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**“LA BERRETTA DUCALE CON DUE ORECCHIE GRANDI”.
A NOTE ON AN ICONOGRAPHIC DETAIL IN
THE DOUBLE PORTRAIT OF DUKE FEDERICO
DA MONTEFELTRO AND HIS SON GUIDOBALDO***

ABSTRACT: The double portrait of Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, and his son Guidobaldo, by Justus van Ghent and Pedro Berruguete, 1476–1480, represents a state, multi-generational, portrait by which not only Federico’s status as the military commander who won the highest chivalric honours of his day and the title of the Duke is represented, but also the legal passing of the hereditary right on his only legitimate male offspring, Guidobaldo. Its iconography has been the subject of research, and scholars have been in agreement regarding the most of the symbols of power represented in this painting. One iconographic detail – a hat resting on the lectern, and above Guidobaldo’s head, has often been omitted from the interpretations of the painting, or has been erroneously identified as a gift by the Shah of Persia, whose ambassador visited Urbino in 1472. We suggest that this was the ducal bereta described in the report of the ceremony of Federico’s investiture as Duke in 1474, by Bernardino Baldi who worked in the archives of Urbino when writing the biography of Federico da Montefeltro. In the description, Baldi noted that Federico was given a ducal bereta with ear flaps and pendants on both sides. Although Baldi did not provide a detailed description of the bereta, it corresponds to the painted one in the double portrait, and further underscores the self-promotional and state character of the image.

KEYWORDS: Federico da Montefeltro, double portrait of Federico da Montefeltro and his son Guidobaldo, iconography, regalia, ducal berretta.

The double portrait of Duke Federico da Montefeltro (1422–1482) and his son Guidobaldo, attributed to Justus van Ghent and Pedro Berruguete, was painted between 1476 and 1480 (today in *Galleria Nazionale delle Marche*, Urbino), and represents an unusual, if not unique for its time (ROSENBERG 1986: 213), multi-generational ducal portrait, in which the sitters are represented on a single wooden panel (the practice uncommon in the fifteenth century) and

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with the political significance reflected in the relationship between the Duke and his son symbolic of the transfer of the power to his young heir (ROSENBERG 1986: 214–215).

The placement of this painting within the Ducal Palace in Urbino is still uncertain, although, judging by its iconography, it was most probably intended for a public space. According to Pasquale Rotondi, who conducted the 1973 reconstruction of the Federico's studiolo, it was incorporated in the upper register of the decoration of this richly decorated room in the Ducal Palace, finished in 1476, a rare example of a princely study preserved in more or less original state until present. Its complex decoration lead scholars to interpret it as a place for study and contemplation, and as the reflection of the harmonious relation between the active life (*vita activa*) of the military leader-statesman, and the contemplative life (*vita contemplativa*) of the learned statesman-humanist Federico da Montefeltro. On the other hand, it has been suggested that it also served as a political and propagandistic memorial for Federico and his dynasty, which lead towards understanding of the function of this tiny room as, at least, semi-official (ROTONDI 1969; 1973: 561–613; CLOUGH 1973: 129–144; 1978: 718–734; 1984: 293–348; 1995: 19–50; WESTFALL 1978: 20–45; CHASTEL 1982: 364–370; CHELES 1986a: 269–286; CIERI VIA 1986: 47–64; 1992: 18–21; CREVATIN 1986: 417–439; PUDDU 1986: 487–512; ROSENBERG 1986: 217–222; TOMMASOLI 1986: 345–355; KEMPERS 1987: 219–243; REYNAUD, RESSORT 1991: 82–114; LIEBENWEIN 1992: 60–68, 74; COLE 1995: 67–92; 2016: 106–133; PERNIS 1997; KIRKBRIDE 2008; MILOSAVLJEVIĆ-AULT 2013: 43–91). The image of Federico da Montefeltro as a statesman–humanist has already been offered in the eulogies written by his contemporaries, among which is the biography of the Duke, written by the humanist Vespasiano da Bisticci around 1482 during his sojourn at the Court of Urbino, in which he gave the equal attention to Federico's military career and his wide education (BISTICCI 1970: 355–416). Vespasiano also provided an argument for the placement of this painting in the studiolo, since he mentioned one lifelike portrait of the Duke in the room, painted by a Flemish master, leading to the assumption that he referred to the double portrait, although he did not provide a clear identification:

