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Robert Maniura

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1. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1972), p. 1.
2. Giuliano Guizzelmi, *Memoriale*, Biblioteca Roncioniana, Prato (BRP). MS 759.
3. The fundamental study is Christian Bec, *Les marchands écrivains: affaires et humanisme à Florence, 1375–1434* (Mouton: Paris, 1967).
4. The two parts, designated A and B, are now bound together as a single volume, but retain their separate foliation.
5. Mark Phillips, *The Memoir of Marco Parenti: A Life in Medici Florence* (Heinemann: London, 1989), p. viii.
6. So punctilious are his records in terms of dates, destinations, and the officers he served that it is possible to confirm almost his entire working life from the extractions of office holders in the Florentine *Tratte*. In December 1488, he had just finished a six-month tour of duty with Pegalotto Pegalotti who had acted as Capitano of San Sepolcro. Archivio di Stato, Florence (ASF), *Tratte* 986, f7v.
7. MCCCCLXXXVIII.
Memoria chome a di v di dicembre 1488 io Giuliano di Francesco Guinçelmi soprascripto comperai in Firençe una berretta rosata tonda, lire quatro et soldi undici contanti. lb 4 s 11 d 0
Memoria chome decto di tornai di offitio dal Borgo a San Sepolchro et quando giunsi in casa, donai a Raphaello mio fratello et a mia nipoti in grossoni fiorentini et altri arienti soldi cinquanta nove. lb 2 s 19 d 0
Memoria chome a di 6 di dicembre io detti a Andrea mio fratello dua grossoni in ariento per la vectura del cavallo mi haveva mandato a Firençe. lb 0 s 14 d 0
Memoria chome a di x di dicembre io comperai bracia dua di panno nero, et bracia quatro di panno bigio per fare calçe et calçetti lire sei et soldi septe. lb 6 s 7 d 0
Memoria chome a di 12 di decto comperai bracia 2 di pannolino per foderare calçe soldi venti. lb 1 s 0 d 0
Memoria chome a di 15 di dicembre 1488 io comperai braccia dua di pannolino per fare mutande soldi venti. lb 1 s 0 d 0
Memoria chome a di 16 di dicembre io detti a Andrea mio fratello fiorino uno largo di oro in oro

At the opening of *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, Michael Baxandall famously declared: ‘A fifteenth-century painting is the deposit of a social relationship’.¹ In this paper I use the textual and visual material associated with a Prato lawyer, Giuliano di Francesco Guizzelmi (1446–1518), to argue that this is much too passive a conception of the role of images in this period. Fully integrated in the practices of daily life and mobilised in strategies of social interaction, fifteenth-century images were, rather, constitutive of social relationships: they were part of the way in which those relationships were built.

Giuliano Guizzelmi was a prolific writer of pious texts, producing books of miracles for all of his home town’s shrines. He is also a notably well-documented individual. Among his written remains is a record ‘of those things which happen to me day by day and from day to day’, which he began on 5 December 1488 and continued diligently until shortly before his death 30 years later.² Such record books have survived in large numbers from this period in Tuscany and they constitute an important and extensively exploited resource.³ The two volumes of what Guizzelmi called his *memoriale* are not among the more elaborate and discursive examples.⁴ The records are often laconic and amount to what Mark Phillips, writing of the slightly earlier record book of Marco Parenti, has called a ‘detailed ledger of family expenses’.⁵ Yet these records offer remarkable insights into Guizzelmi’s life and his concerns, and act as ground for issues raised in his other writings. Images make a striking early appearance.

The first few entries in the *memoriale* date from Guizzelmi’s return home from an office he had held in Borgo San Sepolcro. Guizzelmi spent his entire working life in the service of the Florentine territorial administration, travelling from town to town on appointments of six months or a year as a judge in the entourage of the state’s ‘extrinsic’ officials.⁶ On 5 December he bought a round rose-coloured hat in Florence and gave a gift of money to his brother Raphaello and his nephews explicitly to mark his return. The following day he records reimbursing his brother Andrea for the cost of the hire of the horse he had ridden from Florence to Prato. Most of his immediate expenses were mundane: the following entries record payments for cloth to make and line hose and to make underpants. However, the next, substantial, payments concern an image:

Memo that on 16 December I gave to Andrea my brother one gold *fiorino largo* in gold for the wax of the image I had made for Lactantio, that is for 10 pounds of wax. fi 1 L in gold

Memo that the said day, 16 December, I gave to Andrea my brother four grossoni to buy fine silver to silver the said image of Lactantio my nephew. lb 1 s 8 d 0⁷

Quite what this image was is not explained in the text. This is only made clear in another part of Guizzelmi's written legacy. Some 17 years later, in 1505, he compiled a book of miracles of the local shrine of Santa Maria delle Carceri.⁸ One of the stories in that collection deals with his nephew Lactantio, a baby of eight months suffering from epilepsy:

Because we judged it impossible that he would survive, and desiring his health, in the year of our Lord 1487 in the month of March I vowed him to the Most Glorious Large Crucifix of the *pieve* of Prato and then to the Most Glorious Madonna, Virgin Mary of the Carceri. I took a lead figure of the Most Glorious Madonna and had it touch Her Majesty and hung it around his neck, saying the Our Father and the Hail Mary whilst the illness took hold of him and vowed him to the said Most Glorious Virgin. And as soon as the lead figure touched his flesh the illness finished and left him and he returned to full health and the illness never returned. When I vowed to the Most Glorious Madonna I promised her majesty, if he remained healthy, to make him in wax, in swaddling clothes as he was and the size he was when I made the vow with 10 pounds of new wax all covered in fine silver. Seeing him perfectly healthy I gave thanks to the omnipotent and eternal God and his most Glorious Mother and measured the baby in order to fulfil the vow. I and all mine judged this to be a great miracle. . . . And seeing the grace to continue, in order to fulfil what I had promised, in December 1488 I offered him to the Most Glorious Madonna in swaddling clothes, his size made out of a large weight of wax covered in silver as you can still see in her oratory in the presence of the Majesty of the said Most Holy Madonna.⁹

The image referred to on the first folio of the *memoriale* was this silver-covered, life-size, wax votive figure. The majesty of the Most Holy Madonna, in the presence of which Guizzelmi placed the figure in the miracle story, was a wall painting of the Virgin and Child enthroned between Saints Stephen and Leonard, probably dating from the latter part of the fourteenth century.¹⁰ It had once decorated a wall of the town prison in Prato, which, by the late fifteenth century, was disused and partly ruinous.¹¹ In summer 1484, the painting began to be associated with miracles and the town authorities resolved to house it in a church, which was begun the following year.¹² The domed Greek-cross structure, designed by Giuliano da Sangallo, enshrines the picture above the main altar.¹³

The status of the texts containing the striking cross-reference to the votive figure of Lactantio needs to be explored. During his lifetime the *memoriale* was a functional book of record and Guizzelmi himself was the principal, and probably only, reader. The entries show him passing back and forth among the pages annotating the repayment of loans and the return of books lent, for example. It was not, however, a wholly private book, because such records were written with an eye to posterity as self-conscious repositories of family memory.¹⁴ By this period, the genre was firmly established, not only in the local culture, in general, but also in the tradition of this family. Guizzelmi's father, Francesco, had kept such a book, now lost, and Giuliano himself annotated the record book of his brother Andrea after the latter's death in 1516.¹⁵ These records were drawn on explicitly by later members of the family, notably by Agostino di Bindaccio Guizzelmi (1534–1600), Andrea's grandson, who wrote lives of both Francesco and Giuliano.¹⁶ The life of Giuliano is an important source to which I will return.¹⁷ The miracle book of the Carceri represents a different kind of writing. It presents a formalised narrative account of the origin of the shrine – a local sacred history – along with a systematic collection of miracle stories in chronological order. The correlation of this history with the daily record of expenses in the matter of the *ex voto* is thus important. The perception of and material response to

per la cera della imagine feci fare per Lactantio cioe per libre 10 di cera. fi 1 L in oro Memoria chome decto di 16 di dicembre io decti a Andrea mio fratello grossoni quatro per comperare ariento fine per inarietare decta imagine di Lactantio mio nipote. lb 1 s 8 d 0 Guizzelmi, *Memoriale A*, flr-v.

