



# Botticelli to Titian

## Two Centuries of Italian Masterpieces



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EDITED BY

Dóra Sallay, Vilmos Tátrai, Axel Vécsey

SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM

BUDAPEST

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# Director's Foreword

For centuries, Italian Renaissance art and its greatest masters enjoyed unconditional reverence. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Leonardo's *Last Supper* was popularized by a multitude of oleographs, copies of Raphael's *Madonna della sedia* were considered icons, and framed reproductions of *The School of Athens* adorned the walls of institutions all across Europe. Respect for the geniuses of the high Renaissance, for Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian, became a cult; their works and styles were canonized by academies of art as being unimpeachable examples of perfection. It is no surprise that the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, not to mention the exponents of the twentieth-century avant-garde, rose up against this canonization. The Fauvists, the Cubists, the Surrealists and the pioneers of non-figurative painting all defined their own endeavours in opposition to the pictorial norms of the high Renaissance; this was how they made a break with the past. At the same time, the Expressionists and Surrealists in particular would rediscover the most anticlassical exponents of Mannerism, which held sway in the greater part of the sixteenth century, as being their forebears. It is, of course, never the task of artists striving to tread their own path to be fair to their predecessors. Yet however legitimate the rebellion against the academism that canonized the Renaissance may have been, the summary rejection of the artists of the period was not. The great figures of the Renaissance – to take only the painters – from Masaccio to Titian, from Uccello to Veronese, did nothing but innovate and experiment, in rivalry both with each other and with classical examples. However much posterity might have created an indisputable authority of Leonardo, there can never have been a more belligerent enemy of authority in the history of art than he was. Michelangelo, Titian, and even Raphael, who died so young, all had careers as rich in turning points and "periods" as later only Picasso's would do. Thus we can say with certainty: the Renaissance was as avant-garde an era as there ever has been. Its greatest masters observed the world and man within it with unprecedented openness, and it was with unheard-of ambition that they strove to lay down the scientific foundations for art, and to perfect the devices of the craft. In order that today's museum visitors might not just admire but also be fond of the Italian painters of this period, that they might look at their works not just out of obligation but out of inner conviction, it is necessary for them to approach the exhibition space displaying their works with the same openness, curiosity, and thirst for knowledge that characterized the works' creators.

There is now an exceptional opportunity for this in the Szépművészeti Múzeum: never before has a Hungarian exhibition of this magnitude been devoted to Italian Renaissance art. Naturally, the extent of the different schools and individual artistic careers is such that even an exhibition three times this size could not give a

fully comprehensive picture of Italian painting from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Visitors, however, will find a selection that is impressive in its richness and variety. The list of artists' names reads like a hall of fame, while the quality of the aesthetic and intellectual content behind the names and within the works is inexhaustible.

It goes without saying that an exhibition of this scale would never have come into being without many months of intense effort from many museum employees. They all deserve recognition and thanks, but first and foremost I wish to express my gratitude to the directors of those collections whose loans were the first step in making this exhibition at all possible. I would also like to thank all of those scholars, both in Hungary and abroad, who contributed to the writing of the catalogue: their academic prestige has helped to confirm the international rank of the exhibition. Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to Vilmos Tátrai, curator of the Italian collection and world-renowned expert on the period, who worked for two years in order to realize this exhibition. Dóra Sallay and Axel Vécsey deserve the fullest recognition for the highly complex and multifarious editorial work behind the production of the catalogue. Sára Schilling, Zsófia Kovács, and Eszter Vályi bore the greatest burden of the practical arrangements; to them I also extend my heartfelt thanks.

We have put on display about a hundred works brought from abroad, together with thirty masterpieces from our own collection, thus drawing attention to the hundreds of other pieces in the splendid Italian collection in the Old Masters' Gallery. This sizeable exhibition is not only a tribute to the genius of the Italian Renaissance, but also to the Esterházys, to László János Pyrker, Arnold Ipolyi, Károly Pulszky, János Pálffy, Jenő Zichy, and all the other collectors, donors and museum directors; to all those responsible for the development and enrichment of this eminent collection, established by the eighth statute of 1896 in celebration of the nation's millennium, for the creation of the first permanent, independent national museum of Hungarian and international art, the Szépművészeti Múzeum.

DR. LÁSZLÓ BAÁN

GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM



György E. Szőnyi

# The World of the Italian Renaissance

For many people, the Renaissance is rooted in the notion of a rebirth of civilization in Europe and the outset of our modern age. Consider these words and phrases from studies, readings, and exhibition-experiences: the discovery of antiquity, man-centred world view, the Italian genius: Botticelli, Leonardo, and Michelangelo; the sonnets of Petrarch and the plays of Shakespeare; the courage of the navigator Columbus and the astronomical revolution of Copernicus; humanist scholarship and witchcraft trials; splendour, courtly culture, high life; Reformation, puritanism, religious wars. It is a true if simplified picture: the Renaissance was all this and much more – and equally, it should continue to have a more significant meaning for us today.

This exhibition reveals many of the secrets, beauties, and wonders of the Italian Renaissance to the fortunate visitor; and while one enjoys the timeless harmony or the intellectual and artistic tensions beneath the surface, one is well advised to look back at this cultural period from a historical perspective and reflect on the motivations that triggered the artists of the era to create their magnificent works. Also, it is worth taking a moment to consider the way in which subsequent generations have continually reinterpreted the achievements of the Renaissance, and how they have integrated them into their own intellectual and artistic worlds.

Pesellino
*Episodes from the Story of Griselda: Gualtieri and the Citizens of Saluzzo*
(detail)
ca. 1445–1450
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo

## THE NOTION OF THE RENAISSANCE AND ITS HISTORIOGRAPHY

For over a century, scholars have claimed that the Renaissance was "invented" by the Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt in his *The Culture of the Italian Renaissance,* published in 1860.[1] In fact, he borrowed the term *Renaissance* from his French colleague, Jules Michelet, in whose 1855 *History of France* the volume on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was entitled *La renaissance*. He also coined the phrase "discovery of the world and of man",[2] which Burckhardt then adapted to the Italian quattrocento and cinquecento. The main themes in this book were "the state as a work of art", "the development of the individual", "the revival of antiquity", "the discovery of the world and of man", "society and festivals, morals and religion".

It is only natural that Burckhardt saw the Renaissance through the filter of his own age. In the introduction to his book he remarked: "To each eye, perhaps, the outlines of a given civilization present a different picture; and in treating of a civilization which is the mother of our own, and whose influence is still at work among us, it is unavoidable that individual judgement and feeling should tell every moment both on the writer and on the reader. In the wide ocean upon which we venture, the possible ways and directions are many; and the same studies which have served for

this work might easily, in other hands, not only receive a wholly different treatment and application, but lead also to essentially different conclusions."[3]

This quote leads to two important conclusions. The first is that Burckhardt was aware that his view of the Renaissance was only one among many possible interpretations. At the same time he deliberately emphasized that he looked at the Renaissance as a major precursor to his own time. He pinpointed individualism as the hallmark of the new age and new ideology that had initiated the long process that led to the Enlightenment, to liberalism, and to the ideals of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie. His intention to discover the cradle of his own civilization determined what he could and wanted to see in and from the Italian Renaissance. This bias earned him much criticism from subsequent historians, but today, when relativism and personalism are highly valued, it seems to be one of Burckhardt's attractive features as a historian.

Another shortcoming of Burckhardt's text is that he practically neglected socioeconomic and cultural developments outside Italy. He believed that the break with the dark and colourless uniformity of the Middle Ages was an achievement of Italy and its people.[4] It is not surprising that he considered the revival of antiquity to be the most important feature of the Italian Renaissance, since, indeed, humanist scholarship, as well as the architectural and artistic revolution, were founded on rediscovered classical texts and the ideas distilled from them.

The "rebirth of antiquity" remains a central issue of Renaissance scholarship to date, although it has been integrated into a much wider and more complex field. In her recent work on the Renaissance, Margaret L. King divides scholarly approaches into three groups, designating a Renaissance "small, medium, or large".[5] The most restricted notion focuses on the revival of antiquity, classical forms and ideas. This notion already had adherents before Burckhardt (Georg Voigt), and in the last century its most notable proponent was Paul Oskar Kristeller. Today, Anthony Grafton maintains this tradition, addressing the impact of classical texts in the early modern period and their recycling by the humanists.[6]

The "medium" Renaissance involves broader cultural resurgence, setting out from the revisiting of classical antiquity, but contextualized into a wider cultural perspective: looking at the Renaissance ideology of "dignity of man", and understanding humanism as a programme for advancing the individual, the state and society as a whole. This trend originates from Burckhardt, who also claimed that the revival of antiquity in Italy provoked a neo-pagan, anticlerical turn. Later scholars criticized him for ignoring the deeply Christian devotion of humanists, especially in the North, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam. Eugenio Garin was another advocate of the "medium" Renaissance, focusing on the relationship of the new individual and his social environment and thus creating the famous category of "civic humanism".[7]

The "large" Renaissance constitutes an independent and complex age, defined historically and culturally, with a specific socioeconomic background; and also an era which developed and embraced many, often contradictory, ideologies and tendencies. However suspicious such generalizations seem to be today, when scholarship tends to reject "grand historical narratives", one should admit that even this broadest notion inspired some impressive concepts, at times originating in a non-dogmatic, open adoption of Marxism (Arnold Hauser, Tibor Klaniczay).[8]

Today, Renaissance research focuses on exploring smaller details rather than aiming at "great" new syntheses. Popular issues include gender, approaches to the body, questions of power, and the birth of the modern ego – all typically "postmodern" problems.[9] The largest current project in the field is undoubtedly the twelve-volume Italian handbook in which important essays by eminent international scholars are compiled, exploring such territories as historiography, economy, society, science, arts, and various aspects of everyday life from education to sex, from devotion to superstitions, from family life to health and hygiene. The geographical perspective is all-European, tracing the diffusion of Renaissance

ideals and practices across the Continent.[10] Thus it seems an apt conclusion to this historiographical introduction to recall that although the present exhibition is restricted to Italian achievements, the idea of the Renaissance is a broader, pan-European phenomenon.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE RENAISSANCE

The origins of the Renaissance should undoubtedly be sought around Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, 1304–1374), a poet born into a family of Florentine exiles in Arezzo. To most scholars, he was the first humanist. Petrarch's life and work include at least five symbolic motifs from which one can deduce the fundamental ambitions and accomplishments of the Renaissance.

In 1345 Petrarch discovered a collection of letters by Cicero, which made him realize the broader social and historical importance of letters. As a result, he began to collect and edit his own epistolary exchanges, eventually preparing them for wider circulation. Two of these letters are addressed to Cicero himself. In the first one he addresses the Roman as if they were dear old friends, personally acquainted:

> Your letters I sought for long and diligently; and finally, where I least expected it, I found them. And as I read I seemed to hear your bodily voice, O Marcus Tullius, ranging through many phases of thought and feeling. I long had known how excellent a guide you have proved for others; at last I was to learn what sort of guidance you gave yourself.[11]

While Petrarch treated Cicero as his contemporary and neighbour, he was also the first to notice the rift in era around the fourth century CE that divides antiquity from his own age. Petrarch referred to the classical period as "clear scintillation" clouded by the darkness of a middling epoch, the *medium aevum,* but one that ought to re-emerge from the oblivion of Lethe.[12] Petrarch's attitude reveals that he discovered the paradox of historical time, seeing antiquity as something familiar yet remote, and which takes conscious scholarly work to be revived.

Petrarch's works laid the foundations of the two great trends of Renaissance literature. *Africa,* his epic poem in Latin, his letters and treatises make him the progenitor of humanism, while his Italian poetry pioneered an even greater turn. His book of songs *(Canzoniere)* is the first major vernacular output to have broken away from medieval poetry and institute the conventions of a new lyrical voice. Thus he triggered the fashion of "Petrarchism", a voice that dominated European poetry for over two hundred years. The development of the sonnet form, still considered to be one of the most perfect concise lyrical structures, is also due to Petrarch.[13]

Yet Petrarch left posterity with still more symbolic accomplishments. On April 26, 1336, the poet and his brother climbed the steep Mont Ventoux near Avignon. What made this Alpine event famous is the detailed description of his motivations laid out in one of his letters: he was not driven by a desire to research or gather knowledge, rather, *"sola videndi insignem loci altitudinem cupiditate ductus"* – "only out of desire to see the unusual altitude of the place".[14]

In itself a noteworthy occasion, we might see in it the beginnings of the discovery of nature and a trial of an individual's capabilities. However, of equal interest is what occurred when Petrarch reached the top. Once he had taken in the view, he used that unusual geographic setting for an introspective philosophical meditation on his own life. He took Saint Augustine's *Confessions* from his pocket and it opened at the following text: "Men go to admire the heights of mountains, the great floods of the sea, the shores of the ocean, and the orbits of the stars, and neglect themselves."[15] Thus, his attention first diverted from nature toward a religious train of thought, Petrarch finally was led to feel enthusiasm for antiquity and to anticipate the Renaissance notion of the dignity of man: "I was angry at myself because I still admired earthly things, I who should have learned long ago from the pagan philosophers that nothing is admirable but the soul; to it when it is great, nothing is great."[16]

Petrarch had occasion to sample another coveted experience of the Renaissance, that of literary fame. His scholarship and poetry attracted a great deal of admiration while he was still alive. The more he learnt about the customs of antiquity, the more he desired to become a *poeta laureatus*. Indeed, in 1340 he received two invitations, both seeking to honour him for his poetry: the first was from the great centre of medieval scholarship at the University of Paris; the second was from the Senate of Rome. In the end he chose the latter and in 1341 the Roman patrician, Orso dell'Anguillara, placed the laurels on Petrarch's forehead. Since he was the first poet to be distinguished this way since classical times, it is justly said that Petrarch was, in his person and career, the embodiment of the rebirth of antiquity.

This notion brings us to question the extent to which the people of the Renaissance were consciously aware of the fact that they lived in "the Renaissance". Although the term was not their invention, they were more than conscious of the special character of their time. Petrarch's binary view of history – antiquity and the Middle Ages – was developed into a tripartite concept: after the *medium aevum* there arrived a new golden epoch, the age of Petrarch's followers.

A small selection of quotations clearly demonstrates this view:

> Marsilio Ficino, Italian, 1472: What the poets once sung of the four ages, lead, iron, silver, and gold. If then we are to call any age to be golden, it is beyond doubt that age, which brings forth golden talents in different places. That such is true of this our age he who wishes to consider the illustrious discoveries of this century will hardly doubt. For this century, like a golden age, has restored to light the liberal arts which were almost extinct.[17]

> Erasmus of Rotterdam, Dutch, 1517: I anticipate the near approach of a golden age, so clearly do we see the minds of princes, as if changed by inspiration, devoting all their energies to the pursuit of peace …. I am led to confident hope that not only morality and Christian piety, but also a genuine and purer literature, may come to renewed life or greater splendour …. I congratulate this our age, which bids fair to be an age of gold, if ever such there was![18]

> Giorgio Vasari, Italian, 1550: For having seen in what way Art, from a small beginning, climbed to the greatest height, and how from a state so noble she fell into utter ruin, and that, in consequence, the nature of this art is similar to that of the others, which, like human bodies, have their birth, their growing old, and their death; they will now be able to recognize more easily the progress of her second birth [*il progresso della sua rinascita*] and of that very perfection whereto she has risen again in our times.[19]

> Loys Le Roy, French, 1575: Now, just as the tartars, Turks, Mamelukes, and Persians have by their valour drawn to the East the glory of arms, so we have here in the West in the last two hundred years recovered the excellence of good letters and brought back the study of the disciplines after they had long remained as if extinguished. The sustained industry of many learned men has led to such success that today this our age can be compared to the most learned times that ever were.[20]

These four quotations span a hundred years, testimony that the people of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were well aware of the excellence of their age, which primarily resulted from the revival of classical arts and culture. Although they did not use the term "Renaissance", Vasari's expression *"rinascita"* can be considered to be an equivalent.

At this point, we come to a difficult question concerning the factors that motivated the people of the Renaissance era: what inspired them to engage academically and artistically in a rapid and revolutionary re-examination of the entire body of writings of antiquity? This question becomes even more salient when we realize that these same texts had been technically continuously "at the disposal" of every generation for the thousand years between the collapse of



Ambrogio Lorenzetti
*Effects of Good Government in the City* (detail)
1338–1339
Palazzo Pubblico,
Sala della Pace, Siena

ancient Rome and Petrarch. Consequently, we must ask: why did this all take place? And why did it start in Italy?

## THE CATALYSERS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

The success of the Italian Renaissance was rooted in the economic profit and social dynamism of the preceding medieval period, a success story that emerged from tragedy. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire circa 476 CE, the economy of Italy decayed, the cities were depopulated. The population of Rome, for example, fell from two million inhabitants at the time of the first emperors, to 90,000 by the accession of Pope Gregory the Great (590 CE), and a mere 35,000 by the twelfth century. When Petrarch first visited Rome in 1337, he was appalled by the degeneration and destruction of what had been the greatest city on Earth.

Mediterranean commerce, which was still a profitable enterprise, came to be dominated by Byzantine Greek and Arab merchants. The great urban centres of the early Middle Ages were the cities of Constantinople, Alexandria, Córdoba, Baghdad and Damascus.

Italian merchants, however, began to regain their bygone power by around the first millennium and strengthened their position in Mediterranean commerce. They traded inland commodities – salt and metals – and the fish of coastal waters for Eastern luxury products. By the early twelfth century, crusades fuelled a boom in the peninsular economy: transport and supply of the Christian army units and managing financial transactions between Europe and the Holy Land was a lucrative business, and these activities were concentrated in the northern Italian cities of Genoa, Venice, Milan and Florence.

Trade quickly boosted production in both raw materials and manufactured goods: a hungry market absorbed agricultural surpluses and helped to stimulate urban population growth, thus providing the demographic basis for the development of manufacture, especially that of textiles. Florence quickly rose to excellence in the wool industry, and this Tuscan city also developed into a very potent banking centre that became the hub of the financial world. Wealth contributed to cultural development and ambition in decoration, too. This can be illustrated in the words of Benedetto Dei who in 1472 boasted of the power and riches of his city as follows:

> We have … the trades of wool and silk …. The number of banks amounts to thirty-three; the shops of cabinet-makers, whose business is carving and inlaid work, to eighty-four; and the workshops of the stonecutters and marble workers in the city and its immediate neighbourhood, to fifty-four. There are forty-four goldsmiths' and jewellers' shops, thirty goldbeaters, silver-wire-drawers, and a wax-figure maker…. Another flourishing industry is the making of light and elegant gold and silver wreaths and garlands, which are worn by young maidens of high degree, and which have given their names to the artist family of Ghirlandajo. Sixty-six is the number of the apothecaries' and grocer shops; seventy that of the butchers, … it would awaken the dead in its praise.[21]

An interesting social phenomenon, unknown in other parts of Europe, also catalyzed thriving manufacture and trade. In northern Italy the nobility did not isolate themselves from the inhabitants of the cities in secluded rural castles; instead they moved into towns and actively participated in their political and economic management. Since in urban economy business skills and liquid capital were more important than anything else, class distinctions were much less idiosyncratic in these Italian cities than in other European feudal societies. Historians call this "the communal revolution", which produced a new social strata, the urban elite, in which the economically active nobility and the rich burghers allied to monopolize power as "the great men" *(grandi)*.[22]

As can be expected, this transformation did not take place without conflicts. Often it began with the *nouveau riche* rising against local centres of feudal power – usually the local bishops – and eventually they clashed with the political powers representing the Holy Roman Empire. Internal struggles shortly unfolded within the communes, too. By the twelfth century almost all important northern Italian cities had some sort of representative government, which was hailed by "Whig" historians as the first modern victory of republicanism. More recent works, however, also call attention to the deep divisions and ruthless



Catalan painter
*The Triumph of Death*
(from Palazzo Sclafani)
mid-fifteenth century
Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, Palermo

political manipulations within these "republics". As Margaret King summarizes: "For although this communal system of government was republican, in the sense that no single king or lord or tyrant could rule unchecked, but all decisions were made by a duly elected or appointed council or committee, it was not democratic. The people themselves – the growing groups of merchants below the level of the great magnate entrepreneurs, the artisans, and the labourers, not to mention the foreigners, prostitutes, beggars, and the desperately poor – had no role whatever in the political process."[23] We could add that not only prostitutes but women in general were excluded from politics, since only taxpaying males had the right to vote in these councils.

The first communal revolutions were followed by further radical changes. Italian city-states soon split into two political camps and while the cities – led by emperor-supported *ghibellins* and pope-supported *guelphs* – also fought against each other, in some urban centres (especially in Florence) workers also revolted and political power was temporarily seized by the *popolo* (1250–1260). Dante Alighieri was also personally involved in the guelph–ghibellin conflict and was ultimately forced into exile. Petrarch remained an outsider and watched these calamities with deep sadness until the cataclysm of the Black Death brought about their end in 1348.

Between 1348 and 1351 the plague swept over the greater part of Europe, killing about half of the Continent's population. With around 25–50 million people dead, the greatest Italian cities, as well as the small villages, became semi-deserted.[24]

After the epidemic neither Europe or Italy was as it had been. Some historians, such as Johann Huizinga or Jean Delumeau, have argued that the splendour of the Renaissance was restricted to a narrow ruling and intellectual class, while the rest lived in poverty, "fear, anxiety, and insecurity" until the eighteenth century when rationalism and the Enlightenment saved mankind from the terrors of the Black Death.[25] More recent studies contest this static view. Samuel Cohn and others have argued that the shock caused by the plague – manifested for example by the ecstatic pageants of flagellants and anti-Semitic pogroms during and soon after the epidemic – was quickly replaced by agitation and willpower. Medieval doctors tried to implement hygienic and pharmacological methods to curb the pandemic. Municipal councils in many towns created regulations to normalize life. Thus the plague, albeit paradoxically, paved the way for the cultural flowering of the Renaissance to begin soon after.



The Italy of 1400 was quite different to that of 1350 and before. The fever of republicanism was gone, the volatile economy and political system of cities became settled. By the fifteenth century two types of rule had crystallized: elitist republic and despotism. By the end of the quattrocento only four republics remained of the dozens of *communes* of the preceding century: Florence, Venice, Siena and Lucca.[26] From these four, it must be noted that the first two became the models for Italian republicanism.

In 1268 a revolution established the second republic *(secondo popolo)* in Florence, which survived until 1494, the ecclesiastical dictatorship of Savonarola. Around 1410 actual power fell into the hands of the Medici family, who nevertheless, oddly, never took the formal titles of dukes or princes. The *pater familias,* Cosimo de' Medici "il vecchio" – in possession of incredible riches and with the help of an intricate web of clientele – became the virtual ruler of Florence and led the city to such prosperity that in the end the citizens gave him the title *pater patriae,* father of the fatherland. Due to his successful foreign



*View of Florence*
Hartmann Schedel,
*Liber Chronicarum*
Nuremberg, 1493,
ff. 86v–87r
Szépművészeti Múzeum,
Budapest




Jacopo de' Barbari
*View of Venice*
1498–1500
Museo Correr, Venice



Luciano Laurana
*Courtyard of the ducal palace at Urbino*
construction begun in 1466

policy Florence emerged as the leading city-state of northern Italy and this status was strengthened in 1439 when Pope Eugene IV called for an ecumenical synod here. The city hosted not only the secular and ecclesiastical leaders of Europe but also many Greek scholars, including Gemisthus Pletho, whose lectures in that classical language greatly contributed to its revival.

Venice rid itself of Byzantine rule around 1000 CE and in 1172 the autocratic state of the *doges* (*dux,* duke) was replaced by a republic. From this time on, the leader, the *doge,* was elected by a great council, consisting of the merchant elite of the city. This council functioned like a closed cast: the constituent families were verified in the famous "golden books", and no new names could be included on the lists.

While the economic power of Florence resulted from the banking and textile industries, the greatness of Venice lay in trade, seafaring, and shipbuilding. The two republics rivalled each other for centuries, causing much mutual harm and damage; however, the culture of the Renaissance profited greatly from their competition as these city-states strove to outdo each other in their cultural achievements.

Beside the republics, by the year 1400, in most places some form of despotism, *signoria,* came into existence.[27] Typically these dictatorships were not based on birthright, becoming effective as a result of successful techniques of power, so memorably described by Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince* (1513, published 1532). In most cases it was a member of the city magnates, a knight in arms, who seized power; this is how Milan was ruled by the descendants of an archbishop, the Visconti, or Verona by the Scala (Scaliger), or Ferrara by the Este, Mantua by the Gonzaga, or Urbino by the Montefeltro.

In other cases mercenary leaders, so-called *condottiere,* became "dukes", such as Ezzelino da Romano in Padua, or the most famous, Francesco Sforza in Milan. The latter arrived in that town as the military rep-



*Books and scientific instruments in a cabinet with the door ajar*
(inlaid panel from the studiolo of Federico da Montefeltro)
completed around 1476
Palazzo Ducale, Urbino

resentative of Venice in order to depose the Visconti, but having won the city, he remained to establish a new dynasty of despots (1450). The Sforza were so quickly accepted among the European royal houses that by the end of the fifteenth century major rulers were competing for the hands of Sforza daughters, such as Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (who married Bianca Maria Sforza in 1494), or King Sigismund I ("the Old") of Poland (he wed Bona Sforza in 1518). The latter actually imitated his late east-central-European "colleague", the Hungarian Matthias Corvinus, who had previously married Beatrice of Naples. Both Italian queens were instrumental in transplanting Renaissance culture, art, and manners from Italy to the still-medieval central European regions.[28]

At this point, we should define the major areas of Renaissance development in these rich republics and the flourishing *signoria*. The first is the relatively open society that resulted in a vivid and innovative lifestyle, primarily manifest in the spreading of humanist literature and the proliferation of classical texts and commentaries upon them by independent humanist scholars. This type of cultural activity was more attached to the courts and civic governments than to the universities which themselves remained bastions of semi-medieval conservatism. The rediscov-



Piero della Francesca
*Portrait of Battista Sforza*
after 1472
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

ery of all the major classical authors brought about the development of new disciplines of humanist scholarship: textology, linguistics, historical philology, and a new appreciation for rhetoric. The overall importance for human posterity of all these fields of study is self-evident. At the same time, a new type of free and critical spirit emerged that glorified human dignity (the treatises of Giannozzo Manetti and Pico della Mirandola are well known), and developed a new approach to politics and society. In 1398 Coluccio Salutati, the chancellor of the Florentine Republic, clearly indicated the changes with his following remark: "Do not believe, that to flee the crowd, to avoid the sight of attractive objects, to shut oneself in a cloister or to go off to a hermitage is the way to perfection."[29]

It is no accident that republican humanists often engaged in the day-to-day politics of their city-states. The famous humanist chroniclers of Florence – Salutati and Leonardo Bruni – were at the same time the chancellors of the city. Later, Machiavelli and his younger friend and rival, Francesco Guicciardini the historian, were likewise employed by the local government.[30] One of the most important humanist activities was correspondence. In spite of the primi-

Piero della Francesca
*Portrait of Federico da Montefeltro*
after 1472
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



tive communication-infrastructure of contemporary Europe, it is fascinating to see how intellectuals, living in various points of Italy and even far beyond its borders, formed intricate networks and cooperated on the recovery of classical works and values, at the same time also spreading their new ideology. This is what even they dubbed *respublica litteraria,* the republic of letters.

One of the first fruits of humanism can be detected in the sphere of education. While universities of this era merely transferred knowledge and did not engage in its overall advancement, the humanists propagated new pedagogical ideals (like Pier Paolo Vergerio in his treatise, *On the Noble Character and Liberal Studies of Youth*[31]) and promptly put them into practice in their new type of private schools and academies.[32]

Humanist learning affected even the technical aspects of the artistic revolution of the quattrocento. When we speak about the development of the arts in Renaissance Italy the emphasis often falls on the improvements of *techné,* such as the discovery of perspectival painting, the triumph of representing the human face and body, and the novel use of oil paint. It is agreed that the best example of these inventions



Francesco del Cossa
*April* (detail):
*The Palio di San Giorgio*
before 1470
Palazzo Schifanoia,
Salone dei Mesi, Ferrara

are Giotto's Madonnas, Masaccio's *Crucifixion,* Mantegna's *Dead Christ,* and the portraits of Piero della Francesca framed by airy landscapes.[33]

Beyond all this, one should also take note of the topical innovations, such as the new vogue for pagan mythological themes. The programme of such paintings was often compiled by learned humanists. The mythological canvases of Botticelli *(The Birth of Venus* and *Primavera),* are well-known examples in whose symbolism art historians have identified the ideas of the Florentine Neoplatonic Academy.

Another famous case: in 1469 Borso d'Este, duke of the State of Ferrara, entrusted Francesco del Cossa to paint a fresco series in the great hall of his summer palace, the Palazzo Schifanoia. The artwork was to have cosmic and astrological meaning and the





(left) Lorenzo Ghiberti
*The Sacrifice of Isaac*
(panel for the competition
for the door of the baptistery
in Florence)
ca. 1401
Museo Nazionale
del Bargello, Florence

(right) Filippo Brunelleschi
*The Sacrifice of Isaac*
(panel for the competition
for the door of the baptistery
in Florence)
ca. 1401
Museo Nazionale
del Bargello, Florence

Palazzo Venezia, the palace of Pope Paul II in Rome



artist was provided with an erudite astrological and mythological programme compiled by the ducal librarian, Pellegrino Prisciani. The secret pagan-astrological references of some parts of the frescoes were soon forgotten, and it was only Aby Warburg in the early twentieth century who could decipher their precise meaning, following his discovery of Prisciani's treatise in the archives of Ferrara.[34]

The renewal of Renaissance architecture also underlines the broader intellectual role of the humanists. No doubt, the classical ruins of Italy and surviving buildings such as the Pantheon in Rome provided first-hand examples of the skills of ancient Roman architects and builders. The first great Renaissance architects, Filarete and Alberti, however, also used a rediscovered text, the treatise of the Roman Vitruvius (first century CE), when they recreated the order and proportion of Greek and Roman columns.[35]

The catalyst of art was the patronage system, and in quattrocento Italy, whoever had money became a patron.[36] The cities themselves supported the arts by important commissions, and in this field too, Florence was ahead. There were famous contests called for certain commissions. Thus in 1401 the city council opened a competition to create the new relief-decorated bronze doors of the *Battistero,* next to the *Duomo*. There were seven contestants and the jury asked two of them – Ghiberti and Brunelleschi – to submit a trial piece representing Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Both works were masterpieces filled with Renaissance spirit but in different ways. Ghiberti's emphasized psychological aspects, while Brunelleschi's explored the dramatic tension of the event. In the end Ghiberti received the commission, though some claimed that the primary criterion was financial. He employed a new technology of casting which required less bronze, thus undercutting his competitor.[37]

Rulers, princes, dukes, aristocrats and despots were generous patrons, but the hierarchy of patronage embraced almost the whole society. Commissions were given by popes, prelates, abbots, churches and monasteries; merchants, burghers, guilds, even artisans. The competition for good masters and outstanding works soon elevated the artists from the cast of craftsmen and turned them into coveted stars with considerable social standing. These changes in the prestige of the visual artists triggered a heated theoretical debate about the primacy of the arts *(ut pictura poesis),* and the artists came to be seen almost as divine creators.[38]

The Renaissance had its greatest flowering in northern Italy, especially in Tuscany and in the Veneto. One should not forget, however, about the southern and central parts of the peninsula either. Naples and Sicily remained feudal kingdoms throughout the period, first under Angevin rule, then when acquired by the Spanish house of Aragon. The economy of this region was primarily based on agriculture as opposed to the trading and manufacturing revolution of the North. All this said, the kings of Naples were not willing to lag behind the prosperous neighbours, so by the second half of the fifteenth century an important Renaissance centre developed here, too. The major patron



Melozzo da Forlì
*Pope Sixtus IV Appoints Bernardo Platina Prefect of the Vatican Library*
ca. 1476–1477
Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome

was Ferdinand I (born 1423, ruled 1458–1494), the father of Matthias Corvinus's above-mentioned spouse Beatrice.[39]

Last but not least, one must look at Rome, a sadly decrepit, provincial place in Petrarch's day, but one experiencing stunning development by the second half of the cinquecento. The decay was the result of moving the Holy See in the fourteenth century to Avignon (1305–1378). This was followed by the Great Schism (1378–1415), in the worst moments of which no fewer than three elected popes competed and warred with each other. Things improved in 1418 when Martin V moved the papal seat back to Rome, and from that time until the onset of the Reformation in 1517 one of the main ambitions of the pontiffs became the development and embellishment of the ancient imperial city.[40]

While the popes built palaces and bridges, collected ancient remains and renovated historical monuments, they were also inspired by humanist ideas. First Nicholas V (ruled 1477–1455) promoted the "new learning" when he established the Vatican Library. His successor, Pius II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini, 1458–1464), was himself a noted philologist, who prior to his ecclesiastical career had even tried his pen at frivolous works of *belle lettres*.

Paul II (1464–1471) collected classical inscriptions and medals; his successor, Sixtus IV (Francesco della Rovere, 1471–1484) renovated thirty churches in the city and reopened the old Roman aqueduct providing the population with fresh water. Furthermore, he had the Sistine Chapel built, which soon became the "canvas" for the genius of Michelangelo. Finally, we should not fail to mention that it was Sixtus IV who appointed Bernardo Platina as chief papal librarian and provided vast sums of money to purchase valuable manuscripts from all over Europe. The ceremony of his appointment is depicted on Melozzo da Forlì's fresco in the Vatican.

The next pope, Innocent VIII (1484–1492), was notorious in history, despite some of his attempts to embellish Rome. As pope, he actively supported the Spanish Inquisition and his actions sparked the witch craze that later in the sixteenth century led to pan-European hysteria and mass murder. He also unashamedly practiced simony and investiture while he did his best to marry his illegal children into the leading families of Europe. Yet, it was with his obstinate and belligerent foreign policy that he harmed Italy the most.

Innocent VIII tried to settle his longstanding conflict with King Ferdinand of Naples by inviting the French king Charles VIII to attack Naples and recapture that throne for the Angevins. The war soon tragically escalated, turning Italy into a battleground for decades, at the same time, it put an end to the economic and political superiority of the peninsula. Paradoxically, perhaps because of sheer inertia, Renaissance culture continued to flourish, actually, reaching its peak, during these very decades. This is the period that cultural historians refer to as the "high Renaissance".

## THE PEAK AND DECLINE OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

It is perplexing that Italian Renaissance culture reached its climax between 1500 and 1530, precisely the decades in which the peninsula was ravaged by political, social, and economic crisis. As Eugenio Garin summarized: "Parallel with the flourishing of painting, architecture, and sculpture; with the birth of ever more sophisticated literary works and high-minded educational ideas, the economy of cities was shaken, crafts were decaying and agriculture returned to feudalism. Civic rights became uncertain, municipal governments declined, and the church – so it seemed – became more corrupt than ever."[41] Allison Brown's reminder is similar: "No one familiar with the histories and chronicles of Italy in the years from 1494 to 1530 can be unaware of the sense of crisis that pervades these writings."[42]

It is enough to think over the cataclysms that reached Italy following the "cordial and chivalric" warfare of the quattrocento. The ruthless invasion of Charles VIII in 1494 was followed by further French attacks in 1499 and 1515. The Spaniards assailed southern Italy in 1501; later, in 1519 the mercenary army of Charles V attacked, concluding with the Sack of Rome in 1527. The once-flourishing city-states all suffered: Florence vacillated for decades between the expulsion of the Medici (1494, 1527) and their restoration (1512, 1530), while also being subjected to the experience of Savonarola's theocratic fundamentalism.

Milan was alternatively taken by the French (1499–1512, 1515–1525) and the Spanish (1525). Naples shared a similar fate: after the French annexation (1494) the Spaniards returned in 1501 to wreak vengeance on the "unfaithful" Italians. In 1509 Venice was fatally defeated and lost the greater part of her mainland dominions.

Due to the political skills and manœuvring of the great Renaissance popes, Rome was only once hit by foreign troops – the *Landknechts* of Charles V – but their Sack of Rome in 1527 has gone down in history as one of the worst assaults on the city. In this general situation it is not surprising that the last flowering of great Renaissance art was concentrated in Rome, a city which was relatively safe during the first



Raphael
*Portrait of Pope Julius II*
1511
National Gallery, London

three decades of the cinquecento, and was greatly developed by three ambitious popes.[43]

Alexander VI is usually described by historians as an abomination, and there is consensus in claiming that the Spanish Rodrigo Borgia (ruled: 1492–1503) utterly destroyed the prestige of the papacy and greatly contributed to the chaos that engulfed Italy and even western Europe. To his credit, it should be noted, it was thanks to him that European Jewry could find a new homeland in Italy following expulsion from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497. Alexander was also a patron of the arts and invited Pinturicchio to decorate the papal apartments in the Vatican with frescoes.

In those days the popes, while remaining unmarried, did not observe sexual abstinence. Alexander's son, Cesare Borgia, was famous for his cruel and ruthless nature, however, he governed his territories so efficiently that the republican Machiavelli created the image of the ideal prince after him. Alexander's successors, Julius II (Giuliano della Rovere, 1503–1513) and Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici, 1513–1521) became even greater and more fervent commissioners of artworks.



Jacopo Tintoretto
*Two studies after the "Atlas statuette"*
ca. 1549
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest

It seems that Renaissance art around 1500 had reached a new phase. This change was maturing in Florence, under Medici patronage, but it peaked in the Rome of the popes. In many respects this began with the architect, Donato Bramante, who moved to the Eternal City in 1502. By this time, Bramante had built the splendid palace of Urbino for the Montefeltro, and also decorated Lodovico Sforza's still medieval-looking Milan with Renaissance buildings. In Rome Julius II commissioned him with the greatest architectural assignment in all Christian Europe: the new Saint Peter's Basilica.

Michelangelo arrived in Rome from Florence in 1505. Although he chose to return there soon afterwards, he was commanded by Pope Julius to settle in the Holy City in 1508 and create the frescoes for the Sistine Chapel. From this time on, apart from a few years in Florence, the master stayed in Rome until his death in 1564.

Raphael of Urbino was also prodigiously talented. After some years in Umbria, he too worked in Florence for four years, but moved on to Rome in 1508. Julius II soon invited the still young painter to be the chief decorator of the new papal apartments, including the *Stanza della Segnatura*. While these rooms have grandiose Christian themes, Raphael also introduced humanist-inspired mythological and classical subjects, the *Parnassus* and the *School of Athens*.

Even the most cosmopolitan and restless genius of the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci, spent some time in Rome. The truly important stages of his career unfolded in Florence and Milan, but between 1513 and 1516 he lived in Rome, at the court of Pope Leo X. In 1515 he was present at the meeting of Leo and the French king, Francis I: this led to his being invited to France where he remained until his death in 1519, enjoying the exquisite friendship of the king.

The other capital of high Renaissance art was Venice. While at the time of the Renaissance flowering of Tuscan art Venice still was artistically in the full bloom of late Gothic splendour, by the cinquecento the city of the lagoon produced her own Renaissance masters: Giorgione and Titian, whose paintings were less monumental than that of their Roman contemporaries; however, they used darker and more mystical colours than those of the Florentines.

The political and immediately following economic crises inevitably touched the world of culture, too, starting in literature. The two greatest writers of the early cinquecento, Machiavelli and Castiglione reflected on it with different mentalities and literary devices. The secretary of Florence (1469–1527), who during his tenure dramatically experienced the fickleness of political fortune, became the sharp-eyed and -penned researcher and propagator of political realism (*The Prince*, 1513). In his works, one can look without hope for the bright idealism so characteristic of his predecessors, such as Leonardo Bruni.

Count Castiglione (1478–1529), who enjoyed the patronage of the Gonzaga of Mantua and the Montefeltro of Urbino, counted among his friends the humanist cardinals Bembo and Bibbiena, the painter Raphael, the writer Aretino, the cultured banker Agostino Chigi, even Pope Julius II. His major work, *The Courtier* (*Il cortegiano,* 1528) shows the exact opposite of Machiavelli's ideology: just one year after the Sack of Rome he glorified harmonious courtly life and the perfect Renaissance individual in such a manner that – in view of the actual events – it can only be considered escapism and a will to conceal utter despair.[44]

The crisis then proceeded and became evident in the visual arts. The unnervingly incomplete last works of Michelangelo, or the deeply enigmatic nature of the late Titian demonstrate the disruption of harmony,

the growth of a deepening crisis. Again in Garin's summary: "The true symbolic expression of this culture is the tragic greatness of Michelangelo as opposed to the morbid charm of Raphael, and the brute realism of Machiavelli against the refined Platonism of Castiglione. In the paintings of Botticelli and in the poems of Poliziano this culture created an ideal shelter that was beyond time and bitter fate, a fate that could neither be lived nor accepted without remorse."[45]

The next generation did not even try to conceal their helplessness about Renaissance ideals and the harmonious forms recovered from antiquity. The "long-necked" Madonnas of Parmigianino, the twisted figures of Tintoretto, the ecstatic visions of El Greco invite one into a new artistic universe, which became the crucible of painful uncertainties, commonly referred to as the transition period of Mannerism, between the Renaissance and the Baroque styles.[46]

## THE RENAISSANCE WORLDVIEW

Not long ago, scholars characterized the Renaissance as embodying European dreams about timeless beauty, as a moment of serene quiet amidst quickly changing history. Our image of the Renaissance today is radically different. To quote John Jeffries Martin: "The Renaissance was, as a movement – or, perhaps better, a cluster of interrelated movements – the cultural expression both of an expanding and increasingly commercially dynamic continent and of new patterns of consumption and competition for prestige in the courts and other centres of power (republican governments, guild halls, and churches) whose patronage elevated artists, architects, and astronomers to loftier, more influential perches within society than they had held before."[47]

Another modern scholar, Ewan Fernie, goes even further: "[By] now the notion of an ultimately authoritarian Renaissance has been thoroughly revised. Taking over from an older stress on order is an attention to disorder, and usurping the assumption of comfortable consensus is a preference for subversion and dissidence. Consequently the twenty-first century Renaissance has to come to be envisaged as an intensely turbulent period, in which construction of class, race, and gender were negotiated, in which doubts and anxieties freely circulated."[48] To all this we can add that in this newly conceived Renaissance world one also cannot help seeing the questions of individual, national and religious identity emerging in novel, local and global perspectives.

We should not shy away from the clearly perceivable tensions and conflicts that make the Renaissance a truly complex cultural period. True, during this period, there was glamour alongside poverty, humanist optimism and schizophrenic enthusiasm, science and superstition, religion and scepticism, tolerance and fanaticism, sophisticated *sprezzatura* and brutal cruelty, noble chivalry and frivolous intrigue. By removing the rigid and idealized facade of the Renaissance, we can immediately see that this period was not essentially different from any other cultural epoch, let alone our own modernity, at least as far as human reason and passions are concerned. This is why we can instantly feel the people of the Renaissance to be our contemporaries. At the same time, this world was still formidably different from our own and we, just as Petrarch in antiquity, can recognize history in the Renaissance, a history that is already irretrievably past. The Renaissance was clearly a period in European history with its specific traditions, and conventions of representation.

A great many of these conventions constituted the norms for the creation of works of art, and these norms today are referred to as "the Renaissance style". Some of its characteristic features are harmony, symmetry, and equilibrium – features that can be perfectly seen in many items at this exhibition. But no matter how much "timeless beauty" dominates these artworks, they speak not of abstract ideas, but rather of the people of an already distant age, nevertheless real people, with their specific knowledge, beliefs, desires – life itself. If the visitor to the exhibition can discover and feel this life, magic will occur: the walls of the exhibition hall will disappear and the Renaissance will be reborn, and clearly be seen as relevant, indeed our contemporary.

NOTES

1. Burckhardt [1860] 1937.
2. Michelet 1855.
3. Burckhardt [1860] 1937, 1.
4. On Burckhardt's notions on the Renaissance and the historiography of the Renaissance see Peter Burke's introduction in Burckhardt [1860] 1990, 1–15. In Hungarian see also Szőnyi 1984, 14–22.
5. King 2003, viii–ix.
6. Voigt 1859; Kristeller 1955; Grafton 1997 and 2002.
7. Garin 1952 and 1969.
8. Hauser 1951; Klaniczay 1977.
9. The new approaches in Renaissance research are clearly demonstrated in the following recent monographs and collection of essays: Findlen ed. 2002; Fernie et al. ed. 2005; Martin ed. 2007.
10. So far five volumes have been published: Fontana–Molà ed. 2005–[…]. A less grand yet also ambitious project is the already mentioned collection of essays published by Paula Findlen that approaches the Renaissance from a very modern viewpoint: Findlen ed. 2002.
11. Petrarch to Cicero, June 16, 1345. *Epistolae familiares* 24,3.
12. Petrarch, *Africa*, ix, 553.
13. On Petrarch's achievements see among others: Mazzotta 1993.
14. Petrarch to Dionigi di Borgo San Sepolcro, on the day of the mountaineering, in Petrarca 1955, 830. English reference: Kristeller 1964, 14.
15. This passage of the *Confessions* of Augustine is quoted in Kristeller 1964, 16.
16. Kristeller 1964, 16.
17. Ficino, "The Golden Age in Florence", in Ross–McLaughlin 1968, 79.
18. Erasmus, "The Golden Age" (letter to Capito), in Ross–McLaughlin ed. 1953, 81.
19. Quoted from the anthology of Peter Burke, 1964, 4.
20. Le Roy, "The Excellence of This Age", from his *De la vicissitude ou variété des choses en l'univers,* in Ross–McLaughlin ed. 1953, 91.
21. Benedetto Dei, "The Prosperity of Florence", in Ross–McLaughlin ed. 1953, 165–67.
22. The connections between medieval urbanization and the rise of the Renaissance is discussed in volume 4 of the Italian handbook series mentioned earlier: Franceschi–Goldthwaite–Mueller ed. 2007. Further useful information can be found in Hay–Law 1989, 29–75; Brucker 2002; King 2003, 22–31; Najemy 2004, 124–204; Ferraro 2007.
23. King 2003, 23–24.
24. Cohn 2007, 69–71. Virologists and historians up to today heatedly debate if this plague was the same as the bubonic plague known from nineteenth-century epidemics, originating from Asia.
25. The last major, medieval-type plague hit Marseille in 1720. See Delumeau 1983; Huizinga 1996.
26. The general history of Renaissance Florence and Venice can be found in Brucker 1983 and Lane 1973.
27. For a comprehensive survey of the development of Italian city-states, see Martines 1979.
28. On the Sforza family see Lopez 2003; Cioffari 2000.
29. Letter of Salutati to the chancellor of Bologna, Peregrino Zambeccari. Quoted by King 2003, 81.
30. The most up-to-date approach to the general questions of humanism can be found in the article by Robert Black (1998). Eugenio Garin's discussion of civic humanism (1958, 1969) is still unsurpassed.
31. Vergerio (1370–1444) is the author of the first humanist educational work. Entitled *De ingenius moribus et liberalibus studiis adolescentiae,* it was dedicated to the son of Francesco Carrara, the despot of Padua.
32. The two most famous humanist schools were founded by Vittorino da Feltre in Mantua and Guarino Guarini (1429) in Ferrara. Among others, the Hungarian Neo-Latin poet, Janus Pannonius also studied in Guarino's school before going on to the University of Padua. The most famous private academy was sponsored in Florence by Lorenzo il Magnifico and headed by the philosopher Marsilio Ficino. One should also mention the Poetical Academy of Rome which flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century (see Garin 1964; King 2003).
33. An innovative summary of the achievements of Renaissance painting is Stemp 2006.
34. New studies on the frescoes of the *Palazzo Schifanoia* with further bibliographical notes: Bertozzi 1999; *Brussels* 1996. See also the chapter "Warburg ikonográfiája" [The Iconography of Warburg], in Szőnyi 2004, 67–69.
35. Filarete (Antonio di Pietro Averlino, 1400–1467), *Trattato di architettura;* Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), *De re aedificatoria* (1452). On the architecture of the quattrocento see Heydenreich 1996; Cardini–Regoliosi ed. 2007.
36. On the Renaissance patronage system see Warnke 1993.
37. Stemp 2006, 23.
38. The contest of the sister arts and arguments for the supremacy of painting can be seen in Leonardo's writings (Farago 1992).
39. The history of Ferdinand, or as popularly known, Ferrante, was written by Lorenzo Valla, one of the greatest Italian humanists: *Laurentii Valle Gesta Ferdinandi regis Aragonum* (see Valla [1520] 1973). On Ferdinand: Pontieri 1969; on the history of the southern Italian Renaissance: Abulafia 2004.
40. On Renaissance Rome see for example: Partridge 1996; for contemporary chronicles and documents on the Renaissance popes see Infessura 1890; Piccolomini 1988; Platina [1479] 2008–[…]; Vespasiano 1963.
41. Garin 1964, 432.
42. Brown 2004, 246–47.
43. See Petersen 2004.
44. On Machiavelli see Skinner 1996; on Castiglione Berger 2000.
45. Garin 1964, 433.
46. On Mannerism as the expression of the crisis of the Renaissance see Hauser 1965 and Klaniczay 1971. The ideological roots of artistic Mannerism were first described by Dvorák 1921–1922. A further important work of intellectual history: Praz 1975.
47. Martin ed. 2007, 23.
48. Fernie et al. ed. 2005, 1.




auendo io cõsiderato quãto gste nostre arti, che procedono dal disegno, siano
gradi, nõ potendo s'huomo alcuna cosa p fettamẽte operare, senza riferirsi
al disegno, dal quale egli trae sempr i miglior cosigli, et ficche io crederrei benissi
far capaci tutti gl'huomini cõ vive ragioni, à le quali nõ si potrebbe cõtradire,
essere verissimo, che il disegno essendo veramẽte origine, & principio di tutte
le azzioni dell'huomo, e solo quella Idea vera della Natura, che fu da gli
Antigni cõ molte proprie figurata, p significare, ch'ella nutrisce ogni cosa, come
sola, e principale ministra di vio, che di terra fecisse, e perciò il prime huomo,
ad'imagine, e similitudine di sè, e che p cõseguenza nõ possono i professori de
l'Arti del disegno hauere p suggetto, e p Impresa loro, niuna cosa, ne piu somiglie
te al vero, ne piu propria degli esercizij loro, che la detta Idea della Natura, come pr
largamẽte dimostrarci, senza ristringermi à tata brevità, se io nõ conoscessi voi tan

István F. Mészáros

# Opus – Ars – Artifex

## Reservations regarding the Emancipation of Painting 1435–1568

With characteristic zeal and energy Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) began to organize the faculty of the *Accademia et compagnia dell'arte del disegno* in Florence in 1563, the archetype for all subsequent art academies, rallying the selected painters, sculptors and architects.[1] *Compagnia* was a reference to the religious confraternity dedicated to the patron saint of painting, Saint Luke, and *accademia* to the new intellectual prestige of the Florentine academy, which was put under the patronage of Cosimo I de' Medici around that time.[2] Until that point, painters as a professional community had belonged to *Arte dei medici, speciali e merciai* in a humiliatingly subordinated role, similar to that of the triple subordination of *arti minori,* the least significant crafts, although occasionally they were able to fill fairly prominent positions.[3] Sculptors and architects were relegated to the *Università dei fabbricanti* – the lowest rank of manual workers.[4]

It took another eight years following the foundation of the new academy for painters, sculptors and architects to be liberated officially and corporately from their bondage in the guilds in 1571, from which date onwards they were allowed to fill political posts. The date marks the beginning of their legal and social emancipation, at least in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.[5] For the unification of the three different occupations into a single corporate body to take place a common organizing principle had to be found that also affected their intellectual emancipation. This was represented by academic status, carrying associations of an intellectual confraternity, and by the collective notion of *arti del disegno,* the core around which the academy was organized. In the statute of the new organization,[6] formulated in 1563, Vasari retraced the community of *artefici del disegno* back to 1219 with tendentious anachronism, although the medieval usage of the term had only signified the religious community practising *arti figurative*, that is, painters and sculptors.

The definition of *ars figurativa* was closely connected to a passage in Aristotle's *Politics* (1338b), and was extended to refer to the community of painters and sculptors by Peter of Auvergne in his commentary, obviously omitting architects who had never paired well with them.[7] *Disegno* as the metaphysical and creative principle of sculpture and painting first appeared in the dialogue of the Florentine Anton Francesco Doni (1513–1574) published in Venice in 1549: "*Disegno* is a divine approach which creates the most exquisite

Benvenuto Cellini
*Project for a seal of the Accademia del Disegno of Florence, with a personification of Nature*
ca. 1563–1569
The British Museum, London





(left) Giorgio Vasari
*Self-Portrait*
ca. 1566–1568
Galleria degli Uffizi,
Florence

(right) Enea Vico
*Portrait of Anton*
*Francesco Doni*
ca. 1548
Szépművészeti Múzeum,
Budapest

art, for without it you are not capable of doing your work either in painting or in sculpture."[8] We must add that anyone who is familiar with this treatise will know that this high-faluting statement has no organic connection whatsoever with the rest of the amusing and well-informed dialogue.[9]

That *disegno* was the generative principle of these three "sister arts" was only defined unambiguously by Vasari in the introduction to the massively enlarged second edition of the *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (hereafter *Vite*) published in 1568.[10] Never before in European history had different artistic activities been designated under a common aesthetic – rather than corporate – principle.[11] Ducal absolutism and cultural policy – however agile it may have been – was no longer sufficient to bring this novelty to bear: it required a consensus for the use of the concept of "arts" in contradistinction to simple manual crafts.

This consensual process is traditionally simplified as follows: from the fifteenth century onward, painting, sculpture and architecture rose from the rank of the so-called mechanical arts to the intellectual rank of the seven liberal arts – grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astrology – despite the fact that during the Middle Ages painting and sculpture had not even been included among the mechanical arts, and architecture had only occasionally been included thanks to its greater social utility.[12]

Moreover, by Vasari's time the scholastic distinction between the symmetrical seven mechanical and seven liberal arts had long been outdated by the new value order of the fifteenth-century humanists, hence the inquiries into the origins ought to have explored how painting, sculpture and architecture had appeared in the reference repertoire of *studia humanitatis,* which focused predominantly on poetry and history. However, the early humanists devoted hardly any attention to the theoretical place of painting among intellectual activities: "Whether or not painting was a liberal art was mercifully not an impor-


DELLE
VITE DE' PIV ECCELLENTI
PITTORI SCVLTORI ET ARCHITETTORI
Scritte da M. Giorgio Vasari
PITTORE ET ARCHITETTO ARETINO.

Secondo, et vltimo Volume
della Terza Parte.
Nel quale si comprendano le nuoue Vite,
Dall'anno 1550 al 1567.
Con vna breue memoria di tutti i più ingegnosi
Artefici che fiorificano al presente
NELL'ACADEMIA DEL DISEGNO
In Fiorenza, et per tutta Italia, et Europa, &
delle più importanti Opere loro.
Et con vna Discrezione degl'Artefici Antichi,
Greci & Latini, & delle più notabili
memorie di quella età,
Tratta da i più famosi Scrittori.

CON LICENZA E PRIVILEGIO.

Giorgio Vasari
*Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori…*, 1568
frontispiece
Casa Buonarroti, Florence

tant theme of the early humanists, but neither were other kinds of conjecture about its status."[13]

Around 1440 Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457), for example, was preoccupied by the decline and rebirth of literature when he also noted: "No more do I know why those arts that most closely resemble the liberal arts – painting, carving, modelling, architecture – became so degenerate for so long and were along with literature nearly dead, or why at the present time they are raised up and come to life again: so great a growth now springs up both of good craftsmen and of good writers."[14] However, in his letter to Paul of Middleburg, written on September 13, 1492, Marsilio Ficino had written: "For this century, like a golden age, has restored to light the liberal arts, which were almost extinct: grammar, poetry, rhetoric, painting, sculpture, architecture, music and the ancient lute play of Orpheus; and all this in Florence."[15] The link between them is Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), who is generally credited with raising painting, sculpture and architecture to the rank of the liberal arts,[16] was the connecting link although – as we shall see later – his contemporaries may have been surprised at most by the fact that he dedicated autonomous treatises to each of these arts, and not by his declaring them liberal arts *expressis verbis*.

What distinguishes Alberti's dissertation on painting, written around 1435, among fifteenth-century humanist treatises is not only its concise structure, divided into three books, its logical construction and power of conceptualization, but also its unexpected and startling choice of theme. Its Latin version is one of the peak achievements of humanist literature, and its Italian version is a forerunner of scholarly prose in the vernacular.[17] His treatise has no precedent in classical antiquity, nor the Middle Ages, nor in his humanist environment, and it is a fact that we are still unclear about why Alberti wrote it, although there is much conjecture on this point. In *Vita anonima* – regarded by many as Alberti's autobiography[18] – which is written in the third person singular, it is stated that he had decided to dedicate himself to studies in physics and mathematics because his memory had begun to fail during his legal studies in Bologna. In the wake of Jacob Burckhardt, scholars usually deduce from this the extension of his "engineering" interest towards painting and architecture in response to his experiences in Florence in 1434.[19]

One thing is certain: Alberti lifted painting up among the subjects of *studia humanitatis* with the self-awareness of one who has created a new genre. He, unlike Pliny, was not writing about the history of painting, but was registering a new discipline *(ars);* as the Italian version puts it, he was building anew the art of painting *(ma di nuovo fabbrichiamo un'arte di pittura)*.[20] What is more, this discipline known as *arte di pittura* is the raison d'être and main ornament of all other *artes:* the architect took from it the ability to create the entablatures, plinths, columns and capitals; stone-carvers, sculptors and all artisans borrow the rules and standards *(regula et arte)* of their trades from the painter.[21] The phrase *arte di pittura* could be deliberately ambiguous in this




Matteo de' Pasti
*Cast bronze medal*
*of Leon Battista Alberti*
ca. 1450–1455
Obverse: *Portrait of Alberti*
Reverse: *Alberti's emblem,*
*the winged eye*
The British Museum,
London

context: it alludes to the literary genre created by Alberti – *ars picturae* in that sense corresponds to Horace's *ars poetica* – on the one hand; on the other, taking Horace's differentiation of *opus – ars – artifex*, it refers to the "know-how" of painting method.[22] At any rate, in his *De viris illustribus* (On Famous Men) of 1456, Bartolomeo Fazio mentions Alberti among the prominent rhetoricians and also as a scholarly and competent *(studiosus et doctus)* student of painting who laid down the basic principles of painting as *ars (de artis ipsius principiis librum unum edidit)*.[23]

Later, Alberti wrote a separate dissertation on sculpture *(De statua),*[24] and in 1452 he completed possibly the most elaborate treatise of his huge œuvre, concerning architecture *(De re aedificatoria)*. This fact alone is confirmation that paintings, sculptures and buildings as works of art *(opus)* had assumed unprecedented significance as cultural objects, with the concomitant revaluation of the mastery of the trade based on fixed rules *(ars)* and the person in possession of this knowledge *(artifex)*.

The real esteem a painter must have enjoyed is revealed in the dedication written in Italian to Brunelleschi. However, there are more concerns with it than joy. Firstly, it includes a very odd list: among the dwindling geniuses of his age, he mentions painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, geometers,[25] rhetoricians, and augurs. I am not the first to notice that into a line such as the "most noble and marvellous intellects" *(nobilissimi e maravigliosi intelletti)* only Alberti, if anyone, could have fitted.[26] The list has three occupations that are related to the *septem artes liberales* (musician, geometer and rhetorician), the rest being organic parts of Alberti's self-image.[27] Secondly, it is addressed to an architect, Filippo Brunelleschi, besides whom he names three contemporaries, Donatello, Ghiberti and Luca della Robbia as great artists, all three sculptors, while a painter – Masaccio – is listed only in fifth place. This seems somewhat odd – to say the least – in the dedication of a tract on painting. Anicio Bonucci, who first published the dedication at the head of *Della pittura,*[28] and who argued for the primacy of the Italian version on this basis, did not comment on the name of Masaccio. Hubert Janitschek, the first critical editor of *Della pittura*[29] argued that the name "Masaccio" more probably alluded to Maso di Bartolomeo, a sculptor assistant of Donatello, for that would make the list more consistent, and besides, of all the addressees only the painter Masaccio was no longer alive at the time the dedication

was written, so a personal meeting with him could not have taken place.[30]

There are several options for the resolution of the contradictions: the finest is of course that of the Krautheimers, who presume that Alberti was commemorating the fifteenth-century Florentine *avant-garde,*[31] as was – wholly independently of him – Ciriaco d'Ancona, who mentioned roughly the same names in the same context in 1533.[32] Another hypothesis claims, on the basis of a play with the verbs *pingere* and *fingere* that Alberti actually equates painting with sculpture as creative endeavours (which may also be interpreted as an organic legacy of the medieval tradition). If I am right, Gerhard Wolf tries to interpret the whole *De pictura* in this light, but however brilliant his study on this subject may be,[33] ultimately Wolf and not Alberti plays with the words *pictor/fictor/aedi-fictor*. Besides, we would have to take for granted that Alberti was also considering *De statua* and *De re aedificatoria* while he was writing *De pictura,* which is a highly risky hypothesis. The third, and perhaps most convincing, argumentation claims that Alberti actually mentions the active participants of Florence Cathedral, consecrated in the year of writing, in the dedication, which implies that "Masaccio" was indeed more likely Maso di Bartolomeo[34] – thus we have returned to Janitschek.

The first book of *De pictura* embarks directly on the problem of picture construction, inverting the study of perspective *(perspectiva naturalis),* hitherto used in explaining the process of visual perception, in order to give scientific basis to an already existing painterly practice: the construction of a picture space with linear perspective *(perspectiva artificialis).* It is still a moot question whether *perspectiva artificialis* was Brunelleschi's or Alberti's invention, but it is a fact that Alberti put forth its theoretical explanation, and on this basis he proposed as self-evident – although it was a surprisingly novel thought – that painting was a science, and this *scientia* was the method of translating spatial structures into planar surfaces ("the picture is conceived as the intersection of the visual pyramid").[35] Though deeming it desirable for a painter to be well versed in the liberal sciences *(artes liberales),* Alberti named competence in geometry as his only obligatory attainment.[36]

In Alberti's view, the virtues of his profession can make the painter feel like a second Creator, which at first sight appears to be a typical manifestation of contemporary *aequiparatio*.[37] This term comes from the legal jargon (Alberti studied canonic law in Bologna) and refers to the procedure by which an office, status or social position *(officium)* was symbolically, and at that time practically deputed to another sphere of activity. Ernst Kantorowicz opines that the *vicarious Christi* phrase was first applied to the *officium* of the pope automatically entailing its "deification", and as an increasingly permanent flourish, to the lawyers and poets. Alberti, however, did not rest content with it as a turn of speech, but traced the peculiar status of the painter directly from antiquity with a historicist attitude. "Painting was honoured by our ancestors with this special distinction: whereas all other artists were called craftsmen, the painter alone was not counted among their number."[38]

Alberti omitted this passage from the Italian version, so as not to offend the sculptors Donatello and Ghiberti, according to Spencer.[39] In my view, it was more a rebuff meant for the humanists who could easily grasp the point, unlike the painters who were unfamiliar with Latin literature and who might have taken it at its face value. Alberti, who is claimed by *Vita anonima* to have been able to throw a coin up to the ceiling of the church and jump over a man's shoulders with outstretched legs, achieves the record of negative typology here. As is well known, biblical typology compares and inseparably combines Old Testament prophecies with the foretold passages in the New Testament in order to endow both the prophecies and their fulfilment with the power of the greater truth. Against that, in Alberti's age – with some exaggeration – the noted painters, sculptors and architects form an orderly queue of one: Giotto,[40] while in the past referred to they were

consistently despised artisans, even though Pliny's roll-call and the topos of the idolized painter must have been canonized before his age.

That was how the eternal archetype of all artisans, Hephaestus, appeared as the only dirty manual labourer *(banausos)* among the exalted inhabitants of the Olympus in Lucian's *De sacrificiis,* and it was also Lucian who listed with withering sarcasm the arguments in his brief essay, *The Dream,* explaining why he had opted for the acquisition of literary culture instead of the *tekhne* of carving.[41] That in antiquity differentiating between the honour of the object of art and the honour of the creator of the art object caused no perplexity is most clearly revealed by a passage in Plutarch's Pericles biography: "… while we delight in the work, we despise the workman *(banausos)*, as, for instance, in the case of perfumes and dyes; we take a delight in them, but dyers and perfumers we regard as illiberal and vulgar folk. … Labour with one's own hands on lowly tasks gives witness, in the toil thus expended on useless things, to one's own indifference to higher things. No talented youth, from seeing the Zeus at Pisa *[i.e. Olympia]*, or the Hera at Argos, longs to be Phidias or Polycleitus."[42]

How the esteem of the painters and sculptors could be so sharply separated from the admiration for the masterpieces they created[43] is a question answered by Aristotle: "It is therefore not difficult to see that the young must be taught those useful arts that are indispensably necessary; but it is clear that they should not be taught all the useful arts, those pursuits that are liberal being kept distinct from those that are illiberal, and that they must participate in such among the useful arts as will not render the person who participates in them vulgar *(banausos)*. A task and also an art or a science must be deemed vulgar if it renders the body or soul or mind of free men useless for the employments and actions of virtue. Hence we entitle vulgar *(banauson)* all such arts as deteriorate the condition of the body, and also the industries that earn wages; for they make the mind preoccupied and degraded."[44]

Alberti most probably knew these passages. Aristotle's *Politics* translated into Latin was compulsory reading at university to be learnt thoroughly together with the commentaries it elicited over the ages. As for Lucian, the younger Lapo da Castiglionchio, his classmate in Padua, dedicated Lucian's satire *On Sacrifices* to Alberti, and by 1436 he had translated his *Somnia*[45] and Plutarch's *Pericles*[46] into Latin. His mental disposition also drew Alberti close to Lucian: his play entitled *Musca* is practically a pseudo-Lucianean work; one of his most elaborate and scathing satires, *Momus* follows Lucian in both form and spirit.[47] There are notably two aspects in *Momus* which retrospectively shed light on two characteristics of *De pictura* discussed above: the imperative of originality already manifest in *Vita anonima* and the ridiculing of the humanist mannerism of unbridled idolatry.

To sum up what I interpret as a dramaturgical turning point: Alberti promotes the activity of the scholarly painter to the rank of an intellectual activity with its own methodology, but this is to differentiate the scholarly painter – not all painters – from simple artisans. He does not think along the *liberal* versus *mechanical* arts dichotomy,[48] but postulates that painting, sculpture and architecture are engineering activities (to use a modern-day expression). This activity is evidently intellectual, relegating its protagonists into a new cultural sphere *parallel* with that of the liberal vs. mechanical arts, into *scientia media,* ultimately retraceable to Aristotle.[49] Nevertheless, in his own age it was probably Alberti alone who personified this kind of intellectual ideal of the painter, the sculptor and the architect, but the impressive cogency of his treatises made it possible later for an increasing number of people to assume the role he defined.

Leonardo da Vinci inserted the *artifex mundi* simile[50] derived from Plato but used throughout the Middle Ages into a natural historical argumentation bordering on agnosticism.[51] Extraordinary caution must be taken in the interpretation of Leonardo's notes, since their originality, chronology and con-

Leonardo da Vinci
*Figure Studies*
ca. 1505
Biblioteca Reale, Turin



text are hard – if indeed it is possible – to reconstruct, even for specialists. Sight is not only one of the noblest organs for perceiving the world – remember that the emblem Alberti created also included a winged eye[52] – but it is science *par excellence*. Nature is the supreme teacher, and its teaching can only be learnt through looking: thoroughly, carefully, and guided by circumspection. What that implies is not adherence to the *natura naturans*[53] of the Middle Ages but anticipation of modern natural science, and hence Leonardo's painter becomes a *demiurge* who re-creates the world on the basis of the most meticulously attentive study of nature. This approach is only partly related to *ars geometriae* in which Alberti's painter constructs space on the plane surface analogously with sight; the emphasis shifts to the application of pure science based on thorough and detailed observation and analysis of the creation of pictures.

Although in his inaugural lecture at London University on January 30, 1950,[54] Rudolf Wittkower evaluated Leonardo's view and practice as of paramount importance in the process of elevating painting to the rank of science, how many contemporaries of Leonardo shared this outlook is highly questionable. Leonardo enjoyed extraordinary prestige, not least owing to his dignified appearance and great skills at argumentation, but his writings appear to have been known only by a very close circle of pupils. Vasari mentions in the second edition of *Vite* that he had seen Leonardo's anatomic studies at Melzi's, who kept the illustrated manuscripts as sacred relics, and that an unnamed Milanese painter canvassed support for the publication of Leonardo's treatise on painting and then left for Rome with the manuscript, where Vasari lost sight of it.[55] It is still unclear whether this was one of the extant Leonardo



Tiziano Vecellio
*Portrait of Benedetto Varchi*
ca. 1540
Kunsthistorisches Museum,
Vienna

manuscripts or a perished one. Leonardo's views on painting first appeared in print in the seventeenth century, torn from their original context and rearranged.[56]

It has often been noted that Leonardo's drawings documenting his anatomic researches at times preceded the verbally formulated scientific findings,[57] but it is less widely acknowledged – as André Chastel explained in an excellent study – that in Leonardo's view a painter's scientific knowledge cannot always be applied when painting a picture.[58] As we might say today, Leonardo had an "aesthetic" viewpoint that could overrule the scientific viewpoint: "You should not make all the muscles of the body too conspicuous, otherwise you will produce a sack of walnuts rather than a human body."[59] In André Chastel's view this remark was directed plainly against Michelangelo whom Leonardo had a particular dislike for, but who produced the most spectacular achievements beside him in representing the human body in motion based on anatomic dissections – this was declared to be the primary task of the painter around the mid-sixteenth century and its greatest exponent – in Vasari's interpretation – was Michelangelo.

Michelangelo only expressed his theoretical views on art (see below) on a single occasion, and his art theory did not come into existence until at least 1961 with a masterpiece of speculative art historical writing published by Robert Clemens,[60] who arranged all accessible direct and indirect Michelangelo testimonies into a coherent theory. Nevertheless, Michelangelo's figure was decisive in the sixteenth-century concept of art: he was the ideal exemplar of Vasari's *artifex polytechnes,*[61] who brought about extraordinary works in painting, sculpture and architecture alike.[62] Alongside one of the finest philosophical commentaries of the sixteenth century, two lectures delivered at the Academy of Florence by Benedetto Varchi (1503–1565) in 1546 were associated with Michelangelo, one of which analysed a Michelangelo sonnet.[63] It is far too often overlooked that Varchi's commentary lauds Michelangelo not as a sculptor or painter, but as a poet,[64] thereby also emphasizing that he regarded poetry as a liberal art, and as the exponent of a philosophy of love, in particular (*honi soit qui mal y pense* – both of them were attracted to members of their own sex).

In his second lecture[65] Varchi devoted another three excursus to the "nobility" of the arts *(della maggioranza e nobiltà dell'arti)* before he embarked on a comparison of painting and sculpture *(Qual sia più nobile, o la scultura o la pittura).* Finally, in the third "dispute", the similarities and differences be-

tween painting and poetry are discussed *(In che siamo simili et in che differenti i poeti e i pittori)*.[66] Of the artists concerned Vasari, Bronzino, Pontormo, Tasso, Francesco Sangallo, Tribolo, and Cellini added their remarks to the polemics generated by Varchi in letters, and also Michelangelo himself – with humiliating brevity. This was the famous letter in which Michelangelo used the phrase *giudizio dell'occhio* and gave short shrift to the comparison between painting and sculpture, remarking that the one works through the method of deduction *(forza di levare),* while the other through addition *(per via di porre).* Karl Borinski has already noticed[67] that this was a concealed citation from Alberti's *De statua;* however, it remains a puzzle as to how Michelangelo could cite Alberti's terms *porre* and *levare* in 1546 when the Italian translation was only published in 1568.

Varchi was not interested in defining the relative status of sculpture or painting; he judged the worth of both *artes* with the Aristotelian gauge, that is, by the extent to which they served the well-being of the community. For him, both were subsumed under the auspices of the productive intellect *(intelletto fattibile),* differentiating between liberal and mechanical arts on the basis of the amount of physical exertion *(fatica)* and intellectual effort *(ingegno)*.[68] By this approach, painting obviously preceded the mechanical arts but it remained short of the intellectual virtues.

Most surprising is the attitude of Vincenzo Borghini, Vasari's mentor – the appointed leader *(luogotenente)* of the *Accademia del disegno* and one of the most erudite minds of his age and environment – to the polemics initiated by Varchi.[69] Borghini adopted Varchi's Aristotelian reasoning, marking off painting and sculpture from the mechanical arts by claiming that painters and sculptors were not merely fabricators *(fattrici)* but also, inherently in the nature of their activity, they were imitators *(imitatrici)* since the representation of the "qualities of the body or the mind" also required intellectual abilities which – as Aristotle explains in *Politics* in several places – were evaluated by the broader community and not by the single consumer. Nonetheless, he regarded Varchi's zeal as *filosofia boschereccia,* which might sound like "coffee-shop philosophy" today (though he had something more depreciative in mind) and swept aside most arguments as *parole formali,* "empty chatter".

It is a known fact that it was Borghini, an active promoter of the preparations of *Vite* with data and corrections, who warned Vasari most seriously not to enlarge his work with too many biographical details, because "Biographies are only due to princes and the performers of princely deed, and not to inferior people".[70] On this issue Vasari, however, did not comply – to the good fortune of posterity – and filled the pages of *Vite* with biographical details, which make it a good read to this day, however unreliable they may be.[71] It aptly characterizes the age that Borghini quotes the Plutarch passage which – as has been seen – was studiously shunned by Alberti, also adding that "things of a beneficial effect are not necessarily good in their material being, and do not necessarily reflect the (moral) nature of their creator, but … may share in the virtue of the one whom they commemorate".[72]

It is not known (I, for one, cannot say for certain) for whom Borghini intended his commentaries. The signs are that he tried to force the genie – the unwarrantable interpretation of *ars* – back into the bottle whereas it had outgrown that old container. The new bottle – the distinct sphere of aesthetics – was simply non-existent in the sixteenth century, however great the demand for it might have been. *Ars artium,* the apogee of all arts, was in Borghini's new-old Aristotelian interpretation government by the statesman or the citizenry in charge of leading the republic.[73] In other words, it was the service and promotion of the public good to which painting only partially and indirectly contributed, paradoxically through the delight it gives rise to. That explains why the new Italian translation of Alberti's treatises on painting and sculpture were published as moral philosophy under the generic heading of *Opuscoli morali* at around this time.[74]

1. The best summary of the foundation is still Karl Frey's, in Vasari 1923–1940, I, 1923, 706–11. For a more recent survey, see Barzman 2000.
2. For the best analysis of Cosimo I de' Medici's cultural policy, by which he cunningly channelled the privately initiated academic movements into the service of political power, see Plaisance 1973.
3. Warnke 1993.
4. From the thirteenth century onward, seven large organizations *(arti maggiori)* represented the main trades and professions, and there were fourteen smaller bodies *(arti minori)* to represent trades of lesser economic importance. On the scope of activity of painters, see Antal 1948, 278–83; on that of sculptors, wood carvers and master builders, Goldthwaite 1980.
5. The rules of their statute dated 1584 reveal that they were a new guild organization at that time. Cf. Barzman 1989, 15.
6. For *Capitoli et Ordini dell'Accademia et Compagnia dell'Arte del Disegno* see Pevsner 1940, 296–305: Appendix I.
7. Petrus de Alvernia 1951, lib. VIII, lect. 1, 21.
8. Doni 1549, 7: "Il disegno non è altro che speculation divina, che produce un'arte eccellentissima, talmente che tu non puoi operare cosa nessuna nella scoltura & nella pittura senza questa speculatione & disegno."
9. Kemp 1974, 225.
10. For this see Mészáros 2008.
11. Kristeller 1951.
12. The most complete and circumspect analysis of the changing interpretation of the "mechanical arts" by ages is Summers 1987, 235–66.
13. Baxandall 1971, 122.
14. Valla [1471] 1999, I, 60–62; cited by Baxandall 1971, 171–72: "non magis quam cur illae artes, quae proxime ad liberales accedunt, pingendi, scalpendi, fingendi, architectandi, aut tandiu tantoque opere degenerauerint, ac pene cum literis ipsis demortuae fuerint, aut hoc tempore excitentur, ac reviviscant: tantusque tum bonorum opificum, tum bene literatorum proventus efflorescat."
15. Cited by Chastel 1954, 61.
16. Cf. Westfall 1960.
17. The Vatican manuscript says it was completed in 1435 without making it explicit whether it was the Italian or the Latin version. Interpretations are effectively divided into two camps, one regarding the Italian variant as the corrupted vulgarization of the more elaborate Latin version, the other considering the practically conceived Italian variant to have preceded the peak achievement of humanist literature (for example Rocco Sinisgalli, in Alberti [1435] 2006). Below I am quoting from Cecil Grayson's bilingual Italian–Latin edition: Alberti [1435] 1973, adjusted with Sinisgalli's suggestions where necessary.
18. Alberti 1972.
19. Burckhardt [1860] 1937, 74.
20. *De Pictura*, II, 26: "Sed non multum interest aut primos pictores aut picturae inventores tenuisse, quando quidem non historiam picturae ut Plinius sed artem novissime recenseamus, de qua hac aetate nulla scriptorum veterum monumenta quae ipse viderim extant …."
21. *Ibid.* "Pictoris enim regula et arte lapicida, sculptor, omnesque fabrorum officinae omnesque fabriles artes diriguntur."
22. According to Wright (1984), Alberti called his work *commentarii*, and adopted Quintilian's *elementa vs. rudimenta–ars–artifex* classification, which of course does not preclude Horace's systematization. For the rectification of Wright's otherwise excellent summary see Vickers 1988, 342ff.
23. Cited Baxandall 1971, 99.
24. Its dating is uncertain. Some put it to the time of writing *De pictura*, others to the time of *De re aedificatoria.*
25. On the contemporary interpretation of "geometer" see Summers 2007.
26. Grafton 2000, 77.
27. He stressed his abilities as a prophet in the *Vita anonima*.
28. Alberti 1843–1849, IV, 1847, 11–12.
29. Alberti 1877. Let me note here that it is only since Janitschek's edition that Alberti's manuals on painting and sculpture are unambiguously classified under "art theory".
30. For an opposing view see Berti 1967, 135, n. 6.
31. Krautheimer – Krautheimer-Hess 1956.
32. Cf. Grafton 2000, 111–13.
33. Wolf 2000b.
34. Pardo 2001, 230.
35. *De Pictura*, II, 26. Cf. Federici Vescovini 1969.
36. *De pictura*, III, 53: "Doctum vero pictorem esse opto, quoad eius fieri possit, omnibus in artibus liberalibus, sed in eo praesertim geometriae peritiam desidero."
37. Kantorowicz 1961.
38. *De Pictura*, II, 26: "Sed et hoc in primis honore a maioribus honestata pictura est ut, cum caeteri ferme omnes artifices fabri nuncuparentur, solus pictor in fabrorum numero non esset habitus."
39. Alberti [1436] 1966, 118.
40. On the topos of Giotto and his "apostolic successors" see Baxandall 1971 and Baxandall 1972.
41. In his sleep, in which Hermoglyphike and Paideia (female personifications of Sculpture carving and Education) are fighting for his commitment, Paideia argues as follows: "What it shall profit you to become a sculptor, this woman has told you; you will be nothing but a labourer *(banausos),* toiling with your body and putting in it your entire hope of a livelihood, personally inconspicuous, getting meagre and illiberal returns, humble-witted, an insignificant figure in public, neither sought by your friends nor feared by your enemies nor envied by your fellow-citizens – nothing but just a labourer, one of the swarming rabble, ever cringing to the man above you and courting the man who can use his tongue, leading a hare's life, and counting as a godsend to anyone stronger. Even if you should become a Phidias or a Polycleitus and should create many marvellous works, everyone would praise your craftsmanship, to be sure, but none of those who saw you, if he were sensible, would pray to be like you; *for no matter what you might be, you would be considered a mechanic, a man who has naught but his hands, a man who lives by his hands.*" (Italics mine, I. F. M.)
42. Plutarch, *Pericles*, 1–2.
43. Kris–Kurz 1979.
44. *Politica,* VIII, 1337 b.
45. Celenza 1999.
46. Pade 2007, II, 57–60.
47. Marsh 1998. For the latest bilingual edition of *Momus* see S. Knight's translation and excellent introduction: Alberti [1520] 2003.

48. As one of his interpreters notes: he brings the liberal arts down to the field of the mechanical arts. See Oppel 1987, 251.
49. On the idea of partly physical, partly mathematical sciences see Aristotle, *Physica* 194a–7–10. The term *scientia media* was apparently first used by Saint Thomas Aquinas, cf. Gagné 1969.
50. Kris–Kurz 1979, 38–61: subchapter *"Deux artifex–divino artista".*
51. Farago 1992.
52. Watkins 1960, 256–57.
53. Around 1130, in *Didascalion* Hugh of Saint Victor regarded nature as the work of God *(opus Dei),* and the activity of the artisan as analogous with the work of nature *(opus naturae)* hence the imitation of nature *(opus arteficis imitantis naturam).*
54. Wittkower 1952.
55. "Di queste carte della notomia degl'uomini n'è gran parte nelle mani di messer Francesco da Melzo … . Come anche sono nelle mani di… pittor milanese, alcuni scritti di Lionardo, pur di caratteri scritti con la mancina a rovescio, che trattano della pittura e de' modi del disegno e colorire. Costui non è molto che venne a Fiorenza a vedermi desiderando stampar questa opera, e la condusse a Roma per dargli esito, né so poi che di ciò sia seguìto" (Vasari [1550, 1568] 1966–1997, IV, 28).
56. Leonardo 1651a and Leonardo 1651b. The former was, by the way, supplemented by the second translation of Alberti's *Della pittura* (following that of Bartoli's, cf. n. 74 below) and thus the two texts came to be the dual fountain-head of the painting theory of the French Academy.
57. First Olschki 1919–1927, I, 1919; also Panofsky 1955b.
58. Chastel 1972.
59. "non farai tutti li muscoli alle tue figure evidenti … e se altrimenti farai, piuttosto un sacco di noci che figura umana avrai imitato" – cited Chastel 1972, 14.
60. Clements 1961.
61. André Chastel's term to designate Renaissance artists working in several genres, see Chastel 1988, 186–87.
62. And as such, he became one of the corporal "heads" of the *Accademia del disegno* (though actually located in Rome), while the other *capo* was naturally Cosimo I de' Medici.
63. Varchi [1546] 1549.
64. Cf. Quiviger 1987.
65. For the critical edition of *Lezzione della magioranza delle arti* see Varchi [1546] 1960.
66. Varchi's intellectual opponent and fellow academician Giambattista Gelli (who was incidentally the head of a shoe-making workshop) already devoted much thought to the praise of painting in his academic speeches in the late 1540s. See Gelli 1551.
67. Borinski 1914–1924, I, 1914, 169.
68. This was to be a persistent *topos* of Lomazzo and Biondo, too, who would return to the scholastic dichotomy of liberal and mechanical art with monotonous and inferior arguments on this basis.
69. Vincenzo Borghini: *Selva di notizie,* in Barocchi ed. 1971–1977, I, 1971, 611–73.
70. Borghini's letter to Vasari dated August 5, 1564 is published by Frey, in Vasari 1923–1940, II, 1930, 93.
71. Barolsky 1990; Barolsky 1991; Barolsky 1992; Barolsky 1994.
72. *Selva di notizie,* in Barocchi ed. 1971–1977, I, 1971, 672.
73. *Selva di notizie, ibid.,* 673: "E per dichiarar meglio, dico che la principalissima azzione dell'uomo e sopra tutte l'altre è quella ch'è occupata circa al governo publico, onde i prìncipi che governano gli stati e' cittadini che governano le republiche hanno un'arte alle mani eccellentissima senza paragone e che da molti meritamente è stata detta *ars artium*, e tutte quelle che se tendono a questo fine sono più eccellenti di grado in grado …"
74. Alberti 1568. On this see Judith Bryce's dissertation (1983), esp. chapter X: "Cosimo Bartoli as translator and editor of Leon Battista Alberti."



János Jernyei-Kiss

# The Paragone

*Paragone* – the rivalrous comparison of the arts, artists and their works – was a characteristic manifestation of Italian Renaissance art and artistic thinking. It accompanied the process in which painters, sculptors and architects, previously considered as mere craftsmen or artisans, attained recognition as creative thinkers, autonomous and self-conscious practitioners of their respective arts, with the same status as poets and scholars.

The roots of the dispute are probably most vividly elucidated by Leonardo's words: "With justified lamentation, painting complains of being driven out of the number of the liberal arts. For painting is a true daughter of nature; and performed by the most worthy sense."[1] In classical antiquity the term "liberal arts" *(artes liberales)* was applied to sciences and other intellectual activities that were considered fitting pursuits for free men (who were expected to acquire this knowledge) to distinguish these activities from lowly, manual labour practiced by slaves. Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music were the seven canonized liberal arts that became the basis of medieval scholarship and education. Visual arts were excluded from this illustrious circle. In the Middle Ages artists – pursuing regulated activities in organized guilds – were *de jure* as well as *de facto* craftsmen. Although signatures and inscriptions perpetuated the names of several masters from the eleventh century onward, they were held in low esteem. Besides the unfavourable ranking in the hierarchy of occupations and their low social prestige, several moral prejudices also obstructed an intrinsic appreciation of their work.

The main arguments put forward to prove the inferiority of artistic activity were the artists' alleged ignorance and lack of learning, the physical-material aspect of their work, and that they worked for money and for the market.[2] Seeking to surpass these prejudices and commonplaces, the *paragone* literature unfolding in the fifteenth century aimed at creating a firm theoretical basis for the higher esteem of the visual arts, as well as promoting a new idea of the artist, by means of comparison between poetry and painting.

It became a resounding phrase of the fifteenth century that the artists' intellect, erudition, scientific knowledge, and even their dignified way of life were in no way inferior to those of poets and scholars. The ideal of the artist as equal to the philosopher was first formulated by the painter Cennini, author of a treatise on painting practice in 1390.[3] According to the first comprehensive art theory, Alberti's treatise on painting, a good artist, as an equal partner to poets and philosophers, should have a complete humanist education.[4] Furthermore, the sculptor Ghiberti

Titian
*Portrait of a Lady ("La Schiavona")*
ca. 1510–1512
National Gallery, London



Sandro Botticelli
*The Calumny of Apelles*
1490s
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

maintained that apart from practical manual skill, the artist had to possess encyclopaedic knowledge encompassing history, philosophy and the sciences.[5] In his notes compiled for a projected major treatise on painting, Leonardo presented the art of painting as a science that requires knowledge of mathematics, geometry and other branches of learning. He devoted a separate section to the question of *paragone*, going further than any of his predecessors in the systematic comparison of the different arts: in his interpretation painting was not only equal, but in many respects even superior to poetry.

Leonardo's reflections aimed at the fundamental principles and universal comprehensiveness of artistic imitation. More than giving his view on the "hierarchy" of the arts he transcended the art concept of his predecessors tied to literature and philosophy by deriving the faculties of the artist not from humanistic studies but from an analytic observation of nature, which helps the painter to perfect his own means of expression differing essentially from those of the poet. Thus, Leonardo's writings involve more than the prestige of painting: his probing into the differences between visual and linguistic representation suggests an awareness of the autonomous system of rules in visual arts.

Leonardo claimed that painting is a science based on experience, built on "true and known first principles" as mathematics is, therefore it is more certain and more comprehensive than the speculative sciences which "begin and end in the mind". The painter relies on direct perception, which is indispensable for scientific investigation; what is more, he can rely on the "noblest" sense of sight, the most certain of all the senses. While poetry "borrows from others' professions", elaborating the material of natural sciences and philosophy and reproducing it with the means of rhetoric, painting works "with its own principle".[6] The painter contemplates nature directly, without the mediation of other sciences and "considers all the qualities of forms with philosophy and subtle speculation".[7] He observes "what is an umbrageous body, what are

Giovanni Bellini
*Madonna of the Meadow*
ca. 1500
National Gallery, London



primitive and derived shadow, and what is light, that is, darkness, light, colour, body, figure, position, distance, nearness, motion, and rest".[8]

Thus the analytic eye of the painter looks directly at nature, while poetry "by its own nature" can only grasp language, a human creation:

> Painting represents the works of nature to the [common] sense with more truth and certitude than words or letters do, but letters present words to the [common] sense with more truth than painting does. We will declare that the most admirable science is the one that represents the works of nature rather than the works of the worker, that is, the works of men.[9]

Promoting these views, Leonardo also reflects on the discourse exploring the means of artistic impact,[10] arguing for the incomparably greater descriptive power of painting: "Now consider which is a closer examination of man, his name or his similitude?"[11] Following the authors of antiquity, it was considered fundamental that rhetoric, poetry, and painting have a kind of evocative power, a vividness of depiction *(enargeia)* by which objects or actions could be set almost literally within reach, "displayed to the eyes":

> It is a great gift to be able to set forth the facts on which we are speaking clearly and vividly. For oratory fails of its full effect, and does not assert itself as it should, if its appeal is merely to the hearing, and if the judge merely feels that the facts on which he has to give his decision are being narrated to him, and not displayed in their living truth to the eyes of the mind.[12]

Leonardo argues that the orator and poet can "display" things merely by the artificial ornaments of speech, while the painter presents the natural immediacy of the sight, which makes his work more effective. He illustrates painting's power to create a sense of presence by the examples of lovers moved by the likeness of the beloved, the simulacra of the gods generating religious fervour and pictures deceiving even animals.[13]

This comparison does not merely serve to prove painting's greater imitative power, but also reveals the fundamental difference between painterly and poetic imitation: Leonardo claims that a painter can represent emotions and states of mind, while the poet can imitate stories and speech.[14] It is the convincing psychological representation of his figures – the wordless eloquence of his art – that enables the painter to present human actions, and his work is



Titian
*Diana and Callisto*
between 1556–1559
Bridgewater Collection
(on deposit at the National
Gallery of Scotland,
Edinburgh)

natural philosophy as well, thoroughly exploring "how the mind works in movements".[15] In Leonardo's explication of *paragone,* similarly to other authors, it is *istoria* or narrative painting in which a painter can demonstrate the full potential of his art, in which the quivers of the human soul, the passions and intentions of the mind, are expressed by visual means, by the movements of the body, and by the facial expression of the figures.[16]

Thus clearly the painter does not merely copy nature, but in possession of his knowledge, following the laws of Nature, he creates. His work is not then a simple mechanical process, because "painting extends not only to the works of nature but to infinite [others] which wait for nature ever to create them".[17] The artist is endowed with the special power of his imagination: he is the creator of beauties but at the same time of monstrous or terrifying things; he may create odd and ridiculous or moving and pitiable things as well. Leonardo has proved in his practice too that the imagination of a painter is not inferior to a poet's in any respect.

Nor did Leonardo miss the opportunity to give a response to those who regarded painters as mere craftsmen bought for money and scorned them:

> If you call painting mechanical because at first it is manual, the hands figure what is found in the fan-



Lorenzo Ghiberti
*The Story of Joseph*
relief from the *Porta del Paradiso*
1430s
Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence

> tasia, and you writers draw what you find in your ingegno manually with the pen. If you say [painting] is mechanical because it is done for a price, who falls into this error more than you do, if it can be called an error? When you read in studios do you not go to whoever awards the greatest prize?[18]

However, when comparing painting and sculpture, Leonardo used the very same argument against sculptors: "Sculpture is not science but a very mechanical art, because it generates sweat and bodily fatigue in the executant."[19] Indeed, sculptors had to fight against even more prejudices than painters if they wanted to win due recognition. It is enough to refer to Michelangelo's example: in his youth his father tried to deter him from sculpture with whippings, because as a landed nobleman he thought it a disgrace to do any kind of manual work for money, including sculpture, which was no more for him than stone cutting. Only Lorenzo de' Medici's authority and eloquence could persuade him to give his consent to his son's career choice.[20]

The role and position of arts in Lorenzo's Florence clearly reveal a change in the attitude of the upper classes and humanists, as a result of which the visual arts had been recognized as liberal arts by the end of the fifteenth century. In his treatise on the cultivated gentleman's education, proper conduct, and pastimes (*The Book of the Courtier,* published in 1528), Baldassare Castiglione already discussed skills in drawing and painting, as well as acquaintance with the arts, as indispensable for a *cortegiano*.[21]

Emancipation was also indicated by the fact that comparison of poetry and painting was gradually superseded by the contrast of painting with sculpture. Leonardo devoted much attention to the issue and Castiglione also discussed it. The Florentine man of letters, jurist, and philologist Benedetto Varchi collected the opinions of his illustrious contemporaries on the subject, summing up their and his own views in two lectures.[22]

In defence of the primacy of painting, Leonardo argues that in sculpture the range of artistic problems is more limited than in painting: a sculptor has to concentrate only on the mass, form, and movement of the body, while a painter has to cope also with colouring, modelling "in chiaroscuro" (with light and shadows), and suggesting distances. He acknowledges the presence of perspective in low relief only and denies it in sculpture in the round. According to Leonardo, chiaroscuro effects in sculpture are not created by the sculptor but emerge "by themselves" in three-dimensional forms. Consequently, sculpture requires less theoretical consideration and much greater physical exertion.[23]

The most frequent argument for the superiority of sculpture was its durability: the materials of marble and bronze are solid and lasting; they impart dignity to the work. Moreover, sculpture represents the forms in their tangible and three-dimensional reality, whereas painting merely forges their illusion on the plane of the panel or canvas. Existence is closer to reality than semblance, the proponents of sculpture claimed. For the greater glory of the painter – the advocates of painting argued, because suggesting volume and recession in space by chiaroscuro modelling and perspective requires greater artistic competence.[24] According to Varchi's summary – without quoting here all his statements and arguments – it is commonly



Raphael
*The Transfiguration of Christ*
1517–1520
Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome

Sebastian del Piombo
*The Raising of Lazarus*
ca. 1517–1519
National Gallery, London



held that sculpture represents a primary level of imitating nature (a "direct" imitation, so to speak), it is more solid (the forms being physically present) and a more difficult art (the parts cut from the marble block cannot be restored to their original place). By contrast, painting can represent a wider range of things, hence it is truly universal (capable of imitating all objects in the visible world) and it creates a fuller illusion (being closer to the natural model by virtue of colouring).[25] A further noteworthy feature of Varchi's work is that it explores the productivity of the artistic creative process itself by clarifying the medial peculiarities of each branch of art. For him, artistic mimesis is not merely a means of creating illusion; the perfection of imitation also involves wonderment about and a reflection upon the context, the means of execution, and the tricks of the trade.[26]

*Paragone,* however, did not only manifest in theoretical debates, but also in art works. The rivalry of painting with poetry and humanist erudition is reflected first of all in the mythological and allegorical compositions of the quattrocento. These are fictions that wish to impress their learned viewers by their "beautiful", edifying meaning or message – *"bello significato",* to use the term coined by an illustrious patron of the period.[27] The complex themes, intricacy of the allegories, the liberal use of textual and visual sources to create new meanings were proof of the painter's "poetic" faculty, even if humanist *letterati* were often involved in working out the painting's subject. As an example of a well-conceived allegory, Alberti put forward to his contemporaries a lost classical painting, the *Calumny* of Apelles, known only from Lucian's description.[28] Several instances

suggest that artists were stimulated by Lucian's and Alberti's text to paint the theme themselves, thus rivalling both the written text and the legendary evocative power of the lost painting. Botticelli's version reveals that he did not confine himself to visualizing the motifs described by Lucian. He set the scene in a splendid hall with an *all'antica* architecture decorated with sculptures and reliefs elaborating on the allegorical message by related themes.[29]

In his *Madonna of the Meadow,* Giovanni Bellini created a synthesis of an old type of devotional image, the half-length icon of the Virgin, and the principles of the new style of painting. When focusing on the landscape, the contemporary viewer would recognize a visual metaphor of Christ's Passion and resurrection in the resurgence of nature in the spring. The more erudite would, however, also recognize the landscape motifs of bucolic poetry and Virgil's *Georgics* and would have an opportunity to compare the powers of poetic description and visual representation.[30] By the identicalness of motifs calling for comparison, Giovanni Bellini clearly reminds the viewer that what he sees is not a simple imitation of reality, but an Arcadian landscape imbued with poetry, that is, a landscape *created by an artist's hand*. The *paragone* motif in this case makes the viewer realize that a picture like this demands more of the spectator than a simple identification of the elements of reality.

In other paintings, it is precisely the resistance of the visual rendering to a comparison with poetic texts that leads to this conclusion. Titian's series of mythological nudes painted for Philip II resist all attempts at a unified, coherent literary reading of the visual elements. It is symptomatic that writing about these paintings in his letters to the ruler the painter did not talk about subjects and meanings:

> Because the figure of Danaë, which I have already sent to Your Majesty, is seen entirely from the front, I have chosen in this other poesia to vary the appearance and show the opposite side, so that the room in which they are to hang will seem more agreeable.[31]

Therefore it is not a poetic-allegorical meaning inherent in the subjects that connects these paintings but a specific painterly program aimed at demonstrating the artist's abilities and virtuosity through the sheer variety of solutions for the same pictorial problem, the representation of the female nude. It is also noteworthy that Titian referred to his pictures as *poesie,* a term employed in Venice to differentiate the Venetian works from the didactic Florentine *istorie* tied to literature.[32] The naming of the genre invites the spectator to compare the painting with poetic texts, and this *paragone* leads to the recognition of those qualities that differentiate a painting from the illustration of a text, revealing at the same time the difference in specific aesthetic experiences provided by a text and by a painting on account of their respective media.

Outcomes of the rivalry between painters and sculptors included the "painterly" relief, a fifteenth-century invention by which sculpture could integrate certain expressive means of painting such as suggesting recession in space by perspective,[33] as well as the appearance of statues and reliefs as pictorial motifs in paintings demonstrating that painters could imitate even the work of sculptors. By incorporating the sitter's relief portrait in the composition of the so-called *La Schiavona,* Titian expressly provoked the viewer to compare the painterly imitation with that of sculpture and, moreover, to acknowledge the painter's supremacy over the sculptor in achieving greater vividness and intensity of expression.[34]

Some pictures even sought to compete with sculpture's powers, to represent multiple views of a figure. This was probably the underlying reason for Titian's focusing on the relation of nudes observed from diverse standpoints in his above mentioned series of *poesie*. According to some sources Giorgione painted a Saint George, now lost, whose figure was reflected in a brook at his feet and in two mirrors at the sides. An unusual work like this might have served as a demonstration piece to be interpreted in the context of *paragone* with sculpture.