Federico sent to Flanders to find a good master, and brought him to Urbino, where he made many (...) stately paintings (...) in his study, where he painted philosophers and poets and all the Church doctors (...) with exquisite art, and a portrait of his majesty from life, which lacks nothing but breath. (BISTICCI 1970: 384)

The Duke is shown seated in the act of reading wearing prominent signs of his military and dynastic honours, such as armour, as the military commander (*condottiere*) with his helmet, gauntlet and military baton aside, with his sword strapped at his left side. Over the armour, he is wearing a richly decorated red brocade robe, lined with ermine, wearing the collar and the pendant of the Order of the Ermine, and the garter of the Order of the Garter tied below his knee. His little son Guidobaldo is standing at his right side, wearing a richly decorated dress made of gold brocade, studded with jewels, holding the scepter on which is written PONTIFEX and above him, on the lectern, rests a red peaked hat with a button at the top of it, richly decorated with pearls and gems, with ear flaps on both

sides and with pendants hanging from them. The fact that Federico is represented reading a book and that he is wearing the robe over his armour has often been interpreted as a reflection of the aforementioned concepts of the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, in which the other, the *contemplativa*, prevails (LAVALLEYE 1964: 114; ROTONDI 1969: 77–85; CLOUGH 1978: 720–721; 1984: 335–336; 1995: 25–30; SLEPTZOFF 1978: 26–35; WESTFALL 1978: 20–45; CHELES 1986b: 15–25; 1991: 20; ROSENBERG 1986; KEMPERS 1987: 234–235; PAULY 1988: 256–250; LIEBENWEIN 1992: 71; COLE 1995: 90; 2016: 132–133; SIMONETTA 2007: 18–25; 2015: 37–44; MILOSAVLJEVIĆ-AULT 2013: 92–93). Charles Rosenberg referred to Vespasiano da Bisticci’s account of the Duke, in which he enumerated the illustrious men (*uomini illustri*), among which were humanists, theologians and philosophers, whose works Federico read. Among them was St. Thomas Aquinas, who is represented in the series of portraits of the illustrious men in the upper register of the decorative ensemble of the studiolo, and in whose *De regimine principum* Rosenberg recognized a key to the levels of symbolic meaning of the double portrait of the Duke and his son. In this work, Rosenberg reminds, St. Thomas suggested that the ruler must be militarily vigilant, just in administering laws, and must have good men to succeed him (ROSENBERG 1986: 216–217). Recently, Marcello Simonetta identified the book Federico is reading as *Moralia in Job*, a guide to living a good Christian life, written by Gregory the Great, who was also noted by Vespasiano among the authors whose writings Federico gladly read, and who was also represented among the illustrious men in the studiolo, thus adding to the concept of the *vita contemplativa* recognized in the double portrait of the Duke and his little son (SIMONETTA 2007: 26–27; 2015: 43–44).

