

Carpaccio's Young Knight in a Landscape: Christian Champion and Guardian of Liberty

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF EDWIN REDSLOB

AMONG THE TREASURES of the loan exhibition "Old Master Paintings from the Collection of Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza" held at the Metropolitan Museum in 1981, Vittore Carpaccio's *Young Knight in a Landscape* stood out as a highlight, even in that august gathering (Figure 1).¹

For almost a century—ever since this painting came to the attention of art historians, when it was in the Vernon-Wentworth collection at Wentworth Castle in Yorkshire—the Young Knight, very much like the Unknown Champion at the Tournament in a romance of chivalry, has defied all attempts to make him yield the secret of his name. It has not yet even been established whether this extraordinary work is a portrait, a saint's icon, or an allegory, though it certainly has features of all three.

When two *cartellini*—one with the artist's signature and the date VICTOR CARPATHIVS / FINXIT / M.D.X., the other with the motto MALO MORI / QVAM / FOEDARI—were uncovered during a cleaning in 1958, at least the problems of the painting's authorship (in the nineteenth century it bore a spurious Dürer monogram) and its date could be considered as solved once and for all by the first *cartellino* (Figure 2). The *cartellino* with the motto, however, has so far led most researchers onto a false track in the quest for the Young Knight's identity (Figure 3).

The position of this *cartellino*, directly above an ermine crouching on a hummock in the swamp in the left foreground, makes it clear that these two elements—the motto and the ermine—are meant to be closely linked, representing a heraldic device or an impresa.

Immediately after it was discovered, the motto MALO MORI QVAM FOEDARI was identified by Helen Comstock as that of the Order of the Ermine, founded in 1465 by King Ferdinand I of Naples.² In a recent article, Agathe Rona has pointed out that the motto of the Order of the Ermine was in fact *Decorum*, and that *Malo mori quam foedari* was a personal motto of King Ferdinand. Assuming that this became a family motto, Rona proposes Ferdinand II, who died young after a rule of less than two years (1495–96), as the model for the Young Knight.³

The generally accepted identification in the last twenty years has been that of Francesco Maria della

1. Allen Rosenbaum, *Old Master Paintings from the Collection of Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1979–81) intro. by John Walker, no. 6, "Young Knight in a Landscape (Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino)," pp. 88–90, color repr. p. 26; intro., p. 15.

2. Helen Comstock, "Carpaccio Signature Discovered," *Connoisseur* 142 (1958) p. 64. Here the motto is correctly translated as "I would rather die than be dishonored"; Rosenbaum, *Old Master Paintings*, renders it "Die painfully rather than be sullied," taking *malo* for an adverbial form of *malum*, instead of the first person singular of the verb *malle*. See also Jan Lauts, *Carpaccio: Paintings and Drawings* (London/Greenwich, Conn., 1962) no. 60; Lauts gives the foundation date of the order as 1483, which is too late. For the Order of the Ermine see Philipp Bonanni, *Verzeichnis der Geist- und Weltlichen Ritter-Orden* (Nuremberg, 1720) no. LXXXIV, p. 93, pl. 156, fig. 76; Ferdinand von Biedenfeld, *Geschichte und Verfassung aller geistlichen und weltlichen, erloschenen und blühenden Ritterorden* (Weimar, 1841) pp. 118–119; and Giuseppe Maria Fusco, *Intorno all'ordine dell'Armellino* (Naples, 1844).

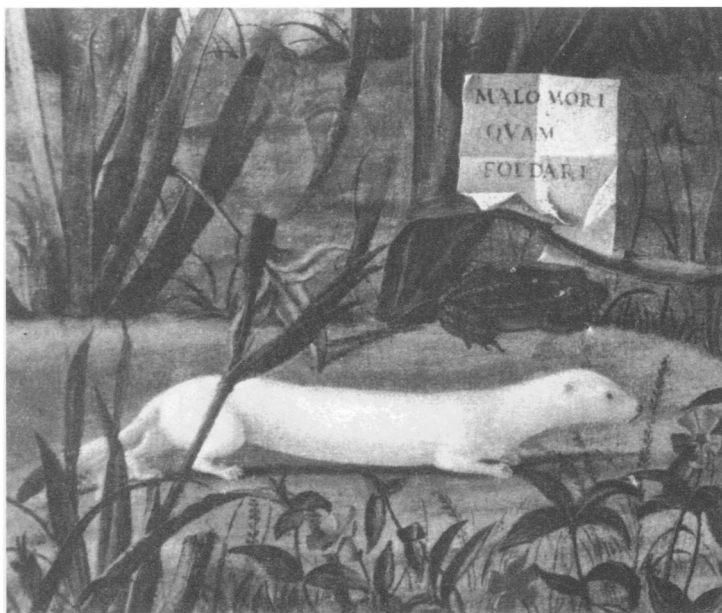
3. Agathe Rona, "Zur Identität von Carpaccios 'Ritter,'" *Pantheon* 41, no. 4 (1983) pp. 295–302.