Raphael represented the figure of Saint Matthew in a similar way in the foreground of his *Transfiguration* altarpiece. Despite the emphasis laid on the motif of reflection – the right foot of the apostle is plainly duplicated on the dark surface of water in the foreground – this image rather employs the refined optical devices of painterly mimesis to challenge sculpture. The volume of Saint Matthew's figure, represented in seated contrapposto, is suggested by the virtuoso foreshortening *(scorto)* and the illusion of relief *(rilievo)* provided by the masterly distribution of light and shadows. Raphael thus clearly juxtaposed his art not only to sculptural imitation but also to the sculptural concept of figures that was represented in painting by Michelangelo. The extraordinary diversity of pictorial devices employed all over the painting can be explained to some extent by the competitive circumstances of its origin: it was commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (later Pope Clement VII) for the cathedral of Narbonne, who, however, simultaneously entrusted Sebastiano del Piombo with the execution of another altarpiece representing the raising of Lazarus. Sebastiano, a painter of Venetian origin, belonged to the circle of Michelangelo in Rome, therefore his work is a wonderful synthesis of the two schools: the painterly qualities of his bright palette and deep chiaroscuro contrasts are united with the sculptural forms of Michelangelo's figures confined within firm outlines. Raphael raised the standard even higher: his painting combines two events, the transfiguration of Christ and the episode of the possessed boy, thus he sets out to represent a complex plot commensurable with those of classical tragedies.[35] In this painting, Raphael not only integrated the multifarious modes of colouring and methods of chiaroscuro modelling employed in the high Renaissance,[36] but he also exhibited a vast variety of physiognomies, facial expressions, and gestures. By this demonstrative display of the powers of the painter, the two masterpieces are spectacular signs of the advent of a new age: after the rivalry of the arts, the sixteenth century witnessed the *paragone* of the great artists.

NOTES

1. Farago 1992, 237 (I. 27.).
2. Blunt 1940, 48-49; Burke 1987.
3. Wittkower–Wittkower 1963, 14.
4. Alberti [1435] 2006, 244–50.
5. Ghiberti 1912, 3–8.
6. Farago 1992, 227 (I. 23.).
7. *Ibid.,* 195 (I. 12.).
8. *Ibid.,* 253 (I. 33.).
9. *Ibid.*, 187 (I. 7.).
10. Rosen 2000.
11. Farago 1992, 209–11 (I. 19.).
12. Quintilian 1920, III, 244–45.
13. Farago 1992, 197–99 (I. 14.).
14. *Ibid.*, 201–3 (I. 15.).
15. *Ibid.*, 213 (I. 19.).
16. See also Alberti's concept of *istoria*: Belting 1985, 37–40.
17. Farago 1992, 237 (I. 27.).
18. *Ibid.*, 213 (I. 19.).
19. *Ibid.*, 257 (I. 35.).
20. Condivi [1553] 1999, 9, 12–13.
21. Castiglione [1528] 2002, 57–58.
22. Varchi [1546] 1960.
23. Leonardo 1882, I, 72–102 (I. 35–46.).
24. Castiglione [1528] 2002, 58–59.
25. Varchi [1546] 1960, 37–40. See also Mendelsohn 1982, 117–32.
26. Bätschmann 1984, 87–91.
27. Belting 1985, 75.
28. Alberti [1435] 2006, 246–48 (III. 53.).
29. For a detailed description of the work, see Bo–Mandel 1967, 105, no. 127.
30. Belting 1993, 526.
31. Hope 1980, 114.
32. Rosand 1972, 533–34.
33. Discussing the reliefs for the doors of the Battistero in Florence, Ghiberti gives a detailed account of the aim of his procedure: Ghiberti 1912, 48–50.
34. Chastel 1978, II, 350.
35. Preimesberger 1987.
36. Hall 1992, 131–36.



Jill Dunkerton

# Developments in Painting Technique in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy

A visitor to an exhibition with the scope of *Botticelli to Titian* cannot fail to be struck by the different appearance of the works from earlier in the period covered – painted on panels, with bright colours and crisp sharp contours, sometimes set against gleaming gold backgrounds – and those by the great Venetian masters, Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese that appear later in the display. These are painted on canvas with a rich variety of brushstrokes and paint effects, including visible impasto and deep-toned glazes of translucent colour. This contrast is the result of developments in painting technique[1] that were arguably more radical than any until the reconsideration of the whole process of painting that took place in the twentieth century.

For Italian painters the first of these changes was the gradual transition from the traditions of egg tempera to painting in oil. In the late thirteenth century painters such as Pietro Cavallini, Duccio, and Giotto had adapted the Byzantine technique of painting with pigments bound in egg yolk by developing new modelling systems which involved the application of their paints with short parallel hatched strokes, necessary because of the rapid drying of the egg medium. Tempera paints have poor coverage and so the modelling and depth of colour has to be built up gradually by repeated application of these hatched strokes, which when viewed from a distance will blend and can suggest volume with great effectiveness, although they may be readily visible on closer inspection. The optical properties of the medium are such that pigments appear bright and high key and the colour modelling systems adopted were usually similar to those employed in fresco painting (fig. 1). When painting a drapery in both tempera and fresco the pigment was most often used in its purest form for the shadows with the relief of the modelling obtained by the admixture of white, or another pale-coloured pigment in the case of *cangiante* shot-silk effects. The brilliant artificiality of these painting techniques complements perfectly the gold leaf used extensively on the framing elements, as a tooled and punched background to the figures and in further decoration of the painted parts, usually with mordant gilding and *sgraffito* (in which tempera paint is superimposed over gold leaf and then scratched away according to the pattern).[2]

When, in the mid-fifteenth century, panel paintings from the Netherlands executed in an oil technique were imported in ever-increasing numbers for the courts and rich merchants of Italy, their impact

Michele Pannonio (probably assisted by Cosmè Tura)
*The Muse Thalia* (detail)
1456–1457
Oil and tempera on poplar
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest



Fig. 1
Lorenzo Monaco
*The Coronation of the Virgin with Adoring Saints*
1407–1409
Egg tempera on poplar
National Gallery, London



Fig. 2
Rogier van der Weyden
*The Columba Triptych*
(detail)
1450s
Oil on panel
Alte Pinakothek, Munich

was considerable, above all for painting technique. In trying to explain the Italian response to these works it is not surprising that Giorgio Vasari in his *Lives of the Artists* produced a narrative that lingers on in popular histories of painting to this day. According to Vasari the technique was the invention of Jan van Eyck. It has long been known, however, from documentary sources that painters had been using oil as a medium for centuries and more recently this has been confirmed by the scientific examination of surviving works from northern Europe – sadly few in number when compared with Italian paintings as a result of outbreaks of iconoclasm. In a panel painting such as the fragmentary *Westminster Retable* of about 1270 the oil medium was already being used with great refinement and sophistication.[3] The innovation of painters in the Netherlands in the early fifteenth century, most importantly Jan van Eyck, Robert Campin, and Rogier van der Weyden (fig. 2), was not technical in the sense of using a new material, but rather the way in which they used the flexibility and wide range of optical effects that could be obtained with the oil medium to depict their world in a novel way. Oil colours could be blended and worked wet-in-wet to achieve smoothly modelled flesh tints or used to describe textures such as fur and rich embroidered and woven textiles. The translucency of some pigments in oil allowed for the use of glazes to build up deep-toned shadows in drapery folds, creating an illusion of reality that must have astonished Italian viewers and so changed Italian painting. Indeed, drying oils had long been in use in Italian workshops, but were generally used for very specific purposes. They were employed in wall paintings and panel painting, usually exploiting the translucent pigments for special decorative effects (perhaps more common, surprisingly, in the thirteenth century) or for glazing cheaper metals such as tin and silver in imitation of gold. Oils were also components of mordants used as adhesives for gold leaf and of the final varnishes applied to the painted surfaces.[4]

As early as the late 1420s, while Jan van Eyck was at work on the *Ghent Altarpiece,* Masolino was making extensive use of drying oils in his completion of the double-sided altarpiece for Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, begun in partnership with Masaccio, whose contributions are in a traditional tempera technique (figs. 3 and 4).[5] While Masolino may already have been experimenting using oils for certain effects before his journey to Hungary, made between 1425–1427,





Fig. 3
Attributed to Masaccio
*Saints Jerome and John the Baptist*
ca. 1428–1429
Egg tempera on poplar
National Gallery, London

Fig. 4
Masolino
*Pope Gregory the Great (?) and Saint Matthias*
ca. 1428–1429
Egg tempera and oil on fibreboard, transferred from poplar
National Gallery, London

it seems possible that contact with painters north of the Alps may have encouraged him in his use of the medium. Therefore the second part of Vasari's account of the development of oil painting is also disproved, for he claimed that the young Antonello da Messina, on seeing Netherlandish paintings, decided to travel north to study with Jan van Eyck (who had died many years before Antonello was active as a painter), and that on his return he introduced the supposedly innovative technique to the rest of Italy, including Venice. It is true, however, that Antonello seems to have worked in oils right from the beginning of his career and that he had seen paintings from northern Europe even before he painted early works such as the *Crucifixion* from Sibiu (cat. 49). This is often described as being in tempera, but even without analysis of paint samples it is possible to recognize many features of paint handling, such as the thread-like white highlights, that appear in later works such as his celebrated *Saint Jerome in his Study* (fig. 5), firmly identified as painted in walnut oil. Antonello did not need to go the Netherlands, since, if – as

Fig. 5
Antonello da Messina
*Saint Jerome in his Study*
ca. 1475
Oil on limewood
National Gallery,
London



seems likely – he received his early training in the Naples workshop of Colantonio, he would have seen the Netherlandish and Franco-Flemish works brought to Naples by René d'Anjou and learnt to work in oil with Colantonio and other foreign painters.[6]

By the mid-fifteenth century Netherlandish paintings were being imported into other Italian cities and courts, inspiring a shift in technique, above all in Ferrara where the presence of important works by Rogier van der Weyden, as well as tapestry weavers



Fig. 6
Cosmè Tura
*A Muse (Calliope?)*
ca. 1455–1460
Oil with egg on poplar
National Gallery, London

and other craftsmen from the north, resulted in the adoption of oil painting by the two principal painters of the panels of the nine Muses from Leonello and Borso d'Este's famous s*tudiolo* at Belfiore.[7] The series was begun by the Sienese painter, Angelo Maccagnino, who according to written sources worked in oil, and then mostly completed following his death by Cosmè Tura, who, in the *Muse* now in the National Gallery, London (fig. 6), used the oil medium with a far greater understanding of the principles of early Netherlandish painting, especially the use of translucent glazes, than is evident in the works of Colantonio and the young Antonello. It seems possible that Tura also contributed to the Muse *Thalia* (cat. 40): although

the figure and little putti are clearly by Michele Pannonio, perhaps brought in to speed up the project which made slow progress until Maccagnino's death in 1456, the splendid cloth-of-gold cloak and the beautifully observed lilies and branches of fruit are painted with a technique close to that of Tura's London *Muse*. The flowers are very different in character to the more conventional rose held by *Thalia* or the flowers in the panels of male saints from Ferrara (cat. 41).

Given the close connections between Ferrara and Venice, including the presence of Jacopo Bellini in Ferrara, it is not surprising to discover that by the time Antonello reached Venice, probably in 1475 (although an earlier visit cannot be excluded), the oil medium was well established. Several paintings by Giovanni Bellini that date from before Antonello's arrival in Venice have been confirmed by scientific analysis as having been painted in oil.[8] While Antonello certainly had an effect on the course of painting in Venice, it was not due to his technique, and indeed he may have benefited from seeing the many Netherlandish paintings that were available in that city. These are reflected also in the works, especially portraits, of painters such as Jacometto (cat. 32), then later in the paintings of Cima da Conegliano.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that once oil painting began to be taken up in Italy all painters would choose to work in the medium, or that those who continued to paint mainly in egg tempera were conservative in approach or operating in provincial cities. Mantegna, for instance, seems always to have preferred the precision of tempera, of which he was an absolute master. Similarly, Carlo Crivelli may have been working in the southern Marches, but he was a Venetian and had trained in Padua. In his panel paintings, with their dependence on gilded backgrounds and decoration, sometimes in relief on the surface (cat. 44), the conventions of tempera are applied with extraordinary sophistication, as he alternates between projection into the real space of the viewer and the imagined space beyond the picture surface. The painters of Siena, with their reverence for the art of the past, might be thought archaic in their continued use of tempera and gilded backgrounds for altarpieces and Madonnas (cat. 39), but again there is no reason why they should not have painted in oil, had they so wished. Francesco di Giorgio, the most important artist in Siena in the second half of the century, was also active in Urbino alongside a Netherlandish painter, Justus of Ghent, as well as Piero della Francesca (another enthusiast for oil), and yet he appears not to have used the technique in his painting. Only with the arrival of Signorelli in Siena did a younger generation begin to move towards painting in oil.[9]

In Florence too, painters varied in their preparedness to change their technique.[10] The Pollaiuoli brothers responded avidly to Northern painting but often by using the oil medium in an apparently experimental way; the paintings of Piero del Pollaiuolo, in particular, show the consequences of what appears almost to be an impatience with the slow drying of the medium. Other Florentine painters were very conscious of Netherlandish painting but chose to work mainly in tempera, perhaps in part because of the close connection between the gradual build-up of colour with the processes of drawing. Verrocchio and many of the artists associated with his workshop (cat. 6) were essentially tempera painters and yet two of his best known assistants, Leonardo and Lorenzo di Credi worked mainly in oil. Filippino Lippi, trained in his father's workshop as a tempera painter, began adding oil glazes to his tempera paintings (the loss of such glazes almost certainly accounts for the pale desaturated draperies of cat. 13), and eventually painted mainly in oil.[11] Domenico Ghirlandaio continued to paint in a classic tempera technique until his death, teaching it to the young Michelangelo (fig. 7); yet he seems not to have minded that a member of his workshop (possibly his brother Benedetto, who had worked in France) executed areas of the huge double-sided altarpiece for the high altar of Santa Maria Novella in an oil technique very unlike the refined tempera of *Saint Stephen* (cat. 14), a lateral panel of the altarpiece which was painted surely by Domenico himself.[12] At a distance, the difference in



Fig. 7
Michelangelo
*Virgin and Child with Saint John and Angels (The Manchester Madonna)*
(unfinished)
ca. 1497
Egg tempera on panel
National Gallery, London

technique clearly did not show, mainly because the areas executed in oil were painted directly, wet-in-wet and using colour modelling systems more related to tempera painting than to the richly glazed effects that were being sought after by a contemporary Venetian painter such Cima.

The potential of oil paint for rapid execution, laying on the colour in a single application with blended transitions instead of the painstaking build-up of hatched strokes as in tempera, was explored by painters such as the Pollaiuoli brothers in Florence and by Giovanni Bellini in Venice, particularly when painting large-scale altarpieces. Botticelli too, although principally a tempera painter, sometimes used oil in this way, most notably on his *Bardi Altarpiece* of 1485, now in Berlin, and in passages of his *Mars and Venus* in the National Gallery, London.[13] His *Mystic Nativity* is also painted in oil but this is a painting on canvas. In Tuscany in the second half of the fifteenth century there seems to have been an association between the use of oil and canvas supports: Uccello's National Gallery *Saint George and the Dragon* of about 1470 (fig. 8) is painted in oil on canvas[14] and the handling of the paint in the *Scenes of Eremitic Life* (cat. 1) indicates that it may well be in the same technique. Piero della Francesca was commissioned to paint a banner



Fig. 8
Paolo Uccello
*Saint George and the Dragon*
ca. 1470
Oil on canvas
National Gallery, London

in oil on canvas in 1466 and a canvas recorded in the Medici inventory of 1492 as by Domenico Veneziano, who died in 1461, is described as painted in oil.

Canvas had long been in use as a painting support, but with its selection generally related to the function of the work.[15] A very high proportion of early canvas paintings have been lost to us, partly because they were regarded as ephemeral, being used for decorative and theatrical purposes, but also because methods used to conserve painted textiles were probably only developed when prized works by painters such as Titian came to need such treatment. Many of the canvases that survive from the fourteenth and earlier fifteenth century are processional banners, painted on canvas for obvious reasons of reduced weight when compared with panels (cat. 11). Another category where the lightness of canvas was an advantage was that of organ shutters (cat. 21). In the second half of the fifteenth century, however, there does seem to have been an increase in the use of canvas for types of painting that would previously have been on panel. Mantegna recommended canvas for its portability in a letter and used it for many of his paintings, ranging from large altarpieces and secular decorations such as the *Triumphs of Caesar* to small devotional works (cat. 17) and grisailles painted in imitation of relief sculpture. Some of these were executed in a glue-size medium, perhaps inspired by paintings in this technique that were being imported from northern Europe.[16]

The damp conditions of Venice, in particular, threatened the durability of wall paintings, and also to a lesser extent large panel paintings. Therefore canvas came to be used for decorative schemes that elsewhere in Italy might be painted on plastered walls.



Fig. 9
Titian
*The Entombment of Christ*
1559
Oil on canvas
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

Even in the fifteenth century most of the paintings that decorated the walls of the meeting rooms of the *scuole* were painted on canvas (cat. 25). In the next century the canvases became ever larger, and were also used for ceilings, culminating in Tintoretto's cycle of paintings for the Scuola di San Rocco and his and Veronese's huge decorative paintings for the Palazzo Ducale, replacing in the case of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio canvases by Giovanni Bellini and his workshop that had been destroyed in the fire of 1577.

Titian[17] is often associated with the development of painting on canvas, although in fact a surprisingly high proportion of his earlier works are on panel, including the great Frari *Assunta* of 1518. However, as he increasingly began to work for patrons from outside Venice, the practical advantages of lightweight fabric supports meant that from the 1520s onwards the great majority of his paintings were on canvas. At first these were often relatively finely woven, for example the canvases for the camerino of Alfonso d'Este, which were sent to him from Ferrara together with the stretchers in order to ensure that the paintings were the right dimensions for the room. Later on he seems to have sought out canvases with a distinct texture, either as a result of

irregularities in the threads, or with complex twill and damask weaves. He then allowed the canvas weave to contribute to the great variety of paint textures that are apparent on his better-preserved works. Even in later works passages of painting, or sometimes the whole painting (cat. 88), can be extremely thin, seeming to be almost rubbed into the canvas. This is contrasted with areas of substantial paint, often based on the rich buttery lead white for which the pigment manufacturers of Venice were famous. With this he could obtain a low soft impasto (quite unlike the stiff raised impasto made with modern machine-made paint). Titian also exploited the vibrancy of "broken" brush strokes, that is strokes of paint that have skimmed across the raised canvas threads or have been slightly repelled by the dry paint layer beneath, resulting in an interrupted, beaded effect. By these means he could achieve meltingly soft flesh tints and blur his contours so that the colours seem almost to bleed into one another.

In Titian's last works the fractured paint surface can give an impression of lack of finish, and there has been much debate as to whether certain works were actually finished. There can be no conclusive answers since Titian's painting technique no longer consisted of a logical sequence of paint application, as in Raphael's *Esterházy Madonna* (cat. 68), which is manifestly unfinished as it lacks the final glazes and much of the fine detail that would be expected in a completed work by him of the same date. Contemporary viewers of Titian's painting understood the *non finito* element in his work and Philip II of Spain would not have been surprised by the expressively free passages in *The Entombment* (fig. 9). Moreover, Venetian connoisseurs had already come to admire the rapid open brushwork of Andrea Schiavone, who in turn may have been imitating the lack of finish to be seen in certain paintings by Parmigianino. That Parmigianino was consciously varying levels of finish is indicated by the existence of works, even from late in his career, that have a smooth, almost enamelled surface: at the same time he also executed paintings with very visible brushwork and with such economy of technique that areas of the prepared painting surface remained uncovered, something that Titian never did.

Parmigianino was able to paint in this way as a result of the third great change in painting technique that occurred in the period covered by this exhibition, the move away from painting on white or very light coloured preparations. He could leave gaps in the paint surface because he painted on a greyish brown *imprimitura* applied over the gesso ground (fig. 10). Exposed areas of a neutral coloured surface will recede and tone in with the rest of the painting, whereas with a white preparation they stand out and disrupt the legibility of the image.

It used to be thought that the change to painting on coloured preparations took place in Venice, and was perhaps associated with late Titian and Tintoretto. Recent research has shown that in fact the development occurred in the early years of the sixteenth century and seems to be associated more with artists working on the mainland in cities along the Po Valley.[18] One of the first painters to use dark grounds was the young Correggio, which might suggest an association with the Mantegna workshop but also with the influence of Leonardo. Leonardo worked on traditional gesso grounds but his use of brown monochrome undermodelling to give flesh tones a cool opalescence and also to achieve *sfumato* effects may have given painters the idea of preparing the whole painting surface with a dark preparation, either in the form of an *imprimitura* over gesso or as a solid coloured ground without gesso, as in some of Correggio's earliest works. The colour of these preparations can range from relatively light shades of grey and beige to red-browns of the type usually associated with the seventeenth-century but actually found in paintings by Correggio, Moretto, and Moroni, and the very dark primings, often almost black, that were favoured by Dosso Dossi (cat. 95). By painting with a brilliant palette and a flickering touch on these very dark surfaces Dosso achieved his distinctive, almost electric, quality.



Fig. 10
Parmigianino
*Virgin and Child* (unfinished)
ca. 1525–1527
Oil on panel
The Courtauld Gallery,
London

By the sixteenth century Florentine painters were almost all using the oil medium but applied in ways that echo the traditions of tempera with its emphasis on *disegno*. Generally, therefore, they continued to work on relatively light-coloured painting surfaces. Bronzino, for example, needed the reflective properties of a gesso ground to obtain the luminous quality and marble-like flesh of his paintings (cat. 118, 124), as well as the smooth surface of a panel. In Venice too, coloured preparations were not taken up until surprisingly late. In his early Venetian works Sebastiano del Piombo used a very pale grey priming, but his painting surfaces became progressively darker only after he moved to Rome, and his predilection for dark painting surfaces means that it is probably correct to attribute to him the development of painting on slate as support. Slate and also polished marble subsequently became popular as supports for small paintings in northern Italy (cat. 105).

Titian also used a pale grey priming for some early works and in the 1520s he experimented with light red-brown primings, perhaps in imitation of Correggio, but soon after he seems to have reverted to painting on simple gesso grounds, applied thinly

to the canvas without filling in the texture of the weave. The blond, relatively high key colour of Veronese's painting[19] meant that he preferred light-coloured surfaces, either with a priming or just gesso, and so too did Tintoretto for the first half of his career.[20] Not until the 1570s did Tintoretto make consistent use of coloured and sometimes very dark primings. Analysis has shown that his primings can contain a wide range of pigments, including expensive ones such as ultramarine and red lake, which suggests that he was mixing in palette scrapings left over after a day's painting. Once he had adopted coloured preparations he exploited them to work in an astonishingly rapid and abbreviated way, leaving parts of his paintings unfinished, some figures and details simply sketched in with lead white, if this suited the function of the work and the original lighting and viewing conditions, in a dark chapel or set between windows in the Scuola di San Rocco, for example.

One of the last painters included in this exhibition, Federico Barocci, was also prepared to leave paintings with areas of exposed priming and the colours blocked in with no elaboration of detail but this was because they were *bozzette* made as part of his extensive preliminary studies in preparation for finished works such as the *Madonna di San Simone* (cat. 131). Painted in oil on a canvas prepared with a mid-brown priming, this altarpiece represents all the significant changes to painting technique that had taken place over the previous hundred years. Furthermore, with minor modifications and the introduction of a few new pigments this was to become the standard technique in Italy for the next two or more centuries.

NOTES

1. Much of the material in this essay is covered in greater detail in the chapters on technique in Dunkerton–Foister–Gordon–Penny 1991 and Dunkerton–Foister–Penny 1999. References will therefore only be given to subsequent publications on the subject.
2. For a fuller account of early Italian tempera techniques see Bomford–Dunkerton–Gordon–Roy 1989.
3. See Binski–Massing ed. 2008; for more northern European oil paintings see Nadolny ed. 2006.
4. For the use of oil and resin varnishes on Italian tempera paintings see Dunkerton–Kirby–White 1990 and Dunkerton–White 2000.
5. For a detailed study of the techniques of Masolino and Masaccio see Strehlke–Frosinini ed. 2002.
6. For more on the role of Naples and the evolution of Antonello's technique see Dunkerton 2000. For Antonello and Venice see Dunkerton 1999.
7. For the implications of the technical examination of the Belfiore Muses see Dunkerton 2002.
8. For a summary of recent analyses of paintings by Giovanni Bellini see Dunkerton 2004.
9. Dunkerton–Christensen–Syson 2006.
10. For Netherlandish paintings in Florence, including effects on technique see Nuttall 2004, especially 161–91.
11. Dunkerton–Roy 1996, 20–23; Roy–Dunkerton 2003.
12. Hirst–Dunkerton 1994, 83–127.
13. For the identification of oil as the medium of the *Bardi Altarpiece* see Dunkerton 2006, 78–79.
14. Dunkerton–Roy 1998.
15. For essays on the early use of canvas in Italy see Villers ed. 2000.
16. For Mantegna's glue-size paintings see Dunkerton 1993 and Billinge–Spring 2009.
17. The recent literature on Titian's technique is extensive. For a brief account of his technique see Dunkerton 2003.
18. Dunkerton–Spring 1998, 120–30.
19. Penny–Spring 1995; Penny–Roy–Spring 1996.
20. Dunkerton 2007.



János Jernyei-Kiss

# Disegno and Colore

Rather than merely a new formal language or taste, the Renaissance in fact brought about a new era – the *age of art* – in Europe.[1] It was indeed the artists and theorists of the Renaissance who laid the foundations of the concept of *art* in the modern sense by practising and considering art as an independent professional medium with specific rules of creation and artistic mediation. The onset of a new age is also manifest in the increasingly articulated discourse about art; thanks to artists with a predilection for theory and to humanists, a fairly rich set of concepts evolved to describe the creative process and evaluate the works of art. Renaissance writings talked about painting as a science, defining the rules of representation, of visual mediation as a stock of special knowledge. Compared to the pious medieval recipients of images, the Renaissance picture presupposed a different kind of beholder, who looked not merely for a representation of the subject, the naïve experience of presence, but also the imprint of the creative mind and hand in the picture. Contemporary theory and criticism on painting facilitate understanding of what the artists and the connoisseurs meant by *picture, representation* and *art* in the Renaissance, and what ideas and expectations determined the processes of creation and reception.

Raphael
*The Tempi Madonna*
(detail)
ca. 1507–1508
Alte Pinakothek, Munich

Some concepts used in the Renaissance came to determine the discourses on art for centuries. For one thing, the significance of the dispute over the primacy of one or the other of the two fundamental tools of expression in painting: drawing and colouring largely outgrew its original scope. Originally, the opposition of *disegno* and *colore* defined the different conceptions of two sixteenth-century schools: the Florentine (and in its wake the Roman) and the Venetian. Eventually, however, it became the basis of differentiating between two radically different artistic attitudes, one being intellectual and instructive, the other rather being sensuous and delighting. The polemic embodied by the opposition of design and colour came to be epitomized by great masters of painting in the next three centuries like Poussin and Rubens, Reynolds and Gainsborough, Ingres and Delacroix, who either consciously and programmatically or in the judgment of posterity became representatives of one and opposites of the other artist type.[2]

The discourse began and unfolded in greater depth on the *disegno* side, as theoretical reflection has always been the forte of classical-intellectual art. If one wishes to find the most elemental definition of *disegno,* one should in the first instance consult the famed chronicler of the Italian Renaissance,

Giorgio Vasari. He gave the basic definition of drawing in the second edition of his famous biographies, *The Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects,* the introduction to speaking about painting:

> Seeing that Design, the parent of our three arts, Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, having its origin in the intellect, draws out from many single things a general judgement, it is like a form or idea of all the objects in nature, most marvellous in what it compasses, for not only in the bodies of men and of animals but also in plants, in buildings, in sculpture and in painting, design is cognizant of the proportion of the whole to the parts and of the parts to each other and to the whole. Seeing too that from this knowledge there arises a certain conception and judgement, so that there is formed in the mind that something which afterwards, when expressed by the hands, is called design, we may conclude that design is not other than a visible expression and declaration of our inner conception and of that which others have imagined and given form to in their idea.[3]

Vasari's definition is about no less than the cognitive and creative ability of art: he describes *disegno* as an intellectual activity that exceeds the particularity of things, the sheer imitation of individual objects, and is able to acquire general, universal knowledge from an experience of the diversity of nature. The mind is, indeed, capable of recognizing the idea, the laws, rules, and proportions manifest in the creations of Nature which produces everything consistently and regularly. That is the basis of art's imitation of nature, above all its representation of human beings, which the Renaissance prized as the most highly ranked among all artistic challenges.[4] The rendering of the structure, functioning, movement of the body, and especially the visualisation of the "motions of the mind" – emotions and passions – the capturing of the character types and mental states, the faculty of visual narration are all derived from the artistic consciousness probing into the depths of nature. Vasari drew a parallel between drawing and cognition: theoretical knowledge is a result of abstracting from the particular, and in the same way, drawing – which captures the object with outlines and forms – is abstraction from the object's material nature, recognizing and revealing the essential and the general in it.

For Vasari and his later followers, this definition of *disegno* was ample reply to the disparaging or dismissive concepts of art such as Plato's, whose views medieval authors often relied on. In Plato's view, artists are only capable of representing sensations from the realm of shadows, that is, material likenesses of a higher primal reality, and therefore the painter is an imitator of imitations, being the farthest from the truth and capable of nothing but deception.[5] Vasari's definition is based on the Aristotelian concept of cognition which derives knowledge from experience.[6] This provided the basis for the ideal of arts revealing truth as well as for the eminent status that art enjoyed from this time in European culture, both in philosophical and social regards.

Thus, *disegno* means more than drawing; it also designates the idea born from the artist's experiences in his mind via abstraction; this idea is the starting point and guarantee for his creative activity, which is comparable with God's and Nature's. The other great theorist of the late Renaissance, Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo advised that artists "should first conceive – in other words, compose – in their minds the idea of what they design to create, before getting to grips with the brush or chisel and perform labour."[7] In order to make the idea assume visible form and become *disegno* in the physical sense, a special procedure is needed:

> … once the thing you want to draw has been formatted in the idea, the best is to draw … [with] a very fine pen dipped, just dipped in some watercolour, or with *pietra tedesca* and *pietra rossa*, and on tinted paper, so that there is just a little difference between the colours of the drawing and the paper; without any confusion as to the subject, gently hint-

(left) Raphael
*Virgin and Child (Composition and figure studies)*
ca. 1504–1508
British Museum, London

(right) Raphael
*The Tempi Madonna*
ca. 1507–1508
Alte Pinakothek, Munich





> ing at everything that had been conceived in the mind, and then putting it into practise without any fatigue of the brain.[8]

Lomazzo's technical guidelines rested on a time-tested practice typical of the great masters of the high Renaissance. Leonardo, and after him Raphael and others, developed a composing procedure and drawing technique that provided the most effective solution for projecting the artist's inner vision. In their captivating drawings *disegno* serves to raise an artistic problem and provide a first draft of it in the form of a compositional or a motion study. Accordingly, medium and technique are handled as flexible agents adjusted to these functions. The light chalk lines, groping outlines, superimposed contours or the indefiniteness and fluidity of forms seem to project outwardly the idea emerging in the artist's mind. This drawing style was designed to be the vehicle of invention, to promote the free flow of artistic imagination and to capture the idea as if in the act of its emergence.[9]

The finished works, however, show no trace of uncertainty: a determined order arises from the chaos, achieved first of all by the firmly controlled line. In a painting predominated by *disegno* there are "strong and leading lines"[10] whose beauty, harmonious arrangement and rhythm not only fascinate the viewer but also designate the main forms, create the directions of movement, indicate the distribution in space, and ensure the control of the whole over the detail. Lines in fact have an expressly descriptive character, too, for they determine the minute but eloquent details of movements and postures that lend the figures emotions and character. Nevertheless, it is also their role to reveal the abstract, "reticent" entity[11] which Florentine artists deemed so indispensable for a knowledgeable representation of nature.

The *disegno*-based painting is inseparable from figural representation: for its advocated "image" means, above all, a composition assembled of human bodies. This is adequately expressed by Vasari's definition by which a painting is a flat surface covered with painted



Michelangelo
*The Last Judgment*
(detail)
Sistine Chapel,
Palazzo Apostolico,
Vatican

fields of colour that fill out the outlines of the figures created with the right *disegno*.[12] Thus all creative virtues: the imitation of nature, composing skills, power of characterization and depth of thought are, perforce, interlocked with the ability to represent the human body, which is the basis of judging the *disegno*.[13] Obviously, Vasari regarded Michelangelo as the perfect paragon of his artistic ideal. He described the *Last Judgment* fresco in the Sistine Chapel as the paradigm of the figural composition expressed by *disegno,* lauding it as "the glowing lantern of our art". Almost the exclusive artistic theme of the great masterpiece is the representation of nudes hovering in diverse postures. Michelangelo created his magnificent composition exclusively from bodies, by linking the intricate motifs of movement with a firm hand, without the help of any perspectival organizing principle:

Titian
*Danaë*
ca. 1544–1546
Museo di Capodimonte, Naples



> It is enough for us to understand that this extraordinary man chose always to refuse to paint anything save the human body in its most beautifully proportioned and perfect forms and in the greatest variety of attitudes, and thereby to express the wide range of the soul's emotions and joys. He was content to prove himself in the field in which he was superior to all his fellow craftsmen, showing the way of the grand manner and of the nude, and displaying his great understanding of the difficulties of *design.* Thus he has demonstrated how painting can achieve facility in its chief province: namely, the reproduction of the human form. And concentrating on this subject *he left to one side the charm of colouring and the caprices and novel fantasies of certain minute and delicate refinements* that many other artists, and not without reason, have not entirely neglected.[14]

This eulogy aptly illustrates that although Vasari knew and respected the alternatives, he had an extremely firm belief in the supremacy of figural painting connected to *disegno*. He emphasized this view also when discussing artists belonging to the great rival school of painting: the Venetians. He did not hesitate to criticize the learning and working methods of the Venetians in his biographies of either Giovanni Bellini or Giorgione, but most revealing is probably his opinion of Titian's art, which he explicated using the great Michelangelo as his mouthpiece. Vasari and Michelangelo visited the Venetian master in the Belvedere palace during his stay in Rome, and, according to the chronicler, Michelangelo commented on the recently completed *Danaë* as follows:

> … Buonarroti commended it highly, saying that his colouring and his style pleased him very much but that it was a shame that in Venice they did not learn to draw well from the beginning …. For the truth was, he went on, that if Titian had been assisted by art and design as much as he was by nature, … then no one could achieve more or work

> better …. To be sure, … if an artist has not drawn a great deal and studied carefully selected ancient and modern works he cannot by himself work well from memory or enhance what he copies from life, and so give his work the grace and perfection of art which are beyond the reach of nature ….[15]

Evidently, by the "lack of drawing skills" they understood the omission of the *disegno* that goes beyond the particular patterns of nature, which in their eyes resulted in sheer naturalism, that is, a servile, "artless" imitation of nature. Seen from Florence and Rome, the Venetian *colorito* was, for all its richness, nothing but an instrument of imitation, and therefore it was denied the high status of drawing which proceeded from the connection with higher-level cognition.

Even those Venetian theoreticians whose ideal of art deviated from the one formulated in the *disegno* theory, based their argumentation in support of *colore* mainly on its mimetic powers. For them, the greatness of an artist lied in his refusal to restrict himself to the representation of the human body. Paolo Pino expected the painter to be capable of imitating all things in nature, including the phenomena that are difficult to render.[16] Lodovico Dolce claimed that colouring could suggest "all the richness of nature" and he had a whole inventory of things that could be imitated:

> … the colour of draperies, silk, gold and every kind of material so well that hardness or softness seems to be communicated to the greater or lesser degree which suits the quality of the material. One should know how to simulate the glint of armour, the gloom of night and the brightness of day, lightning flashes, fires, lights, water, earth, rocks, grass, trees, leaves, flowers and fruits, buildings and huts, animals and so on … [17]

The other cardinal point of Dolce's reasoning was the definition of painting, which he divided into invention, drawing and colour:

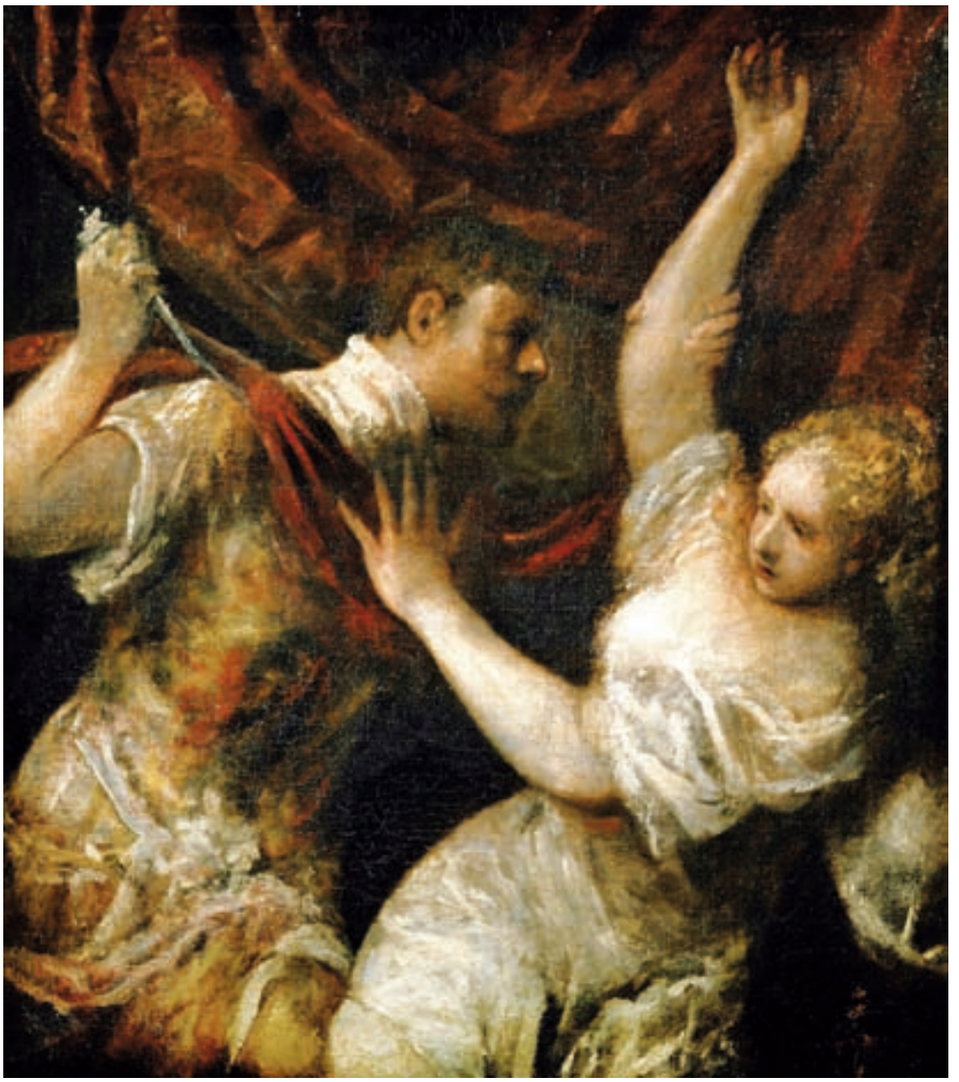
> The invention is the fable or history which the painter chooses on his own or which others present him with, as material for the work he has to do. The design is the form he uses to represent this material. And the colouring takes its cue from the hues with which nature paints (for one can say as much) animate and inanimate things in variegation.[18]

Unlike Vasari who regarded drawing as the main criterion in judging the quality of a painting, Dolce claimed that all three components were equivalent and argued that a painter who excelled only in one of these areas was inferior to one who excelled in all three. By the same token, a painter who could only imitate a single aspect of nature deserved less praise that the one who could represent all. He judged the great painters of his age in line with these principles, thus it is no surprise that his ranking differs considerably from Vasari's. In Dolce's dialogue, one of the interlocutors, Fabrini, is echoing the principles of Tuscan art, while the other, Aretino, sides with Venice. During the colloquy, at first Michalengelo is the most highly ranked, but his primacy is presently relativized by Aretino's argument that his excellence in draftsmanship is restricted to a single field, the representation of powerful, heroic nudes and foreshortened human bodies captured in dramatic movement. Compared to Raphael, Michelangelo – however stupendous and superhuman he may be – is a one-sided artist: "the man who sees a single figure of Michelangelo's sees them all."[19] Raphael's *disegno* is superior because he has always adjusted to the requirements of the given theme and therefore his art is more varied and universal.

As regards both the purpose and the components of painting, Dolce again chose a broader viewpoint than Vasari. This led him to restrict Michelangelo's primacy to sculpture, acknowledging that in that he is "unique, divine and on a par with the ancients", while in painting he put Raphael before him. In his dialogue, however, this is only the preliminary to his final conclusion, which gave the laurels to Titian, for it is in him alone "that one sees gathered together to

Titian
*The Assumption of the Virgin*
1518
Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice





Titian
*Tarquinius and Lucretia*
ca. 1570–1575
Akademie der
bildenden Künste,
Vienna

perfection all the excellent features which have individually been present in many cases. Both in terms of invention and in terms of draftsmanship, that is, no one ever surpassed him. And again, as regards colouring, there was never anyone who reached his level." [20]

For the Venetian authors, the power of colouring did not end with the imitation of nature. Pino, himself a practising painter, provided detailed and substantive observations on the techniques and media of painting. He also named colouring as the essential instrument of painterly imitation, but also argued that a genuine artist needed more than mimetic ability: he had to possess "the intelligence and practical skill of a good master".[21] By these, he will realize that colour's role could not be restricted exclusively to the imitation of nature since the pigments used in painting – whether plain or mixed – are never perfectly capable of producing nature's effects. In any case, however, the goal of painting cannot be merely the accurate copying of the things in nature, as "many real things are beautiful in themselves, but when they are painted appear graceless and clumsy".[22] The painter must carefully observe and convincingly imitate the individual things of nature, and the live model. But he has to subordinate this process to a superior knowledge, a clear idea of painterly creation, the effect of the composition, the visual unity. We might paraphrase this in contemporary terms as "the

truth of the image must be superior to the truth of nature or the story represented". Accordingly, Pino had a more differentiated view of colour, too: he shifted the emphasis from the imitation of the individual qualities to the service of compositional unity.

Pino was not in a position to reflect on the painting experiments which Titian launched about the time of the publication of the dialogue and which led to the sixteenth-century unfolding of the colouristic ideal of painting. From the late 1540s, Titian's paintings display increasingly bold innovations in materials and techniques alike. The wealth of his colouring was amazing earlier, too, with the use of nearly all existing pigments and hues. Now he achieved novel results in the exploitation of the qualities of pigments and media and the handling of paint. He recognized, for example, that coarsely woven canvases reinforced the effect of the paint layers beneath, and that if one juxtaposed unmixed colours, they blended optically when viewed from a certain distance, yet retained their intensity.[23]

About Titian's late works Vasari had nothing to say but that "these last works are executed with bold, sweeping strokes, and in patches of colour, with the result that they cannot be viewed from near by, but appear perfect at a distance".[24] Not only as a theorist but also as a creator of *istorie* and complex allegories, Vasari was the advocate of an art subordinated to the intellect, in which all formal elements were aimed at guiding the viewer with their beauty, expressiveness and mimetic powers to "higher" contents beyond the image. It would therefore be unjust to blame him for dismissing what is, for a colourist, the quintessence of painting. In fact, what makes Titian's late paintings peerless is that they unveil their means of expression to a viewer who steps close to them. Forms dissolve in the complex texture of paint and patches of colour that cover the whole canvas; the space and action become blurred. What is revealed as the "theme" is the texture, the density of paint, the stroke of the brush, the working process. Titian is the first painter in the history of early modern art who, rather than concealing, consciously sought to expose demonstratively his tools of illusion. While other artists aimed at proving the representational power of painting by creating an illusion of palpable reality that seemed as if it were not painted, Titian did not address the observer with the trick of deception: he displayed the *making* of the illusion, too. This method required a radically new attitude on the part of the beholder: he was not only to perceive the subject represented, but also the means of representation. Emphasizing the picture plane, the painted surface, this manner focused on the media of the picture, of paint and colour, and on the value of the professional means beyond the mimetic function. The self-assertion of this kind of painting no longer rested merely upon its ties to philosophy and literature.

NOTES

1. Belting 1993, 26.
2. Puttfarken 1991, 75–100.
3. Vasari [1568] 1907, 205 (Cap. XV).
4. Alberti [1435] 2006, 188–222 (II, 35–44).
5. Plato, *The Republic*, 598b–c.
6. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 981a.
7. Lomazzo 1973–1974, II (1974), 415.
8. *Ibid.*, 417.
9. Gombrich 1954.
10. Wölfflin [1898] 1953, 261.
11. *Ibid.*, 252.
12. Vasari [1568] 1907, 208 (Cap. XV).
13. Puttfarken 2000, 97–121.
14. Vasari [1568] 1987, 378–79 (italics mine).
15. *Ibid.*, 455.
16. Pardo 1984, 338.
17. Roskill 2000, 155.
18. *Ibid.*, 117.
19. *Ibid.*, 172–73.
20. *Ibid.*, 185.
21. Pardo 1984, 339.
22. *Ibid.*, 332.
23. Hall 1992, 212–15; Aikema 2007; Sohm 2007, 83–103.
24. Vasari [1568] 1987, 458.



Mauro Lucco

# Considerations on Drawing in Renaissance Veneto

Since Giorgio Vasari published his first biographies of Italian painters (1550 and 1568), it has become a commonplace that the Venetian painters did not draw, or to use Vasari's own words about Giorgione, they painted "without doing any drawing".[1] Of course, this must not be taken literally, that Venetian painters did not draw at all. Like all the others, Giorgione also did,[2] and what is more, in a case like his – for one whose entire painted œuvre is hotly disputed – there is at least one drawing in red chalk (in the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam), which is unanimously attributed to Giorgione.

In 1944 two scholars, Hans Tietze and Erika Tietze Conrat published a work of pioneering importance: *Drawings of the Venetian Painters in the 15th and 16th Centuries*. This corpus contains 2267 drawings ascribed to this cultural region and to this period. Barring obvious or unavoidable mistakes, this quantity of graphic sheets perfectly demonstrates that the statement cited in the introduction – that Venetians painted "without doing any drawing" – is nonsense. Research has progressed over the past sixty years, so much so that with good reason we can now reckon with about four times as many drawings.

Thus, Venetian painters did draw, and they drew a lot. Nonetheless, the quantity of Tuscan drawings surviving from these two centuries is estimated to be at least seven times more. How can we explain this disparity?

First of all, it must be made clear that "drawing" *(disegno)* denoted something else for Vasari than it does today. What it referred to is closer in modern English to "design". For Vasari, who aligned himself with the Tuscan tradition in his artistic practice, "drawing" meant first of all projecting,[3] the first step of which was a compositional idea, a sketch of the overall design of the scene required by the client, followed by "close-ups", "zooms", a progressive augmentation of certain details of the scene, the subdivision of the overall layout to groups of figures, followed by sketches of each figure and, finally, by studies of parts of a figure. Then all these studies on paper were transferred to the canvas or panel and coloured practically without alteration.

In fact, Tuscan artists – due to this accustomed working method – tended to see the world in terms of lines and hidden structures. If colour is only a skin that is added at the final stage, then what really matters is the line which circumscribes the

Domenico Campagnola
*Mountainous Landscape with Antique Ruins* (detail)
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest



Giorgione
*View of Castel San Zeno at Montagnana, with a Seated Figure in the Foreground*
ca. 1503–1506
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

figures, making their connections, interlacements and movements evident. It is the line that defines their spatial location, too, by fitting them rationally into the perspective scheme. To sum up: the world can be represented as a network of modulated lines. However, since the clients required coloured representations, it is evident that Tuscan artists themselves could not have regarded drawing as anything but an instrument to help them to attain an end, a way to clarify – for themselves first of all – the rational organization of the pictorial space, the way leading to the final formulation of the image on the panel or canvas, and not on paper. Thus, the drawing was a means, not an end. Being subordinated to painting, Tuscan drawing hardly ever became autonomous.

Nothing of the kind can be found in Venice and the Veneto; on the contrary, perhaps paradoxically (as regards Vasari's ideas at least), it was this geographical region where the most profound changes took place in this field, where drawing achieved independence from painting and assumed several new roles.

It is almost banal to say that Venetian painters saw the world in terms of colour. Colour for them was not a skin to be applied as the last step onto the fabric of individual forms, nor was it a superficial veil to be removed safely to reveal the underlying structure. On the contrary: colour was the constitutive matter of the world. Nothing could be perceived without the colours that envelop the forms and modulate in light and air. Dull or saturated colours, lighter or darker tones reveal the spatial location of forms; their opacity or lustre suggest the substance. Without colour things do not exist. As Francesco Sansovino perceived in 1561 in his dialogue *Delle cose notabili che sono in Venetia* (On all the notable things in Venice), painting was introduced in Venice far earlier than sculpture or architecture, and many more paintings had been made in



Giorgio Vasari
*Pope Leo X Appointing Cardinals* (preparatory drawing for a fresco in the Sala di Leone X, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence)
ca. 1556–1559
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest

the Venetian Republic than anywhere else in the world, whereas sculpture was numerically less significant and was introduced later, since it offered less delight and lacks the appeal of colour.[4] There can hardly be found a clearer admission of the significance of this element that allows the viewer to abandon himself to the visual pleasures with a sort of sensuality, noted, moreover, in other aspects of Venetian culture as well.

Therefore, in a way the Venetian approach to representation excluded the necessity of drawing; drawing was not used as a preliminary study to a painting, to its composition or some detail; nor was it, as in Tuscany, a fundamental and integral part of the creative process. Despite that, it did exist in the Veneto, too, but as something quite independent from painting.

Thus we may conclude that in the artistic practice of this region drawing played a different role from that in Tuscany. It assumed particular functions and more importantly, it appeared elsewhere than canonically expected (i.e. on paper). Already Annibale Carracci in his marginal notes to Vasari's *Lives* made the following comment on the cited "without doing any drawing" passage: "as if it were impossible to apply [a drawing] on the panel, then remove it, then apply it again, just as on paper, but here's no space to prove the foolishness of that dunce Vasari."[5] For him, thus, drawing on wood or canvas was equal to drawing on paper.

Though in the trecento any form of autonomous drawing on panel is quite rare (I can recall only the sketch of a female figure by Lorenzo Veneziano under the frame of the *Lion Polyptych* at the Accademia in Venice, which lacks any relation to the nearest visible figure), oddly enough, the early quattrocento witnessed a peak in the production of drawings (generally in pen and ink on paper or parchment) in Verona, due to the activities of an expatriate painter, Pisanello, and by some of his local fol-



Antonio Pisanello
*Sturgeon and Six Monkeys*
Musée du Louvre,
Paris

lowers, such as Giovanni Badile. One would be tempted to declare that these drawings are inextricably tied to the International Gothic style's revived interest in the visible world, were it not for the fact that at the other pole of the region, in Venice, an exponent of the same style, Gentile da Fabriano made very few drawings and the rest of the painters of the period, Jacobello del Fiore, Nicolò di Pietro, Michele Giambono, made practically none.[6] I would suggest that, paradoxically, the very fact that Pisanello had no direct heirs to continue his workshop practice made the survival of his drawings possible. This was perhaps because they were acquired by another painter who did not treat them as working tools, but rather as objects reflecting the glory of a great painter, and thus withdrew them from circulation, far ahead of his time, "musealizing" them. Incidentally, from the earliest years of the sixteenth century there are textual references to collections of drawings in Verona,[7] whereas nothing of the like is known anywhere else in Italy. The number of surviving drawings may also have some connection with drawing on paper, which was practised more extensively in Verona than elsewhere.



Jacopo Bellini
*The Twelve Apostles in a Barrel Vaulted Passage*
(The London Album, fol. 87 recto)
ca. 1440–1470
British Museum, London

Pisanello's many, now scattered sheets were in the metaphorical sense his "sketchbook" which was no different in function and purpose from that of Giovannino de' Grassi (today in the Biblioteca Civica, Bergamo; in 1542 perhaps owned by Lorenzo Lotto[8]). This is manifest in his *Vision of Saint Eustace* in the National Gallery, London,[9] where the animals are rendered perfectly true to life as far as their shape, movement, skin, fur and colours are concerned, but strikingly absurd in their relative proportions to each other. There are birds that are larger than a bear, and dogs that have outgrown a stag. The reason for this is that they were transferred directly from a sketch on paper onto the panel; Pisanello drew them from life when something about these animals had moved his visual imagination, and he drew them so that he could – if he chose – use them at some later date. Inevitably, they bear the marks of their casual origin, and when transferred, they were not adapted to the scene to scale.

This workshop practice is easily comparable to any practice in other parts of Italy and Europe. It is curious, however, that a further step in this direction was taken in a city – Venice – where there was

scant inclination to drawing, and by an artist, Jacopo Bellini, who was the pupil of Gentile da Fabriano, a master with little interest in drawing. From Bellini, an outstanding artist and the head of one of the largest and most successful dynasties of painters, two complete albums of drawings are known, one in the British Museum, the other in the Louvre.[10] Both were originally made with leadpoint, one on vellum, the other on paper. In the album in Paris most of the drawings were reinforced later in pen and ink, evidently to make the compositions more clearly visible. Both albums have been rebound in the past, so the sequence of sheets does not perfectly correspond to the original order given by the painter. However, the sheets need not be in strict sequence as the collection is most heterogeneous thematically, ranging from decorative motifs that could be used for a wall, a chest or a fabric, to details of drawing that were reused in paintings with minor alterations, drawings that are so similar to the painted works that they could be taken as preparatory sketches, and to drawings that were never realized in painting. Sacred and profane themes are similarly intermingled, stories from the lives of saints alternate with blissful childhood scenes, evocations of the distant past enabling fabulous explorations, and the real world of the day, dignified persons and things, men and trees, cultivated fields and simple landscapes.

Evidently, these volumes have partly the same function as Giovannino de' Grassi's actual or Pisanello's virtual sketchbook: they are pattern books, repositories of forms and motifs to be used occasionally, mostly for the paraphernalia, the minor representations surrounding the central subject. Nevertheless Jacopo Bellini's greatness and talent lies primarily in the way he extended the boundaries of his visual interest, turning his drawings into a miniature compendium of the universe.[11]

On the other hand, in a way these books were also the sample books of the studio, including both "ricordi" of works executed and ideas for compositions to be made. The potential client turning over the pages, among two or three versions of the same sacred or allegorical subject could find a compositional solution he liked and could ask to have it painted. As if the master had said: here is the "summa" of what the workshop can offer.

But there is yet another level. In his obsessive research in perspective foreshortening that distorts the scenes, in the representations of the everyday life of the lowest classes, peasants and shepherds – which was outside the range of subjects at that time – Jacopo Bellini proudly asserts his inventive capacities, transcending the limits set by the norms of his day. Showing no sign of exhaustion, self-repetition or monotony, these albums are the walls of the monument that Jacopo erected to his art in his lifetime. It is no accident that even a great painter like Giovanni Bellini himself regularly turned to these books for ideas.

Perhaps the only survivors of a more numerous group of albums, these books were not considered to be ordinary or simply tools of the customary workshop routine, as is verified by the testament of Jacopo Bellini's wife Anna Rinversi (Jacopo's testament has been lost) which stipulates that *omnes libros* – all the books – of her husband should pass to the elder son Gentile, and that they should remain forever in the family's possession.[12] An even more impressive proof of their reputation is provided by their provenance history. When Gentile Bellini was sent to Constantinople, to the court of Mohamed II, in 1479, he took with him one of his father's drawing books in order to present it to the sultan as a sign of homage. Therefore the son – and the Venetian senate too – regarded these books as princely gifts rather than as simple painter's accessories.

As regards the drawings of Jacopo's genius son, Giovanni Bellini, research faces enormous difficulties. Confusion has reached its peak in determining what is to be attributed to his brother-in-law Andrea Mantegna or to Giovanni Bellini himself.[13] Although it is difficult to affirm the existence of any drawing by



Giovanni Bellini
*Polyptych of Saint Vincent Ferrer* (detail)
(underdrawing of Saint Christopher's feet, infrared reflectography by Giovanni C. F. Villa)
ca. 1464–1468
Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice

Giovanni Bellini on paper, we are fortunate enough to know several of his preparatory underdrawings for various paintings both on panel and canvas. The drawings revealed by the modern instruments under works such as the *Transfiguration* in the Museo Correr, Venice, the *Pietà* in the Brera, Milan, the *Pesaro Altarpiece* today in the Museo Civico of Pesaro, and above all the polyptych in Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, are so highly elaborate in their modulation of shadows, despite being made by brush, that a thin layer of paint is enough to give the whole picture depth, vibration and air. Sometimes, as in the case of Saint Christopher in the polyptych of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, the underdrawing – in a fully quattrocento spirit – carefully elaborates even on what will be invisible in the painting: Christopher's feet, which are there in the drawing, are concealed by the waves of the river in the finished work.[14]

However beautiful it may have been, this kind of underdrawing of parallel and diagonal hatchings was too slow and cumbersome, and in the long run, especially from the point of view of the expansion of the workshop, proved to be uneconomical. More than seventy years later Paolo Pino in his *Dialogue on Painting* of 1548, exhorted artists against "drawing on the panel with such extreme diligence, composing the whole thing in chiaroscuro, as Giovanni Bellini used to do; for it is wasted labour, since it is all to be covered over with pigments".[15] Pino used the past tense because he knew full well he was



Vincenzo Catena
*The Holy Family with a Female Saint*
(underdrawing,
infrared reflectography
by Giovanni C. F. Villa)
ca. 1498–1500
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest

branding a bygone practice. In fact, around 1480 Bellini himself began to prepare the panels for his paintings in a new way, by marking the outlines only – perhaps because he had become acquainted with Antonello da Messina's working methods. This new method was adopted almost immediately by all Venetian painters, including Giorgione and Sebastiano del Piombo, as revealed by the recent infrared reflectogram of the former's *Three Philosophers* in Vienna and the technical investigations of the latter's *Solomon's Judgment* at Kingston Lacy on the occasion of its restoration.[16] In fact there is not a single drawing on paper that could be attributed to Giovanni Bellini convincingly. The majority of the drawings once attributed to him are "ricordi" and not preparatory studies, and even the *Two Standing Saints* in the Uffizi, formerly considered as an authentic basis, turned out to be preparatory sketches by his pupil Vittore Belliniano for the saints on the right side of his altarpiece of the parish church of Spinea near Venice, signed and dated 1524.[17]

Although drawing made directly onto the support of the envisaged painting lost some of its importance, drawing on paper came to the fore again from the last years of the fifteenth century in response to the needs of the editorial activity that made Venice one of the greatest centres of the printing industry in the last two decades of the century. From the printed book it was just a short way to the illustrated book, and only a single step to the printing of pictures on separate sheets destined mostly for the Northern markets; from where already many engravings and woodcuts had arrived. We know, for example, that Jacopo de' Barbari spent nearly three years in drawing his gigantic and minutely detailed bird's eye view of Venice, which was published in 1500 by the German Anton Kolb, first and foremost for his compatriots.[18] Giulio Campagnola devoted almost his entire life to printmaking, and it is hardly accidental that many of his drawings are known. With the execution on copperplate in view, he even invented new graphic techniques such as stippling to render the atmospheric vibration of shadows.[19] Titian himself made several prints at (relatively) little cost, for instance, *The Sacrifice of Abraham* and the woodcut *Drowning of the Pharaoh's Host,* printed from several blocks.[20]

The Veneto region provides information about some special types of drawing as well, such as model drawings and preliminary sketches attached to contracts. Even from the preceding centuries there are textual references to drawings that served as the

basis for agreement between the commissioner and the artist, informing the client about the final appearance of the work, though without much detail.[21] At least one such drawing is known from the Venetian cinquecento: Domenico Campagnola's *Banquet of Herod* in the Kunstmuseum in Copenhagen, which at the bottom bears the following inscription: "the agreement was made on the 5th of May". The drawing, with minor changes, is clearly related to the scene of the same theme once adorning the organ shutters of the church San Giovanni da Verdara (today in a private collection in Padua). We have the document of this commission dated precisely May 5, 1552, in which the notary described with meticulous care how the scene should be represented, evidently presupposing the existence of a visual model approved by both parties.[22]

The new practice of calling for competitions to determine a public commission was not solely and typically Venetian either. However, it evidently entailed the making of detailed models for the works of the competitors. The Uffizi's collections hold, for example, Pordenone's final design for the altar of Saint Peter Martyr in the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, submitted in 1526–1528. The altarpiece was eventually executed by Titian, who had won the competition.[23]

In this environment of the Veneto's novel fervour for graphic arts, linked especially to the publishing world, eventually a revolutionary step was made that endowed drawing with a new character. In the early 1530s Domenico Campagnola – the adopted son of Giulio – having prepared a multitude of sheets for prints, started to make drawings – mostly of panoramic landscapes – to be sold as autonomous works of art, mounted and framed under glass, as confirmed by reliable sources such as the inventories of Paduan collections.[24] It should also be noted that just a few years earlier, in his letters to the representatives of the confraternity of Miseri-



After a design by Titian
*Drowning of the Pharaoh's Host*
(Domenico dalle Greche edition, 1549)
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest



Pordenone
(Giovanni Antonio de' Sacchis)
*The Martyrdom of Saint Peter*
(final design for the altarpiece
in the church of Santi Giovanni
e Paolo, Venice)
ca. 1526–1528
Gabinetto dei Disegni
e delle Stampe degli Uffizi,
Florence

cordia Maggiore in Bergamo, Lorenzo Lotto repeatedly insisted that his drawings for the intarsia panels were to be treated well, and not to be damaged since they had cost him as much labour as his pictures. After they were returned to him, he kept them until his death in Loreto, obviously not with the hope of reusing them in a new commission, but on account of their autonomous artistic value.[25]

This rupture of the umbilical cord that tied drawing to painting – the emergence of drawing as an autonomous art form – was a substantially Venetian achievement, as mentioned above, and something the Tuscan artists never managed to achieve. Although in 1681 Filippo Baldinucci took the stance that a "work of art signifies not only paintings but drawings as well, … down to the *primi pensieri* or sketches",[26]



Domenico Campagnola
*Mountainous Landscape with Antique Ruins*
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest

nevertheless the material he took into consideration was still of the type that is preparatory in nature. In any case, it is due to the new perspective opened by the Venetian artists that among arts drawing, all kinds of drawing, including the sketchiest example, assumed a particular status of autonomy remaining – perhaps – a means for the painter, but an end for collectors and art lovers to this day.

1. Vasari [1568] 1878–1885, VII (1881), 427. Though it refers to Giorgione, the passage can be read in Titian's biography. The English formula is from De Vere's 1915 translation (Vasari [1568] 1912–1915, IX, 159); Bull (Vasari [1568] 1987, II, 443) interpreted the passage less broadly: "without reference to drawing".
2. Vasari himself confirms this, speaking explicitly of drawings by Giorgione (Vasari [1568] 1878–1885, IV, 1879, 92). A few pages later he notes: "I have some of his pen-and-ink sketches and drawings." (Vasari [1568] 1987, II, 276.)
3. Vasari [1568] 1878–1885, VII, 427.
4. Sansovino 1561, f. 20 *verso.*
5. For the sake of convenience, I refer to the latest edition: *Le "postille"* 2006, 462.
6. As far as I know, to date no more than three sheets have been attributed to Gentile da Fabriano for various considerations that are hotly debated, namely, the parchments in Edinburgh and Berlin, and the portrait of Gian Galeazzo Visconti in the Louvre. In my view, the first two attributions are more credible than the third. I believe the sheets in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, attributed to him by Degenhart (Schmitt 1966, 24–28), have nothing to do with Gentile da Fabriano. No drawing by Jacobello del Fiore or Nicolò di Pietro is known, and those attributed to Giambono (cf. Tietze – Tietze-Conrat 1944, 167, plate I) do not seem convincing to me.
7. We know of the painter Antonio Badile II's collection of drawings, with the date 1500 on the cover of his album (cf. Schmitt 1966, 42–43; *Venice* 1981b, 1–5; *Venice* 1985, 20–24; *London* 1987, 24). He died in 1507; the drawings passed to the collection of Count Calzolari (born 1522), then into the Moscardo collection where they seem to have remained until 1905.
8. Several sheets of the sketchbook now in the Biblioteca Angelo Mai in Bergamo bear the inscription "Loto 1542", interpreted by Francesco Maria Tassi (1793, 126) as signatures indicating Lotto's authorship. Recent examination under ultraviolet light, however, revealed the inscription "Jo.Jacobus Lulmus" and the date 1574 on folio 21*recto* (Rossi 1995, 45). He was the brother of the painter Gian Paolo Olmo or Lolmo, an admirer of Lotto though not a follower in the strict sense, as demonstrated by his *Holy Trinity* in the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo (D.12). The alternative hypothesis of O. Bravi and G. Zizzo (in Gatti Perer ed. 1989, 78) that the inscription can be read as "Lolmo tenet" does not seem well founded, for it is even doubtful that Gian Giacomo Lolmo was actually born by 1542.
9. Dunkerton–Foister–Gordon–Penny 1991, 276–77.
10. Eisler 1989, 77–104, 454–509.
11. Eisler 1989, 77–78.
12. For the sake of convenience, see the most recent interpretation in Barausse 2008, 338.
13. A remarkable example of the difficulties of evaluation was offered by the recent exhibition on Andrea Mantegna in Paris, where drawings were displayed side by side which in the handling of pen and graphic style all appeared to be substantially by the same hand, yet they were distributed between Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini, often based on quite incomprehensible arguments, continuing the oscillation between the two names that characterized the whole history of these drawings. For myself – particularly after the experience of direct confrontation offered by the exhibition – it is still rather difficult to sustain that, for example, no. R.F. 436 in the Louvre, attributed to Giovanni Bellini (cf. A. Mazzotta, in *Paris* 2008, 150–51), is by a different hand from inv. 115 in Venice's Gallerie dell'Accademia, inv. 147 in Musei di Brescia or D.1978.PG.345 in the Courtauld Gallery, London, all of them attributed to Mantegna (A. Mazzotta, in *Paris* 2008, 146–47, and 144–45, 141–43). I have not been able to discover the slightest difference that might justify the attribution to two hands. They are so tightly associated with Mantegna's œuvre that in my view the right thing is to attribute all to the Paduan master. Nor do I find arguments to support the view that inv. 794.1.2503 in Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes, which is fairly unanimously attributed to Giovanni Bellini, differs in any way from the already mentioned *Entombment* in Brescia or from inv.1909-4-6-3 in the British Museum, London, mostly attributed to Mantegna by modern scholarship.
14. Poldi–Villa 2006, 321–412; what is visible in the Santi Giovanni e Paolo polyptych is reproduced on p. 344, the underdrawing of the feet in the water, not visible to the naked eye, is reproduced on p. 346. Cf. also Villa 2008.
15. Pardo 1984, 336.
16. Cf. Oberthaler 2004, 267–76, and the infrared reflectograms of the *Three Philosophers* on p. 70. In the same catalogue there are several infrared reflectograms of Giorgione's other paintings, esp. that of the *Benson Holy Family* in Washington on p. 170. As is noted, the most conspicuous example of underdrawing in Giorgione's œuvre is the drawing of a completely different subject under the so-called *The Three Ages of Man* in the Palazzo Pitti, Florence. Cf. D. Bertani, M. Cetica, P. Poggi, G. Piccioni, E. Buzzegoli, D. Kunzelman, in *Florence* 1989, 29–32. On Sebastiano del Piombo cf. Laing–Hirst 1986.
17. It seems to me that the *Oriental Man with Turban* in the Uffizi's collection of prints and drawings is a sketch made to record a visual invention. This is supported by its comparison with the corresponding detail of the *Lamentation* in grisaille also in the Uffizi (cf. Poldi–Villa 2006, 354). On the *Two Standing Saints* in the Uffizi cf. Lucco 1996, 87, 118–19, 135. Though an easily accessible text, it was unknown to W. R. Rearick (1998, 55–56 and 2001a, 22), who cited an oral communication by Giorgio Fossaluzza as the source of the attribution. G. Goldner (2004, 246–47), however, believes the drawing is by Bellini's hand and Vittore Belliniano simply utilized it.

18. Schulz 1978, 425–74. See also the texts cited in Lucco 1996, 99–100.
19. Landau 1983, 304.
20. *Venice* 1976, 54–58, 78–83.
21. See, for instance, the drawing of Pietro Calzetta, *The Mill of Christ* drawn after a preceding drawing by Nicolò Pizolo – originally attached to the contract signed by Calzetta and the client, Bernardo De Lazara – for the altarpiece of the family chapel in the Basilica del Santo in Padua on October 17, 1488. Today the drawing is in the Getty Museum, Los Angeles: De Kunert 1906, 52–56. The whole issue was reconsidered recently by B. M. Savy, in *Padua* 2006, 266–67.
22. E. Saccomani (1980, 73–74) was the first to identify convincingly the sheet in the Copenhagen museum with the drawing appended to the contract between Campagnola and the prior of the monastery of San Giovanni da Verdara in Padua, signed on May 5, 1552, for the execution of the organ shutters (Colpi 1942–1954, 90–93, 105, 109–10). The identification was based on the inscription at the bottom of the sketch: "adj 5 maggio fu fatto l'accordo".
23. For a reconsideration of the entire issue of competitions, see Cohen 1996, 260–64.
24. For the sake of brevity let me refer to Santagiustina Poniz (1980) and Rearick (2001a, 55–58, with reference to previous literature).
25. Lotto's opinion can also be derived from the letter he wrote to Girolamo da San Pellegrino on September 2, 1524: "As for these drawings and all the others that the masters have in their hands, put them in your safekeeping in the Misericordia, take care of them lest they should get damaged, and always give only one into the hands of the masters at a time, the one they are working on and immediately ask it back, because you understand how important they are. If I serve you with affection and loyalty, please return the drawings to me so that they could be seen and admired" ("Questi disegni et altri che habiano li maestri in mano; li tenete in Misericordia et li vogliati custodire acciò non si stropiccino et non li lassati in mano loro se non a uno per uno, quanto si operano et subito ritoglierli indrieto perché vedete la importancia; se io servo con amore et fede, tornati che mi sieno i desegni, siano anchor da vedere et godere") (Zampetti 1969, 261). Sentences with similar content can be found on pages 262, 265, 267, 274, 286, 287, 290, 292 and 293. In his will of 1546 (p. 304) the artist clearly names the "Old Testament pictures that were the models for the intarsie for the choir in Bergamo, numbering 30 in all" as works in his possession. "30 pieces of pictures from the Old Testament, 26 small ones and 4 large ones", obviously the same works as those mentioned in the last will, were in an auction at Ancona in August 1550, but they were not sold, so they went back to the artist and remained in Loreto until his death.
26. "... intender col nome di opere non solo le pitture, ma anche i disegni ... e fino a' primi pensieri o schizzi", Baldinucci [1681] 1809, 336.



Nicoletta Pons

# Domestic Art in Renaissance Florence

With the help of the many surviving inventories, account books, and other documents, one may "discover" the interiors of Florentine palaces, learn how they were furnished, and how life was lived at home. The milieu, traditions and way of life described by the written sources are also evoked by Renaissance paintings, which reveal details of interiors and customs.

The practice of investing money in objects in order to add to the magnificence of a family's palace and the prestige of its public image has its roots in the fifteenth century. Some of the increasingly specialized painting workshops of the day dedicated themselves to the production of pieces of furniture. The expenditure of wealthy citizens on their homes and above all on the private chambers (called *camera mia*), especially on the occasion of weddings, was considerable. Naturally, the prospective husband's interest concentrated first of all on the most intimate room of the house, the nuptial chamber, every corner of which alluded to the continuation of the family line. Evidently, the bed was of paramount importance with a headboard often decorated with painting or intarsia, and with chests at the sides to store various goods and textiles. In one of the most sumptuously furnished Renaissance alcoves, the Borgherini room, the bed was, for instance, adorned with scenes from the biblical story of Joseph.[1]

To fight the cold and to provide greater intimacy, the bed was sometimes surrounded by curtains *(cortine)* and surmounted by a textile canopy *(sopracielo)* fixed to a frame, both of which were adorned with painting or gilding.[2] It was recorded that Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici's bed also had a *sopracielo* with an image of Fortuna painted by Sandro Botticelli, hypothetically identified by Everett Fahy as the originally round canvas he had discovered in a private collection in New York (which however might have been transferred from wood).[3] Should this identification prove correct, this would be the only surviving specimen of the kind. *Sopracieli* could also be simple pieces of cloth dyed or painted blue, gold and silver.[4]

Wooden chests used to store clothing and trousseau were indispensable pieces of furniture in bedrooms. In fifteenth-century inventories they are generally referred to as *forziere,* whereas in the sixteenth century the most frequently used term is *cassone* (meaning "large chest", employed by Vasari, too[5]), but *cassa* and *cofano* are also widely used. According to Paolini, *forziere* indicates more generally a chest with a lock, but wedding chests always fitted into this category.[6] Wedding chests were commissioned in pairs, one for each of the spouses, usually by the bride's father. This is affirmed by the lists of commissions

Sandro Botticelli
*The Annunciation*
(detail)
ca. 1485
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection

in the account book of Apollonio di Giovanni's and Marco del Buono's workshop, which specialized in the decoration of *cassoni*.[7] In such cases, wedding chests were carried in the procession that accompanied the bride to her future husband's house. Such a procession is depicted on a front panel of a *forziere,* decorated with scenes from the story of *Lionora de' Bardi and Ippolito Buondelmonti* (private collection), painted by Lo Scheggia, a specialist in the genre. According to other sources, however, it was often the bridegroom who commissioned wedding chests and other furnishings of the room for the occasion. In the account book, for instance, in which Jacopo di Giannozzo Pandolfini began recording his expenditure at the time of his marriage to Marietta Martelli, he included the acquisition of two rather expensive marriage chests.[8] For the wedding of Lorenzo di Matteo Morelli and Vaggia di Tanai Nerli the bridegroom paid the painters Jacopo del Sellaio and Biagio d'Antonio for the completion of two "*forzieri* adorned with stories and gilded" *("forzieri storiati e messi d'oro").*[9] The two chests, which fortunately survive in very close to their original form (today in the Courtauld Gallery, London), could be identified by the coats of arms.[10] However, few wedding chests have been preserved in their integrity; over the passage of time most of them have been dismembered with the parts remounted as individual objects, such as the narrow oblong panels which used to serve as *cassone* fronts.

When commissions for weddings were received, often two or more artists (usually also business partners) had to collaborate to be ready with the pieces for the wedding date, and this required the work to be shared out.

The term *storiato* ("adorned with histories") in the cited documents indicates that the objects were decorated with stories taken from diverse sources,[11] such as the Roman historiographers, Greek mythology, the Bible, Ovid, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. All of these inspired fabulous tales that were depicted with bright colours and gilding on the surfaces of wedding chests, "updated" with contemporaneous Renaissance clothes and architectural settings. Love stories and



Attributed
to Sandro Botticelli
*Fortuna*
early 1480s
Private collection

mythological fables which celebrated bridal virtues such as fidelity, virginity and chastity were popular, but scenes exemplifying male virtues – such as battle-scenes, hunts and tournaments – were also frequent.[12] The latter is exemplified by two panels attributed to Verrocchio, *The Battle of Pydna* (cat. 7) and *The Triumph of Lucius Aemilius Paulus,* once the front panels of a pair of *cassoni* made for the Florentine Mannelli family.

Playful putti holding the family arms were often depicted on chests. They "must always be interpreted as symbols of the good fortune and fertility of the family, that is, the survival of the lineage".[13] A good example of this type, given little attention by the specialists, is the piece now in Museo Horne in Florence. Its "decoration starts with large vegetal scrolls from which two putti converge towards the centre of the panel holding a wreath of laurel with a heraldic shield",[14] evidently emphasising the dynastic theme. Similar motifs are often found on inlaid chests as well, such as the one by Lo Scheggia in a private collection in Milan; and archival evidence attests to the decoration of a *forziere* made for Lorenzo Morelli where the decoration was limited to the coat of arms and festoons of fruit.[15] Finally, there were also marriage chests – as Schiaparelli noted – decorated with simple monochrome painting.[16]



Zanobi di Domenico (carpentry), Jacopo del Sellaio and Biagio d'Antonio (decoration)
*Chest and spalliera with the arms of Lorenzo Morelli and Vaggia Nerli (the Morelli Chest)*
1472
Front panel: *Camillus Chases the Gauls from Rome;* side panels: *Justice and Fortitude;* spalliera: *Horatius Cocles*
The Courtauld Gallery, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust)



Florentine workshop (carpentry), workshop of Lorenzo di Credi (decoration)
*Wedding chest with putti holding the arms of the Rossi (?) and Pitti families*
ca. 1480
Museo della Fondazione Herbert Percy Horne, Florence

*Cassoni* were constructed by specialized carpenters (*cofanai,* "chest-makers") who delivered them to the painters' workshop to be adorned with scenes on the front and side panels and often on the lids.[17] The inside was often decorated with textile patterns and a male or female nude reclining in the entire length of the lid[18] (e.g. Lo Scheggia's *Reclining Youth* in Avignon, the female pendant of which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London). These images of a private nature again promoted fertility; the female nudes are notable predecessors of Titian's and Giorgione's naked *Venus* figures.[19]

Over the sixteenth century, the wedding chest gradually disappeared from among household furnishings – as Vasari himself noted[20] – or assumed the shape of ancient Roman sarcophagi, decorated with intarsia rather than painting.

Documents reveal that in Renaissance bedchambers there was always a *lettuccio* ("little bed") defined by the dictionary published by the Accademia della Crusca in 1612 as "a large chest with backboard and arm rests for sleeping in daytime".[21] It was probably a large bench with a mattress, cushions and blankets for repose during the day. In Andrea del Sarto's fresco



Lo Scheggia
(Giovanni di Ser Giovanni)
*Inner lid of a wedding chest with the image of a reclining youth*
Musée du Petit Palais, Avignon

*The Birth of the Virgin* (Chiostrino dei Voti, Chiesa della SS. Annunziata, Florence), for instance, the weary Joachim is resting on just such a piece of furniture in the fine Renaissance room where the scene takes place. In Botticelli's *Annunciation* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Virgin is kneeling in front of a *lettuccio,* with a bed in the background and benches around it. On the upper ledge of the daybed a so-called *cappellinaio* or rack of wooden hooks was often surmounted.[22] The widely popular daybeds of Florence got as far as Naples thanks to the Da Maiano workshop: the members of the workshop produced extremely costly *lettucci* for their prominent clients in the southern Italian city, including Diomede Carafa, Alfonso, the duke of Calabria, and Filippo Strozzi.[23] These were inlaid pieces, sometimes with perspectival designs.[24] Nevertheless, there must also have been painted daybeds adorned with the family



Sandro Botticelli
*The Annunciation*
ca. 1485
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection



Bartolomeo di Giovanni
*The Story of Nastagio degli Onesti,*
third episode:
*The Banquet in the Pinewoods*
1483
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid



Piero del Pollaiuolo and Sandro Botticelli
*The series of Virtues from the Tribunale di Mercanzia*
1469–1470
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

arms,[25] and gilt or silvered ones.[26] In the course of the sixteenth century the tall backboards of the *lettucci* were gradually omitted and the piece increasingly resembled a chest bench before it disappeared from among the furnishings of the bedroom.[27]

Inventories often mention *spalliere* ("backboards") on the walls of the rooms, a term still much debated, which must have denoted various types of wooden panels of diverse sizes.[28] The word *spalliera* often designates painted panels serving as backboards for other pieces of furniture such as wedding chests. Recorded in documents as "a pair of *forzieri* with *spalliere*", the above-mentioned Morelli–Nerli chests (London, Courtauld Gallery) exemplify the type for which the *spalliere* were additional ornaments. Sometimes a single long *spalliera* with dividing pilasters ran all along the length of two wedding chests, as for example Lo Scheggia's work documented in the Medici inventory.[29]

The word *spalliera* was also used for painted panels of the wainscoting that covered the walls to shoulder level, partly to adorn it and partly to protect the room from cold and humidity. They were decorated with scenes from tales, mythologies or history, just like the *cassoni*. The elongated panels, taller than the



Filippino Lippi
*Virgin and Child with Angels (The Corsini Tondo)*
Collezione della Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, Florence

chest fronts and full of tiny figures, often display daring foreshortening and distorted perspective, which suggests that these pictures were originally placed high on the upper part of the wall, and were thus designed to be seen from below. Often four paintings constituted a series, the biblical or mythological narrative being divided into episodes. Sometimes several painters worked on a cycle, e.g. the four paintings inspired by a Boccaccio story – the *Nastagio degli Onesti* (three panels, Museo del Prado, Madrid; the fourth, private collection) – painted in Botticelli's workshop on the occasion of the Pucci–Bini wedding, where at least two of his assistants worked on them, one of whom can be identified as Bartolomeo di Giovanni. Likewise the series on the Virtues (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) – painted by Piero del Pollaiuolo, with the exception of *Fortitude* which is by Botticelli – were found to have originally been *spalliere* for the seats in the audience hall of the Tribunale di Mercanzia (the judiciary body for the cases of Florentine merchants and guilds); the low vantage point suggests that they were placed on the upper part of the wall.

Several studies have appeared recently about how paintings were placed in Renaissance interiors. They reveal that many pictures were displayed high on the walls, as descriptions of inventories also confirm.[30] Botticelli's famous *Primavera* was, for example, set above a *lettuccio,* while another of his paintings, the so-called *Camilla and the Centaur* – mostly





Lo Scheggia (Giovanni di Ser Giovanni)
*Desco da parto with youths playing "civettino"* (front) *and two "unruly" infant boys* (reverse)
ca. 1450
Museo di Palazzo Davanzati, Florence

known as *Minerva and the Centaur* – was placed above a door.[31] There are also records of plaster heads and heads of Christ "above the door" or on top of the *lettuccio*.[32]

Pictorial ornaments of rooms also included circular tondi, usually of the Virgin and Child, at times in the company of angels or saints.[33] Again inventories use the term "above",[34] meaning they were above headboards or in the upper section of the wall (cf. cat. 9). In a woodcut from the first edition of Savonarola's *Sermon on the Art of Dying Well* (Florence, 1496–1497, fol. biv), the tondo is high above the heads of the standing figures. And the artists, at least the best, took into account that their works would be seen from below, as is demonstrated by Filippino Lippi's *Corsini Tondo,* where the perspective was adjusted to the viewpoint of a person looking upwards from beneath.[35]



Jacopo Pontormo
*Tafferia da parto with the Naming of the Baptist*
1526–1527
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Another circular form, with a different function, was the *desco da parto* ("birth tray"), which featured in many private inventories. It was the name of the painted wooden tray on which food was carried to confined women soon after delivery.[36] As time passed, the decoration of these objects became increasingly intricate, depicting amorous subjects or a biblical episode connected to birth. Often the reverse of the tray was also painted. These objects, symbolizing good wishes aimed at fertility, were sometimes given to newlyweds, perhaps by the bridegroom's parents. For instance, for the wedding of Andrea Minerbetti and Maria Bini, it was the future husband's relatives who presented the bed, the daybed, the marriage chests and a "birth tondo".[37] More frequently, however, *deschi da parto* were presented at the birth of a child, such as in the case of *The Triumph of Fame* by



Raphael
*Portrait of Agnolo Doni*
ca. 1506–1507
Galleria Palatina,
Palazzo Pitti, Florence

Lo Scheggia (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). This piece dated 1449 was occasioned by the birth of Lorenzo de' Medici and was perhaps presented by Lorenzo's father Piero to his wife; on the reverse it displays a diamond ring, three feathers and the motto "Semper" in a banderole (Piero de' Medici's personal device). Afterwards such trays were kept in the *camera* for a long time. The piece mentioned is documented to have hung on the wall of Lorenzo de' Medici's bedchamber.[38] Apart from heraldic signs, the reverses often show frolicking children – exclusively boys – playing with their genitals (e.g. the example in the Museo di Palazzo Davanzati, Florence) as a kind of allusion to fertility and the procreation of children, the primary aim of marriage.[39] The decoration of the *desco* in the Museo Horne in Florence attributed to "the Master of the Johnson Nativity" is interesting: it shows a "little boy equipped with a bagpipe, an instrument with phallic connotations, at least in a Netherlandish environment".[40] The exam-

Raphael
*Portrait of Maddalena Doni*
ca. 1506–1507
Galleria Palatina,
Palazzo Pitti, Florence



ple attributed to Bartolomeo Fruosino (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) has a scene of birth on the front and a theme of classical origin on the reverse, a putto passing water with an inscription around the perimeter explaining the message of the decoration in auguring good fortune and fertility.[41] It was a common belief that looking at children of perfect beauty helped women to bear similar offspring.[42]

In the course of the sixteenth century, the shape of the *desco* changed. One beautiful example of this new concave type, known as *tafferia da parto,* is by Pontormo; it represents the birth of Saint John the Baptist (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) and has the coats of arms of the Della Casa and Tornaquinci families on the reverse. The fact that there is another, identical variant in a private collection with the Ughi–Antinori arms on the reverse suggests that these objects were made in series, and the personal, heraldic emblems were applied at the time of purchase.[43] With the passing of time further typological

changes occurred and wooden birth trays and bowls were substituted by majolica wedding vessels.[44]

The large number of female portraits in Renaissance interiors can also be connected to marriage rituals,[45] like David Ghirlandaio's portrait of Selvaggia Sassetti (cat. 30), as well as diptychs and double portraits of husband and wife, such as the exceptionally beautiful pair of portraits of the Doni couple (Galleria Palatina, Florence) painted by Raphael a few years after their wedding in 1503. On the back of the two portraits the Master of Serumido depicted the myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha, which can also be interpreted as a good wish for fertility.

In addition, portraits of the family's friends and political allies might also appear in the interiors. A portrait of *Galeazzo Maria Sforza* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), painted by Piero del Pollaiuolo in 1471 when the duke of Milan was in Florence, for instance, is documented to have been in Lorenzo de' Medici's room.

As we have seen, several works of art, including tondi and tabernacles, were placed high on the walls. Small works executed with the refinement of illuminators probably needed a closer viewpoint, and had to be placed so that all details could be examined. I refer to pieces like the two small pictures representing the story of Judith and Holofernes by Botticelli (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), or two "miniatures" by Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and Antaeus* and *Hercules and the Hydra* (also in the Uffizi), which were kept in a folded form "like a book" ("a uso di libro che si serra") in the house of the Gondi family in the seventeenth century.[46] Records in the Medici inventory can help reconstruct the storage and use of such pictures: Jan van Eyck's small-sized *Saint Jerome*[47] (tentatively identified with the picture in the Detroit Institute of Arts) was kept in a protective case in Lorenzo's *scrittoio* ("study"). The painting was not hung on the wall or displayed all the time, but probably kept hidden in some drawer or cabinet in the study together with other objects of great material and emotional value – gems, vessels, medals – that is, they were not accessible to anyone and any time,



Antonio del Pollaiuolo
*Hercules and the Hydra*
ca. 1475
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



Antonio del Pollaiuolo
*Hercules and Antaeus*
ca. 1475
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



Mino da Fiesole
*Bust of Piero di Cosimo de' Medici*
1453
Museo Nazionale
del Bargello, Florence

and that they could only be admired at a time and in a way determined by the owner. This hypothesis might perhaps apply to other art works of a similar format.

Sculpture was also well-represented in Renaissance homes. There were not only the marble or (often glazed) terracotta Madonnas in reliefs, but *all'antica* plaster busts and marble heads as well, to represent various members of the family, usually displayed above *lettucci* or above doors. In Lorenzo de' Medici's room a marble bust of his father, Piero di Cosimo, sculpted by Mino da Fiesole in 1453–1454 (today Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence), was recorded "above the door leading from the anticamera"; while another bust by Mino, representing Lorenzo's mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, was displayed above the entrance door.[48] The room of Lorenzo's son Giuliano, later duke of Nemours, was adorned by a small (46 cm high) bronze statuette of Hercules and Antaeus by Antonio del Pollaiuolo, the father of Renaissance small bronzes. This statuette is identified, albeit with some doubt, as that which is now in the Bargello. Sculptures might also adorn the mantelpieces, as for instance in Giuliano di Leonardo Gondi's house, where he kept sculptures of both Hercules and Samson.[49]

In the studies *(studioli)* too – in addition to small, precious paintings – valuable reliefs were also kept. In the *scrittoio* of Lorenzo de' Medici, for example, there was an alabaster relief of *The Rape of Europa* kept in a wooden casket.[50] The walls of Piero de' Medici's famous *studiolo* were embellished with Luca della Robbia's glazed terracotta reliefs with allegorical representations of the months (today in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London).[51]

Few Renaissance houses, even the homes of patricians, had a private chapel in this era. In its absence, the place for prayer and religious meditation was the bedchamber. The noted preacher Giovanni Dominici, advising *patres familias* around 1410, recommended "to have pictures of saintly children or young virgins in the home, in which your child, still in swaddling clothes, may take delight and thereby may be gladdened by acts and signs pleasing to childhood. And what I say of pictures applies also to statues." Then he continued: "It is well to have the Virgin

Mary with the Child in arms, with a little bird or a pomegranate in His hand. Also appropriate is a representation of Jesus nursing, Jesus sleeping in his mother's lap, Jesus standing courteously before her."[52] In fact these sacred subjects did inspire innumerable tondi, portable altars (with or without wings), *colmi da camera* (tabernacles with an arched top) and terracotta reliefs that covered the walls of bedrooms.[53] These works were treated with great reverence and were protected by veils or curtains; prayer was often said in front of them by candle-light.[54] Literary sources reveal that Renaissance people had physical contact with such objects, kissing and embracing them in religious fervour.[55] There were also representations of the Pietà, the head of Christ and crucifixes in the house to elicit compassion and devotion, and to remind the residents of the promised remission of sins.[56]

Paintings on religious themes were also commissioned for weddings, like Raphael's famous *Madonna of the Goldfinch* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), which has recently been restored to its original splendour after long and painstaking work.[57] It was commissioned by Lorenzo Nasi on the occasion of his marriage to Alessandra Canigiani in 1505, and remained in the possession of the Nasi family until the seventeenth century.

So far we have discussed mostly the painted and sculpted decoration of Renaissance interiors, but we must not forget the wooden furnishings produced by noted carpenters' workshops and then adorned by painters or decorators. Lodovico Nobili, for instance, commissioned Francesco del Tasso to produce the wooden furniture for his bedroom, asking him emphatically to take Agnolo and Maddalena Doni's chamber as the model (earlier, it was Francesco del Tasso who made *spalliere, lettucci* and *cassoni* for the Doni family).[58] The joiner and architect Baccio d'Agnolo produced the wooden suite of furniture for the bedchamber of the Borgherini house ordered by Salvo Borgherini for the marriage of his son. The painted decoration of the furniture was executed by such noted painters as Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, Granacci and Bachiacca. Many painted pieces from this most magnificent suite of Renaissance furniture – although scattered – can still be admired today.[59]

NOTES

1. For the hypotheses concerning the bedroom in the Borgherini house and the headboard panels, see Braham 1979 and R. Bartoli, in *Florence* 1996b, 252–53. On the typology of the bed, see also Lydecker 1987, 48–50 and Musacchio 2008, 107.
2. *Vocabolario della Crusca* [1612] 1729–1738, IV (1735), 596.
3. E. Fahy, in *Florence* 1992a, 131–32; sold Sotheby's, New York, January 27, 2005, lot 126.
4. Lydecker 1987, 91.
5. Vasari [1568] 1878–1885, II, 1878, 148–49.
6. Paolini 2006; for the terminology see also Schiaparelli [1908] 1983, I, 296 and Thornton 1984.
7. Callmann 1974, 76–81 (Appendix 1).
8. Lydecker 1987, 102–4.
9. Lydecker 1987, Appendix V.
10. For the Courtauld chests, see most recently Campbell 2009, 69–79.
11. Schiaparelli [1908] 1983, 263–67.
12. On the represented subjects, see Filippini 1992 (with previous bibliography); Miziołek 1996; Baskins 2008.
13. Paolini 1994, 40.
14 Paolini 2002, 120; Paolini 2006, 120.
15. Lydecker 1987, 119.
16. Schiaparelli [1908] 1983, 263–67.
17. Bellosi–Haines 1999, 41–44.
18. D. L. Krohn, in *New York* 2008, 134–36, n. 58b (with previous bibliography); Randolph 2008, 25.
19. Bayer 2008, 233–34.
20. Vasari [1568] 1878–1885, II, 1878, 148–49.
21. *Vocabolario della Crusca* [1612] 1729–1738, III (1733), 56.
22. Cf. Trionfi Honorati 1981; Calderai–Chiarugi 2006.
23 Haines 1994, 134 (with previous bibliography).
24. Sricchia Santoro 2000.
25. Lydecker 1987, 57.
26. Covi 1978, 129.
27. Trionfi Honorati 1981, 40.
28. Cfr. Schiaparelli [1908] 1983, I, 159–68; Pons 1992, 222–24; Barriault 1994; Motture–Syson 2006, 271–78; Bayer 2008, 233–35; D. Krohn, in *New York* 2008, 288–90; 293–94, 298–99; A. Bayer, in *New York* 2008, 295–98.
29. Callmann 1991.
30. Motture–Syson 2006, 271–78; Nelson 2007b.
31. Nelson 2007b, 57.
32. Lydecker 1987, 71, nn. 99 and 100.
33. Olson 2000.
34. Lydecker 1987, 66.
35. Nelson 2007b, 59.
36. De Carli 1997; Musacchio 1999; Musacchio 2006; Musacchio 2008, *passim,* especially 38–51, 119–20, 231–33.
37. Biagi ed. 1899, 17–18.
38. J. M. Musacchio, in *New York* 2008, 154–56 (with previous bibliography).
39. *Ibid.,* 157–58 (with previous bibliography).
40. Paolini 1994, 40.
41. J. M. Musacchio, in *New York* 2008, 152–54 (with previous bibliography).
42. Musacchio 2006, 125.
43. *Ibid.,* 125; J. M. Musacchio, in *New York* 2008, 161–62 (with previous bibliography).
44. Musacchio 2006, 125.
45. On this subject see Fahy 2008.
46. Corti 1976, 633.
47. "Una tavoletta di Fiandra suvi uno San Girolamo a studio chon un armadietto di più libri di prospettiva e uno lione a' piedi, opera di maestro Giovanni di Bruggia, colorita a olio, in una guaina" ("small panel from Flanders showing Saint Jerome in his study, with a bookcase, with many books in perspective and a lion at his feet, the work of Master Giovanni di Bruggia, coloured in oil, kept in a case"), cited by Lydecker 1987, 71 (with previous bibliography).
48. F. Caglioti, in *Florence* 1992c, 42–43.
49. A. Cecchi, in *Florence* 2001, 53–57.
50. F. Caglioti, in *Florence* 1992c, 41.
51. Syson 2006.
52. Dominici [ca. 1410] 1860, 131.
53. For the various types of pictures for private devotion produced in Renaissance workshops, see Neri di Bicci [1453–1475], 1976.
54. Lydecker 1987, 178–79; Musacchio 2000, 150; Musacchio 2008, chapter 4.
55. Cooper 2006, 194.
56. Pons 1992, 227.
57. Ciatti–Frosinini–Natali–Riitano ed. 2008.
58. Aquino 2005.
59. On this subject see R. Bartoli – A. Cecchi, in *Florence* 1996b, 240–41 and R. Bartoli, in *Florence* 1996b, 248–53.

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APOCALIPS
IN·PRINCIPIO·ERAT·VER

# I The Science of Painting

The great innovation of Renaissance painting lies not in verisimilitude itself, but in establishing the scientific foundations of realistic representation. The most important constituent of the latter is the application of the theory of perspective to the practice of painting. Concomitant with the depiction of space regulated by optics and geometry is the clear legibility of the composition, the lucid presentation of the narrative, and the harmony of part and whole. This in turn implies the study of proportion, human anatomy and the language of gestures for artistic purposes. The stage for this historic turn of events, this revival of painting, was Florence in Tuscany, and the backdrop to this epochal change was the mentality developed by the community of the local banker-merchants and craftsmen. Through what modes of transmission did social development influence the man-centred, rational outlook of humanism that took classical antiquity as its frame of reference? Moreover, how did humanism shape art? These questions do not have exact and exhaustive answers, just as there is no explanation akin to a mathematical law for the undeniable primacy of Florence in the birth of the Renaissance.

A first-generation Renaissance painter, Paolo Uccello was passionately interested in linear perspective, particularly in depicting complex shapes in foreshortening. In *Scenes from the Lives of the Holy Hermits* (cat. 1) this is evident only in the geometric simplification of the figural groups and the rocky scenery. Occurring simultaneously in different places, the scenes coalesce into a truly surrealist vision. This makes us immediately realize that the new science was not a dogma but an instrument that strengthens the relation between the picture and viewer, elevating it to a new and higher level. Pesellino's *cassone* panel (cat. 2) displays another aspect of the early period of the systematic representation of space. With its inherent geometry, architecture is an ideal subject or provides an ideal setting for the exemplary use of linear perspective. The contemporary viewer was probably awed to see the way in which the arcade lent dignified rhythm and articulation to the sequence of narrated events, and how natural forms adjusted to this hexametric lilt. Humans and animals with pleasantly rounded forms and elegant movement populate this scene, taming to a fairy-tale Boccaccio's unusually blood-curdling story. Baldovinetti's *Virgin and Child* (cat. 3) clearly exemplifies how the quattrocento painter made a passionate effort to impeccably and precisely demarcate plastic forms. Thus defined unambiguously, the forms are then sumptuously embellished with large homogeneous colour patches and illuminated with pure early morning light. We associate both the notion of inlays and stained glass windows with Baldovinetti's painting, the emotional charge of which is further enhanced by the peculiar landscape in the background. Uccello, Pesellino and Baldovinetti were Florentine masters, and the Perugian

Domenico Ghirlandaio (?) and workshop
*Saint John the Evangelist on the Island of Patmos* (detail)
ca. 1480–1485
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest

Bartolomeo Caporali also became one of the reformers of Umbrian painting by treading in the path of a Florentine model, that of Benozzo Gozzoli. Following Gozzoli's style, in two pinnacle panels showing *The Annunciation* (cat. 4) Caporali shows the chequered floor, the marble-covered garden wall, the cloister, the prie-dieu packed with books, the figures, draperies and locks of hair with a perfect illusion of plasticity while being also sumptuously decorated, thus adding solemnity to the pious depiction. Compared to Caporali and Gozzoli, in Botticelli's œuvre the calligraphy of the drapery and line in general become more supple and sweeping, its expressive function being more important than its decorative one. This is apparent even in his early works, such as the *Virgin and Child with an Angel* (cat. 5) which is a full-length variation – a relatively rare format in Italy – of a popular half-length composition by Botticelli's master, Fra Filippo Lippi. The altarpiece painted in the workshop of the sculptor, goldsmith and painter Andrea del Verrocchio is again dominated by plasticity (cat. 6). This picture is the epitome of several ideals of early Renaissance painting. Verrocchio's pupil – or pupils – united powerfully-modelled, distinctive figures, a stone floor in linear perspective, *all'antica* architecture and a backdrop of Mediterranean trees in a terse, succinct composition of monumental effect. The four male saints are all dignified heroes of faith and embody the ideal man of Florentine humanism. The *cassone* panel depicting *The Battle of Pydna* was also painted in Andrea del Verrocchio's workshop (cat. 7). Together with its companion piece showing the triumphal procession after the battle, this wedding chest decoration offered the heroic virtues of Lucius Aemilius Paulus as an example to the young husband. Admiration for classical antiquity resulted in new subjects for painting, and this posed a challenge to artists. For battle scenes the painters drew heavily on Roman sarcophagus reliefs of analogous subjects, but the lucid composition of animated mass scenes still required much invention on their part. The Umbrian Signorelli developed a particularly individual style in the rendering of sculptural force, and proved himself the equal of the Pollaiuolo brothers and Verrocchio, the Florentine masters he regarded as paragons. In his tondo (cat. 8) he invested the figures with such monumentality as to make an architectural setting unnecessary: the figures themselves constitute a living architectural structure. Whether we look at the muscular bodies or the rendering of the draperies, we are witness to the concentration of energies whose considerable intellectual and spiritual content foreshadow the spirit of Michelangelo's art.