Despite its presumed humanist implications, this complex representation was also clearly an official, self-promotional, portrait of the Duke Federico da Montefeltro, a mercenary whose life was filled with military success as much as with his striving to ensure his social and political position. Federico was an illegitimate son of the Count Guidantonio da Montefeltro, formally legitimized by the Pope Martin V in 1424, summoned by the citizens of Urbino to govern the state in 1444, in spite of his illegitimate birth, after the untimely death of his half-brother Oddantonio. This election was legitimized by the bull issued by the Pope Nicolas V in 1447, by which the Pope legitimized Federico’s reign only “*in temporalibus*” (without the right of succession of his children). In 1452 he became the general of the army of Naples, under the King Alfonso I, and in 1460 he received the title of the General of the Italian League by the Pope Pius II. In the same year, he married Battista Sforza, who gave him the only legitimate heir, Guidobaldo, in 1472. In 1462, under Pius II, he became the Captain General of the Papal Army, and in 1464, Pius II guaranteed his legitimate male offspring the right of succession of the territories Federico conquered. Pope Paul II renewed Federico’s contract as the General of the Papal Troups in 1465, and proclaimed him the Gonfaloniere (Standard Bearer) of the Papal Troups in 1466. Perhaps the most important event in Federico’s life occurred in August 1474 when the Pope Sixtus IV conferred on him the title of The Knight of St. Peter, the Gonfaloniere of the Holy Roman Church, and the most important of all, the hereditary title of the Duke, guaranteeing the right of succession to his legitimate offspring. In the same year, he was introduced to the

prestigious orders of chivalry, the Order of the Ermine conferred on him by the King Ferrante I, and the Order of the Garter by the King Edward IV (TOMASSOLI 1978: 247–261).

The symbols of the titles he received in 1474 are all represented in this painting, and were identified by the scholars (cited above). All but one particular motif: the red peaked hat, or a bonnet, with a button at the top of it, richly decorated with pearls and gems, with flaps on both sides and with pendants hanging from them, resting on the lectern above the young Montefeltro heir, Guidobaldo. This hat has been either omitted from the iconographic interpretations of the painting, or has been identified as the gift by Uzun Hasan, the Shah of Persia, presented to Federico by the Shah's ambassador, a Jewish doctor Isaac who came to Italy in 1472 to solicit aid in the battle against the Turks (LAVALLEYE 1964: 114; ROTONDI 1969: 77–85; CLOUGH 1978: 720–721; 1984: 335–336; 1995: 25–30; SLEPTZOFF 1978: 26–35; WESTFALL 1978: 20–45; CHELES 1986b: 15–25; 1991: 20; ROSENBERG 1986: 220–221; KEMPERS 1987: 234–235; LIEBENWEIN 1992: 71; COLE 1995: 90; 2016: 132–133; SIMONETTA 2007: 18–25; MILOSAVLJEVIĆ-AULT 2013: 92–93). Charles Rosenberg argued in favour of this interpretation, noting that Isaac visited several of the principal powers of Italy, including the Pope Sixtus IV (who responded by preaching a crusade), the King of Naples and the Venetian Senate. The very fact that Federico also received this ambassador and was given such a magnificent gift placed him in this very august company (ROSENBERG 1986: 221):

The Shah's present, then, signified the extent of the Duke's fame, magnificence and military reputation. The emblems of the two chivalric orders, gifts from the King of England and King of Naples, attested to the same virtues. Thus, the jewelled hat and chivalric emblems may be seen as a testament to the glory of the Duke, a glory which he would pass on with his name and dominion to his son (...) Given Sixtus's dedication to the crusading ideal and Federico's special allegiance to this pontiff who finally granted him the title of Duke of Urbino in 1474, it is not unreasonable to find a symbol of the continuing battle against the infidel in so seminal an image as the Urbino double portrait (...) The Persian jewelled hat in the painting may thus stand as an oblique symbol of Federico's continued devotion to the crusading ideal and his dedication to the Church. (ROSENBERG 1986: 211–212)

On the other hand, Cecil H. Clough argued that this hat was the Ducal beret given to Federico by Sixtus IV on the occasion of his investiture (CLOUGH 1984: 335–336) that, along with the scepter held by his young son, Guidobaldo, represented the testimony that the authority was legally held, having been granted by the pope. Thus, this representation had dual importance, according to Clough, as it featured Duke Federico's concern that his son should rule after him, and was to serve as a permanent memorial for the Duke and his dynasty and of his honors and rise to fortune (CLOUGH 1984: 336). Charles Rosenberg rejected Clough's argument on the ground that there are no other images of Federico in which this kind of ducal beret is shown (nor, apparently, the one presented by the Shah of Persia). He admits, though, that there is an indication of what the usual 15th century ducal beret looked like, because in a statue of the Duke Borso d'Este in Ferrara, unfortunately destroyed in the 18th century, Borso wore a high, soft peaked cap with a folded brim and a button at the top (ROSENBERG 1986: 220).