1. Vittore Carpaccio (1460/65–ca. 1526), *Young Knight in a Landscape*, signed and dated 1510. Oil on canvas, 218.5 × 151.5 cm. Lugano, Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection (photo: Brunel)

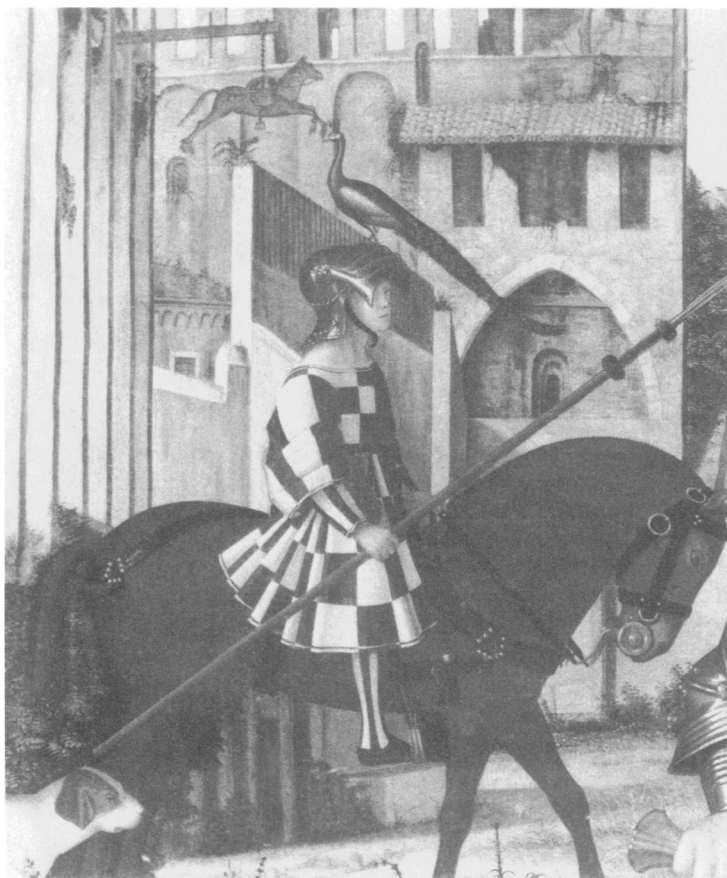




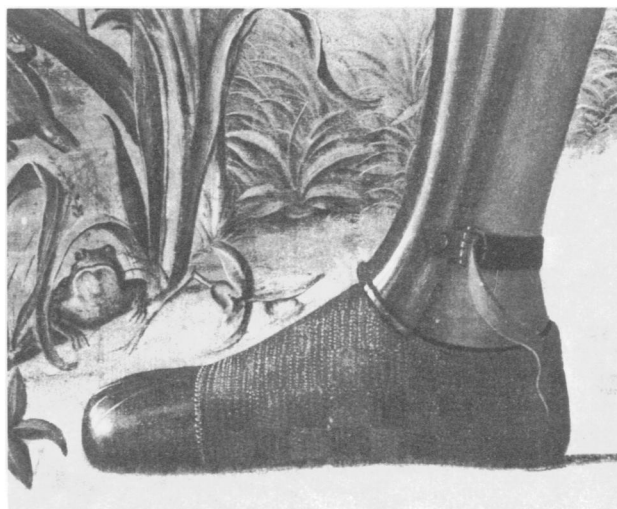
2. Detail of Figure 1, *cartellino* signed and dated VICTOR CARPATHIVS / FINXIT / M.D.X. (photo: Brunel)



3. Detail of Figure 1, the ermine in the swamp and the *cartellino* inscribed MALO MORI / QVAM / FOEDARI (photo: Brunel)



4. Detail of Figure 1, the squire in livery (photo: Brunel)

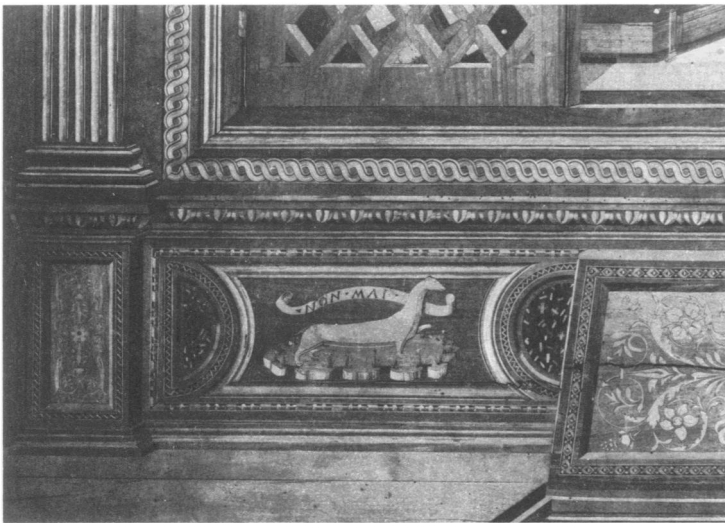


5. Detail of Figure 1, the Young Knight's mail shoe with checquy pattern (photo: Brunel)

Rovere, third duke of Urbino (1490–1538), as suggested by Roberto Weiss in 1963.⁴ In his interpretation Weiss ruled out the possibility that the Young Knight could be a prince of the house of Aragon-Naples, because the livery colors of Aragon and Naples were red and gold, whereas the Young Knight's livery colors, as displayed in the dress of his squire and in the chequy pattern of his mail shoes, are black and gold (Figures 4, 5). One of the members of the Order of the Ermine (since 1474) was the famous condottiere, humanist, and first duke of Urbino, Federigo da Montefeltro (1422–82), who had an ermine on a hummock—though with the motto *Non mai*—as one of his personal imprese (Figure 6).⁵ His coat of arms included a black eagle in a golden field in two of its quarters, which led Weiss to assume that the livery colors of the dukes of Urbino might have been black and gold. Since the youthful face of the Young Knight bears no resemblance either to Federigo's well-known craggy features or to those of his son and successor Guidobaldo (1472–1508), Weiss proposed that the Young Knight might be Federigo's grandson, Francesco Maria della Rovere, whose age in 1510—twenty years—would make him a perfect candidate. Unfortunately, though, Francesco Maria