Sandro Botticelli's *Saint Augustine* (cat. 9) shows one of the leading Florentine artists of the second half of the quattrocento in his full maturity. The vivid depiction represents the saint as the ideal scholar of humanism and suggests the productive tension of inspiration. The foreshortened *all'antica* architecture fills the composition with pathos, while the curtain drawn back and the papers scattered on the floor add to the feeling of homeliness in this small yet monumental picture. In another masterpiece by Botticelli, *The Story of Virginia* (cat. 10), dramatic conflict dominates. Architecture and foreshortening still serve the clear presentation of the story, divided into episodes, but the serene and elegant narration visible in Pesellino's *cassone* panel here gives way to sweeping dynamism and restlessness. The crowded groups of figures, the vehement gestures, the fluttering, rippling draperies all express tragedy. The ancient Roman story is about dishonoured

virtue and the fight against tyranny, possibly with an anti-Medicean and pro-Savonarolan edge. Still, this late work of Botticelli speaks a passionate and spiritualized formal language, on whose development the very Neoplatonic philosophy embraced in Medicean circles had a deep influence. Similarly, when Jacopo del Sellaio depicted – with a keen eye on Botticelli's innovations – the patron saint of Florence, *Saint John the Baptist* (cat. 11), he followed Savonarola's unrelenting prophetic rigour in the choice of the subject only. Although the metaphor of the irate God appears as a motif: "Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire", this saint is not a prophet passing judgment and proclaiming the law, but a sad-eyed youth tortured by the foreboding of the ominous future, advocating a religion of compassionate love.

At times, Renaissance logic found itself at odds with religious content. In an early work by Filippino Lippi (cat. 12) there is a considerable difference in scale between the Virgin holding the Christ Child and Saint Anthony of Padua who presents a friar to her. Despite her outline, which is stylized into a mandorla-like shape, the Virgin is such an earthly figure that we are taken aback to see that she is enthroned on clouds. Yet we do not feel this representation to be spiritually inauthentic. The reason is that faith, although humanized, did not lose its intensity in the Renaissance. This is clearly exemplified in another painting by Filippino Lippi (cat. 13). The depiction of the penitent Saint Jerome tells of the torments of the road leading to the truth of faith. The white garment trickles down the saint's body like molten wax; the rocks writhe with the remorseful man's agony; a dark cave opens behind his head. The small crucifix almost merges with the trunk of the dried-out tree; the glowing red of the cardinal's hat – the only bright spot in the painting – acquires magical significance. While spirituality is strongly present – now in an unmistakably Renaissance language – in the mature works of Botticelli and Filippino Lippi, the basic tone of the works of their contemporary, Domenico Ghirlandaio is solemn in a more prosaic fashion. His works tell not of the transcendental world of Neoplatonic ideas but the reality of the luxurious yet sober life of the Florentine patricians. In the panel that formerly belonged to the high altar of the church of Santa Maria Novella, the pensive *Saint Stephen Protomartyr* (cat. 14) stands in a shell niche both in a statuesque and lifelike way. The blood dribbling from his head wounds and the stone in front of his feet hardly allude to bodily pain, leaving the beauty of the figure unmarred. Scholars have long sought to find the master of the tondo showing *Saint John on the Island of Patmos* (cat. 15) in Ghirlandaio's circle. However, the smooth modelling and enamel-like lustre of the colours that characterize *Saint Stephen* are not typical of this portrayal of the Evangelist writing the book of Revelations. The spirit of the presentation of the two figures is, however, very much alike. The ecstatic or mystical tone is alien to both. Although shown in the act of recording his vision of the apocalyptic end of the world, Saint John is a man of wisdom, a humanist scholar whose narrow face and posture reflect absorption and concentration; the marine landscape behind him expresses moderation and peace of mind. The natural setting is equally peaceful and idyllic in Bartolomeo Caporali's fresco of the *Virgin and Child* (cat. 16). This work by the Umbrian master is much later than his *Annunciation* of 1467–1468 (cat. 4). It dates from the period when, after its initial phase of development under the impact of Florentine models, the Umbrian Renaissance assumed

its own unique character thanks to two exceptionally talented masters, Perugino and Pinturicchio. As this fragmentary fresco demonstrates, Caporali was most deeply influenced by Pinturicchio's works so rich in decorative detail.

The artistic theory that Leon Battista Alberti phrased of the Florentine Renaissance was never put so consistently into practice as by Andrea Mantegna, who began his career in Padua before moving on to Mantua. From the theory of perspective to the monuments of Ancient Rome, his imagination, receptive as it was to the sombrely sublime, was excited by all that the humanists admired. His half-length representation of the *Adoration of the Magi* (cat. 17) gives the impression of a painted relief, not least because of its neutral background. The chiselled finish of the forms, the variety of the poses, the motifs and figural types all bear witness to the artist's admirable skills and inventiveness. It is little wonder that his art became a chief model in northern Italy. It was largely under Mantegna's influence that Vincenzo Foppa, who worked in several places in Lombardy, modernized his artistic language. In a series of detached frescos from a church in Bergamo, a painter from Foppa's circle modelled the busts of Christ's ancestors on the Roman *imago clipeata* or shield portrait, and when he painted *Josaphat* (cat. 18) as a figure leaning from a window, he used an illusionistic device first employed by Mantegna on the ceiling of the Camera degli Sposi in Mantua. After the works of Pesellino and Botticelli, the third multi-figure narrative painting in this exhibition is by a so-far unidentified Bolognese master (cat. 19). In this picture, once part of a predella, the figures, the architecture and the landscape are once again united by the logic of perspective. This order provides a firm framework for the presentation of a story rich in narrative detail. Vivid colour contrasts, in particular the combination of the powerful reds with white, grey and pink, enhance the charm of the representation.

The innovations of the Florentine Renaissance first arrived in Venice via the masters who received commissions in northern Italy (for example, Donatello, Andrea del Castagno, Fra Filippo Lippi), and later through Andrea Mantegna. For many decades, the leading master of the Venetian Renaissance was the consistently innovative Giovanni Bellini. At the beginning of his career he was deeply influenced by Mantegna, as the hard-forged forms of *The Dead Christ with the Virgin and Saint John* demonstrate (cat. 20). This devotional work is a variant on a subject of Byzantine origin, the *Vir Dolorum* or Man of Sorrows, in which the iconic representation of Christ, isolated from any narrative context, is brought closer to the viewer by the painful facial expressions of the Virgin and Saint John. With its successful synthesis of form, colour and light, the *Annunciation* is one of the masterpieces of his mature period (cat. 21). The space bordered by the coffered ceiling, the colourful, chequered stone floor and the wall decorated with veined marble slabs is rendered both airy and solemn by the flowing light. Bellini thus turns Mantegna's sombre magnificence into majestic serenity. Many of his followers were more than just epigones. One was Bartolomeo Montagna, in whose altarpiece the landscape is not a mere background, but a setting that sanctifies the joint meditation of the Virgin and the two saints (cat. 22). The rocks in the fore- and middle ground, and the stone pedestal of the throne

allude to the firmness of faith, while the brilliant sunshine sharply outlining every form symbolizes inner enlightenment. On the basis of the relation of the expansive setting and the diminutive figure, *The Penitent Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* from the WORKSHOP OF CIMA DE CONEGLIANO can rightly be called a landscape (cat. 23). It shows not a topographically identifiable site; it rather combines very diverse natural elements that all celebrate the work of the Creator in a world created by the painter. This phenomenon is parallel with the appearance of the *Weltlandschaft* at the beginning of Netherlandish landscape painting, but the Venetian version is more harmoniously arranged and more imbued with light. Crystal clear design and Mediterranean radiance of light are constant features in CIMA DA CONEGLIANO's idyllic pictures, including the *David and Jonathan* (cat. 24). Cima found no iconographic model for this Old Testament subject, thus he relied on compositions depicting Tobias and the Angel.

The large narrative cycles of Venetian painting satisfied the same demand for spectacle that characterized the lavish festivities there. VITTORE CARPACCIO was the most gifted representative of this genre. His *Visitation* (cat. 25) belongs to a series depicting the life of the Virgin, which originally decorated the seat of the *scuola,* or lay confraternity, of Venice's Albanian community. This enchanting, playful mixture of fact and fancy relies equally on geometric stylization, the decorative liveliness of colour, the imaginative combination of contemporary architectonic motifs and a parade of exotic oriental attires for its overall effect. VINCENZO CATENA was a faithful follower of the Bellini tradition even in the cinquecento. His *sacra conversazione* (cat. 26) made for private devotion conveys, in its own genre, a religious and spiritual content similar to that of Bartolomeo Montagna's altarpiece in a church. The composition of figures, shown in three-quarter length, has been adjusted to the intimacy of a domestic setting: the Virgin and Child appear not in the centre, as is hierarchically due to them, but at the side.

It is doubly justified to conclude the first section of the exhibition with LORENZO COSTA's *Venus* (cat. 27). Firstly, this Bolognese painter – like Catena – did not abandon quattrocento ideals, even during the high Renaissance; secondly, the theme of Venus was of emblematic significance in the Renaissance. It symbolized the cult of beauty that was one of the driving forces of Renaissance art, as well as the Neoplatonic philosophy at the centre of which stood the metaphysical interpretation of beauty and love, and which sought the way to the divine through an understanding of earthly beauty. True, this metaphysical interpretation had such wide margins of tolerance that it was often precisely the metaphysical content that vanished from it. Costa's painting is evidence of this. It was most probably ordered by King Francis I of France, who requested Marquis Francesco Gonzaga "to commission Costa to paint him some naked figure or Venus". The high-ranking client wished to take delight in the artistic representation of female beauty without any philosophical pretext. In other words, platitudinous as it may sound, the secular spirit was one of the real and essential components of Renaissance taste and culture.

VILMOS TÁTRAI

1 PAOLO UCCELLO | Florence, ca. 1397 – Florence, 1475

*Scenes from the Lives of the Holy Hermits*

ca. 1460–1470

Tempera on canvas; 81 × 110 cm
Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, inv. 5381

Paolo Uccello's name is associated above all with the virtuoso and inventive use of perspective, yet the appeal of his works lies in their mysterious atmosphere, in which the painstakingly detailed representation of objects, rather than being realistic, serves to lift the image onto the plane of the fabulous.

This applies to the painting in question too, generally dated to the 1460s. The subject is rather unusual. In a rocky landscape with forests and caves populated by animals and monks engaged in a variety of activities, we recognize Saint Benedict (or Saint Romuald) in a pulpit, Saint Bernard and his vision, Saint Jerome in penance, and Saint Francis receiving the stigmata. Such a composition does not adhere to any standardized iconography but appears to be a celebration of monasticism in general. Parronchi (1957, 21–25) suggested that the work might have been inspired by Pierre Lacepierre de Limoges's medieval treatise *De oculo morali,* which illustrates the optic laws of perspective through religious metaphors and parables from the lives of saints. By contrast, Malquori (1990) interprets it as a representation of the *via perfectionis,* the spiritual improvement of men religious through study of the scriptures, prayer, and penance.

Traditionally the painting is defined as a Thebaid, i.e. a depiction of the lives of the holy hermits of the first centuries of the Christian era, who retreated as hermits into the Egyptian desert around Thebes. Instead of the saints retiring to the Egyptian desert, Uccello's picture shows the saints and monks belonging to the religious orders common in Florence and in the West; thus the work might be defined as a "modern Thebaid" or a "Thebaid revisited".

It seems plausible that some of the fifteenth-century Florentine clients wished to refresh the contents of the traditional representation with scenes of monastic life of saints dearer and more familiar to them. A clear indication of this intention is a Thebaid known as the "small Lindsay Thebaid", from the second half of the quattrocento, in which several scenes also present in Uccello's painting are combined with stories typical of the Egyptian hermits (H. Brigstocke, in *Edinburgh* 2000, 60–62).

The endeavour for revived, pure, and severe religiosity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was broadly welcomed by the church and society. This is reflected in several spiritual trends advocating poverty and penance, such as those of the Observants, particularly of the Franciscan order, of the Hermits of Saint Jerome, and the confraternities of flagellants inspired by them. Taking a second look at Uccello's "modern Thebaid", one finds that these are the very forms of spirituality to appear in it.

The provenance of the painting is from the monastery of San Giorgio alla Costa, which belonged to the Vallombrosan order from 1448 (Paatz–Paatz 1940–1954, II [1941], 167). However, it should be noted that a lay confraternity called the "Buca di San Girolamo della Notte" ("The Cave of Saint Jerome of the Night"), which practised nocturnal flagellation, also met in some rooms of the convent. In addition, next to the monastery, the nunnery of Santi Girolamo e Francesco was erected in the late fourteenth century; this foundation of Franciscan tertiaries (a traditionally penitent order) saw considerable growth during the fifteenth century (Paatz–Paatz 1940–1954, II [1941], 162–63, 344; Bernacchioni 2003, 418). Quite reasonably, these two institutions have also been hypothesized as the original location of the painting (Malquori 1990; Bernacchioni 2003), yet the devotional message it conveys would clearly have been just as valid for any of the religious congregations active in the street of Costa San Giorgio in Florence.

As regards support and format, the painting does not relate clearly to other Thebaid pictures, which are usually painted on large panels with a horizontal format. Uccello's picture was painted on canvas and, as ascertained by Rossella Lari (oral communication), there is no evidence that it was transferred from wood. Furthermore, the work seems to have been cut on all sides, so its original dimensions remain unknown.

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2 Pesellino (Francesco di Stefano) | Florence, ca. 1422 – Florence, 1457

## *Two Episodes from the Story of Griselda: Gualtieri and the Citizens of Saluzzo; Gualtieri's Departure and Marriage with Griselda*

ca. 1445–1450

Tempera on panel; 43.4 × 48.9 cm and 43.7 × 110.3 cm
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 58 MR 00009, 58 MR 00008

The two panels originally formed a single painting in horizontal format, which undoubtedly adorned the front of a *cassone* or wedding chest. Chests of this type were to be found among the furnishings in the bedchamber of a married couple. In fifteenth-century Florence they were often decorated with scenes from historical and literary sources.

The subject depicted comes from the first part of the "Griselda novella" in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*. The smaller panel shows one of the first episodes in the tale, in which Gualtieri, the marquis of Saluzzo, receives a delegation of his subjects, who plead with him to marry so as not to leave his people without an heir to the title. The novella then describes how Gualtieri accedes to the request of Saluzzo's citizens, though strongly doubting whether he can find a woman of honour who matches his exacting demands. The larger panel presents the subsequent events. On the left we see Gualtieri take to the road on the day of the wedding. At the centre he meets the unsuspecting Griselda, who is carrying water home from the well. At this point nobody knows that the marquis has chosen this beautiful but humble peasant girl as his bride. On the right we see the wedding take place before the house of Griselda's family; the young girl stands stark naked before those attending the event. According to the story, Gualtieri entered the house and told Griselda's father that he would marry his daughter provided she promised to obey him always. Griselda acquiesced, and as the young couple left the house the marquis commanded her to strip naked – to the great amazement of all present – then placing a crown upon her head dressed her in magnificent clothes. It was only then that he announced publicly that Griselda was to be his wife, and the wedding took place immediately.

Given that nuptial *cassoni* were given as gifts in pairs, the other chest in this set – of which all trace has been lost – would have depicted the second half of the story, in which Gualtieri subjects Griselda to assorted cruelties and humiliations in order to prove her obedience.

The iconography of the patient Griselda is very rare, if only because the literary genre on which it is based was not regarded as of a sufficiently high standard (Branca 1999, 24–25). And yet the Griselda novella is no mere frivolous story; indeed, the powerful, tragic portrayal of the meek and submissive woman was very well suited to the extolling of a fifteenth-century Florentine wife's marital virtues. This must be one reason why the subject usually appeared on pieces of furniture for nuptial chambers (Branca ed. 1999, II, 205–8, 223–24); of these, mention must certainly be made of the marvellous Sienese panels in the National Gallery in London, painted by the unknown Griselda Master (L. Syson, in *London* 2007, 230–33).

It would appear that Pesellino's painting is the oldest surviving example of this iconography, and dates to the late 1440s. Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi had a great impact on Pesellino's artistic development, but the latter also excelled in a genre not practised by the two aforementioned great masters: namely, the decorative painting of *cassoni*. Such chests were probably already painted in the workshop of his grandfather Pesello, who remains unknown to us (Procacci 1960).

Pesellino's *cassoni* are conspicuous among other similar works by virtue of their inventiveness and the outstanding quality of their painting, as demonstrated by his works based on Petrarch's *Trionfi* (Triumphs), housed in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston (R. Colby, in *Boston–Sarasota* 2008, 104–9), as well as the panels with the *Story of David* in the National Gallery in London (Gordon 2003, 288–95). In these paintings, just as in the Griselda *cassone,* the artist is perfectly capable of harmoniously balancing the profusion of narrative details, the refined elegance of the characters, and the clear, well-arranged composition. Though articulated in a varied manner, the scenes are conceived in a unitary and coherent way, for Pesellino employs an entirely Renaissance method: with the aid of perspective he constructs a realistic and liveable space, and, thanks to his knowledge of human anatomy, populates it with vivid, graceful figures.

The recently completed restoration of the two paintings has reinforced the hypothesis that we are dealing here with two parts of a single wooden panel: radiographic images clearly reveal that the structure of the two supports is continuous and between the painted architecture in the two fragments the underdrawing is uninterrupted. Infrared reflectography has revealed the painter's numerous *pentimenti*. After the removal of yellowed varnish and overpainting from the painted surfaces one can now appreciate even better the clean lines of the figures and the clear, rose-tinged colours so typical of Pesellino.

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3 Alesso Baldovinetti | Florence, ca. 1425 – Florence, 1499

## *Virgin and Child*

ca. 1455–1460

Tempera on canvas; 90 × 74 cm
Musée Jacquemart-André, Institut de France, Paris, inv. MJAP P1842

Perhaps no other genre of painting can be identified so perfectly with the concept of Renaissance art as the Madonnas of the Italian quattrocento. Alesso Baldovinetti's *Virgin and Child* in the Jacquemart-André museum, Paris, is a little-known but highly characteristic example of the genre. The pious appearance of the figures is coupled with the elegance of the gestures, garments, and landscape, in line with the taste of the clients who ordered it, the Florentine noblemen.

As is common with small-sized pictures, no documents concerning the painting survive, but on grounds of style the picture can be dated to Baldovinetti's early period, around the second half of the 1450s (Kennedy 1938, 66).

The state of preservation of the picture is far from satisfactory: the paint is abraded, and the faces of the Virgin and the Infant Christ have been retouched. This work was carried out by a restorer in the early twentieth century who was presumably engaged by the Florentine art dealer Stefano Bardini, from whom Nélie Jacquemart subsequently purchased the painting (Kennedy 1938, 71).

Of paramount interest, though, is the technique. The artist applied tempera to canvas, and "the pigment is laid on canvas very thinly primed instead of on a gesso-covered panel" (Kennedy 1938, 69). The technique of painting in tempera on canvas was not altogether unusual in the Italian trecento and quattrocento (cf. Villers 1995), whereas the use of a thin gesso ground is mainly typical of the Netherlands in the fifteenth century. Few early Netherlandish canvases are extant from this period but documents prove they were widespread and represented a wide variety of themes (Reynolds 2000, 89). We also know that many of these have an Italian provenance (Wolfthal 1989, 34).

There is documentary evidence that these "painted cloths" were increasingly disseminated in Florence, especially in the second half of the fifteenth century, and were often expressly called *fiandreschi* ("Flemish") (Nuttall 2000, 109; Nuttall 2004, 119–20, 129–30).

It is possible that the young Alesso Baldovinetti, who also painted the altarpiece for the chapel of the Medici villa in Cafaggiolo (now in the Uffizi, Florence; cf. Kennedy 1938, 53–60), might have become acquainted with this Netherlandish painting technique through his contacts with the Medici. Piero de' Medici is known to have possessed a rich collection of early Netherlandish canvases (Nuttall 2000, 111–12; Nuttall 2004, 105–17) and to have encouraged Italian artists to paint on canvas, as is proven by Antonio del Pollaiuolo's and Pesellino's canvas paintings formerly in a room of the Medici palace in Florence (Spallanzani–Gaeta Bertelà eds. 1992, 26). That Baldovinetti did use the Flemish technique for the Jacquemart-André *Virgin and Child* is also supported by the fact that originally the canvas was stretched over a board (Kennedy 1938, 70), as was customary with the Flemish "painted cloths" (Reynolds 2000, 92–93).

However, the Jacquemart-André *Virgin and Child* can be defined as *alla fiamminga* on account not only of the painting technique but also of the style and composition. It is outstanding as one of the earliest surviving Florentine paintings, in the background of which is shown an extensive landscape fading into the distance. This is seen from a slightly elevated vantage point where the principal figures are placed, while the sky shows a fine gradation of atmospheric tones.

This type of landscape background has been traced back by Millard Meiss (1955, 64–65) to lost prototypes by Jan van Eyck. Meiss examined how this compositional type gained ground in Florentine painting in the early 1460s, and how by the 1470s it had already given way to backgrounds with a closer horizon.

In any case, it must be acknowledged that if Baldovinetti did see early Netherlandish landscape backgrounds, he reinterpreted them with his peculiar taste for lean and subtle contours. The background landscape fading into the distance in the Jacquemart-André *Virgin and Child* with its winding coastline, the bluish faraway hills, and rocky islands "as fabulous as the Symplegades" (Kennedy 1938, 66), is unparalleled in Florentine painting of the time and directly recalls Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Rolin*.

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4 Bartolomeo Caporali | Documented in Perugia from 1442 – d. 1503–1505

*Angel of the Annunciation*
*Virgin Annunciate*
ca. 1467–1468

Tempera, oil (?), and gold on panel; each 49.5 × 47.5 cm
Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia, inv. 146, 143

Slightly truncated at the sides, these panels originate from the church of San Domenico in Perugia and came to the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria in 1863. They were restored in 1996. In 1861 they were seen in the room of the parish priest, and five years later, in the sacristy (Crowe–Cavalcaselle 1864–1866). Since the publication of Crowe and Cavalcaselle, and later Bombe (1912), until most recently, researchers have associated the two panels – clearly the pinnacles of a polyptych – with several other panels originating from the same church and now also in the Perugia gallery. They presumed that the pieces used to form part of the altarpiece made for the chapel of San Vincenzo Ferrer. The work was created in accordance with the will left by a merchant called Francesco di Pietro Gambella, and two payments of 50 florins were made for it to Benedetto Bonfigli and Caporali between July 18, 1467 and June 14, 1468, when the altarpiece was completed (for a summary of research, see Santi 1985). The other three panels – *Virgin and Child with Musical Angels* (inv. 144; 170 × 98 cm), *Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint Peter* (inv. 142, 131 × 71 cm) and *Saint Paul and Saint Peter Martyr* (inv. 145; 133 × 71.5 cm) – are today almost unanimously attributed to Bonfigli.

Mancini (1992), however, following an earlier indication by Scarpellini, has pointed out the differences in size and iconography, as well as the absence of Saint Vincent Ferrer, the titular saint of the chapel, in these pieces. This led him to postulate that the panels were parts of two different altarpieces made for the same church: the Madonna and the small pictures discussed here would have belonged to the polyptych paid for in 1467–1468, whereas the two panels with two saints each were possibly parts of another altarpiece made for the chapel of San Pietro Martire of the Guidoni family (this would explain the presence of Saint Peter Martyr in one of the laterals). An altarpiece is indeed documented in this chapel.

Furthermore, Mancini connected to the latter polyptych two predella scenes in private collections, first published by Todini and linked by him to the 1467–1468 commission (Todini 1989, I, 42, 44). It is generally maintained that the two pictures show the miracles of Saint Paul (ca. 23.5 × 43.5 cm) and Saint Peter Martyr (23.5 × 53.5 cm).

Mention must be made of Lunghi's reconstruction (in *Perugia* 1996) as well. He considers the Madonna an early work by Bonfigli, the depictions of saints as perhaps parts of the polyptych in the San Vincenzo Ferrer chapel, and the two pictures in question as parts of a third, now lost, altarpiece executed in the late 1460s.

There is no room here to go into sufficient detail about the problems of reconstruction raised by the above works, but a few remarks can be made. The idea that the two panels of the *Annunciation* belonged to the polyptych of 1467–1468 is based on two circumstances: one is the fact that these are, as far as we know, the only works by Caporali that originate from the church of San Domenico, and the other, more importantly, is that this precise time period seems to be the most likely date for them. The best analogies are with the *Madonna with Saints* of 1465 at the Strossmayerova Galerija in Zagreb, in which the Virgin's mantle displays the same accurately broken folds of drapery as the archangel Gabriel's, and the *Glorification of the Virgin* in the Perugia gallery (1469; inv. 166). It is also clear that several elements of the *Annunciation*, from the protagonists' profiles through the squared floor pattern to the lectern in Mary's room, derive from the processional banner painted by Niccolò Alunno in 1466 for the Annunziata confraternity (Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia, inv. 169; cf. Lunghi, in *Perugia* 1996). The face of the archangel is strongly reminiscent of the young magus's face in Bonfigli's *Adoration of the Magi* painted in 1465–1466 and now also in the gallery of Perugia. Despite elements undoubtedly reflecting the influence of Benozzo Gozzoli's Umbrian works – notably the wall inlaid with marble panels and adorned with a flower pot, the Virgin's ermine-lined gown and the inscribed haloes – Caporali's output was characterized in this period by a stylistic concord with Bonfigli, as is borne out by the glowing lustre of his colours. This is verified by documents showing that the two painters jointly produced the altarpiece for the chapel of San Vincenzo Ferrer. It was this altarpiece, I believe, that the above-mentioned predella scenes belonged to, and as Lunghi pointed out (in *Perugia* 1996), they do not represent episodes from the lives of Saint Paul and Saint Peter Martyr; rather, they depict scenes from the life of Saint Vincent Ferrer of Valencia. The two episodes are, more precisely: *Saint Vincent rescues a little girl fallen into a ditch* and *A little boy killed by his mother is raised from the dead on an altar*.

As for the Madonna picture, which I consider Bonfigli to have painted in the 1460s, the different shape of the arches is not reason enough to deny its association with the two panels featuring the *Annunciation*. In late Gothic and early Renaissance Umbrian painting there are several examples of panels in different tiers of the same altarpiece having differing formats and carpentry. One should rather observe that the rocky, wooded landscape in which the artist placed the figures of the sacral scene is unusual for the central panel of an altarpiece, and more in accord with an autonomous work of art.



One most persuasive hypothesis is that a panel showing Saint Vincent Ferrer mentioned in an eighteenth-century account as being in the church (cf. Mancini 1992; Lunghi, in *Perugia* 1996; Teza 2006, 461–64), but later lost, belonged to the documented altarpiece of 1467–1468. At the same time, the difference in dimensions seems to rule out the possibility of the two panels of the *Annunciation* originally being located above the four saints now in the Perugia gallery.

To sum up, the two panels of the *Annunciation*, the two predella scenes, and perhaps the documented panel with the figure of Saint Vincent may have formed part of the altarpiece dedicated to Saint Vincent Ferrer; whereas the *Madonna* is more likely to have been conceived as an independent work. The two laterals showing two saints each – including Saint Peter Martyr – may well have belonged to the altarpiece that once stood in the San Pietro Martire chapel.

Some problems related to the question of authorship remain to be settled. The marble wall and the cloister segment with two cypresses doubled by the shadows cast in the background of the left panel – for which motifs precedents can be found in the works of Fra Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli – are not remotely inferior to other parts of the scene, so this writer believes it is unnecessary to suppose, on the analogy of his miniatures, that Giapeco Caporali participated in the execution of these pieces (Lunghi, in *Perugia* 1996). Equally unfounded in my view, based on formal comparison, is the association of the paintings with the illuminations that have recently been attributed to Pierantonio di Niccolò di Pocciolo (Teza 2004). These proposals are in connection with the questions that arose about the reconstruction of Caporali's œuvre after the discovery of the documents relating to the execution of the Giustizia triptych (Perugia, Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria), but in this regard I agree with Bellosi's observations, expressed in a recent publication (2007, 78–84).

MAURO MINARDI

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5 Sandro Botticelli | Florence, 1445 – Florence, 1510

## *Virgin and Child with an Angel*

ca. 1467–1468

Tempera on panel; 152.2 × 77 cm
Palais Fesch – Musée des Beaux-Arts, Ajaccio, inv. 852.1.595

The Ajaccio painting was already associated with Botticelli in the first catalogue of the Fesch Museum in the late nineteenth century, despite having been entered into the inventory of Cardinal Fesch's Roman collection in 1839 as a painting in the *"maniera di Fra Filippino Lippi",* which had been ruined by restoration *("tutto guasto dal restauro").* The condition of the painting is indeed much deteriorated. The wear from successive restorations – particularly apparent on the garlands and the figure of the Child – does not, however, prevent the artist's style from being recognized. The compilers of the inventory for the cardinal's collection erred on the side of caution when they connected the painting to the circle of Fra Filippo Lippi, though confusing father and son. Considering the painting's condition, which made identification very difficult, the attribution attests to considerable perspicacity at a time when interest in early Italian painting was confined to a very narrow circle of experts.

The Ajaccio panel is the work of the young Botticelli, and shows the strong influence of the compositions of his teacher, Fra Filippo Lippi, and particularly the painting *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* now in the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence. Unlike other variations on Lippi's painting that can be connected to Botticelli's early period (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museo dell'Ospedale degli Innocenti, Florence; National Gallery of Art, Washington; Musée du Louvre, Paris), however, the Ajaccio Madonna departs considerably from its model. Besides the fact that it is the first work of the young Botticelli whose authorship is undisputed, it does indeed display a high degree of inventiveness. While the artist retained the profile view of the Virgin, he deepened the emotional ties between mother and son, presenting Mary and the angel in full figure, in front of a garden wall beyond which nothing but an abstract blue sky can be glimpsed, and finally he framed the scene with curious garlands.

Although the young Botticelli was a pupil of Filippo Lippi, the innovative spirit of the picture strongly suggests that Botticelli attended the studio of Andrea del Verrocchio very early on. As drapery studies made by Leonardo da Vinci and Lorenzo di Credi in the master's workshop bear out, Botticelli borrowed from Verrocchio Mary's ample garments whose folds break stiffly on the ground. Another link to Verrocchio is the angel's profile, the terracotta version of which, ascribed to the master himself, is in the Louvre. It was probably in Verrocchio's studio, full of the spirit of experiment and buzzing with ideas and discussions, that the idea took shape that, unusually for a sacred picture in Florence in the mid-quattrocento, Mary should be represented standing, and in a somewhat statuesque pose. Quite probably the idea of using the garland motif, taken from ancient sarcophagi, also originated in Verrochio's studio. A rarity in Florence, this motif has associations with another contemporary workshop, similarly given to artistic experimentation, that of Francesco Squarcione in Padua. Another special feature of the Ajaccio Madonna is the complete absence of landscape, which suggests above all an affinity to reliefs produced in Verrocchio's studio. Botticelli's work could even be regarded as an early manifestation of the central dispute which occupied the Florentine artistic community in the first half of the sixteenth century, the *paragone,* i.e. the rivalry of sculpture and painting.

The *Virgin and Child with an Angel* is one of the emblematic works of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Ajaccio, but was probably not considered among the greatest masterpieces of what was then known as the primitive school in Cardinal Joseph Fesch's collection. Fesch put together what was perhaps the largest private collection of all time: at his death on May 13, 1839, he left 16,000 paintings in the rooms of the Palazzo Falconieri in Rome. Many of the approximately 250 primitive paintings from the collection now adorn the walls of the great museums of the world. The cardinal collected his primitives in pursuit of the encyclopaedic and didactic ambition to span the whole of art history, restoring the dignity of the early schools of painting, a principle taken up by Alexis-François Artaud de Montor and Jean-Baptiste Séroux d'Agincourt and put into practice in the Louvre under Dominique-Vivant Denon. The auction of the Fesch Collection in 1845 launched on to the market a considerable number of works by the old masters, generating a decisive change in the tastes of private collectors.

PHILIPPE COSTAMAGNA

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6 Workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio (with the participation of Biagio d'Antonio | Florence, 1446 – Florence, 1516)

## *The Virgin and Child Enthroned, with Five Saints and Two Angels*

ca. 1470–1475

Tempera on panel; 168 × 177.5 cm (painted surface 158.5 × 166 cm)
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1386
From San Domenico del Maglio in Florence

Literature dealing with this altarpiece is plentiful, not least because Vasari mentions it as a work of Verrocchio ([1568] 1878–1885, III, 365–66). In Vasari's time the picture was in San Domenico del Maglio in Florence, and based on its iconography there is no reason to doubt that its original location was also somewhere within this Dominican complex. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources state that the work was moved from the high altar of the church to a side altar prior to 1684 (Del Migliore 1684, 236; Richa 1754–1762, VII, 106). However, Thomas (2003, 239) rightly questions whether the picture was originally made for the high altar, since the church's titular saint Dominic does not appear among the saints portrayed.

At Mary's right, in the most important position, stands Saint Peter Martyr, accompanied by an unidentified bishop saint, Saint Vincent Ferrer and Saint James the Great. However, the protagonist of the altarpiece, seen kneeling at the feet of the Madonna, is Saint Catherine of Siena. The fourteenth-century Dominican tertiary and mystic was canonized in 1461, not long before the painting of this altarpiece, an event that undoubtedly carried enormous prestige for the likewise Dominican tertiary (?) sisters of San Domenico. In the altarpiece, Saint Peter Martyr – once the spiritual leader of this Dominican community, who even performed a miracle for the sisters after his death (cf. Richa 1754–1762, IV, 295, 301, VII, 102) – presents the new saint to the Virgin and Child with the conventional gesture of patronage. Compared to the other saints, Catherine is portrayed in a subservient position (in the place and pose generally assigned to donors). Even so, she is undeniably the centre of attention: while Peter looks down at her protectively, Jesus welcomes her with a blessing and Mary turns towards her. The intention to glorify the saint may explain Mary's own gesture of adoration, the unusual nature of which was already noted by Boskovits (1968), and whose use in the group of the Mother and Child necessitated the contrived position of the Child's left hand drawn through his mother's arm.

The history of the Dominican sisters may explain the presence of Saint James: he was the patron saint of the female community of Pian di Ripoli southeast of Florence, from where the members of San Domenico del Maglio moved to the Tuscan capital at the end of the thirteenth century (this title was retained by the sisters of San Jacopo di Ripoli, who separated from the former group at the time of their move). The representation of Saint Vincent Ferrer may in turn be connected to the confraternity of San Vincenzo that met at the church of San Domenico. Dissolved in the first half of the sixteenth century, it may well already have been active in the fifteenth (Thomas 2003, 245).

Despite Vasari's assertion, Cavalcaselle and Milanesi disputed Verrocchio's authorship as early as 1870, thereby incurring the ire of the art dealer Alessandro Foresi, who had offered the picture at a high price to the Louvre and the Italian state. For decades now, most scholars believe the work was painted by Biagio d'Antonio, who began his career in Florence and continued it in Faenza. The master's monographer, Roberta Bartoli (1999), has also endorsed Biagio's authorship. Yet it still seems closer to the truth to return to the more than century-old attribution of the picture as from the workshop of Verrocchio, contrary to Oberhuber's opinion too (1978). The latter argued that it was Verrocchio's autograph work but the Budapest panel certainly does not reach the quality of the *Baptism of Christ* in the Uffizi or the *Madonna* in Berlin. The master – or masters? – of the Pala del Maglio possessed refined artistic skills but not as sophisticated as those of Verrocchio. At the same time, it is equally clear that the panel cannot be fully reconciled with the works of Biagio d'Antonio without stretching a point. True, the Virgin's head turned in almost complete profile recurs in a number of Nativity compositions by Biagio (and survives in a drawing as well), and there is a close relationship between the modelling of the head of Saint James and that of the *Portrait of a Young Man* in the Metropolitan Museum. Likewise, it is not hard to find analogies in Biagio's œuvre for the facial type of the angels or the way light is treated on the hair. However, the manner in which the Budapest work unites strongly individualized yet statuesque figures, an inlaid floor depicted in perspective, *all'antica* architecture and Mediterranean trees within an imposing and monumental whole is without parallel among the stylistically and qualitatively diverse material assembled by Bartoli. The entire spirit of the work is alien to Biagio, even if, with the design of the composition and a series of cartoons in his hands, he must have been largely responsible for its execution. All four male saints embody a humanistic image of mankind: the firmness of their faith is the firmness of their own forged characters. This spirit of Pico della Mirandola, in such a concentrated form, appears in no other known work of Biagio d'Antonio.

DÓRA SALLAY AND VILMOS TÁTRAI

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7 Andrea del Verrocchio and workshop (with Leonardo da Vinci's contribution) | Florence, 1435 – Venice, 1488

## *The Battle of Pydna*

ca. 1475

Tempera on panel; 51 × 159 cm
Musée Jacquemart-André, Institut de France, Paris, inv. MJAP-P1822-2

It has been long known that this *cassone* panel was purchased, together with its pair, *The Triumph of Aemilius Paulus,* by Nélie Jacquemart in Rome in 1889. Thanks to Luciano Bellosi's research, we now also know that the *cassoni* earlier belonged to the Castellani collection, which boasted numerous outstanding paintings. The two panels have been exhibited in the rooms of Nélie Jacquemart's "Italian museum" since its opening, and Emile Bertaux, the first conservator of the museum recorded them in his inventory in 1913. At the end of the Second World War they were taken into storage where they remained until 2000, when they were restored and studied, and finally exhibited as the major new finds of the exhibition entitled *Primitifs italiens*. This clearly shows how much the assessment of the two panels changed in just a few years.

While the pictures were attributed to Pollaiuolo in the Castellani collection, in the Jacquemart-André collection they were catalogued under a more generic attribution, that of the Florentine school of the fifteenth century. Schubring was the first to discuss their function and iconography in his book of 1923: he established that the pictures were *cassone* panels. *Cassoni* are dowry chests presented as wedding gifts, in this instance for a member of the Mannelli family whose coat of arms can be seen in the painting (a field gules with a charge of three parallel swords pointing downwards; Spreti ed. 1928–1936, IV [1931], 317). Schubring identified the panels as depicting two episodes from the history of the Roman commander Lucius Aemilius Paulus in the second century BCE, specifically the battle of Pydna, which decided the outcome of the third Macedonian war, and the triumphal march of Aemilius Paulus. The two scenes were inspired by Petrarch's *Trionfi* and are set in Florence of the second half of the fifteenth century. In this regard it is worth noting that the picture is one of the very few works that depict a subject from classical antiquity in the Jacquemart-André museum. Schubring's assertions were never questioned afterwards; only the commissioner (or commissioners) of the chests was identified with greater precision. The attribution, however, has changed considerably.

In 1941 Mesnil was the first to propose that one of Verrocchio's great pupils, Botticelli may have participated in the execution of the picture. Subsequently, the attribution to Verrocchio's workshop gained prominence. In 1957 Gamba supported his view but suggested that Leonardo, rather than Botticelli, had contributed to the panels. Later Fahy (1973, written communication) proposed the name of Filippino Lippi, which, however, Laclotte refused to accept. Finally, in 1975, Bellosi advanced the hypothesis that Verrocchio himself painted the panels (oral communication, see Blondel 1975) which he reasserted in a publication in 2002. Since then Bellosi's view has gained acceptance.

All of this hesitation is interesting, and points not to any aleatoric nature in the historical discipline, but rather to the organization of Verrocchio's workshop and his role as a painter. Scholars had underestimated his activity as a painter until Konrad Oberhuber's study in 1978 (Oberhuber 1978), which began not only to reconstruct his pictorial œuvre but also to acknowledge the presence of the many highly gifted apprentices in his workshop: Perugino, Botticelli, and Leonardo da Vinci, among others. His workshop was in fact a sizeable "production unit" where the master had every possible means at his disposal to satisfy his numerous commissions in architecture, sculpture, jewellery and painting, in various forms of artistic expression. It is in this context that we have to examine the two *cassone* panels of the Jacquemart-André collection, which were originally embellished with gold and silver leaves. They were produced in the workshop under the direction of the master and involving several of his assistants. Bellosi has given an excellent description of the youthful virtuosity of these two panels, and the many influences they convey, such as that of Netherlandish art (mediated, in fact, by the Pollaiuolo brothers). In particular he called attention to the "atmospheric" background, unusual for this period, far removed from the Florentine tradition, but all the more characteristic of the young Leonardo, seeking his own ways at that time. The two *cassone* panels are, therefore, documents of a rare moment around 1475 when, as Bellosi has suggested, radically innovative procedures were being experimented with in the melting pot of the "great workshop".

NICOLAS SAINTE FARE GARNOT

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8 Luca Signorelli | Cortona, ca. 1450 – Cortona, 1523

*Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Bernard of Clairvaux*

ca. 1492–1493

Oil on panel; diameter 111.5 cm
Galleria Corsini, Florence

As far as we know at present, the painting was first mentioned in 1850 when Gaetano Milanesi gave an exhaustive description of the picture kept "in the alcoved room overlooking the Arno" in the Palazzo Corsini in Florence, where it is still preserved. In his *Commentario alla Vita di Luca Signorelli* (Commentary on the life of L. S.) the scholar introduced the work as follows: "it is a tondo of about two and a half *braccia* in diameter, painted on wood, showing Our Lady seated, with the naked Christ Child in her lap, who turns to the right where a Benedictine saint can be seen on one knee with a book and a quill in his hand", later identified with the Cistercian Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, "and on the other side is Saint Jerome kneeling and unclothed" (Milanesi, in Vasari [1568] 1846–1870). Though several scholars doubt whether the painting is by Luca Signorelli and regard it a workshop product, it is more probable that the tondo was designed and also executed by the master himself. Signorelli was a highly successful artist at that time, and probably employed several assistants, but it seems very unlikely that they participated in the execution of this particular painting in any considerable manner.

Luca Signorelli learnt the rudiments of painting in and around Arezzo, perhaps from Piero della Francesca (for a summary of his formative years, see T. Henry, in Fornasari–Gentilini–Giannotti ed. 2008, 171–83), prior to his move to Florence, where he presumably entered Andrea del Verrocchio's workshop. He was one of the important painters recognized as "Florentine" (by birth or by education) who executed the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel at the beginning of the 1480s. After this assignment, Signorelli sojourned in several towns of Central Italy before receiving another major commission which further promoted his career: the painting of some frescoes and the altarpiece of the Bichi chapel in the church of Sant'Agostino in Siena, probably realized around 1488–1489 (cf. especially Seidel 1979; Seidel 1984).

The success of the works in the Bichi Chapel, but primarily the popularity of the painter's by then mature idiom (as well as his habit of accepting commissions in the most diverse localities in central Italy, which makes it rather difficult to reconstruct the early phase of his career), led to a new, successful and prolific Florentine period. It is to the environment of the Medici (and perhaps to Lorenzo de' Medici himself) that the *Court of Pan* (since destroyed, formerly Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum), the *Medici Madonna* in the Uffizi (included in the inventory drawn up on Lorenzo's death in 1492) and perhaps the tondo showing *The Holy Family with a Female Saint* in the Galleria Palatina in Palazzo Pitti can be connected. The Corsini tondo (of which there is a replica, perhaps not wholly autograph, in the Castel di Poggio in Fiesole, at the Fondazione Aida Baduel-Zamberletti) was painted in the period following the Siena altarpiece and, more particularly, the tondo in the Palazzo Pitti. Typical of Signorelli's distinctive style, the figures in the Corsini tondo are grandiose (reminiscent of a Sybil in the Bichi Chapel frescoes), but the scenery is reduced to "a thin line of wildflowers at the bottom of the panel" with "fragmentary glimpses of hills and a town visible through slivers of empty space between the figures" (L. Kanter, in Kanter–Henry 2001, 33). In all likelihood, when Signorelli was commissioned to paint a picture for private devotion (as were the tondi on religious themes), he simplified the complex compositions abounding in detail which he painted in the 1490s for the leading personages of Florence (including Lorenzo the Magnificent) and which were therefore highly successful. That the painting is Signorelli's autograph work is revealed by the outstanding quality of certain details, in particular the faces of the Virgin and of Saint Jerome, and by the structure of the ample and characteristic draperies.

NICOLETTA BALDINI

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9 SANDRO BOTTICELLI | Florence, 1445 – Florence, 1510

## *Saint Augustine in his Study*

ca. 1490–1494

Tempera on panel; 41 × 27 cm
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890 no. 1473

In this small gem Botticelli does not merely show Saint Augustine in his study; the artist captures the spirit of a scholar at work. In a moment of great concentration, Augustine gazes down at the book that he supports with one hand as he writes with the other using a quill pen. Two ink wells and another open book appear on the table, and a jumble of books are within reach of his right arm. On the floor lie scraps of paper, evidently previous drafts, and two old quills. Botticelli – described by Vasari as "being of a sophistical turn of mind" – indicates the very process involved in writing a book.

Botticelli devoted an unusual amount of attention to the setting, unusual in both its architecture and decorations. An arched opening leads into the saint's study, complete with a coffered barrel vault. The end lunette is decorated with the Madonna and Child, represented as if it were a stone tondo in relief, encircled with laurel. This appears in the upper part of the wall, above the cornice, thus providing a precious indication about how such objects were actually hung in the Renaissance. Outside of the study, and flanking the arch, Botticelli depicted two medallions with heads in relief, also with laurel moldings. These appear to be generic figures of rulers, perhaps indicating a contrast between the religious realm within the study and secular concerns without, though Lightbown has suggested they depict Arcadius and Honorius, the emperors of the East and West when Augustine was ordained as priest. Across the arch opening is a rod supporting a green curtain which Botticelli has pulled back to reveal this scene. For Renaissance viewers, this probably recalled the many altarpieces covered by curtains in churches.

The artist carefully depicted Saint Augustine's clothing. Here, but not in Botticelli's other three representations of the saint, he wears both the red cope of a bishop and cowl typical of the Augustinian Hermits. Most probably, as Lightbown suggested, the work was commissioned by a member of this religious order. The hermits promoted Augustine's duel roles as bishop and monk; in contrast, the Augustinian Canons argued that the saint should never be represented with a monk's cowl. In 1484, Pope Sixtus IV issued a bull that enjoined each side into absolute silence (Gill 2005, 34). About a decade later, Botticelli's patron took a stand in this debate, expressing himself through this painting.

In his 1568 biography of Filippo Lippi, Giorgio Vasari mentions that "in the possession of Bernardo Vecchietti … is a little picture by the same master of a Saint Augustine at his studies, which is most beautiful". Already in 1584, however, Raffaello Borghini writes in his *Il Riposo* about "a most beautiful" painting by Botticelli in the Vecchietti collection; most probably he refers to the present work, especially because he does not list any by Lippi. The attribution of this exquisite panel to Botticelli is accepted by all scholars; they also agree that it dates shortly after his representation of a similar subject in the predella for the San Marco altarpiece, executed in 1489–1490. In comparison to the earlier version, the present work stands out for two qualities: a meticulous and detailed style, and a plethora of details.

This work provided the model for a painting of *Saint Jerome in his Study* (El Paso) by Filippino Lippi – Filippo's son, and Botticelli's former student – as noted in an unpublished letter of 1950 by Roberto Longhi (J. Nelson, in Zambrano–Nelson 2004, 591). Filippino's work, probably painted in 1493–1495, and only slightly larger that Botticelli's, then provided the basis for several drawn, painted, and engraved copies. Both Botticelli and Filippino show the saint and his desk from below. This suggests that the paintings were intended to be hung slightly above eye level, perhaps for the studies of Florentine scholars.

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10 SANDRO BOTTICELLI | Florence, 1445 – Florence, 1510

## *Story of Virginia*

ca. 1500

Tempera on panel; 83 × 162 cm
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 58 MR 00002

Ever since his rediscovery in the late nineteenth century, Botticelli has been celebrated for his graceful paintings, especially those of beautiful women. This panel and its companion piece, the *Story of Lucretia* (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston), depicting rape and murder, show a completely different side of the artist. Many scholars make the reasonable association between these works and a passage in Giorgio Vasari's 1550 biography of Botticelli: "in via de' Servi, around a room in Giovanni Vespucci's house … Botticelli painted several pictures showing many beautiful and vivacious figures." Guidantonio Vespucci probably commissioned the panels for the marriage of his son Giovanni to Namicina Nerli in 1500; by then, the stories of Virginia and Lucretia were popular subjects for paintings in Renaissance bedrooms. The two Roman heroines who died to preserve their chaste reputations (cf. cat. 76) had been linked by Livy and Valerius Maximus as *exempla* of *pudicitia*.

Botticelli recounts the story of Virginia in four main scenes, set in a great basilica. On the left Marcus Claudius, a follower of Appius Claudius, attempts to abduct Virginia; in the upper centre, Appius Claudius as judge declares Virginia to be Marcus's slave; on the right, Virginia's father saves his daughter from a dishonorable fate by murdering her; and in the lower centre, Roman troops rise up against their corrupt leaders. The selection and placement of scenes in both this panel and its pendant strongly encourage a political reading of these paintings. They thus complement a literary tradition, represented by Livy and Boccaccio, who emphasized how the deaths of both Lucretia and Virginia led directly to rebellions against tyrants. Specifically, the Lucretia painting reflects the confiscation of Donatello's *David* and *Judith* statues from the collection of Piero de' Medici, just a year after the revolution that sent the tyrant into exile. The painting includes representation of a statue of David and a prominent relief depicting the life of Judith. These references would not have been lost on the Vespucci and Nerli families, who opposed Piero de' Medici. Lightbown, followed by most others, doubted if the pro-Medici Vespucci would commission an anti-Medici painting. In reality, according to a July 1496 account by Piero Parenti, Guidantonio Vespucci (and Tanai de' Nerli, Namicina's grandfather) belonged to the faction which supported the duke of Milan, not Piero de' Medici (Nelson 1996). In both the town square and private bedroom, Florentine art carried messages about the fall of Florence's first family.

Many have noted the close connection with Botticelli's paintings and two panels with the same subjects painted about twenty years earlier by Filippino Lippi, his former student (Nelson 2009). In their *Virginia* panels both artists adapt a tripartite organization, with the trial in the centre on the stairs, the abduction on the left, and the murder on the right. Several poses are very similar in the two works. One derives from a Roman sarcophagus: Virginia's father stands behind the girl, pulls back her hair, and prepares his sword, as she raises both arms. In the choice of scenes, the overall compositions, and many specific poses, the two representations of Lucretia evince more links between the paintings by Botticelli and Filippino. Most probably a patron in about 1480 approached Botticelli, who made several drawings. Perhaps he planned on working in collaboration with Filippino; conceivably Botticelli created a now lost version of the paintings. In either case, Filippino's stories of Virginia and Lucretia reflect some of Botticelli's ideas for these powerful and violent images, at the very time when Botticelli painted his most graceful and delicate works. About twenty years later, Botticelli himself elaborated on these ideas in his own panels for the Vespucci–Nerli wedding.

JONATHAN NELSON

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11 JACOPO DEL SELLAIO | Florence, 1442 – Florence, 1493

## *Saint John the Baptist*

ca. 1485

Tempera on canvas; 157 × 79.5 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 5957

The picture has long been correctly attributed to Jacopo del Sellaio, whose name derives from his father's occupation (*sellaio* = "saddler"). Sellaio was active in the second half of the fifteenth century as the head of a workshop which produced home furnishings, primarily nuptial chests, wall panels *(spalliere),* and pictures for private devotion. He painted few altarpieces; in a certain period he shared his workshop with Biagio d'Antonio, his colleague and business partner, and with the less known Filippo di Giuliano.

This picture represents Saint John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence. He stands in a rocky landscape, which indicates the desert to which he retreated for many years. He wears a camel hair garment and a red cloak, and has his traditional attributes: the banderole, the reed cross and, in the foreground at the bottom, the vessel. The saint is pointing to the bare trunk of a tree stripped of its branches, from the lower part of which protrudes an axe. These descriptive elements "allude to a notable passage of the saint's preaching, in which he prophesies that 'every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire'" (Matthew 3, 10; Luke 3, 9; cf. Boskovits 1968; Dalli Regoli 1994, 68). The theme of the "cutting down of trees", which can be retraced to Fra Filippo Lippi (Dalli Regoli 1994, 68), was revived and disseminated by Sellaio, who according to Giorgio Vasari had learnt the art of painting from none other than the Carmelite monk Lippi.

In all probability, the Budapest *Saint John the Baptist* painted on canvas originally functioned as a processional banner (Boskovits 1968; Pons, in *Moretti* 2003): it was presumably carried round the city on June 24, the feast day of the patron saint of Florence, or in the processions of the many confraternities which bore the saint's name (cf. Henderson 1994, 455–56). Jacopo del Sellaio was frequently employed by these Florentine confraternities, producing for them pious images arousing deep emotions. The face of the Budapest *Saint John the Baptist* radiates such spiritual tensions, and his gestures are so painful that, together with the didactically displayed attributes, they would have been in perfect harmony with the original destination of the painting: the milieu of a confraternity.

According to Miklós Boskovits (1968), the lean and elongated figure of the Baptist was inspired by a similar figure in Botticelli's *Saint Barnabas Altarpiece* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), which is datable to around 1485. This date then serves as a *terminus post quem* for the painting in question, which Boskovits associated with the "apocalyptic mood" at the end of the century which also characterized Savonarola's sermons.

In 2003 another *Saint John the Baptist* image on canvas attributable to Jacopo del Sellaio surfaced at Moretti art dealer's in Florence (Pons, in *Moretti* 2003). That work is smaller (89 × 70 cm) but it was presumably cut off at the bottom, thus its original size compares well with the picture in question. Furthermore, the motifs of the dried-out tree stripped of several branches and the rocky landscape also correlate. It seems reasonable to postulate that the canvas in Florence too originally served as a processional banner, and that its date of execution is very close to that of the Budapest painting.

NICOLETTA PONS

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12 FILIPPINO LIPPI | Prato, before 1457 – Florence, 1504

## *The Apparition of the Virgin to a Franciscan Friar Commended by Saint Anthony of Padua*

ca. 1475–1480

Egg tempera on poplar panel (cradled); 56.7 × 41.5 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1140

The panel was bought in Venice in 1894 from the art dealer Luigi Resimini by the curator of the museum, Károly Pulszky, who was travelling around Italy, buying pictures in an effort to improve Hungarian collections. Since then the attribution to Filippino Lippi has never been seriously questioned. In 1992, in preparation for the *Maestri e Botteghe* exhibition in Florence, the painting underwent a thorough restoration to remove several layers of yellowed and darkened varnish. Today the colours – especially the blue of the sky and the greens of the landscape – appear to be quite sharp and cold in comparison with Lippi's usual palette, and the painting lacks his characteristic harmony. Previous aggressive cleanings (undocumented, but perhaps performed when the panel was cradled) have left the Virgin's mantle severely abraded and have deprived the donor's head of volume, plasticity and definition, especially when it is compared with the head of Saint Anthony of Padua, whose strong psychological characterization and intensity of expression is a masterpiece among Florentine heads of this period.

The format of the little Madonna indicates that it was part of a small altar intended for domestic devotion. The presence of Saint Anthony, and the robe of the friar he commends, suggest that the painting was made for the cell of a friar, perhaps in a Franciscan convent (Penny, in *London* 1999). It is also possible – as Nicholas Penny proposed in 1999 – that the panel was commissioned by a relative of the friar.

The uncommon iconography has been studied by Miklós Boskovits (1968 and 2nd ed. 1978), Roberta Bartoli (in *Florence* 1992b), and Nicholas Penny (in *London* 1999). The Virgin and Child appear to be oversized not only in relation to Saint Anthony and the friar but also in relation to the general setting, and this, together with their elevation upon a soft and transparent throne of clouds, indicates that the subject of the painting is the apparition of the Virgin to Saint Anthony of Padua and the Franciscan. As Penny (in *London* 1999) observed, the "clean, oval outlines of her form are perhaps deliberately intended to suggest a mandorla", that is, the proper medieval convention for representing such a miracle.

The friar, whom it is not possible to identify, is very probably a portrait. It was still common, at the end of the fifteenth century, for a donor portrait to be set *in abisso,* or painted smaller than the holy figures, even in paintings of a larger format, such as altarpieces. The difference in scale is functional, clarifying the different roles of the figures and distinguishing the human from the sacred, and thus it need not be considered as an archaic device.

The difference in the colours of the Franciscan habits worn by the friar (grey) and Saint Anthony (brown) is noteworthy. However, as Joseph J. Rishel (1997) has pointed out, in the fifteenth century, firm rules for the colour of the Franciscan habit had not been established, and Saint Francis himself was portrayed wearing a black, grey or brown habit. Standardization only came into being with the establishment of the Capuchins in 1529.

The rapid and calligraphic painting of the trees on the right-hand side of the panel contrasts with the careful, minute treatment of the cypresses on the left and with the detailed definition of the grass spotted with little wild roses and pink and white daisies in the foreground, which makes this field similar to that in the Hermitage tondo and the one in the foreground in the *Allegory* once in the Rasini collection in Milan.

The type of the Virgin with her rather archaic veil owes much to Fra Filippo Lippi's example. A drawing with a female head by Filippino (Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1153E) shows how the young artist translated his father's invention into a more modern and naturalistic yet still quite iconic figure, a development which is paralleled by that of Botticelli in the 1470s.

Although a later date has sometimes been proposed, comparison with the drawing, which is in Filippino's early manner, as well as the closeness of the Virgin to the work of his father, make clear that the panel should be dated very early in Filippino's career. At this time, the painter was still strongly indebted, in both his inventions and his style, to his father's workshop, where he had been trained in the 1460s. However, he developed his own stylistic preferences, absorbing the new spacious and naturalistic view of landscape found in the Netherlandish paintings collected in Florence, and also attentive to the work – including the graphic work – of the young Leonardo.

PATRIZIA ZAMBRANO

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13 FILIPPINO LIPPI | Prato, before 1457 – Florence, 1504

*The Penitent Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*

ca. 1475–1480

Tempera on panel; 46.5 × 34.2 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1369

The subject of the penitent Saint Jerome enjoyed special favour in fifteenth-century Florentine art, and Axel Vécsey (in *Budapest* 2008) has given a comprehensive account of this in relation to the painting catalogued here. Saint Jerome, leaning on his crutch, kneels in the foreground. Behind him is a cave in the hillside that occupies more than half of the painting. He beats his chest with a stone, in front of a thin Crucifix that is supported by, and almost merged with, the trunk of the tree that rises vertically to our left. Hidden in the forest behind the saint, his attribute, the lion, is barely visible. In the distance, there is only a small and apparently deserted town. As Vilmos Tátrai has observed (2003), the concentrated setting provides no opportunity for developing a narrative, and no other episode is depicted. The same simplicity, focus and deep spirituality characterize Botticelli's *Saint Jerome* now in the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg (tempera, transferred to canvas, 45 × 26 cm, in my opinion earlier than 1495–1498), and the Uffizi's *Coronation* predella (1492).

Although we cannot exclude the possibility that the Budapest panel originally formed part of a predella, it appears far more likely that it served as a devotional image for a *camera* ("bedchamber"), as did many other similar small paintings, some of them enshrined by gilded wooden tabernacle frames.

The *Saint Jerome* was acquired, with the attribution to a fifteenth-century Tuscan painter, when Károly Pulszky, the director of the museum, was travelling around Italy, frantically buying for his gallery from the most important art dealers of the time, such as Emilio Costantini, Elia Volpi, Paolo Lunghi, and Achille Glisenti (*Budapest* 1988). Glisenti (1848–1906), from whom the present work was purchased, was educated as an artist, first in the Brera Academy in Milan, then in Vienna and Munich. He was also active as an art dealer in his native Brescia, in Florence, where he established a gallery, and in Venice, where he was in touch with another art dealer, Luigi Resimini, who also sold Old Master paintings to Pulszky in the same years.

The little panel remained for decades outside the circles of connoisseurship. Bernard Berenson (1909, 181; 1963, 196) assigned it and another *Saint Jerome* in the same collection (inv. 1221) to Jacopo del Sellaio. Miklós Boskovits in 1968 was the first modern scholar to associate the painting with Filippino Lippi's name and circle, proposing it should be regarded as a work produced inside the painter's "immediate environment", with a date around 1485. Later, in 1978, he fully recognized Filippino's authorship (Boskovits 1968, 2nd ed. 1978). Vécsey retains Filippino's name but with a question mark (in *Budapest* 2008). Recently (2008), Boskovits communicated to the Museum his belief in Lippi's authorship. David Alan Brown, who visited the museum in 2008, favoured an Umbrian master. An attribution to the Master of the Lathrop Tondo was advanced in 1978 by Massimo Ferretti. This artist, who was later identified as Michelangelo di Pietro Mencherini (active in Lucca 1490–1520), was formed under the influence of Filippino Lippi and Domenico Ghirlandaio and was associated with Amico Aspertini when the latter worked in Lucca between 1506 and 1510. Andrea Ugolini (1988) and Maurizia Tazartes (written communications to the Museum in 2001 and 2009) agreed with Ferretti's proposal.

No traces of gilding survive on the panel but it is possible that the many yellowish dots indicating grass and moss on the rocks of the cave are vestiges of the preliminaries for gilding. A magical skill is evident in the painting of the cave, where single, long, and continuous brush strokes establish, without revision, the structure of the rock, each line concluding abruptly and decisively at the edge of the slabs of stone. This very direct and accomplished technique recalls Filippino Lippi's Cherbourg *Pietà* and the *Adoration of the Magi* in London (National Gallery, inv. 1124). In all three panels we find the same compositional idea of the rocks enclosing and defining the sacred figures, and the stone, anfractuous yet soft, is rendered economically with a limited palette of brown, yellow and green.

Jerome's garment, with its long, loose folds, and the way they settle on the grass, is very similar to the white robe of the youngest king in the London *Adoration*, whose pose, in particular the arms, inclined head and fierce stare, are also very similar. These relationships suggest a date in the second part of the 1470s, and establish beyond question the attribution to Filippino.

PATRIZIA ZAMBRANO

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## 14 Domenico Ghirlandaio | Florence, 1449 – Florence, 1494

### *Saint Stephen Protomartyr*

ca. 1492–1494

Tempera on panel; 191 × 56 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 4914
Formerly inscribed at the top (removed before 1812): TORRENTIS LAPIDES STEPHANO MARTIRI INVICTISSIMO DVLCISSIME EXTITERVNT (With a torrent of stones they expelled the most unconquered, most sweet Stephen Martyr)
From the Cappella Maggiore, Santa Maria Novella, Florence

*Saint Stephen* formed part of the high altar in the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Giorgio Vasari ([1568] 1878–1885, III, 268) described the altarpiece as a free-standing, double-sided polyptych with a sumptuous frame. The central panels depicted the *Virgin and Child with Saints Dominic, Michael, John the Baptist, and John the Evangelist* (now Alte Pinakothek, Munich), which faced the nave, and *The Resurrection of Christ* (now Gemäldegalerie, Berlin), which faced the apse. *Saint Stephen* was to the right of the *Virgin and Child,* and a panel of *Saint Lawrence,* also in Munich, was to the left. Flanking the *Resurrection* were panels of *Saint Antoninus,* archbishop of Florence, and *Saint Vincent Ferrer* (both formerly Berlin). At the left side of the altarpiece was a panel of *Saint Catherine of Siena* (now Munich), and at the right *Saint Peter Martyr* (Magnani Collection, Reggio Emilia). The frame was in the form of a triumphal arch with free-standing columns. The entablature supported a lunette, within which was a tabernacle of the sacrament in the form of a classical aedicule, and candelabra at either side. A predella was probably inserted between the pedestals of the columns (Holst 1969). Vasari described a scene of the *Disputation of Saint Stephen* beneath the *Saint Stephen* panel, but this panel, as well as the others that comprised the predella, has not been conclusively identified.

The altarpiece was the centrepiece of the main chapel whose decorations and furnishings were provided by Giovanni Tornabuoni (1428–1497), the Florentine banker and statesman who was the uncle of Lorenzo de' Medici. Giovanni commissioned Domenico and David Ghirlandaio to paint the walls of the chapel with scenes from the life of the Virgin and the life of Saint John the Baptist, his name saint. The contract was signed September 1, 1485, and describes the imagery in detail (Cadogan 2000, doc. no. 25). Also to be depicted on the window wall were Saints Peter Martyr, Dominic, Vincent Ferrer, Thomas Aquinas, Catherine of Siena, and Antoninus. This plan was not executed, because on October 13, 1486 Giovanni secured the patronage rights to the altar (Cadogan 2000, doc. no. 28). As a result the arrangement of the narratives was changed, and some of the saints planned for the window wall were transferred to the altarpiece. While the mural painting was completed by December 22, 1490, patronage rights to the high altar had yet to be exercised when Giovanni drew up his will on March 26 of the same year (Cadogan 2000, doc. no. 39). Giovanni's testament instructs his heirs to spend the generous sum of 500 florins on a "beautiful painted panel". The reason for the delay was undoubtedly competing claims on the patronage of the high altar by other families, but these difficulties must have been resolved by December 30, 1491, when payments for the frame, made by the woodworker Baccio d'Agnolo, began. The panels were probably painted after this date and were completed by the spring of 1494, just months after the death of Domenico on January 11, 1494 (Cadogan 2000, doc. no. 36).

The imagery of the altarpiece celebrates the Virgin, to whose Coronation the chapel was originally dedicated, patron saints of Giovanni and his family, and saints of the Dominican order (Hatfield 1996). The *Resurrection* on the main panel also visualizes Giovanni's hope for salvation through the intercession of the Virgin and saints, a theme entirely appropriate for a chapel in which he wished to be buried. Saint Stephen, along with Saint Lawrence, are the only non-Dominican of the standing saints depicted on the altar and the only ones not included in the plan outlined in the original contract. While the presence of Lawrence might be explained as honoring the name saint of Giovanni's only son and heir, it also alludes to Giovanni's ties to Lorenzo de' Medici. Saint Stephen is linked with Saint Lawrence as a deacon and proto-martyr, but he was also celebrated as an almsgiver and preacher, activities for which the Dominicans were renowned and to which Stephen's *Disputation* on the predella would refer. Both Lawrence and Stephen as martyrs were linked to Saint Peter Martyr and John the Baptist, depicted multiple times in the decoration. The inscription also highlighted Stephen's triumph over death, reiterating the theme of salvation.

Vasari relates that the altarpiece was unfinished at Domenico's death and completed by members of his workshop. *Saint Stephen* shows the distinctive tempera technique and touch of the master's own hand, especially in the saint's head, where long strokes made with the point of the brush create luminous tones. It must have been among the first panels to have been painted. Other parts of the altarpiece were done in a mixed technique, with the addition of oil, laid down with broader, blended strokes, signaling the intervention of the workshop.

JEAN CADOGAN

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## 15 Domenico Ghirlandaio (?) and workshop | Florence, 1449 – Florence, 1494

### *Saint John the Evangelist on the Island of Patmos*

ca. 1480–1485

Tempera on panel; diam. 75.5 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1208
Inscription in the book: APOCALIPS[is] / · YHS · XV; inscription on the scroll: ·IN PRINCIPIO·ERAT·VERB[vm]

Since its purchase in Florence in 1894, this painting has raised several questions that remain unsettled. Tondos, a genre favoured chiefly in fifteenth-century Florence, usually have multi-figure compositions. The present work is therefore more or less unparalleled in Florentine quattrocento panel painting, and analogies must be searched for in other genres, such as the terracotta reliefs produced by the Della Robbia workshop. Closest to the Budapest painting is a *Saint Augustine* tondo of around the same time and size (Andrea della Robbia, ca. 1490, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid). At the same time, some of Ghirlandaio's frescoes may also be considered as pictorial prototypes (vault of the Chapel of Santa Fina, Collegiata, San Gimignano).

There is no doubt about the subject of the Budapest tondo, yet it is rather peculiar from the iconographic point of view. Absorbed in thought, the young Saint John is about to write the Book of Revelations in a leather-bound codex held in his left hand. The apostle sits on the island of Patmos surrounded by the sea but, contrary to iconographic tradition, the vision itself is not shown. The eagle at his side and the banderole unrolling from his left hand, inscribed with the first words of his gospel, confirm that the theme is not the vision but a representation of Saint John as biblical author. At the same time the hypothesis that the tondo belonged to a series of the four evangelists (Olson 2000) can be ruled out: in that case John would be represented as the author of his gospel and not of the Revelations. The picture is far more likely to have been made as an independent work for private devotion, and the saint was perhaps the commissioner's personal patron or eponymous saint. It is this private function that may explain another iconographic peculiarity, the young age of John, since the distinctive, individualized face of the saint may have been a portrait of the client.

The attribution of the picture has remained unresolved. Barring certain isolated and usually refuted opinions (such as Longhi's attribution to Lorenzo Costa, see Longhi [1934–1955] 1975, 73, 228) scholars rightly agree that it was probably painted in Florence in the last decades of the fifteenth century, and that it is to some degree linked to Domenico Ghirlandaio's workshop or, rather, style. Though there are great differences in judging the extent of this relationship, the piece has almost never been considered as the master's autograph work. The name of Domenico's brother David Ghirlandaio has often been raised (Francovich 1930–1931, 140; Mravik 1983; Everett Fahy's written communication to the Szépművészeti Múzeum, 1985), but to judge from the now better-known œuvre of the latter, one must conclude that he did not reach the level of the best details of the Budapest tondo, and neither did Sebastiano Mainardi (proposed by Frizzoni), nor the Master of the St. Louis Madonna – later identified precisely as David Ghirlandaio – (Fahy 1967, 137, n. 34), nor the long-favoured Francesco Granacci (Venturi 1901–1940, IX/1 [1925], 481; Berenson 1963, I, 98; Pigler 1967). In his monograph Holst (1974) acknowledged that certain stylistic features resemble Granacci's – little-known – early works, but he rejected this attribution and returned to Venturi's proposal: Domenico Ghirlandaio's workshop (Venturi 1900b). Fahy also abandoned his earlier hypothesis and attributed the picture to an unidentified Florentine painter at the end of the fifteenth century (in *Florence* 1992a). Representing the other extreme, in a lecture Colin Eisler (see Tolnay 1966, 10) proposed the authorship of the young Michelangelo working in Ghirlandaio's workshop. Underlying this speculative and obviously untenable attribution proposal is the noteworthy idea that one should search for a name in Ghirlandaio's circle as worthy as the master himself. So far, however, not a single other work has been successfully associated with the Budapest tondo.

The quality of the picture seems uneven. The subtle modelling of the face, the realistic rendering of the wrinkles around the eyes and mouth remind one of Domenico Ghirlandaio's work in the first half of the 1480s, when, in no small measure under the influence of Netherlandish painting, he painted faces similar to that of Saint John in his multi-figural panels (including some hidden portraits). The drapery cast over the figure's left shoulder and covering his legs quite plausibly suggests the mass of the body underneath. In many details it repeats the formulae of the drapery studies of the Ghirlandaio workshop, yet it departs from their style in its graphic execution, which suggests Northern influences and, even more, that of Verrocchio's workshop. Some details, however, reveal the lack of painting routine, primarily the left hand's inorganic attachment to the body. In view of the above, it is possible to postulate that the picture was painted in Domenico Ghirlandaio's workshop, with the master's participation, in the early 1480s.

DÁNIEL PÓCS

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16 Bartolomeo Caporali | Documented in Perugia from 1442 – d. Perugia 1503–1505

*Virgin and Child*

ca. 1490

Detached fresco; 88 × 61 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1306

Damaged during removal and restored nine years ago, the fresco was first attributed to Caporali by Mario Salmi (1924, 667), and this attribution has been retained by all subsequent authors including Pigler (1967, 119) and Todini (1989, 49, fig. 828). This work by the Perugian master dates from over two decades later than the *Annunciation,* also exhibited, which originates from the church of San Domenico in Perugia (cat. 4). The style of the *Annunciation* was decisively influenced by Florentine Benozzo Gozzoli, while the *Virgin and Child* shows the painter's effort from the 1480s onwards to keep abreast of the new trend in Umbrian art, whose leading representatives were Perugino and Pinturicchio.

His bent for decoration urged Caporali to follow the latter of the two, Pinturicchio, while his attraction to Florentine painting sensitized him to the manner of imparting plasticity to details, a characteristic of Verrocchio's style presumably passed on to Caporali by Fiorenzo di Lorenzo. The clearly designed and strongly modelled forms of the heads and hands have the same decorative value as the buckle of the Virgin's belt, studded with pearls, the rose she holds with an elegant gesture, and the coral round the neck of the Christ Child, who wears a tunic. The symbolism of the latter two motifs is well known: the rose alludes to Mary's chastity whereas the coral is popularly believed to have the magic power to ward off evil. The parapet in the foreground on which the Infant stands, as well as the wall behind the Virgin and the landscape in the background meant to suggest perspective were clearly more effective when the work was intact and in its original (as yet unidentified) place. Károly Pulszky bought the fresco in Assisi from the art dealer Paolo Lunghi in 1895, together with an even more fragmentary *Madonna* fresco (inv. 1307). It was during a recent restoration that conservators András Heitler and Márta Kiss realized that the two paintings are actually two detached layers of one and the same fresco. According to Márta Kiss's written communication (May 16, 2009), the doubling of the fresco derived from the imperfect manner in which it was detached. During the delicate manoeuvre of *stacco* the lower part of the fresco came off with the underlying coat of plaster *(intonaco)* while the upper part was removed without the plaster layer, which remained in place. Enough pigment had already penetrated the wet *intonaco* to show a second, though fainter, *Virgin and Child*.

Both Caporali's work and the *Josaphat* fresco by a Lombardian master from Vincenzo Foppa's circle (cat. 18) belong to the Italian fresco collection, all items of which were purchased by Károly Pulszky, and which is now an internationally known part of the Old Masters' Gallery. The collection contains predominantly Lombardian and Umbrian works, the latter purchased by the director of the legal predecessor of the Szépművészeti Múzeum (the Országos Képtár or National Picture Gallery) in Perugia and Assisi. In addition to important fresco fragments from the first half of the Umbrian trecento, a fresco cycle of outstanding importance for the stylistic history and the iconography of the late trecento, Cola Petruccioli's allegorical series of Virtues and Vices was also brought to Budapest. The late Gothic cycle, more than half of which survives in satisfactory condition, comes from Palazzo Isidoro in Perugia and rightly deserves the attention accorded it by art historians (most recently: F. Mancini 1998; Fehér 2007; Dunlop 2009, 110–12). As for the Umbrian quattrocento, Bartolommeo da Miranda's and Bernardino Campilio's *Madonna* compositions are true curiosities, while outside Italy, only the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts preserves works by Jacopo Zabolino, active in the second half of the fifteenth century: the representations of Christ and the four evangelists. As Laura Pagnotta (2004) discovered, these originally adorned the walls of the Santa Catarina della Stelletta church in Spoleto.

VILMOS TÁTRAI

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17 ANDREA MANTEGNA | Isola di Carturo, 1430/1431 – Mantua, 1506

## *The Adoration of the Magi*

ca. 1495–1500

Distemper on linen; 54.6 × 70.7 cm
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, inv. 85. PA. 417

Although the picture is not recorded in any early document, there is general critical agreement that it was painted towards the end of Mantegna's long career as court artist to the marquesses of Mantua. Much of his work for the ruling Gonzaga dynasty, such as his fresco decoration of the Camera degli Sposi in the Palazzo Ducale, or his series of canvases depicting the *Triumph of Caesar* (Royal Collection, Hampton Court), was large in scale and secular in content; and ambitious projects of this kind offered ample scope for the painter's extraordinary compositional inventiveness and passionate engagement with the art of classical antiquity. The present work, by contrast, is small in scale and religious in content; and it is not certain whether it was painted for one of his courtly employers or for a foreign customer, or indeed, as a gift for a friend. Nevertheless, it likewise shows a highly original treatment of its subject, and it has been plausibly suggested that it was painted for Isabella d'Este, the consort of Marquis Francesco Gonzaga, and one of the most energetic and discerning art patrons of early Renaissance Italy (Ferino-Pagden, in *Vienna* 1994).

The subject of the Adoration of the Magi, based on the terse gospel account in Matthew (2, 11), was one of the most popular in all fifteenth-century art, especially for the opportunities it presented for the display of rich costumes and accessories, and of numerous subordinate figures, with horses and other animals in an extensive landscape. Mantegna, however, restricts his composition to just six figures – with the three magi on the right converging on the three members of the Holy Family on the left – which he shows in half length, and hence, too, in powerfully expressive close-up. The regal status and exotic origins of the magi remain obvious in the rich fabrics of their gowns and turbans, and in the luxurious character of their gifts: a cup of Chinese porcelain for the gold, and vessels of jasper and agate for the frankincense and myrrh. Yet these details are not allowed to detract attention from the human and religious drama, as the heads press together in awestruck worship of the tiny figure of the Christ Child. Similarly, the artist abolishes all reference to physical environment by setting the figures against a dark, neutral background.

More than four decades earlier, when still working as a young man in Padua, Mantegna had introduced this type of half-length devotional narrative into Italian painting with his *Presentation in the Temple* of ca. 1455 (Staatliche Museen, Berlin). In formulating the type he may have been influenced by devotional panels of a similar format imported from the Netherlands; but from the beginning, the effect of his own work was quite different, because of his deep interest in classical relief sculpture, and also because of his austere and intellectual temperament. In the present work the influence of antique sculpture is immediately evident in the toga-like drapery of the Christ Child, and more generally in the emphatically modelled forms, in the relief-like character of the composition, and in the hard, chiselled quality of the flesh and draperies. Mantegna's forms throughout his career are characterized by a hardness of contour, but here this is further heightened by his choice of the unusual and distinctive technique of distemper (glue size) on linen, which naturally favours a combination of crisp modelling and broad areas of intense but opaque colour (Carr 1997, 3–6). Pictorial handling and composition thus combine to enhance the effect of severity and permanence, and to evoke a mood of deep religious solemnity.

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## 18 Lombard painter
## *Josaphat*
1485

Fresco transferred to canvas; 60 × 60 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1082
Inscription: Josaphat avt. ge. Joram

This image of Josaphat is one of the twelve frescoes that the director of the National Picture Gallery, Károly Pulszky, purchased in Venice from art dealer Luigi Resimini in 1893. The series representing the Genealogy of Christ according to Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 1, 1–17) originally decorated the intrados of an arch in a chapel in Santa Maria delle Grazie in Bergamo, a fact first established by Mauro Natale (written communication, 1984, cf. *Summary Catalogue* 1991, 83) and later by Laura P. Gnaccolini (1996). The latter author quotes nineteenth-century sources which convincingly prove that the frescoes originate from the first chapel on the right side of the church, the whole building having been demolished around 1856. Gnaccolini also reproduces and comments upon four further pieces of the series already alluded to by Natale: *Aram, Jehoram,* and two frescoes from the vault showing the *Annunciation* and the *Adoration of the Shepherds* preserved – when the study was published – in a private collection in Stradella near Pavia. The *Jehoram* picture is particularly important as it bears the date 1485, and thus serves as a clue for the dating of the pieces in Budapest.

Mirror versions of six of the twelve frescoes also occur in a chapel of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Varallo, including the figure used for Josaphat, who appears in Varallo as the prophet Ezechias. The connection between the two series was recognized by Andor Pigler (1960) and attributed to the use of the same cartoons. Pigler accepted Noemi Gabrielli's (1956) hypothesis according to which the frescoes in Varallo are by Nicolò da Varallo, known primarily as a glass painter. Pigler extended this attribution to the Budapest series, hypothesizing at the same time that Gaudenzio Ferrari, who was just at the debut of his career, might have had a hand in the execution. The attribution of the frescoes has not been conclusively settled, but Gianni Carlo Sciolla (1966), who also supports Nicolò da Varallo's authorship, is certainly right in claiming that the fresco series from Bergamo (and now in Budapest) surpasses the Varallo series in quality and hence it is probably earlier.

The half-length figure of Christ's ancestor is depicted in a round window set in a square frame. This combination of painted architecture and figure is patterned on the ancient *imago clipeata* or shield portrait. The only element incompatible with the endeavour to classicize is the inscription written in Gothic rather than Roman letters. The geometry of the architecture appears to have influenced the design of the figure. The head and body of the bearded, long-haired Josaphat are presented so as to emphasize the sense of three-dimensional space. The pronounced modelling, now rounded, now angular, is an important element of the unidentified master's style, whose effectiveness is only slightly diminished by minor errors in the drawing of the hands and arms. Leaning out of the round window, Josaphat looks down at the congregation in the church; leaning on the frame with his right hand, he grasps with his left the edge of the pink toga worn over a yellow garment. All this, together with the foreshortened view of the window, serves to create the perfect illusion that captivates the viewer with its lifelikeness. The illusionism, geometry, and the link to a specific iconographic type of antiquity are closely connected to the influence that Vincenzo Foppa exerted upon the master – or, as Gnaccolini (1996, 131) reasonably suspects, the two masters – of the fresco decoration. However great the uncertainty regarding the attribution of the fresco series, it is certain that the painter's style was influenced by the idiom of Foppa, a defining exponent of the Lombardian early Renaissance.

VILMOS TÁTRAI

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## 19 Bolognese painter

## *Death of the Knight of Celano*

ca. 1475–1477

Tempera on poplar panel; 34.3 × 57.5 cm
Musei Civici, Pesaro, inv. gen. Polidori no. 4557

This picture, painted with impressive self-assurance in bright colours, shows a well-known episode in Saint Francis of Assisi's life: the pious knight of Celano invites Francis and his comrades to a dinner. Persuaded by the saint he confesses his sins. He then dies unexpectedly during the banquet and thus leaves this world in a state of grace (cf. Kaftal 1978, col. 341).

As regards its provenance, the panel is related to two others that were also once in the famous Hercolani Collection of Bologna. One of the latter two was later acquired by the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna (inv. 292), while the other one went, along with the picture in question, to the Musei Civici of Pesaro (inv. gen. Polidori no. 4556). In all probability, the three panels are identical with the works described as follows: "Three pictures painted on wood by Lambertini [i.e. Michele di Matteo], showing the miracles of Saint Anthony." This description is from the 1824 inventory of the collection listing the works inherited from Maria Malvezzi (cf. Ghelfi 2002, 16, 21). The fragment in Bologna shows *Nicolò da Ceprano Mortally Wounded, Praying to Saint Francis;* the other Pesaro piece shows the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis*. These two pictures are in the same style. Compared to the painting in question, their execution is more fluid and sketchy, the treatment of the contours is different, the rendering of the figures and the surrounding landscape is more naive, characterized by an unrealistic, parallel arrangement of the groups of rocks.

Passing over the difference in quality between the fragments, Filippini (1924, 186–87) was the first to propose that the three pictures might be parts of a predella mentioned in local sources as showing "three miracles of Saint Francis" and placed below Michele di Matteo's polyptych including gilded "triangular sections" *(a spartimenti piramidali)* on the altar of the Malvezzi family in San Giacomo Maggiore (Malvasia [1686] 1969, p. 83; Oretti ca. 1760–1780, p. 101). The unfounded attribution of the works to Michele di Matteo was quickly disproved and a long controversy began regarding not only the attribution but also whether or not the *Death of the Knight of Celano* – undoubtedly the finest piece of the three – belonged to the ensemble at all. Berenson brought the painting to the forefront of scholarship and after some vacillation, he attributed it tentatively to Francesco del Cossa (Berenson 1932, 155). All three paintings were on display at the famous exhibition of Renaissance painting in Ferrara in 1933, which immediately prompted Longhi to voice his counter-opinion ([1934–1955] 1956, 99, n. 76).

Dissociated from its companion pieces, this picture marked by a sophisticated spatial arrangement was later associated with the work of Angelo and Bartolomeo degli Erri on the basis of many intimate, homely details (Mauro Lucco's communication, see Negro, in Manni–Negro–Pirondini ed. 1989; Roio, in Giardini–Negro–Pirondini ed. 1993). Agreeing with this hypothesis, Tambini (1993, 113–14) pointed out that Angelo degli Erri's son Giorgio worked in Bologna from 1478, as did his grandson Annibale from 1490. There are regrettably no reliable data about the work in Bologna of the degli Erri family, and a thorough stylistic comparison of the present picture with their works painted in Modena does not seem to substantiate any connection apart from certain physiognomic similarities. However, to return to the more generic attribution to Cossa's workshop (Giardini, in *Pesaro* 1992) would also be misleading, for it would link the leading master of Ferrara to an idiom that incorporated the diversity of the rich cultural life of Bologna in the second half of the quattrocento in a different, more individual and complex manner, as revealed by the panel considered here and its companion pieces. Apart from inspiration from contemporary illuminations (the name of Martino da Modena has been mentioned), the painter seems to have been particularly influenced by Marco Zoppo (see Benati, in *Bologna* 2002) and by the followers and friends thereof – such as Tommaso Garelli, who painted the small saints in the Museo di Santo Stefano in Bologna – who shared a passion for the meticulous and at time irreverent rendering of figures and their surroundings.

Inspection reveals that the material and thickness of the support, as well as the ground and the size of the painted surface are identical for all three predella pictures. The continuous grain on the back of the panels in Pesaro determines the place of the *Death of the Knight of Celano* in the middle and the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* to the right. It can be confirmed therefore that the picture constituted the central section of a predella painted by two different hands in Bologna, most probably in the mid-1470s. Still unsettled, however, is whether this predella is identical with the one showing similar subjects that documents record at the base of the altarpiece in the church of San Giacomo, for that one – to judge from the descriptions – would have been too archaic to be easily reconciled with this vivid representation.

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20 Giovanni Bellini | Venice, ca. 1435–1438 (?) – Venice, 1516

## *The Dead Christ with the Virgin and Saint John*

ca. 1460–1465

Tempera on panel; 44 × 34 cm
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 81 LC 00138
Signed on the parapet: IOHANNES • B •

The image of the dead Christ accompanied by mourners was one that preoccupied Giovanni Bellini throughout his long career, but especially in the earlier phase, before about 1480. Sometimes these images formed part of public altarpieces, but more often, as here, they were clearly destined for private devotion, and were meant to be contemplated in the intimacy of the study or bedroom. The present picture is universally regarded as an early work, painted under the influence of his brother-in-law Mantegna, as is evident in the sharply delineated outlines. Infrared reflectography has revealed (but as is also evident to the naked eye in areas where the paint has become transparent, as in Christ's flesh) that the artist similarly made a very precise underdrawing, in which he modelled form with short, diagonal, parallel hatchings. He also employed the traditional medium of egg tempera, and applied shell gold in the haloes and other ornamental details. Given the uncertainty that still surrounds Bellini's birthdate, a wide spectrum of datings for the picture within the early Mantegnesque phase has been suggested, ranging from ca. 1450 to as late as ca. 1470. On the assumption, however, that he was born about 1435–1538, it seems reasonable to date the picture to the earlier 1460s: that is, to a moment close to the relatively cramped, planar and tentative style of the *Transfiguration* (Museo Correr, Venice). At the same time, details such as the curling tendrils of the hair are treated with the utmost refinement, and the picture provides a beautifully balanced design of shapes and colours.

The figure of Christ corresponds to the iconographical type known as the "Man of Sorrows". In other words, he is represented in a timeless, symbolic way in half length, with his arms crossed in front of him; he is naked except for his loincloth, wears the Crown of Thorns, and displays the wounds of the Crucifixion; his eyes are closed and his lips show a deathly pallor; and yet, miraculously, he stands upright. This iconography was brought to Venice by the many Byzantine icons imported into the city, and was well established in Venetian painting by the early fourteenth century; and despite his modern, Mantegnesque figure style, Bellini deliberately sets out to evoke this Byzantine tradition with the dark, spaceless background, and with the Greek lettering at the top, indicating the figures' names. The addition of the figures of the Virgin and Saint John the Evangelist to that of the Man of Sorrows was also well established in Venetian painting, and these two were obviously chosen because they are mentioned in the gospels as standing beside Christ on the Cross, and they regularly appear in post-Crucifixion scenes such as the Entombment. The foreground ledge bearing the painter's signature, while serving as a naturalistic explanation of the truncation of the figures at waist length, similarly hints at the sarcophagus in which Christ is to be buried. These narrative associations lend the timeless image of the Man of Sorrows a greater emotional impact, especially since Bellini packs all three figures into a tightly confined space, and brings them right up to the picture plane, so that the pious spectator is directly confronted with the sufferings of the Saviour and with the grief of his mother and beloved disciple. While Mary and John weep tears from their reddened eyes, the latter looks out towards the spectator in explicit appeal to share the bitterness of their grief.

PETER HUMFREY

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IOHANNES·B·

21 GIOVANNI BELLINI | Venice, ca. 1435–1438 (?) – Venice, 1516

## *Angel of the Annunciation*
## *Virgin Annunciate*

ca. 1489–1490

Oil (and tempera?) on canvas; 224.5 × 107 cm
Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, inv. 734
From the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice

The two canvases originally decorated the exterior of the organ shutters of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, so that together they showed a continuous scene of the Annunciation when the shutters were closed. When open, the shutters showed the figures of Saint Peter and Saint Paul standing like statues in niches on either side of the organ pipes; the *Peter* is likewise now in the Accademia, but the *Paul* is lost. The revetment of Peter's niche in different-coloured marbles, with cream slabs divided by coloured bands, is repeated on the walls of the Virgin's bedchamber, and it directly echoes the exceptionally lavish marble decoration of the little church of the Miracoli, both inside and out. The ornamentation of the Virgin's prie-dieu and the canopy of her bed similarly echo the niello decoration of the tabernacle on the high altar containing the miracle-working image of the Virgin after which the church was named (Howard 2004).

The church was built between 1481 and 1489 by one of the leading Venetian architect-sculptors of the early Renaissance, Pietro Lombardo, and the organ was originally placed high on the left (north) wall. While it is unlikely that the organ was installed and the shutters painted before the completion of the building, there is good circumstantial evidence to suppose that the *Annunciation* was already painted by 1490, and certainly by 1495, when it is reflected in similar compositions by Cima and Carpaccio.

Bellini's authorship of the shutters is not attested by any document or early source, and in the past it has often been questioned, largely because the figure and drapery style is surprisingly different from that of two dated masterpieces of 1488, including the triptych in the sacristy of the Frari. But the exceptionally high quality of the execution precludes an attribution to any of Bellini's followers, and the reason for the distinctive style and design may be found rather in the subject and context. The Frari triptych, like virtually all Bellini's other surviving works, is contemplative in mood and static and centralized in composition, in keeping with its devotional function. The *Annunciation,* by contrast, shows a narrative scene, and the swift advance of the Angel through the doorway towards the kneeling Virgin is complemented by the asymmetrical composition, with the vanishing point of the perspective located at the extreme right edge. The forward movement from left to right (which originally corresponded to that of the worshipper moving down the nave towards the miraculous Marian image) is given further impetus by the flood of light that accompanies the Angel's advance, and by the flutter of his wind-filled draperies. Although the figures occupy a perspectivally-described box-space, and there is an enticing view through the window towards a distant, luminous landscape, the effect of movement across the surface rather than into depth is yet further emphasized by the representation of the figures in strict profile, and the schematic planarity of the prie-dieu and the Virgin's bed. It may be that the style of the *Annunciation* would seem less exceptional in Bellini's œuvre if the various narrative canvases he painted in the Doge's Palace from 1479 onwards had survived a devastating fire of 1577.

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22 Bartolomeo Montagna | Vicenza (?), ca. 1449 – Vicenza, 1523

## *Virgin and Child under a Pergola with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Onofrius*

ca. 1488–1489

Oil on canvas (transferred from wood); 195.7 × 160 cm
Pinacoteca Civica di Palazzo Chiericati, Direzione Musei Civici, Vicenza, inv. A 2
Signed on the *cartellino* on the rock under the Virgin's feet: OPUS BARTHOLOMEI M.
From the church of San Michele in Vicenza

The Musei Civici in Vicenza holds a photographic plate showing the picture on its original support, before it was transferred to canvas between 1908 and 1910. Even though it was blackened by years of grime, the surface had a highly textured quality, and the sharp-contoured details were clearly visible, from the craggy landscape to the wild-looking Onofrius and the elaborate folds of the Virgin's robe. The aggressive cleaning carried out by Giuseppe Pedrocco in 1964 has defoliated the greenery, erased a few clouds off the horizon, softened the hard contours and the sharp details of landscape, partly removed the azurite and lapis lazuli layers from the Virgin's mantle, ruining its lively folds, and eliminated the highlights of her damask dress and the pattern of the cloth of honour behind her.

The painting was originally on the third altar on the left in San Michele in Vicenza, a church under the patronage of the da Costozza family and demolished in 1812. There were two other paintings in the church by Bartolomeo Montagna: a picture of Saint Onofrius, now lost, which Marco Boschini ([1676] 2000, 216) recorded to the left of this picture (it is interesting to have had two depictions of the same saint in the same place – the self-standing one may have been commissioned by the distinguished Dyers' Guild whose patron saint was Onofrius) and the so-called *Squarzi Altarpiece* (dated 1499, and now in the Brera in Milan) on the same side, but on the first altar from the entrance. It was to this latter painting that Borenius (1909, 41) connected the work under discussion, arguing that it "looks like a preliminary stage of this Brera pala". The Brera panel, however, differs considerably from the masterly simplicity of the work in Vicenza in its insistence on minute detail.

The picture is characterized by an impressive harmony between the bony plasticity of the figures' bodies and the grim, reddish brown shades of their skin. The throne seems to have been carved out of the rock; the canopy, held up by thin saplings, awakens in the viewer the solemn calm of the sacred. The harsh, pure light shining on Onofrius – a sort of *homo selvaticus* – masterfully counterpoises the transparency of the intense colours of the Virgin's dress. This transparency is made possible by the artist's brilliant technique: he applied a thin layer of lapis lazuli in only a few places over the thick coat of azurite, and thus achieved *cangiante* effects similar to those on the pink lining of the cloak or on the orange dress.

Trained "in civitate Venetiarum" between 1469 and 1474, Montagna became one of the most outstanding painters of his time with this work and that immediately preceding it, *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child with Saint Monica and Mary Magdalene* (ca. 1485–1486, Pinacoteca Civica di Palazzo Chiericati, Vicenza). The lyricism of these pictures must have been suggested by Giovanni Bellini's *Transfiguration* (today Museo di Capodimonte, Naples), which had adorned the Fioccardo Chapel in Vicenza Cathedral since 1480, a painting characterized by the perfect harmony of man and his environment, and the human approach to a transcendental theme.

The careful execution of this painting, dating from the end of the 1480s, heralds the large-scale formal experiments of the following decade that began with the altarpiece executed in 1490 for the Certosa in Pavia. During this period, an individual method of underdrawing assumed a crucial structural role in Montagna's formal idiom; initially he merely softly indicated the contours of the figures, and later employed dense, irregular hatching within the forms, meticulously marking out all of the shady areas. This kind of underdrawing was in keeping with Montagna's efforts to achieve plasticity, which during these years encouraged him to construct the volumes of his figures graphically. In the course of the 1490s this led to an emphatic, rock-solid formal stability in his painting and a solid system of chiaroscuro comparable to the art of the inlay-maker Pietro Antonio degli Abati.

It cannot be doubted, however, that the emotional elevation of this work, the silent dialogue of the group at home in the barren landscape of stratiform trachyte that renders even humans and plants stony, all have a powerful effect on the viewer. Drawing on Antonello da Messina and Giovanni Bellini, the young Bartolomeo had by this time developed a formal idiom of his own, which would make him for at least a decade the third protagonist on the scene of Venetian painting.

GIOVANNI C. F. VILLA

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23 Workshop of Cima da Conegliano (Giovanni Battista Cima) | Conegliano, 1459/1460 – Conegliano, 1517/1518

## *The Penitent Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*

ca. 1495

Oil on panel; 70.4 × 99.3 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1242
Fragmentary inscription bottom right on the *cartellino:* MARCVS BAXAITI F.

Barring some minor modifications, the painting is an accurate copy of a picture by Cima da Conegliano now in the collection of the earl of Harewood, at Harewood House, Yorkshire. In the 1950s the relation of the two works prompted scholars, who considered the signature in the Budapest piece as authentic, to assume that Basaiti was Cima da Conegliano's pupil, even though Giovanni Morelli had already judged the signature to be forged in 1865 (see Brambilla Ranise 2007, 83). From the general wear of the whole surface it was concluded that the repainting mentioned by nineteenth-century sources had already been removed during an undocumented intervention; this opinion was supported by the microscopic examination of the signature which appeared to corroborate its authenticity.

In order to rule out any uncertainty, a new reflectographic examination was carried out in January 2009. Infrared light did not reveal any visible underdrawing under the paint layer. Nor can any trace of the signature can be read, which would seem to indicate that it is forged. The result corresponds to the observation made on various occasions: that Cima da Conegliano used iron gall ink for the underdrawing which cannot be detected by infrared light (contrary to ink containing carbon). For the sake of comparison Basaiti's *Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 103) was also examined. As expected in view of other works by the painter, the lines of the underdrawing were clearly visible in this piece. From this it follows logically that the Budapest *Saint Jerome,* since it was made with the technique mentioned, originates from Cima da Conegliano's workshop as a subsequent version of the one now in the Harewood Collection, and not from Basaiti, who worked with quite a different technique.

Saint Jerome is shown as a penitent in the wilderness rather than as a scholar in his study. The transfer from the dignified realm of scholarship into the symbolic and literary bareness of primordial nature has already been examined (Russo 1987). Nevertheless, it must be added that it fits in well with a more universal phenomenon: the delight taken in the beauty of the visible world, which permeated the entire second half of the fifteenth century. In the Veneto, the discovery of the wonders of the created world is discernible especially in the poetic landscapes of two extraordinary masters, Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano.

Although it was a customary requirement for painters "to imitate nature", the more perceptive amongst them were fully aware that to create art was to intervene, to graft a structure upon the crude facts of the visible world. Thus it is that, although several "real" details (the outline of a mountain, a typical building of a city) can be identified in many paintings, there is not a single quattrocento landscape that has become the real "portrait" of the given place. This holds true for the painting in question too: the assemblage of rocky outcrops, plains, the sea, the pond, the brooks, clouds, caves, castles, villages, the flora and fauna – all united by a crystalline transparent light – constitute a sort of "pattern-book" of the universe.

The picture can be presumed to have been painted immediately after the prototype in the Harewood Collection, that is, around 1495.

