

## The Likenesses of Shakespeare.

BY ALEXANDER CARGILL.



PART from the glorious body of writings that bear his name, how very little does the world possess to-day that belonged to Shakespeare. How little is known with certainty regarding his personal history and appearance that can enable us adequately to judge as to what manner of man he was in the flesh—as he lived, moved, and had his being in this work-a-day world some three centuries ago! Many lives of Shakespeare have, it is true, been written with more or less elaboration and ingenuity, yet the really credible facts of his career may amply enough be summarized in a few paragraphs.

What, then, as to his image or likeness? Even of that treasure of the Homer of England—

The maker of our stately English speech—the world has *almost* been denied a copy in which implicit trust may be placed. Would it not, perhaps, have been more in keeping with Shakespeare's transcendent genius, as well as with the mystery that envelops so much of his life, had there never been a single copy left behind him of what, *at best*, only purports to be his likeness?

Be that as it may, there are not a few copies extant that at least exhibit *something* of his likeness in the flesh, and in spite of certain flaws and imperfections attached to most of these copies, they must form a subject of unique interest to all the great poet's admirers—a countless host in almost every country in the civilized world. By far the most important example of these is, of course,

### THE BUST OF SHAKESPEARE

in the chancel of the Church of Holy Trinity

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in his native town of Stratford-on-Avon. With this likeness generations of pilgrims to that classic shrine have been familiar, ever delighted to gaze upon the marble image with profound admiration. The features of the poet as therein expressed are probably better known than those of any other great Englishman who lived before or after Shakespeare's time—for do they not represent in some fair measure the lineaments of one whose works are the heritage not of a sect, or party, or nation, but of mankind?

It is believed that when Shakespeare died, on the 25th April, 1616, exactly fifty-two years of age, a cast of his features was taken—by whom is not known, though the name of the sculptor of the bust, Gerrard or Gerald Johnson, a Hollander, has been suggested. Johnson has been credited with having done his part of the work well, since, before its erection in the chancel of the church, the bust was probably approved by Shakespeare's relations as a good likeness, and deemed worthy of its conspicuous position and

of the man it represented. As is well known to all who have seen the bust, its prominent characteristic is the calm serenity and stately gentleness of the expression of the features; an expression that fairly well satisfies the popular ideal of England's most glorious poet.

Since its erection in the chancel—some time between 1616 and 1623—the bust has experienced not a few vicissitudes. Originally coloured over to resemble life, a custom of the period, the bust was never once restored

or touched up in any way till 1748—a century and a quarter afterwards—when its condition after such a lapse of time can be readily imagined. In the latter



THE STRATFORD BUST.

year, however, at the instance of an ancestor of the famous actress, Mrs. Siddons, it received careful and loving attention; the old colours were fetched forth anew, and the monumental setting was improved and made worthy of the poet. The necessary expenses of this work were, it is interesting to note, defrayed out of the profits of a representation of the play of "Othello" by a company of actors "strolling" by Stratford-on-Avon at the time.

About fifty years after, Mr. Malone, well known in his day as an enthusiastic admirer and commentator of Shakespeare, bethought him that the bust required further renewing, and took it upon himself to "cover it over with one or more coats of white paint, thus," in the opinion of those who witnessed the sacrilegious act, "at once destroying its original character and greatly injuring the expression of the face." For this unfortunate display of hero-worship, Malone was severely censured, and there is at least one record extant that expresses in a measure the feeling of annoyance his action created at the time. In the old visitors' album at the Church of Holy Trinity, the following lines were inscribed as a protest against Malone's offence:—

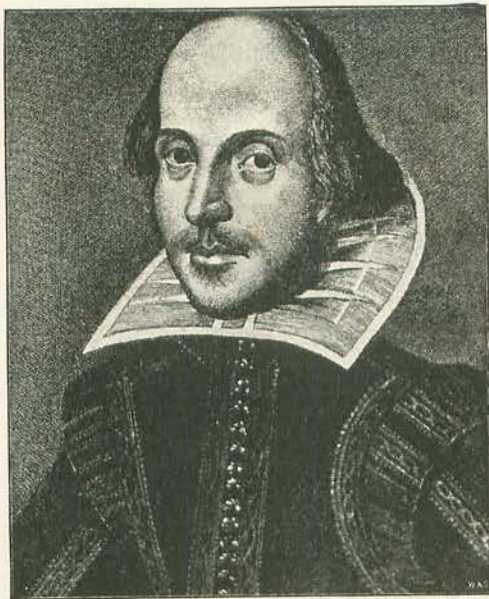
Stranger! to whom this monument is shewn,  
Invoke the poet's curse upon Malone,  
Whose meddling zeal his barbarous taste betrays,  
And daubs his tomb-stone, as he marr'd his plays!