7. Titian, *Portrait of Francesco Maria della Rovere*, 1536. Oil on canvas. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi (photo: Alinari-Art Reference Bureau)



6. Intarsia wainscoting of the *studiolo*, formerly at Gubbio, of Federigo da Montefeltro, ca. 1480; detail showing his impresa of the ermine and the motto *NON MAI*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 39.153

della Rovere's portrait by Titian, painted in 1536, shows, too, a cast of features entirely different from those of the Young Knight (Figure 7); furthermore, Francesco Maria della Rovere was not a member of the Order of the Ermine, and as far as we know did not use his grandfather's ermine impresa.

4. Pietro Zampetti, *Vittore Carpaccio*, exh. cat. (Venice, 1963) no. 51, "*Ritratto di Cavaliere (Francesco Maria della Rovere?)*," mentions Roberto Weiss's suggestion, together with other tentative identifications: St. Eustace ("in precedenza era"), "fantasia cavalleresca" (L. Venturi, 1930), Ermolao Barbaro (G. Perocco, 1960). Still another identity, as "a prince of the House of Habsburg," was suggested by Bernard Berenson in 1957. More recently, in a lecture given at the Metropolitan Museum on Nov. 8, 1981 ("Carpaccio's Portrait of a Knight: Identity and Meaning"), Rona Goffen proposed that the Young Knight was a posthumous portrait of Antonio da Montefeltro (1450–1508), natural son of the first duke of Urbino, Federigo da Montefeltro.

5. Luigi Nardini, *Le imprese o figure simboliche dei Montefeltro e dei della Rovere* (Urbino, 1931) p. 14.

The ermine in the swamp is not the only iconographical detail that has been scrutinized in the hope of finding a clue to the mystery. The oak tree (*rovere*) behind the Young Knight has been seen as a canting device for the name della Rovere; the stag at the water's edge was once taken as a hint that the Young Knight was St. Eustace; the tree stumps in the foreground are viewed by Rona as elements of the collar of the Order of the Ermine; and the lilies have been claimed as attributes of the Virgin Mary and the Annunciation, and thus an allusion to the second baptismal name of Francesco Maria della Rovere,⁶ who was born on March 25, the feast of the Annunciation.

One clue, however, which has so far been overlooked, is the walled city in the background, beyond the stretch of open water (Figure 8). Another clue, which has received some attention but which might still yield unexpected insights, is the armor and equipment of the Young Knight and his squire.

The Young Knight is armored in an *armatura alla tedesca*, in the style of the first two decades of the sixteenth century.⁷ His head is covered with only a small black beret; his helmet—a sallet *alla veneziana*—and his gauntlets are in the keeping of his squire, who has put the helmet on his own head and hung the gauntlets from his belt. The squire, mounted on the knight's dun steed, is clad in black-and-yellow checquy livery matching the checkerboard pattern wrought into the mail of the knight's shoes. The knight is shown grasping his sheathed sword; interestingly enough, this weapon is a so-called *Katzbalger*, the typical sidearm of the *Landsknechte*, German mercenary infantry of the sixteenth century.⁸ The sword's fan-shaped pommel and figure-eight guard are gilded, as are the metal mountings of the black scabbard, repeating the livery colors of black and gold. Though this sword is of an unquestionably German type, its spiral scabbard mounting seems to have been a feature of Hungarian fashion.⁹ Also German in style is the squire's long-skirted coat with puffed sleeves; it is practically identical to the liveries of the Swiss Guards in Raphael's *Mass of Bolsena* of 1512.

For these reasons it is tempting to see the Young Knight as a commander of German mercenaries in Venetian service,¹⁰ probably the commandant of the fortified city in the background. The swallow-tailed battlements of the fortifications in the picture indicate a location within the Venetian sphere of influence, and for more than twenty years I have been

searching photographs, prints, picture postcards, and travel guides for a view of this city, which I assumed to be on the shore of one of the lakes of the Terra Firma. That assumption, however, proved to be wide of the mark. During the dismantling of the loan exhibition of the Thyssen collection, I was able to study this part of the painting at close quarters, and be-

