ 190

But before she brings them to life, she sketches and generates Ideas; the souls who will rule in the near future, she draws them from a model and creates them on the basis of a resembling image.

The verbs 'umbrat et parit' are quite puzzling, since they seem to be in contradiction with the philosophical assumption of the eternity of divine Ideas: souls are created, but Ideas should be eternal. Most probably, this has simply to be understood within the general frame of the poetical and allegorical analogy between God's providence and an artist, an analogy which necessarily implies some inaccuracies – of course, there is no goddess, or celestial palace either. These are all poetical ways of representing things so intricate that even philosophers found them hard to express: the relationship between eternity and time, between providence and contingency, between Divine and human ways of knowing and creating...

As the story goes on, Austria discovers the celestial operating place of Fortuna. It is full of 'regales umbrae', 'royal shades' (l. 192), representing the kings of Greece, Babylon and Rome. The most serene part of heaven is dedicated to the 'Austriadum simulacra', the *simulacra* of the Habsburg rulers (l. 195-6), hiding behind a white curtain of light (l. 197: 'lucis niveo velatur amictu'). In a dramatic climax, Fortuna opens the curtains and lets the shining stage appear before the dazzled eyes of Austria. Here starts the awaited imitation of Vergil's *Aeneid*: Fortuna presents the *simulacra* one by one, starting with Rudolf of Habsburg (l. 204: 'quem cernis', 'the one you notice'; l. 215: 'quem prope nonne vides', 'the next one, don't you see him'). When she comes to Charles V, she utters the famous words: 'hic vir, hic est' (l. 253).

⁶⁶The last verse is clearly imitated from Boetius, *The consolation of Philosophy* 3, 9, 6-8, which is an invocation to the Father of all things : 'tu cuncta superno / ducis ab exemplo, pulchrum pulcherrimus ipse / mundum mente gerens similique in imagine formans' ('from a heavenly pattern / You draw out all things, and being yourself most fair, / A fair world in your mind you bear, and forming it / In the same likeness' Trans. S. J. Tester (Cambridge (Mass.) – London: 1978) 273).

Somewhat later, Austria recognizes her current ruler, Leopold I, on a throne, and she notices that he is accompanied by a beautiful child (l. 269-270). ‘Quis hic?’, she asks (l. 276: ‘Who is this one?’); ‘nosco Aquilam patriam volitantem tempora circum’ (l. 280: ‘I recognize the national Eagle fluttering about his head’). This of course, as Fortuna tells her, is the *effigies* (l. 288) of the future heir of the Austrian Empire. Fortuna goes on prophesying his future life, reign and wars. Austria, enthusiastic, goes to the *effigies* to kiss it – but in the meantime, the real baby is being born on earth. As soon as she learns the news of the birth, Austria leaves the false *figura* behind and rushes back on earth (l. 394-5), in order to satiate herself with the *true* Cesar – and this is the very last verse of the poem: ‘et totam satiat se Caesare vero’ (l. 399). Again, as in Wallius, the real living child is deemed more valuable than the more beautiful *simulacra* – even if they are divine Ideas and objects of a heavenly contemplation.

Conclusions

The genethliac poems by Wallius and Carrara illustrate the confluence, in Jesuit Neo-Latin poetry, of various traditions and tendencies. The poems are written in support of the great Catholic rulers of the time, and of the socio-political concept of hereditary nobility and monarchy. In the choice of poetic genre, of narrative frame, of words and phrasing, both poets emulate famous classical authors, Vergil in the first place (but also Seneca and Boetius). Even when their models express Platonic or Stoic views, Jesuits manage to remain true to Christian theology and to Neo-Scholasticism, which is the philosophical tradition underlying their allegorical inventions. As political players actively involved in the struggles of their times, and at the same time as learned intellectuals thoroughly trained in classical literature, in Christian theology and in Neo-Scholastic philosophy, the Jesuit poets achieved a wonderful synthesis of all those concerns, creating new powerful literary frescoes, able to express their devotion to Catholic rulers, but also to inhabit the imagination and memory of their European readership, without entering into contradiction with their Christian faith.

Another interesting aspect of the poems is their heavy reliance on an artistic paradigm. The newborn child is compared to a work of art whose artist is, ultimately, God – hiding behind the female allegories of Natura (which represents the material work of the artist, as well as the rules of his art) and of Fortuna (which represents the creative mind of the artist, his planning of the work to be done). It is striking that, in the scale of values proposed by our poems, the products of divine art, that is, the living beings, are always at the top. They are not only situated above the human artefacts; but also, inside the divine art, above the *ideae* or *exemplaria* that only prepare the production of beings. Wallius and Carrara are at the same time fascinated by art and conscious of its vanity, yearning for heaven and determined to play their part on earth among humanity – a position which, all in all, may be considered quite typical of the Society of Jesus in the seventeenth century.