8. Giuliano di Francesco Guizzelmi, *Historia della apparitione et altri miracoli di Madonna Sancta Maria del Carcere di Prato*, BRP, MS 87. Published in Isabella Gagliardi (ed.), 'I miracoli della Madonna delle Carceri in due codici della Biblioteca Roncioniana di Prato' in Anna Benvenuti (ed.), *Santa Maria delle Carceri a Prato. Miracoli e devozione in un santuario toscano del Rinascimento* (Mandragora: Florence, 2005), pp. 135–53.

9. Guizzelmi, *Historia*, fols. 65v–67r; Gagliardi, 'I miracoli', 150–1.

10. For the image see Carlotta Lenzi, 'La chiesa di Santa Maria delle Carceri: dipinti e arredi', *Prato. Storia e arte*, Vol. 34, no. 82, June 1993, pp. 30–31.

11. For the prison see Claudio Cerretelli, 'Da oscura prigione a tempio di luce. La costruzione di Santa Maria delle Carceri a Prato' in Benvenuti, *Santa Maria delle Carceri*, pp. 47–8.

12. The fullest account of the foundation miracle can be found in Guizzelmi's miracle book. Guizzelmi, *Historia*, fols. 8v–12v. Gagliardi, 'I miracoli', 136–7.

13. The most important recent literature is Paul Davies, 'The Madonna delle Carceri in Prato and Italian Pilgrimage Architecture', *Architectural History*, Vol. 36, 1993, pp. 1–18 and Paul Davies, 'The Early History of S. Maria delle Carceri in Prato', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 54, no. 3, September 1995, pp. 326–35. The building history is summarized in Piero Morselli and Gino Corti, *La Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Carceri in Prato. Contributo di Lorenzo de' Medici e Giuliano da Sangallo alla progettazione* (EDAM: Florence, 1982), pp. 55–65.

14. Giovanni Ciappelli, 'Family Memory: Functions, Evolution, Recurrences', in Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Rubin (eds), *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2000), pp. 26–38.

15. The record book of Andrea Guizzelmi is preserved as ASF, Ubaldini-Vai-Geppi 425 with Giuliano's annotations on f75r.

16. Francesco's lost record book is the stated source for Agostino's life: Agostino Guizzelmi, *Vita di Francesco di Michele di Lotto di Piero Guizzelmi fabbricata da Agostino Guizzelmi canonico pratese e dedicata alli nipoti suoi amatissimi*, ASF, Ubaldini-Vai-Geppi 470, f9v–10r.

17. Agostino Guizzelmi, *Vita di M. Giuliano di Francesco Guizzelmi fabricata da M. Agostino di Bindaccio Guizzelmi*, ASF, Ubaldini-Vai-Geppi 470. For Agostino see Elena Fasano Guarini (ed.) *Prato storia di una città? 2. Un microcosmo in movimento (1494–1815)* (Comune di Prato: Florence, 1986), pp. 369–71.

18. Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: Text, Sign and History in the Miracles of Sainte foy* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1999), pp. 9–21 and 43–5.

19. Archivio di Stato, Prato, Archivio Comunale, Diurnini, 112, f10v.

20. The earlier book is *Miracoli et gratie della gloriosa madre vergine Maria delle Charcere di Prato, l'anno 1484*, BRP, MS 86. Published in Gagliardi, 'I miracoli', 104–34. The manuscript is undated. It includes references to events dated up to April 1487. For a discussion of the possible source of the stories, see Robert Maniura, 'Image and Relic in the Cult of Our Lady of Prato', in Sally J. Cornelison and Scott B. Montgomery (eds), *Images, Relics, and Devotional Practices in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Tempe, 2005), p. 200.

21. *Miracoli et gratie*, nos 126, 128, 131, 133 and 173, fols 28v–29v and 34r. Gagliardi, 'I miracoli', pp. 117–18 and 120.

22. Agostino Guizzelmi, *Vita di M. Giuliano*, f6r.

23. Guizzelmi, *Historia*, f78v. Gagliardi, 'I miracoli', 153.

24. Guizzelmi Dott. Giuliano. *Miracoli e grazie concesse dalla Madonna del Carcere di Prato nel mese luglio 1484* (Tipografia di Amerigo Lici: Prato, 1884).

25. Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, Gaetano Milanesi (ed.), vol. 3 (G. C. Sansoni: Florence, 1878), pp. 373–5. Aby Warburg, 'The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie', in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, trans. David Britt (Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities: Los Angeles, 1999), pp. 185–221. Julius von Schlosser, 'History of Portraiture in Wax' trans. James Michael Loughridge in Roberta Panzanelli (ed.), *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure* (Getty Research Institute: Los Angeles, 2008), pp. 171–314.

26. Georges Didi-Huberman, 'The Portrait, The Individual and the Singular: Remarks on the Legacy of Aby Warburg', in Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson (eds), *The Image of the Individual: Portraits in the Renaissance* (British Museum: London, 1998), p. 174.

the miracle involving Lactantio are articulated in distinct discursive contexts. We are still dealing with written records, but demonstrably not with a single, self-contained literary construction. The financial record of the vowed wax figure establishes beyond reasonable doubt the historicity of the image. It also makes a strong, if indirect, case for the historicity of the claimed circumstances of its donation and the associated rituals in the miracle story. The offering of the wax figure was clearly a purposeful act and the miracle story is Guizzelmi's own account of and rationalization of that act. This is important because miracle books are usually understood as frank promotional material and one prominent interpretation warns that even claims of first person testimony, such as we find in Guizzelmi's story about Lactantio, need to be treated with immense caution. Such tales are, it is argued, best seen as rhetorical constructions articulating the interests of the shrine's custodians.¹⁸ Guizzelmi was by no means innocent of the interests of the Carceri as an institution. In the year before he produced his miracle book he served a term on the lay building committee of the church.¹⁹ His book shares about half its material with the one other, slightly earlier, surviving manuscript collection of Carceri miracles and this common content may derive from a booklet issued by the building committee.²⁰ A group of stories in the earlier manuscript refers to just such a booklet handed out to pilgrims arriving at the shrine.²¹ But although Guizzelmi's experience and the form of his book are consistent with the miracle collection as institutional advertisement, the actual audience for the book may have been much narrower. It survives in a single copy and the stories in the latter half of the book, including ten in which the writer claims direct involvement, as in the story of Lactantio, and a further group involving other members of his family, are unique to it. Agostino's life of Giuliano notes that a copy of his Carceri miracle book was kept in the family home.²² Four of the six stories listed in a rudimentary index on the endpapers of the extant volume involve members of the Guizzelmi family and it is likely that the surviving manuscript is thus a family copy.²³ It is not possible to establish any more than a family audience for this text before the publication of extracts in the nineteenth century.²⁴ The strong family emphasis in the Carceri miracle book and its apparently limited diffusion suggest that Guizzelmi may not, in the first place, have been promoting the shrine to a potential pilgrim audience but may, rather, have been articulating it for those with an established investment in the cult: himself and his family. In an important sense he seems to have been preaching to the converted and this informs our reading of the stories. I suggest that Guizzelmi's first person stories are evidence of his actions, or at least his memories of them, and of his conceptions of appropriate behaviour.