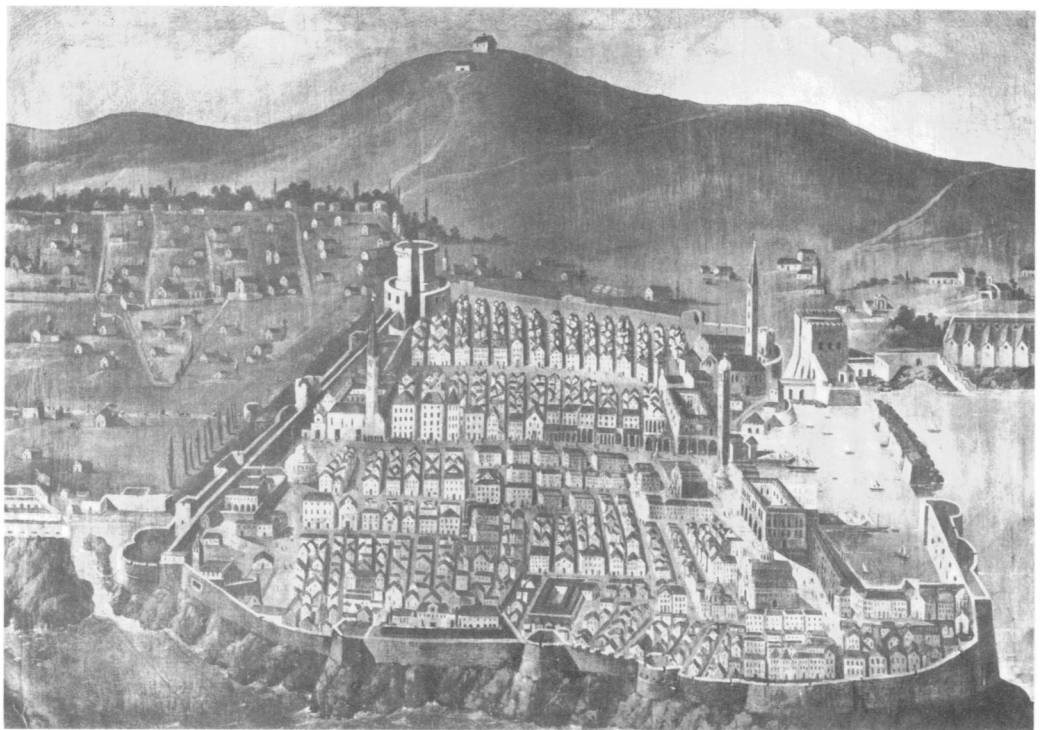
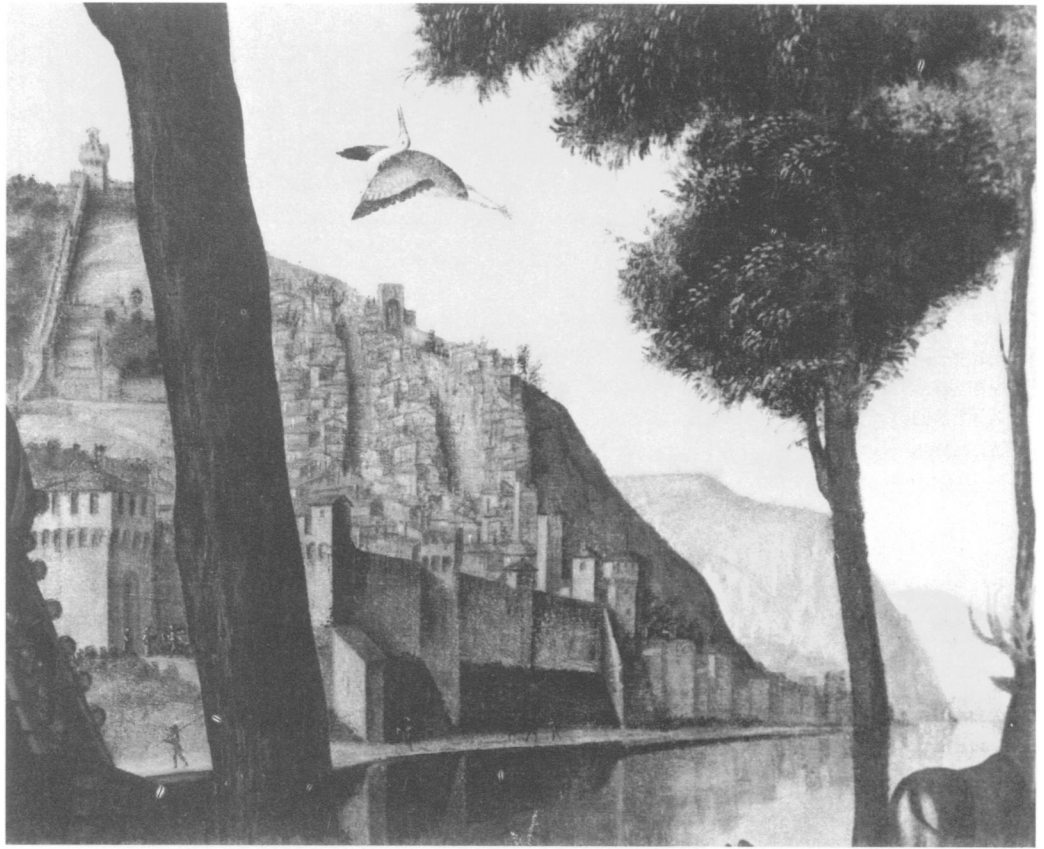
6. Rosenbaum, *Old Master Paintings*, no. 6, pp. 88–89. Rona, "Zur Identität," mentions the lilies as elements in the badge of the Aragonese Order "de la Jara." This was a temperance order, which used lilies in a ewer as its badge to demonstrate that the ewer contained water, not wine.

7. Features in the German style are the fluted colletin, the scallop-shaped shoulder defenses (spaulders), and the thigh defenses with their lames cut at the edges in *Klammerschnitt*, a decorative motif generally associated with the Helmschmid workshop of Augsburg. On the other hand, the heavy lobed ridges on the elbow cops and the embossed star shapes on the knees are considered to be features of Milanese armor made for France; see Jean-Pierre Reverseau, "The Classification of French Armour by Workshop Styles, 1500–1600," *Art, Arms and Armor* (Florence, 1979–80) I, pp. 202–219; and idem, *Les Armures des rois de France au Musée de l'Armée* (St.-Julien-du-Sault, 1982).