The bust remained for many years in the condition in which Malone had left it. Eventually, however, it was restored once more. Malone's daub was completely obliterated, and the original colouring, as "improved" in the year 1748, as far as possible renewed. In that satisfactory condition the bust has, with careful tending, remained ever since, though it has been occasionally touched up to preserve the glorious features of the "carved marble" as they deserve to be, and doubtless will be, preserved in all time to come.

The inscriptions on the mural tablet below the bust must, of course, ever claim regard for their references to the death of Shakespeare, but they are quite overshadowed in importance by the well-known inscription engraved on the stone slab that covers the tomb, since tradition has it that the lines were the composition of the poet himself, and penned, very probably, when on his death-bed. They read as follows:—

Good frend for Iesys sake forbear  
To digg the dyst enclosed here.  
Blese be ye man yt spares thes stones  
And cvrst be he yt moves my bones.

#### THE DROESHOUT PRINT.



THE DROESHOUT PRINT.

In point of intrinsic worth and literary interest, the Droeshout print of Shakespeare—an engraving of his likeness given to the world for the first time along with the original edition of his collected works in 1623—ranks next to the Stratford bust. Some authorities place what is known as the Chandos portrait of the poet before the Droeshout print; while, again, others value the print even before the bust. But there are one or two good reasons why, in this particular instance, the work of the engraver should have prior claim

to regard to that of the painter.

In the first place, the Droeshout print was executed by a skilful artist whose profession it was to "draw from the life"; whereas the Chandos portrait is only supposed to have been painted by one or other of two (or perhaps of three) men whose calling was that of the player.

The Droeshout print bears, in the second place, the special *imprimatur* of Shakespeare's ever-glorious associate, Ben Jonson; and not only his, but it also has the indorsement of the poet's intimate friends and "fellowes," Heminge and Condell, who were remembered in his last will and testament.

In the third place, there is the very suggestive fact that between the Stratford bust and

the Droeshout print there are certain striking correspondences, not so observable between the bust and the Chandos portrait, that have led the best authorities to infer that the sculptor of the bust in all probability had the print before him while executing the details of his work, though modelling mainly from the mask taken after the poet's death. If that inference be correct, it again further infers that the Droeshout print had received the approval of the poet's relatives, and also that Heminge and Condell obtained their sanction before affixing it side by side with Ben Jonson's dedicatory lines in the forefront of the famous first folio referred to. These lines declare as follows :—

## TO THE READER.

This figure that thou seest put,  
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut ;  
Wherein the graver had a strife  
With Nature, to out-doe the life :  
O, could he but have drawne the wit  
As well in brasse as he hath hit  
His face, the print would then surpasse  
All that was ever writ in brasse ;  
But since he cannot, Reader, looke  
Not on his picture, but his Booke.

B. J.

In this work of Martin Droeshout there is nothing, beyond what the print itself bears, to tell of the circumstances in which it was originally executed. Assuming that other portraits of the poet were, in addition to this one, taken during his lifetime, the Droeshout print was doubtlessly one of the earliest copies. Its date, however, is unknown.

Judging from the appearance of the face generally, and comparing that with his other likenesses, Shakespeare had not, it is pretty certain, attained his fortieth year when, with this portrait,

. . . . . the graver had  
a strife  
With Nature !

THE CHANDOS  
PORTRAIT.

