

Representations of the Pope in Western Art

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Abstract: Our objective of the study "Representation of the Pope in Western Art" is to present a few specific features of the typology of the portrait for the sovereign pontiff. The article is structured in two parts, the introductory one which treats problems related to the iconography of the papal portrait, a short presentation of the clothes and papal signs, while the second one contains a description of a few representative papers for the history of art, starting with the papal portrait from the Middle Ages, reaching the contemporary period.

The history of the papal portrait has been a long one, reaching its peak during the Renaissance and Baroque, when various artists have approached this theme, creating works which have become historical documents of that time. The works in which the figures of the sovereigns pontiff were represented have continued up to contemporary times, under different forms and mediums of artistic representation, some of them being more controversial, others, in return, less usual such as the works of Maurizio Cattelan – *La Nona Ora* and Mark Wallinger – *I am Innocent*.

Being very appreciated by contemporary people, the papal portrait has enjoyed a real success, between 2004-2005 there was an exhibition suggestively called *Papi in Posa* (Papal Portraiture). The exhibition reunited a real gallery of portraits of sovereigns pontiff¹, a sort of journey through history and art, materialized in a volume dedicated to this event.

Keywords: Papal Potrait, Papal Symbols, Iconography, Reinterpretation.

Introduction

Being considered one of the most influential personalities of the entire humani, the Pope, the leader of the Roman-Catholic church has had and continues to have an extremely important role from a spiritual, religious and political point of view².

Iconographically speaking, the papal portrait can be placed in the typology *portrait of rulers*³, the sovereign pontiff being represented together with the symbols specific to power. Underlining the high status of the represented model, papal portraits respect, in most cases, a specific type of

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¹Gianni Borgna, *Papi in Posa: 500 Years of Papal Portraiture*, Gangemi Editore, Washington DC, 2005-2006, p. 17.

²Lynne Elliott, *Clothing in the Middle Ages*, Crabtree Publishing Company, 2004, p. 23.

³Shearer West, *Portraiture*, Oxford History of Art, 2004, p. 71.

framing, the image being a static one, in which the character is seated on a throne. Moreover, we can notice a preference of artists to catch the portrait from semiprofile, from a perspective which is slightly ascendent, as if viewer would have knelt in front of the papal chair. In the same time, we can notice a diversity of the modes in which the papal portrait is represented, having the sight directed towards the viewer, as if he would initiate a non-verbal dialogue with one, respectively having the look turned, as if he were caught in action, being preoccupied by the important problems he is in charge of.

The expressiveness of representing the portrait, often surprised at an older age, shows the wisdom and life experience of the sovereign pontiff. In most cases, these images transmit, in different ways, the idea of papal authority, the artist psychologically approaches the portrait, evoking the meditative dimension of the character (Fig.1), treating the topic in a naturalistic way (Fig. 2), describing the physiognomy in a harsh manner (Fig.3) or having a more formal representation of the figure (Fig.4).⁴



Fig.1. Rafael Sanzio, *Portrait of Pope Julius II*



Fig.2. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Portrait of Pope Paul V*

⁴Gianni Borgna, *Papi in Posa: 500 Years of Papal Portraiture*, Gangemi Editore, Washington DC, 2005-2006, p. 17.



Fig.3. Diego Velasquez, *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*



Fig.4. Louis David, *Portrait of Pope Pius VII*

One of the most frequent practices used by artists in the representation of papal portraits was the idealization which inspired feelings of respect and obedience, without precisely underlining the temperament or real personality of the model.

Another iconographic characteristic of representing the papal portrait, this time having a compositional nature, but also a symbolic one, is connected to the position of the hands in the artistic space of the work. The hands are painted with special attention, they render a position which is carefully studied, capable of underlining the authority or the preoccupation for doing important actions.

Furthermore, artists seemed to pay special attention to the way in which they represented the signs of papal authority, such as the ring (*Annulus piscatoris*), the official documents and the holy books that are part of the representation of the sovereigns pontiffs. Depending on the object hold in the hand, we can notice a double typology connected to the authority of the pope, on the one hand the political side (by representing the ring, official documents, seals etc), respectively the religious side (deduced from the presence of the holy books, browsed by the popes).

