



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA del Sacro Cuore

International Conference
The European Fortune of the Roman Veronica in the Middle Ages
Magdalene College, University of Cambridge
4-5 April 2016

The conference on the Roman Veronica is planned in two parts, over two or three years. The first part will be held at Magdalene College, Cambridge, from 4th to 5th April, 2016 under the auspices of the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University and the Departments of Language Sciences and Foreign Literatures and History, Archeology and History of Art, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. The Cambridge conference will concentrate on the European Fortune of the Veronica in the Middle Ages. The second, to be held in Università Cattolica in 2018, will concentrate on the period following the Council of Trent up to the Modern Period.

Scientific Committee:

Maria Pia Alberzoni (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)

Emanuele Colombo (De Paul University, Chicago)

Eamon Duffy (University of Cambridge)

Herbert L. Kessler (Johns Hopkins & Masaryk University, Brno)

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Marco Petoletti (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)
Joseph Weiler (European University Institute, Florence)
Gerhard Wolf (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz)

Convenor: Amanda Murphy

Confirmed speakers (to date):

1. Joerg Boelling (Wuppertal)
2. Stefano Candiani (Università Cattolica, Milan)
3. Donal Cooper (Cambridge)
4. Chiara Di Fruscia (Independent Scholar)
5. Etienne Doublier (Wuppertal)
6. Gisela Drossbach (Augsburg)
7. Christoph Egger (Vienna)
8. Don Federico Gallo (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan)
9. Remi Gounelle (Strasbourg)
10. Zbigniew Izydorzyc (Winnipeg)
11. Herbert Kessler (John Hopkins)
12. Katerina Kubinova (Vienna)
13. Aden Kumler (Berlin/Chicago)
14. Uwe Michael Lang (London)
15. Guido Milanese (Università Cattolica, Milan)
16. Nigel Morgan (Cambridge)
17. Andrea Nicolotti (Torino)
18. Marco Petoletti (Università Cattolica, Milan)
19. Paulus Rainer (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
20. Alexander Rausch (Vienna)
21. Rebecca Rist (Reading)
22. Raffaele Savigni (Bologna)
23. Marc Suredai Jubany (Institut del Patrimoni Cultural Universitat de Girona)
24. Barry Windeatt (Cambridge)
25. Hanneke van Asperen (Tilburg University)
26. Raffaella Zardoni (Milan)

THE EUROPEAN FORTUNE OF THE ROMAN VERONICA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Dates: 4-5 April, 2016 (Monday and Tuesday, arriving on Sunday night)

Place: Magdalene College, Cambridge University

Background

In the *Paradiso*, before meeting St Bernard's "living love", which was destined to lead him to see God, Dante introduces himself as a pilgrim travelling from afar, who "has come to set his gaze on our Veronica, / his ancient craving still not satisfied, / and who thinks to himself, while it is shown: / 'My Lord Jesus Christ, God Himself, / was this then how You really looked?'" (*Par.* xxxi 104-108). These deservedly famous lines

are often recalled by scholars who have studied the holy face of Christ from different backgrounds and angles. Previously, in the *Vita nuova* (XL 1) Dante had already presented the “beautiful countenance” left by Christ on the “blessed image”, which many people travelled to see. Later, in the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (XVI), Francesco Petrarca, mindful of the passage in Dante’s *Paradise*, describes “the old man, grizzled and white” who arrives in Rome “following his desire, / to gaze on the image of Him/ whom he hopes to see again in heaven”. These texts document the fact that the cult of the Veronica was already so well-established in the 1300s that a visit to the holy sudarium was one of the main goals of pilgrimage to Rome, where numerous other relics or memories of the life and passion of the Redeemer were also on display.

The Veronica, the cloth believed to bear the imprint of the face of Christ, handed down through history and religious devotion, has been the object of numerous scholarly works, often associated with the broader, artistically strategic theme of the iconographic representation of Christ, and in relation to other ‘authentic’ images, of more or less prodigious origin. While this is not an unfurrowed field of study, the time has come to take stock of what has been established so far, and open up new research paths in an attempt to draw the various strands of the story of the Veronica together, in monographic fashion, both on a material and theological level.