Although we do not have any comparative material to confirm the assumption that this bonnet is actually the Montefeltro's ducal beret (there is another representation of the beret worn by the Duke in the famous portrait painted by Piero della Francesca between 1465 and 1472, but it belongs to another style), we do have a description of the ceremony of Federico's investiture by Bernardino Baldi, the theologian and scholar from Urbino, who worked in the Montefeltro archives in 1601, while he was writing the biography of Federico da Montefeltro, *Vita e fatti di Federico da Montefeltro Duca di Urbino*. Baldi mentions the presence of the ambassadors of the Persian Shah at the Court of Urbino in 1472 (BALDI 1824: 196), but he does not mention any gift Federico received on this occasion, especially the one that must have had so great political and personal importance to Federico that he had it represented in his state portrait along with other symbols of his personal, political and social achievements and status. In the descriptions of the ceremonies held in 1474 on the occasion of the conferral of the Order of the Ermine to Federico in Naples, and on the occasion of his investiture as the Duke in Rome, Baldi did mention, among other regalia represented in this double portrait, the *ducal beret with ear flaps and pendants*, which corresponds to the one represented in the painting.

The first honour Federico da Montefeltro received in 1474 was the Chivalric Order of the Ermine, conferred on him by King Ferrante I in Naples. Baldi gives a vivid description:

... with great promises and offers [Federico] was summoned by the King of Naples, and by the Pontiff to Rome (...) Upon receiving and welcoming him with great honour, several days after his arrival, that is on the September 11, the King gave him the Order of the Ermine, which he conferred on the signori and persons very close and very dear to him. In the morning of the day destined for this solemn occasion ... a bishop sang the mass in the Royal Chapel; between the ceremonies, and after the epistle, Federico, accompanied by the Duke of Calabria and by many other signori and barons, went to the sacristy where he was given a *turca* (this is what they called, at those times, certain long robes, probably because they were in Turkish style) made of white damask: getting dressed, he returned to the chapel and kissed the hands of the King who had him seated by his side. After a Gospel was sung, while the Duke was standing, the King draped him in a long mantle (...) made of red satin lined with ermine, open at one side, over the *turca*. This done, the celebrant, with an eloquent and rich sermon, spoke of the importance of this degree, and commemorated the qualities that had to flourish in those on which it was conferred, and the favour which they obtain, as between them and the King is contracted the title of brotherhood. (BALDI 1826: 188–189)

In a footnote to this passage (P), Baldi further explains:

After the mass, the King (...) accompanied [Federico] to the altar and, while [Federico] was kneeling, saying some solemn words placed around his neck the most beautiful golden chain from which hung an Ermine, the sign of the order, decorated with diamonds and other precious stones. (BALDI 1826: 227)

After the conferral of this chivalric order, Federico da Montefeltro set off to Rome, first to be created the Gonfaloniere of the Holy Roman Church and the General of the New League, then The Knight of St. Peter, and the Duke of Urbino, as Baldi relates:

... on the 15th of the month he marched to Rome, where the Pontiff waited for him with grand desire (...) The day after his arrival, [the Pope] received him to invest him with the Ducal dignity, which he already had promised [Federico] in his letter before he went to Naples. At the given hour, and with due preparations of this ceremony done, which with the [presence of] numerous cardinals, signori and barons was very solemn (...) As the ceremony ended, two standards were brought in, one with the emblems of the Church, and the other with those of the Pontiff, and were handed over to the Pope himself, who at this moment created the kneeling [Federico] the Gonfaloniere of the Church, and proclaimed him the General of the New League. (BALDI 1826: 189–190)