Life-size wax votive images are by no means unfamiliar in the historiography of Italian Renaissance art. They have, indeed, a distinguished if profoundly ambiguous place. Mentioned by Vasari in his life of Andrea Verrocchio and highlighted by Aby Warburg and Julius von Schlosser at a formative stage of the discipline of art history, they are a notable but purely textual presence.²⁵ There are no extant life-size wax images from this period. The figure of Lactantio and all its many fellows have long vanished. There is, though, no shortage of wistful claims for their potential importance for a mainstream history of art. For Georges Didi-Huberman, for example, they are the missing link in fifteenth-century Florentine portraiture.²⁶ The life-size, wax



Fig. 1. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Confirmation of the Franciscan Rule*, 1479–1485, mural, Sassetti chapel, Santa Trinita, Florence. (Photo: Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Firenze.)

ex votos of Renaissance Italy have an uncomfortable status as a canonical footnote.

Warburg proposed a way of bringing the knowledge of these lost objects to bear on established art-historical issues and extant art objects when he made a parallel between the painted portrait figures flanking the sacred scenes in Domenico Ghirlandaio's wall paintings in the Sassetti chapel in Santa Trinita in Florence and the vast array of life-size, wax votive images which thronged the church of the Santissima Annunziata in the same city between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Warburg stressed the scale and persistence of this phenomenon: 'By the beginning of the sixteenth-century there were so many of these *voti* that space ran out; the figures had to be suspended from the entablature on cords, and the walls had to be reinforced with chains. . . . The interior of the church must have looked like a waxwork museum'.²⁷ Warburg had been disturbed by what he saw as the 'intrusion' of the secular portraits into Ghirlandaio's sacred stories in the Sassetti chapel. In his main example, the scene of the confirmation of the Franciscan rule (Fig. 1), the founder of the chapel, Francesco Sassetti is pictured standing on the right with his son and elder brother alongside Lorenzo de' Medici. On the left stand three more of Sassetti's sons and in the foreground a group including Lorenzo's sons ascends a set of steps.

27. Warburg, 'Art of Portraiture', pp. 190 and 206.

28. Warburg, 'Art of Portraiture', p. 190.
29. James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion*, vol. 1 (Macmillan & Co: London, 1890), p. 9.
30. Schlosser, 'History of Portraiture in Wax', p. 227.
31. Giuseppe Marchini, *Il Tesoro del Duomo di Prato* (Cassa di Risparmio e Depositi di Prato: Prato, 1963), pp. 48 and 131.
32. Guizzelmi, *Memoriale A*, f193v. For more on the chapel and the masses see Robert Maniura, 'The Burial Chapel of Giuliano Guizzelmi in Prato Cathedral and the Demands of Devotion', *Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 19, no. 2, 2005, pp. 185–200.
33. Agostino Guizzelmi, *Vita di M. Giuliano*, f8r. 'si botò a l' Crocifisso nostro grande porvisi di cera...'

Warburg suggested that the presence of the wax effigies at the local Marian shrine helped to explain this juxtaposition. In both cases effigies of the living were placed in the presence of the sacred. For Warburg, though, the paintings achieved this with a greater degree of decorum and the distinction he draws introduces an important issue: 'By comparison with the magical fetishism of the waxwork cult, this was a comparatively discreet attempt to come closer to the Divine through a painted simulacrum'.²⁸ Warburg did not expand on this reference to 'magic' although it is possible that he had in mind the work of James Georges Frazer and his comment constitutes an important and precocious engagement of art history with anthropology. The 'magic' of the 'portrait likeness' engages with Frazer's treatment of 'sympathetic magic' in the first edition of the *Golden Bough* in which 'any effect may be produced by imitating it'.²⁹ For Schlosser the naturalism of the wax votive image was explicitly the source of its presumed effectiveness.³⁰ I will return to this issue of 'magic' below. Here I want to draw attention to how the rich material associated with Giuliano Guizzelmi allows us to build on Warburg's insight.

The miracle story involving Guizzelmi's nephew Lactantio mentions not only the Madonna of the Carceri but also the 'Large Crucifix of the *pieve*' in Prato. The former *pieve* (parish baptismal church) of Santo Stefano, now the cathedral of Prato, no longer has a monumental crucifix predating Guizzelmi's time. A substantially sized sculpted cross that was recorded, as it was dismembered and disposed of, in the early nineteenth century may have been the joint focus of Guizzelmi's vow.³¹ The Large Crucifix was venerated as another miracle-working image. As we will see, Guizzelmi also compiled a book of miracles of this image but that book is now lost. The miraculous crucifix of the *pieve* was a central focus of Guizzelmi's devotion. His *memoriale* records large numbers of masses paid to be said at the altar in the chapel which housed it and he founded his burial chapel in the crypt of the *pieve* in a space explicitly directly below that altar in what seems to have been a deliberate attempt at proximity to the holy image: an imagistic and Christocentric version of the burial *ad sanctos*.³² An image of the crucified Christ above the altar in the burial chapel, to be discussed more fully below, reinforces the reference visually.

Agostino Guizzelmi's late sixteenth-century life of Giuliano reveals an important aspect of his devotion to the Large Crucifix. The life demonstrably draws on the extant *memoriale* but also claims to rely on an earlier *memorialino*, now lost, which fills in details of Giuliano's earlier life. The text relates a story of Giuliano's own vow to the Large Crucifix. In February 1481 he went on his first six monthly posting as judge to the podestà of what is now Castiglion Fiorentino. On 24 July he got such bad sunstroke that he feared for his life and he made a vow 'to our Large Crucifix to place himself there in wax'.³³ Agostino's account goes on to clarify the substance of the vow and its fulfilment.

