

Behrmann · Friedl (Hg.)  
Autopsia: Blut- und Augenzeugen



Carolin Behrmann · Elisabeth Priedl (Hg.)

# Autopsia: Blut- und Augenzeugen

Extreme Bilder  
des christlichen Martyriums

Wilhelm Fink

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## Martyrs and Scientists, or:

### How to Prove Torment with Images

Taking into account how tempting it is to draw a direct parallel between martyred bodies in art and the early modern scientific discovery of the body, one quickly comes to the conclusion that this cannot only be a simple matter of corporeal aesthetics or artistic practice of anatomical studies.<sup>1</sup> The issue of the body's integrity and defragmentation, building on the one hand the effective means of pictorial persuasion, and being the physical phenomenon to be empirically explained on the other, was a topic of different shifts between these two territories of exploration. It was, generally speaking, a rather bilateral relation: if art's experience in creating emotional response and reverence to the sacred was used to authorize the anatomist's practice as a legalized ritual beyond social suspicion,<sup>2</sup> the ongoing scientific investigation of inner parts of the human body also seemingly helped in solving the main problems of evangelical testimony of Christ's crucifixion as well as the secrets of its iconography.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, and this aspect will be crucial for our inquiry, this affinity transcended the literal levels of imitative simulation or adaptation of the results of physical observation for the purpose of just elaborating on a historical record. It was also a case of mixed media of visual argumentation. As Erwin Panof-

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1 Alessandro Allori's progressive anatomization of the crucified male figure, belonging to his famous drawing studies of the ›artistically dissected‹ human body, now in the Gabinetto delle Stampe e Disegni in Florence, can serve as one of the best examples of this particular intertwining. See Simona Lecchini Giovannoni, *Alessandro Allori*; Torino, Allemandi, 1991, p. 310-311. For the tradition of the artists' anatomical studies and their sources, see generally, i.a.: A. Hyatt Mayor, ›Artists as Anatomists‹; in: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, New Series*, 1964, vol. 22, no. 6, p. 201-210. For the broad theme of the early modern implementation of aesthetic canons into anatomical illustration see, i.a., Glenn Harcourt, ›Andreas Vesalius and the Anatomy of Antique Sculpture‹; in: *Representations*, 1987, no. 17 (›Special Issue: The Cultural Display of the Body‹), p. 28-61.

2 From the very rich literature, see: Dolores Mitchell, ›Rembrandt's ›The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp: A Sinner Among the Righteous‹; in: *Artibus et historiae*, 1994, 15, 30, p. 145-156. Cf. Katharine Park, ›The Criminal and the Sainly Body. Autopsy and Dissection in Renaissance Italy‹; in: *Renaissance Quarterly*, 1994, vol. 47, no. 1, p. 1-33.

3 See, i.a.: Cornelius Curtius (Cornelius de Corte), *De Clavis Dominicis Liber. Curae Secundae*, Antverpiae 1622 (1632, 1670); Thomas Bartolinus, *De latere Christi aperto dissertatio, accedunt Cl. Salmasii, & aliorum, De Cruce epistolae*, Lugduni Batavorum 1646; Thomas Bartolinus, *De Cruce Christi Hypomnemata IV: I De Sedili Medio. II De Vino Myrrhato III De Corona spinea. IV De sudore sanguineo* (incl.: *Bartoldi Nihusii De Cruce Epistola Ad Thomam Bartholinum; Nicolai Fontani Responsum Ad Propositam Sibi Quaestionem. An manus, clavis transfixae, pares ferendo corpori, inde pendulo; Nicolai Fontani Responsum ad propositam sibi Quaestionum*); Amstelodami, Sumptibus Andrae Frisii, 1670.

sky already noticed, the rise of early modern anatomy as an autonomous discipline, starting at the latest with Andrea Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* of 1543, depended on the bloom of the Renaissance in the arts: »...the rise of those particular branches of natural science which may be called observational or descriptive – zoology, botany, paleontology, several aspects of physics and, first and foremost, anatomy – was so directly predicated upon the rise of the representational techniques that we should think twice before admitting that the Renaissance achieved great things in art while contributing little to the progress of science.«<sup>4</sup> To put it more succinctly: the experience of the body was strongly associated with the then development of the visual modes of depiction, including, among others, the rudimentary case of proper linear perspective. Since the history of early modern scientific illustration has already become – as a resource field – an independent branch of art history and visual studies in recent decades, I would like to invert this relation and ask about the possible influence of the established natural sciences' imagery – and the their subject – of examination on illustrating martyrdom in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, as I believe this intersection was exactly the one that helped to deal anew with the issue of the extreme. Projected into the archaeological past or geographical distance of the newly discovered world, the Christian martyrdom created then a new challenge for early modern visual media. The aim of images of historical torments was on the one hand to give credibility by means of visual arguments based on specific, verifiable premises and not to lose the sacred dimension of the traceable and measurable history on the other. Therefore, in this paper, meant only as a preliminary attempt, I would like to examine two examples of such a conjunction, differing in their media and original intentions, which diverged according to the new outlines traced for the institutionalized ecclesiastical identity. The common point of the comparison is the images' *modus operandi* that, as I would suggest, involves for the purpose of their efficacy the agency of an experimental mode of early modern natural sciences; anatomy being, however, not the only point of reference in this respect.