An interdisciplinary approach will help solve some of the interrogatives still posed by the veil. This international conference intends to respond by studying first the European fortune of the Veronica in the Middle Ages, with a later conference dedicated to the Modern Age, from literary, historical, theological and artistic perspectives. The various themes to be explored should be developed both synchronically, focusing attention on individual problems, and diachronically, so as to be able to understand the development of the cult of the Veronica throughout the centuries.

It is well known that the tradition centring on the Veronica as the source of particular devotion coincides with the pontificate of Innocent III who, in 1208, initiated a procession on the Sunday following the Octave of the Epiphany. On this day, the holy cloth kept in St Peter’s was carried in procession from the old basilica to the *Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sassia*. Pope Innocent’s gesture marked the beginning of the extraordinary fortune of the Veronica all over Europe. The conference comes 800 years after the concession in 1216 of an indulgence linked to devotion to the Veronica. It aims to explore some of the following questions:

1. **In Literature:** what was the reception of fundamental texts such as *Cura Sanitatis Tiberii* and *Vindicta Salvatoris*, which transmitted matters concerning the Veronica to the West well before Innocent III’s actions? How did it come about that the tradition of the Veronica’s being a painted veil was turned into that of a cloth on which Christ’s face was physically imprinted? In this section, studies need to be carried out on sources regarding the Roman Veronica before 1208 (of which there are some traces in the late tenth century, with more numerous traces in the twelfth century), partly as a way of clarifying the basic question of when the holy sudarium arrived in Rome. It will also be necessary to consider the erudite Latin treatise by Giacomo Grimaldi, *De sacrosancto sudario Veronicæ* (1620), which meticulously lists all the sources he found for the relic, and which exists in various autograph versions. Another theme of interest is the diffusion of texts that feature the Veronica, and interrelated themes, in vernacular languages across Europe.

2. **In history:** the first topic requiring attention is that of the start of the cult of the Veronica during Innocent III's pontificate and its historical development in the 13th century, up to the first Jubilee under Boniface VIII, with particular attention to the question of indulgences. Space will be given to the possible role played by the *Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sassia*, the destination of the procession with the relic (including detailed study of the spread of the rule linked to the *Ospedale* itself). Another neglected area is that of the Veronica in the 14th and 15th centuries, including relations between the papacy and the city. Attention needs to be directed towards the phenomenon of 'private' ostensions of the Veronica to the rich and powerful, such as that of Charles IV in Rome in 1368-9, so as to understand them in their historical context, and, more generally, to the theme of pilgrimage, whose goal was to see the holy face. A useful side issue would be the investigation of the relationship between popes and other Christological relics at the time of the spread of the Veronica cult (13th century).
3. **In liturgy and theology:** issues requiring investigation here are the cult of the Veronica including prayers of intercession, the Veronica Office and Mass Proper, as well as the figure of Veronica in hagiography. It would be opportune to verify the relation between devotion reserved specifically for the Veronica and important theological issues in the thirteenth century, such as the spread of the cult of Corpus Domini and the beatific vision of God, as well as the sacramental value of copies of the Veronica around which devotional ceremonies were developed (e.g. Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV in Prague).
4. **In art:** this is perhaps the best investigated area so far, but it remains fertile ground for a better understanding of the development of characteristics of the Veronica in iconographic terms, but also the geographical spread of its fame across Europe. First, the birth and the evolution of the iconography of the Veronica, with particular reference to the unity and difference between the iconography of the Veronica and of other acheiropoieta of Christ. Second, relations between the liturgy, mystery plays and the depiction of the Veronica merit attention. The ambiguity of this iconography (the transfigured or suffering face) needs to be understood also in the identification of the Holy Face with the Feast of the Transfiguration in north-eastern Europe, for example, particularly in Poland, and the iconography of the Passion. Third, how did the Veronica acquire its status vis-à-vis such competitors as the Lateran "acheropita," the Mandyllion, and the Eucharistic species itself. Finally, it would be interesting to study the fabrication and spread of devotional objects linked to the Veronica, conserved in museums and churches all around Europe.

Specific themes of interest

1. LITERATURE. THE VERONICA IN TEXTS

1.1 Background (*Cura Sanitatis Tiberii* and *Vindicta Salvatoris*: survival, transmission)

1.2 Older sources (pre-13th century) from the perspective of Grimaldi's *De sacrosancto sudario Veronicae*

1.3 The poem on the *Veronica* by Bonifacio di Verona dedicated to Card. Guglielmo de Braye (13th century)

1.4 Vernacular texts since 12th century

- a. Romances, tales, sacred and mystery plays, and their dramatizations
- b. English and German religious texts, pilgrim texts, guides, etc.

2. HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

2.1 The start and spread of the cult of the Veronica (Innocent III and the 13th century popes)

2.2 Popes' letters about the Veronica and grants of indulgences (especially under Urban IV's pontificate: the copy of Laon) in 13th century up to Boniface VIII's Jubilee

2.3 The possible role of the *Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sassia* in the spread of the cult of the Veronica

2.4 The Veronica and the Popes in the 14th and 15th centuries

2.5 Ostensions to those in power in the Middle Ages. Politics and piety.

2.6 Pilgrimages to see the Veronica (and the link with the Jubilee)

2.7 Popes and other Christological relics at the time of the spread of the cult (13th century)

3. THEOLOGY AND LITURGY

3.1 Veronica in liturgical calendars and in the divine office in Italy and in Europe

3.2 Veronica in hagiography

3.3 The link with the beatific vision and Corpus Domini

4. ART AND ICONOGRAPHY

4.1 Characteristics of the Veronica

4.1.1 Characteristics of the Veronica deduced from texts and copies (serenity, suffering, visible teeth, transparent veil, crown of thorns, green crown, triple veil)

4.1.2 The development of these characteristics from 1204-1400

4.1.3 Where did these characteristics come from? From texts to images, or images to texts?

4.1.4 The Veronica and the history of textiles

4.1.5 *Vera icona et presentia realis*; the Veronica and the Host

4.1.6 The specificity of copies of the Veronica linked to their paths of diffusion (through the spreading of the order of Santo Spirito in Sassia, pilgrimages, the Franciscans)

4.1.7 Veronica and new artistic media (woodcut, oil, engraving, etching)

4.1.8 Studies of the first copies of the Veronica (e.g. in Matthew Paris, James le Palmer, etc.)

4.2 Differences and similarities between the images of Christ not made by human hands

Conference programme outlines

Day 1

THE ORIGINS. (NAME, IMAGE, SAINT)

MORNING

1.1 Older sources (pre-13th century) from the perspective of Grimaldi's *De sacrosancto sudario Veronicae*

- 1.2 Background (*Cura Santitatis Tiberii* and *Vindicta Salvatoris*: survival, transmission)
- 1.3 The start and spread of the cult of the Veronica (Innocent III and the 13th century popes)
- 1.4 Studies of the first copies of the Veronica (e.g. in Matthew Paris, James le Palmer, etc.)
- 1.5 Differences and similarities between the images of Christ not made by human hands
- 1.6 The Veronica and Images on cloth?

AFTERNOON

- 2.1 Popes and other Christological relics at the time of the spread of the cult (13th century)
- 2.2 The link with the beatific vision and *presentia realis* in theological discussion and in art

2.3 Vernacular texts since 12th century

- a. Romances, tales, sacred and mystery plays, and their dramatizations
- b. English and German religious texts, pilgrim texts, guides, etc.
- c. The poem on the *Veronica* by Bonifacio di Verona dedicated to Card.

Guglielmo de Braye (13th century)

- 2.4 Characteristics of the Veronica deduced from texts and copies; where did these characteristics come from? From texts to images, or images to texts? The development of these characteristics from 1204-1400

THE FORTUNE (DIFFUSION, CAUSES)

MORNING

- 3.1 The Veronica and the Popes in the 14th and 15th centuries
- 3.2 Pilgrimages to see the Veronica (and the link with the Jubilee)
- 3.3 Popes' letters about the Veronica and grants of indulgences (especially under Urban IV's pontificates: the copy of Laon) in 13th century up to Boniface VIII's Jubilee
- 3.4 Veronica - hagiography, in liturgical calendars and in the divine office in Italy and in Europe

AFTERNOON

(PATHS)

- 4.1 The possible role of the *Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Sassia* in the spread of the cult of the Veronica
- 4.2 Ostensions to those in power in the Middle Ages. Politics and piety.
- 4.3 The specificity of copies of the Veronica linked to their paths of diffusion (by means of imperial ostensions, the order of Santo Spirito in Sassia, pilgrimages, the Franciscans)
- 4.4 Veronica and new artistic media (woodcut, oil, engraving, etching)

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