He (Giuliano) remembered the vow he had made at Castiglione and he wrote to Francesco Rucellai, who still had some *quatrini* of his, to get such an image made by one of the best men in Florence at such work. Andrea his brother took the letter to the said Francesco who had already instructed a painter in Florence, who, a short time ago, had made the image of Sixtus IV in the Annunziata, to make such an image. This painter had already gone to Pisa [where Guizzelmi was working] on other business and because he made and formed such images with the face *al naturale*, he brought letters from Francesco Rucellai proposing that Messer Giuliano let himself be portrayed, which he did. And afterwards the artist made it according to his invention with a rose



Fig. 2. The Flagellation and Portrait of Giuliano Guizzelmi, 1508, mural, east wall, Guizzelmi chapel, Cathedral, Prato. (Photo: Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici e per il Paesaggio per le Provincie di Firenze, Pistoia e Prato.)

coloured gown with broad crimson sleeves and his stole around his neck, kneeling, precisely as he can be seen today painted under the vaults at our altar on the Gospel side. That image, which Andrea had brought from Florence, was placed on the Epistle side in the chapel of the Large Crucifix in our main church where there was the image of M. Thomaso Valori, doctor of our town at that time and a great friend of Messer Giuliano and a person of great learning and philosophy, and also that of S. Galeazzo Pugliesi *al naturale*. These images stayed there until 1545 when the church was whitewashed and in order to beautify it the building committee of those times had the images taken away. This was not approved by everyone because the images were of a certain antiquity and also showed the devotion which the people had to this crucifix, through which image, we read, the Blessed Lord showed many miracles, in conformity with a book by the same Giuliano which tells of the many miracles made by this blessed image in the time of the plague of the Bianchi. At that time I was ten years old and I remember seeing such an image and taking our Messer Giuliano's head, which was in reasonable condition, back home and, what's more, the waxed cloth to make torches for the party I was having with some friends of my age at my house.³⁴

The vow described here is consonant with Giuliano's behaviour in his vow for Lactantio and, given his propensity for including family miracles and accounts of

34. Agostino Guizzelmi, *Vita di M. Giuliano*, f8v-9r. 'si ricordò del voto che egli a Castiglione fatto haveva così scrisse a Francesco Rucellai quale haveva in mano quatrini di suo come detto sopra di sua, per fare tale immagine a uno de' più valent' huomini che fosse in Fiorenza sopra tale essercitio, così la lettera la portò Andrea suo fratello al suddetto Francesco quale trovò che di già haveva dato a fare tale immagine a un pittore in Fiorenza chi poco avanti haveva fatto nella Nuntiata l'immagine di Sisto quinto (sic), quale pittore di già era ito a Pisa per altre sue faccende: e perchè egli faceva e formava tale immagine molto con il volto al naturale, portò lettere di Francesco Rucellai: sopra detto a Messer Giuliano che dal medesimo pittore si lasciasse ritrarse come fece. Dipoi havendola fatta a suo capriccio il pittore medesimo: cioè con una vesta rosata con le maniche larghe di chermisi con la sua becca al collo et aginochioni come appunto si scorge hoggi dipinto sotto le volte nel nostro altare dalla parte dell'evangelo: la quale immagine Andrea



Fig. 3. The Crucified Christ with the Virgin Mary and Sts John and Mary Magdalen, 1508, mural, south wall, Guizzelmi chapel, Cathedral, Prato. (Photo: Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici e per il Paesaggio per le Province di Firenze, Pistoia e Prato.)

havendola fatta portare di Fiorenza, la collocò poi dalla parte della epistola nella cappella grande del Crocifisso nella chiesa nostra maggiore dove era l'immagine di M. Thomaso Valori medico della terra nostra in quel tempo et molto amico di M. Giuliano, e persona di gran lettere di philosophia: et quella anco vi era di S Galeazzo Pugliesi al naturale. . . Le quale immagine vi stettero fino l'anno 1545 nel quale tempo si imbiancò la chiesa medesima anzi per dir meglio il nostro Duomo di Prato e per abellire più la nostra chiesa quelli operai, che in quello tempo vi se devano fecero levar via tale immagine: il chè non fu così aprovato da ogniuno: poscia chi tale immagini mostravano uno certo che d'antichità, et anco dimostravano la devotione, che di già i populi havevano a questo crocifisso: per la cui immagine Dio benedetto: si legge havere dimostro tanti miracoli, conforme a uno libretto fatto dal medesimo Giuliano, quale racconta la multiplicità dei miracoli fatti nella moria de' bianchi, da

his own vows in his miracle books, Agostino's account may well take this story from Giuliano's lost miracle book of the Large Crucifix. To summarise, Giuliano vowed to place a life-size, wax votive image of himself, made by one of the Florentine specialists, in the presence of the Large Crucifix in the *pieve* in Prato. Agostino, who saw the resulting image as a child, likened it to the painted image of Giuliano in the family burial chapel.

The paintings of that burial chapel survive (Figs 2 and 3). On the altar wall figures of the Virgin and St John flank the Crucified Christ with the Magdalen embracing the foot of the cross. Giuliano's portrait appears around the corner on the east wall, unambiguously identified by a prominent inscription: 'Giuliano Guizzelmi, doctor of civil and canon law, made this' (Fig. 4).³⁵ A remark based on the direct visual experience of the writer invites us to see this portrait of Guizzelmi in his chapel as a visual parallel to the vanished wax votive image. Warburg appealed to knowledge of a prevalent devotional practice – the placing of life-size wax images in a local miracle-working shrine – to explain

the placing of portraits in a painting in a contemporary burial chapel. Agostino offers us a parallel, drawing on living memory, between a wax votive image and a painted portrait of a single member of his own family in his family's burial chapel. Warburg's parallel is more than just an insightful interpretative strategy. It turns out to engage with period viewing practice. Agostino's comment offers us perhaps the best available visual focus for a discussion of this wholly vanished body of material.

We are faced with a growing body of lost images: a lost miracle-working crucifix and lost votive figures of Giuliano and his nephew Lactantio. On one level these written records simply allow us to reconstruct visual evidence. This is indeed one of the ways in which the material is important. It reveals something of both the materiality of the images and their part in the day-to-day exchange culture of the period. The expenses for the *ex voto* of Lactantio sit next to the expenses on such basics as clothing and transport, as we have seen. Whatever else they were, the *ex votos* were manufactured goods to be bought and sold and the records of expenses give a sense of relative prices and integrate votive images into the monetary value system as Baxandall did, for example, for contemporary paintings.³⁶ The wax, at one gold florin, accounted for the bulk of the cost of the image. The silver for the coating, priced in terms of the independent silver coinage at four *grossoni*, cost roughly a quarter as much. The image represented a significant but not extravagant expense. It cost a little less, for example, than a travelling coat which Guizzelmi had delivered from Pisa later in the year.³⁷ But on another level loss itself is a cultural issue. By the time Agostino was writing, the *ex voto* of Giuliano was already a lost image, but his account of Giuliano's vow testifies to the importance of that *ex voto* in the construction of family memory. Agostino was dealing with a mix of extant images, lost images, and texts. His account acknowledges and exploits the ephemerality of the wax *ex voto*. Whatever the purpose of the *ex voto* from Giuliano Guizzelmi's point of view it also had a role in the lives of future generations. This adds further resonance to Warburg's insight. Not only could people in the period recognise a relationship between votive images at a shrine and other 'portrait' images, they could recognise them as temporally situated things and think between them in constructive ways.