### Beyond the corporeal

The martyrdom of Saint Vitalis, the first object of our investigation, as it was depicted in the 1598 fresco by Agostino Ciampelli in the Roman Jesuit church San Vitale, goes far beyond the typical iconography of the saint's torment (fig. 1).<sup>5</sup> Vi-

4 Erwin Panofsky, »Artist, Scientist, Genius. Notes on the ›Renaissance-Dämmerung«; in: *The Renaissance: Six Essays*, texts by Wallace K. Ferguson, Robert S. Lopez, George Sarton, Roland H. Bainton, Leicester Bradner, Erwin Panofsky; New York and Evanston, Harper & Row, 1962, p. 123-182 (here: 140, see further p. 140-166). See also Harcourt (cf. note 1) p. 28-61 (here: 33); Markus Buschhaus, *Über den Körper im Bilde sein. Eine Medienarchäologie anatomischen Wissens*; Bielefeld, Transcript, 2005, i.a., p. 116-117.

5 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Between Renaissance and Baroque: Jesuit Art in Rome 1565-1610*; Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003, p. 175-176. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 172-173, on the lost façade fresco with





Fig. 1: Agostino Ciampelli, *Martyrdom of St. Vitus*, fresco, 1598, Rome, San Vitale

talís, with his body stretched on a rack, is surrounded by three groups of tormentors gathered within an antique architectonic structure of an *exedra*, or a portico, which opens with a colonnade towards the city, from where the crowd has already assembled to see the torture spectacle. In this picture, put in front of the scene like spectators in a theatre, but actually watching the whole somehow exclusively from behind the scenes, we are confronted with a clear division of symbolic space according to the competencies of the executioners: The physical force on the left with the men making efforts to pull the wheels of the *equuleus* as far as it goes; the tyrannical authority in the middle with the priests trying to convince Vitalis to praise the golden idol held upright by one of the attendants; and eventually the knowledge and judgment on the right represented by the seated writers, one of them measuring the time of the torture, some of them engaged in a dispute, and eventually the man announcing the court's verdict. If one compares this image with the frontispiece of Vesalius's *Fabrica*, which illustrates an invented scene of the dissection of a woman (fig. 2), several general similarities strike at first, leading to conclusion about the possible intention to stage Vitalis's torment as a kind of anatomical spectacle. And indeed, just as in the Vesalius frontispiece image, the medical guilds' members are virtually united as a homogenous community observing the examination,<sup>6</sup> so are Vitalis's tormentors, gathered within the space of an amphitheater

depiction of instruments of torture, similar to Antonio Gallonio's martyrological *tropaia*.

<sup>6</sup> Cynthia Klestinec, »Vesalius and Print Culture: Public Dissection as Intimate Ritual« (text in Polish: Vesalius i kultura druku. Publiczna sekcja zwłok jako rytuał intymny); in: *Konteksty*, 2006, 272,



Fig. 2: Andrea Vesalius, *De corpori humanis fabrica*, Venetiis 1543, frontispiece

and together embodying the sensuality and cruelty of pagan authorities. At the same time, their presence emphasizes the nature of the torment as a legally authorized fact. The notion of theatre, commonly referring in the early modern scientific literature to the diversity of nature's phenomena and general organization of knowledge, was also in the parallel context used to symbolically put the observed facts, objects and marvels to the judgment of the eye. The use of an amphitheater, the form that not only revealed the variety of forms and phenomena, but furthermore focused the gaze on the central exposed object as well as confronted an intended beholder with the fact of visible attestation by the authorities seems additionally to have been elaborated for the purpose of historical proof.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the scientifically

1, p. 16-24. On the frontispiece illustration and the equally famous Vesalius portrait as manifestations of his professional self-confidence, see also, i.a.: Folker Fichtel, *Die anatomische Illustration in der frühen Neuzeit*; Frankfurt am Main, Mabuse, 2006, p. 203-207, there the earlier literature.