Again, Baldi included more details in a footnote (Q):

Escorted to the Pontiff's room, in which due reverence was made, dressed in a long mantle made of gold brocade open on the right shoulder, with the Pope seated on the elevated throne, [Federico] was placed to his left, on the seat below the seats of the cardinals. After the sacred college made the due reverence, as he was to be made the Knight of St. Peter before he was made the Duke, the mass begun and the glory was said, [Federico] was brought in front of the Pope by the count Girolamo Riario and by Giovanni della Rovere, both of them the Pope's nephews, where, as he was placed kneeling before the seat, the Pontif took the sword, which was held by one of these two, and blessing [Federico] with many ceremonies and orations placed [the sword] in his hand and offering it to him, [the Pontiff] said the solemn words that he gives it to [Federico] to fight with it for the Church and eradicate the enemies of the Crist's Cross: this said, the cardinal Orsino strapped the sword to his side, while at the same time the count Girolamo and master Giovanni attached the golden spurs to his footwear. Thus prepared, at the sign of the master of the ceremony, he took the sword out of the sheath and with great promptness extending his hand he brandished the sword three times, and as he placed it back into the sheath it was taken away by the count Girolamo and the spurs were unlaced by the other nephew. As an epistle was read, [Federico] accompanied by them, returned to the Pontiff to give him the usual oath of fidelity, while all the time the musicians were singing the litanies: when this ceremony was over, he returned to his usual seat. Thus, created the Knight, as was said, and in order to be created the Duke, before the gospel was read, [Federico] was led by two cardinals, one of which was Francesco Gonzaga, the deacon and the elected bishop of Mantova, and the other Battista Zeno, the Venetian deacon who was also elected bishop of Vicenza, to the sacristy of the chapel, where, as the mantle of the Knight was taken off he was vested in a ducal dress made of gold brocade, and thus accompanied by the same [cardinals], he returned to his place, where he remained until the gospel was read: and at the time of the offertory, the same [cardinals] escorted [Federico] to the Pope, who gave him the kiss of peace (placing on his neck a golden chain, from which there hung a fine Dalascio) placing on his head the *ducal bereta with two large ear flaps and with pendants on both sides, according to the ancient habit (la berretta ducale con due orecchie grandi, e pendenti da ambedue i lati secondo l' uso antico)*, and he gave [Federico] the scepter made of gilded silver, ca. un braccio long [ca. 50 cm, A. M.], while giving numerous benedictions and admonitions that are usually given to those who are decorated with such dignity. Then, as he moved a bit aside, a book was brought in which was a form of an oath of fidelity only to the Pontiffs of the Holy Roman Church, that [Federico] read solemnly and aloud; this done, with the same beretta and the scepter he was brought again to the Pontif, kissing his

feet with profound humility, while [the Pontif] said more prayers above [Federico] who was kneeling and bent, after which he raised and kissed the hands of the Pope who embraced him with much tenderness. Moving away from him, [Federico] was taken to the seats of the cardinals, whose hands he kissed, giving due reverence also to the empty seats of those who were absent. Thus finishing the salutations, he was seated among the cardinals, all the time holding the scepter in his hand and the ducal berretta on his head. (BALDI 1826: 227–230; DENISTOUN 1851: 209–211)

Baldi did not provide the description of the ceremony of the conferral of the Order of the Garter, which he erroneously dated in 1476, as it was presented to him via proxy, but he did mention its regalia:

Edward IV, the King of England, sent his ambassadors with grand solemnity, with great love for [Federico's] fame, to endow him with the Order of the Garter, instituted by Edward III in 1348 (...) [the knights of the Order] wore below the knee a strap decorated with many jewels, around which there runs a French motto damning those who think evil. The image of this belt with the aforesaid words appears not only on certain bronze medals, but also at the various places sculpted and painted, among the ornaments of the Court of Urbino, and elsewhere. (BALDI 1826: 196–197)