As Hugo van der Velden has pointed out, the discussion of the lost wax *ex votos* has been dominated by their alleged high degree of verisimilitude.³⁸ At first sight the passage from Agostino Guizzelmi and the painted portrait it draws attention to seem to reinforce the issue. The account of Giuliano being portrayed by the wax artist in Pisa apparently affirms the facial likeness of the wax image and the painted image in the burial chapel, to which Agostino compared it, has the particularised features we associate with portraiture. The issue takes its cue from Vasari who described Orsino Benintendi's wax figures of Lorenzo de' Medici as 'so natural and well-made that they no longer represented men of wax but vividly living ones (*vivissimmi*)'.³⁹ Such a remark made in the culture of mid-sixteenth-century Florence cannot, however, be taken at face value. The living image is a prominent ancient rhetorical trope and one extensively exploited in this period.⁴⁰ Vasari's comment is not obviously a spontaneous response to the visual characteristics of a set of images. Indeed, once we compare the two accounts of the votive images offered above – Agostino Guizzelmi's account of Giuliano's image and Giuliano's account of that for his nephew – the issue immediately becomes more complicated. Although the image of Lactantio was life size, it was not naturalistically painted but covered in silver leaf. The likenesses of

questa immagine benedetta e mi sovviene che io essendo in quel tempo in età d'anni dieci vedere tale immagine, e portare anco a casa la testa di Messer Giuliano nostro, che era in ragionevole stato, et inoltre di quello pannolino incerato, farne le torce per la festa, chè in casa mia facevano allhora certi amici miei fanciulletti di mio tempo'.

35. The chapel was founded in 1506 and painted between 1508 and 1510. Maniura, 'Burial Chapel', pp. 187–8.

36. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, pp. 1–27.

37. Guizzelmi, *Memoriale A*, f13v. This record offers a way of reconciling the costs recorded in terms of the independent systems of gold and silver coinage. Guizzelmi paid one gold florin, six *grossoni*, and four *danari* for the coat that he records as eight *lire*, eight *soldi*, and four *danari*. There were 12 *danari* in a *soldo*, and 20 *soldi* in a *lira*. One *grossone* was seven *soldi* as the earlier record of the purchase of the silver makes clear. The gold florin must thus be six *lire* and six *soldi*. The value of the gold florin fluctuated with respect to the silver coinage tending to increase in relative value over time. This value is broadly in line with the figure of seven *lire* to the florin for 1500 noted in Raymond de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank 1397–1494* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1963), p. 31.

38. Hugo van der Velden, 'Medici Votive Images and the Scope and Limits of Likeness', in Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson (eds), *The Image of the Individual: Portraits in the Renaissance* (British Museum: London, 1998), pp. 126–37.

39. Vasari, *Le vite*, vol. 3, p. 374.

40. Fredrika H. Jacobs, *The Living Image in Renaissance Art* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2005).

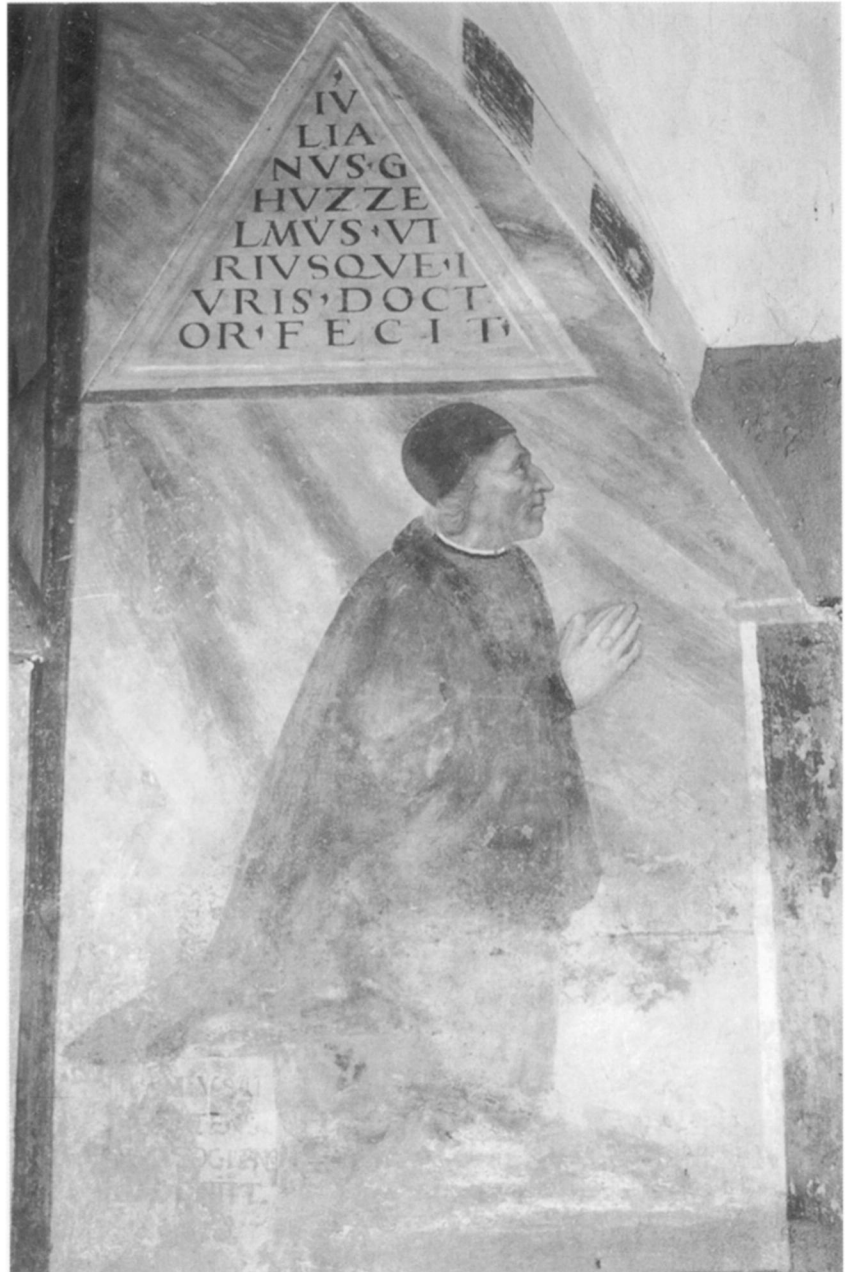


Fig. 4. Giuliano Guizzelmi, 1508, mural, Guizzelmi chapel, Cathedral, Prato. (Photo: Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici e per il Paesaggio per le Province di Firenze, Pistoia e Prato.)

babies are, in any case, notoriously difficult to achieve and there is no reason to suspect that the image of Lactantio was anything other than a generic image of a swaddled baby. Yet the image clearly fulfilled its role in the context of Guizzelmi's vow.