MAURO LUCCO

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## 24 Cima da Conegliano (Giovanni Battista Cima) | Conegliano, 1459/1460 – Conegliano, 1517/1518

*David and Jonathan*

ca. 1505–1510

Oil on panel; 40.6 × 39.4 cm
The National Gallery, Salting Bequest, 1910, London, inv. NG2505

In the nineteenth century, this picture was probably in Naples, in the Modici collection. It was bought in Italy in 1898 by George Salting for "750 [pounds] only". In 1915 Adolfo Venturi erroneously thought the picture to be still in the collection of the Florentine dealer Elia Volpi, who may well have been its previous owner.

Always considered a work by Cima da Conegliano, it has usually been dated relatively late in his career. Since it was first exhibited in London in 1902, the subject of this picture has been recognized as that of David and Jonathan, one which is extremely unusual in Italian Renaissance painting. It was probably painted for a private patron with a special intellectual or emotional interest in this subject.

The story of the friendship between David and Jonathan is told in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 18; cf. Morgenstern 1959). Jonathan, the eldest son of King Saul, strongly admired David, son of Jesse. Jonathan "loved him as his own soul", and wanted David to become King of Israel, even though he was himself the legitimate successor. David however was hated by Saul, and, assisted by Jonathan, defeated Saul and thus became king of Israel. Cima tells this story with great sensitivity and particular subtlety in his description of the dynamic between the two figures. Apparently he has sought to define their characters following clues in the Bible as faithfully as possible.

Thus, we see David on the left, intrepid and determined, and, on the right, Jonathan, gazing at David with great admiration. The two walking figures are placed in the near foreground, within a sort of illuminated stage, and with a background that thus seems both theatrical and natural. A wide, peaceful valley, shaped by the river flowing through it, is "framed" on the left by a castle perched on a cliff, and on the right by a little walled town above which looms a great blue mountain. In his right hand, David is holding the head of Goliath, the Philistine giant he defeated using only his slingshot, visible hanging from his belt. In the other hand, he holds the long sword with which he decapitated the giant. Jonathan is rather taller than David and carries a long – allegorical – arrow (not a spear, as it is often described) over his right shoulder: he is characterized in the Bible as a man of great strength, and was also famous for his excellence in the arts of war, in particular, as a champion of archery.

Cima constructs the emotional relationship between the two figures not just from the biblical text, but also from the other iconographical sources. Since the representation of David and Jonathan was not common in the fifteenth century, the painter had to adapt compositions of a different nature. It has been pointed out (Braham 1975, 366–67) that the composition is rather like that of Tobias and the archangel Raphael, but with the fish hanging from Tobias's hand replaced by Goliath's head. Cima himself depicted this subject in a painting now at the Accademia, Venice (inv. 592). Coletti noted the connection between the two pictures.

The combined poses of David and Jonathan are also similar to those of Saints Peter and Lawrence in the left wing of Cima's San Fior di Sopra polyptych. This work is datable to ca. 1507–1508 (Ballarin 1962, 485), and the London panel appears to be very close in date. There are also striking similarities between the position of the legs of Jonathan and that of a *Saint Sebastian* in the left panel of Cima's dismembered Mestre triptych, now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg (inv. 206). Thus we see how Cima in his *David and Jonathan* visually re-used his own earlier compositional experiments, and adapted them to the biblical text. Also very close in date to the London picture are the beautiful tondi at the Galleria Nazionale in Parma (inv. 370, 373), depicting *Endymion Asleep* and the *Judgement of Midas*. Endymion indeed wears the same *all'antica* "skirt" as Jonathan.

Cima's career is very unusual. He was born in a small town, Conegliano, in the territory of the "Serenissima", the Republic of Venice, achieving great fame and success in the capital. He followed his personal interest in landscape painting, constantly repeating in the background of his paintings views of his native town Conegliano and the Trevisan hills. He was not an innovator, but in his "pastoral" mood and sensitivity for the natural world has been a sort of precursor of the new, pagan concept of landscape brought by Giorgione. Cima belonged to a generation that is often defined as "proto-classical". In this respect, it is emblematic of generational and stylistic change that Cima died probably in the same year as Titian's display of his revolutionary *Assunta,* in the Venetian church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari.

ANTONIO MAZZOTTA

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25 VITTORE CARPACCIO | Venice, ca. 1465 – Venice, 1525/1526

## *The Visitation*

ca. 1504–1506

Oil on canvas; 128 × 137 cm
Galleria Franchetti, Ca' d'Oro, Venice, inv. 215
From the Scuola di Santa Maria degli Albanesi, Venice

By the end of the 1490s Carpaccio was recognized as the leading painter of narrative cycles in Venice. In this capacity he was employed chiefly by the *scuole,* or devotional confraternities for laymen, several of which commissioned from him cycles to decorate their meeting-houses. The present canvas was commissioned by Scuola degli Albanesi, formed in 1442 for the benefit of the Albanian community in the city, and it originally belonged to a series of six representing scenes from the life of the Virgin, the scuola's patron saint. The paintings were removed from their original location in 1808, and are now dispersed between the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, the Brera in Milan, and the Ca' d'Oro in Venice. The commission is not documented, and only one of the paintings is inscribed with a date – the *Annunciation* of 1504, likewise now in the Ca' d'Oro – but there are good circumstantial reasons to believe that Carpaccio began the series soon after 1502, and that the execution of the *Visitation* followed immediately after that of the *Annunciation*.

The subject is taken from the gospel of Luke (1, 36–45). The angel Gabriel had already given the Virgin the news that her aged cousin Elizabeth was, by virtue of a miracle, six months pregnant; and Mary accordingly went to visit her. As the two women embraced, the unborn John the Baptist leaped with joy in his mother's womb. The two elderly men on either side of the central figure group are presumably meant to be the respective spouses of the cousins: Joseph, crouching on a tree trunk to the left; and Zacharias, leaning against a fragment of antique architecture to the right.

In his representation of buildings and accessories, Carpaccio adopts a characteristic mixture of specific allusion and poetic imagination The turbaned figures in the middleground, the displays of oriental rugs on the balconies, the palm trees, and the minaret-like towers in the left background, all reflect a widespread Venetian interest in the Near East in this period; and by including them, Carpaccio clearly also intended to evoke the specific flavour of the Holy Land. The marble-clad buildings in the middleground are more obviously inspired by the contemporary Venetian architecture of Pietro Lombardo and Mauro Codussi. Yet even they do not correspond to any real buildings, or even to possible types of architecture, and are similarly designed in a spirit of free fantasy. Although it is usually assumed that the various animals and birds that populate the foreground carry some symbolic meaning, there is no critical consensus about what precisely this is. Does the red parrot, for example, allude to the future eloquence of the unborn Baptist, or to the angelic salutation of Ave Maria? Or was it inserted for mainly decorative reasons, and to add a further note of exoticism?

Carpaccio, in any case, was certainly a painter with a very pronounced decorative sense. Despite his mastery of geometric perspective and naturalistic recession, he reasserts the surface of his canvas through the use of repeating patches of strong colour. As is appropriate to her central importance, the Virgin wears a cloak of intense blue that does not recur elsewhere, but the other principal colours – notably reds and orange-yellows – are distributed evenly across the surface, uniting foreground and background. Colour was also the principal means by which the painter united the *Visitation* with its five original companion-pieces.

PETER HUMFREY

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## 26 Vincenzo Catena | Venice, ca. 1480 – Venice, 1530

### *The Holy Family with a Female Saint*

ca. 1498–1500

Oil (?) on panel; 66 × 96.2 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 78
Signed on the banderole in the right hand of the female saint: VIZENZO. C. P

Once in the collection of János László Pyrker, archbishop of Eger and patriarch of Venice between 1820 and 1827, the painting was given to the Nemzeti Múzeum (National Museum) in Pest in 1836, and from there it went on to the legal predecessor of the Szépművészeti Múzeum, the Országos Képtár (National Picture Gallery). Despite many minor retouchings all over the surface, it has preserved its wonderful original colours. The composition clearly derives from the devotional pictures of the Bellini school from around the late fifteenth century and first decade of the sixteenth century.

Vincenzo Catena was probably the son of the Dalmatian Biagio. During his training he came into contact with the statuesque painting of Alvise Vivarini, a mediator of Antonello da Messina's style, and followed the example of Cima da Conegliano with respect to his palette. Most crucial for him was, however, the influence of Giovanni Bellini, even in matters of working procedure and the management of the workshop. Indeed, Catena's early works seem to be constant variations on Bellini's *sacre conversazioni*. The Budapest painting is a case in point. The juxtaposition of the individual figures – in a manner resembling an inlay – highlights the assembly of Bellinian prototypes with a procedure visible even to the naked eye: the underdrawing appears in places where the paint layer has become worn (cf. p. 92 in this volume). Take, for example, the figures of the Virgin and Child, where lines drawn in a dry medium containing charcoal can be clearly seen. Their structural rigidity betrays a transfer from a cartoon, a method that was useful in drawing the outlines of figures and the folds of drapery, and came to be used in Bellini's workshop in the mid-1480s.

Catena frequently reworked his master's models with little inventiveness, albeit with a very different emphasis compared to the orthodox pupils of Giovanni Bellini, such as Vittore Belliniano and Francesco Bissolo. He focused on the paint itself, creating glossy, enamel-like, monumental surfaces. The impression of the surfaces resembling polished, shiny marble is changed in the draperies by the light that creates pure chiaroscuro contrasts, while the hair of the female saint and Joseph's beard and hair have the appearance of carved wood. Detail is given remarkable attention throughout, such as in the very fine embroidery on the fringe of the Madonna's veil and the blue-tinted landscape that frames the figures.

The Budapest panel was probably painted at the turn of the century, when Catena employed his colouristic abilities to create works imbued with late-quattrocento culture. It is very closely related to two of his other works, a signed painting in the Art Institute of Chicago and a piece formerly in the Serego Alighieri Collection in Venice (Dal Pozzolo 2006, 93–94), and also to the *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Jerome* in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice.

This initial period adversely affected the reputation of Catena who for too long was considered to be an amateur painter, and there was more talk about his wealth – in his will he left 200 ducats to the school of painters in Venice – and his relations with the humanist and ecclesiastic circles of the age (from Pietro Bembo to Antonio Marsilio and from Giangiorgio Trissino to Marcantonio Michiel) than about his skills with the brush. Yet he received prestigious assignments very early on, including the doge's commission around 1505 to paint a small votive panel, today in the Museo Correr in Venice, depicting the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saint John the Baptist, Saint Mark, and Doge Leonardo Loredan*. The famous inscription on the back of a painting of Giorgione's known as *Laura* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) is a direct testimony of Catena's relationship with the great painters of his time, "1506. adj. primo zugno fo fatto questo de ma de maistro zorzi da chastel fra … cholega de maistro vizenzo chaena ad istanzia de mis giacmo …" ("On June 1, 1506, this was made by the hand of master Giorgio of Castelfranco, colleague of master Vincenzo Catena, at the request of master Giacomo"), as is a passage in his will referring to the "restelo di nogera con zerte figurete dentro depinte de mano de miser Zuan Belino" ("*restello* of walnut with certain little figures in it, painted by the hand of master Giovanni Bellini"). The images of this *restello* (a small, ornate dressing-mirror with hangers for combs and brushes) are probably identical with the allegorical depictions attributed to Bellini in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice.

From the 1520s onward Catena adopted the tone-painting innovations of Giorgione, Titian and Palma il Vecchio, and, owing to his personal connections, he rose to the ranks of an eminent painter, if not on account of his compositions, at least because of his sophisticated use of colour, as exemplified by one of his masterpieces, *The Martyrdom of Saint Christina* in Santa Maria Mater Domini in Venice, datable precisely to 1520.

GIOVANNI C. F. VILLA

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27 LORENZO COSTA | Ferrara, 1460 – Mantua, 1535

*Venus*

ca. 1515–1518

Oil on poplar; 174 × 76 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1257

The painting was recently exhibited in Mantua, and in the related catalogue entry Casarin (in *Mantua* 2008) summarized its critical history. He accepted the almost unanimous opinion, which the present writer shares, that the picture is the work of Lorenzo Costa. One scholar who disagreed with this view is Leandro Ventura (1995): following an early twentieth-century suggestion, he put forward the possibility that the work might have been by the Mantuan painter Lorenzo Leonbruno.

The Ferrarese Lorenzo Costa was the court painter of Giovanni II Bentivoglio in Bologna. Among his works are the paintings for the Bentivoglio Chapel in the church of San Giacomo Maggiore, the frescoes in the neighbouring oratory of Saint Cecilia, executed together with Amico Aspertini and Francesco Francia, and many altarpieces in various churches in Bologna (Tosetti Grandi 1979). Costa had already been in contact with Isabella d'Este Gonzaga before he moved to Mantua in the winter of 1506–1507, after the troops of Pope Julius II had driven the Bentivoglios from Bologna. He became court painter for the Gonzagas at the death of Andrea Mantegna in September 1506.

The history of this *Venus* has been reconstructed by Clifford Malcolm Brown and Anna Maria Lorenzoni (1970). Three letters speak of a portrayal of Venus made for the king of France: the first Costa wrote to the Marquis Francesco II Gonzaga on July 9, 1515; the other two were also addressed to the marquis from his cousin Luigi Alessandro Gonzaga, on March 20 and November 30, 1518, respectively. Another picture by Costa on the same subject is known, which featured in the Ferrara exhibition of 1933 as the property of the Bolognese Scarselli Collection (its current whereabouts are unknown). A drawing of *Venus as the Allegory of Fortune* (Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin) from the same period relates to this latter painting and to Costa's idealized court portraits from the first decade of the sixteenth century, for which Mario Equicola's *Libro de natura de Amore* (Book on the Nature of Love, 1494–1496) provided the literary context. The painter's own alterations *(pentimenti),* which "cut around" the outline of the figure in the Budapest picture, may be connected to the request expressed in the letter of July 9, 1515, that Costa should make Venus "more slender" ("smagrare"). The reason for the portrayal of such female figures as Venus is to be sought in Neoplatonism, and within this the philosophy of Marsilio Ficino as espoused by the young Isabella d'Este herself, which had already found expression in two paintings Costa made for the marchesa's *studiolo:* the signed picture showing the *Coronation of Isabella d'Este as a Poet* (1504–1506) (Brown 1968, 321–24) and *The Reign of Comus,* begun by Mantegna and completed by Costa after 1506 (both Louvre, Paris) (C. Pidatella – G. Romano, in *Paris* 2008, 358–61, cat. 150–51).

Regarding the meaning of such depictions of Venus, the letter which Giovanni Giacomo Calandra wrote to Isabella d'Este on July 15, 1506 is illuminating. He described two figures that Andrea Mantegna was then painting in *The Reign of Comus* as "doi [*sic*] Veneri, una vestida, laltra nuda" ("two Venuses, one clothed, the other naked") (D'Arco 1857, II, 66, no. 80; Panofsky [1960] 1971, 229–30). These are allegorical depictions of happiness: the one in ornate clothes personifies fleeting earthly delight, while the other – naked like the *Venus pudica* in Budapest, who holds a light linen veil – represents eternal joy. This does not run counter to the characterization that we read of the picture's future owner: "bono judice di belleze di corpi, maximamente di donne" ("an excellent authority on the beauty of the body, particularly of the female body") (letter of Francesco II Gonzaga to the French king Francis I, November 30, 1518: Brown–Lorenzoni 1970; Tosetti Grandi 1984).

The presence of the Budapest *Venus* in the Mantua exhibition on Pier Jacopo Alari Bonacolsi, known as L'Antico (ca. 1460–1528), greatly contributed, in my view, to the stylistic reappraisal of the work, allowing to establish the relation between the two contemporary Gonzaga court artists through an exploration of the complex metaphorical meanings that connect Costa's paintings and L'Antico's small, partially gilded, bronze sculptures. I believe that the Budapest *Venus* adopts the same pose as L'Antico's *Venus Caritas* in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (cf. repr. in C. D. Dickerson, in *Mantua* 2008, 274–75, cat. VIII.1), while her wrist and the hand holding the veil recall the bronze statue of *Venus Felix* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (cf. Allison 2008, 20–21; repr. in C. Kryza-Gersch, in *Mantua* 2008, 214–15, cat. V.9). The two statues date from about 1500 and 1510, respectively. I believe that this interpretation may also help in the understanding of the bronze statues themselves. The Vienna *Venus Felix* may originally have held a cornucopia in her now broken hand, similarly to the Venus in Costa's painting formerly in the Scarselli Collection. This would also explain why L'Antico so generously inlaid the plinth of the statue with precious coins.

PAOLA TOSETTI GRANDI

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# 2 | Human Faces, Angelic Faces

The most obvious "material evidence" of the Renaissance cult of individualism is the portrait, which became an independent genre in the fifteenth century. In the first phase of its development, classical precedents such as medals and busts played an important role. Even the theoretical basis for it was provided in the writings of ancient authors, as mediated by Renaissance humanists, according to which portraits serve, on the one hand, to make an absent relative or friend present, and, on the other, to glorify the represented persons in the present or set them as exemplary for posterity. In the early days of portraiture, the primary aspiration was to represent the sitter's features accurately. Idealization or ennoblement was never achieved through falsifying features, rather through the provision of favourable settings, formats, backgrounds and appropriate attributes. The clarity of outlines, sculptural modelling, and bright colours also aided idealization, but the primary requirement was to convey a feeling of the sitters' immediate presence.

The small boy (cat. 28) – identified by some as Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, and here attributed to the painter Girolamo di Giovanni da Camerino – appears in full profile, the most frequent view of the early phase of modern portraiture, inspired by ancient Roman coins and medals. The full profile gives the most characteristic contour of the face, and thus provides greatest assistance in identification, while at the same time the sitter is isolated from the viewer by the static, stylized, abstract quality of the outline against a neutral background. The painter thereby meets the requirements of documenting, ornamenting and glorifying. Francesco del Cossa's work (cat. 29) is a splendid example of another early portrait type. Instead of portrait medals, this uses the marble busts of classical antiquity as a point of departure. The motif of the parapet, which defines the boundary between the viewer's actual and the picture's virtual space derives from Roman sepulchral reliefs. At the same time, the parapet also connects the two spaces, just as the slightly turned sitter's gaze is also directed at us, establishing contact, and his hand holding the ring appears to break through the picture plane as it reaches out to us, casting a shadow on the parapet. The sitter, recorded with naturalistic precision, is elevated into another, higher sphere by the sculptural modelling of the head, as if shaped with a chisel, the bleak, rocky lakeside landscape in the background, and the deliberately ambiguous connection between foreground and background – ambiguous given that there is a void between the two. The motif of the ring suggests that the image was intended as a gift of betrothal, just as the female portrait by David Ghirlandaio (cat. 30), the sitter of which can be identified as a daughter of the Florentine banker Francesco Sassetti. Not only is David a faithful follower of his famous brother Domenico's soberly descriptive style, but as a painter he matches him in quality, too. The high rank of the young lady is conveyed by her noble stance, the style of her hair and clothing, while her chastity is expressed by her bashfully proud glance. The sitter for Perugino's

Raphael
*Saint Sebastian* (detail)
ca. 1501–1502
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo

portrait (cat. 31), Francesco delle Opere (1451–1496) came from a family that produced luxury fabrics, but in a tax record he himself is listed as a tanner. The very fact that he sat for a portrait shows the social recognition of the handicrafts. The Perugian – that is, Umbrian – master's approach is far-removed from the sculptural modelling exemplified by the Bolognese Cossa's male portrait. The subtly sensitive handling of light and form through oil technique, the manner of presenting the hands and the connection between the sitter and the landscape all point to the influence of the Netherlandish painter Hans Memling, who was well known in Italy. The character of the background is also markedly different from the lunar barrenness of Cossa's rocky landscape: here the backdrop of a sloping landscape with trees of sparse foliage and an azure sky above creates an idyllic setting.

Along with several other representatives of the genre, the Venetian Jacometto's portrait (cat. 32) testifies that the neutral background has a similarly essential role in the overall effect of a portrait to that of a landscape background. In the present image the dark abstract background harmonizes perfectly with the emphatically illuminated head of the adolescent boy, conceived with geometric clarity. There is not a single piece of documentary information about the life of this great artist (by whom, however, but a few works are known today), which is particularly strange because such exquisite miniature portraits can have only been painted for clients in the highest circles of Venetian society. Unlike that of Jacometto, Gentile Bellini's life is comparatively well documented by contemporary sources, and quite a few of his works survive. He painted the portrait of Caterina Cornaro (cat. 33) when the former queen of Cyprus had long abdicated from the throne and was living in her estate in Asolo. The versified Latin inscription conjointly extols the sitter and the painter, providing an eloquent document of the extraordinary prestige that was enjoyed by the most outstanding artists and the genre of portraiture in the Renaissance. Gentile Bellini depicts face, clothes and jewellery in the same dispassionate, matter-of-fact fashion, and so the melancholic mood that we tend to sense today in the contrast of the aging body and the ornate attire is not necessarily deliberate.

The *Virgin and Child with Saints and Two Donors* (cat. 34) attributed to the young Bernardino Luini displays an alloy of Lombard and Venetian stylistic elements. Though it is from the first decade of the sixteenth century, it takes us back into the era preceding autonomous portraiture: portraits of donors, mostly on a diminished scale, appear in private devotional images even in the fourteenth century. The differences in scale that had signalled varying positions in the hierarchy continued to be used in the fifteenth century, but saints and donors were more frequently depicted on the same scale, with the humility of the latter expressed in other ways. In this work the Virgin and saints are shown in three-quarter length, while the donors are only bust-length. Another remarkable feature of the picture is that the faces of Saint Catherine and Saint Lucy are highly individualized, like portraits: they may either be concealed portraits, or the master may have wished to characterize the biblical or legendary figures individually.

The interrelation of lifelike representation and idealization in portraiture, and the artistic methods used to achieve them, present an eternal problem for scholars. Some paintings (cf. cat. 91) are so highly idealized and

allegorical that unless some documentary evidence is discovered, it will remain impossible to tell whether they were painted from a live model or simply from the artist's imagination. It is, however, not only portraiture that addresses the representation of ideal beauty, or rather, the ideal of beauty. In fifteenth-century Florentine painting, it was Botticelli who made beauty itself the central theme of his art, as testified to, above all, by his *Primavera* and *Birth of Venus*. These works reflect the artist's attraction to the Neoplatonic philosophy flourishing at that time in the circle of Lorenzo de' Medici. One of the fundamental theses of this school of thought, whose most consistent representative was Marsilio Ficino, was that the beholding of earthly beauty brings us closer to the cognition of perfect divine beauty. The beauty of Botticelli's Venuses, Madonnas and angels is unique in being the expression of a metaphysical longing, a mystical desire for heavenly perfection. As later in the art of Michelangelo – again on a Neoplatonic basis but in a different fashion – Botticelli's human figures constitute the link between the human and the divine spheres, and express man's desire to be perfected. The ovals of the tilted heads, the subtly drawn, transfigured features, the long fingers and other deliberate disproportions, the wavy hair, and the animated and suddenly broken contour of the draperies all fill the figures with tension in the two tondi (cat. 35, 36), of which the one in Vienna is autograph, while that in Rome is a high-quality product of the workshop after the master's design.

The ideal of beauty cherished by Raphael at the beginning of his career, at around the age of twenty, was markedly different from that of Botticelli. The chief source of this ideal can be traced to the Umbrian Perugino's œuvre, who – though he trained in Florence – gradually distanced himself from the methods of composition and modelling typical of the first half of the century, and also the expressive stylization typical of Botticelli and Filippino Lippi. He created a style of his own, characterized by brilliant, warm colours, mildly sloping landscapes, scarce, simple architectonic elements and a humble piety devoid of passion, a style that eventually deflated itself through endless repetition. Before Leonardo's and Michelangelo's art had opened new vistas before him, and he had become the master *par excellence* of the polyphonic harmony of the high Renaissance, Raphael had adopted Perugino's formal language, but – as might be expected of a genius – at a higher level than his model. One could even say, ironically, that Perugino's finest pictures were painted by the young Raphael. Two of Raphael's early works – *Saint Sebastian* and *Christ Blessing* (cat. 37, 38) – are included in the exhibition. On account of its bust format, the devotional image of Saint Sebastian might be termed an ideal portrait, the personification of mental purity, innocence and serene piety. The arrow does not pierce his body, it is just an attribute in his hand: flawless, sublime beauty should not be impaired by suffering. In *Christ Blessing* painted a few years later, the similarly serene beauty of the face framed by cascading long hair is further ennobled by the contrapposto posture and the representation of the youthful body barely covered by the red cloak. As it matured, Raphael's art became more dynamic, powerful and robust, but the unmarred harmony of figure, landscape, light and colour that had already resounded in these two early works was never to fade.

VILMOS TÁTRAI

## 28 Attributed to Girolamo di Giovanni da Camerino | Documented between 1450 and 1503

### *Portrait of a Child*

ca. 1465–1470

Tempera and oil (?) on poplar (thinned to a thickness of approximately 3 mm); 39 × 25.9 cm
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, inv. 319

James Dennistoun, the restless and prolific Scottish traveller, art collector and Renaissance historian (Brigstocke 1973a, Brigstocke 1973b, Brigstocke 1978) recorded in his *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino* that he purchased this picture cheaply in Urbino in 1838 and took it to Rome for restoration (Dennistoun 1851, II, 209 n. 8, 464–66). The restoration allegedly revealed an old inscription on the parapet to the effect that it is a portrait of Raphael at the age of six, painted by his father, Giovanni Santi. In the mid-nineteenth century there was an almost maniacal search for genuine portraits of the old masters, especially Raphael (Curzi 1999, 215). Although doubts arose surrounding the identification (Waagen 1854–1857, III, 281), the picture was held to be a portrait of the young Raphael until the end of the nineteenth century. In 1887, Schmarsow considered it to be a picture of Federico da Montefeltro's young son Guidobaldo, an opinion shared by others based on various arguments (*Burlington* 1910; Brinton 1934–1935; Hendy 1968; Heinemann 1969), but no decisive proof was offered. More recently, it was contended that the painting may represent Federico's favourite son Buonconte da Montefeltro, who died in 1458 at the age of eighteen (Budassi 1984), but this also remained unsupported by convincing arguments.

The Giovanni Santi attribution persisted at least up to the 1930s. That was when Berenson (1932) proposed that the small panel, which had by then passed through the hands of several owners, may be the work of the Umbrian painter Evangelista di Pian di Meleto. In 1934, the painting was purchased by Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza as the work of Melozzo da Forlì; this attribution was supported by the *expertises* and letters written by Gronau and Borenius (Heinemann ed. 1937). In the 1963 restoration by Mario Modestini, the "old" inscription, which proved to be a later addition, was removed, and the picture was cleaned of old varnish and retouching (the painted surface is in good condition apart from some minor losses of paint); this recaptured the incisive purity of line and the luminous resonance of the palette. On the basis of these restored features, Hendy (1968) attributed the picture to Piero della Francesca and considered it as a work from that painter's late mature period, from around 1478.

Since then, art historians have surprisingly neglected this elegant, aristocratic portrait. The identity of the boy portrayed remains unknown, although he was almost certainly the offspring of a ruling dynasty. It is one of the earliest known examples of a child's portrait, and it is possible that it was made to commemorate an heir who died young. In style, it follows Piero della Francesca, and displays several features familiar from that master's portraits. In particular, the dark background and the fine pattern on the sleeve have been borrowed from the *Portrait of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta* (Musée du Louvre, Paris, ca. 1450–1451), while the proportions and modelling recall the *Portrait of Battista Sforza* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, ca. 1472–1475?).

The painter of the present picture, however, uses these motifs with a delicate simplification of colour and an incisive drawing alien to Piero della Francesca's art. The same features, at varying levels of quality, are found in a group of pictures formerly attributed to Girolamo di Giovanni da Camerino (Zeri 1961b, 75–79), and now divided between him and Giovanni Angelo d'Antonio, also from Camerino and occasionally – in 1461 and 1463 – an associate of Girolamo di Giovanni (De Marchi 2002b, 42–57; Di Lorenzo 2002). Only two signed works by Girolamo di Giovanni are known. Documents mention him as an artist in Padua in 1450, where he probably took part in the decoration of the Ovetari Chapel. Giovanni Angelo d'Antonio, however, seemed more attracted by Florence and the Tuscany of the Medici, with whom he had very good links (Di Lorenzo 2002, 296–98; Di Stefano – Cicconi 2002, *passim*). Whatever the merits of the various arguments for the division of the œuvre of these two masters, the cycle of murals showing illustrious people, family members and friends of the duke of Camerino, Giulio Cesare da Varano, which was found under the whitewash in 1985 on the vaulting of two rooms of the ducal palace in Camerino (Marcelli 2001, Marcelli 2002), and which was probably painted by Girolamo di Giovanni around 1468, shows surprising similarity with the present painting in terms of the drawing, the presentation of figures and the clothes (see especially the profiles in the scene known as "Omaggio di un fiore" ['floral tribute'] adorning one of the vaults; Marcelli 2001, 40). Unfortunately, the poor condition of the mural precludes a more thorough study; nonetheless, it displays a noble elegance of drawing similar to the *Portrait of a Child,* and a mode of representation which, with its restrained empathy, evokes in a very similar way the heraldically abstracted figures of Piero della Francesca. It is highly likely therefore that the picture discussed here was painted by the artist of the murals around 1465–1470.

MAURO NATALE

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29 Francesco del Cossa | Ferrara, ca. 1436 – Bologna, 1478

*Portrait of a Man*

ca. 1472–1473

Tempera on panel; 38.5 × 27.2 cm
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, inv. 1956.14

In the small œuvre of Francesco del Cossa, this portrait is a rare testimony of his treatment of the genre. Shown in bust-length behind a marble parapet, the young man wears an elegant grey garment and black cap, and voluminous hair. Behind him extends a rocky lakeside landscape bathed in light. The man fixes the viewer with a searching look, while in his left hand, depicted foreshortened in the foreground, he holds a ring.

This ring has played an important role in the attribution history of the picture. When Domenico Santi made an etching of the painting in the mid-seventeenth century, he identified the sitter as the famous Bolognese painter and goldsmith Francesco Raibolini, known as Francia. Midway through the following century, Carlo Faucci made a print after the painting, which was then in the collection of Count Valerio Boschi in Bologna; Faucci believed the work to be a self-portrait by Francia. Besides the presence of the ring, this notion was supported by the resemblance of the sitter to the woodcut portrait illustrating the 1568 edition of Vasari's biography of Francia, although in reality the likeness is not very convincing. Later Coulson James (1922) shared this view, on the basis of the correspondence between the picture discussed here and a portrait in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Angers (inv. MBA J 339), which depicts a sitter with very similar physiognomy and carries the inscription: "F FRANCIA AURIFEX BONONIAE". However, after a restoration carried out in 1936, it was found that the Angers picture was based on the print by Faucci.

The hypothesis of Francia's authorship, today accepted only by Negro and Roio (1998), has been replaced by a more convincing one that attributes the painting to Francesco del Cossa, the leading figure in the emergence of the Renaissance style in Emilian painting, together with Cosmè Tura and Ercole de' Roberti, in the second half of the fifteenth century. Born in Ferrara around 1436, Cossa is documented from 1456 on, when he was mentioned as a painter working at the cathedral of Ferrara. He lived and worked in both his native city and Bologna, then under the rule of the Bentivoglio family. Sources state that he died in Bologna in 1478, aged only 42, while painting the vault of the Garganelli Chapel in the Basilica of San Petronio. A distinctive feature of his art is a personal synthesis between the new tendency marked out by Donatello, Mantegna and Piero della Francesca in Padua and Ferrara, the tormented forms of Cosmè Tura, and Florentine painting of the first half of the 1460s, in particular the art of Domenico Veneziano and Alessio Baldovinetti. From the Florentines he learned precise drawing, complex spatial composition, and the use of intense colours, features that are already unmistakeably apparent in his early Kress *Madonna* (Samuel H. Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington) and the large *Osservanza Altarpiece* in Dresden.

One of Cossa's most significant works is the cycle of *Months* on the eastern wall of the great hall of the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara, documented by a famous letter dated March 25, 1470, in which Cossa complained to the duke of Ferrara, Borso d'Este, that his remuneration was too meagre considering the amount of labour involved and the artistic value created. The present portrait may have been painted not long after the latter commission, in the early 1470s, around the time that Cossa painted the *Grifoni Polyptych* for the homonymous chapel in San Petronio in Bologna, which he finished in 1473. Although we do not know who ordered the portrait, it is conceivable that the picture was intended as an engagement present; its dimensions also suggest this. Elements of the sitter's attire, such as the collar and the carefully combed hairstyle, support this dating.

In the precise rendering of details and the realistic physicality of the depiction, the portrait resembles the faces of the saints in the *Grifoni Polyptych,* for example that of Saint Florian. The rocks, water, mountains and tiny figures in the landscape lead the viewer's gaze into the distance. This landscape, with its geological features bathed in clear light, also resembles the background of *Saint Peter* and *Saint John the Baptist* in the polyptych mentioned above, where the solutions applied in the frescoes of the Schifanoia Palace appear in a still more refined version. The portrait is notable for its extraordinary originality of composition: the sitter appears neither front-on nor in profile, but in a slight three-quarter profile, and in front of not a monochrome background, but a landscape. The picture therefore differs from important contemporary prototypes such as the portraits of Antonello da Messina, and recalls rather the portraits of Memling and Jan van Eyck's *"Léal Souvenir"* (National Gallery, London) that have a landscape background. Of course, as Longhi has already pointed out, Cossa's greatness lies primarily in his ability to create an illusion and the naturalistic power of the hand that holds the ring.

FEDERICA TONIOLO

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30 David Ghirlandaio | Florence, 1452 – 1525

*Portrait of Selvaggia Sassetti*

ca. 1490

Tempera on panel; 57.1 × 44.1 × 3.0 cm

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931, accession no. 32.100.71.

Painted on a single board with a vertical grain, the Friedsam portrait is in good condition. The brown paint of the border on all four sides – about 2.4 cm wide – is the same brown paint underlying the figural painting. Originally concealed by the frame, the brown border is an early example of the precautions that painters took to ensure their paintings were not covered by woodworkers, who, as Vasari ([1568] 1878–1885, IV [1879], 188) relates in his *Life of Fra Bartolomeo,* "always covered an eighth part of the figures with the projecting inner edges of their frames". The bright red strip at the bottom, echoing the red of the sitter's coral necklace, is presumably the top of a parapet behind which the young woman sits; the white triangle beneath her right arm is a glimpse of her skirt or apron.

Infra-red reflectography reveals summary lines for the eyes, eyebrows, the eye socket of the left eye, the nose, lips, and chin. Before these lines were brushed in, the artist must have made a careful preparatory study, like the large metal-point drawing on gray-prepared paper by Domenico Ghirlandaio of the head and bust of a woman in the Gabinetto dei Disegni degli Uffizi (inv. 298 E), which shows a woman in the same pose as the sitter in the Friedsam portrait, with her body turned slightly to the right, her head inclined to the left, and her eyes staring directly at the viewer.

Ever since the Friedsam portrait was first published (Frankfurter 1931), it has been attributed to Domenico Ghirlandaio, who, together with his three younger brothers, David, Benedetto and Giovanni Battista, operated a flourishing workshop that decorated chapels with frescoes filled with portraits. Even some of the workshop's large altarpieces, such as the *Adoration of the Magi* for the church of the Innocenti, Florence, contain a multitude of portraits. Domenico also executed several independent portraits, notably the painting in the Louvre of an old man with his grandson and the posthumous portrait of Giovanna degli Albizzi, now in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, which is based on one of the frescoes in the Tornabuoni chapel. Likewise, David Ghirlandaio executed some fine portraits, such as the profile donor portraits of Ludovicho Folchi and his wife in an altarpiece now in the Saint Louis Museum of Art and the portrait of an animated young man in the Detroit Institute of Art. The Friedsam portrait matches the latter two works in quality and, significantly, in technique: as in all of David Ghirlandaio's paintings, the brushwork is that of a left-handed artist.

Many commentators on the Friedsam portrait have observed that the sitter appears to be the same person as the girl standing beside the kneeling girl in the fresco of the *Miracle of the Notary's Son* in the Sassetti chapel in the church of Santa Trinita, Florence, which Domenico Ghirlandaio painted in 1485. This scene contains over two dozen portraits of the banker Francesco Sassetti's household, Domenico's self-portrait together with a portrait of his brother, David, an apparition of Saint Francis, as well as sketchy depictions of ordinary Florentine citizens going about their daily activities. In his *Life of Ghirlandajo,* Vasari ([1568] 1878–1885, III [1878], 256) observed that the fresco shows some "beautiful young women of the same [Sassetti] family whose names I have been unable to discover, all with clothes and hair styles of that period, which is a delight to see". Thanks to baptismal records in the archives of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, we now know the names and dates of birth of Sassetti's seven daughters: Violante Margherita, 1462; Sibilla Francesca, 1465; Lucia Lisabetta, 1467; Lisabetta Maria, 1469; Selvaggia Margharita, 1470; Maddalena Francesca, 1474; and Ginevra Romola, 1477. Violante and Lucia were not portrayed in the fresco because they had died before it was painted. Neither is Ginevra who had evidently died in infancy (apart from the registration of her baptism nothing else is known about her), nor is Sibilla, because she no longer lived with her parents, having married Alessandro d'Antonio Pucci on September 27, 1482, shortly before Domenico Ghirlandaio began to plan the decoration of the chapel. So this leaves three daughters who stand and kneel in the front row of the fresco: sixteen-year-old Lisabetta on the far left, in a white brocade gown with her hair elaborately coiffed in the Florentine bridal fashion (since she had just been betrothed as the fresco was being executed); fifteen-year-old Selvaggia in a blue dress with the loose hair of unmarried young Florentine women; and eleven-year-old Maddalena, kneeling as the distraught figure by the catafalque, with the long blond hair and red dress of her name saint. Selvaggia, or Vaggia as she was called, married Simone d'Amerigo Carnesecchi in 1488, and her wedding seems to be the most likely occasion for commissioning the Friedsam portrait, in which she is more mature than she is in the fresco that was painted three years earlier.

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## 31 Perugino (Pietro di Cristoforo Vannucci) | Città della Pieve, ca. 1450 – Fontignano, 1523

*Portrait of Francesco delle Opere*

1494

Oil on panel; 52 × 44 cm
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890 no. 1700

Francesco delle Opere is portrayed in elegant attire, more or less frontally, in half figure. He rests his hands on the parapet and in his right he holds a scroll, attached to which there is a *cartellino* bearing the inscription TIMETE DEUM ("Fear God"). The background is a hilly landscape in shades of green and blue, with a surface of water in the background. Generally in good condition, the picture is characterized by vivid colours.

The portrait appeared in the seventeenth century in the collection of Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici where it was considered to be a painting by Raphael. It was first attributed to Perugino in 1815 and for a while it was thought to be a self-portrait. The definitive attribution to Perugino is due to Gaetano Milanesi, who deciphered the inscription on the back of the picture, which had never before been examined closely enough: *"1494 di luglo / Pietro perugino pinse franc° de lopere ..."* ("painted in July 1494 by Pietro Perugino of Francesco delle Opere", cf. Canuti 1931, 90–91).

Francesco delle Opere was born into an old Florentine family of luxury textile manufacturers in Florence in 1451, and died in Venice in 1496. He himself must have been a renowned artisan and is thought to have been successful as a precious stone cutter. The *cartellino* with the inscription would have been painted onto the complete dress as a final touch. TIMETE DEUM is probably a reference to the Savonarola movement of religious renewal in Florence in the 1480s and 1490s. The claim that the painting was done in Venice cannot be substantiated beyond doubt; although Francesco delle Opere did visit Venice more than once after 1488, he never spent any length of time there, and in any case, Perugino himself spent most of the year 1494 in Florence. There is only one document, dated August 9, 1494, that mentions Perugino's staying in Venice; however, by July 1494 the picture had been completed.

Perugino's interest in Hans Memling's type of portraiture and subtle style is evident in this picture in the carefully modelled face and the landscape background with its meticulous detail. Memling produced several portraits for Italian patrons, such as the *Portrait of a Man,* probably Bernardo Bembo (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, inv. 5DD.42), where, set in a landscape, the figure holds an antique medal in his left hand, indicating his humanist interests. Perugino borrowed this idea: the *cartellino* with the inscription TIMETE DEUM draws attention to the piety of the portrayed person. Raphael, too, used this type of portrait, and was probably aware of works of this kind by Memling and Perugino (Lane 2007, 180–81). This is evident in Raphael's early works, including the *Portrait of a Young Man* (Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 72) and the *Young Man with an Apple* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890 no. 8760). The portrait of Francesco delle Opere is therefore a key work with respect to Italian artists' encounter with Netherlandish portraiture.

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TIMETE
DEVM·

32 "Jacometto Veneziano" | Active ca. 1472; died before September 1497

## *Portrait of a Boy*

ca. 1475–1480

Tempera and oil on panel; 22.9 × 19.7 cm
The National Gallery, Salting Bequest, 1910, London, inv. NG2509

The critical history of this wonderfully preserved picture is a good example of the issues that are generated by the obscure artistic personality of Jacometto Veneziano. In the past, *Portrait of a Boy* was initially considered to be by Antonello da Messina, then by Andrea Solario, Alvise Vivarini and Giovanni Bellini: most of the pictures today widely accepted to be by Jacometto have undergone similar attributional vicissitudes, and so has another, overlooked, picture in the National Gallery – a *Portait of a Man in Black* (NG2095) – which is "Jacomettesque" in character and typology, though not of the same quality.

Almost everything we know about Jacometto we learn from Marcantonio Michiel, whose notes – called *Notizia d'opere di disegno* – on the collections of art he visited in the early sixteenth century were discovered and published only in 1800 (Morelli ed. 1800; Michiel [ca. 1521–1543] 1888). Michiel describes several pictures he believed to have been painted by Jacometto in private collections in Padua and Venice. Some of his descriptions are detailed, particularly those of two small portraits then in the collection of the aristocrat Michele Contarini, which Michiel had visited in August 1543. Today these are generally identified with two portraits now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (inv. 1975.1.85-1975.1.86): the *Portrait of a Man* (according to Michiel the subject is Alvise Contarini), which on its verso has a tethered hart (described by Michiel as a "cervetta in un paese" and engraved in reverse by Giulio Campagnola, as first suggested by Kristeller 1907, 19, n. 14), and the *Portrait of a Woman* (Michiel believed her to be a nun from San Secondo) with a pastoral scene in grisaille on the verso. Therefore, on the basis of documentary evidence, only these two pictures can be considered as being arguably by the ghostly Jacometto.

Johannes Wilde attempted a reconstruction, only partially published (Wilde 1934), of the œuvre of Jacometto. By comparison with the New York pictures, he attributed the *Portrait of a Boy* and another picture in the London National Gallery, the *Portrait of a Man* (NG3121), to Jacometto.

Whoever Jacometto was, he is an artist who is hard to classify, not least because of the extent and range of influences of other artists that are traceable in his œuvre (there has even been an attempt to identify him with another mysterious artistic personality of Venetian art, Jacopo de' Barbari: see Servolini 1944, 21–41). Jacometto must have known the hyper-realistic and Netherlandish-influenced portraiture of Antonello da Messina, who travelled to Venice in 1475–1476: the *Portrait of a Boy* evinces a very immediate reaction to Antonello, and it may therefore be close in date to Antonello's Venetian sojourn. Jacometto was also stylistically indebted to Giovanni Bellini, the leading painter of the second half of the fifteenth century in Venice. But the type of picture Jacometto produced is very particular, since he is known also to have been a miniaturist. Almost all his surviving portraits are very small indeed, often much smaller than life-size. He may therefore have been the trusted painter of an intellectual elite of private patrons who wanted to possess exquisite and portable portraits of people close to their hearts. In this *Portrait of a Boy* in particular, the painter shows off his extraordinary miniaturist skills. He makes great play of the subtleties of light effects, such as those elusive reflections in the darkened side of the face or the cast shadow that starts at the edge of the chin, creating a strong diagonal. Since this is an idealized portrait, there are physiognomic details that refer to the idea of youth itself: the prominent upper lip, the shiny, undulating, compact hair, the rosy cheekbones. The back of the picture is painted to emulate porphyry, a feature in common with several other pictures attributed to Jacometto.

We do not know the identity of the sitter. Another version of this picture is in the Museo Correr in Venice (inv. 10). It is in poor condition, and is not of the same artistic quality as the National Gallery panel. Accordingly, it has often been attributed to the workshop of Giovanni Bellini (Mariacher 1957, 51–52). However, it is of interest for its divergences from its model: it represents a martyr, since the figure holds a palm, has a halo, and bears a laurel wreath around his head. The letters "S. F." are visible at the top corners of the picture. The Correr panel was traditionally considered to be the portrait of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, a Renaissance philosopher, but there is no evidence to support this identification.

Michiel described several portraits of young boys by Jacometto. It is intriguing, Jacometto himself being a poet (Agosti 2005, 345, n. 106), that one of these was of the poet Pietro Bembo aged eleven.

ANTONIO MAZZOTTA

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33 GENTILE BELLINI | Venice, ca. 1431–1435 – Venice, 1507

## *Portrait of Queen Caterina Cornaro*

ca. 1500

Oil on panel; 63 × 49 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 101
Inscribed: CORNELIAE GENVS NOMEN FERO / VIRGINIS QVAM SYNA SEPELIT / VENETVS FILIAM ME VOCAT SE / NATUS CYPRVSQ SERVIT NOVEM / REGNOR SEDES QVANTA SIM / VIDES SED BELLINI MANVS / GENTILIS MAIOR QVAE ME TAM / BREVI EXPRESSIT TABELLA (I am of the clan of the Cornelii, and bear the name of the virgin buried at Sinai. The Venetian Senate calls me daughter, and Cyprus, seat of nine kingdoms, serves me. You see how great I am, but the hand of Gentile Bellini is greater in portraying me on so small a panel.)

Even more than his brother Giovanni, Gentile Bellini performed the functions of official painter to the Republic of Venice. In 1474 he undertook the commission to paint a cycle of scenes from Venetian history for the principal council chamber of the Doge's Palace; he simultaneously undertook a series of ducal portraits; and in 1479 he was appointed to a two-year diplomatic mission to the court of Mehmet II in Istanbul, where his work included a portrait of the sultan (National Gallery, London). A decade earlier he had been knighted by the emperor Frederick III, presumably for likewise painting his portrait. When not working for the Venetian government, Gentile was principally employed by leading devotional confraternities such as the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista, for which he painted three large canvases depicting the *Miracles of the True Cross* (Accademia, Venice). One of these, the *Miracle at the Bridge of San Lorenzo* of 1500, contains in the left foreground a portrait of Queen Catherine Cornaro with her retinue.

Catherine (1454–1510), the subject of the present portrait, was a member of the Venetian patrician family of Corner, which (as is recalled in the inscription) traced its ancestry to the ancient Roman Cornelii. At the age of fifteen she was married to King James II of Cyprus; but the deaths in 1474 in quick succession of the king and their infant son, James III, left the queen as regent. Since Cyprus was of great strategic and commercial interest to the Venetian government, it used the opportunity to take control of the island, eventually forcing Catherine to abdicate and to return to Venice. In compensation she was given the unprecedentedly honorific title of "daughter of Saint Mark" (as the inscription also recalls), and a small court in the *terraferma* town of Asolo, near Treviso, where she presided over the activities of poets such as Pietro Bembo and painters such as Giorgione. Prevented by the government from remarrying, Catherine's celibacy is also celebrated in the inscription, which compares her to her namesake, the virgin princess Saint Catherine of Alexandria.

The subordinate role of women in Venetian society meant that female portraits were rare in the fifteenth century (and even in the sixteenth), but Catherine's regal status obviously made her an exception to the rule. Also exceptional for the date is the format, which unlike any previous Venetian portrait, even by the more innovative Giovanni Bellini, shows the sitter in longer than bust length. An approximate date of 1500 for the portrait is provided by the *Miracle at the Bridge of San Lorenzo*, in which Catherine is seen wearing the same luxurious costume, consisting of a cloth-of-gold underdress and a black overdress, bordered with jewels and pearls. At the shoulders and elbows the white undergarment, or chemise, is revealed, and on her head Catherine wears a richly embroidered cap beneath her jewelled crown. This, with its pseudo-Kufic script, and the transparent veil that covers most of her face and shoulders, lend the queen an almost oriental appearance, which was presumably thought to be appropriate to her fief in the eastern Mediterranean.

Nothing is known of the commission, but given the expression of pride in the Corner lineage, the portrait may have been commissioned by the head of the family, Catherine's brother Giorgio (Zorzi), who played a leading role in persuading her to abdicate. In any case, as a painter of an emperor, a sultan, and numerous doges, Gentile was the obvious choice. Typical of his approach to portraiture is the precise, unflattering delineation of the sitter's features, combined with an emphasis on the particulars of the regal costume, at the expense of any expression of individual personality or emotion. Indeed, the complex network of curving lines that make up her necklace and the borders of her garments serve almost to emphasize her situation as an impassive prisoner of ceremony, like an exotic bird in a gilded cage.

PETER HUMFREY

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## 34 Bernardino Luini (Bernardino Scapi) | Dumenza (?), ca. 1481–1482 – Milan, 1532

### *Virgin and Child with Saint Peter, Saint Catherine, Saint Lucy, Saint Paul and Two Donors*

ca. 1507

Oil on canvas (transferred from wood); 78 × 126 cm
Musei Civici, Museo d'Arte Medioevale e Moderna, Padua, inv. 2479 (bequest of Carlo Fantoni, 1932)

From the 1510s onwards, Bernardino Luini played an increasingly important role in Milan, where the painter's presence is first documented as early as 1501 (Pini–Sironi 1993). It is now a broadly accepted hypothesis that the artist spent time in the Veneto between 1502 and 1507, returning to Milan only towards the end of the first decade. It was only later, in around 1520, that he perfected his own style, drawing on the artistic idiom of Raphael. This was perhaps due to his visiting Rome, but it is also possible that he simply studied Raphael's prints. In this way, Bernardino came to meld the influence of Raphael with that of Leonardo to create his own personal tone of classicism. From this point on, his work is defined by this new monumentality and characterized by an increasingly tender and persuasive mode of expression.

As the literature on the subject has pointed out, the artist's early creative period occupies an uncertain and controversial place within the art of Lombardy in the early cinquecento. The work discussed here – probably privately commissioned, to judge by the two kneeling and praying figures in the foreground – belongs to the period when Luini first came into contact with the cultural life of Milan, and at the same time represents the moment when his style was most strongly influenced by the art of Veneto. Davide Banzato was the first to ascribe the work to Luini, an attribution subsequently cast into doubt by both Bora and Fossaluzza, who cited the close relationship the picture bears to the stylistic idiom of Marco Marziale, to whom the painting was traditionally attributed. However, Banzato rules out the latter's authorship on the basis of the different stylistic traits revealed by a comparison with Marziale's *Virgin and Child with Saints* in the National Gallery in London, dated 1507.

Art historians agree that Luini was in direct contact with the painting of the Venetian *terraferma* after his initial training in Milan in the orbit of Leonardo, Zenale, Bramantino and Solario. As Frangi notes with regard to Lotto's *Portrait of a Woman* painted in around 1505 (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon), Luini was a perceptive observer of the early efforts of Lorenzo Lotto and borrowed his pure naturalism for the "rustic" faces of the donors in the Paduan painting. The well-rounded forms, the view of the landscape, the vivid colours and the symmetrical Belliniesque arrangement of the solid figures, all bear witness to the Venetian components in this work, not unrelated to the calligraphic refinement of Andrea Solario especially as regards the ornaments on the dresses and the hairstyles.

The Paduan *sacra conversazione* may be placed between Luini's works from his first Milanese period inspired by the Bramantino's formal innovations – such as the *Virgin with Child* in Esztergom – on the one hand, and the *Virgin and Child* fresco from 1512 in the Abbey of Chiaravalle, on the other. The date 1512 of the latter is a firm chronological pointer in Luini's career after his return from Veneto, and is an important document of how the artist reached back to his beginnings. Consequently, Banzato's dating of around 1507 would seem quite plausible.

The fact that a significant number of art historians detect a relation between the Paduan painting to the altarpiece signed and dated 1507 in the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris and formerly in the Manfrin Collection in Venice reinforces the hypothesis that the work in question was painted in Venice or surrounds. Nevertheless, while acknowledging the undeniable links between the Parisian painting and the *Lamentation of Christ* in Budapest, the latter previously attributed to Marziale and very similar to the Paduan painting (a point first recognized by Banzato), Bora highlights the Milanese features of the Parisian picture, as opposed to the emphatically Venetian character of the works kept in Budapest and Padua. To the same artistic culture and closely related to the Paduan painting is a *Virgin and Child with a Female Donor* kept in a private collection. This is no cause for surprise, given the frequent artistic exchanges and travelling of artists between Lombardy and Veneto in the first two decades of the century. Yet for Binaghi Olivari (2007, 11), the Parisian altarpiece represents "a contradictory argument, to which it would be imprudent to attach any firm assumptions regarding the dating of the work".

Thus the Paduan *sacra conversazione* represents the moment when Luini came closest to the Veneto style of painting, while remaining faithful to Lombard traditions: at this point his connection to the art of Lorenzo Lotto, and specifically to the Treviso compositions painted under the sway of Bramantino's Milanese works, appears to have been the most influential (G. Romano, in *Milan* 1982, 102–3; Quattrini 2001–2002).

FRANCA PELLEGRINI

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35 Sandro Botticelli (and collaborator) | Florence, 1445 – Florence, 1510

## *Virgin and Child with Six Angels and the Baptist*

ca. 1485

Egg tempera on panel; diameter: 170 cm
Galleria Borghese, Rome, inv. 348

"The rooms began slowly to fill with the scent exhaled from numberless vases of flowers. Full-blown roses hung their heavy heads over crystal vases that opened like diamond lilies on a golden stem, similar to those standing behind the Virgin in the *tondo* of Botticelli in the Borghese Gallery." In this evocative passage from *Il Piacere* [The Pleasure] (1889), a novel by Gabriele d'Annunzio, we find a specific reference to the tondo catalogued here. With the same admiration he describes every single detail of the picture. D'Annunzio had published an earlier article about the tondo in *La Tribuna* on July 22, 1887, and it was perhaps on account of the picture's celebrity that Adolfo Venturi, when he (together with Wilhelm Bode and Giovanni Piancastelli) was asked by the Italian government to value the paintings in the Borghese collection in 1895, gave the Botticelli tondo the very high estimate of 120,000 Italian lire (Agosti 1984, 49).

It is possible that the tondo came from the collection of Cardinal Anton Maria Salviati, who died in Rome in 1602. The painting is mentioned in a Borghese inventory of 1693 as a work by Ghirlandaio (Della Pergola 1964a, 220, 227). In 1864 Crowe and Cavalcaselle attributed the tondo to Botticelli. Morelli, in his meticulous analysis of a decade later (1874), proposed that Botticelli was only responsible for the invention and for the preparatory drawing. In his opinion, the lack of vivacity and translucence in the colours suggested that the actual execution must have been delegated to a collaborator. Herbert Horne went further. Conceding that the tondo had been largely repainted (cf. Della Pergola 1955–1959), he still believed that the Borghese *Madonna* had been painted by a collaborator of Sandro, perhaps the one who acted as his assistant in the Sistine Chapel in Rome (1481). He did acknowledge, however, that it may have been modelled on another tondo painted by Botticelli, or based on a sketch by him. In the twentieth century the Borghese tondo has rarely been classified as a fully autograph work. Lightbown (1978) gave three reasons for excluding the tondo from the inner circle of the Botticelli corpus: "St John is out of proportion with the other figures: the distribution of light and shadow is mechanical and the handling is insensitive", and catalogued the painting as "a workshop production after a drawing by Botticelli, executed *c.* 1488–90".

Even if it is difficult to accept this work as totally by Botticelli's hand, we must acknowledge that the enormous size – 170 cm in diameter – indicates that it cannot have been a minor workshop commission. This tondo is larger than any other painted by Sandro, including the *Magnificat Madonna* (Uffizi, Florence, 118 cm), the so-called *Raczinski Tondo* in Berlin (135 cm), and the *Pomegranate Madonna* in Florence (Uffizi, 143.5 cm). In Medicean Florence such a large format suggests an important commission intended for a prestigious destination. Moreover, this composition seems to have been admired by the Florentines, since many copies (listed by Lightbown 1978) were made.

A good starting point from which to reconsider the whole problem is the dating of the tondo. Usually fixed around 1490 or later, it could be placed five or so years earlier. Comparison with the fresco of the *Annunciation* in the Uffizi (inv. 201), for which Sandro was paid in May 1481, reveals that the Virgins are very similar not only in their features and in the carriage of the heads but also in the details of the arms and hands. The mantles and veils are also identical in shape. The irrational space of the Borghese tondo, charged with ornamental elements – tall, slender vases with bouquets of roses – and with its strangely elaborated throne setting, reflects the same taste that is found in the *Bardi Altarpiece* now in Berlin, documented to 1485.

As Mesnil noted (1938, 232), the little Saint John derives, in reverse, from the kneeling adolescent who plays the role of Theophilus's son in Filippino Lippi's fresco in the Brancacci Chapel. Such an echo would seem more likely soon after Lippi completed that fresco in the early 1480s, and not far from March 1485, when he signed the Palazzo Vecchio altarpiece. In the latter, we see in the foreground the grey stone step which is also a feature of the Borghese tondo. The artist uses this strong horizontal element to balance the composition and contrast with the centripetal force that is typical of the tondo format.

We still know very little about Botticelli's working methods and workshop practices, and this makes it difficult to fix the authorship of the highly problematic Borghese tondo. However, the idea of a workshop copy of so large a format from a lost model by Botticelli seems highly improbable. We should also bear in mind Hendy's (1932, 229) judicious assessment of the Borghese tondo and the one in Vienna (cat. 36), that these are "among the severest of Botticelli's works", to the merits of which many are blinded by "the appealing grace of the *Birth of Venus*".

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*Not exhibited.*



## 36 Sandro Botticelli | Florence, 1455 – Florence, 1510

### *Virgin and Child with Two Angels*

ca. 1490

Tempera on poplar panel; diam.: 115 cm
Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna, inv. 1133

Throughout the fifteenth century the tondo, or painting with a circular format, was preferred for pictures for private devotion in every social stratum of the wealthy and flourishing city of Florence. From the mid-century onward tondi painted on wood gradually ousted the earlier reliefs. The genre reached its apex in the 1480s with Botticelli's harmoniously elegant compositions.

Fifteenth-century Florentine Madonnas are characterized by the depiction of an intimate relationship between the Virgin and the Infant. The close connection between mother and child is made obvious by a multitude of tender and psychologically authentic gestures. The gestures also convey symbolic meanings alluding to Christ's redeeming work.

The tondo in the gallery of Vienna's Art Academy shows the Virgin with the Infant. The Christ Child, naked save for the transparent little shirt, makes a tiny stepping movement in his mother's lap as if to cuddle up to her for protection. The Virgin leans over her child with pensive sadness, holding the back of his head reassuringly. The three-quarter figure of the Virgin dominates the right side of the picture with the movement of her body and the ample drapery of her blue and red dress. The compositional counterpoint is provided by the two angels on the left, shown to hip-length, who bring pink roses for the mother and her baby. The figural group is set against architectural scenery, the door opening on the sky.

The arrangement of some elements of the composition and its symbolism imply references to salvation. The architectural concept brings the protagonists of the sacred episode and its viewer into a contiguous space. Mary is sitting with her child in front of a *pietra serena* wall of solid ashlars, which ties them strongly to the earthly sphere. Slightly towards the background are the angels as heavenly creatures in front of the door opening, through which we see a glimpse of heaven. In the centre of the composition and the vertical axis of the tondo, in front of the door frame marking the boundary between the interior and the sight of the sky, stands the Infant Jesus. His placing stresses Christ's importance for humankind: he is both man and God, and via his redeeming death he will be the mediator between sinful mankind and divine grace.

Even the accidental details or those apparently motivated by scenic considerations tell of the Passion of Christ. As in other tondi by Botticelli, the fact that the Infant is depicted naked, exposing his genitals to emphasize Christ's human nature, alludes to the miracle of God becoming Man.

The pale pink rose in the very middle of the picture caught in the Infant's gathered-up shirt also has a symbolic role. It seems to have been handed to Christ by the angel closer to him, taken from his similarly gathered tunic. Jesus accepted the flower just as he undertook suffering.

The red rose is also an important Marian symbol. Primarily, it indicates her chastity (like a rose without thorns, she is free from original sin) but it also means that she has a share in the suffering of the Passion. As in other devotional pictures produced by Botticelli's workshop, it alludes to the outstanding significance of Mary's virginity and motherhood, as well as to Mary being a precondition of and participant in the divine work of redemption.

In terms of its composition, the tondo in the Academy's gallery is connected to two of Botticelli's most mature tondi. The sweeping contour of the backs of the Virgin and the angels following the circular form of the panel is analogous with the *Madonna del Magnificat* (ca. 1480–1481, Uffizi, Florence). The horizontal accents of the painting, such as the heads of Jesus and the angels set in a line, recall the *Raczynski Tondo* (ca. 1480, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin). The execution of the Vienna tondo shows a simplification of decorative detail and sophisticated modelling, which might reflect the price of the work and the participation of the mostly anonymous members of the studio. In the case of Botticelli's populous workshop, run in the traditional spirit of elaborate division of labour, it is by no means easy to distinguish between excellent workshop products approved by the master and perhaps also executed with his participation on the one hand, and the autographic works in which some details were assigned to assistants on the other.

MARTINA FLEISCHER

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37 RAPHAEL | Urbino, 1483 – Rome, 1520

## *Saint Sebastian*

ca. 1501–1502

Oil on panel; 44 × 34 cm
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 81 LC 00207

This rather effeminate portrayal of Saint Sebastian is one of the first known works by Raphael, painted when he was not yet twenty years old. It stands out on account of its great refinement and the astonishing modulation of light, which dissolves the compositional formula and dreamy facial expression – which Raphael learned from Perugino – in the softness of the atmosphere.

The work is certainly not a fragment of a larger composition, as has sometimes been proposed, but a painting for personal devotion executed for an unknown patron. In the early nineteenth century, the painting came to light in the collection of the Marquis Zurla in Crema, and was later in the possession of Giuseppe Longhi, a Milanese engraver. Subsequently, in 1836, it came into the collection of Guglielmo Lochis, who devoted the most extensive entry of his 1858 catalogue to this work. In contrast to his generally terse catalogue entries for even the major pieces of his personal museum, Count Lochis's extensive praise of this piece is remarkable. After the obligatory description of the painter's origins, he bursts into a genuine panegyric: "To mention the name of Raphael in a discourse on painting is to say all that can be said, so universal is the view of art experts that talent of this magnitude was not born either before him or after, and nobody else had an ability to approach perfection in art comparable to his. O, what a happy time this was for painting, when the great talents were born one after another, a single one of whom would have been enough to give a name to the century in which he lived! Michelangelo, Leonardo, Titian, Giorgione, Correggio, many other artists of great renown, and finally, he of whom we write now, deservedly called divine, all lived in the opening years of the sixteenth century." This is followed by a quotation from Lanzi and an elegant abridged biography ending with a eulogy of the most classical form: "Raphael was of fine aspect, gentle nature, lovable manner and benign soul, the subject of respect in the fullest sense of the word, and thus loved by his pupils, of which he had more than any painter ever, and was loved by popes, kings, scholars and all highly-placed personages of his time."

Lochis thus regarded this painting as the most outstanding item in his collection. He also provided – something he did not do for other works – a full bibliography on Raphael including the greatest art historians of his time, from Quatremère de Quincy to Passavant, Rumohr to Kugler and Giovanni Rosini. It is curious that after listing these great authorities, he transcribed in full length a somewhat provincial laudatory article by a certain Count P. Moroni from the October 7, 1836 issue of *Gazzetta patria* of Bergamo. The long entry ends with several appraisals from art experts of the day, including the painter Francesco Hayez, unanimously supporting Raphael's authorship.

After Lochis' death in 1859, his collection had to be turned into a second municipal museum in the Crocetta di Mozzo villa outside the town. The Bergamo city elders saw fit to strike a compromise with the count's heirs: they admitted about half of the collection into the Accademia Carrara and acquiesced in the sale of the rest. Thus *Saint Sebastian* passed to the gallery in 1866, and was restored and catalogued along with the other works.

By virtue of Lochis' abundantly documented findings, the painting became one of the surest items of Raphael's œuvre and was included in nearly every study of the painter's work. The small painting's fame was also due to its extraordinarily good state of preservation. The panel is thin and almost perfectly unwarped, and both the thicker layers and the fine glazes of the paint have survived completely intact. The latest, unintrusive restoration was carried out by Mauro Pellicioli in 1932.

Since the authorship of the panel is incontestable, differences of opinion in the extensive literature have been restricted to the dating, which wavered slightly in the early years of Raphael's activity. Nowadays, however, there is a broad consensus that it must have been painted in the first years of the sixteenth century. Firstly, the young painter of *Saint Sebastian* still adhered to Perugino's formulas, as is clear by a comparison with, for example, Perugino's *Mary Magdalene* in the Galleria Palatina in Florence, also datable to 1501–1502. Secondly, it was just the time when Raphael must have briefly contributed to the decoration of the Piccolomini Library of Siena Cathedral, and thus worked at Pinturicchio's side. It was the shimmering decorative world of the latter artist's paintings that seems to have influenced Raphael here in the detailed rendering of the gold embroidery on the clothing and in the inclusion of such a strikingly unusual detail as the saint's splendid golden necklace.

GIOVANNI VALAGUSSA

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38 RAPHAEL | Urbino, 1483 – Rome, 1520

*Christ Blessing (Pax Vobiscum)*

ca. 1505–1506

Oil on panel; 31.7 × 25.3 cm
Pinacoteca Tosio-Martinengo, Brescia, inv. 150

The half figure of Christ the Saviour appears set against a cloudless sky and a landscape. His right shoulder and waist are covered in red drapery. Slightly tilting his head to one side, he raises his right hand in blessing and points to his side wound with his left hand.

The paint is subtle and enamel-like on the surface of the figure of Christ, and is in excellent condition throughout the entire surface. Light *pentimenti* in the contours and some underdrawing around the fingernails are visible to the naked eye. The cleaning and technical examination executed before 1986 confirmed that the painting is in good condition; infrared reflectography examination reveals the underdrawing in the areas of the face and the right hand even more clearly. The crown of thorns was painted in the very last phase of execution, on the completed head, a process not unusual for Raphael (Stradiotti, in Passamani et al. 1986).

According to Passavant the picture first turned up in the Mosca Collection in Pesaro, and later literature has successfully traced its subsequent fate up to the point when it was purchased by Paolo Tosio, who brought it to its present location. The latest research (Sickel 2008) has established that in 1584 the picture was in the possession of Bishop Ascanio Cesarini, who came from an influential family of art patrons. It is to be hoped that ongoing research will further broaden our knowledge about the provenance of the painting.

Even Passavant had dated the painting to 1505, and Italian scholars usually shared this view; the work is now generally dated to between 1505 and 1506. The fact that it was in the possession of a prelate at an early stage in its history could ultimately lead to the identification of its original commissioner. As scholars have repeatedly pointed out, it is possible that the commissioner of the work was also a cleric, since the *pax vobiscum* theme always played a central role in Catholic liturgy.

The portrayal of Christ as the blessing Saviour originates from the gospel scene where Jesus appears to his disciples after his resurrection (Luke 24, 36–40). This subject matter often appears in small sized works of art – both paintings and prints – made for private devotion. The way Christ is represented may have been inspired by Northern prints; however, no specific prototype has been identified to date.

The combination of the half-figure of Christ in the form of the *imago pietatis* with a landscape view is of Venetian origin, and was developed by Giovanni Bellini in the second half of the fifteenth century. The subtle modelling of Christ's body and his richly articulated posture follow a type of portrayal that is essentially based on mediaeval prototypes. In this respect, Raphael clearly surpasses one of his own, earlier representations of the subject: the portrayal of the blessing Christ in his fresco in the church of San Severo in Perugia, which dates from 1505.

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# 3 | Renaissance without Boundaries

There are masters and works that in themselves epitomize the Renaissance. Any definition of the art of the period that aims to be comprehensive, however, has to include some restrictions or reservations because the overall picture is extremely diverse. Besides the great centres of Renaissance painting, several small centres also flourished, artists of different generations worked together, there was fruitful competition among the masters, various traditions lived on, and there was a great multiplicity of individual variations. Thus, "Renaissance without boundaries" is intended to mean that the border with the Gothic past was open, there was vivid communication not only between the various Italian cities and painting workshops, but also between Italian and transalpine trends, and not least, there were no limits to artistic imagination and invention. Within a workshop, the style of the master and the pupil would often be impossible to differentiate between, otherwise a workshop would not have been able to produce stylistically homogeneous works or decorative series. At the same time, growing individualism provided an ideal soil for the emergence of singular styles, of diverse *"maniere"*.

The survival of the Gothic style in Siena is particularly interesting. The milieu of merchants, bankers and artisans created very similar social conditions to those in Florence, yet the city – perhaps to emphasize its autonomy and rivalry with Florence – adhered for over a century and a half to the Gothic tradition founded by Duccio, Simone Martini and the Lorenzetti brothers in the first half of the fourteenth century. Of course, Florentine influences permeated into fifteenth-century Gothic, for example, into the aristocratically elegant style of Neroccio de' Landi, as exemplified by the robust *bambino,* reminiscent of Masaccio and Donatello, in his *Madonna* (cat. 39). Yet the predominant character of this work is, with its pale, slender Virgin and golden background, determined by an unwavering respect for local traditions. In very few works are Gothic and Renaissance combined so palpably as in Michele Pannonio's *Thalia* (cat. 40). The female figure is fully Gothic in her absurd anatomy, her boneless body, pliant modelling, and in the genteel pose of her hand, but she is framed by a heavy throne structure, *all'antica* decorative elements, putti, fruit and flowers. The painting reveals that the artist, while Gothic by training, had to adapt to an iconographic programme devised by humanists for the decorative series of the Villa Belfiore near Ferrara, and to the taste of a new generation. This work, the only one signed by this painter of Hungarian origin, can now be seen in the company of two other panels by the master (cat. 41). They resemble the *Thalia* not only in the modelling of the figures and the low viewpoint, but also in the delightful care with which the goldsmith's objects are presented. The treatment of the latter reveals a Netherlandish inspiration for meticulous detail and metallic sheen. Such details remind us of the fact that in those days there was a close connection between the different crafts: Michele Pannonio designed goldsmith's works himself. In the picture by the Venetian Lazzaro Bastiani (cat. 42), the composition, the articulation of the figures, the suggestion of the

Giovanni Mansueti
*Saint Jerome in the Desert*
(detail)
ca. 1515–1520
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo

depth of space all comply with the Renaissance canon, but the charming fairy-tale world of Gothic art persists in the splendour of the brocade, the amassment of motifs, and the decorative playfulness with which the elements are juxtaposed. Underlying this is the influence of Mantegna's master, Francesco Squarcione, who was the first to treat the new Renaissance stock of motifs with antiquating arbitrariness. Carlo Crivelli, whose *Saint George* and *Virgin and Child Enthroned* (cat. 43 and 44) were originally parts of altarpieces, was connected to Squarcione's Paduan circle by many threads. He started his career in Venice and learned about both Byzantine splendour and Gothic elegance from the city's rich artistic heritage, but he also used with perfect ease the achievements of the Renaissance in articulation, proportion, construction and perspective. Blending all these effects, he developed one of the most personal styles of the quattrocento, one which laid much emphasis on beauty and the power of expression. His irony, sense of humour and flair for the grotesque can still amaze viewers today. His works share kinship with the works of the Master of the Bartholomew Altar, even if no actual interdependence between the Italian and Cologne masters can be supposed. In his expressionism, the Bolognese Marco Zoppo also crosses the boundaries of moderation and harmony set by the theoretical definition of the Renaissance. In his *Saint Jerome* (cat. 45) it seems as if the landscape seen in Cossa's portrait (cat. 29) has come to the foreground. Zoppo's figure and landscape assimilate to each other evocatively; the broken rocks and heavy blocks of stone are metaphors of asceticism. Intensified to the extreme, plasticity here aims at more than just a *paragone* with sculpture or a powerful indication of spatiality. It becomes an emotional, atmospheric element, a basic rhetorical motif. This style and the expression it implies are unimaginable without the impact of Andrea Mantegna's early frescoes (most of them destroyed in the Second World War) in the Ovetari Chapel of the Eremitani church in Padua. Mantegna set the lives of saints into the Roman past, one he envisioned as ruggedly magnificent. Even at the end of the fifteenth century, the vision of antiquity he created in these frescoes cast a spell over his fellow Paduan Jacopo da Montagnana. Every mourner in the foreground of his *Lamentation* (cat. 46) is petrified with pain; their faces are like a set of tragic masks, the drapery seems to be carved from marble. The distant figures in the background, including the two crucified thieves, appear to be ghostly figures in a nightmare. Thus, sculptural quality and antiquation are not instruments of harmony here either, but rather of drama. In its spirit, the Venetian Mansueti's *Saint Jerome* (cat. 47) is at the opposite pole to Zoppo's treatment of the same subject, or to Jacopo da Montagnana's *Lamentation*. The Renaissance idea of opening the space to depth had only a superficial impact on the substantially carpet-like impression here. There is a loosely united group of visual episodes in which the protagonist is only marked by his foreground setting and his size. Dramatic condensation is replaced by leisurely story-telling; the viewer is invited to muse rather than to experience awe. It is no accident that Mansueti took part in the execution of several grand-scale narrative cycles on canvas which adorned Venetian *scuole*. These cycles abound in anecdotal details that please the eye.

Giovanni Boccati's *Crucifixion* (cat. 48) manifestly displays transalpine influences. The combination of a plateau in the foreground with a landscape far below it and the horizon shifted to the upper zone of the picture is a Netherlandish invention which was mediated to Boccati's native region, the Marches, by the Florentine Domenico Veneziano. On the other hand, the harassed rhythm of the composition, the harsh colours, jagged

outlines, the almost chaotic jamming together of natural, architectural, figural and ornamental elements are still firmly rooted in the coarsely expressive language of local Gothic traditions. Compared to Boccati's picture, Antonello da Messina's *Crucifixion* (cat. 49) is dominated by a crystalline order. By the time he painted this piece, the Sicilian master had probably encountered the work of the most consistent practitioner of early Renaissance principles of composition, Piero della Francesca. Still, it is hard to find another Italian Renaissance painting that – with its enormous attention to detail, the landscape rising towards the foreground, the topographically recognizable depiction of the Strait of Messina and the angular folds of the mourners' gowns – has a similarly strong Netherlandish character that betrays the direct influence of Jan van Eyck. In Naples, where Antonello spent his years of training, he would have been able to see many works from the Netherlands, Burgundy and Provence, which accounts for the Northern character in his art. Northern taste also affected the Milanese Ambrogio Bergognone. The characters in his *Lamentation* (cat. 50) are fragile, frail figures, and the basic emotional tone is that of humble piety. Gold decoration appears on haloes, the edges of clothes, the hill rising at the right, and even in the background, on the walls of the city indicating Jerusalem where it is used to suggest the warm light of the setting sun. The motif of the lamenting Virgin holding her dead son in her lap derives from fourteenth-century German sculpture. There is not a trace of the theatrical monumentality that characterizes Jacopo da Montagnana's treatment of the same subject (cat. 46).

Owing to its geographic situation, the region of Piedmont had particularly close relations with Northern art. Looking at Defendente Ferrari's nocturnal scene (cat. 51), one would hardly think of Raphael as the painter's contemporary. This Nativity scene was inspired by a Schongauer engraving, and it is tied by its miniature-like execution and its mysticism far more closely to contemporary German art than to the style of any artist in Florence, Venice or Rome. The strangeness and foreign aspect of Bartolomeo Veneto's female ideal portrait or *Flora* (cat. 52) becomes overtly manifest if compared with Palma Vecchio's idealized woman of about the same date (cat. 91). Not only does the Dürerian hardness and sharpness of the design, the bizarre coiffure and the meticulous elaboration of every single detail elicit German associations, so too does the pungent, demoniac, suggestive mien. This is far removed from the overt coquetry of Palma's softly curvaceous female figure. The pose, the turn of the head and even the hand holding a flower produce a tense, disquieting effect: the emphasis is laid on the witch-like features of this *femme fatale*. The Veneto-Bergamasque Giovanni Cariani's masterpiece (cat. 53) was inventoried in the Milanese Ambrosiana gallery in 1685 as by Lucas van Leyden – a telling mistake, indicating that the seventeenth-century connoisseurs did not feel the work was by a compatriot of theirs. This understandable misattribution was probably based on such stylistic features as the crammed composition, the conflicting gestures, the geometric design of the draperies, and on the similarity between the executioners' outfit and the uniform of German mercenaries. In Venetian painting it is a product of extraordinary dramatic tension conveying the tragedy of the event, and in this regard it is similar to Jacopo Bassano's treatment of the subject (cat. 103). However, there is a world of difference between the styles of the two paintings, which is only natural for two personalities of similarly great stature.

VILMOS TÁTRAI

## 39 Neroccio di Bartolomeo de' Landi | Siena, 1447 – Siena, 1500

## *Virgin and Child between Saint Jerome and Saint Bernardino of Siena*

ca. 1476

Tempera and gold on panel; 98 × 52 cm (including original frame)
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 281

Scholars are unanimous in regarding this as one of Neroccio's finest works, with its date clearly indicated by its close stylistic relationship to the triptych signed in 1476 (*Virgin and Child with Saints Michael and Bernardino of Siena,* Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 282). The Sienese painter and sculptor thus completed this work shortly after the breakup in 1475 of his workshop partnership with Francesco di Giorgio, who, like Neroccio, had probably trained with Vecchietta. Around the turn of the 1460s and '70s, Neroccio and Francesco di Giorgio had created together a new, blonde and ethereal female ideal in Sienese painting, of which this Madonna is an especially beautiful example.

Following the dissolution of their *societas in arte pictorum,* the two artists' paths proceeded in different directions. While painting thenceforth played only a marginal role in the activity of Francesco, who excelled as a sculptor, architect and engineer, the greater part of Neroccio's subsequent œuvre consists of devotional Madonna pictures. These are characterized by inventive detail, variety of composition, a refined elegance and a palette based on pale tones. Sometimes his figures appear against a blue sky, sometimes before a resplendent gold background. In this regard too, Neroccio's works faithfully reflect the most characteristic feature of the Sienese quattrocento: the survival of the Gothic tradition, which was renewed from within and into which, filtered through the individual perspectives and preferences of the artists, the achievements of Renaissance art were absorbed gradually and in diverse ways.

In this composition, a slender and long-necked Virgin holds before her the Child, who looks up at his mother while blessing and supporting himself on the armrest of the throne. The sweeping outline of Mary's gold-edged cloak, sharply delineated against the gold ground, still follows the Ducciesque tradition, but signs of receptivity to the new style can be discerned in every detail of the picture. Neroccio decorated even the gold ground not with customary punches but freely composed *all'antica* motifs. Similarly, the hem of Mary's dress is ornamented not with the traditional gilt and punched band, but with tendril motifs and cherubs' heads painted on a blue ground. The Child's gold-speckled halo, depicted in three dimensions, recalls Filippo Lippi's works, while the voluted armrest is a characteristic Renaissance feature derived from Donatello (who spent the last years of his life in Siena). Donatello's reliefs also inspired the vigorous figure of the Child. The special allure of the picture, however, rests primarily in the delicate harmony of gold, pale salmon pink, light greys and blues, as well as in unusual details such as Mary's pensive sideways glance or the play of her supple fingers.

Regarding the composition, the starting point for Neroccio's work was the Madonna type created by Sano di Pietro at the middle of the century. In these, the Virgin and Child are flanked by planar and symmetrically arranged angels and saints. Neroccio presents a modernized version of this pattern: he breaks the rigid symmetry, and accentuates the sense of space by portraying the saints in three-quarter profile and on a smaller scale. He also transforms the format of the Sano di Pietro model, making the pictorial field unusually narrow and high, which contributes to the overall elegance of the work.

Of the two lateral figures lost in thought, Saint Jerome stands to the left, holding a stone, the symbol of his penance. At the right is Bernardino of Siena with the tablet on which he used to hold up the holy name of Jesus – the Christogram IHS enclosed in sunrays – to the audiences of his sermons. Although the Franciscan Observant friar, canonized in 1450, could not have been personally known to Neroccio, his memory was still vivid for many at the time the picture was executed. Bernardino's toothless and emaciated face was also preserved in a death mask cast at the time of his death in 1444, and the demand for lifelike portrayals of him must have contributed to the evolution of Sienese portraiture (Israëls 2007).

A conspicuously large number of devotional Madonnas painted in mid-fifteenth century Siena depict the penitent Saint Jerome and Saint Bernardino. Some of these have been hypothetically connected to commissions for the penitent order of the Gesuati (M. Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 617, 620, n. 11), whose patron was Saint Jerome and who gained their name from their habit of loudly crying out the name of Jesus (Gesù). Although this possibility cannot be entirely ruled out in our case, counting against it is the fact that while in the other pictures Jerome is clad as a Gesuato, here he wears a sleeveless robe and his belt is not made of leather. It is thus more likely that the commissioner of this work must be sought elsewhere, and the range of clients for whom the portrayal of these two saints could have been important is rather wide. A seductive but so far unverifiable theory of Coor holds that the picture originates from the tabernacle which, as a document states, Neroccio made for Bernardino Nini in 1476. In this case, Saint Bernardino would appear as the client's personal patron saint.

DÓRA SALLAY

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40 Michele Pannonio | Documented in Ferrara in 1438 and between 1445 and 1463

## *The Muse Thalia*

ca. 1456–1457

Tempera and oil on poplar; 136.5 × 82 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 44
Signed on the *cartellino:* EX MICHAE / LE PANONIO
Inscription bottom right: PLANTANDI LEGES PER ME NOVERE COLONI
Inscription bottom left: ΦΥΤΕΙΑC ΓΕΝΟΜΟΥC ΑΠΕΜΟΥ ΔΗΓΝΩΤΕ ΓΕΩΡΓΟΙ
From the *studiolo* of the Belfiore Palace in Ferrara

Documentary and stylistic research, and especially technical examinations, now confirm beyond doubt that the panel belonged to the cycle depicting the Muses which once adorned the *studiolo* of the Belfiore Palace in Ferrara. The series, which followed the iconographic programme drawn up by the humanist Guarino da Verona in 1447, was ordered by Lionello d'Este, but brought to completion by his brother, Borso d'Este, who ruled the city from 1450. The nine panels depicting the Muses were displayed in the *studiolo,* a private study which was nevertheless often proudly shown to the duke's friends and political partners, and were framed by carpentry for which the woodcarvers Arduino de Biasio and Cristoforo and Lorenzo da Lendinara were paid from 1448 to 1453. Among the documented painters of the cycle there was the Tuscan Agnolo Maccagnino, who painted the muses Clio and Melpomene, completed in 1449 but later lost. Some scholars believe that the upper parts of *Erato* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara) and *Terpsichore* (Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan) are also his work; these were later completed or reworked by Cosmè Tura and his assistants. Cosmè Tura must have taken over the project in the time of Borso d'Este, and certainly from 1458 when he was called "the painter of the studio", and he probably worked on the Muses until the early 1460s. The Muse (perhaps *Calliope*) in the National Gallery in London is entirely Tura's own work, while his assistants completed *Erato,* and painted both *Urania* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara) and *Terpsichore,* though in the latter Tura intervened personally again. A further panel in the series is the *Polyhymnia* by an anonymous Ferrarese painter in Berlin's Gemäldegalerie, painted on a poplar panel that was cut from the same tree of which all the other four panels were taken. The five pictures also share a similar conservation history, in that all of them underwent an old restoration. Michele Pannonio's activity in the *studiolo* is not documented, and his name is connected to *The Muse Thalia* on the basis of the inscription on the *cartellino* at the base of the picture, which is today almost universally held to be the artist's signature (a degree of uncertainty is due to the unusual form of the signature, preceded by the "ex" and in the ablative case). The assumption that *Thalia* was indeed part of the cycle is confirmed by the provenance of the panel from the same poplar tree as the other pictures, and further supported by the iconography, the Greek and Latin verses composed by Theodorus Gaza and Guarino, and the coat of arms of Borso d'Este featuring the wattle fence *(paraduro)* and the motto "Fido". In addition, we know that from 1452 to the early 1460s Pannonio was one of Borso's most frequently employed artists, receiving numerous commissions for paintings, sculptures and smaller objects.

The image depicts Thalia not as the patron of comedy but as the muse of growing plants, in reference to the efforts of Duke Borso in the areas of soil improvement and agriculture. Shown from below, the female figure sits on an elaborately designed throne. Her elongated body is rendered with soft and malleable plasticity, and the refined linearism in the drapery still reflects late Gothic taste. A more contemporary approach is apparent in the strong light modelling the forms, the blending shades of colour and the accentuated contours of the faces.

The jewellery and vases are depicted with the same realism as in Rogier van der Weyden's works, and have been likened on account of their refined effect to the Parisian *ronde-bosse* enamels found in the collection of Lionello d'Este. The peculiar iconography of Thalia, interpreted here as a goddess who teaches mortals how to cultivate the land correctly, explains the proliferation of elements from nature.

Compared to other works attributed to Michele Pannonio, the artist's style has matured in this picture: the elegant, late Gothic elements are overshadowed by the influence of Donatello and Squarcione. The use of a binding medium containing oil is an indication that the painter had acquired the techniques of Netherlandish painting. He also followed the experimentation carried out in Ferrara by the young Cosmè Tura, as well as two illuminators, Giorgio d'Alemagna and Taddeo Crivelli, which represented a return to the mediaeval ideal whereby the artist should be well-versed in questions of technique and the imitation of materials, while striving to evoke the diversity of natural forms.

The Budapest painting is more mature than the *Saint George* and the *Crucifixion* also attributed to Michele Pannonio, but perhaps earlier than his Franciscan saints (cat. 41). Thus it may have been executed in the transitional period between Maccagnino's activity in the *studiolo* and that of Tura. A dating to shortly before 1458 is indicated by the influence the *Thalia* had on Taddeo Crivelli's miniatures in the books of Psalms and Ecclesiastes in Borso d'Este's Bible (Biblioteca Estense, Modena), presented to the duke in 1456 or 1457 (cf. Toniolo 1997, figs. 127–28).

FEDERICA TONIOLO

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41 Michele Pannonio | Documented in Ferrara in 1438 and between 1445 and 1463

*Saint Louis of Toulouse; Saint Bernardino of Siena*

ca. 1455–1463

Tempera on panel; each 116 × 42 cm
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara, inv. 72, 74

These two panels, once in the Costabili Collection in Ferrara and fortunately still together, were originally part of a polyptych. A third picture from the same altarpiece, depicting *Saint Anthony of Padua,* was discovered by Gombosi (1929–1930) in a private collection in Milan; it undoubtedly belongs to the other two pictures on account of its analogous composition and iconography.

The elegant figure of Saint Louis of Toulouse was probably situated on the left side of the polyptych. The saint has the attributes of a bishop and wears the Franciscan habit, covered by a splendid mantle braided with precious stones and adorned with gold-embroidered fleurs-de-lys in reference to his royal origins. On the right, in turn, must have stood Saint Bernardino of Siena, whose canonization in 1450 provides a firm *terminus post quem* for the dating of the pictures. The saint prays before a large disc which the artist has painted as a genuine masterpiece of the goldsmith's craft, enclosing the Christogram Bernardino used during his sermons. Both saints are portrayed full-length against a golden background, from a low viewpoint, executed by the artist empirically. Their feet rest on marble pedestals on which there are two pairs of vases filled with flowers. Behind Saint Bernardino three bishop's mitres also appear, again in foreshortening, symbolizing the three bishoprics he rejected in favour of devoting his life to preaching and conversion. The saintly status of the figures is emphasized by the niche shells behind their heads. The motif is of late Gothic origin, but here – thanks to the striking interplay of light and shadow – it creates a strong illusory effect, giving the impression of light arriving from the right, from a single common source.

The original provenance of the pictures is uncertain. It is conceivable that they were made for the monastery of Santo Spirito, the seat of the Observant Franciscans in Ferrara, where many celebrations were held in honour of Saint Bernardino after his canonization. Bernardino was particularly popular in Ferrara where the memory of his sermons lived on vividly in the minds of the citizens. The other place linked to his cult in Ferrara was the chapel of the Compagnia di San Bernardino in Ferrara, construction of which began in 1454 beside the church of San Francesco. Both of these sites received significant support from Borso d'Este, the duke of Ferrara, at the beginning of the 1450s, which might even suggest a court commission for the altarpiece. Further indications of this could be, on the one hand, the conspicuous presence of the golden fleurs-de-lys and the Bernardinian Christogram, both of which are known to have been dear to Borso, and on the other, the fact that the work is attributable to Michele Pannonio, whose activity at the court of Ferrara is documented. The best comparison to support the attribution is with *The Muse Thalia* (cat. 40), today universally regarded as the work of Pannonio, even though it still cannot be substantiated beyond doubt that the inscription "EX MICHAE/LE PANONIO" on which the attribution rests should be interpreted as the artist's signature.

Michele Pannonio, who was probably of Hungarian extraction, is first documented in Ferrara in 1438, and later, with greater certainty, between 1445 and 1463. As studies above all by Gombosi (1929–1930) and Boskovits (1978) have established, Pannonio, of the generation preceding Cosmè Tura, was the channel through which certain elements of not only the International Gothic style but also Squarcione's Paduan influence reached Ferrara. Elements reflecting a Squarcionesque inspiration in these works include the exalted gaze in the faces of the Franciscan saints, the experimentation in foreshortening, and the use of decorative elements such as the flower vases. In addition, it was also Michele Pannonio who readily absorbed from Netherlandish painters the almost tangibly real depiction of gold and silver objects, as is evident here in the Christogram, the crozier and the glittering jewels on the cloak of Saint Louis.

The two panels are generally dated to the early 1450s, but Toffanello (in *Ferrara* 2007) recently suggested advancing their dating to the early 1460s. In his view, these are the last works of the artist in Ferrara, produced after *The Muse Thalia,* from which the idea of portraying the figures from below derives. The forms of Michele Pannonio in this late period became more regular, shifting the emphasis from the virtuoso linearism typical of his earlier works such as the *Crucifixion,* now in a private collection. Moreover, according to Toffanello, we may also perhaps discern in the panels an echo of the gesso reliefs and monochrome paintings executed by Pannonio for the palace of Borso d'Este in the Certosa of Ferrara around 1463; in this palace, the decoration included the Christogram as well as the Este, imperial and French royal insignia.

FEDERICA TONIOLO

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## 42 Lazzaro Bastiani | Documented in Venice from 1449 – d. 1512

### *Madonna of Humility Crowned by Two Angels, with Musical Angels and God the Father*

ca. 1470

Tempera on panel; 79.7 × 55.4 cm
Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, inv. 1583/619

The theme of the *Madonna of Humility* is enriched with several iconographic motifs ranging from angels crowning the Virgin to God the Father, who appears with the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, alluding to the Holy Trinity. The angels in the foreground play the lute and the *lira da braccio,* while those in the background blow trumpets and recorders.

The painting entered the Poldi Pezzoli collection before the mid-nineteenth century (for a summary of the history of attribution, see Natale 1982). At first it was regarded as the work of Alvise Vivarini, then Sandberg Vavalà established the attribution to Lazzaro Bastiani (1931). Possibly misled by the similarity of some of the angel musicians, Sandberg Vavalà postulated that the picture was painted about the same time as the *Madonna with Saints and a Donor* of 1484 in the church of Santi Maria e Donato in Murano. However, Collobi (1939) dated it to around 1460; Natale (1982) to 1475 or so; and Casu (1996), who convincingly reconstructed the early phase of the artist's career, to the late 1460s.

Bastiani's first signed and dated work is the panel of 1484 in Murano mentioned above, but earlier (from around the middle of the century) he had already painted several works, most of them under the influence of Antonio Vivarini. He is likely to have spent his formative years in Antonio's workshop, while later he was influenced by Bartolomeo Vivarini and Giovanni Bellini. The Milan painting is from Bastiani's most successful period: at the turn of the 1460s and 70s he was in close contact with the most recent painting trends in Venice and Veneto. Several of his outstanding works were produced during this phase, including the polyptych in Matera, the *Madonna* in Berlin, the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Frick Collection and the *Saint Jerome* in Springfield. The picture in question represents the apogee in quality and invention in a series of Madonna paintings, the earliest of which is *The Virgin Adoring the Child* in the Museo Civico, Padua, followed by two Madonnas (one formerly in the Bondi collection in Vienna, the other in Berlin), and finally *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* at Waddesdon Manor, which also includes several important motifs of the Milan painting. An examination of this series reveals that the artist gradually abandoned the late Gothic stylistic elements, placed the horizon lower and lower (as this picture too confirms), and fell increasingly under the sway of Paduan culture. Apart from the garland and the drapery hung from the top corners of the painting, this influence is apparent in the somewhat theatrical accentuation of the trumpeting angels, which goes back to Marco Zoppo's *Dardani Madonna* (1455) in the Louvre and ultimately to Donatello's reliefs in the basilica of Saint Anthony in Padua. The athletic figures of the angels in the Berlin picture also attest to the impact of Marco Zoppo – as illustrated by a comparison with Zoppo's illumination of Virgil's works (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. lat. 11309) or his Colville folio (British Museum, London). These correspondences grew more intense in the second half of the 1460s when Zoppo and Francesco Squarcione were active in Venice (the latter working between 1463 and 1466 for the Scuola Grande di San Marco).

The relationship with Mantegna most clearly manifests itself in the Berlin painting, but becomes less dominant in the *Madonna* of the Poldi Pezzoli Museum, giving way to the impact of Giovanni Bellini's idiosyncratic use of light. The strength emanating from the Virgin's fingers with which she supports the *bambino* and the foreshortening and plasticity of the faces undoubtedly recall Mantegna's work but the strong diffuse light which shines dazzlingly on the crown, on the Virgin's brocade mantle, the gems of the drapery and the hair of the fluttering angels show that by this point Bastiani had coupled the early influences with the great Venetian master's distinctive treatment of light. We can therefore assume that Bastiani knew such major works as the *Davis Madonna* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) and the *Trivulzio Madonna* (Pinacoteca del Castello Sforzesco, Milan) by Bellini, who in the 1460s began to represent his figures enveloped in yards of glittering brocade. Bastiani borrowed this specific feature in this Milan picture. The work is, moreover, clearly later than Bartolomeo Vivarini's *Madonna and Child with Saints* of 1465 (Musei e Gallerie di Capodimonte, Naples), and can be dated to the years around 1470.

MAURO MINARDI

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43 Carlo Crivelli | Venice, ca. 1430–1435 – Ascoli Piceno (?), 1495

*Saint George*

1472

Tempera on panel; 96.5 × 33.7 cm
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 05.41.2

The saint, a young man with a shock of blond hair, stands firmly on a mottled marble floor, wearing splendid, varicoloured armour and looking proudly at the viewer. His pride derives from his triumph over the dragon symbolizing Satan; he is still holding the broken lance, while the dragon, in vain rancour, gasps its last at his feet.

The panel is in relatively good condition. On either side there is a thin vertical strip, originally unpainted as the frame covered it. When later the polyptych to which the panel belonged was dismembered, these strips were covered with painting and gilding. The gilding in the two upper corners, which masks the arched perimeter of the original gilded background, is also more recent.

Until 1845 the painting belonged to the Roman collection of Cardinal Fesch, Napoleon Bonaparte's uncle. In 1863 it was in London, in the Walter Davenport-Bromley collection, from which it was acquired by Lady Ashburton. The New York museum purchased it in 1905. It was accompanied through these changes of ownership by another panel showing *Saint Dominic,* now also in the Metropolitan Museum (inv. 05.41.1). The *Saint Dominic* is the same size as the *Saint George,* and its background is adorned with the same motif, one common on damask fabrics. These features prompted the association of the two panels with three other pieces that formed part of the same polyptych: one showing the *Virgin and Child* and bearing the inscription "CAROLUS CRIVELLUS VENETUS PINSIT 1472" also in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection); a *Saint James* in the Brooklyn Museum, New York, and a *Saint Nicholas of Myra* in the Cleveland Museum of Art (for the reconstruction of the polyptych, see Zampetti 1986, 258–59).

The depiction of Saint Dominic suggests that the polyptych was made for a Dominican church. Crivelli worked for this religious order in Ascoli and later in Camerino. Anna Bovero (1975, 88) hypothesized that the church of provenance was San Domenico in Fermo in the southern part of the Marches, not far from Ascoli, where Crivelli lived. She based this assumption on the fact that Amico Ricci (1834, I, 214) saw a painting by Crivelli depicting the Madonna and two saints in a corridor of the Dominican convent in Fermo. In his book, Ricci noted that the panel "had recently been sold". In a later handwritten annotation (published by Lightbown 2004, 506) he rectified himself saying that the picture had not after all been sold but could still be found in the convent. However, his original statement was probably the right one, since another handwritten note by the same Ricci (Papetti 1997, 56) affirms that Ignazio Cantalamessa of Ascoli purchased an altarpiece by Crivelli from the Dominican friars in Fermo in 1831. This reinforces Bovero's hypothesis, especially since in yet another note, Ricci himself conjectured that the painting might have come from the high altar of the Dominican church of Fermo (Lightbown 2004, 508; among Crivelli's works for Fermo, Ricci [1834, I, 214, 228, n. 26] also mentions a panel commissioned by the Vinci family for the high altar of the Observant Franciscan church, which was "recently sold to a Roman merchant for 50 *scudi romani*"; it should be noted that Lightbown [2004, 127] erroneously related this annotation to the altarpiece of the Dominicans in Fermo, while it actually refers to another polyptych painted by Carlo's brother Vittore [Lightbown 2004, 345]).

The polyptych of 1472 was an important milestone in Carlo Crivelli's career. The Venetian painter, who probably arrived in the Marches from Dalmatia, was trained in his youth in the circle of Francesco Squarcione in Padua and the idiom he used in his first Marchigian work, the polyptych of Massa Fermana painted in 1468, had an entirely Veneto character. In the works he produced immediately afterwards – the *Madonna* of Macerata and the dissembled polyptych of Porto San Giorgio (probably both from 1470) and more importantly the polyptych of 1472 – he already gradually abandoned these roots, and increasingly came under the influence of Umbrian and Marchigian painting. He was particularly influenced by Niccolò Alunno of Foligno who executed several works for clients in the Marches. The culmination of this process is the majestic polyptych Crivelli painted in 1473 for the cathedral of Ascoli (on Crivelli's development, see Zeri 1961a, 158–61).