From these descriptions we can discern all the symbols of the honours Federico received in 1474, and we can recognize them in the dual portrait of Federico and his little son: the ducal robe, the scepter, the garter, the collar and the chain of the Ermine, the sword, the bereta with ear flaps and pendants. It is interesting to note, though, that Federico is wearing the red brocade dress – the one he received from King Ferrante in Naples, it seems, as it is lined with ermine – and the symbols of the knighthood – wearing the collar and the chain of the ermine, the garter, the sword. It is the little boy, Guidobaldo, who is wearing the gold brocade robe and is holding the sceptre, and above him, on the lectern, rests the *ducal bereta* we recognized from the description given by Bernardino Baldi. It thus underscores even a documentary function of this state portrait that serves as a representation and legitimization not only of Federico's status as the military commander who won the highest chivalric honours of his day, but also of the the passing of the hereditary right on his only legitimate male offspring, future duke Guidobaldo da Montefeltro.

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ЈЕДНА БЕЛЕШКА О ДВОЈНОМ ПОРТРЕТУ ВОЈВОДЕ ФЕДЕРИКА
ДА МОНТЕФЕЛТРА И ЊЕГОВОГ СИНА ГВИДОБАЛДА

Резиме

Двојни портрет урбинског војводе, кондогјера Федерика да Монтефелтра (Federico da Montefeltro, 1422–1482) и његовог сина Гвидобалда, приписан Јустусу из Гана (Justus van Ghent) и Педру Беругетеу (Pedro Berruguete), настао између 1476. и 1480. године, пример је репрезентативног државничког портрета на коме је представљен легитимни статус овог војника који је освојио највише војне и државне почести свог времена. Он, у исти мах, представља легитимитет његовог јединог наследника, сина Гвидобалда, који ће постати урбински војвода 1482. и владати до своје смрти 1508. године. Ова слика је била предмет иконографских анализа и често је тумачена у контексту студиола војводе Федерика да Монтефелтра у његовој палати у Урбину, као представа хармоничног односа између активног и контемплативног

живота. Научници се, такође, слажу да је на слици представљен репертоар симбола који се везују за војводине почасте: припадност витешким редовима Хермелина и Подвезице, статус генерала папске војске, и војводска титула. Све их је примио 1474. године, и они представљају врхунац његових личних и државничких стремљења и достигнућа. Ипак, постоји један иконографски детаљ – капа која је одложена на сталак за читање, изнад главе малог Гвидобалда – која је често изостављана из иконографских анализа, или је, по нашем мишљењу, погрешно тумачена као поклон који је 1472. године Федерико да Монтефелтро добио од персијског шаха, приликом посете његових амбасадора Урбину. Верујемо да се, заправо, ради о војводској капи коју је Федерико добио приликом своје инвеституре као војводе, 1474, коју је описао Бернардино Балди (Bernardino Baldi), урбински теолог и научник, који је, пишући Федерикову биографију 1601. године, боравио у урбинском државном архиву, где је наишао на званичне описе церемонија из 1474. године и које је пренео у војводину биографију. Балди је описао сличну капу са ушима и кићанкама коју је као новопроглашени војвода који је стекао наследну титулу, добио заједно са скиптром. Иако је Балди није детаљно описао, верујемо да се ради баш о оној која је насликана на двојном војводском портрету. Такође, примећујемо да Федерико да Монтефелтро на овој слици носи витешка знамења и одећу, а да Гвидобалдо носи војводску хаљину и знамење војводске титуле. Тиме се додатно потврђује, верујемо, државнички и политичко-пропагандни, али и документарни карактер ове слике.

Кључне речи: Федерико да Монтефелтро, двојни портрет Федерика да Монтефелтра и његовог сина Гвидобалда, иконографија, симболи политичке моћи, војводска капа.