It could be argued that the image of a baby is a special case, but Guizzelmi offers some evidence that generic rather than verisimilar portrait images may not have been confined to babies. Although we do not have Giuliano Guizzelmi's account of his own votive offering, we do have his record of the

votive figure of an adult. In 1497 he acted as an agent for the making and installation of a wax figure for a third party:

I record that on 21 August 1497 I spent one gold *fiorino largo* in gold on a wax image of a kneeling man in a shirt (*in camicia*) which I placed at the Madonna of the Carceri in Prato on the commission of Luca Ugolini, Florentine citizen and my future podestà of the city of Arezzo and he is my debtor for this sum.⁴¹

In the context of the aforementioned stress on the verisimilitude of wax images, it would be easy to take this as a reference to a portrait in the current art-historical sense, which is a figure with a facial likeness to its model. The wax figure was certainly intended to stand for Luca Ugolini. But how 'like' him was it? There is no reference to facial features here and it is not clear that this can be construed as vagueness in the record. The note is in crucial respects extremely specific, but what it specifies is the clothing and pose of the figure. The specified clothing is significant. The reference to a shirt implies a lack of normal and decorous public garments. A number of stories in Guizzelmi's Prato miracle collections refer to vows to visit the shrine *nudo* – literally nude.⁴² Cesare Grassi suggested that we read this not as unclothed but as in a state of undress.⁴³ Luca Ugolini's *ex voto* showed him in just such a state. The relevant likeness here is not facial, but one of comportment: in his votive image Ugolini looked very much like a humble pilgrim. It should be noted that Agostino's account of Giuliano's votive figure and its resemblance to the painted portrait is similarly specific about clothing and pose and similarly silent about facial features: as the inscription on the painting stresses, this is the figure of a doctor of law. Moreover, Vasari's remarks on Orsino Benintendi's images also save their highest claim of lifelikeness for the draperies: the images were 'covered with waxed cloth, with beautiful folds and so well-arranged that you could see nothing better or more lifelike'.⁴⁴ Vasari can, indeed, be taken to imply that the discourse of verisimilitude was based primarily on the vivid evocation of living beings achieved by these figures rather than their likenesses to particular individuals: they looked not like wax men but living ones.⁴⁵ Even if some of the wax votive images were portrait likenesses, this may represent only one of a range of options: many of them may have been generic figures.

This issue is part of what has been seen as a much larger problem of the bewildering variety of possible votive gifts. Votaries gave not only more or less resemblant images of themselves or the vowed person but also images of parts of their bodies, candles, unformed wax, liturgical vessels and vestments, grain or simply money as well as undertakings of actions such as pilgrimage and liturgical services, all of which seem to work equally well in the context of the vow.⁴⁶ How is it possible to rationalise this diversity? Van der Velden, in one of the most sustained and thoughtful of recent approaches to votive images, has pointed out that the individual gifts cannot be considered alone. The vow to the holy person may comprise a number of elements, typically a pilgrimage as well as a material gift, and he proposes the term 'votive complex' to acknowledge this multiplicity.⁴⁷ Moreover, he reminds us that this gift complex is itself part of a process of exchange between the votary and the holy patron and that this should be the starting point for any analysis.⁴⁸ Votive gifts should be distinguished, he suggests, not in terms of their formal qualities but in terms of the 'ends pursued by their donation' and he proposes a 'functional' classification.⁴⁹ Some gifts, for example, have a clear use: robes or jewellery can adorn a holy image,

41. Guizzelmi, *Memoriale A*, f116v. 'Ricordo chome a di 21 di agosto 1497. io spesi, fiorino uno largo d'oro in oro, in una imagine di cera di huomo, in camicia inginochioni, laquale puosi alla Madonna delle Carcere di Prato, di commissione di Luca Ugolini, cittadino fiorentino, et mio futuro podesta, della citta d'Areco, et di decti danari lui e mio debitore F I L in oro'.

42. Guizzelmi, *Historia*, f56v; Gagliardi, 'I miracoli', p. 148.

43. Giuliano Guizzelmi, *Historia della Cinctola delle Vergine Maria*, Cesare Grassi (ed.) (Società Pratese di Storia Patria: Prato, 1990), p. 123 n. 41v.

44. Vasari, *Le vite*, vol. 3, p. 374.

45. Maria Loh argues this point more fully in her article in this issue.

46. Some sense of the variety of votive gifts is given by the surviving inventories of Santa Maria delle Carceri. See Marco Ciatti, 'Doni e donatori del santuario di Santa Maria delle Carceri di Prato nei suoi inventari (1488–1510)', *Prato. Storia e arte*, vol. 22, no. 59, 1981, pp. 14–44.

47. Hugo van der Velden, *The Donor's Image: Gérard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold*, trans. Beverley Jackson (Brepols: Turnhout, 2000), pp. 211–12.

48. Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image*, pp. 193 and 220–1.

49. Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image*, pp. 212–13.

50. Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image*, pp. 213–18.
51. Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image*, pp. 221–2.
52. Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image*, p. 213.
53. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (Routledge: London, 1990). Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image*, p. 197, n. 25; Fredrika Jacobs, 'Rethinking the Divide: Cult Images and the Cult of Images', in Robert Williams and James Elkins (eds), *Renaissance Theory* (Routledge: New York, 2008), p. 101.
54. Mauss, *The Gift*, 'Introduction: The Gift, and Especially the Obligation to Return It', pp. 1–7.
55. Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1992), p. 24.
56. Mauss, *The Gift*, pp. 5–7.
57. Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image*, p. 197.
58. David Morgan, 'Icon and Interface' in *The Embodied Eye* (forthcoming). I am grateful to Professor Morgan for giving me access to this unpublished essay.

liturgical vessels can be employed in rituals before it, and candles can articulate the holy place, all contributing in subtly different ways to the maintenance of the cult and hence to the relationship with the holy person.⁵⁰ Van der Velden stresses the importance of, and scholarly neglect of, vowed acts, such as pilgrimage, but his analysis concentrates on material gifts. There is good reason for this, as he acknowledges. It is the material gifts, or written records of them, that are the most accessible part of this process to historical study. The location or recorded location of a material gift indicates the identity of the holy patron and the votary may also be recorded. But the vow itself, and hence the relationship of the material gift to other elements of the votive complex, is a fugitive thing and can seldom be the basis for study.⁵¹ It is here that the value of Guizzelmi's material emerges most clearly. Above I argued that Guizzelmi's records are evidence of his actions and his conceptions of appropriate behaviour. In his case we can approach the vow itself.

Consideration of the vow suggests a simple but crucial change of emphasis. Abstracting the salient phrases from the story of Lactantio we have:

I promised her majesty . . . to make him in wax . . . and seeing the grace to continue . . .
I offered him to the Most Glorious Madonna.

In Agostino's account of the vow to the crucifix, the matter is even simpler:

He vowed to our large Crucifix to place himself there in wax.

The material outcome of each vow was an artefact, but what was vowed in each case was an action: to make, to offer, to place. In his classification of votive gifts, van der Velden proposed that the first step was to distinguish between objects and acts, but attention to the vow suggests that this is an artificial distinction.⁵² The very notion of gift giving is itself an active concept. What makes the gift meaningful is not its form but the fact that it has been given. The offering of a material gift is as much an action as making a pilgrimage. We can make progress if we shift our attention from the gift as object to the gift as act.

The single most influential contribution on gift giving is Marcel Mauss's celebrated essay of 1923–1934 in *L'Année sociologique* and it is often noted that Mauss's work is potentially relevant to votive imagery.⁵³ I want to suggest one way in which Mauss's essay can help to structure an approach. Mauss's key point is famously that the giving of a gift imposes an obligation to offer a gift in return.⁵⁴ This has been disputed, notably by Jacques Derrida who saw Mauss's essay as a study of economic exchange – of 'everything but the gift'.⁵⁵ For Mauss the gift is indeed part of a system of total services, which incorporates, but is not restricted to, economic relations.⁵⁶ This exchange element is clearly pertinent to the vows under discussion. In Guizzelmi's vow for Lactantio, he 'promised . . . if he remained healthy, to make him in wax'. Such apparently 'profane conditionality' looks very much like the striking of a commercial deal.⁵⁷ Whether or not the votive offering is a 'pure gift' in Derrida's terms, Mauss's proposal engages directly with the presentation of it Guizzelmi's writings. To see the principle of reciprocity in vows as profane, however, is to overlook a profound difference between human and divine exchange. As David Morgan has pointed out, exchange with the sacred realm is distinct because it transcends the boundary of mortality, something that mundane commercial exchange never does.⁵⁸ The debt of Christ or the saints to the votary is a very odd

sort of indebtedness indeed and its gathering in poses problems. Holy figures cannot be held to account in normal human terms.