Of the countless editions of the works of Shakespeare that show a frontispiece likeness of the poet, it is a singular fact that by far the greater number favour the Chandos portrait. The face and features

of Shakespeare as "imaged" in that portrait are those with which his readers are probably most familiar. It is not easy to account for this, since the portrait is certainly not the first in point of genuineness, whatever may be its degree of artistic merit. Possibly it satisfies more fully the popular ideal of the likeness of a great creative poet than does the bust or print just referred to. Be that as it may, the Chandos portrait, for various reasons, more than justifies its being kept in the custody of the nation as a very rare and valuable relic of its greatest dramatist. Its history is, briefly, as follows :—

According to the catalogue of the National Portrait Gallery, where the relic is now safeguarded : "The Chandos portrait was the property of John Taylor, the player, by whom, or by Richard Burbadge, it was painted. The picture was left by the former in his will to Sir William Davenant. After his death it was bought by Betterton, the actor, upon whose decease Mr. Keck, of the Temple, purchased it for forty guineas, from whom it was inherited by Mr. Nicholls, of Michenden House, Southgate, Middlesex, whose only daughter married James, Marquis of Carnarvon, afterwards Duke of Chandos, father of Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham." Hence the name of the portrait, and such, in substance, is all that is known with certainty regarding its history.

## THE JANSEN PORTRAIT.

It is a remarkable circumstance that not a few of the best-known likenesses of Shakespeare should have been executed by others than his own countrymen. As its name would seem to imply, the "Jansen" portrait was also the production of a foreigner. There are others, also, of the Shakespearean likenesses yet to be considered that owe their origin very largely to the skill of devout admirers of the poet who were not in any way of his national kith or kin. In the "Jansen" portrait, so called from the name of the painter, Cornelius Jansen, it is quite



THE CHANDOS PORTRAIT.



THE JANSEN PORTRAIT.

possible that we have a picture of Shakespeare that shows him as he appeared about his forty-sixth year, and when fast approaching, if not already arrived at, the summit of his physical and intellectual strength and glory. It is also possible that the likeness was painted as a memento or token of that friendship and regard which were entertained for the poet by the Earl of Southampton almost from the outset of Shakespeare's career.

#### THE FELTON HEAD.

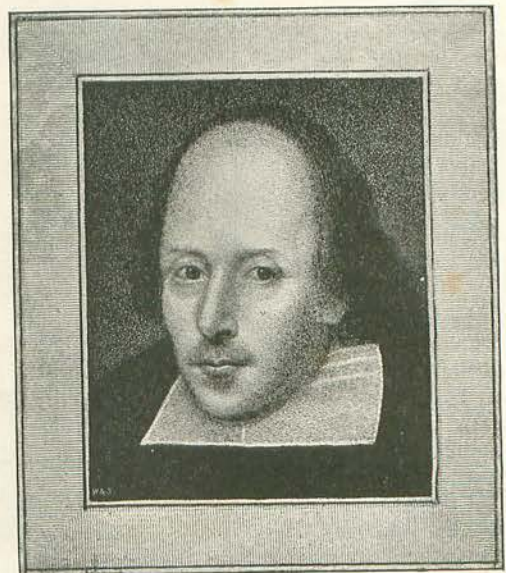
Apart from the question of authenticity, it is safe to say that the likeness of Shakespeare known under the name of the Felton head is one that will probably fascinate, more than any other portrait, the great majority of the poet's admirers. It will, however, speak for itself as to this. But for a somewhat severe and sad, if not dissatisfied, look that seems to haunt the eyes, the portrait takes rank, in at least its excellence of ideality, with any other example. Allowing for some exaggeration in the height of the forehead, a defect which has led some experts to infer that the Felton portrait was in existence even before the Droeshout print, and that, indeed, it served as the model for the engraver, it is assuredly a splendid portrait of Shakespeare, and speaks eloquently of the painter's lofty conception of the poet's features. Its history is curious, if for nothing more than the fact that the name, "Guil-

Shakespear," and the date, "1597," together with the initials, "R. B.," traced on the reverse side of the picture, indicate the likeness to have been, as some authorities believe, the handiwork of Richard Burbadge, the player, who is thus for the second time identified with his great contemporary in this interesting connection.

#### THE "BECKER" MASK.

In the year 1849 there was discovered at Mayence what bore to be a genuine though gruesome relic of Shakespeare, and claimed to be set almost side by side in value and interest with the Stratford bust itself. This relic was declared to be nothing less than the mask of the face and features of the poet taken after his death in April, 1616. As nothing was ever known as to what befell the mask after Gerard Johnson had manipulated it in the preparation of the bust—assuming it had been in his hands for that purpose—the finding of such an extraordinary relic created widespread interest, not only throughout England and Europe, but in America, where also there were those who were ready to believe in its story with sincere trust.