<sup>7</sup> Brigitte Cazelles, »Bodies on Stage and the Production of Meaning«; in: *Corps Mystique, Corps Sacre: Textual Transfigurations of the Body From the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Yale French Studies, no. 86, 1994), p. 56-74; Horst Bredekamp, *Die Fenster der Monade. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz' Theater der Natur und Kunst*; Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2004, p. 23-44; Buschhaus

based theatricalization of historical martyrdom became a new kind of bearing witness, a propagandistic reformulation of the idea of martyrdom as a spectacle taking place on pagan stage, in its very etymology originally referring as the Greek term of »martyrs« to testimony in a legal context.<sup>8</sup>

Incidentally, there is also another clue allowing us to see a connection between our fresco and early modern scientific and especially anatomical image argumentation. The disrobed Vitalis's clothes are presented in the foreground, together with the instruments of his previous torture, serving as relics, or rather tools of his passion. These are meant to help the beholder in reconstructing the course of the whole story and explain the image's intent with help of concrete evidentiary material. Put forward in the very front of the picture, they stop the action happening behind for a moment.<sup>9</sup> Thus, they let us assign the presented *storia* as an ongoing experiment, as we can distance ourselves from the common affective response by getting acquainted with the operational foreground, say, with the unmasked stage props of the action, while seeing the scene from behind. But, most of all, this cold and unemotional knowledge means to see the image's attempt to prove the historical torment in details within the principle of *enargeia* – meant as clear and detailed evidence based on tangible indications. In effect, these frontally exposed tools of martyrdom are eloquent in the same way as are the famous *instrumenta anatomicorum* shown by Vesalius in his *Fabrica* on page 235 in separate illustration (fig. 3), the purpose of which is to give empirical credibility to all of the previously depicted, dissected and vivisectioned bodies. On the following pages of this treatise, these appear already in cut-out fragments, so the depicted instruments are a marker necessary to make the imaginary reconstruction of the anatomist's operations possible. These precisely ordered tools build, after all, the only illustration in Vesalius' book that does not show any specified look of the anatomist on the body parts, but rather visualizes the evidence of professional procedures by self-uncovering the veil of experience and disclosing their backstage. As a matter of fact, even before Vesalius, it was a common practice to visually demonstrate the tools of medical art as explanatory icons allowing for the dissection to be reconstructed as well as showing

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2005 (cf. note 4), p. 89-104. Cf. Paula Findlen, *Possessing nature. Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*; Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994 (Studies on the history of society and culture, 20), p. 206: »Demonstrations became less the personal revelations that complete intimacy with an object yielded and more a technique of persuasion for an audience distant from the phenomenon itself.« For differences to pictorial staging of martyrdom in the medieval painting see Leslie Abend Callahan, »The Torture of Saint Apollonia. Deconstructing Fouquet's Martyrdom Stage«; in: *Studies in Iconography*, 1994, 16, p. 119-138.

8 Alan Dearn, »Victory and Death. The Representation of Early Christian Martyrdom«; in: *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art*, 2004, 5, 2, p. 70-91 (here: 72). Cf., David Potter, »Martyrdom as Spectacle«; in: *Theater and Society in the Classical World*, ed. by Ruth Scodel; Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press 1993, p. 53-88.

9 The particular role of these clothes as a media-related motif was discussed in detail in: Mateusz Kapustka, »Leaving Traces: The Martyr's Garment as a Visual Passage«; in: *Kleider machen Bilder. Vormoderne Strategien vestimentärer Bildsprache*, ed. by David Ganz and Marius Rimmele; Emsdetten, Edition Imorde, 2012, (Textile Studies 4), p. 255-268.



Fig. 3: *Instrumenta anatomicorum*, in: Andrea Vesalius, *De corpori humanis fabrica*, Venetiis 1543

direct proof of its efficacy, such as in the illustration included by Ryff (Rivius) in his treatise of 1541 (fig. 4).<sup>10</sup>

The very direct mode of this quotation in the fresco of Saint Vitalis, if taken for granted, would, however, lead a modern viewer acquainted with such intersections to an inevitable trap of literacy and in effect to a misinterpretation of the picture. A conscious overlapping of the visual traditions, as it often happens, may tend to be a tool for achieving critical irony and decontextualizing opacity. It is not only about the doubt, whether the tormentors would be the ones who are accredited or even able to deliver proofs for the saint's torments. Furthermore, we should be aware of what it could have possibly meant to see a simulated anatomical *mise-en-scène* inside the church only half a century after the publication of the controversial Vesalian treatise, controversial in the sense of its slightly earthly conclusions. As I suppose, it is the idol priest in the middle of the composition who plays a crucial role in this respect as a rhetorical counterpart of the passive saint. Let us notice, by the way, that this martyrdom scene would be an anatomical exercise organized in an old, i.e., pre-Vesalian, manner, as a demonstration rather than detailed investigation: not as a modern one-man show leading to a step-by-step direct empirical observation, but rather a hierarchically shaped lesson guided by the professor as *lector ex cathedra*, based on the pointing gesture of the *ostensor* or *demonstrator*, and physically executed by separate technical assistants.<sup>11</sup> The idol priest as *ostensor*, who was usually responsible for indicating the parts being dissected, points in our scene not to the saint's body but to the idol, as if he was explaining the reason for the physical torment being a result of Vitalis' denial of the idol's venerable corporeality. I would argue that the idol is a saint's respondent as it compositionally takes