8. A. V. B. Norman, *The Rapier and the Small-Sword, 1460–1820* (London/Melbourne/New York, 1980) pp. 66–67, hilt 3, dated "from about 1520," based upon the earliest dated examples shown in two prints by Barthel and Sebald Beham, 1520.

9. Surviving examples are the *Kurschwert* of Frederick the Battle-Ready, before 1423, in the Historisches Museum, Dresden, VI/361, illustrated in Erich Haenel, *Kostbare Waffen aus der Dresdner Rüstkammer* (Leipzig, 1923) pl. 40; János Kalmár, *Régi magyar fegyverek* (Budapest, 1971) fig. 106; Helmut Nickel, *Ullstein Waffenbuch* (Berlin, 1974) color pl. p. 165; Johannes Schöbel, *Prunkwaffen* (Leipzig, 1975) color pl. 51; an estoc and a scimitar, both 16th century, in the Waffensammlung, Vienna, illustrated in Johann Szendrei, *Ungarische Kriegsgeschichtliche Denkmäler in der Millenniums-Ausstellung* (Budapest, 1896) nos. 834, 3159; a pallas and an estoc, both 16th century, in the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, illustrated in Kalmár, *Régi magyar fegyverek*, figs. 164, 172. Spiral mountings are a standard feature also on the shafts of Hungarian battle-axes and war hammers; see Kalmár, *Régi magyar fegyverek*, figs. 34b–d, 48–51, 52b, 57.

10. There were many Germans among the 14th- and 15th-century condottieri. In fact, the first condottieri, according to Machiavelli, who despised the system, were Werner von Urslingen, duke of Spoleto, and Konrad von Landau, a member of the cadet branch of the dukes of Württemberg. The youthful appearance of the Young Knight suggests that his family must be an important one for him to be represented in such a prestigious military position. The Urslingen coat of arms had a shield bordure of checquy black and gold, and had a peacock as a crest, which it is tempting to connect with the peacock conspicuously positioned above the helmet worn by the Young Knight's squire; the Urslingen family was, however, extinct by 1444. Konrad von Landau had three black stag's antlers in his golden shield, and a hound's head as a crest; his family did not survive into the 16th century either.



8. Detail of Figure 1, the walled city in the background (photo: Brunel)

came more than ever convinced that the city on its rocky coast was the portrait of an actual place. By chance, only a few hours later, I encountered in a recent publication an illustration of the same city: it is Ragusa, the tiny capital of the dauntless maritime republic in Dalmatia, whose far-ranging merchant ships, the argosies, became synonymous with enterprising travel (Figure 9).¹¹ For centuries Ragusa—the Yugoslav Dubrovnik—was an almost isolated Christian outpost holding its own against the encroaching Turk, but she was also the sharpest competitor and commercial rival of Venice in the Adriatic.

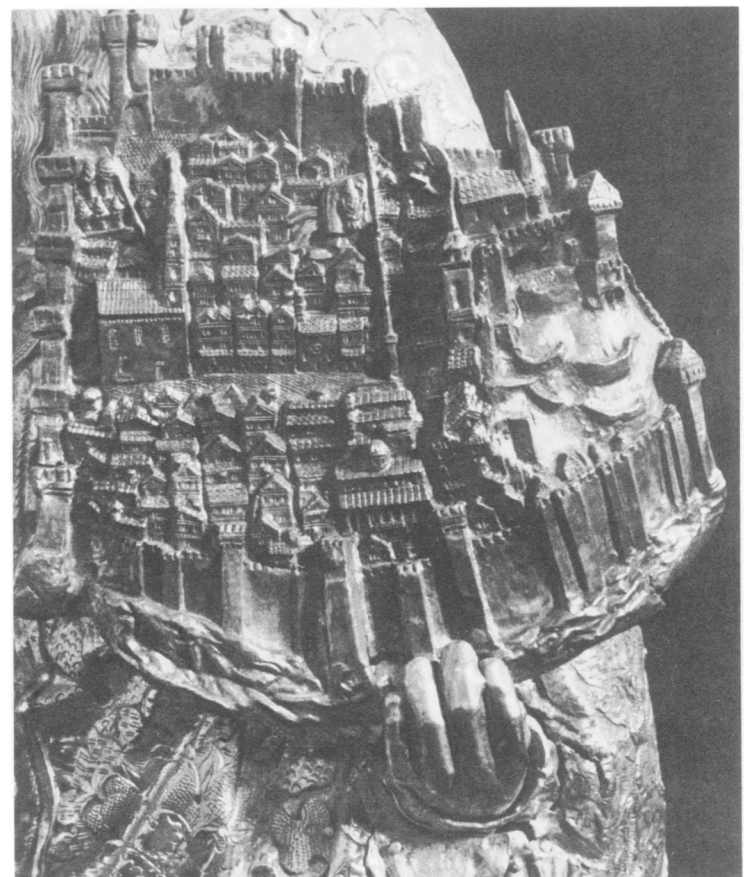
In the cathedral of Ragusa is a silver statue of the town's patron saint, St. Blaise, who carries in his hand a relief model of the city as it looked around 1500, before the great earthquake of 1667, after which many of the city's landmarks were rebuilt in the Baroque style. St. Blaise's model corresponds to Carpaccio's painted city in all essential details, such as the straight city wall running up to the strong Mincetta tower, and the curved wall along the skyline, the church of the Franciscans halfway up the slope, with a tree-lined open space above it, the alignment of the streets at right angles to the traversing corso, the Stradone, as well as the seawalls on the rocky shore and the group of three towers (the Torre dell'Orologio, the steeple of the church of the Dominicans, and the main tower of the harbor fortifications) in the port area (Figures 10, 11).¹²