MATTEO MAZZALUPI

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## 44 Carlo Crivelli | Venice, ca. 1430–1435 – Ascoli Piceno (?), 1495

### *The Virgin and Child Enthroned*

ca. 1476–1477

Tempera and gold on panel; 106.5 × 55.3 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 75
Signed on the step of the throne: OPUS CAROLI CRIVELLI VENETI
From the church of San Domenico in Ascoli Piceno

Dressed in sumptuous attire, the Virgin sits on a complex *all'antica* marble throne. The upper part of the throne is partly covered by a cloth of honour which is embellished at the front with an apple and a quince branch, with a large fruit hanging from each. The patterned gold background gives the impression of brocade. In keeping with the Gothic tradition – to which Crivelli remained faithful throughout his career – the artist executed several details in gilt pastiglia (a mixture of gesso and glue), namely the decorative motifs of the Virgin's cloak, sleeves and neckline, the Infant's cuffs and the diadem on his head, the haloes, and Mary's crown.

The support consists of three vertical planks of different sizes. The painting is in exceptionally good condition, the only notable damage being a vertical crack on the left caused by the movement of the planks.

It was Federico Zeri who identified this work as the central part of a polyptych whose laterals were originally formed of the panels showing *Saint Michael*, *Saint Jerome*, *Saint Peter Martyr* and *Saint Lucy* now in London (National Gallery, inv. NG788.10–14, each approximately 91 × 26 cm). These were made in the same period of Crivelli's career and their backgrounds are decorated with the same pattern. At some point around the first half of the nineteenth century, the four panels were united with another polyptych by Crivelli dated 1476, which comprised nine (originally ten) panels in two tiers and originally stood in the church of San Domenico in Ascoli Piceno in the Marches. Thus was created an enormous polyptych of thirteen panels which became known as the Demidoff Altarpiece after its owner, Prince Anatole Demidoff, to whose collection in San Donato near Florence it belonged from 1854 (on the Demidoff Altarpiece see especially Davies 1961, 161–65). Previously, the parts of the altarpieces had belonged to Cardinal Francesco Saverio de Zelada, librarian of the Holy Roman Church (1795), and Marquis Alessandro Rinuccini (from 1845 to 1852). It is known, however, that there had been fourteen panels in Cardinal Zelada's possession, whereas Prince Demidoff purchased only thirteen. This led Lightbown (2004, 209) to hypothesize quite reasonably that the missing piece, untraceable after these transactions, is identical with the panel now in Budapest. However, Lightbown's other hypothesis, that it was Demidoff himself to refuse the panel in question (to avoid having two Madonnas in his "new" altarpiece), must be discarded. In fact, the Madonna had been separated from the rest of the panels much earlier: the Hungarian Esterházys acquired it between 1812 and 1820 (an inventory of 1812 does not yet include it; it is first mentioned in an inventory of 1820, cf. Fischer–Rothmüller 1820).

McNeil Rushforth (1900, 55) pointed out that the four panels discussed – which formed the uppermost tier of the Demidoff Altarpiece – have nothing to do with the rest of the Demidoff-complex. (They are indeed now exhibited separately in London, two in their nineteenth-century neo-Gothic frames, two without.) Zeri was nonetheless able to establish that this altarpiece, formed of the four laterals in question and the central panel in Budapest, has a provenance from the same church as the larger altarpiece that formed the lower two tiers of the Demidoff Altarpiece: in the eighteenth century Tullio Lazzari (1724, 74) saw it still intact and described it as "the altarpiece to the right of the entrance". Lazzari's description is actually rather sketchy, but a recently discovered document of 1648, describing the subject of each panel, confirms this assumption (Gagliardi 1996). Thus Crivelli executed two polyptychs for the Dominican church in Ascoli; the larger one for the high altar, the smaller for a side altar dedicated to Saint Peter Martyr. The smaller altarpiece must be close in date to the larger one, as suggested by the similarity of the two Madonnas and more generally by the unity of style. (By contrast, Lightbown [2004, 249] suggests a dating to around 1479–1480. He argues that the second polyptych was probably made after 1477, because in that year a part of the church of San Domenico – "a parte dextra introitus versus reclaustrum" – is documented to have been reserved for the chapel of the late humanist Cola Pizzuti. However, it has not, I think, been established beyond doubt that the section of the church named in the document is identical with the place where Lazzari saw the altarpiece, neither is it certain that in 1724 the painting was still in the position it had been placed two and a half centuries earlier.)

At this time Crivelli had been residing in the Marches, actually in Ascoli Piceno, for about ten years already (his first Marchigian painting was the polyptych of Massa Fermana in 1468), and although his poetic vein seems to have been on the decline, his paintings executed with exquisite craftsmanship and glittering with gold and gilt pastiglia continued to be in great demand.

MATTEO MAZZALUPI

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OPVS·CAROLI·CRIVELLI·VENETI

## 45 Marco Zoppo (Marco di Antonio di Ruggero) | Cento, 1433 – Venice, 1478

### *The Penitent Saint Jerome*

ca. 1465–1466

Tempera on panel; 41 × 32.5 cm
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, inv. 743
Signed on a rock in the foreground: MARCO / ZOPPO / OPV

Although the autograph nature of the picture is guaranteed by a full signature in the foreground, Marco Zoppo's powerful depiction did not attract much attention from art historians until Lilian Armstrong's monograph (1976). Armstrong suggested that *The Penitent Saint Jerome* had once been a part of the now-dismantled high altarpiece of the church of San Giovanni Battista in Pesaro, completed by Zoppo in 1471. The impressive structure, executed with extraordinary commitment, had at its centre the large quadrangular *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints John the Baptist, Francis, Paul and Jerome* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin), and it has been suggested that *The Stigmatization of Saint Francis* in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore was one of the predella scenes (Berenson 1915, 167) and the *Imago pietatis* in the Musei Civici of Pesaro its pinnacle (see Zeri 1976, I, 209–10). In Armstrong's opinion, besides the *Saint Francis* scene, also the *Saint Jerome* formed part of the predella, paired with the *Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness* of the Cini Collection in Venice. This reconstruction has been generally accepted and later added to, with the tondo of *The Head of Saint John the Baptist* in the Musei Civici of Pesaro, thought to have been in the centre of the predella (Humfrey 1993, 71–78; see also Lucco 1990, 427–39; Smith Arcangeli 1990, 723; Lucco 1993, 116).

However, the metallic brilliance of the colours and the clarity with which the figures and the landscape are rendered in the *sacra conversazione* in Berlin is at odds with the warm, all-embracing, steeply angled light and the more relaxed rhythm of the landscape around the main figure in *Saint Jerome*. These stylistic considerations lead us to believe that it could not have belonged to the Pesaro altarpiece of 1471 (see Bacchi 1990, 32, who rightly excluded also the painting in the Cini Collection). *Saint Jerome* was probably an independent picture, which is confirmed by its vertical format (the original edges of the painted surface are clearly visible) and the vertical grain of the wood panel (which contrasts with the horizontal grain of the Batlimore panel). There is also the signature, which, as others have also noted (Negro–Roio 1998, 108, n. 5; Rossoni, in Bentini et al. ed. 2004), would unnecessarily repeat the one already present in the Berlin altar panel.

Almost certainly executed for private devotion, the painting shows Jerome as penitent and scholar, a subject that enjoyed popularity among the humanists and gained currency in northern Italy in the fifteenth century (Baxandall 1965, 195). Zoppo himself painted the subject more than once: it occurs, with some variation, in a predella scene of the polyptych of San Clemente in Bologna (1459–1462) and another work, probably with the same function as the picture discussed here but dating from later on (most probably around 1470–1471), now in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid. All three depictions draw their vigour from the scenographic effect of the rocky cave that serves to frame the act of penitence. The two devotional paintings, where the stony mass is larger, show a relation with Mantegna's picture on the same subject (Museu de Arte, São Paulo). The original location of the latter work is unknown, but Zoppo – a friend of Mantegna's (cf. Vasari [1550, 1568] 1966–1997, III, 680) – clearly knew it (K. Christiansen, in *London – New York* 1992, 114) and could have studied it already during his apprenticeship in the workshop of Squarcione in Padua (1453–1455). Of the different versions, the *Saint Jerome* discussed here would probably have been chronologically in the middle, painted between 1465 and 1466 – that is, not long after Zoppo's miniature depicting *Orpheus* in the Paris manuscript of Virgil's works, executed around 1463–1464 (see G. Toscano, in *Paris* 2008, 380–82, cat. 158) and before the altarpiece painted for the church of Santa Giustina in Venice, documented in 1468. The nervous brushwork that brings to life the fresh scene in the polyptych of San Clemente here gives way to a more broadly treated, solid representation pervaded by a stern tone, which culminates, not without irony, in the choleric grimace of the old Jerome beating his chest. It was this concentration of expression that Zoppo, before taking up permanent residence in Venice, developed further in Bologna, presumably under the influence of Niccolò dell'Arca and Francesco del Cossa, the painter of a severe *Pietà* (Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris) completed possibly around the same years.

CECILIA CAVALCA

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## 46 Jacopo Parisati da Montagnana | Documented in Padua between 1458 and 1499

### *The Lamentation of Christ*

ca. 1480–1485

Tempera on canvas; 148 × 109.5 cm
Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hanover, inv. PAM 972

In the second half of the fifteenth century, Jacopo Parisati was the leading figure of painting culture in Padua and its surrounds. In 1458, he moved to the centre of the province from Montagnana to learn his craft in the studio of the painter Francesco Bazelieri, whom we know only from surviving documents. The master immatriculated in the local guild of painters in 1469. Although his date of birth is unknown, it is generally thought to have been in the 1440s. In his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects,* Giorgio Vasari mentions a certain "Iacopo da Montagna" among the Venetian pupils of Giovanni Bellini (Vasari [1550, 1568] 1966–1997, III [1971], 440), whom scholars have tried to identify with Parisati – none too convincingly, given that it is difficult to firmly support this view based on the works themselves. The *Madonna* in the Santuario di Santa Maria del Tresto in Ospedaletto Euganeo and the *Pietà* in the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest (inv. 1066), both of which attest to the outstanding artistic qualities of Jacopo Parisati around the turn of the 1470s and '80s, show a greater affinity with the art of the Vivarinis and Mantegna. Jacopo died in Padua in 1499.

The master enjoyed great professional prosperity, working on the most important commissions either alone or in company with other painters. He took part in the decoration of the Gattamelata Chapel in the basilica of Sant'Antonio between 1472 and 1476, begun in 1469 by Pietro Calzetta and Matteo dal Pozzo. The frescoes perished, and not a single work by any of the other artists survived – similarly to many other masters who, as documents attest, worked in Padua in the decades following the departure of Mantegna. In 1487–1488, Jacopo painted the walls of the novices' cloister in the monastery attached to the basilica. These murals also perished, and for the most part a similar fate awaited the frescoes the artist completed from the mid-1480s with Prospero da Piazzola in the bishop's palace in Padua, the rebuilding of which was initiated by bishop Pietro Barozzi. The master's first dated and surviving works originate from 1490: these are the fragments of frescoes depicting scenes from Roman history, which once adorned the council hall of Belluno town hall and are now held in the local Museo Civico. Exemplifying Jacopo Parisati's later style, there remain the narrative frescoes in the presbytery of the Santuario della Madonna della Salute in Monteortone – where the *Annunciation* housed in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice also originates – and the rich decoration of the Barozzi Chapel in the bishop's palace in Padua executed between 1494 and 1497, from the frescoes on its walls to the triptych of the *Annunciation between Saint Michael and Tobias with the Angel*. The last stop in the master's career was the duomo in Montagnana, where – continuing a time-honoured Paduan tradition beginning with Giotto – he decorated the walls using experimental fresco techniques. The limited but quality body of works by Jacopo is completed by a number of panel paintings, among them the *Lamentation of Christ* in the Museo Diocesano in Padua (on the painter in general see Lazzarini 1908; Moschetti 1925–1939; Lucco 1984; De Nicolò Salmazo – Ericani ed. 2002; Magani 2006).

We do not know the commissioner of the Hannover painting, which is a crowded composition portraying the *Lamentation of Christ,* a subject particularly close to the painter's heart. Long ignored by scholars, at a conference dedicated to Parisati in 1999 the work was presented as one of the most important keys to understanding the master's style. Jacopo here interprets the Paduan legacy of Andrea Mantegna in an original manner and with extraordinary vivacity. Still fresh is the impact of the altar of San Zeno in Verona, painted by Mantegna between 1456 and 1459 in his Paduan workshop. Besides the decoration of the Ovetari Chapel in the church of the Eremitani, this is the work of the great Paduan master that most strongly influenced Parisati's development. Some of Jacopo's figures show a clear link to the innovations of Mantegna recorded in a drawing, now in the British Museum (inv. 1909-4-6-3), that must be read in the context of designs made for the altarpiece in Verona. The sheet shows *Studies of the Dead Christ* on its recto and the *Three Marys* on its verso. In the Hannover picture, related to the works of Jacopo's early maturity also on account of its fine decorative details, the novelty is the figure of Mary placed in the foreground, which opens up the composition in dramatic fashion while recalling Mantegna's engraving, *The Deposition from the Cross* (H. 10. 1.). The taut diagonal of Christ's body evokes not only the pictorial concepts worked out experimentally in the lowermost zone of the Ovetari frescoes, but also anticipates certain lamentation compositions of the early sixteenth century, such as those of Sodoma. This multiple incidence leads one to conclude that there existed a work of Mantegna, now lost, that served as a model.

ALBERTA DE NICOLÒ SALMAZO

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INRI

47 GIOVANNI MANSUETI | Venice (?), ca. 1460–1465 – Venice, 1526/1527

## *Saint Jerome in the Desert*

ca. 1515–1520

Oil on panel; 68.3 × 89.5 cm
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 58 AC 00026
Signed bottom centre: • IOANNESDEMANSVETIS • P / • FACIEBAT •

Mansueti was a disciple of Gentile Bellini, and like his master – and also like his close contemporary, Carpaccio – he specialized in painting large-scale narrative pictures for the Venetian *scuole*. In the 1490s all three painters were engaged on the *Miracles of the True Cross* cycle for the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice), and between 1518 and 1526 Mansueti contributed three canvases to the *Life of Saint Mark* cycle for the Scuola di San Marco, a project that had been begun by Gentile before his death in 1507. Although a minor master of limited talent, Mansueti created a personal style that was quite distinctive, and very well suited to the decorative and narrative function of his cyclical canvases.

The present, relatively small panel shows a subject that became very popular in Venetian painting in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, thanks above all to the example of Giovanni Bellini. According to the widely circulated late medieval compendium of saints' lives, *The Golden Legend,* Jerome spent four years in the desert performing acts of penitence, with only wild beasts for company. The representation of the elderly saint half naked, mortifying his flesh with a stone, and gazing on the image of the crucified Saviour, obviously met an important devotional need among pious Venetians, who presumably drew moral and spiritual inspiration from such pictures in the privacy of their studies or bedrooms. But equally, a large part of the attraction of the subject lay in the opportunities it presented for landscape painting, and for the representation of the rich plenitude of the natural world.

Mansueti shows many of the details that had already become conventional for paintings of the subject: the crucifix; the lion, whose wounded paw the saint had healed; the rustic dwelling, equipped with the materials Jerome would need for his scholarly work as translator of the Bible; the discarded cardinal's robe and hat; and symbols of human mortality, such as the skull and hourglass. But in contrast to *Saint Jerome* pictures by Bellini, and by other Venetian painters such as Cima (cf. cat. 23) and Lotto, Mansueti could not resist the temptation to pack his composition with an enormous amount of further detail: a bear, a stoat, a dog, a deer, a rabbit, two monkeys, and two leopards in the foreground; a shepherd with sheep and cows in the right middleground; a river with gondoliers, washerwomen, swans, and ducks, also in the middleground; and winding roads, with a man and his donkey, and other men walking and riding, leading the eye to a church, a castle, and distant mountains in the background. The overall effect is undeniably cluttered, and the painter is not in control either of relationships of scale or of coherent spatial recession. Nevertheless, in part because of the very naivety of the expression, the picture communicates a sense of delight in an orderly, domesticated world, where God's creatures, human and animal, co-exist in peace and harmony.

Because of the essential consistency of his style over three or more decades, Mansueti's pictures are difficult to date. It may be noted, however, that the little dog in the left foreground, which derives from Carpaccio's *Portrait of a Knight* of 1510 (Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid), recurs in Mansueti's *Baptism of Anianus* of ca. 1520 (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan) for the Scuola di San Marco cycle. It is likely, therefore, that the *Saint Jerome* was painted at some time during the second decade, although a date in the early 1520s cannot be excluded.

PETER HUMFREY

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## 48 Giovanni di Piermatteo Boccati | Camerino, ca. 1409 – Camerino, 1486/1487

### *Crucifixion*

ca. 1440

Tempera and gold on panel; 33 × 24.5 cm
Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino, inv. 1990 D 5

The unusual structure of this *Crucifixion* scene – with its off-central axis – appears to be original, as indicated by the intact borders of the painted surface and by the support, whose edges are shaped on the reverse to fit the old frame. However, there is some uncertainty over whether this small panel was originally an independent work or was joined with another painting to form a diptych.

The picture is part of a group of works from the Marche region that belonged to the Venetian Cini Collection before the Italian state purchased and incorporated them into the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche in 1987 (Dal Poggetto 1988). According to Zeri (1961b) and Meiss (1961), who simultaneously published this picture as Boccati's early work, the positioning of the three crosses off-centre, the way in which the human figures and the horses are randomly truncated by the edges of the frame, the relation between the Hill of Calvary and the ragged coastline in the background suggest that the artist must have been familiar with an early Netherlandish compositional prototype probably associable with Jan van Eyck. Neither was this an occasional influence on the artist, because the same features recur in his other works from this period, including the *Crucifixion* at the Galleria Franchetti (Ca' d'Oro) in Venice and the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Sinebrychoff Art Museum in Helsinki, both dating from shortly after 1440.

Though not yet conclusively determined, it seems likely that these compositional solutions of "Eyckian" origin were mediated to painters like Boccati and Benedetto Bonfigli by Domenico Veneziano, who was documented in Perugia around 1437–1438. In this regard it is worth comparing Boccati's *Adoration* in Helsinki with Domenico Veneziano's panel with the same subject in Berlin (Gemäldegalerie), painted in the late 1430s. Boccati is documented as being present in Filippo Lippi's Florentine workshop in 1443. The results of this relationship, combined with what he had learnt from Fra Angelico, are reflected in his first documented work, the *Virgin and Child with Saints and Angels* (*Pala del Pergolato,* today Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia) painted in Perugia in 1446–1447. The influence of these masters accounts for the misattribution of certain works to Boccati, which are in reality by other artists similarly receptive to Florentine innovations. One of these is a predella scene showing the *Beheading of a Bishop Saint* (Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro, inv. 1925.212, cf. Wright 1976, 19), which is Borghese di Piero's work from his best and most Masaccesque period, and which I hope to discuss on another occasion.

In comparison to the Perugia altarpiece, the *Crucifixion* of Urbino is less touched by contemporary trends, and contains no direct references to Lippi's idiom. Rather, a certain late Gothic legacy can be detected, not only in the use of different materials but also in the thick and dark-hued modelling of the figures and rocks, which derives from Arcangelo di Cola, the foremost representative of Camerinese painting in the 1420s. The condensation of space, owing to which Jerusalem and the seaside mountains appear directly behind the crosses and not in the far distance, is also reminiscent of the Gothic tradition. Space is far airier in the Helsinki and Venice panels mentioned above, as well as in the subsequently painted predella of the Perugia altarpiece, which suggests that the work discussed here precedes the others in date and can be considered the first known painting by Boccati, executed around 1440 (Minardi, in *Urbino* 2005). Furthermore, it marks the start of a whole series of crucifixions that ran through Boccati's œuvre, which are now preserved in Venice (shortly after 1440), Perugia (1446–1447), Turin (1458–1461), Camerino (ca. 1465–1470), Belforte del Chienti (1468), Milan and Esztergom (ca. 1468–1473). Several of them share an expressively disjointed rendering of the markedly emphatic drama, the influence of Donatello's sculptures (as shown by Christ's figure in this picture), and the cosmic projection of the drama of the Crucifixion to a broad and clear horizon.

When painting this Calvary scene, Boccati must have been about thirty, as he is now known to have been born around 1409 (Mazzalupi 2006, 7). There is as yet no data available about his previous work, but presumably his early years were defined by the influence of late Gothic painting in Camerino. This period is concluded with the *Crucifixion* discussed here, in which Boccati cautiously opens towards the Netherlandish innovations and the art of Domenico Veneziano.

MAURO MINARDI

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## 49 Antonello da Messina | Messina, ca. 1430 – Messina, 1479

*Crucifixion*

end of 1460s

Tempera and oil on panel (fruitwood, perhaps peach); 39.4 × 23.1 cm
Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu (Romania), inv. 732

It is not known when the painting was purchased by Baron Samuel von Brukenthal, governor of Transylvania from 1777 to 1787 under Maria Theresa of Austria, for his house in Hermannstadt (now Sibiu), which has been, since 1790, a sort of museum open to the public – the first of its kind in eastern Europe – institutionalized as the Brukenthal Museum in 1817.

In the nineteenth century, the small panel was believed to be by a fourteenth-century German painter. In 1902 Karl Voll established that it had in fact been painted by Antonello da Messina, an attribution that has become universally accepted, as has the opinion that the painting is one of the early masterpieces of the artist, assuming a key role in understanding the first phase of his career and his œuvre as a whole. The peripatetic artist started from Sicily, in the centre of the Mediterranean region, a trading point for many works of art, among other things. He was trained, around the middle of the fifteenth century, in the workshop of Niccolò Colantonio in Naples. Naples at that time saw two successive great rulers: first, King René of Anjou, who was a poet, an intellectual of refined taste and a cultured patron who had a thorough knowledge of Flemish and Burgundian art. King René was accompanied to southern Italy by Provençal painters including Barthélémy d'Eyck and Enguerrand Quarton who mitigated Netherlandish rigidity with softer light effects. He was succeeded by Alfonso of Aragon, who brought Catalonian painters as well as Iberian tiles, ceramics and textiles with him to Naples.

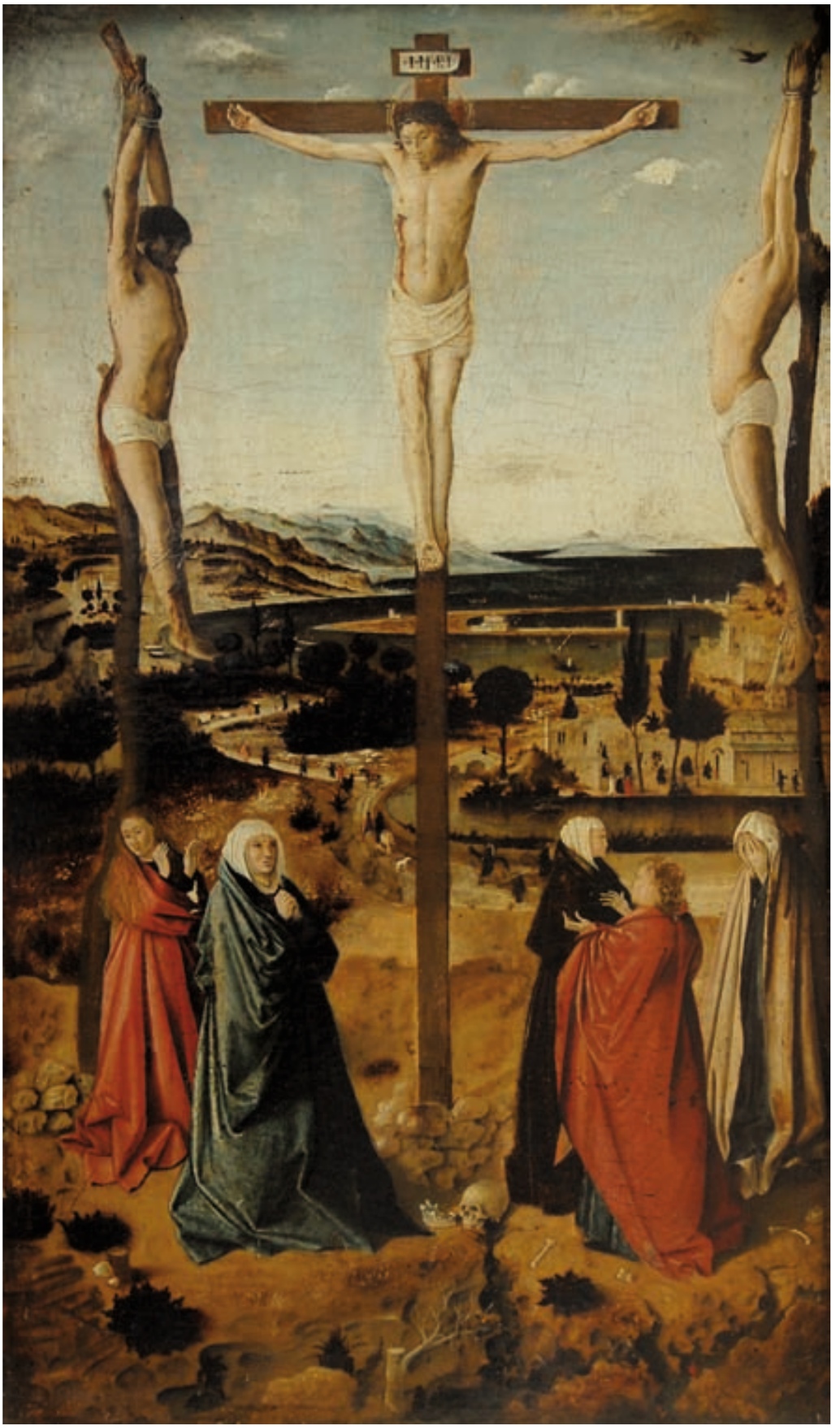
It was this melting pot of visual arts that formed the basis of Antonello da Messina's art (contrary to the legend related by Vasari in his *Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Painters, Sculptors, and Architects,* which celebrates Antonello as the one who obtained the secret of oil painting, the wonderful alchemy of Jan van Eyck). This is reflected in the Sibiu panel, the earliest work in a stylistically related series on the subject of the Crucifixion, continued by the versions in London (National Gallery) and Antwerp (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten), the latter dated 1475. From a technical point of view, these works are completely independent from the alleged Netherlandish influence in that the paint is applied thickly, in an opaque and dense impasto, creating a novel rendering of the landscape and the details which differs essentially from the art of the Netherlandish painters, in particular from Van Eyck's. To paraphrase Erwin Panofsky's famous saying about the latter artist, Antonello's eye does not operate as a microscope and as a telescope at the same time; it is not able to grasp the reality of things and intensify it by the meticulous rendering of the brilliant fabric of surfaces, through changing lights that can evoke even the rippling of water or the swarming of a meadow. For the first-generation artists of the *ars nova* the secret of painting may have lain in the inexhaustible exploration of the visible reality of objects down to detail of the highest definition, but Antonello's interests lay elsewhere. It is revealing that he portrays the landscape behind the Crucifixion – the city and the busy Strait of Messina – from a bird's eye view, from an almost topographical perspective. To the right is the Basilian monastery of San Salvatore, and behind it Matagrifone Castle, also known as the Rocca Guelfonia. In the middle of the strait, the artist took the liberty of depicting the Aeolian Islands that are not, in reality, visible from Messina in that position. To the left, there are flying birds, boats moored up, sails dotting the sea, and tiny strolling figures on shore. We identify these elements mostly by intuition, because Antonello does not describe reality with the tip of his brush in the way that Van Eyck would, but simply implies it, offering a few clues to aid recognition. It is a compendious painting that has to be viewed from the right distance, never less than a metre. If macrophotographs of the works of Van Eyck or, later, Giovanni Bellini reveal a new world and confirm the considerable technical skills involved, the same with Antonello da Messina merely exposes the illusion.

However, Antonello adapted from Netherlandish – Eyckian – prototypes the idea of the high-horizon landscape, interspersed with spongy rocks, sloping towards the foreground. All this is a demonstration of the rich artistic context of this picture, as Mediterranean as it is Italian, revealed as it is by the mourners' splendid dialogue of gestures. Mary Magdalene raises her hands and turns her face away from the Passion scene, another one of the Marys buries her face in her hands, while John spreads his arms in shock in front of the good thief. The latter's body is already stiff, defeated by death, while the bad thief is twitching his last.

GIOVANNI C. F. VILLA

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## 50 Bergognone (Ambrogio da Fossano) | Milan (?), ca. 1450–1453 – Milan, 1523

### *The Lamentation of Christ*

ca. 1485

Tempera and oil on panel; 64.7 × 49.3 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 65

Ambrogio Bergognone, the most consistent and brilliant follower of Vincenzo Foppa, is best known for his leading role in the workshop decorating the Certosa monastery of Pavia between 1486 and 1495. The altarpieces preserved in the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana in Milan and the church of Ss. Gratiniano e Felino in Arona, generally dated to the years 1484–1488 (Righi 1998), give a sense of the artist's work directly before his activity in Pavia. His art in this period is an interpretation of Foppa's style, in which he emphasizes crystal-clear drawing, light and perspective, in a characteristic style replete with the ornateness and radiance typical of Northern art, but filtered through Foppa's nacreous palette.

The Northern stylistic elements are most striking in the works that are perhaps even earlier; these include *The Virgin Nursing the Child* (Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, inv. 1630/654), the *Adoration of the Christ Child* (Berenson Collection, Villa I Tatti, Settignano), and the *Crucifixion* (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery). It is still questionable, however, whether it is a strictly Netherlandish influence at play here, conveyed to Bergognone by Netherlandish works of art arriving in Lombardy or through the mediation of Zanetto Bugatto (who returned at this time from Brussels having "perfected" his style under Rogier van der Weyden). Alternatively, it may be simply a case of the artist borrowing, in modified form, the Ligurian impulses which spread due to the "commuting" of the most important painters working in Lombardy in the third quarter of the century – among them Foppa himself, as well as Carlo Braccesco. In order to understand better the young Bergognone's artistic milieu, I believe it would be worthwhile re-examining the "Gerli" *Presentation in the Temple* (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan). The view that this is a work by Foppa painted in the 1460s (S. Buganza, in *Brescia* 2003, 168) cannot, in my opinion, be regarded as definitive, but it certainly reflects Foppa's influence, and is closely related to another work, undoubtedly by the young Bergognone, the *Virgin and Child* in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli (inv. 1644/640).

This intersection of styles also characterizes the small Budapest panel, in which Northern elements more or less traceable to Rogier van der Weyden are conspicuously present (pointed out by Nadia Righi in 1998, to whom we owe the most detailed analysis of the work), but so are certain Foppa influences, mainly in the physiognomy of some figures in the middle ground, in the facial types and some solutions in the drawing that were to remain effectively unaltered in Bergognone's works of the subsequent years. The broken folds of the cloak of the beautiful figure of Saint John standing at the left have been explained by the artist's study of contemporary Lombard sculpture. The best analogy to the Budapest painting is, however, Bramantino's *Man of Sorrows* in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection in Madrid, even in the way shadows are conceived in both pictures as a kind of dust deposited in the corners, which perhaps indicates the essentially contemporaneous date of their execution.

The picture discussed here undoubtedly reflects the situation in Milan around 1485 well: Foppa's style could be interpreted in the Northern–Ligurian manner, with its sharp attention to detail and rich lustre, or according to Ferrarese taste, where rigour of perspective, unity created by diffuse light, and extraordinarily precise drawing were deemed important. The reference points, however, soon changed completely, the reason for which is to be sought in the success of Leonardo (who was not yet a well-known artist during his first years in Milan), as well as in the growing popularity of Bramantino. These two developments, which began in the second half of the decade and led to the formation of the *maniera moderna*, were initially met with interest but later rejected by the leading figure of the school, Foppa, as well as by the true heir of his splendid legacy, Bergognone. The same blending of idioms is shown in *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, inv. 7438; on this work see Marani 2006, useful also on account of its re-examination of Bergognone's early period), which may thus have been completed at about the same time.

The fact that Bergognone was one of the few painters who took notice of the first version of *The Virgin of the Rocks,* which was almost certainly accessible to only a very few (Mary Magdalene's face in the Budapest painting recalls the face of Leonardo's Virgin), indicates that Bergognone and the picture examined here can be linked to the cultural and social elite that moved around the Sforza family. This impression is reinforced by the extraordinary opulence of the painting, in which even the magnificent rays of the setting sun, spreading softly over the strongly Lombardized Jerusalem in the background, have been executed in gold.

The painting is first recorded, with an attribution to Mantegna, in the 1820 inventory of the Esterházy Collection (see Fischer–Rothmüller 1820; the previous inventory in 1812 makes no mention of it). Its attribution to Bergognone, accepted almost unanimously by later criticism, is by Otto Mündler (1869).

EDOARDO VILLATA

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51 DEFENDENTE FERRARI | Chivasso, ca. 1480–1485 – Chivasso (?), after November 21, 1540

## *Nativity in Nocturnal Light*

1510

Mixed technique on panel; 37 × 27 cm
Museo Civico d'Arte Antica e Palazzo Madama, Turin, inv. 412/D
Inscription in white paint on the reverse: 1510

Along with Macrino d'Alba, Defendente Ferrari has long been regarded as the foremost and most highly esteemed Piedmontese painter of the Renaissance. Modern criticism, too, has re-evaluated his artistic significance, and identified his style as that of a student and – until the first years of the sixteenth century – collaborator of Giovanni Martino Spanzotti (for a critical assessment of Defendente, see Fantino 2007, though the stylistic analysis of the individual works must be treated with caution).

His early career is marked by such prominent works as the *Adoration of the Christ Child* (ca. 1505, formerly in the church of San Francesco in Biella, now in the Accademia Albertina, Turin), the works produced in cooperation with Spanzotti, like the altarpiece for the guild of shoemakers and the *Baptism of Christ* in the Turin Cathedral (1501–1510 and 1508–1510, respectively), and finally the *Saint Jerome* in the Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, and the nocturnal *Nativity* in the Fogg Art Museum (Cambridge, Mass.) (before 1508, cf. Romana 1970, 11). This phase saw his attention first turn towards the novel achievements of the northern Italian Renaissance in the use of perspective and the rediscovery of antiquity, yet these were soon replaced by a marked – and at times almost exclusive – interest in the stylistic idiom of the Alpine region and the areas north of the Alps: he was influenced by early Netherlandish art and by the paintings and graphics issuing from the so-called "Danube school". (For a comprehensive assessment of Defendente, see G. Romano, in *DBI* 1960–[…], vol. 46 [1996], 537–41; on the history of the altarpiece in the Albertina: Manchinu 1998.)

The small panel of 1510 in the Palazzo Madama, which is once more perfectly legible following restoration in the studio of Nicola di Aramengo in 1990, can quite justifiably be included in this group. It is closely related to the painting in Cambridge both in its subject and in the "meticulous and careful execution" which "leads one to suspect that Defendente began his career not far from illuminators' workshops" (Romano, in *Stupinigi* 1996). Nevertheless, the iconographic dependence of the scenery-like, dilapidated hut depicted in perspective, with a glimpse of the angel and shepherds beyond its walls, was borrowed from a print by Martin Schongauer (Margarone, in *Turin* 2006), which clearly indicates the primary sources the artist drew on. At the same time, the foreshortened rendering of the bricks seems to be directly linked to the Bramantinesque architectural spaces that Spanzotti frescoed in the 1480s on the rood screen of the church of San Bernardino in Ivrea – and Spanzotti painted some of the finest nocturnal scenes of Italian painting on this very wall. Around 1510, there was intense mutual influence between the two painters (generating interminable debates about authorship). No matter how one interprets this circumstance, it is clear that Defendente's rise coincided with Spanzotti's becoming an established artist in the area of Turin, Chivasso, and Chambéry in the duchy of Savoy, and with his style veering gradually towards an idiom of the Alps and beyond.

The moment shown by the picture is narrated in the apocryphal Gospel of James (Protoevangelium Jacobi, 19, 1–3): when Joseph returns breathless with a midwife to the hut, and sees that Jesus has already been born. The narration is combined with the vision of Saint Bridget of Sweden, described in her *Revelations:* the Virgin kneels before the Child, without any signs of labour pains, "quem genuit adoravit" ("and adores whom she has borne"); the light emanating from the newborn babe completely overshadows the flickering lamp of Saint Joseph. It is by no means certain that the theme implies an allusion to the Immaculate Conception, as Margarone has supposed. What seems certain is that the painting was meant for private devotion, for a Savoyard (Torinese?) client of notably refined taste.

The painting was acquired by the Palazzo Madama in 1909 as a part of Vincenzo Fontana's important donation.

EDOARDO VILLATA

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*Not exhibited.*



52 Bartolomeo Veneto | Documented from 1502 – d. Turin, 1531

*Flora*

ca. 1520–1525

Tempera and oil on poplar panel; 43.6 × 34.6 cm
Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, inv. 1077

Bartolomeo Veneto, who was active in Veneto and Lombardy, painted predominantly portraits and religious works. He managed to combine the various Italian styles with the Northern influence as few others were able. His prime abilities included a great flair for realism and an extraordinary attention to detail which enabled him to obtain numerous commissions from wealthy clients, particularly for his consummate portraits.

The panel in the Städel Museum, which bears the name of the ancient goddess of spring, Flora, is actually a portrait of an unknown young woman, often identified as the infamous Lucrezia Borgia, the daughter of Pope Alexander VI (Swarzenski 1922). Alternatively, Huysmans (1905, 70–86) has suggested the mistress of that same pope, Giulia Farnese. Nevertheless, in the absence of any evidence to confirm the identity of the sitter, the panel is commonly believed to represent Flora instead, and several details of the picture do indeed lend credence to this assumption.

The half-nude is portrayed against a black background in three-quarter profile, turning to the left but still maintaining eye contact with the viewer. She is dressed in a white tunic which exposes her left breast. Over the tunic, she wears a dark green mantle loosely around her shoulders. In her upraised right hand she delicately holds a small bouquet of various flowers, composed of anemones, daisies, and buttercups, which she appears to offer the viewer with a self-assured gaze. Her gold-coloured, tightly-crimped hair falls over her shoulders and is kept firmly together at her forehead by a light-blue bandana. Over the bandana she wears a thin, almost transparent, white, turban-like headdress, which is also kept together by the bandana. This headdress doubles as a scarf, as it is draped around her neck and across her décolleté. Finally, the assemblage of head accessories is crowned with a myrtle wreath, a symbol for the approaching spring. In addition, the young woman has a cross pendant emblazoned with red and blue gemstones between her breasts, and an equally precious jewel with gemstones and pearls on her forehead; both of these are fixed with a thin string.

In Renaissance art, the flowers described, as well as the myrtle wreath, are often used for the allegory of spring *(Flora),* but sometimes also as indications of the purity of a young bride and marriage in general. In this case, the nudity and the ambiguous gaze of the woman make the latter interpretation unlikely.

Some authors have suggested that the painting may be a portrayal of a courtesan, simply because a woman of higher birth (like Giulia Farnese or Lucrezia Borgia) would not have wished to be depicted half-naked, as is the woman in this work. But on this point, too, the interpretation is inconclusive, because the flower decoration, particularly the myrtle wreath, does not harmonize with the representations of courtesans. Thus, of all the various theories, the hypothesis of the spring goddess remains the most plausible.

As inscrutable and enigmatic as Bartolomeo Veneto's masterfully executed portrait may be, it nevertheless stands as a remarkable example of the successful symbiosis of different stylistic elements borrowed from the great Italian masters like Giovanni Bellini and Antonello di Messina, and from exponents of the northern European Renaissance, Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden.

SERGEY HARUTOONIAN

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53 Giovanni Cariani (Giovanni de' Busi) | Bergamo (?), ca. 1485 – Venice, after 1547

*The Way to Calvary*

ca. 1519

Oil on canvas; 63 × 87 cm
Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan, inv. 203

Born in Bergamo, Giovanni Cariani learnt painting in Venice, probably in the workshop of Sebastiano Luciani, known many years later as Sebastiano del Piombo. Cariani was one of the most intriguing of the second-rate artists to emerge in the first decades of the cinquecento. In the Venetian milieu dominated by Titian, he was capable of preserving his singular tone, his powerful, immediate realism, his particular style which incorporated elements from Sebastiano and Titian and sometimes from other artists such as Palma Vecchio and Lorenzo Lotto, and in a few cases even from Bonifacio Veronese.

This painting was in the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana as early as 1685, but oddly enough, it was registered as Lucas van Leyden's work. Its size suggests that it was meant for private devotion and meditation. Cariani spent a relatively long time – between 1517 and 1523 – in Bergamo where he received regular commissions from residents in and around the town. In this region "inner prayer" – meditation with the help of scenes from the life of Christ or the Virgin – was particularly widespread. In Cariani's painting the event of Christ collapsing under the weight of the cross and Veronica wiping Christ's face with her veil appears as a lively, inventively rendered village wake. In the improbably crowded space a festive procession seems to progress – ignoring the clouds towering in the sky – towards a definite goal: the air is filled with the clamour of people and horns. Some deliver speeches, others seem interested in meeting acquaintances, and there is time to pet a dog as well. Simon of Cyrene is easy to recognize by his old-fashioned peasant clothing. While the crowd moves on, a group of people clad in oriental attire take shelter in the shade of the trees. The representation of the events of the Way of the Cross has always been present in the history of painting, but there was probably a boom in demand for the subject a few years before Cariani's picture when Raphael's picture of Christ falling under the Cross (now in the Museo del Prado, Madrid) sank during its voyage to Palermo but was miraculously recovered.

As far as dating is concerned, various traits present in Cariani's painting have led to a broad range of dates being proposed for it, ranging from the years prior to 1519 to around 1540. However, it can be contended that on the basis of a bent for a certain geometric stylization and a fondness for straight lines the picture can be dated to around the time of the portraits of seven members of the Albani family, signed and dated 1519 (today in a private collection, Bergamo), the *Saint Gotthard Altarpiece* (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan) executed between 1517 and 1519, and the *Landscape with Nymph* (Staatliche Museen, Berlin) universally dated to around 1520. The contemporary clothes and the archaizing, fancifully embellished helmets of the warriors mingling with the crowd also tally with the date around 1519 (they would have been decidedly outdated in 1540) and they probably reflect fairly accurately the uniform of German mercenaries *(Landsknechte),* several waves of whom passed through the territory of Bergamo after 1515. Several scholars have pointed out the presence of Northern elements in the picture, which probably explain the old attribution to Lucas van Leyden.

MAURO LUCCO

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VIRGINIS MATER

# 4 | The Ideal Incarnate: The High Renaissance

The road from early Renaissance to high Renaissance was in no small measure that of the development of the craft and the refinement of painterly devices. Paradoxical though it may seem, naturalism and idealization both reached a higher level at the same time. The attention of the greatest artists was directed away from the surface toward the inner driving forces of the world, away from the mechanical characteristics of motion to its organic nature, and from the externalities of the body and face to the motions of the mind. The methods of composition were transformed accordingly: the interplay of the whole and its parts became more complex and intricate, yet more transparent. The harmony of composition was enriched with the dynamism of polyphony. The glorification of man at the centre of the universe as the repository of Beauty, Goodness and Truth is the main theme of innumerable works. Of course, there was a huge gap between the illusion of idealization and the reality of everyday life, but in the history of human civilization, even those moments are rare when certain illusions can be formulated and given shape at all.

Leonardo da Vinci's *Lady with the Ermine* (cat. 54) was painted around 1490, at approximately the same time as David Ghirlandaio's *Portrait of Selvaggia Sassetti* (cat. 30). When one compares these two works, it becomes clear that Leonardo had established a new era in portrait painting years before the *Mona Lisa*. The "moti dell'animo" mentioned in his writings, the motions of the mind, can be sensed in this portrait in the posture, the gestures and the facial expression. There is serenity in the countenance of Cecilia Gallerani, Lodovico Sforza's adolescent mistress, her smile is impish, her gesture tender, her fingers youthfully restless. Her head turns in a different direction to her body, while the ermine in her hands has the very essence of being poised to jump. Her innermost self, with all its mysteriousness, fresh charm and femininity, is evident in her exterior, and always casts a spell over every observer.

Bernardino Luini
*Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Barbara*
(detail)
ca. 1522–1525
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest

All the important innovations of the high Renaissance – or "maniera moderna", as Vasari termed it – are present in the *Virgin and Child* (cat. 55) by Leonardo's pupil Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio. The work was painted in the last decade of the fifteenth century, probably in Leonardo's Milanese workshop. The faces of the Virgin and the Child are modelled with sfumato – with soft, smoke-like gradations of light and shade – and every form appears tangibly three-dimensional, yet not sculpturesque as was typical of the early Renaissance. Both figures are idyllically beautiful, yet entirely alive. Details like the silken locks of hair, the Child's foreshortened leg or the magnificent folds of the Virgin's sleeve would be unthinkable without thorough studies from nature. The pyramidal composition effortlessly unifies the movement extending in all directions of the space, thus bringing to fruition the key innovation of the high Renaissance: the richly articulated unity that is dynamic in its every ele-

ment. In the early sixteenth century Leonardo's influence in Milan already held sway. The only artist of stature to remain little touched by his influence was Bramantino. His works, including the *Lamentation* (cat. 56), continue Piero della Francesca's approach in their ascetic monumentality and rigid spatial geometry. The painter excludes the viewer, as it were, from the timeless space of the Lamentation, whose dismal, threatening architecture foreshadows the metaphysical painters of the twentieth century. Leonardo's mysteriousness – as a copy of his lost *Leda and the Swan* (cat. 57) demonstrates – is of an entirely different kind. As Kenneth Clark states in his monograph first published in 1939, to Leonardo "the Leda myth could not be what it was to Correggio, an allegory of sensual ecstasy. He saw in it not the joy and beauty of sexual intercourse, but its mystery, and its analogy with the creative processes of nature." [His approach was] "the intellectual treatment of a theme usually reserved for the emotions …." When looking at Francesco Melzi's version of the *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* (cat. 58), one would be hard put to give a better description than Clark's: in Leonardo's painting, for which at least two cartoons were made, "[t]he design has the exhilarating quality of an elaborate fugue; like a masterpiece of Bach it is inexhaustible. We are always discovering new felicities of movement and harmony, growing more and more intricate, yet subordinate to the whole; and, as with Bach, this is not only an intellectual performance; it is charged with human feeling. [It is a] strange blend of mystery and tenderness, human and inhuman …." As a sign of the almost cultic veneration of Leonardo's genius, twenty-five variants of his painting in Paris survive from the first half of the sixteenth century. In his small-scale version (cat. 59), Cesare da Sesto omitted the figure of Saint Anne, placed large plants in the foreground and replaced the mountainous landscape in the background with a castle and a town enveloped in a blue cloud. Nothing of what Clark calls "inhuman" – the inaccessibly majestic and mysterious in Leonardo's subtle and intricate work – survives in this devotional picture executed with special refinement. From the inimitable alloy of the divine and the human, Leonardo's follower filters out the purely human and the emotional content perceptible to anyone. Marco d'Oggiono (cat. 60) used nothing more than certain elements of Leonardo's work – such as the Virgin's facial type or her hand, recalling the *Virgin of the Rocks* – to create an attractive, balanced altarpiece through the combination of the mountain towering in the background, the semicircular grouping of the figures, and the gestures of Saint Jerome and the Christ Child who turn towards each other. Nor does Bernadino Luini's (cat. 61) Leonardism go deeper than the surface, although it would be a mistake to judge the painter, who sought to please viewers with warm attractive colour combinations, handsome faces and tender gestures, only by how much he had understood and adopted from the œuvre of the greatest experimental genius of his age. After all, Leonardo's synthesis of art and science is unique, not only in the Renaissance but in the whole history of European culture. We can withstand the temptation to compare Gaudenzio Ferrari with Leonardo because this artist, active in Lombardy and Piedmont, related not only to the legacy of Leonardo but also to the art of other painters influencing his development – Bramantino, Perugino, Correggio – with a great deal of independence. The *Lamentation* (cat. 62) is one of his masterpieces, in which he bravely juxtaposes rusty brown, bright red and ochre, composes with a fresh spontaneity, and gives free reign to the flow of emotions. It is rare for the Northern, expressive naturalism and intense expression of feeling that generally characterize the art of Piedmont to be so perfectly blended with the classical human ideal and the Mediterranean harmony of balanced levitation as in this picture.

Michelangelo's Leda had the same fate as Leonardo's: it perished, and it is only through copies by his contemporaries that we can form an idea of it now. The best of these is displayed at this exhibition (cat. 63). Leda's posture is very similar to that of *Night* in the Medici Chapel. As in Leonardo's painting, the erotic implication of the myth is missing. *Leda,* just as *Night,* is a variation on the central theme of Michelangelo's art: the agony of the soul imprisoned in the body and longing to be free. A different matter, and a problem that leads us to the discussion of Mannerism, is that many of the artist's followers deprived this pose of its original content and turned it into a decorative formula of virtuoso nude depiction. Some masters under Michelangelo's spell were, however, capable of comprehending the essence of his immense spirit. One of them was Pordenone, active in many places in northern Italy. His *Saint Luke* (cat. 64) is the type of man who can rise above ordinary people by the strength of his will and intellect, who can hear the voice of God and thus become akin to the prophets on the ceiling frescoes of the Sistine Chapel. Through this and the rest of the related paintings once decorating the ceiling of the seat of a confraternity, Pordenone brought the message of Rome to Venice.

Raphael's master, Perugino, has been regarded by art historians since Vasari as one of the artists who paved the way to the *maniera moderna*. Just how fully justified this is – and yet how much their art differs in style and quality – can be understood by comparing Perugino's *Nativity* (cat. 65) with Raphael's *Esterházy Madonna* (cat. 68). The leading master of the Umbrian quattrocento softens the hard Florentine contours, arranges the figures rehearsing pious gestures into a loose group; his architecture is spacious, his landscape idyllic. The mood and serene colour tones typical of Perugino live on in Raphael's work, but the soft homophony of the former is replaced by Raphael's sonorous polyphony. Trained in Ferrara, Francesco Francia of Bologna arrived at results similar to his Perugian contemporary in several respects. This is borne out by the emotional charge and atmosphere of his predella showing the Adoration of the Child and an allegorical scene within a single field (cat. 66). In Francia's work, however, the modelling is more compact, the outlines and the folds of the drapery more complicated, and the surfaces more enamel-like than in Perugino's work from the same period.

In Florence, Leonardo's influence was more indirect than in Milan. The kind of tight adherence to Leonardo illustrated by Boltraffio's *Madonna* cannot be found in the Tuscan city-state. One response to Leonardo's work is represented by the paintings of a Dominican friar, Fra Bartolomeo. In his early *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (cat. 67), painted around 1500, this impact is manifested in the facile harmony of the postures of the two figures, in the successful reconciliation of the sweeping composition and the intimate content, and the masterly use of aerial perspective. Even more obviously, the *Esterházy Madonna,* painted at the end of Raphael's stay in Florence, is based on the absorbed study and interpretation of Leonardo's innovations. Raphael did not share the unquenchable curiosity for the secrets of the universe which motivated the painter of the *Virgin of the Rocks* and the *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne,* but he was deeply inspired by the complex and dynamic manner of composition practised by Leonardo. The *Madonna of the Meadow* in Vienna, the *Madonna of the Goldfinch* in Florence, *La belle jardinière* in Paris and finally the *Esterházy Madonna* are the major Florentine stops along the journey of artistic experimentation in the course of which Raphael adjusted Leonardo's method to his own taste and artistic goals.

Raphael's Florentine period can be evaluated not only in itself but also as a preparation for his frescoes in the Vatican Stanze, these emblematic works of the high Renaissance. Some years later Sebastiano del Piombo arrived in Rome from farther away, Venice. In his *Portrait of a Man* (cat. 69), the lyrical twilight landscape visible through the window and the mysterious expression on the face of the sitter testify to the painter's Venetian training and the influence of Giorgione – again, not independently of Leonardo. At the same time, the architecture articulating the pictorial space, the dignified pose and the homogeneous dark patch of the fur-collared cloak are all stylistic expressions of *grandezza,* the Roman ideal of lofty grandeur. The composition, gestures and facial types ennobled through the spirit of *grandezza* appeared in very small-scale pictures as well, as exemplified by *The Holy Family* (cat. 70) by Raphael's pupil Giovan Francesco Penni. From Raphael's own hand again, but about ten years later than the *Esterházy Madonna,* is the double portrait in the Louvre (cat. 71). The figure at the back is probably a self-portrait, whereas scholars still argue about the identity of the figure in the foreground and the interpretation of his gesture. In view of the Renaissance innovations regarding this genre, it is the dramatization of the portrait that is most remarkable here. The unidentified man turns towards his friend and points out of the picture with a powerfully rhetorical gesture. This, together with Raphael's gaze at the viewer, creates a multiply dynamic relationship between the picture and the viewer.

Girolamo Genga shares with Raphael the biographic fact that he was born in Urbino, and later it was Perugino who would exert the greatest impact on his artistic development. Working in several towns in Italy, he melded different influences into his style. The most conspicuous feature of his predella scene (cat. 72) is that the movement of the undressing and almost naked figures stepping into the baptismal font is highly choreographed, thus there is a sharp contrast between those waiting for their turn and those being baptized. What we witness here is an idiosyncratic version of the far-reaching effect that Michelangelo's *ignudi* exerted on contemporary art.

The greatest Florentine master of the period was Andrea del Sarto. A splendid portrait (cat. 73) after a lost work by him perhaps portrays the sculptor Baccio Bandinelli. It well illustrates how the new type of soft modelling and gentle, sfumato shading has a more intimate and lifelike effect than the sculptural modelling of the quattrocento. Naturally this is a change not in quality but in approach; it is the concept of man that is being transformed. Sarto's sitter breathes; he is almost tangible. We cannot escape his hypnotic gaze; instinctively, we begin to search for the secrets of his soul. For some years, Andrea del Sarto shared a workshop with Franciabigio, whose detached fresco shows the *Noli me tangere* (cat. 74). There is something coarse and rustic about the movements and the drapery folds of Franciabigio's figures, something prosaic in their presentation, which, however, strikes one only when it is compared to Sarto's extremely refined style and emotionally charged lyricism so vibrant with excitement. Viewed in its own right, this scene has a poetic quality in both the colour scheme and the rendering of the landscape.

Originating from Piedmont, Sodoma arrived in Siena shortly after the turn of the century. His work there severed the last thread that bound the city to the long-lived Gothic tradition. However, this change was brought

about by an artist who showed little interest in the exalted ideas of the Renaissance humanists or in the intellectual rank of painting. Though he received commissions from the highest social circles, including the pope's banker, Agostino Chigi, his art was dominated by instinctuality. His dramaturgy, rhetoric and painting manner were all of a plebeian character; he sought not so much to teach or delight his viewers, but to emotionally influence or simply entertain them. This holds true for the whole of his œuvre, even if occasionally, quite unexpectedly, he supersedes all vulgarity. This is exemplified by the *Ecce Homo* (cat. 75), which is one of the most striking representations of the Saviour of the Renaissance, with its Byzantine frontal view, the unusual elongation of the head, the intensity of the gaze, the enlargement of the hands, and the light radiating from within. The heads of the two torturers in the shadows stick closely to Christ's, as if together they formed a three-headed creature, intensifying the contrast between man's divine and beastly nature. In the *Death of Lucretia* (cat. 76) the contrast is only between light and shadow, and its function is to offer up the naked, milk-white body of the Roman heroine for admiration. The tone is melodramatic: beauty and death meet on the stage of the picture, anticipating the sentimental sighs of the viewer. The "smoke" of the sfumato is so thick that one hardly remembers that this device of shading, used so immoderately here, originates from Leonardo. The approximate foreshortening of the arms shows, among other things, that careful execution was not among Sodoma's highest priorities.

The formal perfection and emotional richness of Correggio's *Madonna del Latte* (cat. 77) combine to produce a work of superb quality. The Parmigian artist, one of the great masters of the high Renaissance, elaborated upon the inspiration received from Leonardo and Raphael in a wholly original manner. A warm, homely atmosphere emanates from the scene in which the three figures are aligned along a spatial diagonal opened toward the viewer; their movements are relaxed and free. The contours are absorbed by the three-dimensional mass modelled with chiaroscuro; the gently undulating forms melt into one another. The light softly follows the curves and bends of the shapes, hiding in the deep folds of the drapery and radiating triumphantly elsewhere, as if it were the symbol of eternal rebirth and Christ's love, reviving the mysticism of light of the Middle Ages.

As Correggio's *Madonna* attests, the long-established religious subjects gave artists the possibility for constant and daring experimentation and innovation. The expanding range of profane subjects, however, put them to the test because they could rely on no iconographic prototypes. The mythological paintings of Battista Dossi and Girolamo da Carpi show that artists drew inspiration from both antique and contemporary literature, antique reliefs and the great masterpieces of painting and sculpture in the first quarter of the cinquecento. Battista Dossi's *Allegory of Dawn* (cat. 78) deserves a distinguished place among the Renaissance examples of the genre for its dense, romantic mood, and Girolamo da Carpi's *The Rape of Ganymede* (cat. 79) for the elegant stylization of this mythic episode.

VILMOS TÁTRAI

54 LEONARDO DA VINCI | Florence, 1452 – Cloux near Amboise, 1519

## *Lady with the Ermine (Portrait of Cecilia Gallerani)*

ca. 1490

Oil on panel; 54.8 × 40.3 cm
Czartoryski Foundation, Cracow (on deposit at the National Museum in Cracow)
Renaissance frame: Northern Italy, end of fifteenth century (property of the Wawel Royal Castle, inv. 8588; on deposit at the National Museum in Cracow)

Among his duties as court artist and engineer in Milan (ca. 1482–1499), Leonardo is known to have painted a portrait of Duke Lodovico Sforza's beautiful young mistress Cecilia Gallerani. Leonardo's portrait was celebrated in a sonnet by the court poet Bernardo Bellincioni (also a Florentine), published a year after the author's death, in 1493. The poem (Villata ed. 1999, 76–77, no. 72c), which mentions Leonardo for the first time in print, praises the lady's beauty, preserved for posterity in her portrait. In depicting Cecilia, the painter rivals Nature, but instead of envying Leonardo, Nature should thank him – and Lodovico, the poet adds – for the painting will long testify to one of nature's most perfect creations. Much literary praise for works of art is merely conventional, but in this case Bellincioni predicted exactly what has happened, as anyone can see in the Cracow portrait today. The fame of the picture quickly spread beyond the Milanese court. On April 26, 1498, Lodovico Sforza's art-loving sister-in-law, the marchesa Isabella d'Este, wrote to Cecilia asking her to send the portrait to Mantua in order to compare it with examples by Giovanni Bellini. The picture, Isabella promised, "will be returned to you afterwards, with our most grateful thanks for your kindness …". Cecilia complied a few days later, but did so reluctantly, she said, because the portrait, having been painted when she was "imperfecta", or immature, no longer resembled her. Thus, the panel presently on loan to Budapest made what was probably its first journey, from Milan to Mantua, on horseback. A month later it was gratefully returned to its owner (Villata ed. 1999, 112–15, nos. 129–31).

Leonardo's portrait of Cecilia Gallerani, extolled in the early sources, is now universally identified with the *Lady with the Ermine* in the Czartoryski Museum in Cracow. The reasons for connecting them lie both in the sitter's biography and in the picture itself. Previously, scholars had dated the painting to the mid-1480s, based on stylistic considerations, in particular the comparison often made with the *Virgin of the Rocks* in the Louvre. That earlier dating has now been abandoned, however, in favour of ca. 1490, which agrees better with the events of the sitter's life and with her apparent age in the picture. According to new archival research (Shell–Sironi 1992b; Shell 1998), Cecilia Gallerani was born in 1473 or 1474, not in 1465, as was formerly believed. Early in 1489, at the age of about fifteen, she became Lodovico's mistress and on May 3, 1491, gave birth to a son named Cesare, whose proud father promptly awarded her the fiefdom of Saronno. Meanwhile, however, on January 16, 1491, Lodovico had married the even younger Beatrice d'Este, sister of Isabella and daughter of Duke Ercole d'Este of Ferrara. The duke's passionate affair with Cecilia continued for a while, but something clearly had to give. Responding to political pressure and to the tantrums of his new bride, Lodovico was forced to dismiss Cecilia in 1492. In July of that year he married her off to Count Lodovico Bergamini, who came to reside with Cecilia and her son Cesare in a palace provided by her ducal lover. Following the French invasion late in 1499, Cecilia divided her time between Milan and her husband's estate near Cremona, where she formed a circle of poets and writers who sang her praises.

Cecilia Gallerani presumably kept her portrait by Leonardo until her death in 1536. The later whereabouts of the painting are unknown until it was purchased in Italy by Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski toward the end of the eighteenth century. The panel was preserved in the family castle at Pulawy until the 1830s or '40s, when it was transported to Paris and displayed at the Hôtel Lambert. Perhaps because it was ensconced in a private collection in Paris and, following its return to Poland, in Cracow, the painting failed to attract much notice, despite the inscription citing Leonardo (LEONARD D' AWINCI), added when the background was repainted a uniform black. When the picture was effectively rediscovered around the turn of the last century, Leonardo's authorship was hotly debated among scholars. It was not fully accepted as a canonical work until the publication of Kenneth Clark's monograph (1939, 48–50). Outside the scholarly community, Leonardo's masterpiece remained relatively little known, however, until 1992, when its appearance in the exhibition *Circa 1492*, organized by the National Gallery of Art in Washington to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America, created an explosion of interest that grew exponentially when the picture was exhibited in Italy in 1998 and that has continued to the present day.

The technical investigation undertaken at the time of the Washington exhibition by the Gallery's then senior conservator of paintings, David Bull, resolved a number of questions about the painting's technique and state of preservation (Bull 1992, Bull 1998). Contrary to assertions by the picture's early detractors, the panel is actually in good condition. The edges are intact, so that it preserves the original half-length format. The examination also showed that the background, before being entirely repainted in a dark col-


LA BELLE FERONIERE

our, was originally bluish grey, suggesting that the lady was meant to be seen in an interior setting, an arrangement Leonardo recommends as flattering to a portrait sitter in his notes on painting. Previous speculation about a window behind the sitter proved unfounded. As far as the artist's technique is concerned, the examination revealed that he used a cartoon, or full-scale preparatory drawing, for the composition, above all, for the elements studied from nature, namely, the lady's head and hand. Most interesting – and in accordance with other autograph paintings by Leonardo – digital imprints were discovered in the paint surface, indicating that the artist used his fingers, and not only the brush, to blend the paint. Finger marks are evident under magnification in the lady's nose and forehead and in the head of the ermine. While not unique to Leonardo (cf. cat. 55), this kind of finger painting would constitute a kind of signature if it could only be demonstrated that the imprints in his paintings matched.

The inscription placed in the upper left corner of the painting not only misspells Leonardo's name but misidentifies the sitter as "LA BELE FERONIERE", referring to a mistress of the king of France. Though incorrect, the inscription does underline the character of the lady portrayed as a courtly favourite. By contrast to the rather sombre dress in Leonardo's earlier Florentine portrait of *Ginevra de' Benci* in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, Cecilia is depicted wearing the latest fashion (Żygulski 1969). Her hair is parted in the middle, combed over the ears, pulled under the chin, and tied in a long pigtail called a *coazzone* at the back. Additionally, her coiffure consists of a narrow black band, worn around the head, which holds a transparent veil in place. Around her neck and hanging down her bust is a string of black beads. Her red dress has sleeves attached with ribbons and openings at the elbow revealing a white *camicia,* or chemise. The low cut bodice is ornamented with Leonardo's interlaced knot designs. Over her left shoulder is a blue cape with a golden yellow lining. Cecilia's costume actually helps to date her portrait since the so-called "Spanish" style of dress was first introduced to the Milanese court by Isabella d'Aragona, who married **Lodovi**co's nephew Giangaleazzo Sforza in 1489.

Though well born, Cecilia Gallerani was not of the highest rank, so Leonardo evidently felt free to break with the tradition of profile portraiture to depict her in a more innovative manner. He shows the lady in three-quarter view, in which the anatomically precise detail and delicate contrasts of light and shadow serve to define form and structure and as a vehicle of expression. Leonardo's sympathetic portrayal captures the qualities for which Cecilia was renowned. Agreeing with Bellincioni, for example, the Ferrarese ambassador reported to his master that Beatrice d'Este's rival was "beautiful as a flower". Later, the humanists and writers Cecilia had gathered around her praised not only her beauty but also her intelligence and wide knowledge of a variety of subjects. From them we learn that she knew Latin and wrote poetry in Italian, the writer Bandello going so far as to call her a "new Sappho". But Leonardo's brilliant concept for Cecilia's portrait went beyond rendering her appearance or interpreting her character in terms of facial treatment. John Pope-Hennessy (1966, 101–5) has rightly connected the *Lady with the Ermine* with an artistic revolution, and another writer has singled it out as the "first modern portrait" (Gould 1975, 73). Even if credit for inventing the psychological portrait may go, a bit earlier, to Antonello da Messina, there can be no doubt that what Leonardo called the "motions of the mind" was here being applied to portraiture. The traditional profile was clearly unequipped for such a task. In fact, Leonardo had already adopted the three-quarter view for his *Ginevra de' Benci,* completed in Florence in the 1470s. And he also included the sitter's hands, missing from the panel in its present truncated state. To judge from the prototype for Leonardo's picture – Verrocchio's sculpted *Bust of a Lady* in the Bargello – Ginevra's hands were shown holding a bunch of flowers. What is so original about the *Lady with the Ermine* is not the three-quarter view, therefore, nor the hand holding an attribute, nor the facial treatment suggesting character. It is the choice of attribute and the lady's dynamic turning pose, which, in the logic of the picture, must be connected. In *Ginevra de' Benci,* the sitter's head and hand face in the same direction. In the Cracow portrait, however, the lady's torso faces left while her head turns sharply to the right. Bellincioni's sonnet in praise of the portrait aptly describes the sitter as "seeming to listen but not to speak". In fact, she turns in a spiral motion to gaze expectantly to the right, as if toward an unseen companion who is surely meant to be the duke, her lover. Leonardo's stroke of genius, we might say, was to convey Cecilia's nature through the revealing liveliness of her pose.

In a delightful display of visual mimicry, the ermine held by the lady raises its paw and turns to the right, as if to acknowledge Lodovico's presence. Leonardo's use of the animal, instead of the usual flower or ring held by female portrait sitters like Ginevra de'

Benci, has been much discussed by scholars. As the central motif, the ermine is obviously a key factor in determining the significance of the picture for Lodovico, who would have commissioned it, and his contemporaries. In the already mentioned portrait of Ginevra de' Benci, the juniper behind the sitter – *ginepro* in Italian – is widely understood to pun on her name, Ginevra. This sort of word play was much admired in humanistic circles, both in Florence and Milan, so there is no reason to doubt the claim made in the literature that the ermine in the Cracow picture plays on the Greek name for the animal, *galé,* which is similar to the lady's surname Gallerani. The ermine is also a common symbol of purity because of its aversion to getting soiled. According to legend, the ermine would rather die than besmirch itself avoiding capture. Leonardo himself illustrated this very subject in a pen and ink drawing in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, which, given its round format, might be a study for the reverse of a medal and which dates, in any case, to the time of Cecilia's portrait. In his notes copied from medieval bestiaries, moreover, Leonardo specifically cites the ermine as an emblem of moderation (Richter [1883] 1970, II, 266, no. 1234 and 276, no. 1263). Just why Cecilia should hold a symbol of purity might be a matter for debate, but a third explanation offered for the animal's role in the picture appears beyond dispute. Other poems by Bellincioni, in fact, refer to Lodovico as "Ermellino" or "Bianco Ermellino", the reason being that in 1488, two years before the probable date of Cecilia's portrait, the duke was awarded the Order of Saint Michael, also called the Order of the Ermine, which had been founded by the king of Naples in 1465. Lodovico, accordingly, adopted the ermine as one of his emblems. The Cracow painting can also be read as a political allegory, therefore (Pedretti 1990). Once we realize that the ermine is an emblem of Lodovico and, in a sense, represents him in the painting, Cecilia's gesture of caressing the animal's back takes on new meaning. In visualizing the liaison between the lady and her lover, Leonardo's painting belies the claim, often made in the Renaissance, that only a poet could create a true likeness.

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55 GIOVANNI ANTONIO BOLTRAFFIO | Milan, ca. 1465 – Milan, 1516

*Virgin and Child*

ca. 1495–1496

Oil on panel; 82.4 × 63.4 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 52

There is no information on the painting predating the 1820 inventory of Nicholas Esterházy's collection (Fischer–Rothmüller 1820). The Museum purchased the entire collection in 1871. Fiorio's catalogue entry (2000) sums up critical scholarship on the painting, which, abandoning an initial attribution to Leonardo, has definitively attributed the work to the Milanese Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio. Boltraffio, "Vinci Leonardo's only pupil" (Casio 1525, ca. 46v) is documented in Leonardo's workshop as early as in 1491.

The painting tells us much about how Boltraffio used Leonardo's models. There is now consensus in research that the picture was painted in the last decade of the fifteenth century. Fiorio (2000) has pointed out that the design of the Child is related to a small cartoon in the Louvre, probably by Boltraffio himself; she has also connected the work with the *Madonna del Latte* by Marco d'Oggiono in Auckland. She dates both Madonnas to the beginning of the 1490s, when the two painters were working together on the altarpiece showing the *Resurrection of Christ with Saints Leonard and Lucy,* today in Berlin (commissioned in 1491, new contract signed in 1494). Alessandro Ballarin ([1985] 2005) has proposed a somewhat later date. He judges that the painting in question was influenced not only by Leonardo's second *Virgin of the Rocks,* a milestone in his Milan output (around 1490) but also by Bramantino. The latter is discernible in the foreshortening of the Child's leg, a significant feature in a painting that deliberately places little emphasis on the use of perspective. Ballarin dates the Boltraffio–Bramantino contact to around 1497, the presumed year of the completion of the Berlin altarpiece and, for Bramantino, the completion of his *Madonna of the Towers (Madonna delle Torri)* in the Ambrosiana Gallery in Milan.

Mauro Natale is of a similar opinion, communicated orally to the staff of the Szépművészeti Múzeum (2008). He claims that the marble-like smoothness of the faces and their idealization are indebted to Leonardo's *Last Supper,* completed about the end of 1497. These observations can on the whole be agreed with, even if the date of the painting might be put a little earlier, to around 1495–1496. In fact, it is this writer's view that this was the time when the Berlin altarpiece was completed (the gesture of the right arm of the resurrected Christ was adopted by Macrino d'Alba for an altarpiece in the Certosa di Pavia which bears the date 1496). While it is true that Boltraffio's interest in Bramantino dates from this period, it is also true that the foreshortening of the Child's leg in the Budapest painting was inspired by Bramantino's *Lamentation,* once on the façade of the San Sepolcro church in Milan (now, in a mutilated state, in the Ambrosiana Gallery), which I believe dates from 1488–1489. The treatment of light, especially the deep shadows and the multitude of colourful reflections on the right also remind one of Leonardo's works of the eighties; this suggests that the Budapest Madonna should not be dated too late within the last decade (though the soft fold on the Child's right arm already indicates the authoritative presence of Francesco Napoletano in Leonardo's studio). There can be no doubt that Boltraffio knew the *Last Supper* and it is rightly presumed that during its execution he had free access to climb the scaffolding. Of particular interest is that the face of the Madonna derives from a drawing in the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown datable to the early 1490s (G. Bora, in *Paris* 2003b, 346–47), while the Infant's face is a mirror inversion of that of the young Saint John in the *Virgin of the Rocks* in London; it is from this head that the cartoon in the Louvre today – attributed now to Leonardo, now to Boltraffio (Marani 2008, 44–45, with complete previous bibliography) – was made. In the Budapest painting, it was precisely the head of the Child that the painter reworked in the course of the execution, as the *pentimento* extending to the entire outline of left side of the face reveals. This autograph modification was discovered by X-ray examination at the Getty Museum, Los Angeles, where the painting is being restored at the time of writing. It should be noted that it was first Leonardo who used this Child head for the figure of Christ in the first sketch, later radically altered, for the London *Virgin of the Rocks* (Ravaud 2003, 134–37). Other *pentimenti* are visible in the Virgin's right hand, the turn of her shoulder, the drapery falling over the ledge and the Child's arms and hands. It is hard to answer the question of whether the painting is unfinished: true enough, the Infant's vigorous gesture would only be meaningful if there were flowers – an allusion to the Passion – in the vase on the left.

According to the written communication of Sue Ann Chui (June 2009), pre-restoration examinations have brought to light, apart from the *pentimenti,* a longitudinal lacuna in the paint stretching from one side of the panel to the other at the height of the Virgin's shoulders, and many fingerprints all over the painting (just as in Leonardo's early works).

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## 56 Bramantino (Bartolomeo Suardi) | Documented in Bergamo from 1480 – d. Milan, 1530

### *The Lamentation of Christ*

ca. 1520–1525

Oil on canvas; 174 × 157.5 cm
Pinacoteca del Castello Sforzesco, Milan, inv. 1462
Probably from the church of San Barnaba in Milan

This *Lamentation of Christ* represents an important stage of the late period of Bramantino, the most significant Lombard painter of the Renaissance, also active as an architect. The work was acquired by the museum in 1985, and restored by Pinin Brambilla Barcilon in 1986–1987. Prior to this – at least from 1926 onwards – it was documented in the Werner Collection in Milan. According to Venanzio de Pagave's (1723–1805) biography of Bramantino *(Vita di Bartolomeo Suardi detto il Bramantino),* published by Suida (1953, 215–26), *The Lamentation of Christ* was originally an altarpiece in San Barnaba, a church demolished and then rebuilt by Galeazzo Alessi in 1561. (We should nevertheless note that guidebooks of Milan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries make no mention of such an altarpiece.) Suida also published two photographs, the older of which documents the work in the sacristy of San Barnaba, apparently in a heavily repainted condition.

In 1906, Suida dated the work to around 1520 or somewhat later. Subsequent scholarship, too, generally considered it a later work, until Mulazzani (1978), who put the time of the picture's completion at around 1518. This dating was accepted by Marani, even though he reconstructed the painter's career differently (Marani, in Fiorio ed. 1997–2001; Marani 2005b).

The subject of the Pietà pursued Bramantino more or less throughout his entire career, starting with the now fragmentary *Lamentation of Christ* he executed at the end of the 1480s (Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan), which originally adorned the façade of San Sepolcro in Milan. Assuming that the version in the Royal Palace of Bucharest dates from the beginning of the sixteenth century, while a date of shortly before 1510 can be put on the picture formerly in the Artaria Collection (which is sometimes seen as an autograph work, sometimes as a copy, while in truth it is probably a workshop product, so somewhere between the two), the version of the Castello Sforzesco, in which Bramantino foregoes the violent foreshortening of Christ's lifeless body, can be regarded as the coherent conclusion of the series. This foreshortening, on the one hand, pays homage to the most anti-modern piece by Vincenzo Foppa, the *Trivulzio Pietà* (1499, formerly in Berlin), while, on the other hand, it creates a calmer and more solemn compositional structure through the oblique placing of the tomb. The artist's striving for a decelerated, somewhat ritualized rhythm achieves its real culmination here through the almost abstractly geometrical figures and architecture that simultaneously evokes antiquity and the visionary. With Bramantino, however, this intellectual simplification of form is always accompanied by a tireless experimentation with colour, which extends from his filtration of the style of Giorgione in *Saint Sebastian* (Rasini Collection) and, to a certain extent, in the Brera *Crucifixion* (both from the beginning of the sixteenth century) to the pale tones of the present painting. The palette is so restrained not only because the picture has survived in fairly poor condition, but because the artist has visibly and consciously employed warm tones and coloured shading, using precisely these transitions in tone as a tool in fashioning the surfaces in the picture. This may indicate Bramantino's interest in Correggio's works created shortly after 1520, between *The Rest on the Flight to Egypt* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) and the paintings executed for the Del Bono Chapel. Other factors – especially the activity of Gaudenzio Ferrari – also show that there was a new rise of interest in Correggio's art from the beginning of the third decade in Lombardy, and it would not be surprising if Bramantino had been the pioneer also in this regard.

Motifs from earlier works by Bramantino recur in this picture: the large columned building recalls the edifice that was discovered by X-ray examination in the first version of the Brera *Crucifixion* (Marani ed. 1992), while certain figures – among them the man second from the right, probably Nicodemus, clasping his hands together in the manner of an ancient philosopher – bring to mind Bramantino's classicist interpretation, in the same *Crucifixion* and the Trivulzio tapestries, of the apostles' idealized humanity in Leonardo's *Last Supper*.

There exists an old version of this painting, more or less identical in size and of fairly good quality, which Marani (in Letzte–Buchsteiner ed. 1997, 198–99) published as an authentic work by Bramantino. In addition to various written documents, this probably also testifies to the success of Bramantino's various interpretations of the subject of the Pietà (cf. Marani 2005a, 38–39), which probably created an immediate demand for versions of them in good, and in some cases outstanding, quality.

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## 57 After Leonardo da Vinci
## *Leda and the Swan*

ca. 1525–1530

Oil on panel; 112 × 86 cm
Galleria Borghese, Rome, inv. 434

The picture appears for the first time in the inventory of the Galleria Borghese in 1693, with an attribution to Leonardo. Although for a long time afterwards it was ascribed to Sodoma, it is now considered as by an unknown artist (Della Pergola 1955–1959). The latest research suggests that it was painted by "a master from the region of Tuscany on whom Netherlandish realism exercised a powerful influence" (Bartoli, in *Vinci* 2001, where, however, the dating to 1515–1520 is too early).

The painting is one of the best-known copies of a lost work by Leonardo depicting *Leda and the Swan*. Several drawings by Leonardo demonstrate that the original painting was undoubtedly devised in around 1503–1505 in Florence. They include four sheets kept in the Royal Library at Windsor, England (inv. 12515–12518; Clark 1935, 16–18), which, based on their style and technique, can be dated to the period mentioned, as well as the sheet inv. 15577 kept in the Biblioteca Reale in Turin. In the latter, besides studies for *The Battle of Anghiari* and perhaps for a beheading of Saint John the Baptist, a small female figure can also be seen, with a child at her side, in the pose of the standing Leda – the only difference being that she tilts her head not to the left but to the right (Pedretti 1975, 17–20; Villata 1997, 203). The lost painting is one of the most classically inclined works of Leonardo's entire career. According to Jonathan Nelson's brilliant suggestion (2007a), it may have been painted for Giovanni Rucellai, who, it seems, wrote a real *ekphrasis* of this painting around 1515–1520 in his tragedy entitled *Oreste*. (I am less convinced by the theory of Maria Chiara Monaco that the work was ordered by Isabella d'Este; nevertheless, Monaco's observations are useful for a contextualization of Leonardo's interest in the subject [Monaco 2008].)

The large number of copies of the standing Leda (for a list, see Nanni 2008) may be divided into two groups. One group, best exemplified by the picture formerly in the Spiridon Collection and now in the Uffizi (on this, see the summary by R. Nanni, in *Vinci* 2001, 140–43, cat. III.5), is characterized by more elongated proportions. In pictures of the other group – above all, in the examples in the Galleria Borghese and in Wilton House (the latter is generally attributed to Cesare da Sesto; Carminati 1994, 187–88) – we encounter rather more squat forms. It would be worthwhile ascertaining whether, as empirically seems to be the case, different proportions were applied to the same pose: in the first group the height of the figure seems nine times the height of the head, while in the second group, only eight times. If this theory were to be confirmed by more thorough examinations and mathematical calculations, we might draw the conclusion that Leonardo anticipated Dürer's theory of proportions (the best examples of the application of Dürer's theory are his engraving *Adam and Eve* from 1504 and his panels on the same subject from 1507 preserved in Madrid; on Dürer as a theorist, see Panofsky 1955a, It. ed. 1967, 314–68). It is also possible, however, that both groups apply, or at least use, the proportion theories of Bernardo Zenale, by whom a now lost treatise – which was widely discussed at the start of the 1500s – was recorded by Giovan Paolo Lomazzo (on the interest in human proportions in northern Italy, in relation also to Dürer's theory, see Marani 2007, 54, with notes and further bibliography).

The various versions of the Leda composition differ from one another in the landscape, which indicates that this element was probably missing in Leonardo's prototype. It may, therefore, have been not a painting but a cartoon (or perhaps two cartoons). In the version discussed here, only two of Leda's children – Castor and Pollux – are shown, while the other versions generally portray four. Reflectographic examinations have revealed *pentimenti* in the figures of these two children. The painter – who was perhaps not a Tuscan influenced by Netherlandish painting, but, as suggested by the almost scholastic attention to the meticulous rendering of the plants and animals, as well as the cold and smooth surfaces of the bodies, an Italianized Netherlandish artist working in the 1520s – clearly had to tackle the task of painting the landscape and the two children alone, with some difficulty, and without an authoritative model.

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*Not exhibited.*



58 Francesco Melzi | Milan (?), 1491 or 1493 – Vaprio d'Adda, ca. 1570

*Saint Anne with the Virgin and the Child Embracing a Lamb*

ca. 1520–1525

Oil on panel; 99 × 72 cm
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890 no. 737

Formerly in the imperial collection in Vienna, this painting was acquired by the Florence gallery in 1793 through exchange. It is a fairly faithful copy of Leonardo's *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) of 1501 whose completion took so long, and which shows many *pentimenti* (Leonardo's cartoon for this work was described by Pietro da Novellara in 1501, cf. Villata ed. 1999, 134–35). The picture in Florence differs from Leonardo's in the landscape and a few, yet significant, details.

Traditionally, the painting (which carries the inscription *"del Lomazzo"* on its reverse) is attributed to Gian Giacomo Caprotti called Salaì, Leonardo's rakish and ill-reputed pupil, who entered his studio at the age of ten in 1490 and died a violent death in 1524 (Shell–Sironi 1992a). However, if the signature and the date 1511 on the artist's *Salvator Mundi* recently auctioned off in New York (Sotheby's, January 25, 2007, lot 34; the date but not the signature had already been read by Suida in 1929, cf. Suida 2001, 269) are confirmed as authentic and thus finally provide a reliable clue for the reconstruction of Salaì's œuvre, this attribution will have to be discarded. And it seems that we need not even wait that long, since the glazed, glossy rendering of the paint layer, the treatment of the landscape, the partiality for folds of drapery animated by a kind of inner vibration, the botanically authentic rendering of the vegetation, and even such Morellian features as the somewhat rigid facial characteristics and distinctive toe knuckles of Saint Anne bear a similarity to the *Vertumnus and Pomona* in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, which carries the fragmentary signature of Leonardo's aristocratic pupil and heir Francesco Melzi (on him in general, see Marani 1998).

This painting is to be dated later than the *Vertumnus and Pomona,* as shown by the Virgin's face, which is almost more reminiscent of Luini than strictly of Leonardo. The differences between the *Saint Anne with the Virgin and Child* in Florence and Leonardo's prototype are very significant. These regard the landscape – entirely reformulated here – and the foreground in which an alluvial riverbank is replaced by a sumptuous meadow, but also such minor details as the loop of the Virgin's red dress as it winds around her waist. In his own painting, Leonardo apparently returned to this drapery detail several times, giving it a peculiarly layered quality in the last phase (the *pentimenti* are visible even to the naked eye, but art historians have overlooked them, though they are far more important than the sketches on the back on which so much breath has been wasted), which is completely absent in the picture discussed here. And curiously enough, this detail in the Florentine painting is closer to one of Leonardo's preparatory drawings (Windsor Castle, Royal Library, inv. 12530, cf. Clark 1935, 81) than to his final solution in the painting. These signs suggest that the master of the picture now in Florence had at his disposition for a model not Leonardo's painting, which was almost certainly in French king's possession from 1518 (Jestaz 1999), but his cartoon. The latter probably showed only the figures (without the final alterations Leonardo effected in the painted version) and there was either no landscape at all or merely the faintest indication of it, as in a similar famous Leonardo cartoon in the National Gallery, London. The painting in Florence might thus provide primary evidence of the existence of a now lost cartoon which was then used with variations for the panel now in Paris. Suffice to recall that the estate that Leonardo bequeathed to Melzi did not contain any paintings but there were in it "tools and cartoons for his art and work as a painter" (Villata ed. 1999, 276).

Limitations of space prevent me from embarking on other comparisons and problems in detail here (but it may be noted that Leonardo's painting must in any case have been known indirectly in Milan at some time, perhaps following Salaì's return from France, as proven by the picture previously in the church of San Celso in Milan and now in Los Angeles, also traditionally attributed to Salaì: here the landscape also closely follows Leonardo's prototype, cf. Agosti 1993). These matters will be dealt with more fully elsewhere.

The painting was exhibited in Florence in 2004 and in San Jose, California, in 2008. On its reverse there is a label referring to the 1939 Leonardo exhibition: the picture is reproduced in the commemorative publication but was not included in the official catalogue (*Milan* 1939).

EDOARDO VILLATA

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59 Cesare da Sesto | Sesto Calende (?), 1477 – Milan, 1523

*Virgin and Child with the Lamb*

ca. 1516–1517

Tempera on panel; 37 × 30 cm
Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, inv. 1617/667

The painting first appeared in the "Exhibition of Old Art" held at the Brera Gallery in Milan in 1872, already as the property of Gian Giacomo Poldi Pezzoli. Andrea Di Lorenzo convincingly suggests (in *Parma* 2008 and verbal communication) that earlier it is identifiable with the small painting on the same subject, attributed to Leonardo, which Cesare Cantù described in 1844 in the Castelbarco Collection in Milan. In the first catalogue of the Poldi Pezzoli museum, published in 1881, Giuseppe Bertini linked the painting with Leonardo's school in general. Indeed, the painting is clearly derived from Leonardo's *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), although the Virgin's mother has been omitted here, and the figures are set in an entirely different landscape. Art historians have almost universally accepted Frizzoni's (1900) attribution of the work to the Lombard Cesare da Sesto, who was trained in the orbit of Leonardo and Bramantino, and then spent a long time in Rome (and later also in southern Italy) where he was influenced by Raphael's classical style. In his exceptionally accurate catalogue entry, Natale (1982) has dated the present work to around 1510–1515, which date was subsequently set very slightly later by Carminati (1994) and Di Lorenzo (2008).

Cesare da Sesto's version (itself a source of scores of copies and derivations), which turns the group of figures into a Madonna of Humility through the omission of Saint Anne's figure, seems to be based on Leonardo's definitive, painted version, as the ample folds of the drapery around the Virgin's waist attest (for this problem see cat. 58 in this volume). The broad, rounded forms, the mature but not excessive sentimental classicism, and the vivid palette dominated by red and blue all form part of the peculiar synthesis which this great artist created by melding Leonardo's compositional solutions, ever present in his work, and Raphael's Roman style.

As already noted, the artist completely recomposed the landscape in this painting, transforming it in an appealing, fairy-tale way, far removed from the disquieting barrenness of Leonardo's version. The large cloud in the middle of Cesare's work – which recurs in numerous copies and must be therefore be considered an essential iconographic element – is very emphatic (and is treated by Cesare as an stimulating exercise in the rendering of atmospheric phenomena in painting). Compared to Leonardo's version, which conveys a message both religious and political (the Lamb embraced by the Child may stand for Saint John the Baptist and therefore Florence, but at the same time is an apocalyptic prefiguration of Christ's sacrifice), Cesare gives this theme a more distinctly Christological interpretation. As Di Lorenzo noted, the clearly visible genitalia allude to the truth of Incarnation and the Lamb of Sacrifice, while the cloud, I believe, may refer to the coming of the Son of Man, as described in the Book of Daniel (7, 13: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him"). Together, they probably signify the Ascension of the resurrected Saviour which Jesus himself – specifically referring to the prophecy of Daniel – announces in the Gospel of Mark (14, 62: "And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven") and which is subsequently narrated in the Acts of the Apostles (1, 9: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight"). The representation could therefore be interpreted as the prophetic promise of the Saviour, progressing through the stages of Incarnation, Sacrifice, Resurrection and Ascension. It is difficult to refrain from placing this meditative content, evidently suggested by a sophisticated client, in the context of the fervent religious climate of Milan under French occupation at the start of the cinquecento.

EDOARDO VILLATA

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60 Marco d'Oggiono | Milan (?), ca. 1465 – 1524

## *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints Jerome, Bernardino of Siena (?) and John Capistran*

ca. 1524

Oil on canvas (transferred from wood); 176 × 148 cm
Museo Diocesano, Milan, inv. MD 1998.002.001
From the church of San Michele Arcangelo in Besate (near Milan)
Inscribed: HOC OPUS FECIT FIERI COMUNITAS BESATI

The painting was transferred to canvas in 1905 and restored by Luigi Parma in 1996. During the latter intervention, many retouches and additions were removed from the areas around the many losses in the paint, restoring full legibility to the painting. At the same time a decision was made not to remove the results of certain earlier restorations by then considered "historic".

There are some particularly curious historical records about the provenance of the painting. It was "rediscovered" in the early years of the twentieth century, when Napoleone Bertoglio Pisani (1903) published an article that reported important information based on the manuscript notes of a certain Don Sanchioli, parish priest of Besate in the late eighteenth century. In these notes, Don Sanchioli cited some documents that were purported to have perished in the middle of the eighteenth century, when the parish archives burned down. Allegedly, the documents referred to a commission that Marco d'Oggiono received from some noblemen of Besate for an altarpiece. Another document even indicated that Marco d'Oggiono spent several months in Besate, during which period, apparently, he was supposedly engaged to paint the altarpiece in question. The work would have been commissioned to the artist in 1524 as a sort of *ex voto,* after a grave epidemic of the plague struck the area but spared the small town.

In 1989, Domenico Sedini had already voiced some doubts about the veracity of these events (1989, 171). In addition to the fact that two documents quoted by Don Sanchioli contain incongruous data, he stressed the obvious contradiction with the descriptions of sixteenth-century canonical visitations, which record the work in a lateral chapel and not on the high altar. Only in 1997 was it finally possible to resolve the question by demonstrating that the cited documents were false (Comincini 1997). Mario Comincini proved that the documents were real forgeries made by a parish priest of Besate in the early twentieth century in order to find a sponsor for the restoration of the altarpiece, then in extremely poor condition. The inscription "HOC OPUS FECIT FIERI COMUNITAS BESATI" was added precisely during this restoration intervention so as to substantiate the contents of the counterfeit documents.

Since its rediscovery the painting has been attributed to Marco d'Oggiono, an important representative of Leonardo's school in Milan. It is one of the last works of the artist, who presumably died of the plague in 1524; in any case, there is documentary evidence that in May 1525 he was no longer alive. The date of the painting thus cannot be too far from the year 1524 mentioned in the forged documents. The stylistic features seem to support this dating: they point to Marco d'Oggiono's last period when he consciously returned to archaizing and traditional schemes, his artistic language became somewhat more rigid, and he used stylistic and iconographic elements that can be traced to Leonardo. The composition of the scene, based on a clear, pyramidal structure, derives from Leonardo's models. It has been rightly pointed out that the central group is related in composition to the *Virgin and Child with Musical Angels* in the Blois château museum (Musée des Beaux Arts du Château de Blois), whereas the figures of the two saints on the left appear again in the polyptych of Maleo, which is now in the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan. Finally, the bare background reduced to its most essential elements shows considerable similarities with the *Assumption of the Virgin,* also in the Brera gallery.

NADIA RIGHI

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HOC OPVS FECIT FIERI
COMVNITAS BESATI

## 61 Bernardino Luini (Bernardino Scapi) | Dumenza (?), ca. 1481–1482 – Milan, 1532

### *Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Barbara*

ca. 1522–1525

Oil on panel; 94.2 × 72.5 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 58

The original location of the painting is not known. From various replicas it is possible to conclude that in seventeenth-century Milan, where there was an intense interest in Bernardino Luini among art collectors, the picture was known and had been seen in some church or collection. The Budapest museum acquired the work in 1871. Previously it had been part of the Esterházy Collection where it was catalogued as a work of Leonardo, although Johann David Passavant (1838) and Charles Lock Eastlake (1842) had already recognized it as one of Bernardino Luini's masterpieces. Though not a great admirer of Luini, Giovanni Morelli (1880) also ranked the *Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine and Barbara* among the artist's best works, dating it to between 1510 and 1520. Subsequently Angela Ottino Della Chiesa (1956) put the time of its completion to the first half of the 1520s, comparing the painting to Luini's *Mystical Wedding of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan.

The painting is obfuscated by a layer of yellowed varnish, and a number of fillings are visible on the faces and necks of the Virgin and Saint Catherine, as well as on the Child's arms. The painted surface is decorative and glossy, similarly to other works Luini painted from the middle of the second decade of the cinquecento, which, in style and sometimes also in iconography, are very close to the works of Andrea Solario. The dark background also brings to mind the paintings of Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio and Cesare da Sesto. Reflecting on Luini's much-debated chronology, we can date this painting to the first half of the 1520s, to a period when the master had already carved out for himself a solid position on the Milanese art scene. His works completed in the preceding decade, such as his fresco depicting the *Virgin and Child with Angels Playing Music* in the abbey of Chiaravalle (1512) or the cycle in the chapel of the Holy Sacrament in the church of San Giorgio al Palazzo in Milan (1516), show mainly the influence of Bramantino and Zenale, while an adherence to Leonardo's style grows stronger at the time of the painting of the Budapest picture, particularly in the works for private devotion. This tendency, presumably welcomed by clients, is probably not unrelated to Francesco Melzi's return to Milan from France in 1519, given that Melzi brought back with him the drawings and writings that he had inherited from Leonardo.

Of the works of Luini that can be regarded as contemporary, the Budapest painting can be readily compared with the heads of numerous figures in the frescoes of the sanctuary of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Saronno (1525), the *Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist and the Lamb* in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid, or the *Magdalene* in the National Gallery of Art in Washington. The prototype for the latter is the figure of the same saint in Raphael's *The Ecstasy of Saint Cecilia* painted for the church of San Giovanni in Monte in Bologna. A new component in Luini's artistic development emerges in these years, then, and is attributable to two causes: Luini's journey to Rome – of which Cesare Cesariano informs us in his commentary on *De architectura* by Vitruvius published in 1521 – and the return of Cesare da Sesto to Milan in 1519 after spending some years in Rome and the Kingdom of Naples. The composition of the Budapest picture, with the Madonna at the centre and the two female saints slightly behind her on either side, may be derived from earlier models painted by Andrea Mantegna, such as the *Virgin and Child with Saints* in the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris or the *Holy Family* in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie. The painting further develops the Mantegnesque model in that it features three-quarter-length figures rather than half-figures. This solution was also adopted by Bartolomeo Veneto, perhaps under the very influence of Luini's works of this kind, in pieces such as the *Salome with the Head of Saint John the Baptist* in the Dresden Gallery (ca. 1520), the *Portrait of a Lady* in the Timken Museum of Art in San Diego (1530), or the *Portrait of Ludovico Martinengo* in the National Gallery in London (1536).

Throughout his career Luini drew on the tradition of Veneto, and above all on the art of Mantegna, Giovanni Bellini and Cima da Conegliano. These borrowings reinforce the hypothesis that he spent time in his youth in the Venetian *terraferma,* a supposition that several scholars have put forward based on the signature and date legible on the altarpiece preserved in the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris, which reads: "BERNARDINVS MEDIOLANENSIS FACIEBAT MDVII". In this work and a small number of other works grouped around it (cf. cat. 34) an artistic idiom close to Zenale mingles with the influence of Cima da Conegliano and the young Lotto. Bernardino's sojourn in the Veneto must have been approximately between 1503 – when documents attest that the artist was absent from Milan (Pini–Sironi 1993, II, 32–38) – and the end of the first decade of the fifteenth century.

CRISTINA QUATTRINI

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## 62 Gaudenzio Ferrari | Valduggia (?), ca. 1475–1480 – Milan, 1546

### *The Lamentation of Christ*

ca. 1533 (?)

Oil on panel; 118 × 91.5 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 4684

The panel is first mentioned in 1830 in the possession of the painters Rossi in Turin, and then at an unspecified time in the ownership of a certain Signor Bianco, before being acquired by Benigno Crespi in Milan in 1889. In 1914, it was purchased by the Szépművészeti Múzeum through the Parisian art dealer Georges Petit (Gaglia, in *Turin* 1982, and the dossier on the painting in the museum; for hypotheses regarding the fate of the picture in the seventeenth century, see Sacchi 2006).

Scholars from Adolfo Venturi onwards (1900a) dated the work to the third decade of the sixteenth century, not long after the polyptych of the Collegiata di Varallo (1518–1520). Later studies (for a summary, see Viale 1968) put the execution of the work more precisely at the end of the third decade. The convincing dating of the work to around the mid-1530s is due to Gaglia.

A seductive and chronologically very plausible supposition put forward by Rossana Sacchi is that the Budapest picture, which is surely the pinnacle of a dismantled polyptych, originally belonged to Gaudenzio's altar of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, formerly located in the secondary sacristy of the cathedral of Vigevano and executed on the orders of Duke Francesco II Sforza before 1533.

*The Lamentation of Christ,* a splendid cartoon of which is preserved in the Accademia Albertina gallery in Turin, reveals what is probably the culmination of Correggio's influence on Gaudenzio, the first signs of which appear in the artist's *Madonna of the Orange Trees* (1529–1530) in the church of San Cristoforo in Vercelli. Never before had the painter used such bold combinations of pinks, reds and ambers, nor such coloured and almost glazed shadows, and in none of his previous pictures are so many barely delineated details to be seen. Neither would he reach this point again in his subsequent career; rather, he would tend to create more polished, compact and marmoreal – entirely Mannerist – forms (the more emphatically so, the more significant the involvement of assistants). The Mannerist spirit already appears in the present work in the accentuated anatomy of Christ's body (which recalls a long-established and popular prototype by Moderno; for a summary, see D. Gasparotto, in *Mantua* 2008, 284–85, cat. VIII.10, with previous bibliography), and in the ritualized rhetoric of the mourners, which similarly recurs in the master's later works.

It would not be surprising if Gaudenzio, who had already incorporated the influence of Correggio into his art, had followed this path still more consciously and conspicuously in order to win the favour of Duke Francesco, who had left no doubt about his preferred tastes by entrusting Bernardino Gatti, also known as Il Sojaro, with work in his favourite cathedral of Vigevano.

The panel is jeopardized by a vertical crack, which is particularly visible on the beard and neck of Christ. It begins from a point, directly to the right of the bearded man behind the arm of Mary Magdalene, where a number of smaller horizontal losses in the paint are visible. The paint layer has a much duller character on the topmost section of the painting, above the horizontal losses mentioned above. This differing paint extends onto the hat of the figure at the left (disfigured by an unsightly red colour that appears nowhere else in the painting), and on the hair of the other male figure. Examining the reverse of the panel, it can be seen that this layer of paint was applied over a horizontal addition roughly nine centimetres high, which appears to be of considerable age but is by no means original. There is a similar addition at the base of the painting.

The hypothesis that these additions date from a later time, perhaps the seventeenth century, is supported by the absence in the Turin cartoon of either the upper section or the lower one, on which the front wall of the sarcophagus has been depicted (the paint layer has a rather dull effect here also). Although further technical examinations are desirable, the infrared photographs taken by Imre Nemcsics in 2009 already prove beyond doubt that the horizontal strips at the top and base of the panel do not belong to the original panel. The picture was thus originally around one metre in height, and had an almost claustrophobically congested composition. This tightness in composition is very far indeed from the jauntily confident naturalistic style which characterizes the second phase of the artist's work at the chapel of the Crucifixion at Sacro Monte di Varallo (1519–1520), or, with some signs of restlessness, in the frescoes for the church of San Cristoforo in Vercelli (1530–1534).