10 Walter Hermann Ryff, *Des Menschen (...) beschreibung oder Anatomie*; Strassburg, Balthassar Beck Pistor, 1541. See also Roger Kenneth French, *Dissection and Vivisection in the European Renaissance*; Aldershot et al., Ashgate, 1999, p. 140-141.

11 Panofsky (cf. note 4), p. 141-142.

Fig. 4: *Exposed skull with anatomical instruments*, in: W. H. Ryff, *Des Menschen (...) beschreibung oder Anatomi*, Strassburg, 1541



the place of the Vesalian skeleton, put in the middle of the frontispiece graphic of the *Fabrica*. In the treatise, the latter serves not as a *vanitas* motif, but rather as an osteologic device, a model result of a perfectly performed dissection, at the same time as its symbol revaluing the common motto of almost every *theatrum anatomicum*: *Nosce te ipsum*. In this way, replacing the skeleton, the best attribute of the anatomist on which Vesalius himself even seems to be pointing with his left hand while uncovering the *viscera* of the female body with his right,<sup>12</sup> with a pagan idol urging to be looked at upon the sentence of torture and death, creates a critical commentary on violent staging of the body for the purpose of its empirical investigation as an object, within a *demonstratio ad oculos*. It would possibly be overestimated to speak about a charge of a ›scientific idolatry‹ or cult of deceptive surfaces of experimental knowledge as *simulacra*, expressed herewith by the Jesuits, but in this way it becomes clear that through a simulated experiment of the body's violent destruction, Saint Vitalis is presented as an anatomy-resistant martyr beyond corporeal inflictions.<sup>13</sup> As such, being exposed naked on the horizontal rack, in this way apparently distinguished from the others gathered around, tormented but not even wounded, and almost untouched, he is pleading for the martyr's clear body of transfiguration, preserving the natural order of God's creation as well as the very

<sup>12</sup> It may, however, also be interpreted as a teacher's gesture.

<sup>13</sup> On the original idea of the prevailing spiritual values of suffering bodily torments by Christian martyrs, see: Maureen A. Tilley, »The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr«; in: *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 1991, vol. 59, no. 3, p. 467-479.



spiritual value of martyrdom.<sup>14</sup> Other numerous martyrdom frescoes in the same church, painted around 1599 by Tarquinio Ligustri, also attributed to Paul Brill from Antwerp, respectively to one of his pupils, turn the hitherto existing aesthetics of violence upside down and favor the landscape depictions with martyrdom scenes composed almost beyond the perspective of the tormented body, merely as diminutive, almost undecipherable staffage, which, by the way, may be perceived as a slightly revolutionary step in the evolution of the Roman martyrological iconography.<sup>15</sup> If we consider this fact in context of inefficacy of the anatomical procedure shown in our fresco, we may draw conclusions about an intended attempt to critically discuss the issue of extreme brutality in the then saintly torments' bloody iconography like this initiated at the latest by Circignani in Santo Stefano Rotondo in 1582.<sup>16</sup> It would be, by the way, a somehow similar procedure to Antonio Gallonio's argumentative idealization of martyrs' bodies already in 1591.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the critical ›subtext‹ of the martyrdom scene of Vitalis finally overcomes its pure visual analogy. The experimental investigation of the saintly body, with its machinery of proof, becomes itself an object of violent misuse within an iconographical quotation leading to even critical inversion, the aim of which seems to be a disguised provocation against the early modern rise of the body's empirically measured sensuality.

### Sacred machinery of experimentation

The second example I would like to examine is a book: One of the largest illustrated martyrological *compendia*, composed by the president of the Prague Jesuit Clementinum college, Matthias Tanner, illustrated by Karl Škreta, published in 1675 in Latin and later as an enlarged edition also in German.<sup>18</sup> Its images have been hith-

14 Below the fresco of Vitalis's torments, above the stucco statue of St. Gregory on the right side, there is an inscription transposed from the latter's »Moralia in Job,« 3, cap. XXI, 12: »martyres tolerant scissuras vulnorum, et aliis proferunt medicamentum sanitatis« (»martyrs endure tearing of wounds and give to others medicine for health«). The deceptive nature of the idol is emphasized by another inscription, analogously flanking the accompanying figure of St. Jerome on the left: »basilicas martyrum daemones fugiunt fortitudinem & flagella sancti cineris non ferentes« (»demons flee the churches of martyrs; they cannot endure the force and blows of their holy ashes«); both translations after: Bailey 2003 (cf. note 5), p. 176.