Identification of the city as Ragusa makes it possible to reinterpret two of the iconographical clues already mentioned. The oak tree, thought to be a pun on the family name della Rovere, could equally well



10. Silver statue of St. Blaise, ca. 1500. Dubrovnik Cathedral (photo: after Fisković, *Dubrovnik*)

11. Detail of Figure 10, the model of Ragusa held by St. Blaise (photo: after Fisković, *Dubrovnik*)



11. Jan Morris, *The Venetian Empire: A Sea Voyage* (New York/London, 1980) ill. p. 162. For the historical background see Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, *The History of Dalmatia and Ragusa* (London, 1848) 2 vols.; and T. G. Jackson, *Dalmatia, the Quarnero and Istria* (Oxford, 1887) 2 vols.

12. Cvito Fisković, *Dubrovnik* (Belgrade, 1964) pl. 18, color pl. 3.

9. Unknown artist, *View of Ragusa*, before 1667. Oil on canvas. Dubrovnik, Museo Franciscano (photo: Scala/Art Resource, Inc.)



12. "Orlando," the Roland of Ragusa, by Antun of Dubrovnik and Bonnino of Milan, 1423 (photo: Aldi Kočina)



13. The Roland of Bremen, before 1366 (photo: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg)

statue of "Orlando," the Roland of Ragusa (Figure 12).¹⁴

Roland statues, still numerous in north and central German cities both great and small, were cherished symbols of civic liberty.¹⁵ As a rule these Rolands are knights in full armor but without helmets on their flowing locks, standing with feet planted well apart, and holding a drawn sword in the right hand (Figure 13).

Ragusa's "Orlando" is the southernmost of all Roland statues—its nearest companion is the Roland of Prague—and it is unique within the entire Mediterranean region. In spite of the fierce spirit of independence shown by the numerous city-states of Italy, not a single one had a Roland statue as a visible symbol of her treasured civic liberties. The Roland of Ragusa, according to a plaque attached to its pillar, was erected in 1423 as a privilege bestowed by Emperor Sigismund (1411–37), who was not only the head of the Holy Roman Empire but also king of Bohemia, Hungary, and Dalmatia; by long-standing tradition the kings of Hungary were the protectors of Ragusa and its liberty.¹⁶ The grant of a Roland statue to Ragusa was possibly prompted by a legend cherished in local lore, that Roland, Charlemagne's paladin and the hero

be a play upon the element *dub* ("oak") in the Slavic name of Ragusa, Dubrovnik ("little oak grove"). The stag at the water's edge, once interpreted as the attribute of St. Eustace, could indicate the name of the offshore archipelago to the west of Ragusa, called the Elaphite, that is, Stag, Islands.¹³

There is a single important difference, though, between Carpaccio's cityscape and the model in St. Blaise's hand: the former does not show the huge banner waving from a high flagpole in the piazza of the silver relief. In Ragusa this flagpole is attached to a four-sided stone pillar, topped with a platform from which official proclamations and public announcements were once read. On the side facing the government building of the Dogana and Mint stands the

13. Jackson, *Dalmatia*, I, p. 386.

14. Rita Lejeune and Jacques Stiennon, *La Légende de Roland dans l'art du moyen âge* (Brussels, 1967) I, chap. 5, section II, "Le Roland de Dubrovnik et le Roland de Dôle," pp. 361–364; II, pl. 450. Fisković, *Dubrovnik*, pls. 15, 17.

15. Probably the best-known example, "Roland der Riese am Rathaus zu Bremen," bears written on the border of his shield the proud rhymes: "Vryheit do ick ju openbar / de Karl und mennich vorst vorwar / desser stede ghegeven hat / des danket gode, is min radt" ("Liberty I show you openly / that Charlemagne and many princes truly / have given to this city; / for this thank God, this is my council"). For Roland statues see Lejeune and Stiennon, *Légende de Roland*, I, chap. 5, section II, "Les Statues géantes de Roland," pp. 354–364, color pl. LVII; II, pls. 440, 441, 443–446. See also Horst Appuhn, "Reinold, der Roland von Dortmund; ein kunstgeschichtlicher Versuch über die Entstehung der Rolande," *Beiträge zur Kunst des Mittelalters, Festschrift für Hans Wentzel zum 60. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1975) pp. 1–10, ill.