EDOARDO VILLATA

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63 After Michelangelo Buonarotti | Caprese, 1475 – Rome, 1564

*Leda and the Swan*

after 1530

Oil on canvas; 105.4 × 141 cm

The National Gallery, London, Presented by the Duke of Northumberland, 1838, inv. NG1868.

This painting is an early copy of a lost original by Michelangelo, for which several autograph drawings still survive. His sixteenth-century biographers, Ascanio Condivi and Giorgio Vasari, recorded that Michelangelo had promised Alfonso I d'Este, duke of Ferrara, a work "by [his] own hand" when in Ferrara in 1529. Once back in Florence, he immediately set about completing a large easel painting ("quadrone da sala") in tempera on panel, which represented "the union of Leda with the Swan and, nearby, the bringing forth of the egg from which Castor and Pollux were born …". Because Michelangelo's contact with Alfonso is documented, the painting can be dated to between July 1529 and October 1530, when a letter from the duke to the artist indicates that it was completed. Alfonso dispatched his servant, Pisanello, to Florence; he so offended Michelangelo by calling the painting "una poca cosa" that the artist refused to surrender it. But Michelangelo's pique only partially accounts for his change of mind. The work was in all likelihood part of a larger diplomatic effort to secure military assistance from Alfonso during the siege of Florence (1529–1530). Michelangelo had been engaged to design fortifications for the city and travelled to Ferrara specifically to inspect their defences, when he met Alfonso and took on the commission. By the time the duke's envoy arrived to collect the panel, however, Florence had surrendered and Michelangelo would no longer have needed to curry favour with him. Instead, he gave the painting to his pupil, Antonio Mini, who took it to France, where after several vicissitudes it was bought by Francis I.

Not only did Mini transport Michelangelo's panel, but he was also in possession of the cartoon. According to several surviving letters, both Mini and a young Florentine called Benedetto del Bene were replicating Michelangelo's work in Lyons by early 1532. They were not the only copyists either: a cartoon after Michelangelo's panel, sometimes attributed to Rosso Fiorentino, survives in the Royal Academy, London (inv. 156). Indeed, the present canvas is sometimes given to Rosso, who from November 1530 had been working at Fontainebleau. Its poor state of preservation, however, does not allow for certain attribution. Yet it does share several characteristics with other copies. With the exception of an engraving by Cornelius Bos, they all omit Castor and Pollux and the elaborately draped setting, concentrating instead on the coupling of Leda with Zeus in the guise of a swan. It was this unashamed eroticism which probably presaged the demise of Michelangelo's painting. The panel seems to have survived in the French Royal collection until the seventeenth century when Anne of Austria, then queen mother, apparently took offence to its licentiousness and ordered it burnt.

The theme was also treated by Leonardo in the early years of the sixteenth century (cf. cat. 57). His painting is now lost, but what is known from copies is that she was shown standing and not reclining as in Michelangelo's version. Michelangelo's Leda is sometimes compared with the figure in the foreground of Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians,* which he would have seen in Ferrara, but the comparison is unconvincing. Instead, as Wilde showed many years ago, the complicated pose of Leda is better related to an ancient relief of the subject, which had also inspired Michelangelo's statue of *Night* for the Medici Chapel.

SCOTT NETHERSOLE

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## 64 Pordenone (Giovanni Antonio de' Sacchis) | Pordenone, ca. 1483–1484 – Ferrara, 1539

### *Saint Luke*

ca. 1535–1537

Oil on panel; 75 × 75 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 999
From the Scuola di San Francesco ai Frari, Venice

Although Pordenone spent much of his career in his native region of the Friuli, he also spent periods in other artistic centres in northern Italy, including Treviso, Cremona, Cortemaggiore, and Piacenza. He specialized in depicting powerfully built, often ungainly figures in dramatic movement, and seen foreshortened from below, and he found the fullest scope for this specialism in the decoration of ceilings and domes. From 1527 until his premature death in 1539 he resided more or less permanently in Venice, where for a time he represented a serious challenge to the supremacy of Titian. During this period he undertook a number of monumental commissions in Venetian public buildings, including a narrative canvas for the hall of the Greater Council of the Doge's Palace, and painted ceilings for the Sala della Libreria in the palace and in the church of San Rocco.

The present panel, which shows the Evangelist Saint Luke with his customary attribute of a bull (or ox), was also painted for a Venetian ceiling, but on a much smaller scale. Together with three other rectangular panels representing the evangelists, and four octagonal panels representing Franciscan saints (two of which are now in the National Gallery, London, and the rest likewise in the Szépművészeti Múzeum), *Saint Luke* was originally inserted into the richly carved and gilded wooden ceiling on the ground floor of the Scuola di San Francesco, one of a number of devotional confraternities affiliated to the great Franciscan church of the Frari. The ceiling was still in place at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but by 1733 it had been dismantled, and its appearance is not easy to visualize, not least because Pordenone's principal, central panel, a circular *Stigmatization of Saint Francis,* is lost. It is clear, nevertheless, from the prominently represented architecture in all four of the Evangelist panels – cornices joining one another at right angles, and seen as if from below – that these panels were placed at the four corners of the ceiling, while the four Franciscan saints – behind each of which the cornice remains continuous and parallel to the plane – were placed between the evangelists in the middle of each wall (Schulz 1968).

In his design for the Scuola, Pordenone was forced to make a number of compromises with his previous practice as a ceiling painter. For a small room with a low, flat ceiling he could scarcely attempt the kind of consistent, unified illusion already achieved in his domes at Treviso, Cortemaggiore and Piacenza; and in any case, there already existed in Venice a preference for mounting individual painted panels into a sumptuously gilded wooden framework. In *Saint Luke,* therefore, the figure could not be illusionistically related across the space of the ceiling either to the central *Stigmatization* nor to his fellow saints and evangelists, and he is accordingly shown preoccupied with his gospel. Nevertheless, the fact that the artist shows him in an active pose, and somewhat from below, would have created the effect that he was physically present above the spectator's head, thereby lending his image a striking dramatic immediacy.

PETER HUMFREY

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65 Perugino (Pietro di Cristoforo Vannucci) and workshop (?) | Città della Pieve, ca. 1450 – Fontignano, 1523

## *The Nativity of Christ*

ca. 1504

Oil on panel; 34.3 × 45.5 cm
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 81 LC 00208

One of Perugino's most favoured subjects at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the Nativity of Christ, set in a wide landscape ennobled by the Renaissance architecture rendered in clear central perspective, and in which only a few figures appear, in reverent poses. It seems that in the workshop of the artist, immensely renowned and in demand at this time, it was usual practice to work out the figures first in preparatory sketches, then transfer them onto the surface of the painting while varying only minimally the colours, the architecture and the background. This customary method was adopted especially in the case of large-scale frescoes. As a consequence, we know at least three almost identical and monumental versions of the present composition, all of them in the territory of Umbria. In the course of this repetitive work, however, the quality of execution remained equally high, indicating that the master himself worked on them, even if he may have been helped by his assistants.

The earliest of these versions is probably the fresco in the Collegio del Cambio in Perugia, painted in 1498–1500, followed, it seems, by the fresco removed from the church of San Francesco a Monteripido and now in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, completed about 1501–1502, and the version in the Museo di San Francesco in Montefalco datable to approximately 1503. The most significant difference between these versions is in the architecture. In the first version we see a stone edifice with a series of ceremonial arches. In the two later versions, this is replaced by a wooden structure with a large timbered roof, which more appropriately evokes the stable where the event took place. The arrangement of the figures and their postures are essentially the same in all three versions, as is the landscape background.

The panel discussed here is a very small scale version of the same composition. Even its first known owner, Guglielmo Lochis, noted that the figure of the Virgin is comparable to *The Adoration of the Christ Child,* which was painted between 1496 and 1499 and once formed the central part of a triptych in the Certosa of Pavia (it was transported to England in Lochis's time). Based on the architecture, however, the Bergamo painting cannot date from earlier than the fresco of *The Adoration of the Magi* executed in 1504 in the Oratorio dei Bianchi in Città della Pieve. In this latter work, the wooden structure has been simplified (it is not ornamented as in the Montefalco painting), but it has also been boldly elevated, rendering the space below it airier. A further change in the small Bergamo picture compared to the three earlier versions is that Saint Joseph does not cross his arms across his chest, but adopts the *orans* gesture made by one of the shepherds in the earlier frescoes: raising his hands, he turns his open palms towards the Child. This could be a sign of Perugino's inclination to reconsider elements in the oft-repeated composition, which is even more evident in the profoundly changed, generously populated version of Città della Pieve.

The Nativity composition which ultimately bears the closest resemblance to the Bergamo picture is a similarly sized (27 × 46.5 cm) predella panel in the Art Institute of Chicago. This formed part of a predella consisting of five elements, which perhaps belonged – as Keith Christiansen proposes (see F. Marcelli, in *Perugia* 2004, 274) – to the altarpiece of the Chigi Chapel in the church of Sant'Agostino in Siena. Perugino worked on this between 1502 and 1506, that is, more or less in the same period when he painted the fresco in the Oratorio dei Bianchi.

Guglielmo Lochis had no doubt that picture discussed here was an autograph piece by Perugino, a view shared by the writer of the Accademia Carrara's 1881 catalogue, and then by Gustavo Frizzoni in 1907. In 1913, Adolfo Venturi was the first to consider it as a product of Perugino's school, an attribution shared by Locatelli Milesi in 1916. Gnoli was the only one who flatly rejected Perugino's authorship, evidently not wholly unrelated to the fact that Berenson omitted the picture from his authoritative list of the master's works. Later scholarship never discussed the piece at length but generally considered it executed by Perugino with the assistance of his workshop, acknowledging at the same time its high quality and occasionally even tacitly returning to the assumption that it is a fully autograph work by the master (for example, Ottino della Chiesa, who described the panel in 1967 as a "magnificent *bozzetto* or predella scene").

One may conclude that the work was painted in Pietro Perugino's closest entourage, certainly with the direct participation of the master, who must have personally decided about the changes between the various versions. Although possible, the intervention of the assistants seems insignificant. A more definitive judgment could be made after the removal of the thick, yellowed layer of varnish and some retouching, which were applied long ago, in the course of documented restoration interventions in 1867, 1882 and 1903.

GIOVANNI VALAGUSSA

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66 Francesco Francia (Francesco Raibolini) | Bologna, ca. 1447 – Bologna, 1517

## *The Adoration of the Child; Saint Augustine Hesitating between the Blood of Christ and the Milk of the Virgin*

ca. 1507–1508

Tempera on panel; 52 × 168.8 cm
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, inv. 570
Inscriptions on the banderoles around the figure of Saint Augustine: HIC AB VBERE LACTOR // POSITVS IN MEDIO QVO / ME VERTAR NESCIO / DICA(M) ERGO IESV MARIA / MISERERE // HIC A VVLNERE PASCOR
From church of Santa Maria della Misericordia in Bologna

At the end of the eighteenth century, the agents going round the suppressed monasteries and convents in Bologna selecting works of art to be removed and impounded, chanced on this wonderful painting in the second chapel on the right in the Augustine church of Santa Maria della Misericordia, one of the most prestigious monastic complexes of the city. The painting formed a predella to a magnificent Renaissance altarpiece which to this day frames the fresco *The Madonna Nursing the Child*, painted by Lippo di Dalmasio in 1397. A highly venerated image, Lippo's *Madonna* was originally in the presbytery of the church, and according to Malvasia ([1686] 1969, 318/24), it was detached and transported to the side chapel, a property of the Gozzadini, when the walls of the chapel were being built. Construction work began in 1516 (and not in 1528, as generally assumed; for a corrigendum, see Gamberini [2004–2005, 70] who cites the *Memoriale* of Brother Vincenzo da Bergamo, begun in 1558). Subsequently, the family decided to decorate the chapel with a "magnificent panel or altarpiece" ("pulcherrimam et adornatam tabulam seu anchona") which is undoubtedly identical with the altar structure which, at the time of the Napoleonic suppressions, included both the trecento fresco and this predella.

Executed with great technical expertise, this painting from Francesco Francia's mature period enchants the viewer particularly with the perfect harmony achieved between the iconic subject and the naturalistic setting.

Set in a single, deep, scenic landscape, the two episodes are quite distinct – a fact underlined by the slender leafy tree separating them in the middle. On the left we see the adoration of the Child, its succinct rendering belying its monumentality, as if it were a miniaturized version of the altarpiece painted earlier by Francia for the high altar of the same Augustinian church (now Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, inv. 584). On the right, the pictorial story continues with a subtle evocation of an allegorical subject fairly rare at the time: Saint Augustine hesitating between the blood of Christ and the Virgin's milk. "Hic ab ubere lactor; hic a vulnere pascor; positus in medio quo me vertar nescio, dicam ergo Iesu Maria miserere" ("I am nursing on this breast, grazing on this wound; standing in the middle I know not which way to turn, so I say, Jesus, Mary, have mercy"), reads the text on the banderoles unfurling around the devout figure of the saint. It has been suggested that these passages were inspired by the text of Saint Augustine's *Meditations,* generally considered to be apocryphal (see Ronen 1988, 124, n. 115). The Crucifixion, to which Augustine turns with a doubtful and contrite look, is right in the foreground of the picture, in front of a cloudy sky brightening towards the horizon and a river bed shown in perspective: this scene is certainly one that was created in Francia's most felicitous moments.

The inspiration behind this picture is Raphaelesque – the group of the Madonna and Child in particular has close analogies, for example, with the contemporaneous studies of the Madonna and Child in the Graphische Sammlung Albertina (inv. IV 209) in Vienna – as is apparent in the use of intense and skilfully shaded chiaroscuro, which does not affect the brilliance of the rich and transparent colours, but rather lends vigour and substance to the slender and elegant figures. The painting nonetheless owes much of its visual appeal to the elaborate details, the meticulously painted clothes, architecture and vegetation.

Seeking to define the boundaries of the "Perugian and Raphaelesque period" in Francia's œuvre, Crowe and Cavalcaselle ([1871] 1912) dated the predella to after the paintings in the oratory of Saint Cecilia, but to within the first decade of the century, which closed with Francia's fine *Portrait of Federico Gonzaga* at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. *The Virgin of the Annunciation with Saint Jerome and Saint John the Baptist* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna (inv. 587) and the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden have been rightly suggested by these authors to be the closest analogies of the painting. Their proposal for the dating, which may in fact be narrowed down to about 1507–1508, was rejected in subsequent monographic texts by Williamson (1901), Lipparini (1913) and Piazzi (1925) – who tended to date it earlier, to about 1499–1500 – but it is accepted by the majority of scholars who have recently written about the work (see Negro–Roio 1998).

CECILIA CAVALCA

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## 67 Fra Bartolommeo della Porta (Bartolommeo di Paolo) | Florence, 1473 – 1517

*Rest on the Flight into Egypt*

ca. 1500

Tempera and oil on canvas; 135 × 113.5 cm
Palazzo Vescovile, Pienza

Ever since the painting was found in the Palazzo Vescovile in Pienza in 1979 it has been universally accepted as by Fra Bartolommeo. Conservation has ascertained that the canvas is the original support, which is somewhat surprising since most of Fra Bartolommeo's paintings were originally made on wood.

Fra Bartolommeo was a pupil of Cosimo Rosselli (1439–1507), from 1484/85 to ca. 1491 along with Piero di Cosimo (1462 – after 1515) and Mariotto Albertinelli (1474–1515) with whom he entered into partnership around 1494. Deeply impressed by the teachings of the Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola, he laid his painter's tools aside and entered the order of San Domenico in 1500. After four years of theological studies he resumed his practice of painting and soon became head of a large and prolific workshop in the convent of San Marco. His pious paintings were fashionable among the pro-Savonarola middle classes of Florence. But at the return of the Medici family in 1512, demand for his works fell rapidly and he went to Rome to seek his fortune. The competitive atmosphere there, however, did not suit him and he soon returned to his native Florence where he spent his last years painting some huge altarpieces for foreign patrons. Together with Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael he created the high Renaissance style, one of the most perfectly consistent systems ever known in pictorial art, characterized by an almost abstract expression of ease and accomplishment, formal clarity and balance.

The *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* is a fine example of that style with its conscious use of elementary vertical and horizontal lines and the simple scheme which governs the play of light.

It is a most touching image of the relationship between a mother and her child. The seated Virgin is rendered in pure profile and the pale features of her head are set off against the dark green shrubbery behind her. She protectively supports the Child's head while nursing him. The donkey has been tied to the trees and Joseph is kneeling in adoration on a background of wide open plains in which the leafless branches of two wintery trees are set off against the misty sky. They recall the many fine studies of trees which the Frate drew in the late, probably under the influence of Hugo van der Goes's *Portinari Altarpiece,* which had caused a sensation at its arrival in Florence in 1485 (f. ex. Fischer 1995, 51, cat. 26 verso). The Virgin's pose is also found in a large number of Fra Bartolommeo's early drawings (Fischer 1992, 13–18). These seem to recall a Virgin type favoured by Donatello, preserved in two small shallow-carved reliefs: the marble *Madonna in the Clouds* in Boston (Museum of Fine Arts) and the bronze tondo with a *Madonna dell'Umiltà* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (Fischer 1992, 14, figs. 11–12). It is almost certain that the Frate was referring to such a sculpture, for Vasari reports that he painted two shutters for such a type of relief by Donatello. This relief has been tentatively identified with the one in Boston and the shutters can be safely identified with two small early panels in the Uffizi (Fischer 1990, 34–37, figs. 1–2). Fra Bartolommeo was not the only artist who was inspired by Donatello's shallow-carved reliefs around 1500; Perugino, Michelangelo and Raphael also turned to Donatello in their attempt to impart monumental simplicity to their compositions. It is thus likely that the painting should be dated among the Frate's early works.

As mentioned above, Fra Bartolommeo's career falls in two parts: as a lay painter from 1493–1500 and as a friar after 1504. His activity as a layman is largely unknown, whereas his career is relatively well documented after he became a friar. As he did not paint between 1500 and 1504 it can be presumed that there would be no stylistic differences to his works made on either side of the break. In 1516 a list was made of the works that Fra Bartolommeo had executed while working for the Dominican order. It consists of two parts: the paintings which had been sold and those that had not been paid for, because they had been made either for the order itself or as gifts. Among the latter, there is one which Serena Padovani has tentatively identified with the Pienza painting: "A canvas of ca. two *braccia*, in which he painted the Virgin and Child with Joseph, estimated at VIII duc., given to the nuns at Santa Lucia." The measurements are not very different from those of this picture, and the rather rare canvas support as well as the subject-matter, are concordant, so it is not unlikely that this is the painting shown here. How it ended up in the Palazzo Vescovile is, however, still a mystery.

CHRIS FISCHER

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68 RAPHAEL | Urbino, 1483 – Rome, 1520

## *Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist (The Esterházy Madonna)*

ca. 1508

Tempera and oil on panel; 28.5 × 21.5 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 71

The Virgin kneels as she holds the Child, who sits on a rock and turns vigorously to the left, toward the infant Saint John the Baptist. The latter is absorbed in reading the banderole. In the background, the ruins of the ancient Forum of Nerva and the campanile of San Basilio appear among the gently sloping hills. It has now been established with certainty that this veduta can be traced back to one of the landscapes shown in the collection of drawings known as the *Codex Escurialensis* (now in the Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, El Escorial), which was in Florence at the time of the execution of the picture (Garas 1983, 49–52; Vécsey, in *Budapest* 2008). Scholars unanimously attribute *The Esterházy Madonna* to Raphael. Even Passavant dated its execution to the latter half of the artist's Florentine period, that is, to around 1507–1508. This view is now considered indisputable.

The top layer of the painting is largely unfinished. The paint of the Virgin's dress is applied in thick layers; in the flesh tones, however, the artist got hardly any further than underpainting. Here the surfaces are dominated by the preparatory underdrawing.

The subject that Raphael depicts here – the Virgin together with the Child and the infant Saint John the Baptist – was one that the artist would have seen in contemporary Florentine paintings created primarily for private devotion. In the early fourteenth century an anonymous author enriched the story of the childhood of Saint John the Baptist with many new narrative elements in the biographies that were later attached to Domenico Cavalca's *Vite de' Santi Padri,* and by doing so, created the prototype of the infant hermit (Aronberg Lavin 1955; Aronberg Lavin 1961). It is in this context that the portrayal of the two children together must be understood; the representation refers equally to the baptism and the passion of Christ. Saint John the Baptist was also the patron saint of Florence. Raphael's own contribution to the subject was that he combined it with the representation of the "Madonna of Humility", that is, the Virgin humbly seated on the ground.

The only surviving preparatory drawing, more or less identical in size to the painting (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 539E), was made for the entire composition. The very close correspondence between the two compositions and the pricked outlines visible in the drawing suggest that the sheet was used as a cartoon. The drawing, executed in the style of Raphael's Florentine period, also shows a landscape with a town in the background, but the buildings are not yet the Forum of Nerva.

In his composition of the figures, Raphael was evidently inspired by Leonardo, in particular by the *Kneeling Leda* (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. I 466), from which he borrowed the twisted posture of the Virgin, albeit in reverse (Natali, in *Vinci* 2001). For *The Esterházy Madonna* Raphael developed a clear, well-structured composition which is animated by the dynamically flowing motion of the figures. The inscription "ECCE AGNUS DEI" (John 1, 29: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world") that the infant Saint John is reading – the words were intended to be written on the banderole but never executed – thematizes the idea of the passion story; all of the elements of the composition start and arrive in the figure of John. This representation is highly reflective of Leonardo's mature work, and is therefore one that Raphael would have been able to create only at the end of his Florentine period.

JÜRG MEYER ZUR CAPELLEN

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## 69 Sebastiano del Piombo (Sebastiano Luciani) | Venice, 1485 – Rome, 1547

### *Portrait of a Man*

ca. 1512–1514

Oil on panel; 115 × 94 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1384

In August 1511, despite a highly successful early career in his native Venice, the twenty-six year-old Sebastiano Luciani accepted the invitation of the super-wealthy Sienese banker Agostino Chigi to return with him to Rome. There Sebastiano quickly became a close ally of Michelangelo in his rivalry with Raphael, and after the departure of the former for Florence in 1516, and the death of the latter in 1520, the Venetian became the leading artist in the papal capital. He enjoyed a particularly close relationship with Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who as Pope Clement VII invested him in 1531 with the honorific title of "keeper of the Papal Seal" (Piombo), thereby giving him the name by which he has always subsequently been known. Sebastiano was above all a painter of altarpieces and other religious works for public settings, but throughout his career he also practised as a painter of portraits, many of them on an imposing scale and possessing exceptional artistic distinction.

The present portrait, perhaps of a humanist, is usually dated to ca. 1515, but recently it has been placed slightly earlier in Sebastiano's Roman career, ca. 1512–1514 (Lucco 2008). Indeed, the relationship with the painter's Venetian works remains strong, with the architectural backdrop closely resembling the arrangement in his altarpiece for San Giovanni Crisostomo, and the face half in shadow, as in the portraits of Giorgione. The highly evocative landscape, in which rustic buildings are juxtaposed against a sunset sky, is also strongly Venetian in character. One might almost be tempted to suggest that the portrait was painted before Sebastiano left Venice, especially since another portrait customarily dated to ca. 1512–1514, the *Man in Armour* (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford) already looks much more Roman: in the dynamism of the pose, in the powerful fist, and in the sense of sculptural form encased in hard steel. By comparison, the composition of the present portrait is planar, it is stabilized by the grid of verticals and horizontals, and the hand is slim and elegant. Yet it is about one third larger than the Hartford portrait, and this new grandeur of scale may be seen as another, different aspect of the influence of Michelangelo (Hirst 1981). It is also true that, paradoxically, some of Sebastiano's most intensely Venetian landscape backgrounds were painted in Rome, almost as an expression of nostalgia for the home he had renounced. In the end, therefore, the contrast with the Hartford picture may be interpreted as a deliberate effort by the painter to expand the expressive range of portraiture by adopting different styles and compositions to suit different sitters – and in these cases, to contrast the energetic man of action with the tranquil man of contemplation.

PETER HUMFREY

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## 70 Workshop of Raphael: Giovan Francesco Penni | Florence, 1496 (?) – Naples, after 1528 (?)

*Virgin and Child with Saint Joseph (The Holy Family of the Book)*

ca. 1512–1515

Tempera grassa on panel; 35.4 × 24 cm
Galleria Palatina, Florence, inv. 1912 no. 247

This painting is attributed to Raphael in the inventory of the collection of the Della Rovere family, compiled in Pesaro in 1623. It arrived in Florence as part of the inheritance of Vittoria della Rovere, the last heiress of the family of the lords of Pesaro and Urbino, who in 1631 became the consort of Ferdinando II de' Medici. In 1635 it was placed in the grand duke's bedroom in the Palazzo Pitti, where after various episodes it remained, until it became part of the Palatine Gallery established by the Lorenese administration between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the grand-ducal collections, the traditional attribution to Raphael or his workshop was substituted at the turn of the nineteenth century by an attribution to Giulio Romano, while the first full nineteenth-century catalogues of the Palatine Gallery maintain the reference to the School of Raphael, with the conjoined appearance of the name of the other heir to the master, Giovan Francesco Penni, called il Fattore. In fact, however, the painting was never taken into serious critical consideration, until its inclusion in the 1984 exhibition *Raffaello a Firenze,* when the attribution to the young Giulio Romano was advanced once more (Chiarini, in *Florence* 1984). Having been excluded from recent studies on Giulio, it was attributed to Raphael, and dated to 1512, by Oberhuber (1999), to the workshop of Raphael after 1518 by Meyer zur Capellen (2005), and to Giovan Francesco Penni working from a drawing by Raphael, by the present author (2007).

The balance and elegance of the composition permit the recognition of Raphael's hand in the invention of the work, which resumes the harmonious simplicity of his Florentine *Madonnas* of 1506–1507. This point is confirmed by the variation in the background, visible through infrared reflectographic examination, which reveals a first and different version featuring the slightly open shutters of a foreshortened window: this follows an idea of early Netherlandish origin that Raphael realized in similar small-format compositions of this same period, such as the *Madonna of the Carnation* (National Gallery, London). At the same time, the pictorial solution – of very high quality, yet not enough to allow for full attribution to Raphael himself – shows a maturity and chromatic richness that suggest an earliest dating to the first years of Raphael's Roman sojourn: it thus can be inferred that the composition sketched by the master during his Florentine phase must have been executed several years later in his workshop in Rome. For the proposed dating of 1512–1515, Giulio Romano was definitely too young, whereas Penni, who entered Raphael's workshop in Florence and followed him to Rome, assisting in the master's projects with a smooth and elegant hand, can be nominated as the most convincing candidate for the execution of this exceptional work, which inspired numerous copies in central Italy and especially Emilia.

SERENA PADOVANI

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71 RAPHAEL | Urbino, 1483 – Rome, 1520

## *Double Portrait*

ca. 1518–1520

Oil on canvas; 99 × 83 cm (canvas strips added on all sides)
Musée du Louvre, Department des Peintures, Paris, inv. 614

In the foreground of the picture a bearded man points at the viewer with an outstretched arm. He wears a dark baggy doublet with slashed sleeves over a pleated shirt. He rests his hand on the hilt of his sword and turns back to the other, somewhat older man who stands behind him, wearing similar clothes. The latter looks at the viewer, lays his left hand on the shoulder of the man in front of him, and his right hand on his waist.

The surface of the painting, executed on canvas, was for a long time so soiled that it could not be judged properly. After its restoration in 1972, it was presented in the catalogue of the 1983 exhibition as an autograph work by Raphael (*Paris* 1983), a view that has been universally endorsed by art historians ever since.

The double portrait was documented in Fontainebleau in the seventeenth century, and subsequently it remained in the possession of the French kings. The uncertainty with respect to the identity of the painter and the two portrayed figures led Le Brun to attribute the picture to Raphael in his 1683 inventory of King Louis XIV's collection, and he identified the rear figure as that of the artist himself. In his catalogue (1752–1754) Lepicié claimed the man in front was Raphael's fencing tutor, a conjecture that would prevail in scholarly literature for a long time afterwards. However, while precise comparisons have confirmed that Raphael is indeed the rear figure, the identity of the other man remains a subject of debate. In recent publications, scholars have sought to identify this man by the application of various methods of art theory and social history (see Meyer zur Capellen 2008, 139–42). Nevertheless, already in 1984 Cecil Gould made the plausible suggestion that the man was identifiable with Pietro Aretino (1492–1556), who lived in Rome from 1517 and stayed in the house of Agostino Chigi. Indeed, Aretino very closely resembles the second man in Raphael's painting in a print made of him by Marcantonio Raimondi. Raphael's gesture – resting his hand on the man's shoulder in front of him and touching his waist with his right hand – is very personal, almost intimate, and it certainly has the character of a presentation, as if the man in the foreground were being introduced to someone, presumably the viewer of the image. In the context of the unusual gesture, Gould's hypothesis would explain whom Raphael is looking at, and at whom the other man is pointing. He is very possibly Agostino Chigi, Raphael's major private patron in his late Roman years and Pietro Aretino's host in Rome. If Chigi was the person addressed by the picture, he was probably also the one who commissioned it.

As scholars have repeatedly pointed out, the theatrical gesture of the anonymous man compares well to the passionate movements of the figures in Raphael's last work, the *Transfiguration* (now in the Pinacoteca Vaticana, see p. 56 in this volume). Accordingly, this painting too would have been created in the last years of the artist's life.

JÜRG MEYER ZUR CAPELLEN

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72 GIROLAMO GENGA | Urbino, ca. 1476 – Urbino, 1551

## *Saint Augustine Baptizes the Catechumens*

1516–1518

Oil on panel; 49.5 × 91.3 cm
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 81 LC 00238

This spectacular painting was recently removed from storage by staff at the Accademia Carrara and carefully restored by Antonio Benigni in 2006. During this work the excellent condition of the picture came to light. The composition was painted by the artist on a single large panel, which has a horizontal grain and is slightly warped, but has retained its original size, as evidenced by the intact edges of the painted layer all around. The removal of the darkened varnish, applied by Mauro Pellicioli during an earlier restoration in 1932, has rendered the colours of the picture clearer and more intense, their potency enhanced by a number of deeper tones of blue, orange, red and green. Infrared reflectography has revealed remarkable, rapidly and energetically executed underdrawing, which is partly visible even to the naked eye.

The scene portrayed in the picture is quite rare. It takes place in an interior laid out in precise perspective, with an *all'antica* baptismal font in its central axis. The naked figures move in the space with a vigour that might better suit medieval depictions of immersion in the fountain of eternal youth than a religious ceremony. The viewer is particularly struck by the powerful musculature of the nudes disrobing in the foreground. Antedecents for this can already be found in the work of Masaccio and then Piero della Francesca, but here this approach clearly mingles with the influences of Michelangelo's ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and Raphael's first Stanze in the Vatican. The artist's style is thus comprised of a great many elements, including that singular type of chiaroscuro that came to Genga's attention through the work of Sodoma in Siena, but which was originally inspired by Leonardo (cf. cat. 75).

Guglielmo Lochis, former owner of the painting, made this note about the work in 1858: "picture with twenty-one figures, formerly in the Imperial and Royal Brera Academy". Indeed the work was earlier in Milan: it arrived there in 1809 together with two other elements from the same predella. All three works were subsequently sold to private individuals in 1819–1820. A few months after the predella fragments, the enormous central panel of the altarpiece also arrived in Milan.

Extensive documentation survives regarding the fact that the altarpiece was originally made for the Augustinian friars in Cesena. We know that on September 12, 1513, Genga set down the conditions for execution of the work in writing and presented his design. He consented to move to Cesena for the duration of the work's execution, and lived there from 1516. This was probably also due to the events that led to the downfall of Genga's earlier patron, Francesco Maria I della Rovere. Settling in Cesena, the painter carried out the assignment with the help of at least three assistants (known of thanks to a document surviving from 1517). He had certainly already begun the work in 1516, because in this year the friars paid him 40 of the 400 ducats specified in his contract. Genga received the last payment instalment on March 18, 1518, on completion of the work. It would appear, however, that the faithful were only able to see the painting for the first time on the Feast of Saint Augustine on August 28, 1520.

According to Alessandro Morandotti's reconstruction, the altarpiece originally consisted of the central panel depicting the *Dispute on the Immaculate Conception* (now Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan), beneath which there was a tripartite predella with scenes taken from the life of Saint Augustine: to the left, *The Conversion of Saint Augustine* (currently in a private collection); at the centre, the *Saint Augustine Baptizes the Catechumens* discussed here; and to the right, *Saint Augustine Giving the Habit of His Order to Three Catechumens* (Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina). From the extensive literature dealing with the Brera panel and the predella pieces, it is worth mentioning that, in his time, Francesco Scannelli (1657) regarded it possible that Genga's assistants – and in the case of the present painting, Gerolamo Marchesi – cooperated in the execution of the predella paintings. This supposition, however, has not been embraced by subsequent scholars; instead, most have taken the view that in the altarpiece as a whole there are no discernible inconsistencies that might serve to isolate the work of another painter's hand.

GIOVANNI VALAGUSSA

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73 After Andrea del Sarto (Andrea d'Agnolo) | Florence, 1486 – Florence, 1530

*Portrait of Baccio Bandinelli (?)*

late sixteenth – early seventeenth century (before 1635)

Oil on canvas; 58.5 × 42.5 cm
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890 no. 1486

The painting is recorded in the Medici collections from at least 1635 when it appears in the inventory of the "Tribuna degli Uffizi". This document attributes the painting to Andrea del Sarto and identifies the sitter as Baccio Bandinelli. Later criticism generally accepted this identification. Indeed, according to Vasari (1568), the young Baccio asked Andrea del Sarto to paint his portrait for two unspoken reasons: he wanted to watch his friend working and spy out his brilliant painting technique, and he was anxious to have a picture by Andrea so as to learn to imitate his style and forms. The painter, however, saw through the trick and painted the picture very quickly, with masterly skill; he used many colours at once and did not permit Baccio to stand up and examine his methods. The disappointed Baccio subsequently asked Rosso Fiorentino, this time openly, for advice and instruction.

When Vasari published the first edition of his artists' biographies (1550), the portrait Sarto painted was still in the possession of Baccio Bandinelli. Later Borghini (1584) mentioned it in Rodolfo Sirigatti's *studiolo,* and in 1605 the painting was in the Capponi collection. Its subsequent fate is unknown.

On the basis of these sources and established tradition, scholars usually identified the picture now kept in Uffizi with the one Vasari claimed Andrea del Sarto painted of Baccio, even though the question was open to debate. Laboratory examinations performed during the last restoration (1986), however, have shown that the Uffizi picture is actually a copy – albeit a very old and a very good one – of the portrait mentioned by Vasari. In addition, it is worth noting that Andrea del Sarto, like most Florentine painters well into the late cinquecento, usually painted on wood, using canvas only for processional banners and temporary decorations for the stage.

In the Galleria Palatina in Palazzo Pitti there is a painting of very similar subject and technique (inv. 1912 no. 66), which was acquired as a self-portrait of Andrea del Sarto in 1797. Compared with the picture held in Pitti, the Uffizi portrait is older and more accomplished; it was undoubtedly completed before 1635 (when it was mentioned in the Tribuna inventory) and can be dated to the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

A contemporary of Rosso Fiorentino and Pontormo, Baccio Bandinelli (Florence, 1493–1560), before becoming one of most accomplished sculptors of the Medici court, attempted to gain some standing as a painter, and, while he was making his first sculptures, he was also tirelessly practising drawing by copying from models. He had the occasion to put his painting abilities to the test in 1512 when he was invited to make "a painting" ("quadro", as recorded in a document of payment) in the church of Santa Maria dei Servi dell'Annunziata in Florence. This is probably identifiable with the scene of *The Marriage of the Virgin* in the cycle of frescoes on the life of the Virgin in the atrium of the church, the Chiostrino dei Voti, where Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino also worked at that time. Baccio executed some preparatory drawings for the scene (British Museum, London, Department of Prints and Drawings, inv. Pp. 1-60, see M. Sframeli, in *Florence* 1996b, 182–83, no. 53), but the commission did not come to fruition and was handed over to Franciabigio (1513–1514). In the years of his training and early activity, Baccio Bandinelli thus frequented a circle of artists such as Andrea del Sarto, Rosso, and Franciabigio, who formed the so-called "Annunziata school" in the second decade of the sixteenth century. Together with them, he keenly studied Michelangelo's cartoon for *The Battle of Cascina* and shared with them a new vision of dynamic and imposing art, for which they sought inspiration from the masterpieces of Florentine art (Giotto, Masaccio), the works of their great contemporaries (above all Michelangelo), and art from antiquity most characterized by pathos and heroism.

The episode related by Vasari about Baccio Bandinelli's portrait reveals that Andrea del Sarto was recognized very early on as one of the most outstanding portraitists of his time. As the replica in the Uffizi proves, he was able to establish a balance between lifelike representation and idealization, with a successful combination of vivid expression, classical dignity and moral elevation. Recently, Antonio Natali (1998) pointed out that there is a certain resemblance between the physiognomy of the figure portrayed in the Uffizi portrait and the Saint John the Baptist in the *Madonna of the Harpies* (Uffizi, Florence), which Andrea del Sarto painted for the church of San Francesco de' Macci in 1517. Natali suggested that the face of Saint John could be a portrayal of Rosso Fiorentino, while in the figure of Saint Francis on the other side of the altarpiece perhaps a portrait of Pontormo, another collaborator of Andrea del Sarto around 1512, can be recognized.

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## 74 Franciabigio (Francesco di Cristofano) | Florence, 1484 – Florence, 1525

### *Noli me tangere*

ca. 1520–1525

Detached fresco; 162 × 145 cm
Museo del Cenacolo di San Salvi, Florence, inv. 1890 no. 3242

The painting is generally identified with the work which Giorgio Vasari describes thus in his biography of Franciabigio (1568): "He painted a most beautiful *Noli me tangere* for the clothweaver Arcangelo, at the top of a tower that serves as a terrace, in Porta Rossa" [a district of Florence]. The client was thus a simple weaver, plying the same trade as the artist's father. The fresco adorned the covered terrace at the top of the weaver's house, known as the Ciaccheri tower. The house stood in the heart of Florence in the bustling quarter of artisans and merchants known as the Mercato Vecchio. The fresco was removed from the wall for preservation before the quarter was torn down in around 1890.

The scene shows two episodes from the New Testament. To the left, Mary Magdalene, one of the most devoted and loyal disciples of Jesus, is seen with two other women discovering that the tomb in which they had interred the crucified body of Jesus the preceding evening is now empty. An angel dressed in pure white sits on the tomb, giving the women the news of Christ's resurrection. In the foreground, the resurrected Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, who has moved away from her companions. Having first taken him for a gardener, she then recognizes him and, falling to her knees, extends her arms to embrace him. Christ stops her, however, telling her: "Noli me tangere" ("Touch me not"). The artist depicts Jesus in accordance with the traditional iconography: his naked body is covered only by a cloak, permitting his wounds to be seen, while he holds a hoe in his hand.

Known as Franciabigio, Francesco di Cristofano was a contemporary and friend of Andrea del Sarto. Still in their youth, directly following Franciabigio's apprenticeship with Mariotto Albertinelli, the two artists set up a joint workshop. Even after the closure of the workshop, they often worked together, mainly painting frescoes: these include, for example, the frescoes depicting the life of the Virgin in the atrium – the Chiostrino dei Voti – of the church of the Santissima Annunziata dei Servi di Maria in Florence, the scenes from the life of Saint John the Baptist in the cloister of the Confraternità dello Scalzo, and the decoration of the great hall of the villa in Poggio a Caiano. Together with Sarto, Jacopo Pontormo, Rosso Fiorentino, and other artists working at the Servite church of the Santissima Annunziata, Franciabigio belonged to the "Annunziata School", whose members received the most important public and private commissions in the period after the fall of the Florentine Republic and the return of the exiled Medici (1512). A short distance from the Annunziata church was the headquarters of the confraternity of Saint Job, for whose chapel Franciabigio painted an altarpiece (*Altarpiece of Saint Job,* 1516; Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) and of which he himself was a member; perhaps his sobriquet derived from the ash-grey (in Italian: *bigio*) habit worn by its members.

From the beginning, Franciabigio had been influenced by Andrea del Sarto's style, which, however, he reworked in a more intimate and refined fashion, enriched with rustic, domestic moods, showing a marked interest in naturalism and vivacious expressive power. His *Noli me tangere* was, indeed, inspired by Andrea del Sarto's work of the same subject painted for the church of San Gallo in 1509, at the time of the workshop association of the two young artists. However, the pose of the figures and the iconography of Christ reveal that Franciabigio was familiar with another, much later work: the *Noli me tangere* fresco painted by Fra Bartolomeo in 1517 for the Ospizio della Maddalena at Le Caldine near Florence. Furthermore, in the monumental and imposing figures of Franciabigio, shown from a low viewpoint, we can also detect an echo of the presence in Florence of Michelangelo, who from 1520 was working on the Sagrestia Nuova. Lastly, the crumpled and broken folds of Christ's cloak, Mary's hairstyle, and above all the landscape painted with rapid brushstrokes, with its monolithic masses of crumbling rock, ruined wall, trees with their full, irregular foliage and withered, ethereal trunks (perhaps symbolizing life overcoming death), can be traced back to German graphic art, and in particular to the influence of the prints of Lucas van Leyden.

Like many of his contemporaries, therefore, Franciabigio shows an inclination to the erudite and wide-ranging eclectic style that permeates Florentine art of the 1510s and 1520s. The painter melded these varied influences into a heroic yet intimate narrative.

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## 75 Sodoma (Giovanni Antonio Bazzi) | Vercelli, 1477 – Siena, 1549

### *Ecce Homo*

ca. 1510

Oil on poplar; 59.5 × 46 cm
Private collection, Modena (on loan to the Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)

Sodoma's *Ecce Homo* can certainly be considered one of the most refined of his panel paintings (for a short biography see cat. 76). It has only recently been published in a catalogue entry by Pietro C. Marani (2001) and here is exhibited for the first time outside Milan. The state of conservation is generally good with some losses of colour. The painting has a well-documented provenance. It belonged to the Medici branch of Ottaiano (near Naples), established in 1567 by Bernardetto, who was a son of Francesca Salviati (daughter of Lucrezia and niece of Pope Leo X); in 1998 it was sold to the present owner by the princess Gloria Imperiale. There can be little doubt about Sodoma's authorship, which has already been asserted by Roberto Longhi and Giuliano Briganti on the basis of photographic reproductions (for details see Marani 2001). An early copy is preserved in the Galleria Palatina in Florence, and shows just how successful was Sodoma's invention. The dating of the original poses several problems. It has been connected with Sodoma's early career, especially his encounter with Leonardo's work in Milan around the year 1500.

The picture highlights the half-length figure of Christ, whose bound hands are crossed in front of his naked breast, on which are traces of blood. A light purple robe partly covers his left shoulder and completely hides the other. The body is shown in a slightly asymmetric position with the nearly frontal head, the gaze directed to the right. Tears well from the eyes, and the mouth is half open. The face is slender and well-proportioned, framed by the beard and long hair; the crown of thorns pierces the forehead and casts shadows onto the illuminated skin. A few drops of blood flow from the wounds. The painting presents Christ in an appealing fusion of beauty and pain. Two figures emerge from the dark background: the man on the left, wearing a helmet and metal vestment (from which points of light glitter), seems to be a Roman soldier. With one hand he holds the rope that binds the hands of Christ. The mouth with thick lips is also half open, he is characterized as black or more generally as "oriental". However, even if he looks somewhat fierce he is not shown in the act of despising Christ. The man on the right is of mature age, wearing a turban, and he seems to touch the shoulder of Christ from behind. As Marani has pointed out, this figure recalls Leonardo's famous drawing of an old man in Turin, which is often considered a self-portrait. There are also notable differences, however: Sodoma's figure is younger, the mouth is smaller with the moustache drooping over it, and the furrowing of the brow is worked out more in terms of volumes. No doubt, however, the figure takes inspiration from Leonardo's physiognomic studies.

Sodoma shows Christ as Ecce Homo according to John 19, 6, when Pilate presented him to the people of Jerusalem, with the crown of thorns and dressed in a purple robe. Sodoma's invention must be seen in comparison to the Ecce Homo paintings of Antonello da Messina and Mantegna. Whereas Antonello in his various versions of the subject has preferred to show the single figure of the Saviour in a close-up format, and introduced the motif of tears, Mantegna, presumably around 1500, painted an Ecce Homo with two figures in the background (Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris). In the latter work, the subsidiary figures are explicitly characterized as accusers, and Mantegna displays their dramatic request to Pilate: "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Sodoma has created a completely different atmosphere. According to iconographical tradition, the figure on the right can be identified as Pilate, who presents the Saviour to the observer, whereas Christ himself appeals to our compassion. Sodoma has invested the close-up format, a genre which brings the viewer into the direct proximity of the painted protagonists, with lyrical intensity, following Antonello's or Giovanni Bellini's images of *pietà* which work on a three-figure scheme. One of the most remarkable features of Sodoma's painting is the slender hands of Christ, touching his own body and arm in a self-referential gesture which contributes to the sensuality of the work, as do the light and mode of painting itself.

As for the dating, there is no doubt that Sodoma was familiar with Leonardo's works, but references to them would be present in his repertoire for years; it also seems probable that he came into contact with Venetian painting (cf. Marani). Scholarship has dealt less than thoroughly with Sodoma: little, for instance, is known about his practice of producing more than one version of a painting, as he does in the case of the *Lucretia* (cat. 76). The *Ecce Homo* seems to have been known in Siena, a fact we can deduce from a work painted by his son-in-law Bartolomeo Neroni called il Riccio (*Ecce Homo with Two Male Figures,* art market, brought to my attention by Dóra Sallay). For these reasons and its cinquecento character in general, a dating of ca. 1510 may be proposed for Sodoma's work.

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## 76 Sodoma (Giovanni Antonio Bazzi) | Vercelli, 1477 – Siena, 1549

### *The Death of Lucretia*

ca. 1530–1535

Oil on panel; 71 × 61 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 77.16

After his introduction to Piedmontese-Lombard Renaissance painting by Giovanni Martino Spanzotti in Vercelli, and a probable subsequent spell in Milan, followed by a longer period in Rome, Sodoma settled in Siena at the beginning of the sixteenth century, where he established himself as the leading artist along with Beccafumi. He also continued to work for eminent patrons outside of Siena, in places such as Rome, Florence, Piombino and Pisa. His works were influenced by Leonardo and Raphael, and later also by Polidoro da Caravaggio and others, as well by contemporary etching and antique sculpture.

Sodoma depicts here an episode from early Roman history as recounted by Livy (*Ab urbe condita,* I, 57–60) and others. After she is raped by one of the sons of King Tarquinius Superbus, Lucretia tells all to her husband Collatinus and her father Spurius Lucretius, both of whom have rushed to her side, accompanied by Lucius Junius Brutus and Publius Valerius. She demands that the perpetrator be punished. Although she herself is blameless, she stabs herself to death, in order not to give other women an excuse to commit adultery. The crime sparks an uprising, led by Brutus, which drives Tarquinius Superbus and his sons from the city. Rome was henceforth ruled by two consuls, with Brutus and Collatinus being the first elected to the office. Sodoma shows the dying Lucretia held by Collatinus and Lucretius, and originally wanted to place both companions in the background. Under a bright light the outlines of their heads are still visible in the upper two corners. The head in the right-hand corner seems to have been abandoned by the painter himself. The other is more developed and was probably meant to portray Collatinus's friend Brutus, whose pale red robe can be seen even in normal light at the left edge of the picture (next to the hands).

Giorgio Vasari reports that Sodoma, via Agostino Chigi, gave a painting of the naked Lucretia stabbing herself to Pope Leo X and in return was granted a knighthood. Euralio Morano d'Ascoli's epigram, *Pro statua Lucretie Sodome,* published in 1517, probably refers to this work; it also states that husband and father are in the picture. Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out that the picture given to Leo X is the same *Lucretia* as the one mentioned by Sodoma in a letter of 1518, one which he had painted for Francesco Gonzaga, but had to hand over to the pope's brother Giuliano de' Medici during Leo X's stay in Florence in 1516 (Cust 1906, 150–55). Of the four surviving *Lucretia* panels by Sodoma in Budapest, Hanover, Paris, and Turin, the details given in Vasari's and Morano's accounts together correspond only with the one displayed here. A possible identification with Leo X's picture was nevertheless ruled out, as the Budapest *Lucretia* was assigned a later date by scholars up to Tátrai (1983). Since Haraszti-Takács's dating to the years 1513–1516, however, some scholars regard the Budapest picture as the pope's *Lucretia* after all. This writer believes that a comparison with those of Sodoma's works that can be dated with certainty points to a date after Leo X's pontificate. The face of this *Lucretia* is reminiscent of the *Sebastian* in Florence (Uffizi, 1525), but her body shows more shading and is therefore closer in style to the *Sebastian* on the altarpiece *God the Father and Four Saints* in San Domenico (Siena, after 1531). The head of Lucretia's father shows some resemblance to that of the old man on the right behind the youngest king in the *Adoration of the Magi* (Sant'Agostino, Siena, ca. 1530), but with its heavy shading it is closer to the heads of *God the Father* and *Vincent Ferrer* in the altarpiece in San Domenico. The use of light and colour is comparable to the *Lamentation of Christ* (Sotheby's, London, April 20, 1988, lot 9) dated 1533; the Budapest panel, however, has even darker tones.

We cannot rule out the possibility that we are looking here at the picture painted for Assuero Rettori also mentioned by Vasari, "in which there is a Roman Lucretia, who wounds herself as she is held by her father and husband", even though Vasari describes it as a canvas painting and mentions it as a relatively early work. Furthermore, the Budapest *Lucretia* may have been the one documented in Sodoma's estate after the painter's death.

In the paintings in Paris and Turin, Sodoma modelled the figure of Lucretia's father on the statue of *Jupiter of Versailles* (Loseries 1994, 360). For the composition of Leo X's *Lucretia,* too, an antique statue will presumably have been a model, perhaps a damaged marble copy of one of the *Amazons of Ephesus* (Weber 1976) which had been discovered in Rome at that time and which – probably because of the stab wound in the body – was regarded as a *Lucretia* during the Renaissance. Scholars have already hypothesized that an antique statue – a Hellenistic torso – served as a model for the Budapest *Lucretia* as well, but Sodoma is more likely, when composing this figure, to have had the *Amazon* in Rome in mind.

WOLFGANG LOSERIES

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77 Correggio (Antonio Allegri) | Correggio, ca. 1489 – Correggio, 1534

*Virgin and Child with an Angel (Madonna del Latte)*

ca. 1522–1525

Oil on panel; 68.5 × 56.8 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 55

On May 22, 1787, Goethe saw the painting then on sale, and described it in his *Italian Journey* as follows: "A picture by Correggio … showing the Madonna with the Child at the moment when the infant is hesitating between the mother's breast and some pears handed to him by a little angel." The Virgin indeed offers her bare breast to her son but his attention is captured by the fruit proffered by a child angel. As art historical research has revealed (Muzzi 1999), the theme is meant to allude to the Immaculate Conception through the *Song of Songs,* and be, as it were, a corollary to the "miracle of the palm tree" narrated in the apocryphal Gospels. In addition to pears, cherries are also present, which symbolize the "Fruits of Paradise" and virtuousness that reaps its reward in heaven (Hall 2001, 266). The intricate theological message of the painting is revealed only to erudite and initiated believers, concealed as it is by the extraordinary spontaneity of the depicted figures, and by the captivating humaneness of their tender gestures and glances. Presumably, it is this affection of the figures radiating serenity that accounts for the extremely great popularity of the painting, especially in the seventeenth century, among collectors and artists who made drawing studies and copies of it (Spagnolo, in *Rome* 2008a). The astonishingly large number of copies, even if it leaves various philological questions unsettled, testifies to the success of the picture and the significance attributed to it. Rather than the dark background in the painting, some of these copies and the prints made after them show a wooded landscape, which is more consistent with both the artist's style and the iconography.

There is no information about when Correggio was commissioned to paint the work, nor is the client identified. On the basis of its close stylistic affinity with *The Madonna of the Basket* preserved in the National Gallery in London, the painting can be dated to between 1522 and 1525. The innumerable copies (in Saint Petersburg, Rome, Livorno, Florence, Milan, Bologna, Reggio Emilia, cf. Ricci 1929; Cadoppi 2005, 58, no. 107) are apparently later and do not provide information about the original location of the painting. Two paintings in the Galleria Nazionale in Parma (inv. 1189 and 393) contain almost exact copies of the figure of the Virgin uncovering her bosom in the *Madonna del Latte*. Their provenance is different, and they are attributed to various masters but both can be linked to the workshop of Correggio's son, Pomponio Allegri (who quite possibly possessed his father's sketches and drawings). These two pictures, as well as Lelio Orsi's drawing showing the *Virgin and Child with Two Saints* (Christ Church College, Oxford, inv. 1349), in which the group of the Virgin and Child is obviously borrowed from Correggio's composition, warrant the assumption that Correggio's picture was painted for a client in or around Parma (Spagnolo, in *Rome* 2008a). On the basis of these facts, two hypotheses can actually be proposed.

There is a renowned miraculous devotional image showing the "Madonna del Latte" in Parma: the *Madonna della Steccata* (Virgin of the Palisade). In the sixteenth century it was so deeply venerated that the citizens of Parma built a sanctuary for it, which was consequently dedicated to the "Blessed Virgin of the Palisade" *(Beata Vergine della Steccata).* An archival document shows that at the time of the construction, on August 26, 1525 (Fadda 2008), Correggio made a design for an altarpiece, intended for the altar of the Madonna in this church. The Budapest painting might possibly be linked to this document.

Alternatively, the fact that Lelio Orsi's sketch contains a citation from Correggio's *Madonna del Latte* is a clue which may point to Reggio Emilia and its environs. All that is known about Lelio Orsi's drawing is that it was made for an altarpiece (F. Frisoni, in *Reggio Emila* 1987, 180–82), a fragment of which survives in Carpi (halfway between Reggio Emilia and Correggio). Also to be borne in mind is that among Correggio's works recorded by Giorgio Vasari in Reggio Emilia there remains unidentified "a rare and most beautiful picture", one which "Messer Luciano Palavigino … upon seeing it … gave no thought to the cost, and, as if he had bought a jewel, sent it to his house in Genoa".

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## 78 Battista Dossi | Active by 1517 – Ferrara, 1548

### *Allegory of Dawn*

1544

Oil on canvas; 89 × 155 cm
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, inv. 130
From the Palazzo del Corte, Ferrara

Battista, younger brother and long-time assistant of Dosso Dossi, was likewise court painter to Alfonso, duke of Ferrara, and to his successor Ercole II. The present work was painted as one of four allegories of the Times of the Day, originally placed above each of the windows in an apartment of Duke Ercole in the Palazzo del Corte. As shown by documented payments of March 1544, Battista was responsible for *Dawn, Day,* and *Night,* while the fourth in the series, *Dusk,* is almost certainly identifiable with the *Diana and Endymion* (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden) by Garofalo. The paintings were taken down and sent to Modena when the duchy of Ferrara devolved to the papacy in 1598, and the precise room in the former ducal palace can no longer be identified. The *Dusk*, the *Dawn* and the *Night* (often called *The Dream*) formed part of a large group of pictures sold by Duke Francesco III d'Este to the prince-elector Frederick Augustus II of Saxony in 1746; Battista's *Day* (representing *Apollo in His Chariot*) is still recorded in Modena in 1743, but shortly afterwards it disappeared, and never apparently went to Dresden.

Like its companion-pieces, the theme of Dawn was represented by a scene from classical mythology, in this case inspired by a passage in Ovid's account of the story of Phaeton (*Metamorphoses* II: 118–21): "When the sungod saw the Morning Star setting, when he saw the sky reddening, and the horns of the vanishing moon fading from sight, he told the swift Hours to yoke his team. Quickly the goddesses carried out his orders: from the lofty stables they led out his horses, breathing fire and replete with essence of ambrosia, and fastened on the jingling harnesses." Battista, who locates the scene in heaven by filling the foreground with clouds, shows just one of the three Hours leading the team of four horses towards the empty chariot that will transport Apollo across the morning sky. The motif of the chariot provided another link between the *Dawn* and the two subsequent scenes of *Day* and *Dusk*.

Painted two years after the death of Dosso, the *Dawn* provides an important point of reference for the independent style of Battista. The mistily atmospheric landscape to the right, with its swaying trees and distant mountains, remains faithful to Dosso's example, but characteristic of Battista himself is the hard, flat foliage behind the Hour, and the figure type, with its ovoid head and wig-like tresses. All this is despite the fact that, to judge from a drawing in the Louvre (inv. R. F. 509), Battista's composition was based on a preparatory sketch by his colleague Girolamo da Carpi. Characteristic of Girolamo is the calligraphic urgency of the drawing, particularly evident in the horses' manes; but in his pictorial execution, Battista has predictably made these elements tamer and blander.

PETER HUMFREY

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79 GIROLAMO DA CARPI | Ferrara, 1501 – Ferrara, 1556

## *The Rape of Ganymede*

ca. 1543–1544

Oil on canvas; 80.5 × 145 cm
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, inv. 145
From the Palazzo del Corte, Ferrara

Previously active in Bologna, where he came into close contact with Parmigianino, Girolamo settled in his native Ferrara in the early 1530s, and thereafter was extensively employed by Duke Ercole II on the decoration of his various residences. In January 1544 he received a payment from the ducal exchequer for painting "un quadro nominato il ganimede" – almost certainly identifiable with the present picture – for Ercole's apartments in the Palazzo del Corte. Around this time Girolamo was collaborating with Battista Dossi on the *Dawn* (cat. 78); and given its closely similar shape and size, the *Ganymede* was probably likewise originally intended to hang above a window or door, possibly even in the same room. Iconographically, however, the *Ganymede* is not related to the *Dawn* and the other *Times of the Day,* and it is unclear whether it belonged to a separate pair or series of mythologies. Like the *Times of the Day* canvases, it was removed from its original placing in 1598 and sent to Modena, and it was bought by the prince-elector of Saxony in 1746.

The story of Ganymede is told in a number of well-known antique literary sources, of which the most relevant here was probably Ovid's *Metamorphoses:* "The king of the gods was once fired with love for Phrygian Ganymede, and when that happened Jupiter found another shape preferable to his own. Wishing to turn himself into a bird, he none the less scorned to change into any save that which can carry his thunderbolts. … He snatched away the shepherd of Ilium, who even now mixes the winecups, and supplies Jove with nectar" (X: 155–60). Girolamo accordingly portrays Ganymede as a beautiful, nude adolescent, who clutches a glass ewer as a symbol of his future role as cupbearer to the gods, as Jupiter in the form of an eagle carries him through the sky to Mount Olympus. It has been noted that Ganymede's pose is related to that of Paris in Marcantonio Raimondi's well-known engraving of the *Judgement of Paris* after Raphael, and also to preparatory drawings by Parmigianino for his own version of the Ganymede story (Canedy 1970). Certainly Girolamo's figure reflects the inspiration of Parmigianino in its elongated refinement, and in the fluent calligraphic rhythms of the hair and draperies. At the same time, the emphatically planar composition implies a deliberate intension to evoke antique relief sculpture, of a kind extensively studied by the painter during his earlier years in Rome.

Although a drawing of Ganymede by Girolamo (private collection) is sufficiently similar to the present picture to be regarded as a preparatory design for it, the format is vertical and the eagle is seen frontally, as if the composition was originally intended for a different position in the room. It is not clear why Ercole and his court humanists commissioned the subject, but an important consideration would have been the prominence of an eagle, which was the heraldic emblem of the Este dynasty. This aspect of the bird is certainly made more emphatic in the painting than in the drawing by the bold silhouetting of the dark wings and profile head against the lighter sky.

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# 5 | Titian: The Triumph of Painting

Giovanni Bellini was still alive and active when Giorgione of Castelfranco offered another direction to Venetian painting. While from surface ornamentation, Bellini found a force to create form in colours saturated with light, Giorgione dampened this resplendence with fine distinctions in the tones of colour, wrapped forms in a haze, and at the same time relaxed the crystalline structure of composition. With *The Tempest,* he created the first landscape painting in the history of European art, and the first picture whose theme and literary source remain a mystery – perhaps because it has neither theme nor literary source. And if *The Three Philosophers* has a subject, it certainly has no iconographic precedent, just as the inspiration of bucolic poetry can only partially explain the mythical consubstantiality of man and nature, the profoundest theme of *The Sleeping Venus*. Giorgione's paintings, enigmatic in their subject and mood, were executed for the first collections of art in the modern sense, for clients now acquiring works of art purely for aesthetic pleasure.

Titian's early works display his perfect mastery of Giorgione's formal language. Yet as an artist, he went through as many periods as later only Picasso would. His aspiration to fill his narrative scenes with vitality and dramatic power, to imbue his depiction of female beauty with an air of sensuality, and to characterize the sitters for his portraits authentically, yet elevate them heroically, was quickly evident. The liveliness of his works is inseparable from his legendary colourism. One aspect of this is that he used the warmest, deepest, most sensual hues of a relatively reduced palette. The other is that he applied the paint with loose brushstrokes, sometimes thinly, sometimes thickly, in multiple layers. His modelling was based more on colour gradations than on shading, and he let the contours dissolve. In creating a dynamic overall effect, he gave a role to the canvas itself. Its weave shows through the thin layers of ground and paint, shapes the texture, and allows the surface to breathe. Titian's innovations made it clear that this summary method, emphasizing as it does certain details while omitting others, corresponds better to the very nature of human seeing than does the meticulous elaboration of every detail with equal industry.

Some claim that Giorgione's Berlin portrait (cat. 80) was influenced by Perugino's *Portrait of Francesco delle Opere* (cat. 31) of around 1494, executed perhaps in Venice itself. Whatever the case, the comparison is an instructive one, for it makes evident how his changing approach led Giorgione towards a sort of simplification. In Perugino's portrait the theme is the sitter's achievements, virtues and social status, and as a result it is more resplendent – in both a literal and a figurative sense – than Giorgione's work. The latter displays no demonstrative or exemplary nature: we feel the presence of the sitter to be self-evident, and his expression and the few, finely nuanced colours suggest introversion. This is a straightforward and intimate image, revealing the slightest motions of the mind, intended exclusively for the sitter and his closest circle. In the other portrait by Giorgione, that in Budapest (cat. 81), the tilting head facing away, the hand placed on the chest and the dreamy expression

Titian
*Portrait of Philip II of Spain* (detail)
ca. 1550
Galleria Palatina, Florence

are all similar in mood to *The Tempest, The Sleeping Venus* and *The Three Philosophers*. The portrait displays an attitude in vogue with certain circles in the patrician elite in Venice, one not necessarily inherent in the character and nature of the youth but closely related to the trend for Petrarchan and bucolic poetry. Melancholy and passive contemplation were the prerogative of a select crowd; these might even be considered as status symbols, the privilege of the insiders who also understood the meaning of the esoteric emblems on the parapet. The cult of "spleen" in the romantic period would be a similar phenomenon, just as the birth of landscape is greatly indebted to an idea particular to both pastoral poetry and to the romantic attitude: the identification of nature with the natural and the morally pure.

The votive painting from Antwerp (cat. 82) clearly reveals that not only Giorgione but also Giovanni Bellini had a strong influence on Titian's early career. It was commissioned by the same Jacopo Pesaro who years later would be the donor of the epoch-making altarpiece in the church of the Frari. Even this first Pesaro commission resulted in a splendid work. Saint Peter, sitting on a dais decorated with a bacchic bas-relief, blesses Pesaro, the bishop of Paphos, who is presented to the saint by the infamous Borgia pope. The overall effect of the composition is so resplendent and celebratory that the fusion of a Christian theme with pagan motifs appears entirely natural, in perfect harmony with the spirit of the picture.

Titian's portraiture would influence the development of the genre for many centuries, not least because his fertile inventiveness allowed him to create new formulae with each sitter and commission. For instance, in the half-length portrait of his physician, Gian Giacomo Bartolotti da Parma (cat. 83), the energetic man turns away from the viewer not only with his head but also with his body. Of course, the formula would be of limited merit were Titian not able to capture every last feature of the sitter's face with the greatest sensitivity, precisely and aptly, yet not fastidiously, and if he could not render the gaze in the averted face to be every bit as intense as if it looked directly at us.

The *Man with Gloves* (cat. 84) embodies an entirely different ideal from that of the portrait of the doctor from Parma. Rather than a character or state of mind, this painting displays a model behaviour. The posture, which puts great emphasis on the hands, exudes a striking casualness; the youth becomes the epitome of Baldassare Castiglione's courtier, the ideal of nonchalant elegance. This is not Giorgione's contemplative man lost in thought; this is an educated member of the social and intellectual elite, with winning manners, and ready for action. Again, we only need think back to the profile and half-length portraits of the quattrocento to see the enormity of the journey undertaken by the art of portraiture as a result of Titian's work. Without the example set by the man with gloves and his fellow sitters, the aristocratic portraits of Van Dyck in the seventeenth century or Gainsborough in the eighteenth would be inconceivable.

Always satisfying the double task of characterization and glorification to the highest degree, Titian established for many years to come the standard for representing those at the top of the social hierarchy. In the portrait of Philip II (cat. 85), the full-length format, the simultaneously relaxed and dignified posture, the intensification of the pomp of the clothes through artistic means, and the creation of a symbol of power in the architecture all

serve to express sovereign authority. After Charles V, Philip II was also to see in Titian's artistic genius an irreplaceable asset in the propaganda of the court.

For many years, Titian was also official painter to the Republic of Venice. He painted a long series of portraits of the doges for the Palazzo Ducale, of which only replicas and variants survive after the fire that ravaged the palace in 1577. The portrait of Marcantonio Trevisan (cat. 86) depicts an ill, elderly man who is nevertheless able, not just with the attire of his position, but with an expression suggesting his sense of responsibility, and with a gesture of his hand clutching a handkerchief, to convey the aura of the highest official in the historic maritime republic.

Correggio's *Madonna del latte* (cat. 77) showed how, by loosening structure and with a masterly use of light and shade, it was possible to infuse the most traditional Christian subject with an unprecedented level of emotional content. Now, faced with Titian's *Albertini Madonna* (cat. 87), we witness the way burning colours and the dynamism of the brushwork can give both intimate and passionate pathos to the relationship between the Herculean divine child and Mary as she gazes at him tenderly.

Giovanni Cariani (cat. 53) or Jacopo Bassano (cat. 103) represented Christ's carrying the cross in multi-figural narrative scenes. Titian's treatment of the subject (cat. 88), in turn, isolates the figure of Christ from this episode of the Passion, his only accompaniment being Simon of Cyrene helping him carry the cross. The close-up, austere presentation in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation calls upon the faithful to follow Christ. It is precisely this simplicity in the mute dialogue between Christ and Simon that gives this call enormous emphasis. The brevity of the presentation, the avoidance of any rhetorical exaggeration, and the concentrated visualization of the human content of the episode all foreshadow Rembrandt's interpretations of the Bible.

Counter-Reformatory directives are manifest in the depiction of *Mary Magdalene in the Wilderness* (cat. 89), too. Titian created the prototype of this subject around 1532: in the painting today in the Palazzo Pitti, the curvaceous naked body and the cascade of silky hair present seductively a woman guilty of promiscuity. More than three decades later, a whole series of Magdalene paintings, including the present one, bear no more than the memory of this open sensuality. Both the Spanish court and the ideology of the Counter-Reformation strove to expel the pagan spirit from the depiction of religious subjects. Titian and his workshop went on to execute several "censored" Magdalenes. The popularity of this composition might be ascribed to the admiration of Titian's artistic genius.

The final, old-age period of Titian's art is represented by a fragment from a Calvary scene (cat. 90). The oblique view of Christ and the Good Thief suggests an asymmetric dynamic for the whole composition. What remains of the picture generates an almost monochrome effect, affirming the above assertion: Titian's colourism is anything but a multitude of colours. A mysterious light glows from Christ's body, palpably modelled with thin, diluted paint. This is a light that provides an explanation for the Good Thief's conversion as suggested by his posture: the light revealing the presence of God.

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## 80 Giorgione (Giorgio da Castelfranco) | Castelfranco Veneto, 1478 – Venice, 1510

*Portrait of a Young Man (The Giustiniani Portrait)*

ca. 1502

Oil on canvas; 57.5 × 45.5 cm
Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin, inv. 12 A
Inscribed on the on parapet: V V

The half-length figure of the young man appears slightly foreshortened behind a stone parapet, the depth of the latter indicated by the perspective in the portrayal of the hand. His head is almost imperceptibly turned towards the viewer. Nothing appears behind the figure to give any idea of the spatial context. The figure of the youth emerges from the dark grey background through a number of chromatic degrees modulated by light: from the dark shade of the hair through the rich pink of the quilted jacket to the pale tone of the parapet that forms the nearmost plane in the foreground. The delicate colours of the face counterpoint the mass of centre-parted hair, while the doublet of various shades of pink is held together by a series of dark rose-coloured bows, which technical examinations have shown to be painted on with thin brushstrokes. The uppermost bow is undone, leaving the white shirt visible beneath. The young man gazes directly into the eyes of the viewer. His melancholy, reserved and perhaps somewhat distant expression reveals a sensitive, captivating personality.

There is no doubt that the *Giustiniani Portrait* – in contrast with the traditional style of portraiture typical, above all, of Giovanni Bellini – appears as an entirely novel work, and is thus of very great significance in the development of Venetian portrait painting (Woods-Marsden 1998, 117–18). Its novelty is noteworthy principally for the posture of the model, who is seen in an informal and unaffected pose. Here we can sense *in nuce* the later development of Giorgione's art as a portraitist, exemplified in subsequent years by the compellingly naturalistic style and spiritual richness of, for example, the *Laura* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), *La Vecchia* (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice), or the *Portrait of a Man (The Terris Portrait)* (San Diego Museum of Art).

Vasari ([1568] 1878–1885, IV, 92) mentions Giorgione as a great admirer of Leonardo: "Giorgione had seen some things by the hand of Leonardo that were very subtly shaded and darkened, as has been said, through the use of deep shadows; this manner pleased him so much that he was forever studying it as long as he lived, and in oil painting he imitated it greatly." Although it cannot be proven that the two artists knew each other personally, three of Leonardo's paintings were in private collections in Venice in Giorgione's lifetime. This is an important circumstance that may explain the fascination Giorgione had for Leonardo's art and its influence over him.

Much debate has surrounded the meaning of the two letters engraved into the parapet. Similar inscriptions can be seen in many other sixteenth-century Venetian portraits. In this case, the letters have been interpreted either as the initials of the person portrayed (perhaps a member of the Vendramin family) or as an abbreviation of *Vanitas Vanitatum* (Schrey 1915, 574; Richter 1937, 209). Thomson de Grummond (1975) deciphered the abbreviation as representing *Vivus Vivo* or *Vivens Vivo* ("the living for the living"). More recently, it has been suggested that the inscription may signify *Virtus Vincit* (Ballarin, in *Paris* 1993; Holberton 2003, 34) – typically of the humanist spirit, which had a tendency to conceal moralizing aphorisms behind initials – or perhaps *Virtù* and *Verità,* in reference to the good qualities of the model, as Pandolfo Collenuccio explained in his *Specchio d'Esopo* (ca. 1497) (Fiorenza 2001, 73–78).

The portrait is generally known as the *Giustiniani Portrait,* after the name of the family in whose possession it was when Jean Paul Richter purchased it in 1884 in Padua as a work of Sebastiano del Piombo imitating the style of Giorgione (Anderson 1997, fig. 160). Our earliest knowledge of the picture dates from this period.

The work is now unanimously attributed to Giorgione and considered as one of his very few autograph works. The hypothesis of Joannides (2001), based on an examination of the painting technique, that it might be the work of the young Titian, was most recently discussed by Ferino-Pagden (2008). In the latter scholar's view the accurate representation of reality, the detailed rendering of the various materials and the fluid, watercolour-like application of colours are features also consistent with the art of Titian.

As far as the dating is concerned, scholars' opinions vary between Giorgione's juvenile years (1495–1497) and some time about 1506, the date of the *Laura*. The colour tones correspond to the period when Giorgione fell under the influence of Netherlandish art, and in particular the work of Memling (Pignatti 1971, 100–101). According to Schleier (in *Gemäldegalerie Berlin* 1985, 330), the comparison with Memling is justified by the foreshortening of the hand, which is not typically Venetian and is more likely traceable to Netherlandish models.

The canvas was most probably painted in the first years of the sixteenth century, close to the artist's early works.

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V V

## 81 Giorgione (Giorgio da Castelfranco) | Castelfranco Veneto, ca. 1478 – Venice, 1510

### *Portrait of a Young Man (The Broccardo Portrait)*

ca. 1508–1510

Oil on canvas; 72.5 × 54 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 94
Bears later inscription on the parapet: ANTONIVS BROKARDVS MARIN…

"Even today it is a little difficult to define exactly what the advent of Giorgione means for the history of taste. Like Proust, he taught educated people that the world could be looked at in a more pleasurable, more subjective way. His recipe for doing so was to infuse painting with the lyricism and romance that were already current in the prose and poetry of his time."

It would be hard to find a more felicitous summary of Giorgione's importance than the above words by John Pope-Hennessy (1966, 132). In barely over a decade, this short-lived painter radically transformed Venetian painting, even though recent research has established that Giovanni Bellini's role in this change was more fundamental than previously assumed (Wilson 2004). The Giorgionesque spirit not only dissolved narrative scenes in a magical, poetical atmosphere, but was able consistently to apply this approach to portraiture as well, developing the novel type of introspective, lyrical male portraits, of which the Budapest *Portrait of a Young Man* is the most inventive and most inspired example. Yet it remains the most problematic of all these portraits, too: although the scholarly texts that have sought to interpret it could fill volumes, virtually none of the issues related to it has been satisfactorily settled. There have been long and unresting debates about the identities of its creator and sitter, as well as the date of its execution, the meaning of the hieroglyphic emblems on the parapet, and even the character of the emotion permeating the picture.

The young sitter is represented deeply engaged in thought, with an unfixed gaze directed downwards and explicitly away from the spectator, emphasizing the fact that he is unaware of us. This would seem to be a reaction against the contemporary trend of establishing a fiction of communication between sitter and viewer, but in fact it invites the spectator to join the contemplation, and thus to enter fully into the spirit of the youth's emotions. The Leonardesque idea of representing the "motions of the mind" is raised to a new qualitative level in the art of Giorgione: rather than being conveyed by the intellect, emotions here tend to affect the viewer directly, as in music.

X-ray examinations have revealed that in the first version the youth's gaze was directed upward towards a mountainous landscape in the background (some traces of which are visible to the naked eye), very much as in Girolamo Romanino's *Portrait of a Man* in Budapest (cat. 93). While certainly conveying emotions, this solution preserved some of the psychological distance of earlier official portraits. We may assume that Giorgione revised the composition of the Budapest youth in order to intensify the sentiment and the sense of intimacy.

The gesture of the right hand is a prominent element of the image, but its interpretation is much debated. It is clearly derived from the gesture of devotion in religious images, and most probably here too is intended to suggest devotedness, although Mravik (1971) interpreted it as a rhetoric gesture, referring to the sitter's being a jurist. More realistic are, however, the ideas of Ballarin (in *Paris* 1993), who took the gesture as signifying religious ecstasy, and of Koos (2006), who defined the underlying emotion as the torment of bittersweet love. The inscription on the parapet, which identifies the sitter as the renowned poet Antonio Broccardo, is a later addition and certainly incorrect; alternatively, a certain Vittore Cappello was proposed as a possible sitter (Gronau 1908, 431) on the basis of the emblem of a hat with the letter V (*cappello* = "hat").

Paradoxically, while this portrait has always been taken as the epitome of the Giorgionesque portrait, Giorgione's authorship has been often doubted. It has to be admitted that both in forms and atmosphere it is bolder and more direct than most of the works usually associated with Giorgione. Nevertheless, our notions of the style of Giorgione's last years are still rooted in the reconstruction based on the earlier, erroneous reading of the date on the *Terris Portrait* (Museum of Art, San Diego), and therefore are in need of fundamental revision. A tendency to distance himself from the langiud atmosphere of the earlier works – as may be observed in the *Giustiniani Portrait* (cat. 80) – and to set out on a path toward a more powerful and straightforward style is already felt in Giorgione's *Laura* of 1506 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). In fact, the Budapest portrait is rather close to some other late works, such as the *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice), also of dubious authorship, or the figure by Giorgione in the *Triple Portrait* (The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit). Also of major importance regarding the portrait's critical evaluation is the rough and bold underpainting revealed by infrared reflectography, which is very similar to that in the *Terris Portrait.*

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## 82 Titian | Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485–1490 – Venice, 1576

## *Jacopo Pesaro Being Presented by Pope Alexander VI to Saint Peter*

1512–1513

Oil on canvas; 147.5 × 189 cm
Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, inv. 357
Inscribed (in a seventeenth-century hand): RITRATTO DI VNO DI CA PESARO IN VENETIA CHE FV FATTO GENERALE DI S.TA CHIESA. TITIANO P. (Portrait of one of the Pesaro Family in Venice who was made [a] General of the Holy Church. Painted [by] Titian.)

*Jacopo Pesaro Being Presented by Pope Alexander VI to Saint Peter* is one of the first works of Titian's maturity, executed by a painter whose artistic vision was still not quite matched by his technical prowess. It is an ambitious synthesis of what Titian had learnt from the Bellini brothers and Giorgione following his arrival in Venice. The composition is derived from the traditional Venetian votive portrait, in which a donor is presented by his patron saint to the Virgin and Child. However, this formula has been adapted considerably here, so that Jacopo Pesaro, bishop of Paphos (d. 1547), is shown kneeling before Saint Peter, the founder of the papacy. His intermediary is the notorious Borgia pope, Alexander VI (d. 1503).

This canvas was probably commissioned for display in Jacopo Pesaro's Venetian home, perhaps in the *portego*. It commemorates Pesaro's activity in Alexander VI's service, and in particular his role (as commander of the papal navy) in the recapture of Santa Maura (Lefkas) from the Ottomans in 1502. Officially this naval engagement was won by Jacopo's kinsman Benedetto, but several contemporary historians gave Jacopo most credit for the victory, and he himself raised the pontiff's banner on the captured fortresses. In retrospect this was the high point of Pesaro's career, and he remained indebted to his papal patron until his death, even requesting in his will the regular celebration of Mass "for the soul and happy memory of Pope Alexander VI".

The viewer of Titian's portrait is intended to imagine that Pesaro has come straight from the battle, removing his helmet to kneel in homage at Peter's feet, bearing a banner with his patron's coat of arms. The naval conflict in the background, framed by the figures of Jacopo Pesaro and Saint Peter, must refer to Pesaro's naval triumph. The Venetian-looking buildings at the far right presumably represent the republic's colony of Cyprus, from where Pesaro's ships set off for Santa Maura. The saint sits upon a dais decorated with two *all'antica* sculptural reliefs, which also allude to Pesaro's career in the eastern Mediterranean. The subject of the main relief includes Cupid dancing on an altar with his bow, and it probably depicts Aphrodite, to whom Paphos – Pesaro's bishopric – was once dedicated. The careful positioning of Saint Peter's keys (to the gate of heaven) over Cupid signals Paphos's allegiance to sacred rather than profane love.

This painting has long been prized as a great Titian. Van Dyck copied it in Venice in 1623, shortly before it passed into the celebrated collection of Italian pictures formed by King Charles I of England. However, scholars have argued over its precise placement in Titian's career, because of some obvious stylistic borrowings, and apparent inconsistencies. The figure of Saint Peter recalls Giovanni Bellini's late work, while Pesaro's helmet resembles Giorgione. The archaic style of the pope and of Saint Peter has led to suggestions that the painting dates from the early sixteenth century, just after Titian's probable emergence from Giovanni Bellini's studio. Yet in compositional terms it is closest to the monumental style Titian developed around 1510–1511, seen in the altarpiece of *Saint Mark Enthroned* (Santa Maria della Salute, Venice) and the frescoes for the Scuola di Sant'Antonio in Padua.

The recent restoration of the Antwerp painting has demonstrated that it was executed in one phase, and by a single controlling artistic identity. It has also made the picture's relationship to Titian's other works of the early 1510s more obvious. The composition is particularly close to the slightly later *Virgin and Child with Saints and a Donor* (Fondazione Magnani-Rocca, Parma), while the classical pastiche of the relief of Venus is only marginally less sophisticated than the sarcophagus in *Sacred and Profane Love* (Galleria Borghese, Rome).

In this painting Titian creates a palpable sense of engagement between his three subjects, convincing the viewer of the veracity of this improbable meeting between Christ's chief disciple, a dead pope, and a sixteenth-century Venetian. The lively figure of Jacopo Pesaro is the linch pin of the composition. The under-drawing reveals that Titian altered the position of Pesaro's eyes, so that he appears to gaze directly at Saint Peter. With this change Titian dramatically enhanced his patron's status. It is thus not surprising that Jacopo Pesaro was entirely satisfied with Titian's picture, despite the fault-finding of some subsequent art historians. This commission began Titian's fruitful association with the Pesaro clan, culminating in the majestic *Madonna of the Ca' Pesaro* (Frari, Venice).

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83 TITIAN | Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485–1490 – Venice, 1576

## *Portrait of the Physician Gian Giacomo Bartolotti da Parma*

ca. 1515

Oil on canvas; 88 × 75.5 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. 94

Together with Paolo Veronese and Jacopo Tintoretto, Titian was one of the three great masters of sixteenth-century Venetian painting. Born in the north Italian village of Pieve di Cadore in about 1485–1490, he can be documented in Venice as early as 1498. He opened his own studio in 1513. During his long life – he died of old age or the plague in 1576 – he painted for several sovereigns including King Francis I of France, Pope Paul III as well as the Este of Ferrara and the Gonzaga of Mantua, though he was first and foremost the court painter of Emperor Charles V and his son Philip II. His rich œuvre contains sacred and mythological works just like several portraits.

This portrait is an early work by Titian. Its provenance can be retraced to the Venetian collection of Bartolomeo Della Nave: a sales list of 1637 in Italian names it as the portrait of Parma, Titian's doctor (Lauber 2007, 258). Previously, a sales list in English had been the basis for the identification of the painting; however it did not provide enough clues to identify the portrayed person. Thanks to the detailed description by the art biographer Carlo Ridolfi (1648) the portrait of a certain "Parma" in Della Nave's collection had long been known. Joseph Rosa (1796, I, 76) was the first to discover Titian's doctor as the model in the Viennese picture on the basis of Ridolfi's description. Von Schupbach managed to identify him with the physician Gian Giacomo Bartolotti, of Parmigian origin (ca. 1465/1470–1530) in 1978.

Von Schupbach's research has revealed that Bartolotti was the scion of a well-known family of physicians active in various towns – Bologna, Cremona and Venice – in northern Italy. He studied medicine and philosophy in Bologna in 1491. His first Venetian contacts dated from between 1505 and 1507 when he worked in the East as the physician of the Venetian fleet. In 1511 or 1512 he was the prior of the *Collegio dei Medici Fisici* in Venice. According the subdivision of medical sciences, the *medici fisici* were specialists of therapeutic treatments. A description of 1571 says that their activity included "… the prescription of diets, syrups, balms, medicaments and herbs" (Heller 1999, 588–89). As president of the society, Bartolotti was a public figure and took part in the meetings in the Doge's Palace as the official representative of doctors. Many of his manuscripts have survived, including an ironic poem about the problems of medicine, entitled *Macharonea medicinalis*. Between 1514 and 1520 Bartolotti was in Venice again, probably working as a physician. The date of his death is not known but he is documented as having still been active around 1530 (Schupbach 1978).

Titian shows the half-length figure of the greying, slightly tousled man in his prime against a dark background. Over his crimson velvet jacket which allows his shirt, the *camicia,* to show, he wears a broad-sleeved black robe. His left hand adorned with two rings (one embellished with a profile, the other perhaps a signet ring) grasps a grey stole cast over his left shoulder. The stole and the broad-sleeved robe allude to the high rank of the model. The hand with the rings holds the stole with a firm and strong gesture, thus directing attention to this garment associated with high rank.

Titian's authorship is universally accepted. What speaks for the master is the psychologically authentic rendering of the model's personality. The gaze into the distance of the portrayed person, lost in thought, is distinctly reminiscent of the *Portrait of Jacopo Sannazzaro* (Hampton Court, Middlesex, Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II) who holds an open book in his bent right hand. Significantly enough, the X-radiograph of the Vienna painting reveals a similar pentimento. It is generally held that the work was painted during Bartolotti's second period in Venice. The physician was therefore nearing fifty when Titian preserved him for posterity with this portrait of a personal nature.

WENCKE DEITERS

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84 TITIAN | Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485–1490 – Venice, 1576

*A Man with Gloves*

ca. 1520–1523

Oil on canvas; 100 × 89 cm

Musée du Louvre, Department des Peintures, Paris, inv. 757

Venetian portraiture of the early cinquecento, after having managed to break with the traditional representation of the profile, was more reluctant to relinquish the parapet. The function of this artificial barrier of imitation marble or wood was to stand between the viewer and the portrayed figure, to set him apart, whether set in a real or fictitious environment. Isolation behind a parapet helped to determine the identity and personality of the other person, and to prevent the development of an overly intimate relationship or too strong an involvement with the viewer, if not the painter. Today's viewer almost never has any knowledge about the identity and personality of the portrayed figure, and tends to want to know more about them, hankering after that intimacy once reserved for a few and today denied. So it is now the viewer who strives to establish a relationship with the portrayed, all the more so because the sitters of these portraits belonged to the social or cultural elite of their age, separated if not unapproachable, looking inward on account of their pride, introversion, or narcissism. So there they stand behind the parapet – the painted one, and that of social status, formality, and *bon ton*.

In Titian's famous portrait, *A Man with a Quilted Sleeve* (ca. 1508–1509) in the National Gallery in London, the irksome parapet has now been "breached" by the man's quick, self-assured glance at the viewer, and even more so by his arm which, in a gesture as elegant as it is defiant, in keeping with the fashionable blue doublet, reaches out into the space of the viewer. After a few subsequent portraits of figures with a similarly lively expression and/or attire (such as the *Portrait of a Man in a Red Cap* in the Frick Collection in New York, ca. 1515), Titian's portraiture underwent radical change when the painter came into contact with the cultural milieu of the courts of the Este in Ferrara and of the Gonzaga of Mantua, which demanded sobriety in terms of dress and ornament in an effort to draw the attention of the viewer to the face and hands, that is, to expression and gesture, the most eloquent details of the portrait, now finally conceived as a live image of the character and the personality.

*A Man with Gloves* (generally known as *Man with a Glove*) is probably linked with the court either in Ferrara or Mantua, although the various identities proposed for the man remain rather unconvincing, and consequently the associated dating of the painting dubious. The parapet has been discarded altogether, and the format of the picture has become longer. The simple elegance of the young nobleman's attire comes from the subtle harmony of two colours, black and dark grey with hints of blue. The forced austerity, however, is dampened by the almost frivolous hairstyle with its curling fringe, and in particular the accessories which attest to sophisticated tastes: the white shirt with a pleated collar and cuffs, on which stands out the red-gold pendant with a sapphire and a pearl, the yellow-gold signet ring on the index finger of the right hand, originally extended to reveal a now unidentifiable crest, and of course, the eponymous pale grey, soft leather gloves, one worn on the left hand, the other one carefully held in it.

In spite of a spectacular display of what Baldassare Castiglione, in his famous *The Book of the Courtier (Il libro del cortegiano),* describes as *sprezzatura* ("nonchalance", Castiglione [1528] 2002, 32) – that is, an easy elegance, an artificial grace that appears to be artless – the young man is visibly anxious: above a soft chin and a sparse moustache his gaze is tense and unfathomable, and the veins show in his nervously jerking hand. The reasons for his anxiety, like his identity, remain unknown, of course; and the fact that we are able to perceive anxiety even in the absence of any biographical information whatsoever, is a miracle of Titian's sensibility: all he needed to immortalize the youth's state of mind was three sober colours and a few clear signs. As we know, gloves come in pairs; the glove on the youth's left hand remains his, but the other one, according to established tradition, will be given to someone as a pledge of loyalty and fidelity. Given the tender age of the youth portrayed (twenty at the most) and his obvious anxiety – only partly offset by his good looks and fine clothes – one can safely say that, as in so many cases and in so many contemporary male portraits, we are looking at a pledge of love.

AUGUSTO GENTILI

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85 TITIAN | Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485–1490 – Venice, 1576

## *Portrait of Philip II of Spain*

ca. 1550

Oil on canvas; 183.5 × 100.5 cm
Galleria Palatina, Florence, inv. 1912 no. 200

Philip II (1527–1598) inherited from his father Charles V the sovereignty over the Spanish Empire, with its vast territories and colonies in Europe and the Americas. During his reign, he expanded the holdings of the crown, with the conquest of the Philippines (1564) and then Portugal (1580), the former re-named in his honour. Under Philip II, Spain also affirmed itself with the victory over the Turks at the famous battle of Lepanto (1571). If his Protestant enemies called him "the Demon of the South", he was admired in the Catholic and Counter-Reformation world as "the Prudent King", and praised for his moderation, diligence, and piety.

Philip was well aware of his enormous responsibilities as a governor, and of the need to represent himself as a prince of "high virtues", among them his much noted "gravitas". For this purpose Titian, already active since 1532 for Charles V, was undoubtedly the most qualified artist. The Venetian painter met Philip twice, the first time during the prince's visit to Milan (December 1548 – January 1549), and the second at the Imperial Diet in Augsburg two years later. These occasions allowed Titian to paint a number of portraits of the young heir to the empire, who was soon convinced of the exceptional talents of the painter from Cadore: thus began a long and important series of commissions, which not only included the numerous portraits of the Spanish sovereign but also the famous paintings inspired by Ovid – the so-called *poesie* – and the double commemoration of the victory of Lepanto and the birth of Philip's son Fernando.

In this painting the young prince is portrayed full-length and life-size, against an architectonic background. The portrait shows Philip in the open air, standing on a flowery lawn and wearing a rich and elegant court attire. He looks into the distance with "royal majesty", as Pietro Aretino defined it in a sonnet dedicated to the prince, and in praise of the now lost portrait of him painted by Titian in Milan in the year 1549. While the flowery lawn evokes Philip's taste for gardens, the column placed directly behind him recalls not only the atmosphere of a royal palace, but also, allegorically, the moral and political concepts of strength, dignity, and high royal position. In his right hand the young prince holds a dagger, and in his left a pair of gloves placed next to the hilt of the sword he carries beneath his mantle. Around his neck he wears the Order of the Golden Fleece, which confirms his high rank and honour. The setting of the private garden, the Renaissance place of preference for study and contemplation, together with Philip's costume and posture, transmit the image of the prince as a refined and highly cultured courtier. At the same time, the presence of the gloves and weapons affirms his status as a warrior, ready for action (Navarro, in *Paris* 2006). The painting re-employs the same stance seen in *The Portrait of Philip II in Armour,* now in the Museo del Prado, Madrid, which was executed during the meeting between Philip and Titian at Augsburg; for this reason – but also for the evident youth of the sitter – it can be dated to approximately 1550, at the end of the young prince's journey in Italy and Germany (Luengo, in *Aranjuez* 1998). It was sent by the painter himself to the grand-duke of Tuscany Cosimo I, together with another painting showing Charles V (Vasari [1568] 1878–1885, VII, 450), and it is documented for the first time as part of the grand-ducal collection in 1560 (Cecchi, in *Florence* 1978). Long held to be a workshop copy of the portrait of Philip in the Museo di Capodimonte of Naples, the master's own hand was eventually recognized on the basis of the generally high quality of the painting, and especially in the refinement and liveliness of the head (Wethey 1971).

FAUSTA NAVARRO

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86 TITIAN | Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485–1490 – Venice, 1576

## *Portrait of Marcantonio Trevisan, Doge of Venice*

ca. 1553–1554

Oil on canvas; 100 × 86.5 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 4223

From the 1360s onwards commemorative portraits of all the doges of Venice were made for the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Palazzo Ducale. These portraits were always executed by the most prestigious painters of the republic at the time, and it is revealing that Titian undertook this task for forty-three years, between 1517 and 1559. It was an extraordinary loss when this portrait gallery was destroyed by fire in 1577; fortunately, however, replicas of several of the portraits survived, made for the respective families or for other admirers. Among these is the present portrait, although it is rather a revised version than an exact replica of the one that hung in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio.

Payment for the Palazzo Ducale's Trevisan portrait was made by the republic to the painter on February 28, 1554 (Ost 1992, 89), but Titian's friend, the highly influential Pietro Aretino, had already written two sonnets in praise of it in October and November 1553 (Aretino 1957–1960, II [1957], 436–7). The sonnets partly employ the customary antique *topos,* revived by Petrarch, whereby the portrait is so lifelike that it seems as if it would "speak, think and breathe". However, Aretino's sonnets on Titian's portraits sought primarily to demonstrate that, under the brush of his painter friend, portraiture as a genre had been transformed from a documentary to a genuine form of liberal art, capable of representing the *concetto* – the social image – of the sitter (Freedman 1996, 115–21). In this case too, Aretino's characterization of the doge may provide a key to the aura that the painter intended to create around his subject: "composed of innocence and honesty". It is worth noting that according to Gazzola (2006, 148–51), it is these very virtues to which the snow-white handkerchiefs, similar to the one clutched in the doge's hand here, refer in many Venetian portraits of the time. Aretino concludes his sonnet thus: "The grand diadem upon his head does lie / With such placidity and such rigour / That clemency and reason do require."

Elected doge at the age of seventy-eight in 1553, to die scarcely a year later, Marcantonio Trevisan was a deeply religious statesman of moral severity. Titian presents him as a moral hero: his monumental figure towers above the viewer, filling the canvas right to the edge. And yet this powerful presence does not strike us as oppressive: the doge gazes at the viewer sternly, but with open sincerity. The magnificent glow of the gold brocade cloak, treated with virtuoso broadness of brushwork, creates an air of majesty around the entire composition – just as Aretino observed.

The Budapest portrait is most often considered not to be autograph but attributed to the workshop. Sceptical scholars emphasize the bland posture, the sitter's aloof attitude, and the awkward position of his left hand, as well as the fact that – as Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1877, II, 227) have already remarked – the smooth and more finished handling of the face and the extremely free, pastose treatment of the cloak do not make up a genuinely organic whole. Most recently, Falomir (in *Vienna* 2007, 186) spoke of affected Titianesque manners in the picture, and suggested an attribution to Gerolamo Dente. This writer, however, cannot agree with such a stance. The Budapest portrait certainly does not rank as one of the peaks of Titian's œuvre, and we cannot rule out workshop assistance in its execution, but it should be taken into account that a certain stiffness necessarily results from focusing on the character features that were stressed also by Aretino. Moreover, the thinner paint used for the face and the beard have abraded more heavily than the pastose passages of the cloak, which considerably contributes to the sense of dissonance.

Another portrait of Marcantonio Trevisan, attributed to the circle of Palma Giovane and possibly a copy of the image in the Palazzo Ducale, is in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice (Weber 1993, fig. 40). The head in this picture corresponds closely to that in the Budapest portrait, as does the motif of the right hand grasping the handkerchief and – with some variations – the figure's attire. However, this portrait presents Trevisan seated, extending his left hand in a dynamic gesture. In the sonnet written to Vasallo, Aretino also speaks of a seated figure. In this context, it is significant that the shape encompassing the body in the Budapest portrait, the angle of the body, the position of the head, and the direction of the gaze correspond almost exactly to the portrait of Ludovico Beccadelli painted in 1552 (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), in which, however, the sitter is seated. It may be suggested, therefore, that this latter portrait served as a starting point for the image of the doge, and that in the official version Trevisan was also represented seated. The awkward positioning of the left hand in the Budapest version may be due to the compositional change, the remaining space simply having become too tight. At the same time, it seems improbable that a workshop assistant would have drafted such a major change to the composition independently.

AXEL VÉCSEY

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87 TITIAN | Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485–1490 – Venice, 1576

## *Virgin and Child (The Albertini Madonna)*

ca. 1560–1565

Oil on canvas; 124 × 96 cm
Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, inv. 1359

The *Albertini Madonna* has long split the ranks of art historians. Between the extremes of conspicuously positive and equally vehement negative opinions, the majority hold that Titian painted this work with the help of one or two of his numerous assistants called in to satisfy the constant demand for pictures of private devotion. Evaluation of the work is made more difficult by the fact that the paint is in bad condition, with traces of earlier repainting. For this reason, the latest restoration (2005) was restricted to suitable conservation (Rossi, in *Venice* 2008). X-radiography and infrared reflectography have revealed that under the present paint surface there is another picture at an advanced stage of execution (upside down). It shows Saint Margaret or Saint Catherine of Alexandria, the composition corresponding to the *Saint Margaret* in the Uffizi and the *Saint Catherine of Alexandria* in the Prado, which are partly or wholly attributed to Titian's workshop. However, a similar case occurs with a work unanimously judged by art historians as belonging to the best autograph works of Titian: the famous *Venus with a Mirror* in Washington. The time has perhaps come to break with the old, futile, and idealistic differentiation between autograph and studio production, and to try – as some already have done (Tagliaferro 2006) – to examine the actual, concrete facts of the way work was carried out in a successful studio like Titian's, which not only had an immense amount of work but also faced the far from easy task of balancing objective demand for serial products with the natural subjective desire for variety.

In speaking of this picture, the first analogy usually mentioned is Titian's signed *Virgin and Child* in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, of which the artist informed Philip II already in the spring of 1562, though it arrived in the Escorial in 1574; nothing is known of its intervening history. However, the Munich painting has far greater intensity, in both the expression of the figures' faces and the atmospheric effects of the twilight landscape. More properly mentioned here is the *Annunciation* (1563–1565) in the San Salvador church in Venice – a masterpiece that has few parallels in the œuvre – since the incandescent light visible in it already appears in the *Albertini Madonna,* yet in more restrained terms. This fire may refer to the burning bush known from the biblical story of Moses (Exodus 3, 1–6) – which Christian exegesis explains as the allegorical prototype of Mary's virginity – without the allusion being given a pictorial form.

Amidst growing indifference today towards the contents of paintings, nobody seems to have noticed that the left hands of mother and child are joined over an unidentified "object" rendered wholly unrecognizable by earlier overpainting and never restored. On the basis of the figurative tradition expressed in hundreds of Madonna pictures, this writer is persuaded that it is the apple of "Mary as the new Eve" – the fruit of the announced sacrifice – held jointly by the Redeemer and Mary as participant in the Redemption (Co-Redemptrix). This explains the utter sadness on the meek face of the mother who is aware of the future, and the silent questioning in the eyes of the unknowing infant.