15 Bailey 2003 (cf. note 5), p. 179-185.

16 See one of the latest articles on this topic: Nadja Horsch, »Sixtus V. als Kunstbetrachter? Zur Rezeption von Niccolò Circignani's Märtyrerfresken in S. Stefano Rotondo«; in: *Kunst und ihre Betrachter in der Frühen Neuzeit: Ansichten, Standpunkte, Perspektiven*, ed. by Sebastian Schütze; Berlin; Reimer, 2005, p. 65-92 (there the previous literature).

17 Opher Mansour, »Not Torments, but Delights: Antonio Gallonio's Trattato de gli instrumenti di martirio di 1591 and Its Illustrations«; in: *Roman bodies. Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Andrew Hopkins and Maria Wyke; London, The British School at Rome, 2005, p. 167-183.

18 Mathias Tanner, *Societas Jesu Usque Ad Sanguinis Et Vitae Profusionem Militans: In Europa, Africa, Asia, Et America, Contra Gentiles, Mahometanos, Judaeos, Hæreticos, Impios, Pro Deo, Fide, Ecclesia, Pietate. Sive Vita, Et Mors Eorum, Qui Ex Societate Jesu [...] sublati sunt*, Praga 1675; id., *Die Gesellschaft Jesu Bisß zur vergiessung ihres Blutes wider den Götzendienst, Vnglauben, und Laster, Für*

erto neglected by art historians who merely stressed its allegedly epigonic character in comparison to the well modeled and firmly established classics such as Gianbattista Cavalieri's or Antonio Gallonio's editions.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Gauvin Alexander Bailey's brief description of this work, »a martyrological phone-book,«<sup>20</sup> somehow applies, due to its multilayered but repeating structure of the martyrs' short biographies. But, I would propose to look at its images, apparently deviating from their classical precedents, as a signal of renunciation of the traditional imagery of martyrdom in order to establish a new model of verifiable visual information as an identity-generating factor of Jesuit community in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In these terms, we may again draw a quick parallel between the martyrdom's depiction and scientific knowledge. Tanner's book is devoted neither to the paleochristian martyrs, nor to the anonymous models like Gallonio's, but, instead, to the present Jesuit priests dying for faith on all of the four continents. Already its title with the prominent »militans« indicates the contemporary time of the torment scenes; therefore, this book is not part of a revival. The detailed visual relation helped in this case to overcome not the huge gap of time, but rather the geographical distance, and imagine the Catholic mission in lands, the exotic nature of which already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century transcended the limits of the contemporary literary narrative, as the known models of exemplification and comparison could not be effectively applied.<sup>21</sup> Apart from the obvious portion of this book's ethnographic interest, also the anatomical detail widened for Škreta, as Tanner's illustrator, the paths of the martyrs' representation: a motif of a martyr's brain flowing out of his

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Gott, den wahren Glauben, und Tugendten in allen vier Theilen der Welt streitend: Das ist: Lebens-Wandel, und Todtes-Begebenheit derjenigen, Die auß der Gesellschaft Jesu umb verthätigung Gottes, des wahren Glaubens, und der Tugenden, gewalthätiger Weiß hingerichtet worden, Prag; Carolo-Ferdinandeischer Universität Buchdruckerey, 1683.