16. Wilkinson, *History of Dalmatia*, I, pp. 367–368; Jackson, *Dalmatia*, I, p. 298.



14. *Roland and Oliver Separating from Charlemagne's Army*, miniature from *L'Entrée de l'Espagne*, ca. 1350. Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, cod. fr. XXI (photo: Biblioteca Marciana)

of the *Chanson de Roland*, had once, allegedly in A.D. 788, saved the city from a Saracen pirate attack.¹⁷

It was the practice of medieval heralds to assign coats of arms to each and every historical or legendary person of importance. To Roland, as a knight and paladin, armorial bearings were given as a matter of course. The Roland statues of Germany sometimes bear the *Reichsadler*, the double-headed eagle of the Empire, or the city's arms on their shields, but in French illustrated manuscripts of the *Chanson de Roland*, or on representations intended to be actual portraits, such as the silver statuettes at the foot of the *Karlsreliquiar* in Aachen Cathedral, Roland is shown with his attributed personal arms: or, a lion gules within a border engrailed sable. However, in North



15. Title woodcut of Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, Milan, 1513 (photo: after Lejeune and Stiennon, *La Légende de Roland*)

Italian tradition, as exemplified by the manuscript *L'Entrée de l'Espagne*, written in Padua around 1350, and in the Biblioteca Marciana (cod. fr. XXI) in Venice since the fifteenth century, Roland carries a banner: chequy of or and sable (Figure 14). The chequy shield also identifies Roland in the title woodcut of Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, printed in Milan in 1513 (Figure 15).¹⁸

17. Wilkinson, *History of Dalmatia*, I, p. 278.

18. Lejeune and Stiennon, *Légende de Roland*; Roland statues with *Reichsadler*: I, color pl. LVII (Bremen); II, pl. 436 (Nordhausen), 440 (Halberstadt), 441 (Zerbst), 443 (Perleberg), 444 (Stendal); Roland statues with city or other local arms: II, 439 (Hamburg), 449 (Prague); representations of Roland with lion arms: II, pls. 279, 372–375, 407, 411, 412, 414, 432, 433, 474.

The ermine with the motto *Malo mori quam foedari*, which has created so much confusion, was not exclusive to Naples; it was also the personal device of Anne, duchess of Brittany, who died in 1513.¹⁹ The coat of arms of Brittany was plain ermine, and there was even a second Order of the Ermine, founded in 1361, one hundred years earlier than the Neapolitan order, by John IV, the Conqueror, duke of Brittany (Figure 16).²⁰ The paladin Roland was a count of Brittany, and therefore Carpaccio used the ermine badge and motto of the last ruling duchess of Brittany, Anne, as another device to identify the Young Knight as Roland.

The most difficult part of the problem, for more than one reason, is to identify the person here portrayed as the Roland of Ragusa. There is no question that this painting is indeed a portrait: the very youthful, soft, and almost dreamy features are not what one would expect in a representation of a heroic champion, however much idealized. The face of the Young Knight with its round cheeks, small pointed chin, and narrow eyes under a broad forehead is of a type rare in Italy, but easily found in Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, the portrait painted in 1515 by Bernhard Strigel of Lajos II of Hungary (born 1506, reigned 1516–26, killed during the retreat after the disastrous battle of Mohács, 1526) shows the same



17. Bernhard Strigel, *Portrait of Lajos II of Hungary as a Child*, 1515. Oil on wood. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (photo: Kunsthistorisches Museum)

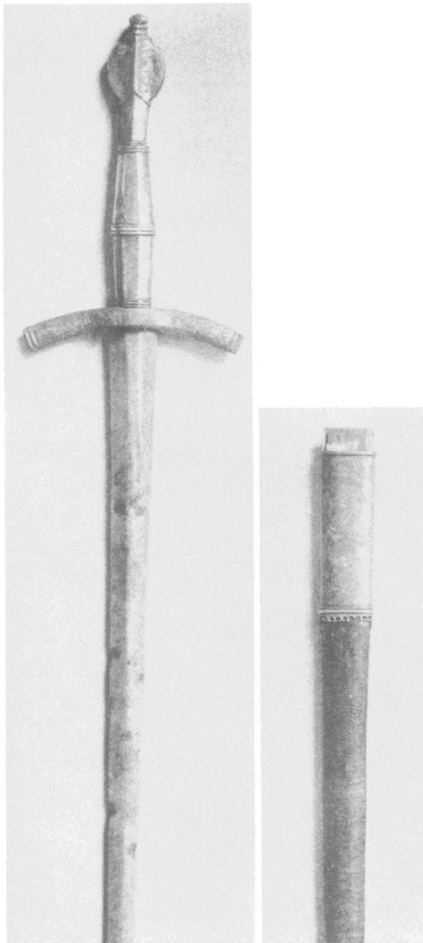
16. The arms of Brittany and Orléans; the shield of Brittany encircled by the collar of the Order of the Ermine (after Conrad Grünenberg, 1483)



475, 497; representations of Roland with checquy arms: II, pls. 249, 472, 499. Another version of Roland's arms—quarterly of gules and argent—is to be found in miniatures, and they are also mentioned in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516) canto VIII, l. 85. The same arms, incidentally, are those of the Veronese family Orlandi: see J. B. Rietstap, *Armorial général* (Leiden, 1856) II, p. 355; IV, pl. cccxix. In miniatures illustrated by Lejeune and Stiennon, *Légende de Roland*, II, pls. 503–505, Roland bears a cross in his shield as a Christian champion. The Roland of Ragusa has his shield incised with crosslines, which might indicate a quartered shield, with a central boss, and encircled by a leafy bordure (*orla*), which might be a canting device for “Orlando.”

19. J. Dielitz, *Die Wahl- und Denksprüche, Feldgeschreie, Losungen, Schlacht- und Volksrufe, besonders des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1884) p. 184.