AUGUSTO GENTILI

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88 TITIAN | Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485–1490 – Venice, 1576

## *Christ Carrying the Cross with Simon of Cyrene*

ca. 1560

Oil on canvas; 98 × 116 cm
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, inv. 439
Signed on the rock in the foreground: I B / TITIANVS

Around the middle of the sixteenth century, Titian painted numerous pictures for the Spanish court or its immediate entourage for private devotion. In these pieces he removed the subjects from their original narrative settings, depicting them against a neutral background, wholly isolated, as privileged objects of remembrance and contemplation. The protagonists are usually the Virgin as Co-Redemptrix (the indispensable supporter of the act of redemption, shown as if isolated from traditional Deposition or Lamentation scenes, in half-length and without any attributes except for her expression, which identifies her as the Mater Dolorosa, wailing with clasped hands or outstretched arms) and the Man of Sorrows (isolated from scenes like the Mocking of Christ, the Crowning with Thorns or the Ecce Homo, also shown in half-length figure, but with various attributes such as blood and the crown; the rope and the reed stalk).

The *Christ and Simon of Cyrene* of the Prado (inv. 439), signed as "I B / TITIANUS" on the rock at the bottom (the enigmatic abbreviation IB has still to be deciphered), was isolated from the scene of the Carrying of the Cross. Apart from the two protagonists, none of the numerous participants of the episode is depicted. This extremely reduced narrative context presents only two elements of the story. One is the moment when Christ falls and has to lean on the rock which in this context clearly signifies the cornerstone, the foundation of the Christian church that is built upon the sacrifice of the Redeemer. The other is the prompt and speedy assistance of Simon of Cyrene who grasps the cross, while in the background – seemingly neutral today due to deterioration of the pigment and darkening of the varnish – traces of the hill of Calvary are still just about discernible.

The *Christ Carrying the Cross with Simon of Cyrene* (that is, a man from Libya and not Judea, a pagan and not a Jew) is an appropriate scene for the theme of the imitation of Christ in Titian's œuvre. The Cyrenian takes over the cross from Christ exhausted from the climb up Calvary, thus he metaphorically assumes the burden, the agony, the martyrdom, and thereby initiates within himself the process of redemption and conversion. This process is predetermined: it is not Simon's own decision to take the cross; the soldiers force him to do so. Sixteenth-century writing – particularly *Monte Calvario* by the Spanish Franciscan Antonio de Guevara, councillor and official chronicler to Charles V (first published in Italian in 1555) – notes that the episode refers to the conversion of the pagans contrasted with the obstinacy of the Jews, but also specifies that the handing over of the cross is an encouragement to all Christians, calling on the devout reader to "volunteer" for the pious gesture that Simon of Cyrene was forced to make.

That the painting was an object for meditation is emphasized by Spanish sources too. These note that the work was placed in El Escorial in Philip II's private chapel, and the ruler spent long hours, sometimes at night, "in the exercise of vocal and mental prayer" (Santos 1657) before the poignant image of the bleeding Christ. Titian himself must have felt personally affected, since he decided to portray himself in the role of the Cyrenian. This self-portrait can be compared with those in the figure of Nicodemus in the *Entombment* (1559) in the Prado and in the *Saint Jerome* (1557–1559) in the Brera in Milan, both painted at more or less the same time.

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89 TITIAN | Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485–1490 – Venice, 1576

## *Mary Magdalene in the Wilderness*

1567

Oil on canvas; 128 × 103 cm
Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples, inv. 136

Ever since a decree issued by Pope Gregory the Great, literary and artistic tradition has identified Mary Magdalene with the unnamed woman sinner who approached Christ in Simon's house, anointed his head and/or feet with perfumed ointment, washed them in her tears of penitence and wiped them with her plentiful hair. From then on, Mary Magdalene was depicted with her typical attributes: long reddish-blond hair and a jar of ointment. As a new disciple and spiritual partner, she accompanied Christ all through his life: she was present at the Crucifixion, the Deposition, and the Lamentation. She did not witness the Resurrection, but when she found the beloved man's tomb empty, she brought news of it. She even met the resurrected Christ in the "Noli me tangere" ("Touch me not") episode. Finally, already detached from the story of Christ, she endured the arduous experience of penance alone.

Like other versions of the subject, the work in question is based on the prototype Titian intended for Philip II of Spain and kept in his workshop in 1560–1561. Eventually, the painting remained in Venice: a nobleman called Silvio Badoer unexpectedly offered a generous sum for it in cash, so the artist sold it to him (Vasari 1568, Ridolfi 1648). The *Magdalene in the Wilderness* of the Capodimonte museum was painted for a prestigious old client, Alessandro Farnese, and is well documented in two letters Titian wrote in the spring of 1567. The painter modified the iconography characteristic of the rest of the series in two important respects: he omitted the fragile glass jug (otherwise a traditional attribute for Annunciation scenes!) and employed instead the usual alabaster balm jar; more important still, he arranged the solitary woman's chemise so that it covered both her breasts. The skull and book – objects related to meditation on the vanity of earthly life – remain, but they no longer merit a glance from the Magdalene. The tears falling from her eyes raised heavenward indicate that she has completed the "experiential" road of repentance for her sins and, in a condition of utter penitence, has been redeemed by God's grace. In an era of organized, disciplined, and obligatory religiosity, the great success of this picture type was a sign of the success of the call to individual spirituality with its prospect of the "broad way" to mercy and salvation.

All the important details of the Capodimonte picture – the figure, the attire and the attributes – are highly finished. The painting is completely homogeneous in conception and execution; nothing indicates the intervention of Titian's workshop, frequently emphasized though this may be by several modern-day critics. Nevertheless, the work as a whole lacks in expressivity, something which must be ascribed to the fact that it was painted for a particular client – and an important one, too – who wished to have a highly finished work. The picture in fact is too refined for this phase of Titian, in which he was developing and honing an idiom of transience and mutability. In this period, when he was expected to produce a finished painting, he complied with the task impatiently, lacking inner conviction and absorption. The counterexample is, of course, the *Magdalene in the Wilderness* in the Hermitage, the apotheosis of expression. Neither finishing nor selling it, Titian kept this one for himself.

AUGUSTO GENTILI

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90 TITIAN | Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485–1490 – Venice, 1576

## *Christ on the Cross and the Good Thief*

before 1566

Oil on canvas; 137 × 149 cm
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, inv. 521

The painting shows Christ on the cross with the good thief – crucified, as the apocryphal gospels tell, on the right of the Lord – to whom Christ promised salvation. It appears to capture the moment when their conversation ends (Luke 23, 39–43) and hope is kindled in the heart of the thief, who is portrayed raising his eyes passionately toward the sky. The figure of Christ is shown in radiant light, with his head inclined over his right shoulder and his body overcome with agony, which contrasts with the figure of the thief, animated by the sudden twisting of his body and the dynamic gesture of his right arm.

The ingenious composition is striking even in its fragmentary state. The decision to arrange the crosses diagonally instead of frontally, as was customary, imbues the scene with dramatic force. The intense light that surrounds Christ's head leaves his neck and the lower part of his face in shadow; another source of light from the left illuminates his dying body, accentuating the muscles of his left arm and torso, and setting off his figure against the golden brown background. The bodies are modelled with plasticity in a brushwork that becomes particularly fluid and diffuse in the loincloths around the hips of the figures. The powerful expression of the essentially human drama of Christ's suffering and death are features of Titian's late poetics and style, for which reason scholars have considered this fragment as one of the last works of the master.

Undoubtedly, the fragment was part of a larger composition, probably an altarpiece. Some details exposed by restoration – the lance heads at the bottom indicating the presence of the soldiers, the top of a ladder (Mauceri 1931, 95), and the back of a small figure about to leave the scene in the bottom right corner (Varignana 1983, 115–19) – suggest that the original format of the work was vertical; the lower part, however, can no longer be reconstructed. On the right, the figure of the third crucified man must have completed the composition. It can be inferred from the proportions of the figures that the height of the original work approached some four metres. Foreshortened from a low vantage point, the bodies of Christ and the thief are slightly less than life-size, for they originally occupied the upper part of the composition (Finocchi Ghersi 1997, 26; Finocchi Ghersi, in Bentini et al. ed. 2006, 368). At the top a strip of about 70 cm is probably also missing, as both the vertical beam of Christ's cross with the inscription and its obliquely depicted horizontal beam have been cut.

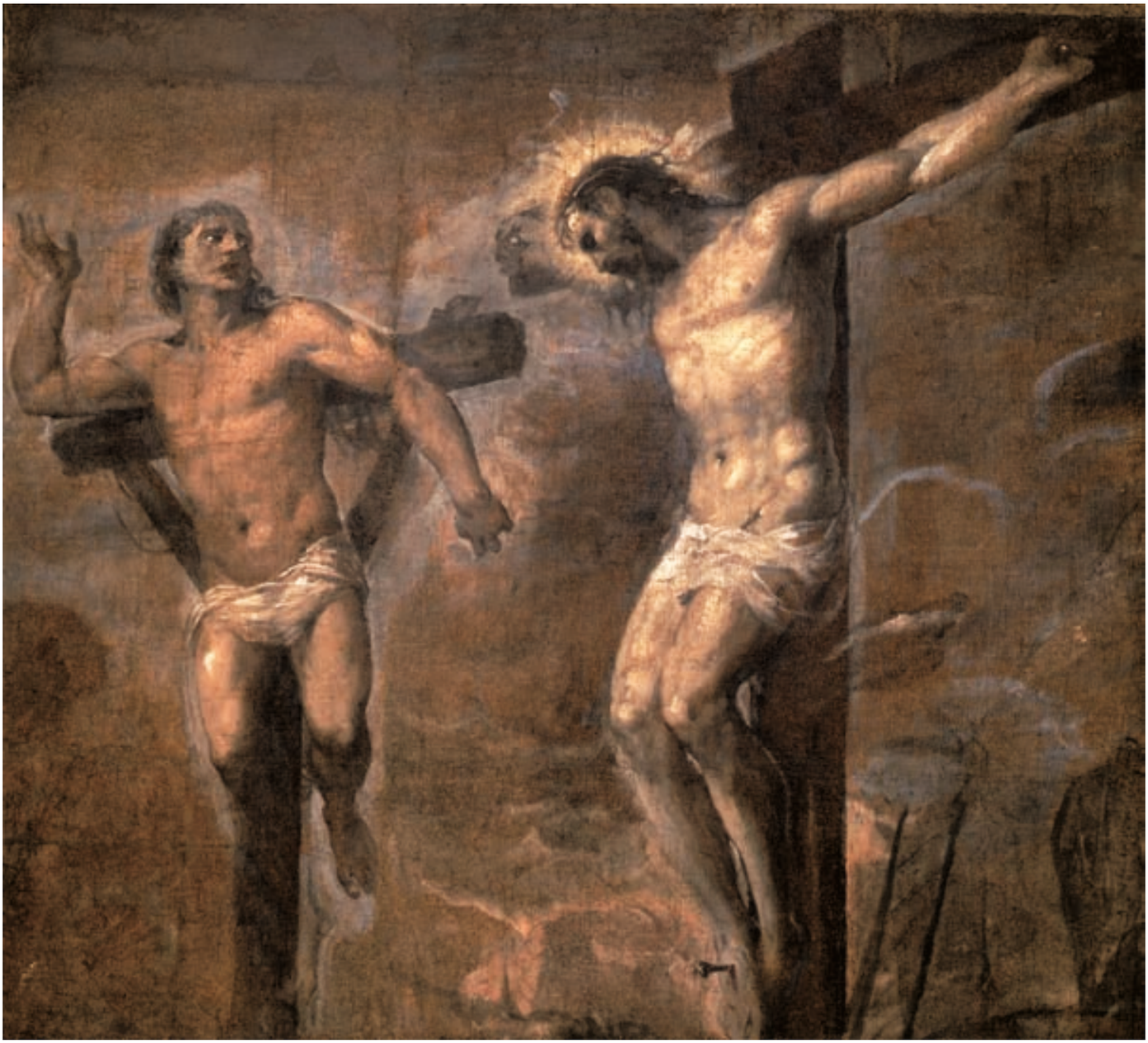
Since its rediscovery in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna, Mauceri (1931) and Suida (1930–1931, 899 and 1933, 139) assigned the work to Titian. In Suida's opinion the painting may be identical with a work Titian executed for a merchant of Flemish origin, Giovanni d'Anna (van Haanen) and seen by Vasari in Titian's studio among the works "sketched and begun" during his visit to Venice in 1566 (Vasari [1568] 1878–1885, VII [1881], 457).

Finocchi Ghersi (1997, 21–29 and in Bentini et al. ed. 2006, 367–68) accepted Suida's hypothesis (1933, 139) and, on the basis of important documents found and later published by Charles Hope (2007, 39, n. 90), reconstructed in detail the history of the commission. Giovanni van Haanen ordered a large altarpiece for a chapel in the church of San Salvador in Venice where he planned to place the tomb of his family. The painting now in Bologna is presumably a fragment of this work, never handed over to the family and consequently never set up in the chapel for which it was intended. The scholar acknowledged the fragment as an autograph piece by Titian on the basis of stylistic comparison with the master's *Transfiguration* and *Annunciation,* likewise painted for the church of San Salvador. The issues of attribution and identification still raise many questions and doubts in the literature. Finocchi Ghersi's reconstruction, resting as far as authorship is concerned on the unquestionably high quality of the painting, is highly intriguing. Even if not substantiated by irrefutable evidence, the identification he proposed on the basis of Vasari's words and the important, recently discovered documents seems at present to be the most plausible.

FRANCESCA DEL TORRE SCHEUCH

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# 6 | Venice and its Hinterland

By the sixteenth century, the power of Venice was already fading. Turkish territorial gains hindered trade in the Mediterranean Sea, while the French and Spanish advances into Italy put an end to Venetian mainland expansion. Yet this same century produced the golden age of Venetian painting. Artists were showered with commissions from the government offices of the Serenissima, the church (which enjoyed significant independence from Rome), the self-supporting and charitable lay confraternities *(scuole),* and the representatives of the oligarchy. The many newly raised buildings also increased the number of decorative tasks. The Titianesque technique of oil painting quickened the pace at which commissions were completed. The most prestigious masters operated with a veritable army of students and assistants who thoroughly assimilated the style of the head of the workshop. While Titian constantly renewed his own formal language, other pivotal figures also came to the fore. Tintoretto – learning from both Titian and Michelangelo – established a passionate, turbulently dynamic style, imbued with rustic piety and foreshadowing the mysticism of El Greco. At the same time, Paolo Veronese became the last Italian exponent of the high Renaissance. His spectacular pictures proclaim the triumph of beauty with a lofty serenity and an uncomplicated harmony. A talent on a par with theirs was that of Jacopo dal Ponte, active in Bassano, near Venice, who in his later period established a new genre by merging landscape, genre painting and allegory, achieving enormous success among collectors.

Of the republic's mainland territories, it was painting in Brescia and Bergamo that enjoyed the greatest prestige. In Brescia, Moretto, Romanino and Savoldo each blended the Lombard realist tradition with Venetian colourism in a different fashion. In Bergamo, Palma Vecchio and Giovanni Cariani were the leading exponents, followed by Moroni, but much of the activity of Lorenzo Lotto is also associated with the city. This Venetian-born master, always wandering and never at peace, left to posterity one of the most brilliant œuvres of the cinquecento.

If the rivalry between Venice and central Italy was continuous, so too was their constructive interaction. Titian's personal encounter with Michelangelo in Rome in 1545 was of symbolic significance. Venetian painting continued to preserve its individual character but not by shying away from outside influences. It was partly this that represented the Venetian painter's sovereignty, as defended by Paolo Veronese on July 13, 1573 at an inquisition tribunal with the following words: "We painters take the same licence as poets and madmen."

Moretto da Brescia
*Portrait of Tullia d'Aragona as Salome* (detail)
ca. 1537
Pinacoteca Tosio-Martinengo, Brescia

One of the age-old themes of literature on Venetian painting is that of whether Palma Vecchio's *Portrait of a Woman* (cat. 91) and many other similar paintings are true portraits or idealized images of women, and, if they are indeed portraits, whether they depict courtesans or young brides. What is certain is that such paintings celebrate female beauty. They are probably not portraits in the proper sense, even if they had sitters. It cannot be coincidence that only a few decades after their completion they were often listed in inventories simply as *La Bella* ("the beautiful woman"), just as this picture was. The pomp of the dress only serves to make the body's silky beauty even more alluring and enticing.

The Magdalene in Palma Vecchio's *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene* (cat. 92) is almost a sister to *La Bella,* just as this religious painting showing half-length figures was made for a collector, not a church commission. The Bergamo-born master painted a whole series of such pictures, in which softly undulating contours and gestures that gently respond to one another unite the fresh beauties into a single group in front of a dreamlike, idyllic landscape. The fleshy bodies and the freely flowing rhythm of their movements attest to the triumph of the high Renaissance. Palma did not follow Titian's new method of employing increasingly loose brushwork to imbue every pore of the composition with dynamism; he kept a finish on the resplendently coloured surfaces.

In *Portrait of a Young Nobleman* (cat. 93) by the Brescian artist Girolamo Romanino, we see a youth with a dreamy expression, gazing into the distance, as in Giorgione's portrait in Budapest. This meditative content, however, is contrasted – and, given the rest of the artist's work, we suspect more by design than by accident – with the luxurious clothes, the hand grasping the hilt of the sword, and, most of all, the vulgar character of the face. In the presentation of the free and plebeian-minded Romanino, this contemplative attitude no longer appears as fashionable, but as a pose observed with irony.

Giorgione's vision of the consubstantiality of man and nature had a deeper influence on another great artistic personality from Brescia, Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo. In his *Tobias and the Angel* (cat. 94), what we see of the Old Testament story is not the oft-depicted journey to Egypt, but rather the moment when, at the archangel's order, Tobias catches the fish from the river Tigris, the bile of which will restore his father's sight. In numerous ways the silvery light of dusk illuminates the archangel's face and hands, Tobias's body, and the countless wrinkles and crinkles of their attire. Despite the classical monumentality of the figures, the overall effect is intimate and lyrical, which is how the artist involves us in the magic of a biblical moment blessed by divine presence.

Of all the Ferrarese masters of the cinquecento, Dosso Dossi was the most open to the innovations of Giorgione and Titian. The Venetian roots of his sanguine art are undeniable; his colours, following Titian's example, are warm in tone, alive, and glowing. He also adopted the iconographic freedom characteristic of Giorgione's paintings and Titian's mythological scenes known as "poesie" ("poetry"). One example of this is *The Embrace* (cat. 95), showing a satyr embracing a nymph, which originally formed a part of the ceiling decoration of the bedroom of Alfonso d'Este, duke of Ferrara. Dosso Dossi's large-scale altarpiece, *The Holy Family* (cat. 96), is again made particularly attractive by the rich dynamic created by the interplay of light and colour. It is a testament to the painter's wonderful gift for synthesis that this dazzling colourism is entirely in harmony with Mary's twisted posture and the lofty ceremony of the whole composition, that is, with stylistic elements that originated from the Rome of Raphael.

Although the allegorizing portrait only became truly popular during the Baroque, its invention goes back to the Italian Renaissance. Moretto da Brescia's painting is one of the most intriguing and exceptional examples of this genre, for the sitter appears in the role of a negative New Testament heroine, Salome. In this way *Tullia d'Aragona* (cat. 97) sought to atone for the fact that, although she aspired to poetic laurels, she was better known as a courtesan in the higher social circles. Symbolic laurels decorate the background, while, as her expression appeals to us for forgiveness, the sceptre, inappropriate to Salome, can be in the courtesan's hand because her likely father, Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona, granted her a noble ancestry.

The young woman that Paris Bordon portrayed behind a dressing table (cat. 98) does the same as Palma Vecchio's *La Bella:* she rests one hand on her jewellery box, and touches her long hair with the other. Thus, about twenty-five years later, around the middle of the century, the Treviso-born painter continued the Venetian tradition of celebrating female beauty. The difference between the two paintings can in no small measure be explained by the inroads made by the Mannerist aesthetic. The classical architectural background, the stylized hair and clothes, the statuesque face and body are all components of an abstract, classicizing notion of beauty, one where we look in vain for the liveliness and erotic radiance so admired in Palma's painting. A classicizing tendency is conspicuous also in *Venus and Cupid* (cat. 99), but even more so are its roots in the tradition established by Giorgione and Titian. Venus, reclining in a luscious landscape and reaching out for Cupid's arrows, is a descendant of Giorgione's *Slumbering Venus* and Titian's and Palma Vecchio's paintings of the goddess of love and beauty.

In Paris Bordon's *Annunciation* (cat. 100) we note a different characteristic feature of Mannerism. The protagonists in this central event of the New Testament are smaller in scale than the surroundings of the scene. It was Sebastiano Serlio's stage set designs, disseminated through prints, which set the example for Bordon's compositions like this one. Yet the stateliness of the architecture with its columns and arcades is not without a sacred quality. The foreshortening and the distance that separates the two protagonists creates pathos: Mary does not yet know of the approach of the angel; she can only sense it.

The successful spread of Mannerism can also be recognized in *The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* (cat. 101) by Jacopo dal Ponte, named Bassano after the city of his birth. Her attempted execution comes to nothing thanks to divine intervention, and Saint Catherine kneels atop a heap of dead executioners, while some tormentors flee or attempt to defend themselves. This display of complicated postures is unimaginable without the influence of central Italy, and is given its inimitable atmosphere by the colours which glow like enamel. We see an optical illusion: what in one moment is the intertwining of tightening, wriggling and lifeless bodies is in the next a fanciful design.

It is possible, but not certain, that Jacopo Bassano also painted one of the finest portraits in the Szépművészeti Múzeum, a now fragmented work whose original size remains unknown. In the *Portrait of a Cardinal* (cat. 102) the quality is Titianesque but the style is not. Although the portrait has been repeatedly attributed to Titian, neither the naturalist depiction of every detail of the head, nor the heroification-free manner of portrayal is characteristic of Titian. Few portraits are known at all which project resignation and inward-looking, forlorn wisdom before our eyes with such hypnotic force.

*The Way to Calvary* (cat. 103), its formal language transformed by the influence of Parmigianino, and its expressiveness at its height, is a later Bassano work than *The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine*. In the crowd directed by destiny, in this chaos engineered by a masterly hand, the theme of Christ's solitude is expressed with enormous power. The deformed proportions, the simultaneous movements of love, bitterness and brutality, the light gleaming on the metallic browns, copper reds, hard armour and clothes wrinkled with the calligraphy of pain all lift the painting to the tragic height of the presentation of suffering and defencelessness, and thereby make it one of the key works of Venetian Mannerism.

The *Allegory of Summer* (cat. 104) is both a landscape and a genre painting. The greatest demand from collectors was for works of this kind from the Bassano workshop; even the seventeenth-century followers of the master profited from the constant appeal of this category. Jacopo's *Allegory* presents the virtues of the new type of picture at the highest level. Thanks to the dynamism of the composition and to the light flooding the scene in waves, the village scenery and the everyday activities of the workers (shearing sheep, preparing food, harvesting, threshing) are ennobled into a ceremonious allegory. When Jacopo painted this picture, his Mannerist period was at its end, and his works assumed an increasingly Venetian character. If we compare his painting on slate in the Eger museum (cat. 105) with *The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* or *The Way to Calvary,* we get an even clearer sense of this development. *The Adoration of the Magi* was painted with the broad technique of Titian's late period: the light of the star shining in the Holy Night makes the surface of the forms soft and loose, while the visible brushstrokes allow us to witness the painting process, the picture's genesis.

The fresh brushstrokes still smelling of paint were from the outset a key element of Jacopo Tintoretto's formal language. Looking at the details of *The Supper at Emmaus* (cat. 106), we feel as if he had not so much painted them as drawn them with a brush. The basic scheme of this early composition is still that of the high Renaissance: the contraposition of the two groups of three is governed by the classical system of antitheses and parallels. Yet this scheme is stretched to the point of bursting by the figures filled with robust, Michelangelesque energy, the fervent gestures, twisted postures, and the instinctive, rawly-applied colours that designate the lines of force. Another painting by a follower of Tintoretto shows *Christ and the Adulterous Woman* (cat. 107). This New Testament story of Christian forgiveness has never and nowhere been depicted as often as in the Venetian cinquecento and the German centres of the Reformation. Its success in Venice was no doubt assisted by the anti-dogmatic spirit that characterized the religiosity of this city of commerce. With its columned architecture, the theatrical stage derived from the architectural tract of Sebastiano Serlio plays a decisive role in the atmosphere of this scene, just as it does in Paris Bordon's *Annunciation*.

In the mature style of Tintoretto is *Saint Andrew and Saint Jerome* (cat. 108), which was originally part of a series of votive paintings in the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, the Venetian treasury building near the Rialto, a structure still standing today. Most of the pictures depicting the patron saints of the government officials were realized by Bonifacio Veronese, who lined up the saints in pairs with considerable monotony. Tintoretto's muscular, energetic figures, modelled with a powerful chiaroscuro and placed in Michelangelesque poses, break through this repetitiveness with great force. Such a radical change of style within a single series is only conceivable in an intellectual community where innovative talent was rated more highly than respect for predecessors.

After the explosive dynamism of Tintoretto's many-figured narrative works, it is surprising to be faced with the puritanical simplicity and refined melancholy of the majority of his portraits. The *Portrait of a Procurator* (cat. 109) is an exception as far as its monumentality is concerned, conferred on the portrayal by the low viewpoint, the pomp of the gown's fur, and the small head in proportion to the body. Yet the face itself reveals less the pride of a high official than the reserved seriousness of an old patrician.

Giovanni Battista Moroni from Bergamo also painted his altarpieces in an entirely different style from his portraits. The latter genre dominates his œuvre and includes his best-known masterpieces, for example, *The*

*Tailor* in the National Gallery in London. His works on religious subjects were strongly influenced by the iconographic dictates of the Counter-Reformation, and on occasion, as in the case of the *Woman in a Red Dress* (cat. 110), his portraits also show this effect. The three-quarter figure stands in front of a neutral background, in an elegant dress tightly restraining her breasts. Strict in her morals and obedient to the rules of Spanish etiquette, she is a world away from the open sensuality of Palma Vecchio's *La Bella*.

The model for the *Portrait of a Man* (cat. 111) by Paolo Veronese is evidently not constrained by Spanish etiquette. With ostentatious openness, he exemplifies the aristocratic ideal of careless elegance as embodied by Titian's much earlier *Man with Gloves* (cat. 84). The wall overgrown with ivy, the red curtain, and the landscape decorated with an ancient ruin all provide a serene, solemn backdrop to the theatrical, irreverent posing of the eminent young man. The portrait offers little in the way of any depiction of his character or soul, but this does not detract from Veronese's artistic achievement. For Veronese is an exponent of pure painting; with almost unbelievable modernity, he is only interested in the exquisite, idyllic, all-pleasing view; his art leaves no room for ideological or psychological content. He approaches his subjects with exceptional freedom, in the spirit of "l'art pour l'art". This is why his *Venus and Adonis* (cat. 112) brings to mind rococo associations, and its playful eroticism is congenial with the interpretation of Ovid's myth.

Veronese's imagination, inexhaustible in its visual ingenuity, his use of cold tones and silvery colours, and his depiction of uplifting beauty, introduces the viewer to the wonder of artistic creation. This is true even in the case of works with a moralizing content, such as the composition in the Prado (cat. 113). A boy of no more than twelve, clearly from an eminent family, must choose between Virtue and Vice. The lascivious woman embodying Vice is the loser, and the child obediently joins the victorious Virtue, but no drama emerges from this: there is nothing to disturb the brightly-lit harmony of the gracefully moving figures, the loose robes, the decorative clothes, the windswept foliage and the stagelike colonnade. The architectural setting receives particular emphasis in the *Annunciation* (cat. 114). The painter's decorative whim puts the Palladian architecture of the background at a level below the stage of the scene, on which the angel, amongst fluttering drapery, with outstretched arms and wings, and with a gaze already fixed on Mary, is about to land. The relation of the airborne messenger and the sunken *coulisse,* together with Mary's sublime posture as she turns, is filled with a dynamism that is free from raw, wild or pent-up tension. Veronese's works are visions of the pagan-Christian paradise of ethereal beauty and lofty bliss.

The last in the chronological sequence of Venetian paintings on display is Paolo Fiammingo's *Apollo and Poseidon Punishing Troy* (cat. 115). This work, on a rare subject, is exhibited for the first time since its rediscovery in 2008. Its painter, who settled in the Venice of Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and the Bassano is of Flemish origin, but also achieved artistic success outside Italy. Paolo shows himself to be a master of Mannerism: by narrowing the format and allowing the ground to rise steeply, he lays out the scene from the Trojan saga before the viewer's eyes, and groups the motifs in such a way as to let the winding, meandering contours also operate as a planar design.

VILMOS TÁTRAI

## 91 Palma Vecchio (Jacopo Palma) | Serina [Bergamo], ca. 1480 – Venice, 1528

### *Portrait of a Woman ("La Bella")*

ca. 1518–1520

Oil on canvas; 95 × 80 cm
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, inv. 318a
Inscribed on the parapet: A M B / N D

The first question prompted by a portrait is "who is this person? for whose likeness has someone paid a sum of money to an artist?". *"La Bella",* lavishly dressed with her huge red sleeves, self-consciously posed, her face animated only by the sideways look of her eyes, her lips parted slightly, has an alluring air of expectation. With one hand caressing her hair, and the other holding a jewel box, one wonders what she means by her gestures. The jewels and the dress opened over her white chemise, imply the intimacy of a boudoir. Her smooth bare shoulders remind one of an observation by Canon Pietro Casola, visiting Venice in 1494: "these Venetian women, especially the pretty ones, try as much as possible to show their chests – I mean their breasts and shoulders – so much so that several times when I saw them I marvelled that their clothes did not fall off their backs" (Newett 1907, 144–45). Certainly the image gives the strongest sense of the invisible presence of an admiring male onlooker.

*"La Bella"* is one of more than twenty half-length paintings of young women, blondes or redheads, that have come down to us and which clearly represented an important source of income for Palma. The question of their identity is complex. A choice between images of Venice's numerous, celebrated though to some degree anonymous courtesans on the one hand and of nameable patricians' or patrons' wives on the other is too simple. In the work of three major artists in sixteenth century Venice who produced large numbers of half-length images of women of this kind – Palma Vecchio, Titian, Paris Bordon – and even more so in the work of minor figures such as Giovanni Cariani and Bernardino Licinio, the women have a generic resemblance to each other, varying more as a function of the artist's style than of the features of a variety of different sitters. German historiography gave a name to the genre: *Schönheitsideal*. Rona Goffen, discussing Titian's portraits of women, rejected the notion that a portrait necessarily implied an exact likeness, as one would expect today. The double "portrait" of Laura Bagarotti in Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love* (Galleria Borghese, Rome), neither of which actually look like her, is a case in point (Goffen 1997, 33ff., 45ff.).

The inscription on the blank surface of the parapet in front of the subject (an oddly abstract motif which corresponds to no architectural motif in a Venetian household, although we find it in other paintings of the period such as Titian's *La Schiavona* [National Gallery, London]), may be a dedication: "A Madonna B… Nobil Donna" for example. This implies an amorous context, within or without wedlock. Petrarchan sonnets of this period, which were much in vogue in Palma's time, can read like verbal equivalents of *"La Bella"* – a standard repertoire of metaphors and similes that describe in detail the physical appearance of the loved one, suppressing individuality with hyperbole. She may in fact be a painted equivalent of a love sonnet. Carlo Ridolfi, in 1648, recorded a lost painting of *La Zattina,* a courtesan whose nickname was referred to by a jewel in the shape of a lion's paw *(zampina)* held in her hand (Ridolfi [1648], 1914–1924, I, 140). Such a jewel appears in the portrait of a man by Lorenzo Lotto (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), in which the sitter's right hand is placed over his heart.

According to this interpretation *"La Bella"* is not therefore a portrait of the precise appearance of Palma's client's loved one, but rather an image of what he feels about her, and the beauty he wishes to attribute to her. Several paintings of women were inventoried in Palma's studio at his death, most of them unidentified, which suggests that he kept them in reserve as "stock-in-trade".

The picture can be dated, on the basis of the internal evidence of the development of Palma's technique, ca. 1518–1520. It is worth noting that Palma's paintings of women, full and half length, became more explicitly erotic in the 1520s.

When *"La Bella"* was in the Sciarra-Colonna collection in Rome, it was attributed to Titian, in recognition of the sumptuous beauty of its colours, fabrics and subject as a whole. J. D. Passavant's attribution to Palma Vecchio in 1853 has never been contested (Passavant 1853, 163, unnumbered note).

PHILIP RYLANDS

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A M B
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92 Palma Vecchio (Jacopo Palma) | Serina [Bergamo], ca. 1480 – Venice, 1528

*Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene*

ca. 1525

Oil on panel; 71 × 108 cm
Palazzo Bianco, Genoa, inv. P.B. 283

This is surely one of the finest examples of the art of Palma Vecchio and of the *sacra conversazione* in Venetian high Renaissance painting. Though not monumental in scale, nor dramatic in its psychological or narrative components, nor innovative in technique, composition or style (as one might expect instead from Titian or Lotto at this time), it is almost perfectly accomplished within the narrow limits Palma Vecchio set for himself.

The *sacra conversazione* is the epithet that historians have ascribed to non-narrative arrangements of the Virgin and Child in the company of saints: in altarpieces, the Madonna is enthroned and full-length figures stand symmetrically at her sides. A variation, consisting of half- or three quarter-length figures such as this, emerged in the late quattrocento from the prolific studio of Giovanni Bellini and from his numerous pupils and imitators – which included the Bergamasque painter Andrea Previtali who may well have been Palma's tutor when Palma too migrated from Bergamo to Venice in the opening years of the cinquecento. Such paintings served a market for domestic devotional images (some versions include pious donor portraits) but eventually they joined other more or less profane genres – portraits, idealized women, nudes and mythologies, in addition to bible stories (all of which Palma painted at various times) – in the private art collections recorded in the notes of Marcantonio Michiel in the third and fourth decades of the sixteenth century (Michiel [ca. 1521–1543] 1888, *passim*).

The splendour of the Genoa painting is both formal and sensuous. Unlike the saints to left and right who stand, the Virgin is decorously seated (though her throne is invisible). Her raised and lowered knees, the bifurcation between her head and that of the infant Christ, leaning in opposite directions, the swirling drapery that moves rhythmically around her body expanding her contours, her head raised a little higher than those of her companions, her central position forward of theirs: all of these factors ensure her pre-eminence in the otherwise dense and uniform frieze of shapes, lines and colours. The lateral saints perfectly complement each other: male and female, Mary Magdalene's rich robes, contrasting with the Baptist's rough skins, blonde tresses versus tangled brown curls, the glowing whiteness of the Magdalene's flesh as opposed to the Baptist's tan and taught muscle. Each of them gaze respectfully at the Infant, while the Infant, thanks to his skilfully-drawn contrapposto (which Palma had learned from prints after Raphael), gestures to the one and turns to the other. The Baptist's long and densely scripted scroll draws the eye into the centre of the composition; the Magdalene gracefully closes it to the right.

Palma's deployment of colour reinforces the formal composition, and this, and the sheer beauty of the serene figures, constitute the sensual corollary of the formal harmony. The intensest hues and liveliest chiaroscuro play across the Virgin's form. The orange and violet of the Magdalene's robes befit her subordinate position, but also introduce a sonorous variant of chromatic harmony. The distant landscape, explicitly pleasurable in its variety and panorama, opens the widest space around the Virgin's head, while silhouetting the others.

This rather lengthy description of what the eye can see is intended to convince the viewer that this painting is by a mature artist at the height of his powers, and to give it the terms of a classical masterpiece, in which balance and variety, formal and chromatic beauty operate in untroubled harmony with the content of the image.

The painting was first recorded in the collection of Marcello Durazzo in Genoa in 1760 (Ratti 1766, 187), when it already bore an attribution to Palma Vecchio. Palma's authorship has never been seriously questioned.

PHILIP RYLANDS

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93 GIROLAMO ROMANINO | Brescia, ca. 1484–1487 – Brescia, 1560

## *Portrait of a Young Nobleman*

ca. 1520–1525

Oil on panel; 82.5 × 71.5 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1254

Represented three-quarter length, in the act of gripping the hilt of his sword with his right hand, the youth is clad in an elegant brocade with gold and black ornamental motifs and in an item of lined headgear (known as a *balzo*) of a perfectly matching gold colour.

There is, regrettably, no clue whatsoever to help identify the sitter, who most probably belonged to a noble family in Brescia, an assumption justified mainly by the provenance of the painting. Before it was purchased by the Hungarian museum in 1895, Morelli (1880, 447) had seen it in that town, in the collection of the Fenaroli family. (For hypotheses on the earlier history of the work, see Frangi, in *Trento* 2006, 124.)

A further, decisive pointer to the Brescian origin of the painting and the sitter is the unanimous attribution of the picture to Girolamo Romanino, an outstanding representative of the school of painting in Brescia, a flourishing centre of sixteenth-century Lombardian art, though at the time it formed part of the western territories of the Venetian Republic.

Datable approximately to the early 1520s (Ballarin, in *Paris* 1993), the painting itself is exemplary of the chief characteristics of Romanino's early mature style, marked by a constant dialogue with contemporary Venetian culture. The echo of Giorgione's and the young Titian's models is discernible not only in the manner of positioning the sitter – which is very similar to Titian's *Portrait of a Young Man* of around 1515 (collection of the Earl of Halifax, on loan to the National Gallery, London) – but also in the meditative and melancholic attitude derived from Giorgione which is conveyed by the slightly tilted position of the head and the detail of the gaze into nothingness.

At the same time, it is clear that the Lombardian artist reinterpreted these borrowed elements in a highly idiosyncratic way: he replaced the sophisticated syntax and idealizing propensities of the great Venetian masters of the early cinquecento with a crudely naturalistic approach, which can be seen in the illusionistic rendering of the attire and first and foremost, the figure's face. The portrait unforgivingly shows his unkempt beard, his irregular, unattractive features further accentuated by the slight foreshortening from below, which contributes to the asymmetrical distortion of the sitter's physiognomy.

The tendency to heighten the realism of the represented figure – which was already present, with growing intensity, in Romanino's work in the 1510s, and in some cases approached the brink of grotesque distortion – should be seen primarily as a consequence of his thorough knowledge of German Renaissance art. This influence is unmistakably reflected, for example, by the Passion scenes executed by Romanino in 1519 for the great fresco cycle on the walls of the nave of Cremona Cathedral, or the lunette with *The Mass of Saint Gregory,* painted between 1521 and 1522 for the chapel of the Sacrament in the church of San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.

The vibrant and passionate donor portraits in the latter chapel offer the closest parallels with the Budapest portrait: here, as in the Brescia lunette, Romanino appears to respond to Lorenzo Lotto's contemporary works painted in nearby Bergamo, but translating the psychological inquietude that animates Lotto's portraits into a more biting and ruder language.

FRANCESCO FRANGI

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## 94 Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo | Brescia, ca. 1480–1485 – Venice, after 1548

*Tobias and the Angel*

ca. 1522–1525

Oil on canvas; 96 × 124 cm
Galleria Borghese, Rome, inv. 547

Although this is one of Savoldo's most experimental and paradigmatic works, nothing is known of the circumstances in which it was commissioned. The date of its execution must be put to the apogee of the painter's mature phase, to the period immediately preceding his masterpiece, the altarpiece for the Dominican church at Pesaro, ordered in 1524 (now Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan). By this time, all the components of his style acquired during his long stay in Venice – learnt from Giorgione, Titian, Dürer and the Netherlandish masters and to a lesser extent even from Raphael – had harmoniously merged with his own singular style characterized by the realism of the atmospheric and light effects.

Even the choice of the subject is original (the representation of the story of Tobias and the angel is fairly rare in early sixteenth-century Venice, though these figures sometimes appear as the characters in *sacre conversazioni*), and takes its place in the vast and diverse tradition of landscape painting with an originality that anticipates Caravaggio. The biblical story of the young boy sent by his father to Rages in Media to collect a sum of money deposited with the father's coreligionist Gabael (Tob. 4, 20–21) lends itself to a narrative treatment and it is no accident that the few depictions in contemporary art (cf. M. Lucco, in *Washington–Vienna* 2006, 140) stress this "adventure story" aspect of the theme. Savoldo, however, did not lay the emphasis on the journey or wandering but on the moment when Tobias takes a rest on the bank of the Tigris river, in harmony with the Arcadian atmosphere of nature. Another deviation from other customary representations is that Tobias is not a child here but a strong, tanned youth. In his totally new capacity for depicting the feelings and emotions of the two figures so convincingly Savoldo shows some common ground with endeavours by his contemporary Lorenzo Lotto, though how this came about remains unknown.

The extraordinary novelty of the painting is the extension of the realism of the setting to light and the atmosphere – an ability peculiar to Savoldo in this era – with unprecedented attention given to the evening clouds towering in the sky and to the cold silvery back-lighting that sets the monumental figures sharply against the stage-set of the trees, with their frilled foliage. The morphology of the leaves is tied so closely to artistic tastes beyond the Alps that – as Suida noted (in Thieme–Becker 1908–1950, XXIX) – the picture might well anticipate Elsheimer.

In the wake of Gilbert's hypothesis (1945) the prevalent view was that the picture was perhaps "one of the four, very fine pictures of night and fire" ("quattro quadri di notte e di fuochi, molto belli") which Vasari wrote about ([1568] 1878–1885, VI, 507) and which were in Milan "nelle dette case della Zecca" ("in the above-mentioned building of the Mint"). The hypothesis was based on the salient role of money in the story depicted, which might have pleased the officers of the mint. However, as Gombrich ([1948] 1972) has stressed (true, in another context, that of late fifteenth-century Florence – though it does well to recall that Savoldo was immatriculated in the painters' guild of Florence in 1508), there are no documents to demonstrate a link between the economic aspirations of merchants and the independent representations of Tobias and the angel. Today the above hypothesis has been completely discarded, since it is connected neither to the rest of the pictures, which probably constituted a cycle, nor to Vasari's description.

MAURO LUCCO

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95 Dosso Dossi | Mirandola (?), ca. 1486 – Ferrara, 1542

## *The Embrace*

ca. 1526–1528

Oil on panel; 71.3 × 67 cm
Dobó István Vármúzeum, Egri Képtár, Eger, inv. 55.291
From the ducal apartments in the Via Coperta, Ferrara

Dosso Dossi was court painter to Alfonso I d'Este, duke of Ferrara, and spent much of his career decorating his patron's various residences in and around the city. The *Embrace* from Eger belonged to a series of nine oval panels that were originally set into the gilt wooden ceiling of the duke's bedroom in the so-called Via Coperta, a series of richly furnished apartments that linked the castle to the Palazzo del Corte. The series is not precisely documented, but a number of payments to Dosso from the ducal exchequer suggest that the duke's bedroom was furnished and decorated during the course of the 1520s.

The ceiling was dismantled when the Duchy of Ferrara was devolved to the papacy in 1598, and while five of the panels were sent to the new Este capital of Modena, the other four – including the Eger picture – were sent to Rome, and were acquired by the cardinal-nephew Scipione Borghese. At some date in the seventeenth century all the panels in Rome were transformed from their original ovals into rhomboid formats. At an unknown time, *The Embrace* appears to have been further cut down into its present octagonal form, and was acquired in the nineteenth century by the canon of Eger, Endre Pánthy.

The picture resembles the others in the series in showing a genre-like scene with a limited number of figures, who are seen from close up and in half length, and are cut off in the foreground with a ledge on which still-life objects are displayed. Unlike the five panels in Modena (Galleria Estense), however, each of which shows three figures, the Eger panel shows only two, which are consequently somewhat larger and physically more assertive. The subject and meaning of the picture, which is known both as *The Embrace* and as *Violence,* is unclear; but depicting the tight and apparently forcible embrace by a bestial man (a satyr?), dressed in an animal skin, of a struggling naked woman (a nymph?), the picture seems to allude to the sin of lechery. In this context, the flowers on the foreground ledge are probably meant to refer to the deflowering of the woman's virginity. Yet the grotesque and ludicrous nature of the struggle was probably not meant to be taken too seriously, and Dosso invests the scene with a ribald humour.

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96 Dosso Dossi | Mirandola (?), ca. 1486 – Ferrara, 1542

*The Holy Family*

ca. 1527–1528

Oil on canvas; 236 × 171 cm
Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome, inv. 1

In addition to his responsibilities as painter to the Ferrarese court, Dosso undertook a number of commissions for altarpieces for the churches of Ferrara and Modena and their surrounding territories. The original placing of the present work is unknown, but to judge from its large scale and vertical format it was painted as an altarpiece; and the fact that it is first recorded in a Roman collection in 1624 suggests that it came from a church in or near Ferrara, and like so many other high-quality Ferrarese paintings of the sixteenth century (see cat. 78, 79) was removed to Rome following the devolution of the duchy to the papacy in 1598. The subject of the Virgin and Child with Saint Joseph, although very common in small-scale works for private devotion, is much less so in the public context of altar painting; and the unusual prominence of Joseph – almost equal to that of the Virgin – suggests that the respective altar bore a dedication to him. The Virgin, who turns to meet the Child's embrace, holds up a large illuminated manuscript, presumably an Old Testament, and points to a particular passage, perhaps one of the messianic prophecies.

The painting is typical of Dosso's own idiosyncratic blend of stylistic elements drawn from the artistic traditions of both Rome and Venice. The twisting pose of the Virgin is clearly inspired by Raphael's *Sibyls* of ca. 1512–1513 (Santa Maria della Pace, Rome), and perhaps even more by one of the *Virtues* in the lunette of Stanza della Segnatura of 1511, both of which works Dosso could have seen on a probable visit to Rome in 1513. At the same time, the inspiration from Raphael is clearly inflected by Dosso's acquaintance with the work of Giulio Romano in Mantua after 1524, as is evident in the exaggerated planarity of the Virgin's pose, and the strong contrasts of light and shade. The influence of Venetian painting, and in particular of Giorgione, may be seen rather in the sensuous effects of texture, as the light plays over the silky folds of the Virgin's draperies, in the magical glow of her halo, and probably originally in the now very damaged landscape background.

Although in the past the picture has been dated to as late as ca. 1538, there appears to be growing critical consensus that it was painted in the late 1520s, soon after the arrival of Giulio Romano in the neighbouring duchy of Mantua. Still controversial is the question of whether Dosso's younger brother had a hand in the execution; but while the bold and energetic figure of the Virgin is entirely characteristic of Dosso himself, there is a strong case for regarding the somewhat tamer figure of Joseph as the contribution of Battista. It may be significant that when first recorded in 1624, it is described as the work of both brothers ("dei Dossi").

PETER HUMFREY

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## 97 Moretto da Brescia (Alessandro Bonvicino) | Brescia, ca. 1498 – Brescia, 1554

### *Portrait of Tullia d'Aragona as Salome*

ca. 1537

Oil on panel; 56 × 39 cm
Pinacoteca Tosio-Martinengo, Brescia, inv. 81
Inscribed on the parapet: QVAE SACRV(M) IOAN(N)IS / CAPVT SALTANDO / OBTINVIT

The panel featured as Moretto's "Herodias in a fur coat holding a stick", a work purchased in Brescia, in an inventory of the paintings in Teodoro Lechi's possession (Lechi 1968, 204). On July 20, 1814 Lechi exchanged the picture with Giuseppe Longhi, professor of engraving at the Brera Academy and famous for his reproductive prints. The picture probably came to the Tosio collection in the 1830s, after Longhi's death in 1831, when his heirs divided up the master engraver's rich collection (Beretta 1837, 69).

While the picture was in Longhi's collection, the Milanese graphic artist Caterina Piotti, a pupil of Longhi's, made an engraving from it and entered her work in the Milanese Academy's grand competition as a "half-length figure after a work of Moretto". At the exhibition related to the competition the engraving appeared with the title *Herodias* (Gianfranceschi – Lucchesi Ragni, in *Vienna* 1997). Subsequently, Giovanni Raffaelli published the engraving with a dedication to the art collector Giovanni Battista Sommariva; it was in this version that the portrayed figure was identified for the first time with the sixteenth-century female poet Tullia d'Aragona. Eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century works on literary history, as well as various reprints of Tullia's works fostered an avid interest amongst the cultured elite in the famous courtesan-poetess whose life typified so well the contradiction-laden customs of the Renaissance era. Piotti omitted the inscription referring to the beheading of Saint John the Baptist from the marble block, even though it must have been clearly visible in the painting, otherwise the portrayed figure could hardly have been identified at that time as Herodias.

While the attribution to Moretto was never questioned after the Lechi inventory, the figure was identified alternatively as either Tullia or Herodias in publications of the second half of the nineteenth century. Eventually, Federico Odorici realized that the picture could portray a contemporary of the painter's "in the guise of somebody else" (Odorici 1888, 21, no. 39: "Tullia d'Arragona cambiata in una Erodiade", that is "Tullia d'Aragona turned into Herodias").

A more faithful interpretation of the inscription led Bernard Berenson (1907, 262) to suggest that she was more likely to be Salome, Herodias's daughter, who with her voluptuous dance successfully persuaded Herod into giving her the head of Saint John the Baptist. However, the usual attributes of this figure, according to the narrative of the gospels, are not present: the dance and the plate with the severed head of Saint John are replaced by a royal sceptre and the laurel, referring to poetic glory.

Salome and Tullia have a single biographical fact in common: a promiscuous – or at least disorderly – way of life following the example of, and with encouragement from, the mother. The gospels tell us that Salome was led into evil ways by her mother, and Tullia d'Aragona expressed in her poems more than once her regret and shame for her life as a courtesan, which she had been driven into by her mother's example and the social norms of her time, and how she sought to redeem herself from this role by means of culture, poetry and art in general. Moretto's portrait with the rich but dignified and modest clothes and the insignia of nobility and the arts, conveys to contemporaries and posterity an image that elevates the poetess to the social role to which she always aspired. The commissioner of this "key portrait", if not Tullia herself, could have been a member of one of the Venetian literary circles she attended. Moretto probably painted the portrait during Tullia's stay in Venice between 1534 and 1537; this would seem to be confirmed by the stylistic features, which correspond to those of other works by Moretto from the same period.

Like most of Moretto's female portraits, some of the poetess's features are idealized, but the somewhat accentuated nose, the bright eyes, and the long neck reflect her actual physiognomy. Infrared reflectography has shown that the artist made a full detailed drawing of the main forms, but relied on painterly means to build volumes (Stradiotti 1988, 217). The light coming from the top left highlights the pearls in her hair, the sumptuous velvet mantle and the soft folds of the fur, and, caressing the right side of the face, traces out her features and finally casts an intense shadow on the inscription in the foreground. Moretto painted the bay leaves in the background with thick brushstrokes, evoking another "metaphorical portrait", Giorgione's *Laura*.

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QVAE SACRV IOANIS
CAPVT SALTANDO
OBTINVIT

98 PARIS BORDON | Treviso, 1500 – Venice, 1571

*Young Woman at her Toilet*

ca. 1550

Oil on canvas; 102 × 81 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. 16

Paris Bordon, said by his contemporary the biographer Giorgio Vasari to be Titian's pupil, was one of the leading representatives of Venetian Renaissance painting, together with Giorgione, Veronese, Tintoretto and Lorenzo Lotto. Born in Treviso in northern Italy in 1500, Bordon arrived in France in 1538 upon the invitation of Francis I after working in Vicenza, Treviso and Venice. His clientele included the Fuggers in Augsburg, Mary of Habsburg in Brussels and King Sigismund II of Poland. Bordon died in Venice in 1571, at the age of 71.

The *Young Woman at her Toilet* shows the model in front of a niche, facing the viewer. Her eyes gaze into the distance, her abundant, long reddish-blond hair falling over her shoulders. The elaborate hair style alludes to a late phase of Mannerist painting in Venice. Her brow is adorned with a string of pearls. Her pale red damask dress with a low neckline and gathered sleeves is fastened by a belt of filigree gold balls, known as a *catena d'oro* (Vecellio 1590, 96). The shirt, a *camicia,* showing beneath the dress allows her manly, muscular arms to be seen. The arms, together with the rendering of pale flesh with the rosiness of the cheeks and the bosom also appear in other of Bordon's paintings, such as the *Woman in a Green Dress* in Vienna, made around the same time.

With an affected gesture, the woman arranges her hair with her left hand while the right rests on the open jewel casket on the table. The beauty accessories on the table include a glass phial, probably from Murano, containing some manner of perfume (Bailo–Biscaro 1900). A similar vessel appears in other paintings with this subject; for example, in the *Woman at her Toilet* attributed to Titian (Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington), where it has been interpreted as a perfume phial (Schäpers 1997, 130).

The elongated object next to the jar was previously thought to be a brush (Bailo–Biscaro 1900). However, this object, which glitters metallically, could rather be a *scriminal* used to part one's hair. "Shaped like a folding stick", this tool was usually made of bone, or glass, or even silver (Ludwig 1906, 266). A similar object is seen next to the comb in Tintoretto's *Susanna and the Elders* in Vienna, and – in Schäpers' interpretation (1997, 138) – in a *Venus at her Toilet* attributed to Tintoretto (once in Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum).

A usual attribute of women at their toilet is the mirror, which is also a means to show feminine beauty from another angle, through reflection. The mirror is less significant here; unlike in other toilet scenes, such as Giovanni Bellini's *Young Woman at her Toilet* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), it does not serve to present another viewpoint.

Earlier, the model was identified as a courtesan or as a *donzella,* a young unmarried girl (Bailo–Biscaro 1900). This places Bordon's *Young Woman at her Toilet* into the tradition of Venetian ideal female portraits, which started with Bellini's *Young Woman at her Toilet* mentioned above, and was developed by Titian and Palma Vecchio. Unlike his fellow painters, who depicted a fragile and girlish type of woman, Bordon favoured a cool and artificial depiction.

WENCKE DEITERS

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99 PARIS BORDON | Treviso, 1500 – Venice, 1571

## *Venus and Cupid*

ca. 1540–1550

Oil on canvas; 93.7 × 143.3 cm
Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, Warsaw, inv. M.Ob. 628

Paris Bordon was one of the earliest pupils of Titian, and although based throughout his career in Venice, he sought to emulate his former master's success in cultivating a foreign princely or aristocratic clientele. Many of his early works consist of half-length *belle,* or paintings of anonymous beautiful women, in the tradition of Giorgione and Palma Vecchio, as well as of Titian; but by the 1540s he had expanded his repertoire to include full-length mythological subjects, usually comprising prominent female nudes. Extended foreign trips to centres where such subjects were in demand included those to Augsburg, probably in 1540; to Milan, from 1548 to 1551; and – according to Vasari – to the court of Francis I at Fontainebleau in 1538. These experiences must have further stimulated an existing tendency towards a certain contrived artificiality of style and an interest in international courtly Mannerism.

The reclining nude figure of the pagan goddess of love had been a favourite subject in Venetian painting since the early years of the sixteenth century. In ca. 1508/1510 Giorgione created the celebrated picture now in Dresden (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister), in which the goddess, originally accompanied by Cupid, was seen asleep in a verdant landscape. Variations on the theme were produced in the second and third decades by Palma, before Titian painted his so-called *Venus of Urbino* (Uffizi, Florence) in 1536–1538 for the future duke of Urbino, a work that inspired innumerable further variations, including by Titian himself. The present picture, which clearly belongs in this tradition, shows the goddess apparently summoning Cupid to her side, with a gesture that irresistibly recalls that of Michelangelo's Adam on the Sistine ceiling. Holding a bundle of arrows on his shoulders, Cupid offers one of them to his mother as he advances. In her right hand she holds a bunch of pink roses, and behind her is another of her attributes, the evergreen myrtle, symbol of undying love. It has been suggested (Waźbiński 1987) that Bordon derived these attributes from Vincenzo Cartari's handbook *Le Imagini de I Dei Antichi*, published in Venice in 1556; but all of them are traditional, and it does not necessarily follow that the picture was painted after this date.

Because of the dearth of certain dates in Bordon's career, his chronology remains highly problematical, and the difficulties of dating his pictures is further exacerbated by what appears to have been a mistaken report by Vasari. According to the biographer, when Bordon was at the French court in 1538 he painted a *Jupiter and Io* – universally identified with the picture now in the Konstmuseum, Göteborg – for the cardinal of Lorraine, and a *Venus and Cupid* for the bedchamber of the cardinal's brother, the duc de Guise. With good reason, however, most scholars now believe that Bordon's French visit actually took place during the reign of Francis II in 1559–1560, and that the cardinal and duke in question corresponded to a younger generation of Guises; and indeed, stylistically the Göteborg picture is more credible as a work of the late 1550s than of two decades earlier. But while the present picture from Warsaw is sometimes identified as the *Venus and Cupid* for the duke, it differs in style from the much more schematic and planar *Jupiter and Io,* and a better candidate for the Guise picture might be Bordon's version of the *Venus and Cupid* now in the Ca' d'Oro, Venice. With its greater sensuousness of surface texture, the greater voluptuousness of the nude, and the lush richness of the landscape (which includes a watermill at the centre, a shepherd and his flock on the right, and a distant castle), the present work must be rather earlier than the Göteborg picture. Commissioned, therefore, by a still unidentified but probably courtly patron, it was perhaps painted in the mid-1540s, immediately before the artist's visit to Milan in 1548.

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100 PARIS BORDON | Treviso, 1500 – Venice, 1571

*Annunciation*

ca. 1555

Oil on canvas; 99 × 134 cm
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 544
Signed on the plinth of the first column on the left: PARIS B.

This medium-sized canvas shows the subject in the traditional manner. Much less usual is the stage-like setting in front of a powerfully foreshortened loggia. A viewer of today might not realize the contrast between the canonical iconography and the typical Venetian architectural environment of the painter's time, reminiscent of works by Jacopo Sansovino and Scarpagnino; the artist's contemporaries, however, cannot have failed to note it. The Alpine landscape beyond the arches of the loggia also conjures up parts of Veneto where the famous villas of Venetian patricians were being built around that time.

Paris Bordon was one of the major representatives of Mannerism in Venetian painting. He was trained in the circle of Titian, with whom he even rivalled for commissions, causing conflicts in their relationship. However, Bordon soon veered away from Titian's Olympian classicism, his colour scheme becoming cooler and more vibrant. His pictures are imbued with the atmosphere of a cold and restless elegance typical of the Mannerist taste in vogue in courts all over Europe. Apart from Venice and Veneto, he also worked in France and Germany, in Augsburg, always to the greatest satisfaction of his clients (for an updated profile of the artist, see Humfrey in *Edinburgh* 2004, 110–15; 145–49; 152–53 and Contini 2007). Bordon, like Titian, worked for clients from various social strata; in addition to compositions meticulously finished down to the minutest detail – such as the work in question – there are altarpieces for rural churches that he executed more hastily, relying on traditional iconography. The most interesting part of Bordon's œuvre consists of profane mythological or allegorical pictures which fall into two groups. One contains allegories that the viewer has to decipher: he has to decode the symbols and attributes one by one and piece them together to find the overall meaning of the picture. The other group contains the works that at the time were called "poesie" ("poetry"): they were to be perceived more emotionally and immediately, like musical compositions or poems that interact with the emotive side of human nature.

The present painting was executed around the middle of the 1550s. It compares well with another *Annunciation* (Musée des Beaux Arts, Caen) in which the "dreamlike" (Béguin 1987, 18–19) architecture is, however, far less realistic, while in the painting in Siena the overall structure is determined by the rationality of space (Grabski 1987, 205). As far as the figures and the painting style are concerned, the canvas in Siena is a typical work of Bordon's most characteristic and easily recognizable stylistic features, whereas the perspective structure aptly illustrates the typical Mannerist irrationality manifest in the distortion of the orthogonal lines that indicate vertiginous spatial rhythms, anticipating the experiments of Tintoretto and El Greco. This kind of painting, produced by Bordon during his stay in France, probably scored great success and as early as the second half of the sixteenth century inspired several architectural paintings in France – a genre that found sublime interpreters in the next century in Poussin and Lemaire.

Paintings like this, clearly predominated by the representation of architecture, are few in Bordon's œuvre, yet they are probably the most original of his output since they paved the way for the true glory of eighteenth-century Venetian painting: the *vedute* of Canaletto, Guardi and Bellotto. No doubt the birth of the *veduta* can be traced in part to the "photographic" works of Carpaccio, but it was Bordon who enriched Venetian architectural painting with a bizarre, fantastic element, thereby laying the foundations for the architectural *capriccio*.

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101 Jacopo Bassano (Jacopo dal Ponte) | Bassano del Grappa, ca. 1510–1515 – Bassano del Grappa, 1592

## *The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*

1544

Oil on canvas; 160 × 130 cm
Museo Biblioteca Archivio, Bassano del Grappa (Vicenza), inv. 436
From the church of San Girolamo in Bassano del Grappa

Jacopo Bassano worked in comparative isolation in Bassano del Grappa, far from the main cities of the Venetian *terraferma* (the town lies some fifty kilometres from Venice, on the road that leads through Trento towards Germany). Even so, alongside Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese, he was one of the key figures of Venetian painting in the late cinquecento. In the 1530s, he left the provincial workshop of his father Francesco the Elder, and came to the Venice of Doge Andrea Gritti. Here he studied the latest work of Titian, approaching it through the plainer and more narrative version practised by Bonifacio Veronese. His interest in naturalistic painting brought him into contact with Lorenzo Lotto, as well as other painters such as Romanino, Moretto and Savoldo, who reinterpreted the heritage of Giorgione by paying particular attention to physical reality, portraiture and the expressive dimension. The results of these experiences can be seen in his first independent paintings, among them the *Flight into Egypt* (1534) and the votive painting made for the podestà Matteo Soranzo (1536), both of which are now in the Museo Civico in Bassano.

In the course of his artistic development, Jacopo Bassano came into increasingly close contact with the culture of central Italy, which spread north following the Sack of Rome in 1527. At first he studied prints made after the works of Raphael and Michelangelo, but he was also influenced by Pordenone, who spent time in Rome in his youth. Around 1540 Bassano became acquainted with the Tuscan-Roman *Maniera,* which appeared in Venice in 1539; this year, in fact, saw the arrival of Francesco Salviati, who entered the service of the Grimani family. He was followed by his pupil Giuseppe Porta, and Giorgio Vasari, who was invited to the city by the Tuscan writer Pietro Aretino. Now began a new, intense phase of experimentation for Bassano, among whose early fruits was *The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* examined here. This was already recognized by Giovan Battista Verci (1775) as one of the most distinctive works of this period of the painter. After the painting passed into the Compostella collection in 1811, it received little critical attention until its purchase by the Bassano Museo Civico in 1953 and its publication by Licisco Magagnato in 1956.

As we know from the second account book *(Libro secondo)* of the Bassano workshop, the work was executed in the summer of 1544 on the orders of a clergyman named Evanzelista (Vicenza, 1478 – Bassano del Grappa, 1558). This cleric, the son of the Vicenza nobleman Nicolò Ricci, acted as the rector of the San Girolamo convent of Benedictine nuns in the Leone quarter of the town of Bassano between 1506 and 1533. He was later transferred to the parish church of Rosà, but his connection to the Bassano convent remained, and he retired there in 1550 (Muraro 1992, 36, 118, 119, 410, fig. 33; Signori 1992, 342). As rector he ordered a number of works for the church from Bassano's studio from 1532 onwards, including the above-mentioned *Flight into Egypt*. In 1539 he commissioned a depiction of John the Baptist (now lost without trace) to decorate the sacristy, followed by this *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine,* which was to be placed to the right of the church's high altar. Evanzelista features several times as a witness in various matters listed in the *Libro,* in 1535, 1545 and 1550, which indicates that he may have enjoyed a trusted and friendly relationship with the painter.

Saint Catherine emerges from the breaking on the wheel ordered by the emperor Maxentius unharmed. The anguish of the soldiers overpowered by divine intervention is portrayed by the artist without the spilling of a single drop of blood, through unnaturally contorted bodily postures and difficult foreshortening. Bassano was influenced by the artificial beauty of the allegorical figures in *Le Ingegnose Sorti* published by Marcolini in 1540 (a fortune-telling book based on card-reading, with illustrations by Salviati and Giuseppe Porta). He was also familiar with the woodcut of the *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* in the volume on the life of the saint by Pietro Aretino (*La Vita di Catherina Vergine,* 1540), which was made after a drawing traditionally attributed to Salviati, although some consider it the work of Vasari. Like Titian in the biblical subjects painted for the ceiling of the church of Santo Spirito in Isola (today in Santa Maria della Salute), in this painting Bassano reached a level of abstraction where all traces of naturalism vanish and the colours become at once harsh in tone and richly ornate.

VITTORIA ROMANI

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## 102 Attributed to Jacopo Bassano (Jacopo dal Ponte) | Bassano del Grappa, ca. 1510–1515 – Bassano del Grappa, 1592

### *Portrait of a Cardinal*

ca. 1545

Oil on canvas; 57.5 × 45.5 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 108

In the course of restoration work carried out in 1988–1989, the raised right arm was uncovered from beneath an earlier repainting; it thus became clear that the picture is a fragment of a larger composition. However, it is still not known whether it is a truncated portrait or a detail of a narrative scene. What is certain is that the picture was originally painted as a genuine portrait, and that to judge from the scarlet cloak and cowl, as well as the long white beard, the person depicted may have been a cardinal. Beards came into fashion in the Veneto only after 1527 (when Pope Clement VII began to wear one as a mark of mourning for the Sack of Rome), although it was at the same time a symbol of wisdom and venerability and thus particularly befitting of high-ranking ecclesiastical figures. Nevertheless, the suggestion that the picture portrays Cardinal Pietro Bembo can be ruled out, since the model does not resemble known likenesses of Bembo.

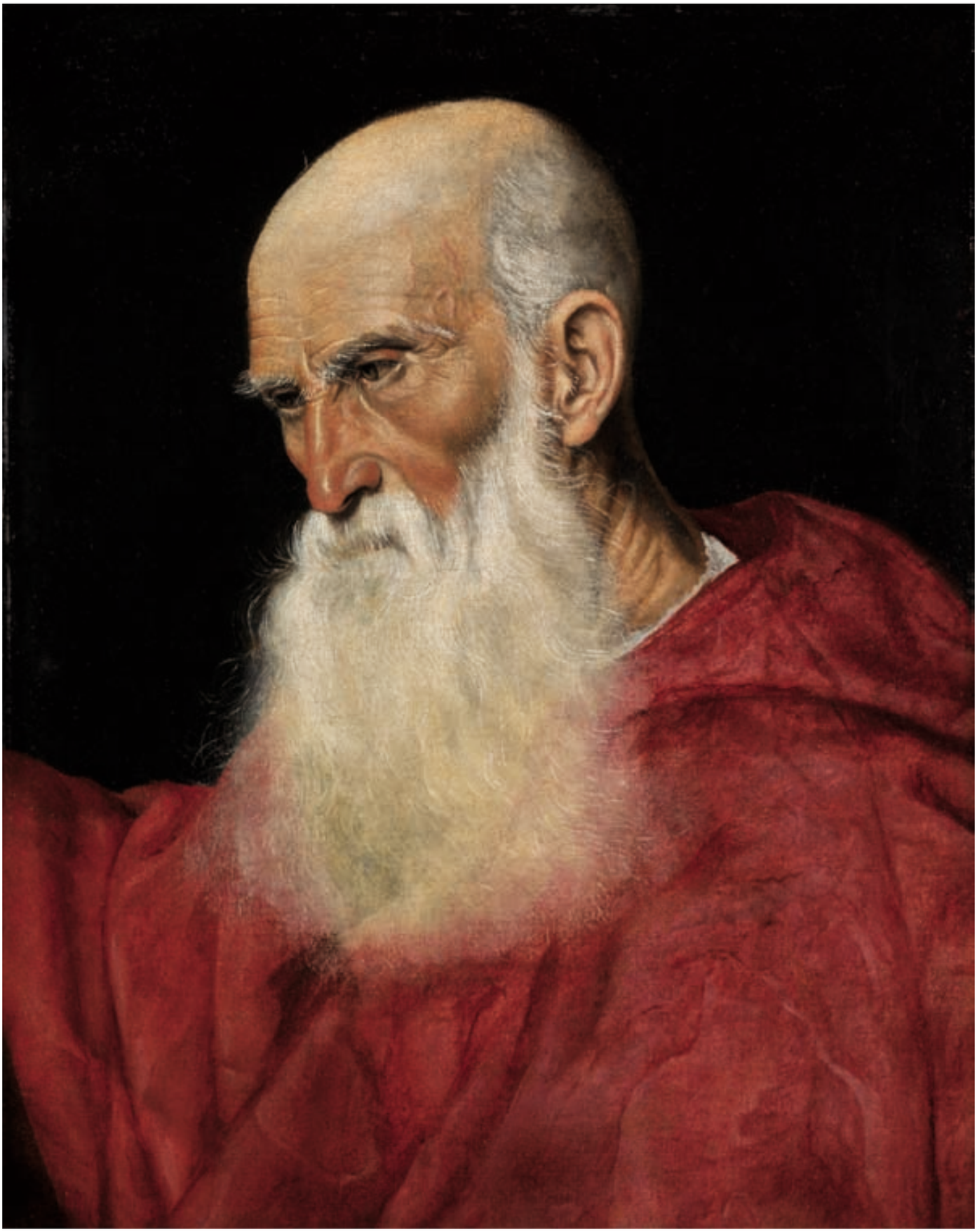
At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the picture was owned by Luciano Bonaparte, and was subsequently held in the collection of the prince of Lucca. During this time it was variously attributed to Titian, Savoldo or Jacopo Bassano. Though some doubt remains, in recent times the attribution to Bassano is the most readily accepted. The robust naturalism of the image (for example, the prelate's oily and glistening skin, reminiscent of old leather) recalls Bassano's work from the mid-1540s; we need only think of the head of Saint Joseph in two versions of *The Flight into Egypt* (in the Toledo Museum of Art in Toledo, Ohio, and the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, California), or the head of the aged apostle at the right side of *The Last Supper* (1546), housed in the Galleria Borghese in Rome. The technique of painting nevertheless differs here, and it is this fact that gives cause for scepticism. The picture bears little resemblance to the portraits of Jacopo Bassano, for example the painting depicting *Bernardo Morosini, the Podestà of Bassano* in the Museum of Kassel, or the *Franciscan Friar with Skull* in the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth. In short, it would seem that the prevalence of the frayed, realistically textured qualities of the impasto surface are not perceptible on the form itself, and yet this specific quality is very typical of the works of Bassano, especially of those completed in the 1540s.

The large patch of shadow visible on the sitter's neck, the right side of the skull and the very sharp profile of the left of the face do not seem the artist's original work, but are perhaps rather the result of an earlier repainting. If – as seems likely – the entire black background is the consequence of such a repainting, this clearly has a substantial impact on our perception of the painting and makes it more difficult to reach unequivocal conclusions regarding the work. For precisely this reason, we need to await the results of technical examinations before being able to make any well-grounded statements on the question of the work's authorship; even so, it should be noted that despite its fragmentary nature, the picture, thanks to the almost Brescian, powerful optical and light effects, can be counted among the most outstanding portraits of the first half of the cinquecento.

MAURO LUCCO

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## 103 Jacopo Bassano (Jacopo dal Ponte) | Bassano del Grappa, ca. 1510–1515 – Bassano del Grappa, 1592

### *The Way to Calvary*

ca. 1552

Oil on canvas; 94 × 114 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 5879

The circumstances in which the picture was commissioned are not known. Bassano painted the subject of the way to Calvary on several occasions, initially while still in his youth, when he was inspired by Raphael's painting executed for the church of Santa Maria dello Spasimo in Palermo (now in the Prado in Madrid), a work popularized through a 1517 print by Agostino Veneziano. Bassano doubtless had a copy of the print among the numerous other engravings in his workshop, as he repeatedly returned, in a number of works on a variety of subjects, to the motifs of soldiers on horseback, the torturer leading the procession, and the group of the Virgin with the devout women. The artist had initially reworked Raphael's composition using a naturalistic, highly expressive style and rich, Titianesque palette of colours, as we can see in *The Way to Calvary* now held by the Fondation Bemberg in Toulouse (ca. 1535–1536). Later, however, he gained a deeper understanding of Raphael's ambitious formal innovations and discovered more complex and dynamic solutions. This is apparent in *The Way to Calvary* in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (ca. 1543), as well as in the version in the National Gallery, London (ca. 1547). In the latter the landscape disappears from view as the canvas is overrun by interweaving figures which throng around Christ in affected movements recalling the Tuscan-Roman *Maniera,* and within this primarily the works of Francesco Salviati. Unlike earlier versions where the focus was on the Virgin Mary fainting (the *spasimo*) at the sight of Christ's suffering and his falling to the ground beneath the weight of the cross, at the centre of the London painting is the episode of Veronica. According to one version of the legend, Veronica offered Christ her veil on the path to Calvary so that he might wipe the sweat from his brow. The divine features were impressed into the material, which then came to be revered as a relic known as the Veil of Veronica ("vera icona" or "true image") (Wolf 2000a, 103–14; Penny 2008, 6–15). The emphasis falls even more strongly on this episode in the Budapest picture: here, the movement of the procession, led by a soldier on horseback and cruelly driven forward by the torturers, is momentarily arrested at the centre of the picture around the intense dialogue of Christ and Veronica, before being lent fresh impetus through the despairing gestures of the devout women and the Virgin.

When compared with *The Way to Calvary* in London, or with the version in the Christie Collection in Glyndebourne, the Budapest picture shows itself to belong to a different period of the artist's work defined by the influences of Parmigianino and Schiavone, so much so that initially it was believed to be the work of Schiavone. It was with this attribution, suggested by Lili Fröhlich-Bum, that the painting entered the museum's collection. Subsequently, Adolfo Venturi (1901–1940, IX/4 [1929], 1150–53) established Bassano's authorship, while Roberto Longhi (1948, 48, 52) dated its completion to the period when Bassano's interest in Mannerism was once again awoken, this time concentrating on effects of light and dramatic character. At the end of the 1540s, Schiavone found success with his own personal version of Mannerism in Venice: alloying the innovation of Raphael and Salviati to the studied and elongated elegance of Parmigianino, he created a fluid and vibrant painting style in which graphic values transform into chiaroscuro effects. In these years, the art of Tintoretto was also characterized by sketchiness, a "prestezza del fare", and an increasingly keen interest in the play of light and shade. Bassano proceeded on this path beginning with *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist,* painted for the Paduan notary Gasparo Ottello and now housed in the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, and the altarpiece showing the *Pentecost* painted for the seat of the confraternity of Santo Spirito in the church of San Giacomo in Lusiana. Both works appear in 1551 in the account books of the artist's workshop, and – similarly to *The Way to Calvary* in Budapest – typify a renewed tension in form which is traceable to the influence of Parma. With the sinuous outline of her figure, her veil fluttering in the air and her face turned from the viewer, Veronica resembles the Salome of the Copenhagen painting, while the supple movement of the three Marys recalls the movement of the apostles on the left-hand side of the *Pentecost*. Compared to *The Beheading,* in *The Way to Calvary* discussed here the darkening of the palette is clearly perceptible; the colour scheme is now based on golden browns and greens, and is in keeping with the work's more pronounced shading. This tendency continues in the artist's *Lazarus and the Rich Man* (Cleveland Museum of Art) and in *The Miracle of the Quails* (private collection), which Bassano painted for Domenico Priuli in 1554.

VITTORIA ROMANI

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## 104 Jacopo Bassano (Jacopo dal Ponte) | Bassano del Grappa, ca. 1510–1515 – Bassano del Grappa, 1592

*Summer (Sacrifice of Isaac)*

ca. 1575

Oil on canvas; 78.5 × 110.5 cm (strips added along the upper and lower edges)
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. 4302

Jacopo dal Ponte took his sobriquet after his birth town Bassano del Grappa, a town where his art was deeply rooted and where he found his most important sources of inspiration. Though he predominantly worked on the mainland, he is nowadays acknowledged as one of the greatest masters of Venetian painting of the cinquecento along with Titian, Veronese and Tintoretto. He was in contact with the Venetian workshop of Bonifacio Veronese and often returned to Venice later. His works show that he knew the achievements of artists working in Venice, but also that he was familiar with the works of the great masters of Emilian and Tuscan-Roman Mannerism as well as with painting north of the Alps, the latter through prints.

Bassano was a painter of religious scenes and a discerning portraitist but he primarily owes his fame to the invention of an utterly new genre, one that combined pastoral themes with biblical and allegorical subjects. His depictions of the seasons – unique in cinquecento Italian painting – were probably inspired by Pieter Bruegel's, Pieter Aertsen's and Joachim Beuckelaer's works and scored great and lasting success. Bassano's workshop painted innumerable replicas of these compositions, which came to be known even beyond the Alps through prints, in particular those made by the members of the Sadeler family.

In a gentle, hilly landscape, the theme of summer is introduced by a scene of sheep-shearing and a woman pausing for repose with three children. The three scenes in the middle ground – harvesting, gathering, and thrashing the crop, from left to right – confirm that the episode takes place in summer, as does the warm light that envelopes the figures and intensifies the colours. The painter's refined sense of colour and masterful technique are especially noticeable in the frothy whiteness of the fabrics, the precise rendering of the quality of the diverse materials (the softness of the sheep's wool, for example), and the highlights applied with the tip of the brush, all of which add to the naturalistic liveliness of this representation.

The slightly elevated viewpoint allows for a far-reaching view of the landscape, which is dotted with huts, trees, and peasants, and ends at the horizon with the outlines of Monte Grappa. On the left a grassy knoll attracts our attention. The sketchily depicted figures on it are engaged in the scene of the sacrifice of Isaac, considered as a prefiguration of the sacrifice of Christ. Above is the sacrificial scene, while lower down there is the suggestion of two figures with a horse, perhaps the servants who brought wood for the burnt offering (Genesis 22, 3–6). Biblical themes also appear in the background of other works from the same series in the Kunsthistorisches Museum. This prompted scholars to interpret the seasons cycle as a representation of the fall of mankind from spring to the winter of the Calvary (Ballarin 1968, 240–41) or as a sequence of the fall of man from the state of grace and the successive steps towards the promise of redemption through Christ's crucifixion (Rearick 1992–1993, 145–46). Yet another interpretation (Aikema 1996, 137) suggests that these paintings express a clear contrast between an ideal way of life reflected in the biblical scenes and the blindness of mankind, represented here by the peasants whose attention is diverted from the road to salvation by their daily chores.

The message conveyed by these scenes involving solemn, dignified figures is in any case associated with a religiosity and a religion that was firmly embedded in peasant life (the rural life of a distinct geographic area: the countryside around Bassano). This tendency was in harmony with the efforts of the period after the Council of Trent to fill the time and everyday life of the believers with sacred contents (Bortolotti 1999, 166).

Variously attributed to Jacopo dal Ponte and his son Francesco, *Summer,* in Ballarin's view (1995a, 354–55), is the work of the head of the workshop.

The inventory of the collection of Archduke Leopold William (1659) makes reference to a group of six paintings showing the seasons. Four of these were reproduced in print in the *Theatrum Pictorium,* the illustrated catalogue of a selection of the Italian paintings in that collection published in 1660 by David Teniers the Younger. The same four were reproduced again in 1735 in the *Prodromus,* a volume realized by the painters Frans van Stampart and Anton Joseph von Prenner and containing prints after the salient pieces of the imperial collection.

FRANCESCA DEL TORRE SCHEUCH

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105 Jacopo Bassano (Jacopo dal Ponte) and workshop | Bassano del Grappa, ca. 1510–1515 – Bassano del Grappa, 1592

## *The Adoration of the Magi*

ca. 1580–1585

Oil on slate; 34.5 × 27 cm
Dobó István Vármúzeum, Egri Képtár, Eger, inv. 55.49

This Italian piece was an exception in the collection of Cardinal József Samassa, archbishop of Eger, who was especially drawn towards Hungarian works of art. The archbishop bequeathed his paintings to the Museum of the Archiepiscopal Lyceum of Eger in his last will of 1913, and the *Adoration* has been on view to the public in Eger since 1920. The first scholar to work on the Lyceum collection, Miklós Szmrecsányi, catalogued it as a work by a late sixteenth-century Venetian painter from the school of Bassano (Szmrecsányi 1920, 17). After nationalization in 1955 the picture went to the Eger Picture Gallery (Egri Képtár); in the gallery catalogues published between 1960 and 1979 it was attributed by Ágnes Czobor to a follower of Jacopo Bassano (Czobor–Bodnár 1979, 29). Considerable old repainting and badly oxidized and soiled varnish layers concealed the original surface, but the restoration in 1997 revealed the great art-historical significance of the work. The writer of these lines published the work in the critical catalogue of the Eger Picture Gallery in 2008 as a work by Jacopo Bassano (Lengyel, in *Egri Képtár* 2008). During preparatory work for this exhibition, Alessandro Ballarin examined the painting and concluded in a written communication (June 2009) that it does not seem wholly autograph but partly executed by the workshop and perhaps partly overpainted. Concerning the uneven quality of the execution, one must concur with Ballarin's observation; indeed, in the details he found questionable, particularly Mary's head and the figures of the two Magi in the background, not only the workshop but also the restorer's retouching of the paint loss along the cracks of the slate support must be considered (Nemessányi 1997).

Jacopo Bassano painted several versions of the theme of the visit of the three kings of the Orient. The Eger composition reiterates several elements of the *Adoration of the Magi* in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. 361) datable to around 1555. In its painting technique (both are executed on *pietra nera*) and style it is close to the *Crucifixion* in the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya in Barcelona painted around 1575 (inv. 108373; A. Ballarin, in *Rome* 1990, 56–62). The closest analogy is certainly the picture on the same subject in the Chinol collection in Rome, known to specialists since 1992 (F. M. Aliberti Gaudioso, in *Bassano – Fort Worth* 1993, 442–44). The composition of the two paintings is basically identical, differences affecting only minor details. The supports also differ: the Rome picture, painted around 1585, is on dark-grounded canvas, while the one in Eger is on almost black slate. In both cases Bassano created an extraordinary atmosphere by way of a *notturno,* a scene shown in nocturnal lighting, which had already enthralled Karel van Mander who visited Rome between 1574 and 1576 (Van Mander 1604, fol. 180). Bassano impressively rendered the artificial lights of the night, he exploited the painterly effects derived from Titian and Tintoretto, and used an extremely rich Venetian palette: warm greens, reds, and yellows on a dark ground. Neither picture has more than a sketchy indication of the thatched shed over the manger in Bethlehem. In the Eger painting Christ's swaddling clothes are depicted in a small basket at the Virgin's feet, where the other picture has the crown of an adoring king. These motifs correspond in many respects to the *Adoration of Magi* in the Galleria Borghese in Rome from around 1576. The figures in the scene are recurrent characters in Bassano's œuvre: these character types appear frequently in both the master's autograph works and in the products of his workshop. The figure of the old kneeling magus was used by Bassano several times as an adorer of the Saviour and, occasionally, as the admirer of an enticingly beautiful woman (*Susanna and the Elders,* 1585, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nîmes). The attire of the humbly kneeling figure, with its emerald green and red shining with golden yellow hues, illustrates the old master's and his studio's characteristic luminist style based on rapid brushwork.

The most conspicuous difference between the Eger painting and the Roman version is the Bethlehem star. In the Eger composition, its golden rays brighten the upper third of the picture and explain the use of the bright colours saturated in light, radiating from the dark ground. This work is thus less dramatic and mysterious, but more solemn and luxurious than the one in Rome. No substantial difference in quality can be discerned between the two. The *Adoration of the Magi* in Eger, which reflects the powerful pictorial language of the old master's late works, was probably made around 1580–1585 as a version of the Rome painting.

László Lengyel

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## 106 Jacopo Tintoretto | Venice, ca. 1518 – Venice, 1594

*Supper at Emmaus*

ca. 1542

Oil on canvas; 156 × 212 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 111

Although Tintoretto did not achieve his artistic breakthrough until the *Miracle of the Slave* (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice) of 1548, when he was thirty years of age, he had always burned with ambition. Carlo Ridolfi, his seventeenth-century biographer, emphasized the determination of the young Tintoretto, noting his desire to synthesize the draftsmanship of Michelangelo and the colouring of Titian, "il disegno di Michelangelo e'l colorito di Titiano". The young painter apparently made a name for himself through aggressive marketing, hawking his pictures in the streets, painting for free, and assisting established painters without pay in order to learn from them.

Tintoretto's *Supper at Emmaus,* completed about 1542 when the artist was around twenty-four, exemplifies this youthful ambition. The subject is taken from the Gospel of Luke (24, 30–31) and recounts how the evening following the resurrection, two disheartened disciples did not recognize the risen Christ when he appeared before them on the road to Emmaus. Later, over supper, the stranger blessed a loaf of bread, broke it, and offered it to the disciples, replicating the ritual of the Last Supper and revealing himself as Jesus.

Nothing is known of its patron or early provenance. Tintoretto's Budapest canvas takes as a point of departure Bonifazio de' Pitati's *Supper at Emmaus* (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan) of the mid-1530s. Tintoretto's painting moves quickly beyond Bonifazio's model, however, to challenge Titian directly. The Budapest painting incorporates elements from Titian's two versions of the *Supper at Emmaus* painted ca. 1533–1534 for the Maffei family of Mantua (Louvre, Paris) and the Contarini of Venice (Brockelsby Park, Lincolnshire). Tintoretto's painting shares a tightly-cropped composition, prominent tablecloth, Christ at centre raising his right hand in blessing, a column and a patch of cloudy sky behind Christ's head, and even a disciple wearing green at left. Tintoretto draws attention to Titian's examples in order to distance himself from them.

Bonifazio's and Titian's *Suppers* emphasize balance and harmony, with a remarkable amount of still-life detail, including objects on the tables and astonishingly rendered tablecloths. Tintoretto, perhaps realizing that he could not rival Titian's refined paint handling and meticulous still-life elements, seems to have changed the terms of the competition, seemingly declaring the narrative drama of Christ's revelation far more important than the ability to render textures. Thus Tintoretto's Budapest picture appears deliberately unbalanced in composition, theatrical in its poses, and abbreviated in technique. The table is no longer parallel to the picture plane, but instead juts out toward the viewer, its surface tilted up. Where Titian anchors his compositions through grids of horizontal and vertical lines, Tintoretto's picture is destabilized by diagonals, such as the crossed walking sticks and the table leg. Moreover, rather than gazing at Christ, Tintoretto's two seated disciples twist violently away from the centre of the composition, as if seeking confirmation of the miracle or spreading the news. Christ appears somewhat small and quiet at the centre, with energy radiating outward, like ripples expanding from a stone dropped in the centre of a pool.

Tintoretto's aggressive brushwork offers the greatest break with Venetian tradition: insistent impasto strokes, the rope-like folds of the draperies, and above all the astonishing electric highlights on the clothing of the young man at the far right. The effect resembles a drawing with pen and wash, highlighted with white; in other words, Tintoretto's finished painting includes passages recalling preparatory drawings on paper. Perhaps only Andrea Schiavone was painting as freely as Tintoretto at the time. (Indeed, when the painting was sold by the heir of Count Edmund de Bourke, Danish ambassador to Spain, to Nicholas II Esterházy in 1821, it carried an attribution to Schiavone.) Tintoretto's unprecedented loose handling presents a striking contrast to Titian's meticulous and lifelike renderings of fabrics, for example in the portraits of *Gian Giacomo Bartolotti di Parma* (cat. 83) and the *Man with a Glove* (cat. 84). Tintoretto's declarative brushstrokes might even be seen as a dismissal of Titian, their very roughness implying that the refinement of the older artist was no longer cutting edge. It is worth considering that Titian's open brushwork, first seen in his work in the 1540s and culminating in his fabled late style, as exemplified by his *poesie* for Philip II and the *Pietà* (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice), might have found inspiration in the loose paint handling of his younger rivals: Schiavone, Veronese, and especially Tintoretto.

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## 107 Follower of Tintoretto (probably Giovanni Galizzi | active ca. 1540–1565)

### *Christ and the Adulteress*

ca. 1563–1565

Oil on canvas; 119 × 168 cm
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome, inv. 1460

Under an enormous loggia, a crowd has begun to disperse. A woman stands elegantly but alone at the centre. Christ sits and gazes at her, his head surrounded by light. The twelve disciples, behind Christ, look at each other in apparent disbelief. Figures in the background and at right slink away. The painting is based on John 8, 3–11, recounting how an adulterous woman was brought by the Pharisees to the temple of Jerusalem. Although the Pharisees hoped that Christ would advocate execution by stoning, he merely wrote on the ground, finally announcing, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her". The Pharisees realize their hypocrisy and depart in embarrassment.

Although the painting's subject is clear, the attribution remains contested. Von der Bercken and Mayer (1923) and von Hadeln (1924) were the first modern scholars to assign the picture to Tintoretto, the latter connecting the painting to one described in Ridolfi's biography of Tintoretto (1648) in the house of Vincenzo Zeno showing "the *Adulteress*, as Our Lord points with his finger at the letters written on the ground; we see the Scribes and Pharisees one after another leave, concealing themselves behind the columns of a colonnade that forms a splendid perspective". The painting is presumably also that described by Boschini in 1660 in the collection of Paolo del Sera. Despite these early sources, the painting's authorship was doubted in 1961 by John Maxon, who noted stylistic tendencies foreign to Tintoretto. These include attenuated bodies lacking a sense of underlying anatomy, strict isocephalism, exaggerated perspectival architecture, and "the head as an ovoid form upon which the features are sketched". Maxon proposed this canvas as the name piece for a distinctive imitator of Tintoretto. While this picture displays appealing passages of energetic and varied paint handling, and the adulteress poses in stylish contrapposto, the spindly bodies and overly prominent architecture do not accord with Tintoretto's autograph work.

As recent exhibitions in Madrid, Boston, and Paris have demonstrated, Tintoretto's muscular figures are composed of strong geometric volumes, particularly cylinders, and engage in bold poses. His dynamic figures generally dominate their settings, rather than being dwarfed by them. Before Maxon, critics had assumed that the *Adulteress* was an early work, datable to ca. 1546, just before Tintoretto's breakthrough. Indeed, it is only as an early painting that this work makes sense as a Tintoretto, where its awkward aspects might be tolerated as a youthful artist finding his way. Yet the work is implausible as a step toward the *Miracle of the Slave* (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice) of 1548; the inherent energy and solidity of the figures in the Venice painting easily surpass the flat and frail population of the *Adulteress*. To date the *Adulteress* to ca. 1546 would require that the painter took a radical detour in his development between the *Supper at Emmaus* (cat. 106) and the *Saint Andrew and Saint Jerome* (cat. 108).

Following Maxon's lead, Robert Echols proposed in 1993 and 1995 that the author of the *Adulteress* was Giovanni Galizzi. Galizzi's career is little documented, though two dated paintings (1543 and 1547) and his will of 1565 and death that year suggest something of his activity and family tree. Echols has reconstructed Galizzi's œuvre, noting works by other artists – including Polidoro da Lanciano and Tintoretto – that inspired the painter. Echols posits that the Rome *Adulteress* is one of Galizzi's last works, which reflects the perspectival interiors in Tintoretto's huge paintings of the *Wedding at Cana* of 1561 (Santa Maria della Salute, Venice) and the *Finding of the Body of Saint Mark* of ca. 1564 (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan). As Echols reasonably concludes, "Surely these large-scale works predated the Rome *Adulteress* and provided the inspiration for its architecture, rather than *vice versa*". Galizzi may have been a Tintoretto assistant or collaborator, rendering the seventeenth-century attributions technically correct in light of Renaissance workshop practice.

Despite these arguments, some scholars maintain Tintoretto's authorship of the *Adulteress* and see it as a crucial stage in his early development. Erasmus Weddigen in 1970 employed X-radiographs to reconstruct the genesis of the painting, whereby the architecture, painted before the figures, was substantially changed during the execution. The floor pattern, derived from Sebastiano Serlio, replaced a simpler rectangular pattern. Weddigen has defended the attribution in subsequent essays. Roland Krischel (2000) has also upheld the attribution to Tintoretto and the date of ca. 1546, speculating that the architecture might reflect Giulio Romano's designs for the cathedral of Mantua. Then again, Krischel notes as well that Galizzi may have shared studio space with Tintoretto, perhaps a tacit acknowledgment that the attribution of the Barberini *Adulteress* to Tintoretto's follower Galizzi has merit.

FREDERICK ILCHMAN

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## 108 Jacopo Tintoretto | Venice, ca. 1518 – Venice, 1594

*Saint Andrew and Saint Jerome*

1552

Oil on canvas; 225 × 145 cm
Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, inv. 898
From the Magistrato del Sale, Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, Venice

To a greater extent than other Venetian painters, Tintoretto considered the human figure the true carrier of meaning. In the words of Robert Echols, "No matter what the subject of the picture may be in a narrative sense … the body is Tintoretto's true subject and principal vehicle for expression". Even when at rest, as in *Saint Andrew and Saint Jerome,* his muscular figures strike dynamic poses and seem on the verge of movement. In Tintoretto's work, the pose of the body is often more eloquent and expressive than any particular facial expression, as is the case here. His early paintings, such as the *Supper at Emmaus* (cat. 106) of about 1542, reveal an inexperienced artist finding his way, with anatomical flaws such as the preposterously long legs of the serving boy at left. These misunderstandings of the human body had disappeared by the time of *Saint Andrew and Saint Jerome* a decade later.

The format of this canvas, a vertical rectangle with an arched top, and the subject matter, two saints easily identified by their attributes (the cross for Andrew; the stone, books, lion and cardinal's hat for Saint Jerome), might suggest that this painting was originally an altarpiece in a church. In fact, this picture was painted for the Magistrato del Sale, the committee responsible for administering the tax on salt, within the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, the Venetian treasury building located at Rialto. The Magistrato del Sale was one of about twenty rooms in the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi decorated with canvases during the sixteenth century. Individual paintings were commissioned by two or three government officials at their expense to commemorate their sixteen-month terms of office. As Philip Cottrell has shown, "the decoration served to echo and reinforce a concept that lay at the centre of Venetian ideology: the virtue of a sustained, cumulative contribution to the republic's status quo on the part of its ruling classes". Saints Andrew and Jerome celebrate Andrea Dandolo and Girolamo Bernardo, who left office on September 6, 1552 and October 9, 1552 respectively, providing the date for the execution of the canvas. Their coats of arms can be seen along the bottom edge.

Bonifazio de' Pitati and his workshop had shepherded the cycle of paintings for the Camerlenghi from about 1529 to 1552. Many of Bonifazio's pictures were uninspired groups of two or three saints, standing stiffly. Not surprisingly, Tintoretto made a clean break from his predecessor with the energy and grandeur of *Saint Andrew and Saint Jerome,* one of his first contributions to the cycle. Tintoretto's strapping figures face each other, engaged in conversation. Their silhouetted poses fill the pictorial field. Saint Andrew, largely in shadow, stands with the elegance of a dancer, his giant cross balanced against his knee. The cross does not rest on the stone platform but in fact stands on the bottom of the pictorial field, projecting into the viewer's space with *trompe l'oeil* flair. By contrast, Jerome is bathed in light and holds a pose of coiled energy, presenting a dignity and dynamism largely absent in earlier depictions of the hermit saint (for example, those by Filippino Lippi, Cima's workshop, and Zoppo, cats. 13, 45, 23). Tintoretto's Jerome is particularly accomplished, with deft painterly touches, such as the thin white outline along his proper right hip. The bundle of sticks, perhaps a broom or scourge, leaning against Jerome's leg emphasizes the figure's taut muscularity. While the composition appears carefully planned, it is worth emphasizing the freedom and improvisation in many passages, such as the pentimenti in the folds of drapery grasped by Andrew's right hand.

Jerome holds both stone and book, emphasizing his diverse roles as penitent and scholar. A prominent second book, however, sitting on the lectern at the centre of the picture, commands attention. The regular appearance of the lettering and the distinctive blocks of text suggest that this is a printed book, perhaps an edition of the Vulgate, Jerome's translation of the Bible, or one of the saint's commentaries. Although the book on the lectern has not yet been matched with a specific printed volume (and the text itself is not quite legible), Erasmus Weddigen has proposed the intriguing hypothesis that this is in fact a Hebrew book, with a right-to-left orientation, since the transitions to paragraphs seem to begin at the right edges of the columns of print. Weddigen further suggests that the book on the stand is the Old Testament, while the volume on his lap is the New Testament.

Although Tintoretto seems to have lost interest with some of his later contributions to the cycle at the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, the conspicuous effort devoted to this picture underscores the painter's reputation for making a great first impression.

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## 109 Jacopo Tintoretto | Venice, ca. 1518 – Venice, 1594

### *A Procurator of Saint Mark's*

1570s

Oil on canvas; 138.7 × 101.3 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection, inv. 1952.5.79

By contrast with Titian, who famously worked for the top stratum of clients – popes, princes, and kings (e.g. *Philip II,* cat. 85) – Tintoretto is best known for serving more humble patrons: lay confraternities *(scuole)* in Venice, a category of patronage that he thoroughly dominated. Many of these brotherhoods were quite modest indeed, possessing only an altar or section of a wall within an unassuming parish church. Thus it is worth remembering that in the sixteenth century Tintoretto was also by far the favourite portrait painter of the Venetian aristocracy, producing many dozens of portraits for such elevated clients. Tintoretto's portraits, which typically feature a brightly-lit and carefully rendered face, loosely painted clothing, and a neutral background, seem to have struck just the right note of sobriety and dignity to appeal to Venice's ruling class.

This splendid picture is one Tintoretto's largest and most impressive portraits. Much of its impact derives from its format and pose: the subject is seated, shown almost full-length, with the body presented frontally. This differs from the vast majority of Tintoretto portraits; these depict standing figures, shown half-length, in turned poses. In the past the sitter has been identified as Francesco Duodo (1518–1592), an important commander of the Venetian fleet at the battle of Lepanto in 1571. Secure likenesses of Duodo, however, make clear that his nose, cranium, and eyebrows were differently shaped, as seen in a School of Tintoretto portrait at the Museo Storico Navale in Venice and marble and terracotta busts by Alessandro Vittoria in the Ca' d'Oro and the Museo Correr.

Although the sitter thus remains unidentified, his clothing has led scholars to conclude that he is a procurator. These influential magistrates were drawn from the highest nobility and were the only Venetian government officials, besides the doge, to be elected for life. Peter Humfrey (*Edinburgh* 2004, 186, cat. 68) noted that procurators were entitled to wear voluminous sleeves that did not taper at the wrists, affording painters the opportunity to paint luxurious expanses of ermine lining, here conveyed magnificently. As Miguel Falomir observed (*Madrid* 2007, 314, cat. 34), this procurator may be in mourning, since he wears a crimson stole matching the robes, rather than the standard black one. The figure looms over the viewer, filling nearly the entire pictorial field. While the sitter's direct stare projects confidence and competence, the striking bulk of these robes suggest in their very weigh the burden of office. Tintoretto's skill as a portraitist is seen in the convincing, three-dimensional volume of the head, partially shadowed, and the contrast between the tightly executed face and the efficient brushstrokes that express the highlights along the fabric folds. Whereas Veronese's portraits often possess a suave and stylish air – for example his early *Portrait of a Young Man* in Budapest (cat. 111) – Tintoretto's sitters such as this one seem to personify gravity and solemnity.