- 19 Peter Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit. Zur Kultur des Martyriums in der frühen Neuzeit*, München, Oldenbourg, 2004 (Ancien Régime. Aufklärung und Revolution, 35), p. 224, 229, 233-244; Elisabeth Oy-Marra, »Bildstrategien von Schrecken und Erlösung. Der geschundene Körper christlicher Märtyrer in Graphik und Malerei um 1600«; in: *Gewaltdarstellung und Darstellungsgewalt in den Künsten und Medien*, ed. by Martin Zenck/Tim Becker/Raphael Woebis; Berlin, Reimer, 2007, p. 253-254. On the literary and historical aspects of this book: Martin Svatoš, »Mathias Tanner: Societas Jesu militans, imitans, laborans. Slavné skutky, ctnosti i mučednictví jezuitů v podání Matěje Tannera TJ., Karla Škréty a Johanna Georga Heinsche«; in: *Listy Filologické*, 1995, 118, 3-4, p. 288-305. Cf., the recent monograph article on the problem of images of violence in Tanner's edition: Mateusz Kapustka, »Verlassenheit. Das neue visuelle Paradigma des Märtyrertodes in Matthias Tanners ›Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis...‹ (1675) und die ästhetische Gemeinschaftsbildung«; in: *Ästhetik der Gewalt – Gewalt der Ästhetik*, ed. by Anna Pawlak and Kerstin Schankweiler; Kromsdorf, VDG Weimar, 2013, p. 57-73.
- 20 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, »The Jesuits and Painting in Italy 1550-1690. The Art of Catholic Reform«; in: *Saints & Sinners. Caravaggio & the Baroque Image*, ed. by Franco Mormando; Chicago et al, University of Chicago Press, 1999, p. 151-178 (here: 160).
- 21 Cf. Markus Völkel, »Hugo Grotius' Grollae obsidio cum annexis von 1629: Ein frühneuzeitlicher Historiker zwischen rhetorischer (Text) und empirischer Evidenz (Kartographie)«; in: *Evidentia. Reichweiten visueller Wahrnehmung in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Gabriele Wimböck/Karin Leonhard/Markus Friedrich; Münster, LIT, 2007 (Pluralisierung & Autorität, 9), p. 83-110 (here: 85).



Fig. 5: Melchior Küsell after Karl Škreta, *Martyrdom of Rochus Gonzales a S. Cruze and Alphonsus Rodriguez*, in: Tanner, *Societas Jesu* (...), Pragae 1675

head after a severe strike by an assassin is rather not a traditional one and gives an impression of martyrdom as a precisely planned procedure (fig. 5). This extraordinary visual experience can be possibly also linked with the systematic establishment of images of the opened skull in medical treatises, especially soon after the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as the rationally mechanistic Cartesian model locating the human *spiritus animalis* within the brain area, provoked anatomists to a critical discussion equipped with brain's elaborate depictions in their treatises dating to the 1660s.<sup>22</sup> I would argue, however, that the predilection for a detailed depiction of the martyrdom in the book by Tanner aimed not at increasing the extreme expressivity and shocking the viewer emotionally, but was rather to fulfill the needs of a particularized report under the directives of, say, ›veritas geographica,‹ to paraphrase the main law of Gabriele Paleotti's post-tridentine image-theology meant as an art theoretical concept.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the detailed relation from the torment place already played a particular role at the time of Tanner's edition. The Jesuits identified themselves with the discovery and religious conquest of the new world, as we see it, e.g., in the Cornelius Bloemaert's paradigmatic frontispiece of Daniello Bartoli's history of the whole order, showing the rays of heavenly light shed by the IHS monogram on the personifications of four continents leaning on the globe.<sup>24</sup> But,

22 Harald Moe, *The Art of Anatomical Illustration in the Renaissance and Baroque Periods*; Copenhagen, Rhodos, 1995, p. 143-145.

23 Kapustka 2013 (cf. note 19), p. 63-67.

24 Daniello Bartoli, *Historia della Compagnia di Giesu*, 6 vols.; Roma, Lazzeri, 1660-1667; Cf., i.a., *Barock im Vatikan 1572 – 1676*, ed. by Jutta Frings; Leipzig, Seemann Henschel, 2005, p. 400-401.





Fig. 6: Melchior Küsell after Karl Škreta, *Martyrdom of Henricus Enriquez*, in: Tanner, *Societas Jesu (...)*, Prague 1675



Fig. 7: Melchior Küsell after Karl Škreta, *Martyrdom of Joannes de Fonte and Hieronymus de Moranta*, in: Tanner, *Societas Jesu (...)*, Prague 1675

at the same time, the very same open world was a place of Jesuits' permanent fight and sacrifice: Such a program was adapted among others in Tanner's compendium, divided into four parts due to the geography of continents, each of them accompanied by a large depiction of the universal anti-Jesuit aggression arising among all creatures, including insistent heretics, bad armed Indian putti, roaring antique sea monsters, leopards and alligators. The world of Jesuit martyrs was distinguished with absolute loneliness and permanent threat in the global state of war. According to this, martyrology had to become a detailed modern combat report for educated novices.