Saintly reciprocation of gifts is part of a larger issue of the practical implications of dealings with the divine. Returning to the story of Lactantio, the votive offering is but a part of a complex of exchanges involving images. The devotee, Guizzelmi, invoked the aid of the Virgin Mary through the manipulation of a figured token and undertook to place an image of his nephew at the shrine, the focus of which was itself an image of the Virgin. Such practices have long been seen as problematic in the context of Christian worship. The ritual focus on the image has been seen as carrying the risk of misdirecting worship onto the material object, that is, of idolatry. At two stages in Christian history, in eighth- and ninth-century Byzantium and in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, this anxiety gave rise to open conflict over the role of images in worship and to widespread iconoclasm.⁵⁹ The apparent ambiguity of the perceived status of images also lies behind Warburg's allegation of 'magical fetishism': do not rituals such as those described by Guizzelmi treat images as inherently powerful 'presences'?⁶⁰ Indeed, the play of resemblance and contiguity in Guizzelmi's miracle stories brings us back to Frazer and to the categorization of sympathetic magic which he developed in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*: 'homeopathic' magic based on resemblance and 'contagious' magic based on contact.⁶¹ The appeal to 'magic' has been dismissed as an abdication of analytical responsibility and Frazer arguably provides little more than an apt descriptive framework.⁶² But the idea of magic, broadly defined to encompass ritual in general, helps to focus attention on behaviour that appears to our post-Enlightenment eyes as perplexing and to prompt the search for an explanation. These behaviours can be compared with those studied by anthropologists in non-western societies where the term magic is less self-consciously applied. The issues that arise in the study can carry us forward.

For Frazer, magic was explicitly a rudimentary but mistaken form of causal reasoning and this formulation has been profoundly influential. But, as Bronislaw Malinowski pointed out, it seems as though all societies display forms of ritual activity alongside systematic 'scientific' behaviour based on observation and trial and error. Ritual is arguably a distinct sphere of activity.⁶³ I have proposed that we can begin to make sense of the practices described by Guizzelmi if we treat ritual not as misunderstood causal thinking but as a distinct form of persuasive or rhetorical action.⁶⁴ The devotee, in extreme circumstances, does what he or she can to influence the saintly or divine helper who, however powerful, cannot be reached by mundane methods of petition. These rituals perform an interpersonal relationship. We are not dealing just with mimetic objects – pictures on walls and statues that in certain respects look like people – we are also dealing with mimetic rituals: rituals that mime social interaction and which actively constitute the relationship between devotee and saint. In this context the gift emerges as a very powerful device. What better way to build the relationship with God or the saint than with a gift, which conventionally demands a gift in return? For Mauss the gift so conceived was 'one of the human foundations on which our societies are built'.⁶⁵ I propose that we can see the votive gift as a basic building block of the relationship between devotee and saint.

The invited reciprocal gift is miracle. This may seem to take us beyond historical analysis, but I have argued that miracle can be seen as a ritual redescription of the world that accommodates the divine counter-gift.⁶⁶ The

59. The literature on iconoclasm is extensive. For Byzantium see Charles Barber, *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2002). For the Reformation, see Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe* (Routledge: London, 1993). For an overview, see Alain Besançon, *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2000).

60. Warburg, 'Art of Portraiture', p. 190.

61. James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, vol. 1 (Macmillan: London, 1911), pp. 52–4.

62. Van der Velden, *Donor's Image*, p. 232.

63. Bronislaw Malinowski, 'Magic, Science and Religion', in Joseph Needham (ed.) *Science, Religion and Reality* (Sheldon Press: London, 1926), p. 21. Cited in John Beattie, 'Ritual and Social Change', *Man*, New Series, Vol. 1, no. 1, March 1966, p. 61.

64. Robert Maniura, 'Persuading the Absent Saint: Image and Performance in Marian Devotion', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 35, no. 3, Spring 2009, pp. 629–54.

65. Mauss, *The Gift*, p. 4.

66. Maniura, 'Persuading the Absent Saint', pp. 652–3.

67. Guizzelmi, *Historia*, fols. 57v–58v; Gagliardi, 'I miracoli', p. 148.

68. The idea of performative utterances was developed by Austin. See John Langshaw Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1962; 2nd edn, 1975), pp. 4–7.

69. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, pp. 67–82.

70. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, pp. 133–47.

devotee cannot apparently compel the return gift but what constitutes a miracle is ultimately the devotee's decision. Consider the one story in the Carceri miracle book in which Guizzelmi claimed direct experience of the Virgin's grace:

On 30 May 1486 we were ready to leave Borgo San Sepolcro, with Messer Antonio Malegonelle, my *capitano*, that is of the said *borgo* where I had been a judge, the office of six months being finished. And wanting to mount a horse, a mule gave me a great kick on the elbow of my left arm in such a way that the elbow made an explosion and a loud noise as if one had struck a wooden box with an axe, so that all those around thought that it had crippled me. But no harm had been done to me: only the mark of the whole hoof remained on my shirt. And I immediately looked at my elbow and saw the mark of the hoof of the mule, because they were eating the grass and it was soiled, and touching this elbow I found that there was no wound, at which I marvelled and all those present who had seen this case marvelled too. And I recognised that I had been preserved from this danger unhurt and without any loss of consciousness by the most glorious Virgin Mary of the Carceri of Prato whose lead image, which had touched her glorious figure, I had on. At which grace, or better miracle, I marvelled and marvel still.⁶⁷

One does not need to be unduly sceptical to observe that Guizzelmi might just have been lucky. The explicitly subjective language of this story – 'I looked, I found, I recognised' – emphasises the writer's role in the construction of the miraculous. It is not merely that Guizzelmi offers his testimony of an event. He construes the significance of the event: the recognition of the miracle and its articulation are themselves parts of the ritual performance.

The votive images enact the relationship between votary and holy person in physical space. Ex votos do not stand alone. They cluster around the focal holy object. Guizzelmi placed the image of Lactantio 'as you can still see, in the presence of the Majesty of the said most Holy Madonna'. The juxtaposition of the ex voto and the holy image was not the result of a single unified plan but of a process of accumulation over time; yet they were explicitly meant to be seen together. The parallel offered to us by Agostino of the imagery in the burial chapel clarifies this in visual terms: the painted image of Guizzelmi kneels before the painting of the Crucified Christ just as his wax ex voto knelt before the miraculous Crucifix in the chapel above (Figs 2 and 3). What is visualised is not just Guizzelmi but Guizzelmi-in-relation-to-Christ. This juxtaposition of images, though, does not represent some pre-existing state of affairs but actively constitutes the relationship. The image of Guizzelmi before Christ is a constituent part of his relationship with Christ. The image is mobilised in the persuasive performance, miming the relationship between devotee and divinity. The image itself is part of the ritual action.