In papal portraits, special attention is paid to clothes and papal symbols, they are minutely represented by the artist. Papal clothes are of two colours, red (the cape, the mozzetta, the shoes) and white (the papal clothes, the zucchetto)⁵. The red cape is not an imperial symbol, but a scarlet cloak which reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ. Together with these clothes, of

⁵<http://lumea.catholica.ro/2014/02/originea-si-simbolismul-vesmintelor-pontificale/>

great importance in the iconography of the papal portrait are the symbols of the sovereign pontiff, such as the papal tiara, the mitre, the pectoral cross and the ring.

The papal tiara has had a long history and has become one of the most known crowns of sovereign up to the present. In the first centuries of Christianity, from the 2nd century up to the 8th, the first popes did not wear a tiara, but a linen cloth cap or *Camelaucum*. The papal crown was used for the first time in the 8th century as a unique tiara; later on, the Vatican added the second crown. This double tiara was worn by Pope Boniface VIII and by Pope Benedict XI. Starting with the 14th century, the Vatican added the third crown to the papal tiara, known as the Triple Crown Papal Tiara or *Triregnum*. It has been worn up to the year 1963, from Pope Clement V up to Pope Paul VI. The papal tiara has become in time a symbol of the authority and power of the pope, the sovereign pontiff being considered the vicar of Christ on Earth and the supreme pontiff of the Roman-Catholic Church⁶.

The Triple Crown Papal Tiara has a special symbolism, representing the triple authority of the sovereign pontiff, of Universal Pastor (the superior crown), of Universal Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (the middle crown) and of Temporal Power (the lower crown)⁷. During the papal crowning, the following words in Latin are used: "*Accipe thiaram tribus coronis ornatam, et scias te esse patrem principum et regum, rectorem orbis, in terra vicarium Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi, cui honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum*"⁸ ("*Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns and know that thou art Father of Princes and Kings, Ruler of the World, Vicar of Our Savior Jesus Christ on earth, to him be the honor and glory forever and ever*"⁹).

Just like the papal crown, the papal ring or the Ring of the Fisherman (*Annulus Piscatoris*) is one of the main symbols worn by the sovereign pontiff. In the past, the ring was used as a seal for the security of the papal correspondence, this usage disappeared approximately two centuries ago¹⁰. Despite all these, the Ring of the Fisherman remains an important papal symbol which was usually destroyed after the death of the follower of Saint

⁶ Sergio Becerra, *The True Treasure of The Vatican: The Papal Tiara: The Authority and Power of The Pope*, Lulu.com, 2013, pp. 3-4.

⁷ Roberth „Messiah” Edberg, *The Inevitable Dossier: Top Sacred*, p. 173(210). <https://books.google.ro/books?id=shuoAgAAQBAJ&pg=PT172&dq=triregnum+crown&hl=ro&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiH3LHC46zbAhXkd5oKHQqWCBMQ6AEIYzAH#v=onepage&q=triregnum%20crown&f=false>

⁸ Jean Joseph Gaume, *Die Katholische Religionslehre nach ihrem ganzen Umfange Oder*, Regensburg, 1851, p. 210.

⁹ Roberth „Messiah” Edberg, *op. cit.*, p. 173(210).

¹⁰ Leo Lyon Zagami, *Pope Francis: The Last Pope? Money, Masons and Occults in the Decline of Catholic Church*, Consortium of Collective Consciousness Publishing, 2015, p. 48.

Peter, each chosen sovereign pontiff benefitted from his own ring and personal new seal¹¹.

Starting from all these meanings, it is obvious today the fact that, regarding the artistic side, we witness an evolution of the way of representing the figure of the most important character of the Catholic Church, taking into account the tendencies and the canons of visual representation from each historical and artistic period, from the way of rendering physiognomy and clothes in the spirit of medieval art, to the paintings and sculptures which are hyper-realistic in contemporary times.

To continue, in order to exemplify these ideas, we propose for analysis a few representative examples of some papal portraits considered today true masterpieces of visual arts.

“Confirmation of the rule” by Giotto di Bondone



Fig.5. Giotto di Bondone, *Confirmation of the rule*

Of a specific expressiveness is the scene called “Confirmation of the rule” which is part of the ensemble of representations from the life of Saint

¹¹B. R. Bentley, *The Cross, Inspired by Real Events*, Fiesen Press, 2014, p. 47.