The resurrection of the veritable death-mask of the immortal author of "Hamlet" not unnaturally suggests, as it no doubt suggested at the time, a famous scene in the last act of that famous tragedy. Nevertheless, its discovery was hailed with enthusiasm, and what purported to be an undoubted clue



THE FELTON HEAD.

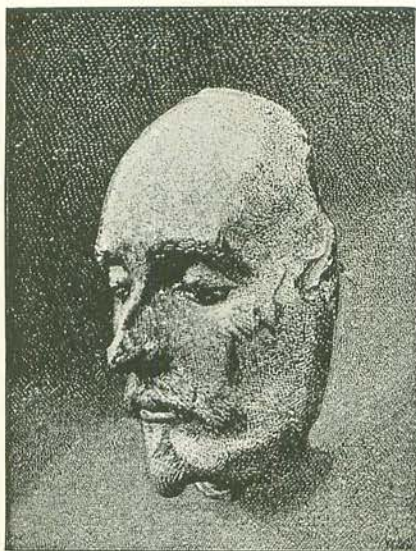
to a mystery more than two centuries old was taken up at once and followed with rare persistence by those who declared they held, in the possession of the mask, the only key to its solution.

The gentleman into whose possession this curiosity came was named Ludwig Becker, who, writing in 1850, gave so entertaining an account of it as to induce Mr. Page, a well-known artist of New York, to visit Germany and there examine this famous relic for himself. After a prolonged scrutiny of the mask, Mr.

Page declared his firm belief in its *bona fides*, and thereupon made from it a very interesting set of models of the features of Shakespeare, which, at the time, attracted great attention. An excellent account of the history of the mask was also written by Mr. Page for *Scribner's Magazine* of May, 1876. The relic itself was brought to London for exhibition, where it secured many admirers and willing believers, and it is actually recorded that some were so affected by the sight that they burst into tears!

#### THE STRATFORD PORTRAIT.

Like the "Becker" mask, the Stratford portrait of Shakespeare, so-called from its having been discovered (in 1860) in that town, is quite a modern "find." Whether the portrait had its original home in London or elsewhere is unknown; but, like the "Becker" mask, it, too, was taken to the Metropolis for public exhibition. Many opinions were pronounced in favour of its genuineness, while many more unhesi-



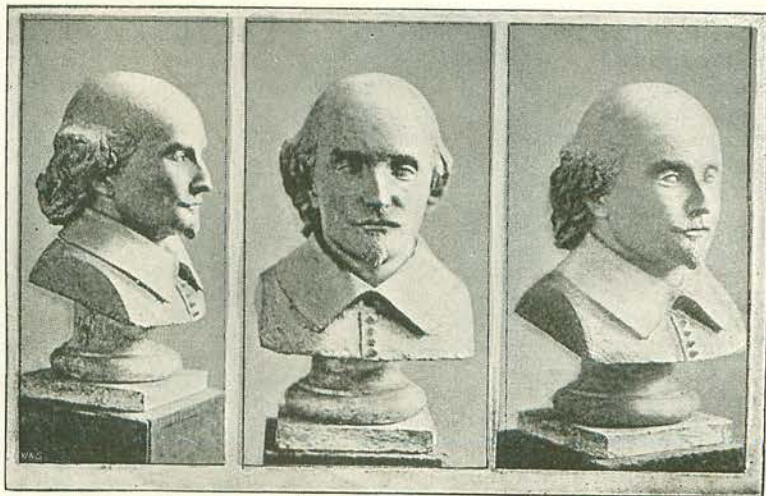
THE "BECKER" MASK.

tatingly discredited it. At the time of its exhibition a newspaper warfare was waged over the question with results that, on the whole, were unfavourable to the pretensions of the portrait.