Therefore, the story is not as important here as the object. Only few of the 169 images in Tanner's work represent a typical *storia* of martyrdom, whereas the vast majority show just indications from afterwards, visualizing the effect of torments having already been a physical fact and ready to get reconstructed. Consequently, the viewer is permanently confronted here with an abandoned corpse. It is all about a rationalization of the martyrdom process, which due to its repeatability gains the status of an axiom and does not even need to be proven, just exemplified. Such a logical procedure of classical Aristotelian syllogism creates a kind of *scientia*, which is verifiable by demonstrating repeatable homomorphic experimental procedures

*Amiantus lapis fibrosus,  
cujus e fibris fiunt funes, ac tela ignem  
sustinentes,*



Fig. 8: *Proof of asbestos as an incombustible material*, in: Ferrante Imperato, *Historiae naturalis libri XXIX*, Lipsiae 1645

delivering inductive generalizations, as such the claim of objectivity.<sup>25</sup> To balance the loss of traditional, affective witnessing by using solemn gestures and, instead, to simulate this nearly criminological tracing, Tanner introduces a completely new sort of visual argumentation. The martyr's death as an observed experiment that authenticates the general rule of martyrdom is no more caused by a cruel executioner, but rather by an anonymous hand from behind the scenes (fig. 6, 7). In this way, the basic demonstration mode from treatises on nature sciences has been applied, as these hands evoke their typical visual machinery of argumentation. Namely, in Tanner's book the usual ›talking hands‹ are transformed into killing ones, and the experimental values of the event stay the same.<sup>26</sup> Numerous examples of such visual procedures of hands as ›experimenting actors‹ could be evoked, but

25 Rüdiger Campe, »Evidenz als Verfahren. Skizze eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Konzepts«; in: *Vorträge aus dem Warburg-Haus*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2004, p. 105-133 (here esp.: 124-128).

26 *Sprechende Hände*, ed. by Bernd Evers; Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2006; exhibition: Berlin, Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 24.2.2006-17.4.2006. Cf. Peter Burke, »Images as Evidence in Seventeenth-Century Europe«; in: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2003, vol. 64, no. 2, p. 273-296.

Fig. 9: *Compression of water in a tube*, in: Kircher, *Physiologia* (...), 1680



let's quote just three images from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries that show far-reaching operational similarity within examinations despite being different in their scale and purpose: Ferrante Imperato's proof of asbestos being tested as a noncombustible material (fig. 8),<sup>27</sup> Athanasius Kircher's compression of water in a tube (fig. 9),<sup>28</sup> and William Harvey's evidence of circulation of blood in veins (fig. 10).<sup>29</sup> Tanner's violent hands are not communicating like those later accompanying illustrations in physical treatises in the Enlightenment's age of the machine with their ›manual‹ language of comment.<sup>30</sup> The hands of Tanner's tormentors, armed with spires, clubs, tomahawks, bows, and fire-guns, embody the power of action, force, and initiating movement, and are like the quoted three examples the only and purposeful mechanical cause of the here-and-now demonstrated process. So, it is not about the mathematical calculation, but rather about the actuality of the individual physical operation instituted by the fictitious experimenter's hand in

27 Ferrante Imperato, *Historiae naturalis libri XXIX*, Lipsiae, Philippi Gothofredi Saurmanni, 1645, p. 766-767.

28 Athanasius Kircher, *Physiologia Kircheriana experimentalis, qua summa argumentorum multitudo et varietate naturalium rerum scientia per experimenta physica, mathematica, medica, chymica, musica, magnetica, mechanica comprobatur atque stabilitur*, Amstelodami, Janssonio-Waesbergiana, 1680, p. 149-150.

29 William Harvey, *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus*, Francofurti, Guilielmi Fitzeri, 1628.

30 See in the general context of the visualization of experiments in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century: Barbara Maria Stafford, *Artful Science. Enlightenment, Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Education*; Cambridge, Mass. et al., MIT Press, 1994, p. 133-215.

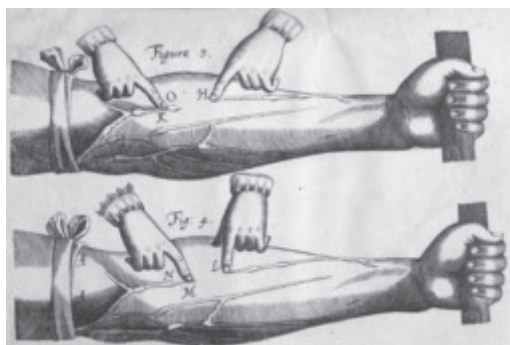


Fig. 10: Evidence of circulation of blood in veins, in: Harvey, *Exercitatio (...)*, 1628

order to confirm the unchangeable law of nature and present it to the viewer.<sup>31</sup> These hands, respectively even reduced to acting weapons alone, create – or fabricate – the innermost argumentative value of the image of an act or process. Just like Imperato's asbestos put in fire indeed does not burn, the simple compression let the objects physically move inside the Kircher's tube, the blood circulation in Harvey's microcosm of the human body can be traced by simply pressing the veins,<sup>32</sup> so obviously does the martyrdom have to take place as an inevitable fate of the Jesuit missionaries in Tanner's vision of community. In all these three cases, the visual experience itself – delivered »*propriis manibus*,« as meant already by Vesalius – became a form of authority. Thus, the image of martyrdom turned into a kind of visual autopsy and the gap between experience and sight was overcome.<sup>33</sup> In this way, the Prague visual martyrology elaborated by Tanner is in its intention marked with an exceptional kind of evidence, situated between notion analysis and rhetoric, the former being a philosophical or mathematical procedure of categorizing