Francis, painted by Giotto between 1297-1299, in Basilica di San Francesco from Assisi. The work is the seventh scene from the twenty-eight which form this ensemble¹², representing the moment of benediction of the Franciscan community and of its rules by the Pope Innocent III, known as one of the most influential and powerful popes whose pontificate was consigned between 1198-1216. Starting from these dates, it is interesting to notice the fact that the artist paints the ensemble of these scenes at approximately eight decades from the pope's death, this fact can lead to a series of questions regarding the truthfulness of resemblance with the represented model, and also the document sources that the painter used in the moment of painting the portrait.

Being a subtleperceiver of the importance of the represented moment, Giotto impresses through the way of disposing the composition, showing two distinct groups of characters, the one of Saint Francis and of the monks that accompany him, all down on their knees, respectively the group in whose center one can notice the image of Pope Innocent III, represented seated on the pope's throne, overbuilt through two steps with circular arcades which reiterate some of the architectural motifs from the expressive décor of the upper part of the image. Together with the pope, there is a group of bishops and prelates dressed according to the dressing code for specific church functions.

The scene is remarkable through its documentary-historical character and also the artistic and aesthetic one, impressing the viewer through the balanced composition, the chromatic harmony dominated by refined warm-cold contrasts (ocre, gold, red and subtle nuances of light blue). The centre of the image catches the meeting of the two main characters of the scene (St. Francis and Pope Innocent III), situated on a parallel axis with the rising diagonal of the composition, describing a trajectory whose climax is represented by the imposing figure of the pope. It is interesting to notice that between the two mentioned characters, the artist has paid more attention to the representation of the pope whose image seems to be privileged through his position in the work, through the chosen chromatics, the symbolism of gestures and power signs that are part of the representation. The pope's helmet has only one crown, being known the fact that the second and the third crowns of the tiara would be later added by Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303), respectively in the first half of the 14th century, symbolizing the triple sovereignty of the pope¹³. Today, the tradition of wearing the papal tiara during the great solemn events seems to have fallen into desuetude, once Pope Paul VI was pontified, having been worn up to the year 1963.

If we look at Saint Francis, he seems to be one with the group he is part of, both from a compositional, chromatic perspective and also from the

¹²https://www.wga.hu/html_m/g/giotto/assisi/upper/legend/franc07.html

¹³Rosa Giorgi, *Symboles et cultes de l'Église*, Éditions Hazan, Paris, 2005, p. 97

point of view of artistic execution. There are three elements which distinguish this character from the ensemble of figures from the left part of the image: the central position in scene, in the immediate neighbourhood of the pope, the presence of the halo which marks his holiness and the gesture of being awarded/ receiving the rotulus on which behavior rules are written regarding the new Franciscan order. The pope's hand that benedicts him shows that they have common religious ideals, through initially the Pontiff has estimated that they would be too high for the forces and possibilities of spiritual rising of ordinary people¹⁴.

Furthermore, the compositional separation of the two groups of characters indicates two distinct branches of the clergy, one characterized by poverty and severe norms of behavior, the other responsible for the good management of the religious cult and associated with political power and entire spiritual authority.

Another extremely expressive papal portrait is the one of Julius II by Rafael Sanzio, in which the sovereign pontiff is represented being old, having a serene look in his eyes and being meditative, despite the historical reality which mentions him as a "*pope with helmet (...) [having a character] which is violent, capricious and prone to anger*"¹⁵. The picture of the young Renaissance artist has reflected in a unique way the pomp of the clothing specific to the pontiff, and also "*the interior loneliness of this man having bristled eyebrows, a deep look expressing harshness and tenderness in the same time*"¹⁶. The mentioned physiognomic aspects were completed by the éclairage chosen by the artist in order to underline the value of the papal portrait, which is contoured on the ornamental background by a light which underlines his face.

The description of the model of Raphael has opened a totally new perspective regarding the feelings of this paymaster who, although considered a violent man, has still managed in this portrait to make the viewer become emotional through the shown tenderness and sadness.

After the death of Raphael¹⁷, one of the most important portrait artists of the century was Tizian, he was inspired¹⁸ by the works of his predecessor

¹⁴*Ibidem*, p. 303

¹⁵Fred Bérence, *Renașterea italiană [Italian Renaissance]*, vol. II, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1969, p. 146.