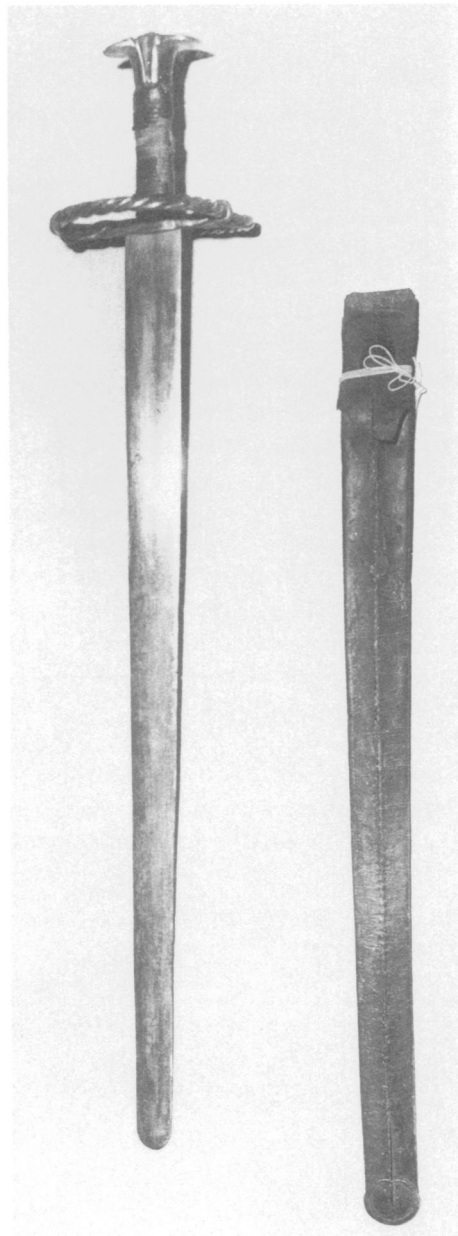
20. Bonanni, *Verzeichnis der Ritterorden*, p. 114, no. civ, pl. 160, fig. 94; Biedenfeld, *Geschichte der Ritterorden*, I, p. 36; R. Graf Stülfried-Alcántara and Ad. M. Hildebrand, eds., *Des Conrad Grünenberg Wappenbuch*, facsimile of the 1483 MS. (Görlitz, 1875) pl. XLIX.



18. State sword of the rector of Ragusa, late 15th century. Vienna, Waffensammlung (photo: after Boeheim)

19. So-called sword of King Lajos II of Hungary (killed in battle, 1526). Budapest, Hungarian National Museum (photo: Hungarian National Museum)

features, though the future king was then still a child (Figure 17).²¹ The main difficulty in claiming King Lajos II as the model for the Young Knight lies with the date M.D.X. on the first *cartellino*. In 1510 Lajos was only four years old, and his father, Laszlo II (born 1456, reigned 1471–1516), was still alive. If the date M.D.X. could be amended to M.D.X.X., a date which not only would fill the available space on the *cartellino* much better but would also be more compatible with the costume and the arms and armor, the portrait could be that of the very youthful, fourteen-year-old king of Hungary, Lajos II, who by treaty and tradition was the protector of Ragusa. It is also interesting



to see that Carpaccio did not use the state sword of the rector of Ragusa (Figure 18) as a model for the sword held by the Young Knight, but a *Katzbalger* identical to the sword in the collections of the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, traditionally known as the sword of King Lajos II (Figure 19).²²

21. Gertrud Otto, *Bernhard Strigel*, Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien 33 (Munich/Berlin, 1964) nos. 57, 61, color pl. 1, pl. 129.

22. Wendelin Boeheim, *Album hervorragender Gegenstände aus der Waffensammlung des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* (Vienna, 1898) II, pl. vi, fig. 1; Kalmár, *Régi magyar fegyverek*, fig. 104.

The iconographical evidence to be gleaned from this painting—the city of Ragusa in the background landscape, the checquy livery of the knight's arms, the ermine badge of Brittany, the oak tree and the stag as canting devices for place names on the Dalmatian coast—and the possibility that the Young Knight is a portrait of the king of Hungary as Ragusa's protector indicate that Carpaccio intended his work to represent the Roland of Ragusa, the secular counterpart of a patron saint's icon. Its direct parallel is *The Lion of St. Mark*, which Carpaccio painted in 1516 for the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, as a symbol of the strength of the Serenissima (Figure 20).

On earlier occasions, Carpaccio had painted his St. George cycle for the Scuola degli Schiavoni (the guildhall of the Dalmatian merchants) and his *Story of the Virgin* for the Scuola degli Albanesi (the guildhall of the Albanians) in Venice, and also the altarpiece for the cathedral of the archbishop of Dalmatia in Zara. The latter, incidentally, became a seminal work for the school of Dubrovnik.

It may have been because of these established connections with Dalmatia that Carpaccio was selected to create a work that could be used as a diplomatic pres-

ent for the Serenissima's old rival, Ragusa, which had become an ally at the time of Venice's political isolation through the League of Cambrai (1510). If such a diplomatic gift was considered, nothing could have been better suited than a representation of the valiant guardian of Ragusa's liberty and independence, the Roland of Ragusa, standing quietly alert, sheathing his sword, but ready to draw it at any time for his new ally.

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20. Carpaccio, *The Lion of St. Mark*, 1516. Oil on canvas. Venice, Doges' Palace (photo: Alinari)