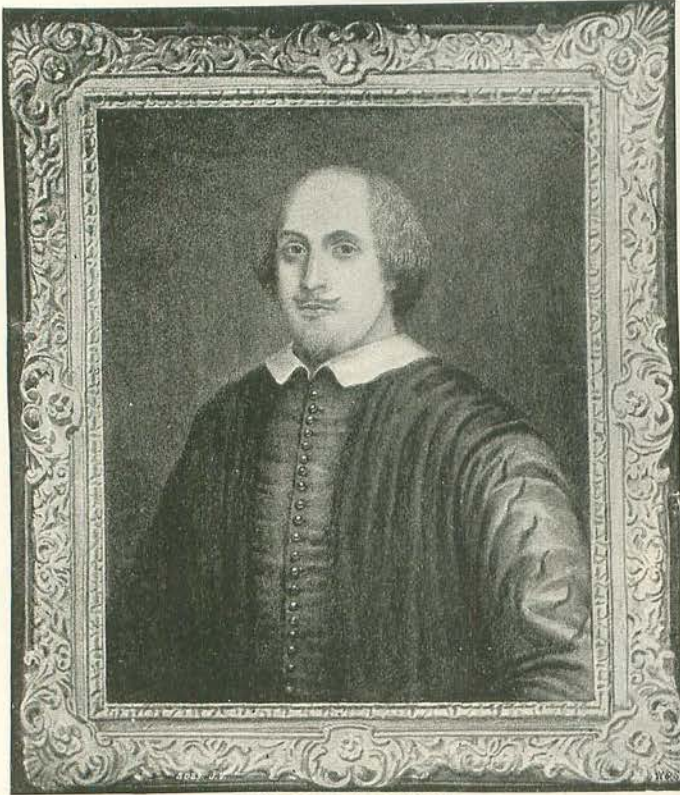
In this likeness Shakespeare appears as if in the very flush and heyday of his early manhood and strength. A robust, almost bucolic, massiveness and compactness is, perhaps, the prominent physical trait. A calm, dignified repose fills the full, winsome eyes, and at the same time gently compresses the eloquent lips. The forehead is ample: somewhat less

lofty than in the bust, much less so than in almost any other portrait, but still a fine, full brow that could only have been that of a highly gifted man. Like so much else connected with Shakespeare, the history of this portrait—when, and by whom, and for whom painted—is enveloped in obscurity.

Some authorities believe it to have been the work of a local amateur, who either painted it to satisfy his own or another's ideal. Some even incline to the view that it was made to order, to do duty as a common tavern-sign! If so, then it is surely one of the best examples of the kind ever executed. After



PAGE'S MODELS OF THE MASK.



THE STRATFORD PORTRAIT.

having been exhibited in London, the picture was taken back to Stratford, where it has ever since found a place of honour and safety in the house in Henley Street where Shakespeare was born.

#### THE HILLIARD AND AURIOL MINIATURES.

The former is by far the more interesting and meritorious. When its pretensions to genuineness were put forward early in the present century, the Hilliard miniature belonged to Sir James Bland Burges, Bart., who, in a letter to a friend giving an account of it, alleged that it had been discovered in a bureau which belonged to his mother, who had inherited it from her father, Lord Somerville, and thus traced its history



THE HILLIARD MINIATURE.

the same. When its claims were put forward for the first time in 1815, Mr. Dunford, the owner, assured the public that he "saw in the portrait a likeness to the Droeshout print." Mr. Wivill, the well-known expert, compared them carefully and was afraid the resemblance was of the kind discovered by Fluellan between Macedon and Monmouth! When the portrait was exhibited shortly after its discovery in the year mentioned, it is recorded



THE AURIOL MINIATURE.

back to the days when the poet lived in retirement at Stratford.

The Auriol miniature is certainly more pretentious than the other, though greatly inferior as a work of art or even as a likeness of the poet. It was claimed for it that it at one time belonged to the Southampton family, but there is no evidence of this. It bears to have been painted when Shakespeare was in his thirty-third year, and it is recorded that "to the bottom of the frame of the miniature was appended a pearl, intended to infer that the original was a *pearl of men!*"

#### THE DUNFORD LIKENESS.

If the likeness known as the Dunford portrait has the slightest resemblance in any particular to Shakespeare, that individual is exceptionally gifted who can trace the same. When its claims were put forward for the first time in 1815, Mr. Dunford, the owner, assured the public that he "saw in the portrait a likeness to the Droeshout print." Mr. Wivill, the well-known expert, compared them carefully and was afraid the resemblance was of the kind discovered by Fluellan between Macedon and Monmouth! When the portrait was exhibited shortly after its discovery in the year mentioned, it is recorded that "of not more than 6,000 who went to see it, 3,000 declared their belief in its originality." Even an authority like Sir Thomas Lawrence voted in its favour. Moreover, it was twice engraved by Turner in



THE DUNFORD LIKENESS.

mezzotinto, so sincerely did many persons believe in it as a true likeness of Shakespeare. Eventually, however, it lost credit, and is now only remembered as an instance of that strange trait in the character of the British

public, viz., its easy gullibility in matters appertaining to Shakespeare.