¹⁶*Ibidem*, p. 148.

¹⁷H. W. Janson și Anthony F. Janson, *History of Art, The Western Tradition*, vol. II, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004, p. 482.

¹⁸Cf. John Pope Hennessy, *Portretul în Renaștere [The Portrait in Renaissance]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1976, pp. 86-87, „În 1543, pe când se afla la Bologna, Tițian a pictat portretul Papei Paul al III-lea, astăzi la Neapole, pentru care punctul de pornire a fost portretul executat de Rafael” [“In 1543, when he was in Bologna, Tizian painted the portrait of Pope Paul III, to be found today in Naples, for which the starting point was the portrait of Raphael”].

representing *Pope Julius II* and *Pope Leon X*. In its turn, the artist from Venice created two similar masterpieces, representing the portraits of *Pope Paul III* and *Pope Paul III with his nephews*, Tizian managed to catch the character of modes and to innovate, in the same time, the portraiture due to spatial conception¹⁹ and frequent usage of raccourci, offering a specific monumentality to pictorial creations.

Representing an official paper, the portrait of *Pope Paul III* was inspired by the pyramid composition met in the work of Raphael, suggesting the imposing character of the model. Tizian has chosen a format of bigger dimensions than the one chosen by his predecessor, and also another type of raccourci which offers magnificence and a specific way of getting closer to the viewer; given the compositional construction and the placement of the character in the artistic space, the viewer experiments the sensation of real kneeling in front of the papal chair. Shown slightly inclined forward, the main compositional centre has the face towards the viewer. Another centre of interest is represented by the hands of the pope, the left one leans on the handle, while the right one is on the purple cloth, the focus is on the ring. Passing from the compositional frame of the work to its chromatics, regarding the coloristic subtlety specific to the paintings of Tizian, it is obvious the fact that he used a refined series of shades of white and a variety of nuances of red, from the intense one to the darkest purple and he also used a diversity of shades of brown, the artist managed to correctly render the attitude of the model and "*the variety of the character in tough reality*"²⁰.

As far as Velázquez is concerned, he was inspired by the papal portraits of Raphael – *Pope Julius II* –, and Tizian – *Pope Paul III*, he contoured another temperamental side of his model, *Pope Innocent X*²¹, in his second trip to Rome. The inspiration sources are obvious, given the compositional and chromatic similarity between paintings, the differences between images can be seen in the work style, the created atmosphere and, in the same time, in the different attitude of the two pontiff sovereigns.

Noticing his violent character, the artist insisted on nuances of red used in considerable proportions and the resolute look of the pontiff, suggesting his volcanic personality through chromatics. Velázquez revolutionized

¹⁹Patricia Fride-Carrassat, *Maestrii picturii [The Masters of Painting]*, RAO Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, p. 67.

²⁰*Ibidem*, p. 68.

²¹Cf. José Antonio Maravall, *Velázquez și spiritul modernității [Velázquez and the Spirit of Modernity]*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1981, p. 207, „despre acest tablou s-ar putea spune că nu este imaginea unui papă, ci, ca să folosim o expresie a lui Unamuno, portretul unui om din carne și oase” [“about this painting, one could say that it is not the image of a pope, but in order to use an expression of Unamuno, the portrait of a man made of flesh and blood”].

portraiture through *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, given his chromatic refinement and the careful study of physiognomy and human psyche²².

Among the three mentioned papal figures²³, there have been varied resemblances, all of them being compositional portraits with hands, positioned in a similar way, from semi-profile, being pyramidally framed. Pope Julius II was caught looking down, to the right of the work being somehow resigned. Unlike him, Pope Paul III and Pope Innocent X are looking at the artist (viewer), they seem to establish a visual dialogue with him. Following a series of psychological aspects dictated by a specific type of relationship between the viewer and the work, in Velázquez's case, the importance of the character is given, like we have already shown, by raccourci, the model is placed higher in rapport to the viewer. The work of Velázquez is surprising through its realism and lack of idealization of the imposing model who, through inspired by the ones of Raphael and Tizian, still keeps the personal touch of the Spanish artist. It is said that, when he saw the work, Innocent X would have exclaimed: *Troppo vero!* (Too real!), this fact probably determined Velázquez's latter acceptance at Accademia di San Luca²⁴.