31 So, if Brigitte Cazelles (cf. note 7), p. 74, writes on the exposure of the body as »translation of pain into power, victim's body into tormentor's voice,« in Škreta's illustrations we can observe a kind of purposeful rhetorical reduction: the tormentors are absent as *dramatis personae* and the individual subject within the Jesuit community gains special relevance; see Kapustka 2013 (cf. note 19), p. 57-73.

32 It can be mentioned that Harvey actually just let the »operating hands« be added to the elder illustrations taken from *De venarum ostioliis* by Hieronimus Fabricius ab Aquapendente, published in 1603, the first treatise on the valves of the veins. By just depicting these hands as an expression of the acting subject of experimentation, he was able to visually correct the hitherto broadly accepted theory about blood flowing from the liver and thus to show the innermost points of his revolutionary observation on circulation of blood; see Moe 1995 (cf. note 22), p. 54. On Harvey's different attestation modes of the observation results, cf., i.a.: Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800*; Cambridge et. al., Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 337-338.

33 Jan-Dirk Müller describes early modern *evidentia* as a »rhetorically produced emergence«: Jan-Dirk Müller, »Evidentia und Medialität: zur Ausdifferenzierung von Evidenz in der Frühen Neuzeit«; in: Wimböck/Leonhard/Friedrich 2007 (cf. note 21), p. 57-81 (here: 61). On autopsy in terms of the testifying scenario of visual media see: Buschhaus 2005 (cf., note 4), p. 104-123; as well as on its cultural and philosophical etymology in anatomical context: Chakè Matossian, »Philosophie et autopsie: un imaginaire anatomique«; in: *Art, anatomie, trois siècles d'évolution des représentations du corps*, ed. by Chakè Matossian; Bruxelles, La Part de l'Œil, 2007, p. 85-97.

firm and indisputable laws by just showing indications, and the latter useful for proving the individual historical facts. The reason for this is, of course, the status of the natural sciences, which – as Lorraine Daston underlines in her discourse on evidence – »are above suspicion, because presumed free of any intention.«<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the investigation of our martyrdom scenes meant as educational prolegomena for the young Jesuit trainees needs to be conducted under a sign of historical epistemology, a discipline dealing with preconditions and changing forms of creating the facts, a critical approach which – as Daston also proposed – »Instead of asking whether facts are constructed, (...) may prompt us to ask why we regard construction as a cardinal sin, incompatible with truth and intellectual honesty.«<sup>35</sup>

When we realize all this, it will also be easier to understand why within the Jesuit missionary propaganda the way of cognition was imperatively presented as an equivalent to the way of glorious death. The geographic extension of the Jesuit apostolic work, attested by the order's system of imitative subordination, implied a specific means of persuasion which could make the new candidates, treated like innocent *tabula rasa*, sure of the inevitability of their violent death on the altar of missionary sacrifice. Every *terra incognita* still remaining in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to be Christianized offered a great challenge and many possibilities for further experimentation.<sup>36</sup>

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34 Lorraine Daston, »Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe«; in: *Questions of Evidence. Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines*, ed. by James Chandler/Arnold I. Davidson/Harry Harootunian; Chicago/London, University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 243-274 (here: 244). Cf. T. Hugh Crawford, »Imaging the Human Body: Quasi Objects, Quasi Texts, and the Theater of Proof«; in: *PMLA (Publications of the Modern Language Association of America)*, 1996, vol. 111, no. 1 (Special Topic: The Status of Evidence), p. 67: »[...] theater of proof, a physical space where the objects of science are said to be freed from rhetorical distortions, faulty vision, and the inadequacies of the ›lesser‹ senses.«

35 Lorraine Daston 1994 (cf. note 34), p. 282-289, here: 285.

36 Cf. in this respect the graphic of university theses by Bartholomaeus Kilian after Christoph Storer: Sybille Appuhn-Radtke, *Das Thesenblatt im Hochbarock. Studien zu einer graphischen Gattung am Beispiel der Werke Bartholomäus Kilians*; Weissenhorn, Konrad, 1988, p. 256-260; id., *Visuelle Medien im Dienst der Gesellschaft Jesu. Johann Christoph Storer (1620-1671) als Maler der katholischen Reform*; Regensburg, Schnell + Steiner, 2000, p. 308, 310-311.