ZOUST'S PORTRAIT.

An excellent likeness of the poet, which strikingly recalls the Chandos portrait, is

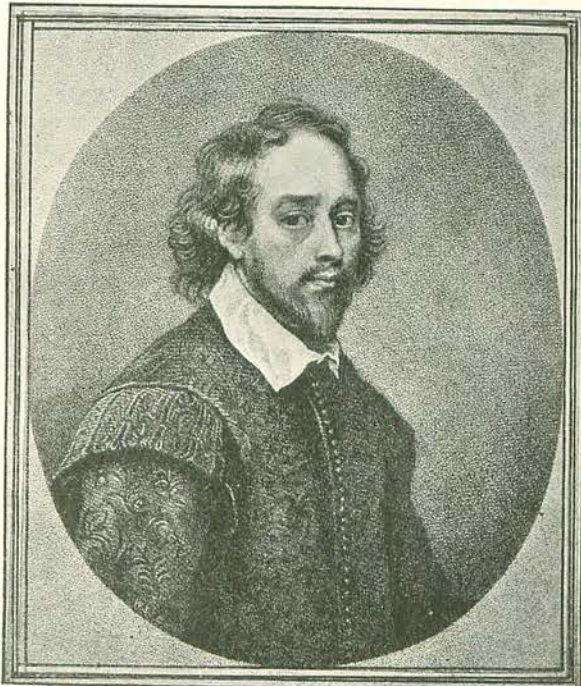


THE STACE PICTURE.

one that was alleged to have been painted by Soest, or Zoust. As that artist was not born till 1635, when Shakespeare had been dead for nineteen years, his example must have been from a copy—probably that in the possession of Sir William Davenant, afterwards known as the Chandos portrait.

THE STACE PICTURE.

What is known as Stace's picture of Shakespeare is reminiscent, like that by Zoust, of the Chandos likeness, in so far as the arrangement of the figure and dress and the expression of the features are in some points not unlike. The history of this picture is peculiar in that it has had an unusual spirituous aroma about it. Discovered early in the present century in a public-house, "The Three Pigeons," Shoreditch, where it hung for more than forty years, its glory "all unbeknown," it was sold by auction at another public-house, "The Old Green



ZOUST'S PORTRAIT.



GILLILAND'S PORTRAIT.

Dragon," Wilson Street, Moorfields. Its ultimate destination, however, was "far otherwise," if it really was the case that "its purchaser, having formed such an attachment to the portrait, secured it by lock and chain in a costly case to be buried with him at his decease!"

#### GILLILAND'S PORTRAIT.

If this picture has any merit at all it is in its bald antiquity. In this curious likeness of Shakespeare, which was discovered about seventy years ago, there is at least a guid auld grey-bairdie bit o' a man, as we say in Scotland: nothing more. The purchaser, Thomas Gilliland, writing in 1827, declared it was his impression that the portrait was painted about the time of Shakespeare, "either by an artist who had seen him, or who copied a genuine portrait of the poet *now lost*, as this likeness differs from all the portraits published or known." What an interesting gallery

the lost portraits of Shakespeare would make, to be sure!

#### THE ZINCKE LIKENESS.

"The earth hath bubbles as the water hath, and this of them," is the not inappropriate foot-note which the engraver printed on his



THE ZINCKE LIKENESS.

copy of the likeness of Shakespeare known by the above name. Here again, for the third time, is Richard Burbadge, the actor, associated with what pretends to be a portrait of his friend; while, for the second time, in like manner, the name of Ben Jonson is connected with it. Of course the picture is only a fabrication, "concocted" about 1820 by the artist whose name it bears.

#### THE PORTRAIT BY ZUCCHERO.

Those who are familiar with the portrait of Shelley will not fail to note the very striking resemblance between it and the above example. But it, too, has small claims to be regarded as authentic.



THE PORTRAIT BY ZUCCHERO.