The visual impact of Velázquez's painting - *Pope Innocent X* –was a big one²⁵, both regarding italian portraiture and also for the Spanish one of the 17th century, there were a bust copy made after it and some interpretations, as it is the case of the paper Pietro Martire Neri (1591-1661).

Being inspired by the composition and style of Velázquez, Neri brought his contribution to the ensemble vision of the work, by underlining the entire figure of Innocent X and by introducing a character in the right side of the composition. The two works, the bust and the portrait –an entire composition having the pope's face represented, follow the two realistic tendency specific to the epoch, not to be found in later interpretations from the 20th-21th centuries.

Though the works of Raphael and Tizian have inspired the portrait made of Velázquez *Pope Innocent X*, his work served as a source of inspiration for the artists of the 20th century, among which we mention Francis Bacon (1909-

²²Cf. José Antonio Maravall, *Velázquez și spiritul modernității [Velázquez and the Spirit of Modernity]*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981, p. 229, „Tablourile lui Velázquez sunt, în definitiv, experimente asupra umanului, prin intermediul cărora încearcă să-și clarifice cazurile particulare în care această realitate a omului i se înfățișează”[“Velázquez's paintings are, after all, experiments on people, through which he tries to clarify the particular cases in which this reality of the human being reveals itself”].

²³*Pope Julius II* by Rafael, *Pope Paul III* by Tizian and *Pope Innocent X* by Velázquez.

²⁴Karin Hellwig, *Painting in Italy, Spain, and France in the Seventeenth Century*, in vol. *Baroque: Architecture, Sculpture, Painting*, Edited by Rolf Tomas, Ullmann & Könemann, 2007, p. 384.

²⁵José López-Rey, *Velázquez*, vol. I, Editura Taschen, 1996, p. 191.

1992), Mark Wallinger (1959), Yan Pei-Ming (1960) Yue Minjun (1962) and Glenn Brown (1966).

Reinterpretations of the work *Pope Innocent X*

The largest series of papal portraits inspired by the work *Pope Innocent X* can be seen in the creation of Francis Bacon²⁶, an artist captivated by the image of the sovereign pontiff and the message of this painting, some of the works having this topic are reunited in an exhibition at The Museum of Contemporary Art from San Diego²⁷. Various reinterpretations have been made after photographic reproductions²⁸, the artist preferred this type of approach instead of the study after the original.

Bacon has painted the *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* between 1951 and 1965 for approximately forty-five times, in different hypostases²⁹. Though the source of inspiration was the *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* of Velásquez, Bacon still appealed to other elements taken from different images, such as the painting the *Portrait of Cardinal Filippo Archinto* of Tizian, *The Scream* of Edvard Munch, the photography of the critic David Sylvester, the image of a woman who is screaming in the white-black movie *Potemkin Cruiser* by Sergei Eisenstein or the teeth of Teddy Roosevelt³⁰. Moreover, trying to create a connection between his work and the predecessors' creations, together with the obvious mentioned influences, Bacon used to put his paintings under glass, framing³¹ them with a traditional, massive frame whose role, beyond the aesthetic one, was to underline past periods of creation, his work acquiring true meaning through direct rapport to the used sources of inspiration.

A famous work of the artist, *Study after Velásquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, dating back to 1953, shows a distorted, aggressive image, full of hatred and anger. The chosen topic and the execution way seem to be in contrast, but at a closer look, we notice that the artist did nothing else but to underline what was present in an enigmatic way in the work of Velásquez, respectively the volcanic temperament of the character, Bacon undermining

²⁶Cf. H. W. Janson and Anthony F. Janson, *op. cit.*, p. 879, Francis Bacon (1909-1992) was a British painter of Irish origin stylistically and thematically belonging to Abstract Expressionism. Being obsessed by the work of Velásquez – *Pope Innocent X*, the artist has created for several years paintings which no longer represent the model of the Spanish artist, but a shouting phantom.

²⁷ Hugh M. Davies, *Francis Bacon: The Papal Portraits of 1953*, Contemporary Art, San Diego, 2001, p. 9.

²⁸ Karim Ressouni-Demigneux, *Un pape de chair et d'esprit, Diego Velásquez, Innocent X*, dans *Les grands scandales de l'histoire de l'art*, Beau Arts édition, 2008, p. 44.