The philosophy of language offers a model for this active role. Certain spoken utterances, such as promises and, significantly, vows, perform what they articulate rather than describe a distinct action: to promise or vow is to utter a form of words.⁶⁸ The votive image, juxtaposed with the shrine image, performs the relationship it visualises in an analogous way. The ephemerality of the wax votive image arguably makes this almost gestural quality particularly clear: it is the visual equivalent of what J. L. Austin called an explicit performative.⁶⁹ But I propose that this active role should not be seen as confined to this group of images. In language a firm distinction between performative and non-performative utterances proves difficult to draw. Austin argued that almost all utterances perform actions.⁷⁰ I propose that the same may be true of images. Following Agostino Guizzelmi's prompt, I have used

the wall paintings in the burial chapel as a visual hook for a discussion of the lost *ex voto* and miraculous crucifix, but the same principles can be applied to this work on its own terms. If Guizzelmi's *ex voto* can be seen as an active performance, then so should this set of paintings. This too is part of Guizzelmi's relationship with Christ. Agostino's comments notwithstanding, the relationship between the imagery in the two chapels is not primarily one of visual resemblance. The resemblance lies, rather, in ritual action: the images do closely related things.

The implications of this are not limited to a distinct sacred sphere. If the image of Guizzelmi before the crucified Christ was a part of his relationship with Christ, it was also part of him. Guizzelmi's devotion to his Saviour and the image of his saving death was part of the construction of his social self. The appearance of the votive figure of Lactantio among Guizzelmi's everyday expenses emphasises the point. Votive practice was just as much part of his self-definition as the clothing, which appears as a regular expense in the *memoriale*.⁷¹ To draw on the language of his story of his vow of Lactantio, on the walls of his burial chapel Giuliano Guizzelmi makes himself in paint. The note of the location of his wax *ex voto* in the *pieve* in Prato is particularly suggestive of this social role. Placed among images of other Prato residents in the chapel of the Crucifix, the votive image actively contributed to a devout community into which Christ was bound by implicit mutual exchange.

The remarkable visual and textual evidence surrounding Guizzelmi allows us to trace these relationships in some detail, but the issues have a wider significance. A related mobilization of images can be seen in more familiar works. An apt test case is Warburg's key example of Ghirlandaio's *Confirmation of the Franciscan Rule* in the Sassetti chapel in Santa Trinita. The juxtaposition of saintly and worldly figures, which so challenged Warburg, is directly analogous to the devout society generated in the chapel of the Large Crucifix in Prato (Fig. 1). The founder of the chapel, Francesco Sassetti, stands looking on at a crucial scene involving St Francis, his saintly patron. Next to him stands Lorenzo de' Medici, his most important worldly patron. The image is a veritable diagram of an extended network of patronage in the sense proper to the period: patronage as a web of mutual obligations, here visualised as extending into the sacred sphere.⁷² Just as in the case of Guizzelmi's chapel and the chapel of the Crucifix, it would be wrong to see this image as a representation of an existing set of relationships. The painting actively constructs the relationships it shows. This chapel, the masses said there and its images are part of Francesco Sassetti's relationship with St Francis. The images are no less part of his relationship with Lorenzo. At the time that these images were painted the Medici bank was in crisis.⁷³ Sassetti was the general manager and his competence was widely questioned. The images in his chapel are a performance of loyalty no less direct than the written expression of devotion in a letter to Lorenzo of 1486: 'To you I would dedicate my life, my children and everything I have in this world'.⁷⁴ The avowedly paradoxical scene painted by Ghirlandaio suggests such a pointed intent. The contemporary fifteenth-century portraits apparently share the same space as the thirteenth-century sacred scene at the centre and that space elides Rome with the Piazza della Signoria in Florence. For all its naturalistic devices, this is manifestly not a representation of the world as it is or ever was. This too is part of a performance. Even in the world of the living where verbal address was possible, images could be a valuable part of a persuasive strategy.

71. Elena Fasano Guarini, 'La croce, la casa, i libri le vesti. Vita di un giudice itinerante tra '400 e '500', in Carlo Ossola, Marcello Verga and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds), *Religione, cultura e politica nell'Europa dell'età moderna. Studi offerti a Mario Rosa dagli amici* (Olschki: Florence, 2003), pp. 499–500. For the role of clothing in the construction of selfhood, see Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity during the Hundred Years War* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2002).

72. Jill Burke, *Changing Patrons: Social Identity and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Florence* (Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, 2004), pp. 3–6.

73. De Roover, *Rise and Decline*, pp. 358–75.

74. Eve Borsook and Johannes Offerhaus, *Francesco Sassetti and Ghirlandaio at Santa Trinità, Florence: History and Legend in a Renaissance Chapel* (Davaco Publishers: Doornspijk, 1981), pp. 51–2. For the chapel, see also Michael Rohlmann, 'Bildernetzwerk. Die Verflechtung von Familienschicksal und Heilsgeschichte in Ghirlandaios Sassetti-Kapelle', in Michael Rohlmann (ed), *Ghirlandaio. Künstlerische Konstruktion von Identität im Florenz der Renaissance* (Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften: Weimar, 2003), pp. 165–243.

75. Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1994), p. xxi.

76. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. xii-xiii: '... at the time of the Renaissance, two kinds of images, the one with the notion of art and the other free of that notion, existed side by side'.

77. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. 459.

78. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. 471.

79. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, p. 1.

In this paper I have persisted in calling the objects of study 'images'. That term has the sanction of period usage – both Giuliano and Agostino Guizzelmi refer to the votive figures as *immagini* – but it is a term that has become enmeshed in a debate about the development of the visual arts. Hans Belting has argued that the period treated in this issue gave rise to the modern conception of art in which 'art... became acknowledged for its own sake – art as invented by famous artists and defined by a proper theory'.⁷⁵ The image is set against this 'era of art'. Belting acknowledges that the new conception did not immediately supplant the old and one way to approach Guizzelmi's material would be to see in it a negotiation between the two.⁷⁶ I suggest, though, that Guizzelmi blurs these distinctions. In the new era, for Belting, the 'new presence of the work succeeds the former presence of the sacred in the work'.⁷⁷ He clarifies: 'The image formerly had been assigned a special reality and taken literally as a visible manifestation of the sacred person... the image was now the work of an artist and a manifestation of art'.⁷⁸ I have taken issue with the idea that images were ever taken literally as a manifestation of the sacred person. As presented here the sacred image is the focus of a persuasive performance and the votive offering is an element of that performance. Rather than establishing a presence, the images form an arena in which to negotiate a relationship. It is my proposal that this cuts across any distinction between image and art. However, we choose to categorise them; in both cases, a relationship is constructed involving those depicted, sacred, and profane alike, and the makers of the image. Even if we admit the artist as a new party in the negotiation, the client, to use Baxandall's term, retains a crucial role.⁷⁹ Belting's formulation leaves the latter strikingly out of the reckoning and thus leaves no place for this ritual interaction. The framing of art to include only the work and the artist is a simplification. The rise of a new discourse of art in this period is well established and it clearly prompted new discriminations and distinctions. But the resulting works, art or image, remained part of a ritual process.