In the absence of any biographical information, inscription, or period documentation, the portrait can only be dated on stylistic grounds. Although scholars agree that this is a fairly late work, its place in Tintoretto's chronology remains controversial. Humfrey's preference for "ca. 1570–1590" seems too broad; on the other hand, Falomir's date, "ca. 1570", appears overly precise, since Tintoretto can paint in very different manners in the same year, and his style does not progress linearly, particularly in his portraits. Indeed, a pertinent observation was made by Paola Rossi in 1974, when she noted that the present picture distinctly resembles the *Portrait of Gabriele di Pietro Emo* in the Seattle Art Museum, which is dated 1572. The two portraits feature similar handling of facial features, hands, fur and drapery folds, with a difference being that the lines of the brocaded stole are rendered in the Washington picture with dark paint against a lighter colour, while those on the Seattle painting display lighter strokes on a dark background. Despite this convincing comparison to a dated picture, given the uncertainties in the chronology of Tintoretto's portraits, it is prudent to date the Washington picture no more precisely than the decade of the 1570s. The presence of this stately Venetian work from the later cinquecento balances the fine portrait collection already in Budapest, and the many masterly examples of Italian portraiture brought together for this exhibition.

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## 110 Giovanni Battista Moroni | Albino, ca. 1520–1524 – Bergamo, 1578

### *Woman in a Red Dress*

ca. 1560

Oil on canvas; 135 × 89.5 cm
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, inv. 176
From the gallery of the duke of Modena, 1746

Moroni was held to be the best portraitist of his age. Even Titian himself put Moroni's ability to paint his models *al vero* before his own. Born in Albino near Bergamo, Moroni was Alessandro Moretto's pupil in Brescia until about 1543, but he was strongly influenced by other artists, too, such as Savoldo, Lorenzo Lotto, and Titian. Apparently he hardly ever left the area around Bergamo. By about 1560 he had become the leading painter of the region and set the course of the Lombard school. He was particularly favoured by the aristocracy as a portraitist, but he also received several ecclesiastical commissions.

The artists of the Italian Renaissance introduced fundamental innovations in portraiture, including, in particular, a new type of realism and convincing lifelikeness. The Dresden picture affirms Moroni as a master of his craft. The three-quarter figure stands by a table addressing the viewer directly. She holds a cloth bag in one hand and a *caccia dei pulci* in the other. Flea furs were worn for sanitary reasons from the Middle Ages on, in order to keep fleas and other blood-sucking insects away from the human body. They could be made of weasel fur – as this one – or of ermine, polecat or sable fur. During the Renaissance, flea furs were fashionable accessories in aristocratic garb (see e.g. Parmigianino's *Antea,* Pinacoteca di Capodimonte, Naples). In Moroni's portrait the expensive gold weasel head adorning the flea fur also points to an aristocratic wearer. The high birth of the model is, furthermore, indicated by the crimson velvet dress, the gold buckles on the belt, the necklace adorned with pearls, and the ornate hairband. The name of the sitter is unknown. The style of her attire corresponds to a dress made around 1560, possibly for someone close to Eleonora di Toledo (1522–1562) (Museo di Palazzo Reale, Pisa; see Orsi Landini – Nicoli 2005, 70, fig. 21). Earlier hypothetical identifications of the figure as Caterina Cornaro or Mary Stuart have proven unsustainable.

August III (1696–1763), elector of Saxony and king of Poland, purchased one hundred masterpieces from the gallery of the duke of Modena in 1746, including outstanding works by Correggio, Veronese, Annibale Carracci, and Titian. The *Woman in a Red Dress,* also acquired at that time, was attributed to Titian: in the appendix to the 1744 inventory of Francesco d'Este's (1698–1780) collection this portrait is listed as being by Titian (Gherardi 1744, 248, n. 49).

Both in the Dresden inventory of 1746 and the first printed catalogue of the gallery published in 1765 the work continued to be attributed to Titian. From the mid-nineteenth century doubts were repeatedly voiced in the collection's catalogues about Titian's authorship. In 1877 Crowe and Cavalcaselle ascribed the portrait to Bernardo Licinio, but Morelli and Berenson adhered to the Titian attribution, and therefore in Dresden it was assigned to Titian, though with a question mark, up to the second half of the twentieth century. In the 1980s Moroni's name was raised with increasing frequency, and first set down in the Dresden catalogue in 1992. Stylistically, the attribution seems convincing: the summary brushwork not lost in minute detail – probably inspired by Titian's manner of painting – also appears in other Moroni portraits of the 1560s, e.g. that of the Venetian nobleman Antonio Navagero (1565, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan). The portraits of a scholar (dated 1560, Pinacoteca Civica Tosio-Martinengo, Brescia) and of Bartolomeo Bonghi (ca. 1560–1563, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) ought also to be taken into account in attributing the Dresden painting to Moroni.

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## 111 Veronese (Paolo Caliari) | Verona, 1528 – Venice, 1588

### *Portrait of a Man*

ca. 1555

Oil on canvas; 120 × 102 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 4228

With Titian and Tintoretto, Veronese was one of the dominant personalities of Venetian painting in the second half of the sixteenth century. Although particularly known for his magnificent series of biblical feasts, painted for monastic refectories in Venice and the Venetian *terraferma,* his range as an artist was universal, and the types of commission he undertook extended from altarpieces to painted ceilings, and from pagan mythologies to the mural decoration of villas. Veronese was also active throughout his career as a painter of portraits – usually, as here, of male sitters, although more often than his rivals also of women. All too often the identity of his sitters remains unknown, and it is accordingly not easy to make generalisations about the social rank or even nationality of his clientele. It seems clear, nevertheless, that his sitters comprised neither the foreign rulers and their courtiers customarily portrayed by Titian (cf. cat. 85), nor the procurators, senators, and other members of the Venetian ruling class so often painted in their official robes by Tintoretto (cf. cat. 109). To judge from their frequently highly luxurious and fashionable costumes, Veronese's male sitters seem rather to consist mainly of the provincial nobility, from mainland cities such as Vicenza or his native Verona, or perhaps distinguished foreign visitors to Venice, such as the Elizabethan poet Philip Sidney, who sat for the painter in 1574.

The present portrait is not dated, but there is general agreement that it was painted during the earlier part of Veronese's career, before ca. 1560. Although it has sometimes been seen as one of his very first portraits, executed when he was still living in Verona in the late 1540s, the confident elegance of the pose, the boldness of the contrast between the dark foil of the wall behind the sitter, and the luminous sky to the left, suggests a date in the mid 1550s, after the painter had established himself in the metropolis. Also in keeping with this date is the virtuosic brilliance of the pictorial execution, in which Veronese exploits the contrasting textures of hair and flesh, of silk and fur, with rapid, dry, suggestive brushwork. The elegance of the pose, with the left arm akimbo and right leaning on a table, is matched by the luxury of the black satin costume, with its lynx-fur lining, and the aristocratic accessory of the gloves, one off and the other on. Yet the sitter's expression is not haughty or remote, but responds to the spectator, albeit with thoughtful reserve, in a way that makes him humanly sympathetic and accessible.

Although the landscape backgrounds to Veronese's paintings frequently include antique buildings in a state of picturesque ruin, this is the only one of his portraits to do so. Here the building appears to have been loosely adapted from an engraving by the Flemish printmaker Hieronymus Cock of the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, published in 1551 (Garton 2008, 140). The significance of the borrowing, however, is disputed: does the painter mean to invest the portrait with a sense of deep melancholy, inviting reflection on the inevitable decay of all human greatness? Or should the motif be seen merely as a picturesque accessory, enhancing a mood that is instead extrovert and carefree? Or perhaps such a polarity is false, and the spectacle of antique ruins was indeed meant to inspire a gentle nostalgia, but of an essentially pleasurable kind. There also remains the possibility that the motif has a dynastic dimension, and refers to the antiquity of the sitter's family. This would be especially likely if he was a compatriot of the painter, and sought to link his ancestry with Verona's illustrious Roman past.

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## 112 Paolo Veronese (Paolo Caliari) | Verona, 1528 – Venice, 1588

### *Venus and Adonis*

ca. 1586

Oil on canvas; 68 × 52 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. 1527

Paolo Caliari, named Veronese after his birthplace Verona, was twenty-five when in 1553 he arrived in Venice where, except for a sojourn in Rome in 1560–1561, he was to spend all his life. Together with Titian and Jacopo Tintoretto, Veronese was one of the great trinity of painters of the Venetian cinquecento.

Veronese returned to the story of Venus and Adonis repeatedly. Compared to the variants in Augsburg, Seattle, Madrid, and Stockholm, the small painting in Vienna is the most intimate work.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (X: 525ff.) the goddess of love, pierced by the arrow of her son Cupid, becomes enamoured of the beautiful Adonis. Since she foresees that her lover's death will be caused by a wild beast, she begs him to refrain from hunting. Yet Adonis goes on a hunt nonetheless, and the prophecy comes true: he is fatally wounded by a wild boar. Venus fails to save her lover, from whose spilt blood grows the anemone. In other sources Adonis' blood stains a white rose red, and the pheasant's-eye or adonis is thus created in memory of the loss of the beloved.

Veronese's earliest variant of the theme was influenced by Titian's *Venus and Adonis* painted for Philip II (National Gallery, London); there he concentrated on the moment the goddess of love tries to keep Adonis from going to hunt. However, the picture in Vienna and the variant in Seattle show the two lovers in an intimate tête-à-tête in an idyllic setting. Under the protective shade of trees Venus and Adonis embrace, while Cupid, who is helping Venus to undress, watches them attentively. Their love appears to be undisturbed, but the sombre tempestuous sky in the background shown through the branches of the trees already anticipates the tragic outcome. In addition, the brown-green colour scheme, and the sketchy painting of the background trees and the sky all contribute to enhance the dramatic mood. Pignatti and Pallucchini claim that Veronese followed Tintoretto and Bassano in his relaxed brushwork and subdued colours.

The client who commissioned the intimate cabinet picture is unknown, but the work can be retraced to the art collection of the Venetian art dealer Bartolomeo della Nave together with its pendant, *Hercules, Deianeira and the Centaur Nessus* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) as Veronese's work in 1636. Through the English ambassador Basil Fielding it found its way to London, into the collection of the duke of Hamilton (1638–1649). After the English civil war, the royalist duke was executed. His collection was sent to the Netherlands and offered for purchase to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, governor of the Spanish Netherlands. In 1656 Leopold Wilhelm returned to Vienna, where the painting first appears in the inventory of the imperial collections in 1659.

Although it has always been known to be Veronese's work, in 1893 Wickhoff ascribed it to one of Veronese's pupils. Since Fiocco (1928), however, the painting has once more been attributed to Veronese. Together with its pendant, also on a mythological subject, as well as his *Hagar and Ishmael* also in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, *Venus and Adonis* is considered to be a late work by the master, painted presumably between 1580 and 1586. A few years later, in 1588, the painter died at the age of sixty in Venice. The running of his studio was continued by his brother Benedetto and his sons Carlo and Gabriel.

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## 113 Paolo Veronese (Paolo Caliari) | Verona, 1528 – Venice, 1588

### *Youth between Virtue and Vice*

ca. 1580–1582

Oil on canvas; 102 × 153 cm
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, inv. 499

The painting elaborates an allegorical theme: the young man who has to choose between Vice and Virtue. Vice is embodied by a woman sitting on the left, whose scanty garments reveal part of her breasts, whereas the other, bare-footed woman, with the laurel wreath of glory on her head and taking a resolute step away to the right as if wishing to leave the picture field, personifies Virtue. Veronese applies this illusionistic device cleverly to depict how the youth is led by Virtue "out of" the space dominated by Vice to set out on the right path. Arranged like a *mise-en-scène,* the composition is set – in keeping with the classic canon – in a shallow space parallel to the picture plane, like a bas-relief. Veronese omitted all secondary attributes, leaving the concept to be expressed by the gestures, facial expressions, and above all the colour harmonies, which are organized in such a way as to guide the spectator's eye to the most important details. The most intense colour patch is the claret attire of the young nobleman, dressed in the fashion of the period. Vice also wears late sixteenth-century fashionable garments (the garb of courtesans), while Virtue is clad in *all'antica* robes, the colour of which is similar to the youth's outfit but of a less intense hue. The left side of the composition dominated by Vice reminds one of the courtyard of Palladian villas, as against the rocks on Virtue's side, probably alluding to climbing along a narrow and tiring path, a metaphor used for the virtuous life since the Old Testament and classical Greek literature.

The moralizing tone of the work fits in well with the spiritual climate of the second half of the sixteenth century, dominated by the Counter-Reformation, even though as Molteni (2004) rightly notes, the theme has its precedents in the humanist culture of the quattrocento, when a similar concept was usually conveyed by "Hercules at the Crossroads between Vice and Virtue", as in the well-known early work by Raphael at Musée Condé in Chantilly. The theme can be retraced to Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Cicero's *De Officiis*. It has been suggested (De Madrazo 1872) that Veronese's painting is identical with the picture once owned by Giovan Battista Sanudo and described by Ridolfi in 1648 (Ridolfi [1648] 1914–1924, I, 338). This hypothesis cannot however be substantiated, because Ridolfi described Virtue as an old woman. The historiographer must have seen another painting on a similar theme.

Paolo Veronese trained in Verona in the 1540s, where he came into contact with exponents of Emilian (Parmigianino) and Mantuan (Giulio Romano) Mannerism. Later he moved to Venice where he was active from 1553, with immense success. Veronese is chiefly famed for his monumental mass scenes of astonishingly large numbers of figures, such as the *Marriage at Cana* of 1562–1563 (Louvre, Paris; painted for the refectory of the convent of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, built by Palladio). His renown was also enhanced by the decorative cycles with which he embellished the churches, palaces, and villas in Venice and Veneto. Particularly successful is the result of his collaboration with Palladio, the frescoes of the Villa Barbaro at Maser (around 1561). In addition to monumental works, Veronese was a highly gifted portrait painter, as is testified by his splendid *Portrait of a Man* in the Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (see cat. 111). His œuvre also contains smaller and medium-sized pictures on sacred, allegorical or mythological themes painted for private collectors, always using an exquisite palette. To the latter group belongs the Madrid painting, the success of which is attested by a replica, probably autograph, now in the collections of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

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## 114 Paolo Veronese (Paolo Caliari) | Verona, 1528 – Venice, 1588

*Annunciation*

ca. 1580–1585

Oil on canvas; 110 × 86.5 cm

Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid (deposit at Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona)

The painting represents the Annunciation according to the contemporary canon: the annunciating angel arrives flying in from the top left towards the Virgin in the bottom right of the picture. In the top left corner is the dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit – the brightest spot in the painting – from which falls the ray of light, which touches the Virgin as it descends. Unlike Paris Bordon's painting of the same subject, also exhibited (cat. 100), the setting in Veronese's adheres more accurately to the sacred texts: the scene is in an interior that can be identified with the Temple of Jerusalem with the curtain woven by Mary shown in the twilight on the right. The only iconographic liberty the painter took is the lapdog in the foreground, a frequent motif in Veronese's paintings. The presence of the dog may also be explained by its being a symbol of loyalty. At the same time, similarly to Paris Bordon's *Annunciation,* the building seen through the arch is in the style of the painter's own era: the forms are strongly reminiscent of the façade of the Biblioteca di San Marco designed by Jacopo Sansovino – the ceiling decoration of which, in fact, included one of Paolo Veronese's earliest Venetian works.

The painting demonstrates the darkening of Veronese's palette, characteristic of his final period, as well as a tendency for the disintegration of forms, which lose the sharpness of their outlines, a technique that may recall the "non-finito" of Michelangelo's sculpture. The joyful atmosphere of the youthful works is replaced by inquietude, melancholy, and earnestness, which may also reflect the changing times: the advance of the Counter-Reformation, the appearance of the Ottoman threat on the eastern frontier of the Venetian Republic, and the weakening of Venice's economic and political might. However, the extremely high-quality, virtuosic rendering of certain details – such as the golden hair of the angel or the part of his dress in the shadow where just like the impressionists the painter darkened the hue not simply by adding black but by applying a different colour – reminds us that what we have before us is a work by one of the greatest colourists ever.

Unlike the *Youth between Virtue and Vice* (cat. 113) which basically plays on contrasts of colour, in the *Annunciation* chiaroscuro effects also have an important role, as well as, obviously, colour tones. The left and right sides of the picture are juxtaposed not only in terms of colour but also in regard to the amount of light and shadow, anticipating as it were the central problem of seventeenth-century painting, inaugurated by the chiaroscuro experiments of Caravaggio.

The chief element in Veronese's artistic language was colour and his mastery of composing chromatic accords led the impressionists to conduct a thorough study of his canvases. In his art the legacy of the painting of classical antiquity – present in Venice through the Byzantine mosaics of San Marco and the Constantinopolitan enamel pictures of the Pala d'Oro – was revived with elementary force. Veronese's art remains one of the most brilliant examples of classical style, and Federico Zeri – developing an idea of Erwin Panofsky's (1960) – even interpreted it as the apex of classicism in European art: "… the *par excellence* classical painter is not to be sought in the eighteenth century or in neoclassicism, it is not David or Ingres, but Paolo Veronese. In my view, in Paolo Veronese the classical world was reborn with extraordinary felicity and striking immediacy" (Zeri 2004, 93–94).

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## 115 Paolo Fiammingo (Pauwels Franck) | Antwerp, ca. 1540 – Venice, 1596

### *Apollo and Poseidon Punishing Troy*

ca. 1590

Oil on canvas; 118 × 100 cm
Private collection, Budapest (on loan to the Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest)

This is the only known sixteenth-century representation of this theme, which was identified by Árpád Miklós Nagy (oral communication, 2008) when the painting was recently rediscovered. It was also a very rare theme in later periods; Andor Pigler mentions a single example in *Barockthemen* (1974, II, 153): the French Pierre Dulin's Diploma piece for the Academy (École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris) in 1707. The story is related by both Homer (*Iliad*, XXI, 441–55) and Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, XI: 199–215). Laomedon, king of Troy asked Apollo and Poseidon, newly banished from Olympus, to build the walls of the city. They completed the work but failed to get the promised reward. The deceived gods took revenge: Apollo sent the plague, Poseidon a sea monster to destroy Troy. The sea monster, shown as tritons in the picture, inundated the land with water from pitchers, sending both man and beast fleeing, while the plague is represented by Apollo shooting an arrow from the sky. On the right, a *tempietto*-like building emerges from among the clouds, in which King Laomedon is kneeling with two soldiers in front of the statue of a seated figure. This motif belongs to the continuation of the story, which allows us to suppose that the subsequent events might have been depicted in a now lost or untraced pendant picture. It was prophesied to Laomedon (the *tempietto* must have been the oracle) that he could only avert the threat looming over Troy if he cast his daughter Hesione as prey to the sea monster. Laomedon did so, but eventually Heracles saved the girl.

The attractive composition contains in a fully developed form all the stylistic elements that determined Paolo Fiammingo's art, as analysed in detail by Meijer (1975, 1983) and in a monographic essay by Mason Rinaldi (1978). The tree on the right with its wind-blown foliage and the landscape unfolding in the middle with the storm clouds and rays of light indicate that the master had already acquainted himself with the Italianate manner of landscape painting back home in Antwerp. The classic poses of Apollo shooting an arrow and Poseidon brandishing his trident, the twisted postures of the fleeing and the struck down youths, the sinuous movement of the tritons pouring water from their pitchers all stem from the Mannerist repertory which, several researchers believe, the painter encountered in Florence among the court painters of Francesco de' Medici, grand duke of Tuscany. The genre motifs – the glittering pewterware, glazed pottery, the copper cauldron, the animals fleeing the flood or the peasant woman with a sack, seeking shelter and looking back in fright – evidence the fertilizing influence of Jacopo Bassano and his workshop. The meandering, winding contours which also have the effect of a two-dimensional design, the planarity of the rendition created by the narrow picture space, and the abrupt recession of space upwards are devices expertly used by the "spirited interpreter of high mannerism" (S. Mason Rinaldi, in *Venice* 1981a, 238). The serene, light colours, which are markedly different from Veronese's palette and brushwork due to the smooth modelling, are in contrast with the basically sombre episode of the myth presented. The theme, meant to satisfy and even amuse a collector of refined taste, the spectacular wealth of motifs, the confident use of the Mannerist apparatus, and the sophisticated dynamism of the composition all make this work of Paolo Fiammingo, published and exhibited here for the first time, worthy of attention. Having no iconographic precedent, the picture can safely be ranked among Fiammingo's most successful works, not least because rarely was he able to unify so fortuitously the figural, landscape and genre elements.

In quality and character the painting so clearly fits into the œuvre of the Antwerp-Venetian master that no serious doubts can be entertained as to its authorship, even given the lack of a signature or documents. The *Birth of Athena* preserved in the Castle Museum in Prague is closely linked to the painting not only by virtue of its rare theme, but also its composition. Neumann (1964, 102–3) dated the Prague work to around 1590, which might provide a clue in situating this painting chronologically as well.

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# 7 | The Crisis of the Renaissance – Mannerism

The Renaissance experienced its first crisis in its native Florence. As early as the 1510s, new kinds of content appeared in the paintings of Jacopo Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino – disharmony, restlessness, visionary impulses, and expressive abstraction – signalling a shaking-up of the optimistic world-view of humanism. The balance between verisimilitude and abstraction, between a worldly spirit and transcendent thought, was upset in favour of the latter in each case. Michelangelo's path led from the identification of earthly beauty with metaphysical to the denial of everything of this world – a path from the *Pietà* in Saint Peter's to the *Rondanini Pietà*. Parmigianino passionately looked for the canon of perfection beyond the harmonic system of proportions. While one disciple of Raphael would strive to outdo his master in elegance and grace, another would try to outdo him in an archaeologically faithful evocation of antiquity. For several artists in Rome, Florence and Bologna, Michelangelo's gravely intellectual portrayal of man became a set of pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, a meaningless repertoire of complex postures and movements. On one side stood the aulic rhetoric and the decorative formalism of Giorgio Vasari's allegorical and historical scenes in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence; on the other, the white-hot, plebeian mysticism of Tintoretto's biblical cycle in the Scuola di San Rocco in Venice. The most prestigious artists enjoyed a cult following; their inventions were circulated via a profusion of prints. The breadth of subjects drastically increased, as did the formal repertoire used for their depiction, and, partly thanks to the migration of the artists, by the end of the cinquecento Mannerism had become international.

Lorenzo Lotto was an anti-classical master by instinct and by nature. He was one of the self-expressive artists, just as Michelangelo would also become in his late period. Lotto learned a great deal from his contemporaries in Venice, Florence and Rome, and from the art of antiquity; his style, however, remained deeply personal. He projects his emotional restlessness, sympathetic humanism and hard-won faith into his paintings. Of the three predella panels of the Martinengo altarpiece (cat. 116), *The Miracle of Saint Dominic* captivates the viewer with its emotionally authentic evocation of the story, *The Entombment* with its ecstatic, apocalyptic mood, and *The Stoning of Saint Stephen* by the way it turns figures, landscape and light into participants in the drama.

If we recall Fra Bartolomeo's *Holy Family* (cat. 67) or Raphael's *Esterházy Madonna* (cat. 68) we can truly understand just how radical was the change that the art of Jacopo Pontormo brought to Florence (cat. 117). It takes some time for us to be able to interpret the wide-open eyes and bizarre features of the young Saint John the Baptist as an early manifestation of his future prophetic zeal, or before we can contend with our surprise at seeing the stiff movements and high forehead of Jesus, his gaze fixed on the distance. Mary's elongated figure, her elegant oval head, her protruding right elbow, her anxious fingers, and the scarf loosely wrapped around her head all speak of the decline of a whole world of ideas.

Bartolomeo Passerotti
*Portrait of a Man with a Dog* (detail)
ca. 1585–1587
Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome

Bronzino's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (cat. 118) is connected to more than a century of tradition in the Florentine Renaissance by the harmonic linking of spatial elements, the semicircular grouping, Mary's position on the central

axis, and the faithful expression of the scene's theological content. The gracious and twisted movements, the cold blue light, the statuesque nature of the protagonists, the spotlessly polished surfaces or the glow of the colours are not at odds with this tradition. All that Bronzino does to make the new Mannerist notion of beauty triumph in this painting (admired by Vasari, among others) is to consciously reinforce and raise the pitch of the classical *maniera*.

Of the two pictures by the Sienese Domenico Beccafumi, *Penelope* (cat. 119) is the earlier and more classical composition. The contrapposto of the slender woman evokes Leonardo's *Leda* (cf. cat. 57), while the head recalls the Madonnas of Raphael. At first glance, the signs of changing tastes are barely visible: the paleness of the face, the hazy lightness of the blonde hair, the slight magnification of the hands and feet, the odd hues of the green of the dress, the utter improbability of the loom, and the bareness of the thin tree in the background. In *The Continence of Scipio* (cat. 120), Gothic elegance and zest for narrative are revised in a Mannerist fashion. The protagonists perform Livy's story with comically overacted pantomime gestures. Before the backdrop of a fairy-tale landscape, the Celtiberian girl's coyness, Scipio's self-deprivation, the fiancé's gratitude, the disbelief of the girls' parents and the diligence of those delivering the ransom are all expressed with the utmost clarity. Masterfully juxtaposing cold and warm tones, the palette leads the viewer's eye towards the dazzlingly bright blue of the bride's wedding dress, transparent like a polished diamond.

For no other Mannerist painter is beauty identified so closely with grace and elegance as it is for Parmigianino. In creating a canon of beauty beyond classical harmony, the master of the *Madonna of the Long Neck* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) was so successful that, alongside Raphael and Michelangelo, he had the greatest influence on the stylistic development of the following decades, and thus also on the international Mannerism of around 1600. This elegance is the main theme of the tiny picture from Frankfurt (cat. 121), the iconography of which – as further evidence of the painter's passion for experimentation – has not been clarified to this day. His *Portrait of a Man* (cat. 122) is noteworthy for the suggestive power of the slightly downward-looking expression and the concentrated characterization of the head, depicted facing us, which forces the viewer to make a judgment.

In the masterpiece of the Emilian Lelio Orsi, *The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* (cat. 123), Michelangelo's *terribilità* meets Parmigianino's *grazia:* the folds of the dress draw elegant curves on the muscular angels and the terrified executioners. Although we have stressed the central Italian influence in Jacopo Bassano's treatment of the same subject (cat. 103), the two paintings hardly resemble each other. In Lelio Orsi's picture, as so often in Mannerism, the high level of stylization is compatible with a high level of naturalism. The instrument of torture is treated with a meticulous care that betrays technical curiosity, as does the splintering of the floorboards as they collapse under the executioners. The motions evoked by triumph or panic, the lights glimmering in the night, and the faithfully presented materials all act to make the composition bizarrely effective.

Bronzino's allegory *Venus, Cupid and Envy* (cat. 124) is an example of the mature phase of Florentine Mannerism, and – within that – of the courtly, academic style. Perhaps deliberately to distance his work from the recumbent Venetian Venuses, Bronzino forces his main protagonist into an awkward sitting position. The marble statue-like Venus and Cupid gaze at each other in delight. The other participants in the allegory do not share their cold, undisturbed sublimity. One putto shows us its behind, a grinning satyr face winks out of the picture, and Envy, hurrying away, looks at us with a delirious expression.

The decorative aspect of this academic Mannerism is seen in the *Marriage at Cana* by the architect, biographer and painter Giorgio Vasari (cat. 125). The dramatic biblical content of the events is almost lost in the richly ornamented, intarsia-like composition with its mannered colours. Vasari's newly identified *Annunciation* (cat. 126), which is addressed by scholarship for the first time here, is a more inspired work than the *Marriage*. The intimate mood of the scene, the noble harmony of the proportions, the Raphaelesque head of the Virgin and the classicizing head of the angel all place this tondo among the finest works of the master.

In the Bolognese environment that took Mannerist artificiality to its extreme, Bartolomeo Passerotti developed a style that in many aspects displays naturalism. The *Portrait of a Man with a Dog* (cat. 127) is striking in its directness and human warmth. It is only the extravagant originality of the invention and the touch of irony in the depiction of the man in the huge hat that make it clear that the portrait belongs to the period preceding the Baroque.

The purist simplicity and geometrical rigour of the Madonna by Luca Cambiaso (cat. 128), together with its clear, straightforward chiaroscuro is testament to an attitude influenced by the Counter-Reformation and deliberately at odds with the demonstratively overcomplicated branch of Mannerism. But since simplification is just as much a kind of stylization as exhibitionistic over-complication is, so Luca Cambiaso can also rightly be termed Mannerist.

The appearance of the first female painters was a novelty of sixteenth-century art. They include Sofonisba Anguissola of Cremona, who, like Luca Cambiaso, tended to conceive simply-structured compositions. The artifice in her self-portrait (cat. 129) is iconographic rather than formal: it is a picture within a picture, to which her master, Bernardino Campi, is putting the finishing touches.

It was in the work of Giuseppe Arcimboldi – who spent decades at the court of Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, a key centre of international Mannerism – that the cult of the artistic idea or *concetto* reached its extreme. Although surrealists considered him their predecessor, his works, like *The Vegetable Gardener* (cat. 130), have a superficial connection at best to this movement; the intellectual background behind the two is very different. His paintings are witty and allegorizing optical games offering intellectual amusement to clients, which also explains their present popularity.

Federico Barocci might be called a late Mannerist reincarnation of Correggio. His paintings, full of overflowing emotions, are characterized by a feverish rhythm of line, a vivacity of ethereal lightness, and the use of rich, rainbow-like, creamy colours. For the *Virgin and Child with Saint Simon, Saint Jude and Two Donors* (cat. 131) he made, as was customary for him, countless preparatory drawings, yet the completed painting appears enticingly spontaneous and fresh.

Barocci deeply influenced the formal language of Ventura Salimbeni. *Saint Catherine* (cat. 132) is a particularly attractive example of the Sienese master's utterly refined style. The painting is dated 1606. By this year, Mannerism had reached its last, rococo phase, but works displaying its virtuoso formalism would continue to be produced for another two or three decades. Yet, by 1606, Caravaggio and the Carracci had already created numerous masterpieces of both the naturalist and classicizing Baroque.

VILMOS TÁTRAI

## 116 Lorenzo Lotto | Venice, ca. 1480 – Loreto, 1556

*Saint Dominic Raises Napoleone Orsini, Nephew of the Cardinal of Fossanova*
*The Entombment of Christ*
*The Stoning of Saint Stephen*
between 1513–1516

Oil on panel; 51.3 × 97.4 cm, 50.8 × 97.2 cm, 51 × 97.3 cm
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 58 AC 00070, 58 AC 00071, 58 AC 00072
From the church of Santo Stefano, Bergamo

These three pictures constituted the predella of a large altarpiece that Lotto painted for the Dominican church of Santo Stefano in Bergamo between 1513 and 1516. The central panel is now in the church of San Bartolomeo in Bergamo, while the gable picture, showing an *Angel with Orb and Sceptre,* is in the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest. The altarpiece – in terms of size alone (measuring nearly 8 metres in height and 4 metres in width with its frame) – must have been one of the most ambitious undertakings in northern Italy in the early cinquecento.

The work marks the onset of Lotto's perhaps most remarkable period, that of his stay in Bergamo between 1513 and 1525, when, after his youthful experiences, he successfully blended the psychological core of his scenes and the restless movement of light in concentrated, tense narratives. By virtue of his expertise and the richness and complexity of his figurative solutions Lotto is hard to confine in any predetermined bracket, because he was an outstanding and solitary genius who always understood how to influence the human heart directly.

The original sequence of the three panels is not known for certain: the order presented here is based on the subtle shift of shadows on the ground (indicating the varying distance from the light falling in through the windows on the right of the church) and more importantly, it is adjusted to the sequence of the titular saints as shown in the central panel of the altar. Accordingly, the panel showing the *Miracle of Saint Dominic* is put on the left since this saint is on the left in the central panel; by the same logic *The Stoning of Saint Stephen* is put on the right. The position of the Virgin and Child in the middle axis of the main panel corresponds to the *Entombment* in which both the Virgin and Christ are participants.

The oft-mentioned difference in quality between the *Miracle of Saint Dominic* and the other two can be attributed to differences between the artistic problems to be solved: while the *Entombment* and *The Stoning of Saint Stephen* present single scenes in a realistic space and time construction, the more complex temporal arrangement of the *Miracle of Saint Dominic* requires the narrative to unfold in several "scenes" and their spatial arrangement to comply with the importance of the events: it is as if this panel were a "dress rehearsal" for Lotto's fresco cycle in Trescore, dated 1524. On a stage so densely crammed with buildings to separate the events of the plot, the dilution or partial loss of the magical, atmospheric fusion of the characters and the landscape present in the other two panels could not be avoided.

There is relative consensus about the influence of Raphael discernible in the three predella panels. This element is, however, mixed with a Northern, well-nigh Grünewaldian approach, as the extremely expressive tension of colours and forms reveals. It can be added that especially the postures of the three executioners on the right side of *The Stoning of Saint Stephen* – apart from resembling the work of the young Raphael – are clearly reminiscent of antique statues Lotto had seen in Rome: the executioner closest to the central axis of the picture is practically the mirror image of the *Laocoön* (Lucco, in *Washington–Bergamo–Paris* 1997). Yet what turns these predella pictures into unforgettable masterpieces is the artist's ability to depict the emotions of the figures with burning intensity and to project them upon inanimate objects, shadows, certain natural features, the hazy atmosphere or the startling reality of the mountainous landscape enveloped in fog, as in the martyrdom scene. The foliage on the right of the same picture is, however, quite conventionally rendered, its strongly linear character clearly revealing its German, Dürerian origin. Experiments such as the reflected light on the pious woman standing in the shade on the right side of the *Entombment,* the subtle interaction between the figures and the landscape, and above all the sudden flaring of light whose source is hard to discover, appear to be related to Grünewald's contemporaneous painting and also to that of Holbein, slightly later.

MAURO LUCCO

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117 JACOPO PONTORMO | Pontormo, 1494 – Florence, 1557

*Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist*

ca. 1520–1525

Oil on panel; 57 × 37 cm
Galleria Corsini, Florence, inv. 141.

The *Virgin and Child with the Young John the Baptist* in the Corsini collection is not signed but it appears to be one of only a half dozen Holy Families Pontormo painted for private patrons. It is, arguably, among the earliest in date of his small group of domestic works. The attribution is, however, not universally accepted and the critical history of this painting is rather tortured. The earliest documented attribution is to Rosso Fiorentino. It was then first ascribed to Pontormo by Berenson, but Costamagna, most recently, classed the work as a copy after a lost original by the painter known in other versions, including one in the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco that he regarded as closer to the master's style. Yet the style of the Corsini painting is certainly entirely consistent with Pontormo's work around the time of the frescoes at Poggio a Caiano and the Certosa del Galluzzo from the first part of the 1520s. On the balance, it seems most reasonable to retain the panel as an original pending more technical analysis, at least as a fully sanctioned product of the artist's workshop.

The painting features a markedly elongated Virgin who glances downward at John the Baptist as he pulls mischievously on her ample, ambulating drapery that establishes the entire lower margin of the composition. The child Baptist appears nude without any attributes. Looking directly outwards, the standing Christ Child, firmly held by his mother, takes the unmistakable stepping pose of Resurrection complete with a mature gesture of benediction made, unusually, with the left hand. He wears his halo with an inserted cross – one of his personal attributes. Presumably, this explicit reference to the Resurrection following the Passion, reinforced by the foliage behind the child, had some particular meaning for the patron even if we are no longer able to reconstruct the precise intent. If this plant can be identified as a laurel, it would indicate patronage of the Medici family or someone in their circle.

Typical of the more progressive painting of this period in Florence, recalling Rosso Fiorentino too of course, the design of the Corsini panel is compressed and relentlessly frontalized to enhance the drama of this most conventional of subject matter. Pontormo arranged his powerful, muscular bodies to press forcefully against the picture plane and introduced little recession. The figures do not even respect the usual pyramidal shape, but the design is instead predominately rectilinear and graphic with many sharp and abrupt accents. The background is a simple juxtaposition of a few discrete elements. Indeed, this approach to the landscape by a shortcut means is somewhat lacking in ambition for an artist of Pontormo's talent, not least considering that two of the artist's masters, Leonardo da Vinci and Piero di Cosimo, were deeply interested in the background of their paintings.

The Corsini painting is set out of doors in an airless sunlight. It is bright and lucid with almost polychromatic colouring and weak shadows as in a fresco. The hard and rather acerbic surface is comparable to Pontormo's works of the earlier 1520s when he was most influenced by German prints – a style that Vasari so forcefully condemned for what he perceived as a lack of creativity in his life of the artist published in 1568.

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## 118 Agnolo Bronzino | Florence, 1503 – Florence, 1572

### *The Adoration of the Shepherds*

ca. 1539–1540

Oil on poplar panel; 65.3 × 46.7 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 161.
Signed lower left: BRONZINO

In his life of Bronzino Giorgio Vasari wrote that this work was commissioned by the Florentine Filippo di Averardo Salviati (1513–1572) and that it had small, incomparably beautiful figures: "Fece in un quadretto una Natività di Cristo in figure picole, tanto bella che non ha pari" (Vasari [1568] 1878–1885, VII, 506). This small, privately commissioned devotional painting was most likely destined for a private chapel in the Salviati villa.

In his narrative, Vasari places the painting in the late 1530s, just before Bronzino became court painter to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici. Although smaller in scale, the *Adoration of the Shepherds* has much in common stylistically with the first work of Bronzino's mature mannerism, the chapel of Duchess Eleonora di Toledo in the Palazzo Vecchio, especially its altarpiece, the *Lamentation* (1540–1545; now in Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts).

This jewel-like painting displays the extreme refinement of execution and luxury of materials characteristic of Florentine Mannerism, with *disegno* ("drawing"), sculptural modeling of forms, and enamel-like finish apparent in every detail. The entire upper half of the composition is a deep landscape of lakes and hills, above which stretches a vast blue sky that Bronzino painted in expensive lapis lazuli. To the right, an angel announcing the birth of Christ to a single shepherd hovers in the sky, and in the foreground five putti fly in celebration directly over the Nativity scene. Around them is a heavenly light, which is the source of the illumination in the painting. This luminosity and its location within the picture space is unique in Bronzino's œuvre.

The sacred tableau is a night scene lit from above. The birth of Christ is celebrated by three blond angels who dance around the kneeling Virgin, echoing the heavenly dance of the angels above. In the left foreground in front of the shed over the manger are Saint Joseph and an almost prostrate kneeling veiled woman who leans over the Child in prayer, her white shawl brilliantly illuminated from above. The robes of the Virgin and Joseph are painted in the same lapis lazuli that Bronzino used for the night sky. To the right are the leaders of a procession of shepherds, one of whom gestures to those who follow from offstage. He is accompanied by an old shepherd playing bagpipes and two other shepherds, one of whom holds a lamb in allusion to Christ. At the centre of the painting the Child is displayed to the visitors on a brilliant white cloth. In front of him, at the top of a flight of steps leading up from below, another shepherd kneels in adoration.

The figures and their poses have a Mannerist artificiality and elegance: the refined type of the elegantly precious Virgin, her beauty and that of the angels (especially the one in green with the transparent veil), the serpentine contrapposto of Joseph, and the kneeling half-nude shepherd contrast with the rustic types of the other shepherds. The two angels to the left evoke the late quattrocento, Botticellian style of Bronzino's first master in the early 1520s, Raffaellino del Garbo (1433–1524).

Bronzino's painting contains subtle elements of religious symbolism and learned allusions to both antique and Renaissance art (Brock 2002). The Child is resting on fragment of antique architecture that also suggests an altar above the step on which the shepherd – or priest – kneels as if in front of the body of Christ at the Eucharist. This shepherd and Joseph are pendants and both allude to sculptural works of art from the past. The flattened, twisted pose of the shepherd is based on the Hellenistic Belvedere torso, a famous antiquity that Bronzino often quoted in his art, as in his contemporaneous portrait of Duke Cosimo de' Medici (Philadelphia Museum of Art). Joseph is freely based on the Prophet Isaiah (Sistine Chapel, Rome) by Bronzino's favored artistic model, Michelangelo (who himself quoted the Belvedere torso in the Sistine *ignudi* and elsewhere).

According to Vasari ([1568] 1878–1885, V, 538–39), Bronzino's *Adoration of the Shepherds* became famous because it was the subject of an engraving. Raffaello Borghini, writing a generation later (1584, 536), notes that the painting was considered a rare thing by its owner and that it was reproduced in a print and copied in many places. The engraving, which is about the same size as the painting, was made by the Mantuan Giorgio Ghisi in 1554 (Bury 1993, 8). There are other sixteenth-century copies of Bronzino's well-known work: engravings after Ghisi's print, anonymous painted versions, a drawing by Marco Pino (a free copy of the painting; Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 22474), and a Limoges enamel by the Master I.C. (or I.D.C.; New York, The Frick Collection, inv. 1916.4.34), which is in mirror image and with added details in the landscape and sky.

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## 119 Domenico Beccafumi | Near Siena (?), 1486 (?) – Siena, 1551

### *Penelope*

ca. 1514

Oil on panel; 84.2 × 47.8 cm
Seminario Patriarcale, Venice, inv. 70

Relentlessly pursued by suitors during her husband Odysseus's twenty-year absence, Queen Penelope declared she would only choose among them after she had finished weaving a burial shroud, which she surreptitiously unpicked each night. From antiquity onwards, this Homeric heroine has been lauded in poetry and art for her constancy, chastity, and tenacity. In his biographies *On Famous Women* (1374) for example, Giovanni Boccaccio declared: "For married women [Penelope] is the most sacred and lasting example of untarnished honour and undefiled purity …." The Sienese artist Domenico Beccafumi translates Homer's epic verse and Boccaccio's praise into an equally poetic visual language. His sculptural figure wears a silky green dress, a colour associated by Renaissance poets with fruitfulness, persistence, and love, an elaborate headdress and a bejewelled girdle alluding to her regality and chastity. She stands in elegant contrapposto, weaving (or unpicking?) a tapestry on her fanciful vertical loom built of rough branches (scissors and thread hang from its knots) and decorated with grotesque masks. The loom stands upon a pagan altar embellished with bronze rams' heads, perhaps an allusion to the sacrificial offerings made and prayers said by Penelope for Odysseus' safe return. She stands at an ambiguous threshold, perpetually poised in both body and spirit, at a parapet decorated with sculptural reliefs, a woman and companion at left, and a group of women haggling with a merchant over spools of thread at right. Beyond, the exquisitely painted landscape is suffused with a penumbral light and dominated by a skeletal tree, creating a melancholic mood suggestive of the queen's longing for her husband, long presumed dead. Our eyes are drawn along the meandering path to a body of water and a cluster of buildings in the distance – evoking Odysseus' long journey by land and sea – encouraging us to scan the horizon, like the patient Penelope, for his return.

While scholars have frequently noted *Penelope*'s resemblance to Michelangelo's *Apostles* for the *Piccolomini Altar* of Siena Cathedral, none have observed her closer affinities with the ancient sculpture of the *Three Graces* in the Libreria Piccolomini nearby. Like Raphael, who sketched and imitated these companions of Venus, Beccafumi adopts their dancing S-curve pose and elegantly raised arms. Perhaps most striking is the shared physiognomy – squared jaw, broad cheeks, long nose, almond-shaped eyes and upswept hairstyle. That Beccafumi selected these goddesses, often individuated in the Renaissance as Chastity, Beauty and Love, as the models for this figure, indicates the attentiveness with which he approached his work and the sense of otherworldliness with which he imbued it.

Although the patron of this panel remains unknown, the earliest documentation traces it back to the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, suggesting its manufacture for a local context. The panel was subsequently acquired by the marchese Federico Manfredini (1743–1829) and passed to the Seminario Patriarcale, Venice, after his death. In Renaissance painting, Penelope most often appears as a part of a cycle of famous women or in nuptial decorations for patrician palaces. For example, around 1509, the Sienese ruler Pandolfo Petrucci commissioned a fresco cycle for his palace which included Bernardino Pinturicchio's *Penelope with the Suitors* in which she appears seated at her large floor loom, and Luca Signorelli's *Triumph of Chastity* in which she breaks Love's arrows and plucks the feathers from his wings (both now in the National Gallery, London). Such works were often part of a program of decorative furniture comprising a *lettuccio* ("daybed"), a *cassapanca* ("chest-bench"), *cassoni* ("wedding chests") and *spalliere* ("wall panels"). While the majority of such furniture has been dismembered and dispersed among public and private collections, a contemporary intact *cassapanca,* attributed to Guidoccio Cozzarelli and painted with the chaste heroines *Hippo, Camilla* and *Lucretia* exists (private collection, Siena). The *Penelope*'s comparable format and subject suggests that it too once formed part of a similar set of furnishings. The success of the *Penelope cassapanca* may have led to Beccafumi's subsequent commission, around 1519, to decorate the bedchamber of Francesco Petrucci with a similar bench depicting *Tanaquil, Marcia* (National Gallery, London) and *Cornelia* (Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome). Like the *Graces,* these heroines were often grouped in threes, and, in the absence of additional evidence we can only speculate as to the identity of Beccafumi's other figures. Boccaccio may however be the key, as in the preface to his biographies, he singles out Penelope, Lucretia (cf. cat. 76) and Sulpicia as exemplary "chaste matrons".

JENNIFER SLIWKA

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## 120 Domenico Beccafumi | Near Siena (?), 1486 (?) – Siena, 1551

### *The Continence of Scipio Africanus*

ca. 1525

Oil on panel; 68 × 140 cm
Museo Nazionale di Palazzo Mansi, Lucca, inv. 60

The painter, printmaker, and sculptor Domenico Beccafumi was, alongside Sodoma, Siena's leading artist in the first half of the sixteenth century, with important public (cathedral, municipal palace, hospital, churches) and private commissions in his home town and only occasionally elsewhere (Pisa Cathedral; the palace of Andrea I Doria in Genoa). He developed a very individual style, rooted in the tradition of Sienese painting and influenced by contemporary art, especially that of Florence and Rome, which made him perhaps the earliest and certainly one of the most important representatives of Tuscan Mannerism.

Surrounded by an eighteenth-century frame, this painting shows an event in the Second Punic War: after Scipio Africanus's capture of Carthago Nova (modern-day Cartagena in Spain), the exceptionally beautiful virgin betrothed to the Celtiberian prince Allucius, fell into the hands of the Romans. Scipio allowed her to return untouched to her family. The panel depicts the moment when the young general announces her release to the prince kneeling before him, and in return asks simply that Allucius become a friend of Rome. On the right are the parents, who have hurried there with servants carrying golden vessels and other valuables to secure their daughter's freedom. Scipio refuses ransom money, and accepts the proffered treasure only in order to give it to the betrothed pair as a wedding present. Overwhelmed by such magnanimity, Allucius and his soldiers join in Scipio's struggle against the Carthaginians.

This episode, recorded by Livy (*Ab urbe condita libri,* XXVI, 50) was regarded in classical antiquity as an example of virtue (Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia,* IV, 3.1). Scipio was also an exemplary figure during the Italian Renaissance, and his image adorned public and private palaces. A picture of him, with the *Continence* scene in the background, was painted by Francesco di Giorgio (assisted by the Griselda Master) as one of a series of eight paintings of virtuous people, which was probably produced around 1493 for a wedding in the Sienese Piccolomini family (L. Syson, in *London* 2007, 234–45). To mention another example, in 1509 the ruler of Siena, Pandolfo Petrucci, arranged for a room in his palace to be decorated magnificently for the wedding of his eldest son, including a mural of the *Continence* (P. Jackson, in *London* 2007, 270–78). The scene was depicted again in the Sienese Venturi palace, where it was given the most prominent place in a series of frescoes on themes from antiquity, which Beccafumi painted around 1520 on the ceiling of a hall (Guerrini 1998). In the panel displayed here Beccafumi does not show the battle for Carthago Nova in the background, as in the fresco, and he reduces the number of portrayed figures to the most important protagonists, who, as in a relief, appear in a row in the foreground.

This work, too, was probably intended for a private palace. In about 1519 Beccafumi painted pictures to decorate a room in the palace of Francesco Petrucci, which have been identified as six panels, now dispersed in different collections, with themes from Roman antiquity *(Lupercalia*, *Cerealia*, *Tanaquil*, *Cornelia*, *Marcia*, *Venus and Cupid).* Before his subsequent banishment from Siena in 1526 Petrucci had already sold the pictures to his cousin Scipione Petrucci (C. Plazzotta, in *London* 2007, 323–33). The latter used them to decorate a room in his palace, perhaps in preparation for his marriage in 1525 to Livia di Pietro di Niccolò Piccolomini (Archivio di Stato, Siena, A 56, fol. 220r). He could have taken the opportunity to commission an extra painting from Beccafumi, namely the one exhibited here, which portrays the hero whose name he bore. This hypothesis is supported by the following facts: the height of this panel differs only marginally from that of the *Lupercalia* and *Cerealia* panels, both of which have a similar, horizontal format (Museo Martelli, Florence, 65.5 × 124.5 cm); the stylistic dating of ca. 1525 fits with the wedding date; moreover, iconographically the painting also neatly matches the themes of the previously acquired pictures, which include a portrait of *Cornelia* (Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome), the daughter of Scipio Africanus. The hero of antiquity, who does not submit to his sexual desires but instead respects and protects a genuine love sanctioned by law and society, something which he himself longs for, was, in the eyes of the upper class of the Italian Renaissance versed in humanism, an ideal subject for a wedding. In this instance the scene portrayed would, furthermore, have had a special personal significance, as Scipione was born illegitimately and had had to be legitimized as the son of Girolamo Petrucci in order to become a full member of the powerful family and to marry someone of such a high rank.

WOLFGANG LOSERIES

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## 121 Parmigianino (Francesco Mazzola) | Parma, 1503 – Casalmaggiore, 1540

*Virgin and Child with an Angel*

ca. 1523

Oil on panel; 26 × 19 cm
Städel Museum, Frankfurt, inv. 1496

This work is the smallest painting in the entire œuvre of Parmigianino; no wonder that it has been likened to a miniature. The work has raised various stylistic and iconographic questions over the years. Before its restoration in 1932, when thick layers of overpainting and a cogwheel on the left of the composition were removed, the painting was believed to be one of many existing versions derived from a small painting in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. 284), until then attributed to Parmigianino. In the innumerable copies (apart from the one in Vienna, in the Galleria Nazionale of Parma, inv. 363, in a private collection in Parma; in the Pinacoteca Vaticana, Waldshut, Badminton, and on the art market) the presence of the cogwheel suggests that their subject should be defined as Saint Catherine in the company of angels. Without the cogwheel – as in our painting – the subject can be identified with an episode narrated by the apocryphal gospels, the Miracle of the Palm Tree, which occurred during the rest on the flight into Egypt (Muzzi 1999, 35). The two young putti on the right of the composition are indeed just pulling down the palm branches to pick the dates that have miraculously appeared on the tree to feed the Holy Family. At the same time, in Parmigianino's work it is not clear whether both putti are angels or one is the Christ Child, whose absence would otherwise be hard to explain (Béguin 2000, 22). If this is the case, the Frankfurt picture would have the same subject as several other famous cinquecento works executed in a Parmigian environment, such as Correggio's *La Zingarella* and *Madonna del Latte* (see cat. 77), and Parmigianino's own *Holy Family with Angels* in the Prado.

Neither the date of the iconographic change that turned Mary into Saint Catherine nor the prototype from which the different variants derive are known. What we do know is that the picture of the Galleria Nazionale in Parma originates from Lelio Boscoli's collection where it was defined as a "sitting Saint Catherine … with two little angels playing with palm branches" ("Santa Caterina … a sedere con due angiolini che scherzano con palme", Campori 1870, 378); thus 1690, the date of this inventory, at least provides a *terminus ante quem*.

On stylistic grounds the small Frankfurt panel has been associated with the works commissioned by the Sanvitale family in Fontanellato. There, in the castle of the family, in the summer of 1524 Parmigianino painted the masterpiece of his early period, the fresco on the myth of Diane and Actaeon. The characteristic, almost vulpine face of the Virgin of the Frankfurt picture is indeed nearly identical with that of Ceres (who appears on one of the walls frescoed by Parmigianino in the castle), which is generally believed to be a hidden portrait of Paola Gonzaga Sanvitale. Among Parmigianino's preparatory drawings for Fontanellato there is a study of a female face (Départements des Arts Graphiques, Louvre, inv. 6445r) which seems to be related to the Virgin in the Frankfurt painting, although it shows a lunette in the background. There is also a series of drawings of putti bending leafy branches (Départements des Arts Graphiques, Louvre, inv. 6439), which in turn may be the models for the figures of the two children in the painting in question.

The work was painted before September 1524 when – as Vasari reports – Parmigianino moved to Rome. Compared to the frescoes in Fontanellato and the *Holy Family with Angels* in the Prado, which sources say was painted to serve as the artist's self-introduction to the court of Pope Clement VII (thus directly before the trip to Rome), the work in the Städel Museum in Frankfurt appears somewhat less mature, and is therefore datable to around 1523.

ELISABETTA FADDA

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## 122 Parmigianino (Francesco Mazzola) | Parma, 1503 – Casalmaggiore, 1540

### *Portrait of a Man*

1530

Oil on panel; 52 × 42 cm
Galleria Borghese, Rome, inv. 85

The figure fills the entire foreground of the painting; it is unclear whether the edges of the painting were cut off for exhibition purposes or if it was Parmigianino's artistic choice to use this extremely close-up view of the sitter. The old inventory books of the Galleria Borghese (cf. Della Pergola 1964b, 452) indicate the size of the picture as "approximately three spans" (66.9 cm), which may suggest that the picture was subsequently truncated, but there is no indication of such an act in the catalogues of the Borghese gallery. According to Anna Coliva (in *Parma–Vienna* 2003), the picture was painted around 1527 during Parmigianino's stay in Rome, but most scholars date it to between 1527 and 1530, when the artist resided in Bologna. This writer believes that Parmigianino painted it during the last months of his stay in Bologna, that is, at the end of 1530, because it displays similarities with the figure of Zachariah in the *Madonna with Saint Zachariah* executed between 1530 and 1533 (Fadda 2003, 43; Fadda 2006, 300).

Critics have long acknowledged Parmigianino's qualities as a portraitist, which are evinced by his famous early *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Nearly all the works that have recently entered the catalogue of his œuvre belong to this genre (Ekserdijan 2006, plates 153–155); yet, with very few exceptions (*Galeazzo Sanvitale,* Gallerie di Capodimonte, Naples; *Lorenzo Cibo,* Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen), the sitters in his portraits remain unknown. The intense portrait of the Galleria Borghese shows a man in his early thirties wearing black clothes in keeping with the fashion promoted by, amongst others, Emperor Charles V, which was widely popular in the sixteenth century (Quondam 2007). His triangular headgear, which appears in other portraits by Parmigianino as well, for example in the portrait in York (City Art Gallery) or in the *Portrait of a Collector* (National Gallery, London), has, since Freedberg (1950, 206–207), been erroneously interpreted as an ecclesiastic headdress. Manuscript sources (Lamo [1560] 1996; Da Erba 1572) mention various portraits painted by Parmigianino during his stay in Bologna: there was the one of Count Bonifacio Gozzadini, Rinaldo Pannirazzi's portrait on canvas, and a portrait of "some Bolognese count" is also mentioned by Vasari ([1550, 1568] 1966–1987, IV [1976], 540). In this period, Parmigianino's clients included Baldassare da Milano (depicted next to Saint Roch in the Saint Roch altarpiece in the church of San Petronio in Bologna), Giovanni Andrea Bianchi (who commissioned the *Conversion of Saint Paul* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna), Gerolamo dal Lino, Gerolamo Fagioli, Luca dei Leuti, and Giorgio Manzoli.

For this reason it is not easy to establish the identity of this man with a penetrating gaze. The first mention of the picture is in the inventory of the Galleria Borghese dating from 1693: "the Pianerlotto portrait … by Parmigianino" (Della Pergola 1964b, 452). Scholars (Vaccaro 2002) have pointed out the necessity for further research into the biography of "Pianerlotto", but the doubt arises whether this name might actually have resulted from an erroneous transcription. In this case, "Pianerlotto" would not refer to the identity of the sitter but rather to the location of the portrait within the Palazzo Borghese: to the landing at the top of a flight of stairs (in Italian: *pianerottolo*).

ELISABETTA FADDA

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123 Lelio Orsi | Novellara (?), 1511 – Novellara, 1587

## *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*

ca. 1565–1575

Oil on canvas; 88 × 66.5 cm
Galleria Estense, Modena, inv. 3477

This painting, whose size suggests it was made for private devotion, is one of Lelio Orsi's mature works. Its provenance is unknown prior to 1902, when it was mentioned, correctly attributed to Orsi, in the Plessi collection in Modena. The dating of the work is therefore based on the stylistic analysis of the painting and of a highly elaborate study presumably conceived as a presentation drawing (British Museum, London, inv. 5210.43).

Scholars have almost unanimously dated the painting to the period following Orsi's stay in Rome (1554–1555), not least because of Michelangelo's obvious influence discernible in the sculptural modelling of the bodies of the torturers, the agitated rhythm of their movements, and particularly the distorted postures of the figures falling through the floor at the sudden breaking of the wheel, which betray an inspiration drawn from the damned of the *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel.

Since Orsi's affinity for Michelangelo is present not only in the works he painted during or immediately after his stay in Rome (including a drawing sold at Christie's in London on July 3, 2007, lot 21) but also in his works produced many years after his Roman experience, it provides no firm ground for the dating of the *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine*. As Popham (1950, 355) rightly warns, "a delicate weighing of influences as a guide to chronology may well prove misleading" in Orsi's case.

The dynamism and the Michelangelesque elaborate anatomy characterizing the *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* can also be found in the drawing of the *Conversion of Saint Paul* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. WA 1955.81), which is reminiscent of Michelangelo's fresco in the Cappella Paolina in the Vatican and was probably executed in the first years of the 1560s (Romani 1982, 42). This drawing, however, does not reveal the studied, daring light effects (Romani 1984, 68) of the *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* and other works by Orsi datable to the late 1560s.

The painter's interest in light effects was inspired by two works by Correggio then in Reggio Emilia, the *Agony in the Garden* (once in the Signoretti collection and now in Apsley House, London) and the altarpiece in the church of San Prospero, showing the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (now in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden). From the altarpiece Orsi derived the idea for the gesture of the soldier in the background to the right who shields himself from the intensity of the divine light (visible in the British Museum drawing). Correggio's two night scenes inspired Orsi, as well as other artists of his generation (Spagnolo 2005, 78, 138–39), to explore the dramatic and expressive potential of the nocturnal genre.

Venturi's (1933) observation about the "German" character of the *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* was made more specific by Hoffman (1985, 32) who suggested that Lucas Cranach the Elder's *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden) might have been its prototype. Yet the general tone of Orsi's picture is perhaps more Netherlandish than German: it is particularly close to the Emilian-Netherlandish stylistic blend demonstrable in Rome and Parma around 1570 (Dacos 1990). The dramatic intensification of the light-and-shade contrasts – which Orsi achieved by the device of the divine light flaring up suddenly in the night – recalls similar Roman endeavours, e.g. the frescoes of the Oratorio del Gonfalone.

For these reasons it seems reasonable to date the *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* to the late 1560s or early '70s, even though there are varying opinions about its date, ranging from the late 1550s (Zeri 1952, 61; Briganti 1985, 53) to around 1565 (V. Romani, in *Bologna – Washington – New York* 1986, 151; F. Frisoni, in *Reggio Emilia* 1987, 169) or even later (Pevsner 1928, 97; Arcangeli 1950, 50).

The subject – Catherine triumphing over martyrdom – responded to the Catholic Church's revived interest in martyrdom after the Council of Trent. The interest, verging on obsession, with which Orsi represented the monumental instrument of torture, the "wheel with iron saws and razor-sharp nails projecting from her rims" ("rotas serris ferreis et clavis acutissimis circumseptas", as described by the Golden Legend) and the huge wooden scaffolding presupposes the general attraction of society of this period to the practical and technical aspects of the stories of martyrdom, which was given its fullest expression by Laurentius Surius (*De probatis Sanctorum historiis*, 1570–1575) and later by Gallonio (*Trattato de gli instrumenti di martirio*, 1591).

The work was thus conceived in the atmosphere of ardent Catholic reforms, which was not alien to Novellara during the reign of Count Camillo I (Bentini 1986, 37) and inspired Orsi to execute masterpieces such as *Christ among the Crosses*. Just as the *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine*, that work also shows a tendency to fill the space with stereometric forms (Monbeig-Goguel 1990, 81) and create thereby a scheme of spatial perspective which diverges in various directions instead of unifying the composition, and eventually estranges the scene from any realistic connection.

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## 124 Agnolo Bronzino | Florence, 1503 – Florence, 1572

### *Venus, Cupid and Envy*

ca. 1548–1550

Oil on poplar panel; 192 × 142 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 163
Signed on the vase to the right: IL BRŌZINO FIOR. F.

This large allegorical painting, formerly in the Kaunitz Collection in Vienna, was presented by Count István Keglevich in 1863. The damaged picture, which had been heavily repainted (particularly the head and feet of Venus, the right arm of Cupid, and the drapery), was restored in 1958 (Devich 1959). In the course of the restoration, a later addition of a veil held in Venus' left hand and extending over her thigh was removed and the original lapis lazuli of the drapery under her was revealed intact.

Bronzino, a pupil of Jacopo Pontormo, was one of the leading painters of Florentine Mannerism and became court painter to Duke Cosimo de' Medici in 1539. By 1545 Bronzino had become the most sophisticated artist in Florence of the *Maniera,* a highly self-conscious and elegant late phase of Mannerism, influenced by Michelangelo's art of the 1520s and '30s. It has been aptly termed the "stylish style", one of artifice, abundance, ornamentation, and that ineffable quality – *grazia*. In this painting aspects of the style of early sixteenth-century Renaissance art have been inverted: space is tipped-up and shallow, light is frontal, the flat and twisted pose and angular limbs of Venus are contradicted by marble-like sculptural modelling, and the attenuated, gracile figure of Cupid stands in a parody of the contrapposto of classical sculpture, with an exaggerated thrust of the hip. As seen in the refined handling of detail in this painting, the *Maniera* is also a style that emphasizes ornamentation: extremities – especially the hands of Venus and Cupid, as well as their hair, have a polished finish.

In the earlier literature the Budapest painting was thought to have been connected with Giorgio Vasari's reference in the life of Bronzino to scenes of unspecified subjects for comedies presented at the time of carnival in Florence in the 1540s (Vasari [1568] 1878–1885, VII, 598). However, neither this picture nor its subject is mentioned by Vasari, and in any case theatre sets were invariably ephemeral works. The Budapest *Venus, Cupid and Envy* is rather a variant on Bronzino's *Allegory of Venus* (National Gallery, London), the major allegorical work of his mature years (Cox-Rearick, in *Florence* 2002). It was painted in 1544–1545 for Duke Cosimo, who, as related by Vasari ([1568] 1878–1885, VII, 598), presented it to King Francis I of France (see also Cox-Rearick 1995–1996, 227–34, cat. VII-1). Slightly larger than the London picture, the Budapest painting is also an allegory of Venus and Cupid, who play with his bow and arrows, and Venus is also set against a light blue drapery, on which lie two masks symbolizing deceit. *Venus, Cupid and Envy* is so similar in subject and style to the London *Allegory* that it must have been painted close in date to it; however, it is heavier and more academic in handling, not as subtle in detail and its palette is less high-keyed, suggesting a date towards 1550.

The supporting characters and the theme of the paintings, however, are very different: in the London picture seven characters tell a moralizing story of the perils of erotic love, which would have resonated at the French court, where sophisticated poetry about Venus and the double nature of love played with these Renaissance conceits (Cox-Rearick 1995–1996, 231–32). In the Budapest version the possibility of Venus being wounded by Cupid's arrow (which she holds directly below his genitalia) is teasingly suggested, but its theme is pleasure. On the right, under a vase holding the roses sacred to Venus, a kneeling putto crowns another putto with a floral wreath. The pose, with his buttocks prominently displayed to the observer, is the same as that of the adolescent Cupids in both the London *Allegory* and the latest of Bronzino's paintings of the subject, *Venus, Cupid and a Satyr* of ca. 1553–1554 (Galleria Colonna, Rome), where the amorous pair is observed by a leering voyeur, a satyr within the picture who replaces the external observer of the earlier London and Budapest scenes. The delighted putto, the recipient of the crown of flowers, tramples the masks under his feet that evoked deceit in the London painting. The theme of the painting is thus the Triumph of Love, the alliance and harmony between Venus, goddess of beauty, and Cupid, god of love.

This theme is also signalled by the monstrously ugly figure traditionally identified as Jealousy, who is banished from the world of Venus and Cupid in the left margin of the scene. Rather than Jealousy, the fleeing figure actually corresponds more closely to descriptions of Invidia (Envy) in sixteenth-century emblem books, as well as to Invidia as an enemy of Venus in a sonnet by Bronzino himself, "Sopra una Pittura d'Una Venere", and in a lecture of 1545, "Sopra l'Invidia", by Benedetto Varchi (Smith 1981, 251–52; and for Bronzino's poem, 257). Hence, despite its stylistic similarities to the London *Allegory,* Bronzino's Budapest painting has nothing of its moralizing content; rather, it reflects the celebratory mode of contemporary Medicean court culture.

JANET COX-REARICK

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125 GIORGIO VASARI | Arezzo, 1511 – Florence, 1574

*Marriage at Cana*

1566

Oil on panel; 40 × 28 cm
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 172

On April 4, 1566, Vasari arrived in Perugia to supervise the installation of his three large paintings in the refectory of the San Pietro Benedictine monastery. In keeping with the function of the room they were to decorate, all three had themes connected to meals but, deviating from tradition, none was a depiction of the Last Supper, most commonly represented in refectories. One painting, on a New Testament theme, was the *Marriage at Cana,* while an Old Testament scene showed the prophet Elisha turning the pottage made from poisonous gourds into wholesome food with flour for his disciples at Gilgal. The third painting, whose subject is connected to Saint Benedict's legend, depicted the scene when camels, packed with flour and led by the angels of the Lord, arrive at the monastery gate during a bout of famine. The pictures are still preserved in the Perugia monastery but have been moved from the refectory to the sanctuary chapel.

Of these pictures, two also have smaller variants: the Elisha episode in the Uffizi and the *Marriage at Cana* in Budapest. There is no documentary evidence of the intended purpose of these smaller, autograph versions. Alessandro Cecchi believes they were *modelli,* preceding the large pictures; by contrast, David Franklin supposes that they were made afterwards, perhaps as presents for Vincenzo Borghini, prior of the Ospedale degli Innocenti, a friend of Vasari's, and a mediator in the Perugia commission. In the *modello* versus *replica* dispute, Franklin's theory is more convincing: in the sixteenth century it was general practice for an artist to present the planned work to the client in a drawn version (oil sketches, called *bozzetti,* became widespread only in the Baroque period), furthermore, the painstaking execution of the two small-size pictures also reinforces the assumption that both the artist and his client regarded them as autonomous works, intended for private collections.

Among the figures, the Virgin and the apostle Saint Peter, the titular saint of the monastery seated on Christ's left, can be easily identified. The most emphatic figure in the foreground, holding a *tazza* ("goblet"), is probably the chief steward, while the bride is seated on the left in an ornately carved chair, dressed in more elegant garb than the rest of the people. The excitement caused by the water turned into wine is expressed with theatrical gestures and facial expression. The overall impression is, however, not generated by the emotional content of the scene but by its rhetoric decorativeness, owing to Vasari's eclectic, academic Mannerism. The figures crammed into the narrow space, which is closed off in the background by stairs, fit one another like the elements of a marquetry pattern or an abstract design. The ornamental character of the composition is enhanced by the meticulous elaboration of several details and by the artificial, lustrous colours. It is due to the basically decorative nature of the work that nothing is lost aesthetically through the reduction in scale: the original composition in Perugia is monumental in physical terms but not in spirit or contents. It was precisely Vasari's eclectic taste and limited artistic sovereignty that enabled him to develop a style which purely epitomizes the most fundamental and theoretically defined ideals of the *maniera*.

Originally from the Esterházy Collection, during the Second World War the painting, then on temporary loan in a ministry building, disappeared. It only re-surfaced in 1963 when the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Montreal purchased it *bona fide*. It was returned to the Budapest museum with diplomatic assistance in 1999.

VILMOS TÁTRAI

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## 126 Giorgio Vasari | Arezzo, 1511 – Florence, 1574

### *Annunciation*

1570–1571

Oil on poplar panel; diameter 157 cm
Móra Ferenc Múzeum, Szeged, inv. 50.47.1
From the Chapel of Saint Michael, Torre Pia, Vatican Palace

The *Annunciation* at the Móra Ferenc Múzeum came to light only in 1896, when the art dealer Illés Csáki sold it to the economist and politician Lukács Enyedi (Eisenstädter); on his death in 1906 the latter bequeathed the painting to his wife Ilona Zsótér, from whose bequest it was eventually given in 1925 to the Móra Ferenc Múzeum in Szeged where it resides to this day. According to a nineteenth-century inscription on the reverse, some previous owner optimistically identified the painting's author as Raphael; subsequently, the director of the National Picture Gallery (Országos Képtár), Károly Pulszky, proposed an attribution to a much later artist, Cristofano Allori (1577–1621). In recent decades the painting has been catalogued by the museum under the names of either the Florentine painter Agnolo Bronzino (1503–1572) or his pupil Alessandro Allori (1535–1607) (Szabó 2008). However, in March/June 2008 the work, undergoing restoration in Budapest, was identified, independently, as Vasari's work by Mauro Natale, by Monica Bietti, and by the present author, as reported by Vilmos Tátrai, who was the first to raise the possibility of Vasari's authorship but subsequently expressed his doubts about this attribution, which were shared by Miklós Boskovits and Alessandro Nesi (Tátrai 2008; for the restoration see Kovács 2008). Bietti subsequently rejected her attribution to Vasari (personal communication, February 2009). The files of the Móra Ferenc Múzeum contain an undated note by Bietti attributing the painting to Michele di Ridolfo Tosini. Despite the doubts that have been expressed by scholars about the attribution, a close reading of the contextual and documentary evidence not only confirms that the painting is Vasari's work but also makes it possible, for the first time, to identify the picture's date, the patron who commissioned it, and its original location: Pius V's chapel of Saint Michael in the Torre Pia of the Vatican (1570–1571).

The Szeged tondo can be identified definitively as Vasari's design thanks to the survival of an autograph preparatory drawing, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library (fig. 1), whose relation to the tondo has not been noted previously. The Morgan sheet (*Baltimore* 1961, 66, cat. 78, *New York* 1965, cat. 104) is squared, apparently to facilitate the transfer of the design to a full-scale cartoon or directly onto the panel. The drawing reveals the artist's thought process: in the final work he uncluttered the space between Mary and the angel by eliminating the doorway behind them; he also moved the ponderous sculptured lectern from right to left, adapting the position of Mary's left hand so that instead of holding open her book she gestures toward the angel. Apart from these changes, the painting closely reflects the poses of the figures in the Morgan sheet, their costume, and even such minor details of the setting as the position of the bed-canopy and the little rectangular step on which Mary kneels.

Vasari's choice of format for an Annunciation scene was anomalous. The tondo's unusually large size seems to indicate that, unlike many painted tondi, it was not intended for a domestic setting but as part of a monumental decorative scheme. On the verso of the preparatory drawing Vasari drew a system of circular compartments that may reflect an early idea for the installation of the *Annunciation* tondo.

We can probably identify the painting now in Szeged with one of the four "tondi grandi a olio" ("large tondi in oil") with which Vasari decorated the pendentives below the vault of the Chapel of Saint Michael in the Vatican, as the artist recorded in his *Ricordanze* (Vasari 1938, 103). In 1570 Pius V (born Antonio Ghislieri, 1504–1572) commissioned Vasari to decorate the three chapels in his newly constructed five-storey tower, now known as the Torre Pia, in the Vatican Palace (Ackerman 1954, 98–101; Serlupi Crescenzi 1992; Ostrow 2005, 247–50). The artist arrived in Rome on December 2 of that year, together with his principal assistant, Jacopo Zucchi. Vasari began immediately with the Chapel of Saint Michael, which communicated directly with the pope's apartment (Serlupi Crescenzi 1992, 148). The dedication of the chapel reflected the personal devotion of Pius V to the sainted archangel Michael, whose name he adopted in place of his baptismal name, Antonio, in 1518, when he became a Dominican friar, until his election as pope in 1566. Vasari and Zucchi completed the decorations of the three chapels on June 30, 1571 and the pope rewarded Vasari with 150 *scudi,* a Knighthood of Saint Peter worth 900 *scudi,* the title of Knight of the Golden Spur, and a gold chain worth another 80 *scudi* (Vasari 1938, 102–03; Corti 1989, 138–40).

While little of the original decoration of the Chapel of Saint Michael has survived, Vasari's *Ricordanze* reveal that, as the chapel of the pope, its decoration was more complex than that of the other chapels. In the dome Vasari designed seven archangels overcoming seven mortal sins; on the walls four narrative frescoes depicted the story of Tobias and allegories of two angelic virtues. The four "large tondi in oil" occupied the corners of the chapel and represented, besides the Annun-



ciation, the Birth of Christ, Zacharias and the Angel, and the Liberation of Saint Peter. The lunettes beneath the dome represented doctors of the Church and the four evangelists. An altarpiece with a *Coronation of the Virgin* completed the iconographic programme (Vasari 1938, 103).

All the Vasarian frescoes, with the exception of those in the dome and tambour, were painted over in the middle of the nineteenth century (Serlupi Crescenzi 1992, 148). Until now the only known panel painting from the chapel was the altarpiece depicting the *Coronation of the Virgin,* which was donated to the church of Santa Caterina in Livorno in 1847 (Corti 1989, 138). In all likelihood the Szeged tondo arrived on the art market around this same period.

The division of hands observable in the chapels of the Torre Pia has led most scholars to conclude that Vasari personally executed the altarpieces, which are painted on panel, while Zucchi is credited with painting nearly all of the decorations in fresco (Corti 1989, 138; Serlupi Crescenzi 1992, 148). Hence, the sixty-year-old Vasari could work from the comfort of his own studio while his assistant carried out the arduous task of painting on wet plaster from the scaffold. The arrangement also reflected the higher monetary value of paintings on panel, as well as the pride of place that they enjoyed in the decorative schemes Vasari designed.

Vasari's own correspondence during the period indicates his awareness of the importance of the Chapel of Saint Michael, intended for the pope's personal use and dedicated to his name-saint. The four "tondi grandi" in the pendentives were among the most prominent and visible parts of its decoration. It is therefore no surprise that the huge *Annunciation* bears all the signs of Vasari's hand, as we see it in his altarpieces for Pius V. There is little here that recalls the doll-like prettiness and facile glibness Zucchi displayed in executing his teacher's designs. While Zucchi possibly painted some of the subsidiary areas of the panel paintings for the papal chapels, the execution of the figures in the *Annunciation* is marked throughout by Vasari's crisp, deliberate, often splintery outlines and laconically efficient brushwork. The angel's delicate but virile face evokes the younger brother of the Roman soldier gazing out from the foreground of *The Stoning of Saint Stephen,* now in the Vatican Pinacoteca, which Vasari painted for the altar of another of Pius V's chapels (illustrated in Corti 1989, 140). In its elegant design and vivid execution the Szeged *Annunciation* reveals how, even in the last years of the artist's life, a patron of Pius V's calibre was able to call forth, undiminished, the power of Vasari's Michelangelesque *disegno* and his dramatic but deeply human approach to the portrayal of sacred narrative.

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Fig. 1

Giorgio Vasari, *Study for the* Annunciation *for the Chapel of Saint Michael*, pen and wash, squared with black chalk, diameter 133 mm. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.



Fig. 1

## 127 Bartolomeo Passerotti | Bologna, 1529 – Bologna, 1592

### *Portrait of a Man with a Dog*

ca. 1585–1587

Oil on canvas; 57 × 46.5 cm
Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome, inv. PC 68

Bartolomeo Passerotti was a much sought-after portraitist in Bologna in the latter half of the sixteenth century, famous for his ability to show the physiognomy of the faces and to represent his sitters in dynamic poses. As the seventeenth-century biographer of Bolognese painters, Canon Carlo Cesare Malvasia wrote, Passerotti portrayed his characters "… not appearing motionless and insensate, but in action and in motion, thus animating them and placing them within a narrative" (Malvasia [1678] 1971, 157). The painter depicted the life and pastimes of the upper classes in Bologna: the effigies are accompanied by books, arms, and musical instruments, as well as dogs of all manner of sizes and breeds. He was clearly drawn to intellectuals, musicians, and collectors, but he also portrayed soldiers and clergymen. Outstanding among the latter is the *Portrait of Ignazio Danti* (Musée Municipal, Brest), a Dominican who was a prominent astronomer, cartographer, and mathematician (Ghirardi 2007). Passerotti painted three portraits of popes, men at the peak of the hierarchy of power, whom one must "look up to with reverence" as Gabriele Paleotti, cardinal of Bologna noted in his famous *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* (Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images) published in 1582. Passerotti's portrait of *Pius V* is in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; his most successful papal portrait, *Gregory XIII,* is in the Museen der Stadt, Gotha, while his *Sixtus V,* a very late work, has recently returned to the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna (A. Ghirardi, in Bentini et al. ed. 2006, 157–59, cat. 107).

Bartolomeo Passerotti's most creative period fell approximately between 1575 and 1583, immediately preceding the naturalistic reform of the Carracci brothers. This was when he painted the four experimental pieces of the Mattei cycle, definitively reconstructed only recently (Benati 2000, 25; F. Baldassari, in *Cento* 2001, 186, cat. 45), which are the first representations of the everyday reality of tradesmen (butchers, fishmongers, poulterers, vegetable sellers) in Italian painting, revealing the artist's openness to contemporary European trends, his attentiveness to Flemish models, especially those of Aertsen and Beuckelaer, and the affinity between his development and that of Vincenzo Campi of Cremona (Ghirardi 2000, 87–101). Even after 1583–1584, when he executed the prestigious altarpiece the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna), he continued to achieve high quality and originality, especially in portraiture.

This is the case with the *Portrait of a Man with a Dog,* datable to 1585–1587. Passerotti presented a novel compositional idea in this work: the young man clasps the spotty dog to his chest, while he turns to the viewer with a clear and intense gaze, as if he had been suddenly addressed. The hand with the spread fingers holding the dog suggests tenderness, and the dog's front legs resting on the master's shoulder and its muzzle turned toward his face express devotedness. There is no knowing who the young man with a cap looking at the viewer might be, but he was certainly a member of a prominent family in Bologna, a city where Passerotti enjoyed high esteem and access to the best circles. The painting has a soft, Venetian tonality, tempered with warm hues and defined with broad and thick brushstrokes. The direct and intimate approach and the emotional warmth of the scene convey the feeling of a "true" humanism, far from the ostentatious, histrionic poses of Mannerism, in parallel with the naturalistic endeavours of the Carracci in the same period. It is no surprise that in old inventories it was attributed to Annibale Carracci. The picture is presumably the pendant to the *Portrait of a Man* of the same size (Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome, inv. PC 65) which also came from the Sacchetti collection of Rome and was painted by Passerotti in the same period.

ANGELA GHIRARDI

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128 Luca Cambiaso | Moneglia (Genoa), 1527 – El Escorial, 1585

*Virgin with the Christ Child in Swaddling Clothes*

ca. 1575–1580

Oil on canvas; 67 × 56 cm

Museo dell'Accademia Ligustica di Belle Arti, Genoa, inv. 59

From his early career until the late 1550s, Cambiaso's work clearly displays the knowledge and the reworking of cinquecento traditions, from Perin del Vaga to Beccafumi and Correggio. The frescoes and canvasses he painted in this period are characterized by an exuberant style, complex and articulated composition, a rich palette, vigorous brush strokes, and refined effects. His adherence to the style of Correggio, master of a *maniera moderna* leaning towards naturalism, is particularly evident in a series of works on religious subjects – such as the *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Angels* in the church of Santa Maria della Cella in Genoa and the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* in the Accademia Ligustica, Genoa – where his debt to Correggio is intensely apparent in the grace of the figures.

Around the 1570s, in his mature period, a marked change can be discerned in Cambiaso's style. While in the above-mentioned *Holy Family* at the Accademia Ligustica, datable to 1565–1570, he tends to use powerfully built masses and simplify the forms and colours, from the 1570s he painted a series of pictures for private devotion and meditation – such as *The Holy Family with the Young Saint John* (National Gallery, Edinburgh), *The Holy Family with Saint Anne,* the *Virgin, and Child with Saint Catherine* (both Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas, Austin), and the true paradigm of these works, the *Madonna of the Candle* (Musei di Strada Nuova in Palazzo Bianco, Genoa) – in which the atmosphere becomes thinner and quieter; the colour scheme, more reserved. True, they are night scenes; but while in the early *Adoration of the Shepherds* in the Brera (ca. 1550–1555), in another painting of the same subject in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna (ca. 1570) and in the *Christ before Caiaphas* at the Accademia Ligustica (ca. 1575) the artist used thick impasto colours applied with rapid fine brush strokes (suffice to refer to the glowing carmine dress of the Virgin in the Brera *Adoration* or to the chilly metallic shimmer of the soldiers' armour in the *Christ before Caiaphas*), in the devotional paintings listed above the palette is restricted to a few colours and the scenes are illumined by a cold, motionless, conceptual light rather than the warm flickering light of the candle, suspending as it were the time of the narrative.

The small canvas presented here – certainly painted for private devotion, as the format also suggests – epitomizes most completely Cambiaso's tendency to simplify and convey an intimate atmosphere. Attention is focused on the elements helpful to meditation: the figures of the Virgin and the Child occupy the entire painted field, without any other figure or object to divert the viewer's attention from the silent and mystic interaction. With a tender gesture, the Infant appears to console his mother, immersed in thoughts of profound sorrow. The faithful beholder seems to be invited to take part in the conversation, to enter the dim space and open himself to the fervour of divine love.

The figure of Mary follows that in the *Madonna of the Candle,* and the use of light is similar, too: the strong light coming in this case from outside the picture illumines the Child, with only the profile of the mother showing against the dark background. Nothing alludes to the environment and only the foreshortened figure of the child suggests spatial depth. Unlike so many similar scenes, Jesus is not a happily kicking baby but is wrapped in swaddling clothes from which only his arms and tiny feet protrude.

This rendering of the theme is in perfect harmony with the deepening spirituality of Cambiaso's mature period, which scholars have attributed either to his knowledge of north European teachings of the Reformation (Profumo Müller 1970, 38–39), or to his adherence to traditional mysticism gaining popularity in his city in the wake of the writings of Saint Catherine of Genoa, or even to his knowledge of meditative experiences related to the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, disseminated around that time, after the Jesuits' settlement in Genoa (Magnani 2007, 49–50), experiences which profoundly influenced the last works Cambiaso produced in Genoa before departing for Spain.

Giulio Sommariva

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## 129 Sofonisba Anguissola | Cremona, ca. 1535 – Palermo, 1625

### *Bernardino Campi Painting Sofonisba Anguissola*

ca. 1559

Oil on canvas; 111 × 109.5 cm
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 497

This double portrait represents a genre that gained great popularity in Italian Renaissance painting after the well-known inventions of Raphael (cf. cat. 71) and Titian. In Lombardy, this genre, as well as group portraits set in interiors and outdoors, was practised particularly by Sofonisba Anguissola. This famous woman painter of Cremona was a lady-in-waiting to the Spanish queen Elisabeth of Valois, and she became the official portraitist of the court (Kusche 1989). Outstanding among her portraits, often showing members of her family, are the *Chess Game* (Muzeum Narodowe, Poznań) and a portrait of her father Amilcare, sister Minerva and brother Asdrubale (Nivaagaards Malerisamling, Nivå). In the Siena picture, a painter looks at the viewer while he paints the portrait of Sofonisba. She is elegantly dressed and holds a glove in her left hand.

In the early nineteenth century, the painting came to the Siena gallery from the Spannocchi collection, which was created in 1774, when the marriage of Giuseppe Spannocchi and Caterina Piccolomini di Modanella united the two family collections. Catarina also brought with her some pictures that one of her ancestors, captain Enea Silvio Piccolomini had acquired. During the sacking of Mantua in 1630–1631, Piccolomini purchased several works that the German troops had pillaged from the collection of the Gonzagas (Lapenta, in *Mantua* 2002). Tellini Perina (1992, 95) identified the painting with a "picture onto which Sofonisba Anguissola and a portrait of M. Fermo is painted; with frame", as noted in the inventory of the Mantuan Palazzo Ducale taken before the pillaging. However, Mina Gregori (1994, 34) pointed out that the subject of that picture must rather have been Sofonisba painting Fermo Ghisoni's portrait. Indeed, the sitter for this painting can rather be identified as Bernardino Campi, a Cremonese painter and the first master of Sofonisba, whose features are known from a medal (F. Rossi, in *Cremona* 1985, 353, fig. 5.6r) and a print by Agostino Carracci (F. Buonincontri, in *Cremona* 1985, 328, fig. 3.14). The writer of the Gonzaga inventory could hardly have had doubts about the identity of Fermo Ghisoni, a painter who spent an extended period living at the Mantuan court. Yet it is to be presumed that the painting now in Siena also has a provenance from this court (Gregori 1994, 34; S. Ferino-Pagden, in *Vienna* 1995, 67). In any case, there are documented relations between the Anguissola family and the Gonzagas: Sofonisba is known to have stayed in Mantua in 1556 (Tellini Perina 1992) where she might easily have painted a double portrait in honour of her colleague Fermo Ghisoni.

Previously attributed to a painter in the Veneto area, the hand of Sofonisba Anguissola was recognized by Giovanni Morelli in 1890, who also correctly identified the two figures. More recently, Robert Miller (cf. Sambo, in *Cremona* 1985) and Marco Tanzi (1991, 9) have raised doubts about the traditional attribution to the Cremonese painter. Actually, there is no evidence to substantiate their attribution to Campi rather than Sofonisba; all that can be said is that the rather poor condition of the painting makes it impossible to determine a definitive attribution on the basis of stylistic analysis. In any case, the face of the woman – the only detail of the painting that can usefully be taken into consideration in deliberating the attribution – shows a painting technique that corresponds to Sofonisba's, and the artistic context and the invention are also closely tied to Anguissola. The recent restoration of the picture by Elena Pinzauti in the conservation laboratory of the Siena gallery has freed the canvas of a distorting overpainting, which had completely concealed Sofonisba's wonderful red dress full of embroidery and gems, details common on the garments in her portraits in general, examples being the family portraits cited above, her *Bianca Ponzoni* in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, her presumed small *Self-Portrait* formerly in the Gagner collection and now in a private collection in Milan, and the *Self-Portrait* in the Brera in Milan. The Sofonisba of the Siena picture is very close to the round miniature *Self-Portrait* in the Uffizi, which must have been painted during her stay in Milan in 1559 in the court of the duke of Sessa (Kusche 1992, 9; reproduced in *Cremona* 1994, 219). For this reason critics agree almost unanimously that the double portrait of Siena was created at the end of the artist's stay in Cremona, in 1559, immediately before her departure for Spain that year. If this was the case, the painting was a last tribute to her master, with whom she continued to correspond even after moving to Madrid.

MARIO MARUBBI

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*The photograph reproduced here has been taken in the course of restoration.*



130 GIUSEPPE ARCIMBOLDI | Milan, 1526 – Milan, 1593

## *The Vegetable Gardener (Priapus, the Protector of Gardens)*

ca. 1587–1590

Oil on panel; 35.8 × 24.2 cm
Museo Civico Ala Ponzone, Cremona, inv. 211

At the beginning of his career, Milanese painter Giuseppe Arcimboldi was engaged to work at the cathedral of Milan. In 1562 he entered the service of the Habsburgs, first in the Vienna court and later in Prague. He painted several pictures for the court and also designed costumes for different festivities and tournaments. In 1587, at the age of sixty-one (this number appears on the low forehead of his curious self-portrait composed only of sheets of paper), he received permission to return definitively to his native town (Berra 1996b).

*The Vegetable Gardener* – a title first given to the picture by Geiger (1954, 49) – was very probably painted in the last Milanese period of Arcimboldi's career. The client who commissioned it is unknown. Some Lombardian men of letters eulogized about Arcimboldi's unusual, "whimsical" pictures, praising them for their masterly combination of two basic aesthetic principles: "icastic" imitation and "fantastic" imitation (Berra 1988). The artist in fact elaborated two peculiar genres: in the so-called "composite heads" he assembled a variety of different elements which optically create the illusion of a clearly recognizable head (these include the *Four Elements* and *Four Seasons* series), while the "reversible heads" allow for a dual interpretation when turned upside-down, delighting the viewer with their metamorphosis. *The Vegetable Gardener* belongs to the latter group (other examples are *The Cook* in Stockholm and the *Reversible Head with Basket of Fruit* in New York).

Viewed in one direction, the picture shows a traditional still-life: a metal bowl full mostly of vegetables. Turned upside down, the forms alchemically come to life to produce a grinning face. The bowl becomes a rustic hat, a walnut and a medlar re-create the dark pupils, a white radish moulds the large nose, an onion and a turnip shape the bulging cheeks, two mushrooms form the plump red lips, lettuce leaves provide the tresses of wavy hair and some Soncino roots imitate the prickly beard. Essentially, the resulting painting is a grotesque vegetable head, which the artist must have elaborated partly on the basis of some Leonardo caricatures circulating in Milan at that time (Berra 1998).

The chubby cheeks and the long swollen nose obviously allude to the testicles and an erect penis. Indeed, physiognomic tradition held that "Nasus correspondet praeputio" (Della Porta 1586, 71). Similarly, the mushroom lips are reminiscent of the vaginal lips. By deliberately juxtaposing the male and female sex organs the artist clearly wished to refer to the sexual act, in close connection with the fertility of the gardens protected by a sort of vegetable scarecrow. It is therefore worth reconsidering the sexual interpretation put forward by Calvesi (1987), according to which the figure represented is Priapus, a fertility deity and protector of gardens. It is known that ugliness, tousled hair, beard, and red cheeks – all present in Arcimboldi's painting – were held to be typical traits of Priapus, the "guardian of gardens" (Colonna 1499, m Vv). This mythological figure was in fact described as "the god of vegetable gardens … with a beard and ruffled hair" (Cartari 1571, 443) and "ugly, bearded, misshapen, ruddy-cheeked" (Filarete [1461–1464] 1972, II, 550). Furthermore, in several ancient statues Priapus was represented with an erect penis with which he holds a dish containing various produce (Megow 1997), an association evoked by this fascinating picture.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the accurate naturalism of Arcimboldi's paintings exerted a great influence on some Milanese artists specialized in still-life painting (Berra 1996a; Berra 2000; DaCosta Kaufmann 2007). It is no coincidence that Arcimboldi sent a few works by the woman painter Fede Galizia, well known for her still-lifes, to Emperor Rudolf II (Borgogni 1598, 39v–40r). Arcimboldi's mimetic method was of particularly great significance even for an outstanding genius of naturalist painting, Caravaggio. In fact, for his stay in Milan, certainly in 1591, Caravaggio was lodging within a few hundred metres of his senior colleague's busy workshop and thus he was able to learn from the peculiar manner of "icastic" representation that was the basis of Arcimboldi's bizarre art (Berra 2005, 224; Berra, forthcoming).

GIACOMO BERRA

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131 Federico Barocci | Urbino, 1535 – Urbino, 1612

*Virgin and Child with Saint Simon, Saint Jude and Two Donors (Madonna di San Simone)*

ca. 1567

Oil on canvas; 283 × 190 cm

Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino, inv. 1990 D 84

Early art writers put the date of the picture painted for the church of San Francesco in Urbino to the period preceding Federico Barocci's stay in Perugia (from the end of 1567 until 1569). Borghini (1584) and Bellori (1672) dated it after the *Madonna di San Giovanni* (ca. 1565, formerly in the Capuchin church in Urbino, today owned by the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche) but before the *Descent from the Cross* in Perugia (1569). The painting is also mentioned as a work of Barocci in accounts of the history of the friary of San Francesco *(Libro delle notizie del convento di San Francesco)* though no word is given about its genesis. The picture was restored by Andrea Rothe in 1965.

In a humble interior set before a rural landscape wrapped in mist, the celestial apparition is imbued with the tender and intimate mood so typical of Barocci. The divine figures painted in bright colours shine out from the grey of the background as does the vermilion drapery, a simplified version of Raphael's canopies. The influence of Raphael's works – particularly the *Madonna della tenda* and the *Madonna of Foligno* – is obvious in Barocci's preparatory sketches for the composition (Emiliani 1985; Emiliani 2008).

The scene is transected by oblique lines constituting a triangle formed by Saint Jude's lance, Saint Simon's saw, and the drapery running across the upper part of the picture. The lower vertex of the triangle is marked by the heads of the two donors for whom the Virgin and the Christ Child – in the middle of the geometric composition and of religious devotion – are to intercede in heaven. Thus, the elevation of the soul is ensured by the instruments of martyrdom and the intercession of the Virgin and Christ. In Barocci's successful solution the immediacy of the message and the decorum of representation are in perfect harmony with the dictates of the Counter-Reformation.

This sacred scene set in a modest environment of this world, is permeated by a subtle but intense emotional vibration characteristic of Barocci's art. This circumstance is enhanced by the portrait-like characterization of the two donors and the saints; a feature even more obvious in the *Portrait of a Man* (Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome) which is free of a sacred context: the portrait was the model for one of the figures, Saint Jude. In spite of these motifs in the picture that allude to reality, the whole scene is enacted on a kind of stage (to which the male donor is pointing) on which even the landscape elements are lines of a generic horizon lost in mist. This stage is indeed the location of a sacred scene, beyond time and place.

The female donor's head was, as Calzini (1913) noted, painted on paper which was then glued to the canvas. Contrary to Olsen's (1962) assertion, this head is also autograph.

Allusions to Raphael's Virgins, those divine beings full of maternal tenderness, and to his Infants showing their mothers passages from the Scriptures (e.g. in the *Connestabile Madonna* now in the Hermitage), are mixed with Correggiesque stylistic features present throughout Barocci's œuvre but always with an original, personal interpretation. Although the painter worked somewhat in isolation in the tiny Duchy of Urbino, his innovative language did have considerable repercussions.

Drawing played an important role in the execution of the picture; it is generally true of Barocci that his method was based on careful graphic studies. The preliminary models later appeared in several other compositions of his, and even his pupils often used them to create works closely adhering to the master's ideas, since these were much sought after. The right side of the picture is, for example, very similar to the corresponding section of a compositional sketch showing the *Virgin and Child with Saint Roch and Saint Sebastian,* today in the Devonshire Collection in Chatsworth (The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement, inv. 358).

In the compositions of Barocci's followers the most frequently recurrent motif is the central group of the Virgin and the Infant. These painters repeated and varied the master's themes at times obsessively, in which Barocci's preliminary cartoons were of great help (Ambrosini Massari 2005). Mention must be made here of Antonio Cimatori's altarpiece painted for the church of Ss. Pietro e Paolo in Frontino and another altarpiece for the Pious Society of the Piceni *(Pio Sodalizio dei Piceni)* in Rome, recently linked even more definitely to Cimatori's name (Vitali 2005, 96), as well as Ventura Mazza's documented altarpiece in Museo dei Bronzi in Pergola.

ANNA MARIA AMBROSINI MASSARI

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## 132 Ventura Salimbeni | Siena, 1569 – Siena, 1613

### *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*

1606

Oil on canvas; 127 × 96 cm
Museo Nazionale di Palazzo Mansi, Lucca, inv. 71
Inscribed bottom right, on the wheel: VENTURA / SALIMBENI / SENENSIS / PICTOR / FECIT / 1606

This painting belongs to the group of art works Leopold II of Habsburg-Lorraine donated to the city of Lucca in 1848, shortly after the city and the Duchy of Lucca had been incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. The work thus originates from the Medici collection. It was first reproduced in the epochal work of Hermann Voss, *Die Malerei der Spätrenaissance in Rom und Florenz*. Since then it has regularly been included in studies on Salimbeni, partly because it is signed and dated (1606), and partly because it is a rare example of the painter's activity as a portraitist. Despite this, neither the work itself nor Salimbeni's portrait output in general has been the subject of in-depth stylistic analysis, even though his activity in this field must have been considerable. Proof of this is the presence of various figures painted after real personages, especially in his late frescoes in the choir of Siena Cathedral (1610–1611). Among the saints and the blessed of Siena the artist himself appears, together with the rector of the cathedral, Muzio Placidi, and Archbishop Camillo Borghesi. They are lively, impressive figures, testifying to an experienced portraitist, as is evidenced by Salimbeni's *Self-Portrait,* painted with masterly assurance (Uffizi, Florence). Also to be borne in mind is that Ventura Salimbeni's moderately talented son Simondio was primarily a portrait painter.

Ventura Salimbeni painted not only real portraits; he also depicted fictitious persons in a portrait-like manner. The work in question is of this latter type, together with another *Saint Catherine of Alexandria,* a double portrait of *Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Mary Magdalene,* and the unpublished triple portrait of *Saints Catherine of Alexandria, Cecilia, and Mary Magdalene*, in which the Bizzarrini coat of arms appears (private collection). The former two, though homeless, are well known because they were on display in the Medici exhibition held in Siena in 1980 (Capresi Cambelli, in *Siena* 1980, 155, cat. 61 and 158, cat. 63). Although they do not refer to a specific person, all these works were nonetheless painted after a model. For the Lucca painting this was the same as the one for the figure in the foreground of *The Miraculous Fall of Manna* (1607) in Pisa Cathedral. As was often the case with complex subjects, for the composition Salimbeni relied on the art of the first half of the cinquecento. The layout of the picture is similar to Sebastiano del Piombo's *Portrait of a Woman* in the Cambò Collection in Barcelona and to Titian's *Pope Paul III in a Red Velvet Cap* in the Museo di Capodimonte, Naples. The only difference is the scene of martyrdom that imparts a meaning to the landscape background and thus underscores the religious character of the picture. In his expression of the idea of the saint triumphant over the drama of martyrdom, Salimbeni appears to have been influenced by Beccafumi's *Saint Paul* in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Siena. The tempest in the background, with flashes of lightning that illuminate the figures like apparitions, also seems to derive from Beccafumi's work. Rather than the violence, Salimbeni emphasized the miraculous character of the martyrdom. The saint herself is rendered in an elegant, lyrical manner, rather than a realistic one. The figure is painted with soft texture; the artist seems to have relished the rich details, using a wide range of colours: he painted the garments mustard yellow, raspberry red, cornflower blue, and cream-white. There is an obvious analogy with the iridescent world of Salimbeni's step-brother Francesco Vanni, but here the colours are transparent, soft and more delicate.

This soft variant of Vanni's more powerful idiom, which characterized Salimbeni's easel paintings in the first decade of the seventeenth century, was highly acclaimed by his contemporaries: it brought back in an updated form the ancient lyricism of Sienese art. But Salimbeni was a successful artist outside his native town too. In this period, he was much engaged in Genoa, Pisa, Lucca, and Florence alongside the leading masters of these towns. His clients included the most erudite art collectors of the day, from Giovan Carlo Doria through Giovan Battista Marino to the Medici, for whom this symbolic portrait was painted.

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