²⁹http://www.artfactory.com/art_appreciation/portraiture/bacon/francis_bacon.htm

³⁰ Hugh M. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15.

³¹http://www.artfactory.com/art_appreciation/portraiture/bacon/francis_bacon.htm

"artistic conventions in a deliberate way, such as the famous portrait of Velásquez, «Pope Innocent X», which has become a shocking, grotesque masque which is screaming"³².

Using elements specific to his own vision, Bacon deforms the human figure which seems to be "tortured by his imaginary regarding all sorts of contortions, sometimes pushed up to the limit of desintegration"³³, showing a violent character which seems to have been locked in a cage and tied to the seat he is sitting in. The image described by the artist underlines a powerful state of anxiety, the tension of the work seems to be uncharged by the deaf scream of the character.

At the level of the portrait, the artist no longer keeps the details of the real physiognomy described by Velásquez, but he disfigures them³⁴, he stylizes in his own way a portrait who expresses both anger and pain. Bacon upgrades the image of the 17th century³⁵, his portrait expresses severe suffering augmented by the scream and menacing position of the character.

The series of works in which the pope's portrait was reinvented represent a process of adaptation of the theme and style to the elements specific to the art of the 20th century³⁶. In the same time, these paintings have been deeply criticized because of the defying attitude addressed to the authority of the Catholic Church³⁷.

The importance of the series of paintings made by Francis Bacon consisted, on the one hand, in the persuasion of interpretation of this topic, for more than a decade, while on the other hand, in the interest manifested by other artists for the same source of inspiration. In this respect, the reinterpretations of the painting *Pope Innocent X* have not stopped at the paintings of Bacon, they continued in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Just like Bacon, the appreciated Asian artist Yue Minjun has created many reinterpretations of some western masterpieces, among which the already mentioned painting of *Pope Innocent X*, a work made by Diego Velásquez. The artist's way of working is characterized by a particular form of distorting the works seen as a source of inspiration³⁸, transposing them in an original manner which only reminds us of the initial works, managing in the same time to bring a particular note both through the transformation of

³²x x x, *1000 de tablouri ale unor pictori de geniu [1000 Paintings of Genius Painters]*, Aquila Publishing House, Oradea, 2007, p. 497.

³³*Ibidem*, p. 320.

³⁴Giulio Carlo Argan, *Arta modernă [Modern Art]*, vol. 2, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1982, p. 188.

³⁵Hugh M. Davies, *Bacon's Popes: Ex Cathedra to in Camera*, în vol. *Francis Bacon: The Papal Portraits of 1953*, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 2001, p. 12.

³⁶*Ibidem*.

³⁷http://www.artfactory.com/art_appreciation/portraiture/bacon/francis_bacon.htm

³⁸*Ibidem*.

the physiognomy of the character and through the upgrade and adaptation of the pictural style to contemporary tendencies.

In this respect, Yue Minjun turned his attention to the pictural masterpiece created by Velásquez, the artist creating through his work - *The Pope*—a daring parody³⁹ addressed to the pope, making a self-portrait in papal clothes and underwear.

Referring to another contemporary interpretation which vaguely reminds us of the famous painting of Velásquez, remarkable through the marked *tachisme* and the restrained chromatics having tones of white, red and grey, the work *The Pope* of the Chinese neo-Expressionist artist Yan Pei-Ming⁴⁰ proposes another type of painting approach which focuses the attention of the viewer systematically on the portrait⁴¹. Through this creation, the artist expressed his indifferent attitude towards conventional understanding and defining the portrait as a tool of representation and rebuilding the human identity⁴². Most of the characters painted by Yan Pei-Ming were anonymous, the artist sometimes painting real portraits of people that influenced his life in a particular way⁴³.

Together with Yue Minjun, Glenn Brown and Yan Pei-Ming, another artist who also used this source of inspiration is Mark Wallinger, with his work from 2010, *I am Innocent*, formed of two reproductions after the work of Velásquez, they permanently rotate, creating an optical illusion of movement and duality of the figure of the character.

The name of the work envisages the decoding of its message, the artist ironizing the so-called innocence of the pope by replacing the original title with the expression *I am Innocent* (I am not guilty), throwing on the character a possible state of guilt, regarding which he is trying to exculpate from.

Synthesizing these aspects, in the light of the presented examples, it becomes more obvious the fact that the phenomenon of reinterpretation represents, on the one hand, a normal symptom of the crisis state⁴⁴ through which contemporary art has to pass, manifesting itself as a "general

³⁹Feng Boyi, *To Be Is Just Absurd: The Art of Yue Minjun*, în *Reproduction Icons: Yue Minjun Works, 2004-2006*, Yue Minjun and Museum Collection Services Co., 2006, p. 14.

⁴⁰Betty M. Adelson, *The Lives of Dwarfs, Their Journey from Public Curiosity toward Social Liberation*, Rutgers University Press, 2005, p. 165.

⁴¹Hou Hanru, *On The Mid-Ground*, Selected Textes Edited by Yu Hsiao-Hwei, Published by Timezone 8 Limited, 2002, p. 50

⁴²*Ibidem*.

⁴³*Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁴⁴Yves Michaud, *La crise de l'art contemporain: Utopie, démocratie et comédie*, Press Universitaire de France – PUF, Paris, 2005, p. 131.

depletion of her possibilities”⁴⁵, and being reflected, on the other hand, globally, on the other phenomena specific to the nowadays artistic context.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we believe that the representation of the papal portrait in the 13th-17th centuries represents one of the important topics of visual art in this period, its relevance consisting also in its continuity in later artistic and historical epochs.

The few examples that we have analyzed in this research regarding the papal portrait represent the basis of a more complex study which could refer to a more extended temporal period, up to today. Though briefly presented in the present study, we can extract a series of ideas having the value of conclusion which will serve to a better understanding of this typology of artistic representation.

Thus, we mention the fact that the pope has represented and represents even now one of the most important characters in the history, being considered the person in charge with the Catholic Church and the one who continues the long tradition of bishops mentioned in bibliographical sources, as it is the famous *Liber pontificalis*, a tradition whose origins can be traced back to the first Christian century, in the person of Saint Peter. This tradition, based on “the apostolic succession of the bishops of Rome seemed to guarantee the untainted transmission of the Christian learning in the form received from Christ”⁴⁶, this fact justifies the long continuity and also the forms of organization and ruling of the nowadays Catholic cult.

The importance of such a character is a reason relevant enough for the big number of artistic representations whose topic or centre of interest is represented by pontiff sovereigns from different times of church history. Taking into account this big diversity of representations, we must underline another idea having the value of a conclusion, to be more precise the fact that the stylistic formula of representation is almost always in conformity with the working style or the dominant artistic manner from the period of existence of the artist. Thus, we can notice two different typologies of the papal portrait, depending on the moment in which it was made: in the same period with the pontificate of the pope (the artist and the pope being contemporaries), respectively later, after the pontificate (a topic of representation specific to the art of the 20th century – just like we can notice in the creation of Francis Bacon, *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, who took the model made by Diego

⁴⁵Liviu Malița, *Extremele artei [The Extremes of Art]*, Accent Publishing House, Cluj, 2010, p. 335.

⁴⁶ Harald Zimmermann, *Papalitatea în Evul Mediu. O istorie a pontifilor romani din perspectiva istoriografiei [Papacy in the Middle Ages. A History of Roman Pontiffs from the Perspective of Historiography]*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2004, p. 17.

Velásquez). Regarding this aspect, we can notice a greater freedom of expression of the artists non-contemporary with the represented popes, it is normal to be so, given the conditions; at least in the past, the papal portrait resembled the portrait of apparatus (see the presence of distinctive pontifical signs: the papal tiara, the pectoral cross, the crook, the ring, the clothes etc). This context imposed, of course, a bigger resemblance with the physiognomic and psychological portrait of the model. Representations which are contemporary, specific to the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, like the one made by Maurizio Cattelan (*La nona ora*), no longer take into account these aspects, speculating in return different ideological, political, aesthetic or conceptual aspects.

Of course, the complexity of the discussed topic cannot be exhausted in just a few pages, reporting the mode of representation specific to contemporary art to the models of the art from the past brings forward a long evolutive trajectory whose imagistic *palmares* marks a large ensemble of artistic attitudes: from the humble representation – specific to religious art, to the official one—having a documentary-historical character, up to the one charged with sensitive psychological, existential, ironic or even mockery nuances.

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